

MDOCS

JOHN B. MOORE DOCUMENTARY STUDIES COLLABORATIVE

Spring 2015, 1.10



March 27, 2015
A Bi-weekly Newsletter

Guerrilla Filmmaking: Docu-Trek '15

2015's spring break was not a break for 6 students, myself included, who started a documentary film about Skidmore's Opportunity Program (OP). We had a hands-on experience with pros Nicky Tavares and Adam Tinkle, learning how to use equipment for visuals and sound, conduct interviews, create a set, and develop universal set etiquette.

The week started on campus with lessons on how to use the cameras effectively. I had never experienced such an intense camera (Canon T5i) with buttons for every single function. Selecting white balance, ISO, focus, aperture, etc. became essential for every shoot for the rest of the week. During interviews with OP alumni and staff, as a crew, we assigned team roles. We first interviewed Psychology professor Sheldon Solomon. He spoke about why he joined the Opportunity Program and his passion for it. He described experiences of many OP

students, such as low economic status and discomfort.

We continued our interviews with OP graduates, both on campus and in New York City, where we headed on Wednesday. Many spoke about how grateful they were for the Opportunity Program and being on Skidmore campus, but also mentioned the challenges faced with situations back home. It was great talking to students who were involved with the Opportunity Program and to see how it has benefitted many students beyond college. Their interviews will be the start of our documentary story.

In addition to conducting interviews, we visited The Magic Shop, a Soho sound recording studio, and met Skidmore alum Jocelyn Arem and her colleagues Steve Rosenthal and Jessica Thompson (see p. 2). Arem spoke about the Caffè Lena History Project and making archives of

Caffè performances from the 1960s forward. Rosenthal led a studio tour and Thompson demonstrated tape restoring. This amazing experience taught me how important it is to save documents to preserve a culture that may no longer exist. One of the most amazing things to learn was how today's technology makes it possible to preserve past recordings for the future.

The week had great, unscripted moments. Exiting the Magic Shop we ran into a street set, and stood on the sidelines to watch the crew film a van crash into a building. The street was completely blocked off, police monitored access into and out of it, and there were plenty of trucks loaded with equipment. The experience allowed me to open my mind of the complexities and effort that goes into filming what may only be a couple of seconds in a show.

Inside This Issue:

- **Guerrilla Filmmaking**
- **Multimedia Storytelling**
- **Behind the Scenes (Photos)**

Docu-Trek 2015

Sound, Story, Stage with Jocelyn Arem

When 1000 words are not enough

Plus: Fall 2015 – Looking forward!



Docu-Trek '15 (continued)

We filmed in Brooklyn on the street, on the Brooklyn Bridge, and in the apartment that was our “docu-trek” homebase (Wilson Espinal interviewed Danny Tejada, p 1). We also attended an alumni mixer, where we met documentary and OP alumni. On Friday, we met with alumna Ellen Sherman, who has worked on Dateline to document stories on crime, especially murder. Sherman explained how some stories take up to three months from research to filming to editing then air in an hour on television. A key point I left with: producers or networks will be more inclined to listen to an idea for a documentary if others have already written about it. Connecting back to our project, I think the documentary about the Opportunity Program will be a great success because people have already written pieces that we can use. Stay tuned!

Jamerly de la Cruz,
'18



Ellen Sherman
with Docu-Trek
students Brittany
Kent '18 and
Ziyi Cheng, '18.
Photo by Wilson
Espinal, '17.



Director's Note

The best way to learn about making a documentary film might just be...making a documentary film. Nicky Tavares and Adam Tinkle led six students on a spring break Docu-Trek to New York City to begin a documentary film project about Skidmore's Opportunity Program. With the help of two alumnae—Jocelyn Arem and her Magic Shop colleagues and Ellen Sherman, a veteran of NBC's Dateline and a documentary filmmaker—students got a taste of production and some amazing interviews to start their film project. (p 2)

We were delighted to welcome Jocelyn, Steve and Jessica to campus the next week for an amazing Carr “lecture” and listening experience with restored Caffè Lena recordings and amazing campus musicians. Thanks to the support of Special Programs, Sound Solutions of Saratoga, Adam, Nicky and Wilson Espinal '17, MDOCS expects to share our own ‘document’ of this amazing evening. (p. 3)

Want to get involved? Check out the “Cube”—it's back & in the JKB Lobby. Plus! Fall '15 courses are live and registration starts in early April! Community members interested in auditing a class or workshop should contact the MDOCS director. J. Dym

DOC ON CAMPUS

Asian Studies Presents:

Tuesday, March 31:

7 pm, Davis Auditorium

Screening + Q & A

with filmmaker Hao Wu



a chronicle of the staging of the American musical Fame—China's first official collaboration with Broadway—by the senior class at China's top drama academy

MDOCS Doc Date
Conversation with Wao Hu!
Palamountain 382,
Wed, 4/1, 2:30-3:30 pm

Film Appreciation Troupe Presents:

React to Film



Wednesday, April 8

7 pm, the Spa

Fall '15 MDOCS Classes

Documentary Filmmaking



DS 251D 001 Nicky Tavares
MW 9:00am-12:05pm, 4 credits

Intro to Audio Documentary



DS 251C, Adam Tinkle
TTh 9:40am-11:00am, 3 credits

PLUS!

1-credit DS Workshops

- Skidmore-Saratoga Memory Project Sound Archive
- Archival Storytelling
- Documentary Project (9/9-10/30)



For details, see:

<http://www.skidmore.edu/mdocs/courses>

Reimagining the Sound Archive



On March 26/27, Jocelyn Arem's Carr Lectureship residency culminated with a 2-part finale. Her third workshop, on archival story (presentation), engaged participants in working story threads into documentary work. Museum, historical site and cultural venue participants imagined everything from books to films.

Several local stories had a musical element, so a big plus was the presence of Jocelyn's partners at the Magic Shop: owner/founder Steve Rosenthal, and mastering engineer Jessica Thompson. The Magic Shop crew also met with professor Tony Holland's Music Technology class, "geeking out" with students on the fine points of music recording and getting a tour of Zankel Music Center's own recording studio.

The main event took place March 26, on a snowy (or was it rainy?) evening in Filene Recital Hall. In this public presentation-performance, supported by the Office of Special programs, Steve, Jessica and Jocelyn guided a sizeable audience of Skidmore and Saratoga Springs music and recording fans through the pleasures of "treasure hunting," restoring, releasing and listening to music recordings, demonstrating how to erase the snaps, crackles and hisses. Then the trio introduced seven Skidmore-community groups, each interpreting a Caffè Lena recording on stage.



From Noah Prebish's resampling and Fenimore Blues' rocking, to Jocelyn's vocals with bassist Thabang Maphothoane, to the closing harmonies of Phoebe Radcliffe, Elisa Smith, and Alisha Stommel, the evening highlighted how historic recordings can inspire multiple generations.

Thanks to local magicians Chris Bailey (Sound Solutions of Saratoga), Adam Tinkle & Nicky Tavares, MDOCS plans to share their performances with you later this spring.



Behind the Scenes



Nicky Tavares and Maryam DeWitt adjusting a camera, Jonathan Ogunleye & Ziyi Cheng on site, Docu-Trek '15.



Jamerly de la Cruz on sound duty. Eileen McAdam introduces Cube architect Hugo Martinez (in the lobby of the JKB until June!) and led conversations about portable sound studio design. Photos J. Dym & W. Espinal.

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