

# The Foreign Languages Newsletter

Clark University · Worcester, Massachusetts

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## HARTMUT KAISER TO RETIRE

One of the mainstays of our German program, HARTMUT KAISER, will retire at the end of this academic year. Kaiser, an associate professor of German and adjunct associate professor of Music, will have taught at Clark for 31 years.

The *Newsletter* asked Professor Kaiser to comment on his life and work. He cordially agreed, as follows:

"I received my undergraduate education in Hamburg, and earned a Ph.D. in German at Brown in 1968; I taught at Brown for a while before coming to Clark in 1971.

"In addition to standard German language courses at all levels, I've taught a six-week total-immersion German course, the equivalent of two semesters of college German, at the University of Trier and also in Berlin; a team-taught course on 'European Romanticism,' and 'The Medieval German Epic.' I have also participated twice in the team-taught departmental core course 'The National Imagination.' Since 1986 I have regularly taught a First Year Seminar on 'The Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm,' in which students are introduced to a variety of interpretive models and also improve their writing skills.

"In my family in Germany there was always a lot of music-making going on. I began playing the violin at age seven. After elementary school I worked as an apprentice in violin-making for three-and-a-half years and worked as a journeyman for an additional three years before going back to school. These childhood experiences may explain why music is such an important part of what I teach. The interdisciplinary course 'Music in German Literature and Thought' raises questions about the relationship between the two disciplines: How do individual writers communicate a musical experience or describe music with words? How meaningful are allusions to musical compositions, especially opera, in literature? The point of such comparisons is to develop students' appreciation of form.

"From the *Faustbook* of 1587 to the twentieth century authors Paul Valéry and Thomas Mann, the story of Doctor Faustus has played a major role in European literature. My interdisciplinary course 'The Faust Theme in Literature and Music' investigates both musical and literary works inspired by this well-known story, most especially Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* (1947), in

which the author makes the protagonist not a professor or a scientist, but a composer.

"My realization that no other nineteenth-century German artist had a greater international impact than Richard Wagner led me to develop a team-taught course called 'Richard Wagner's Music Dramas: Myth and Innovation.' It was chosen to be the Higgins Seminar for 1992-93. Later, I revised this course significantly in consultation with Prof. Castonguay, and we team-taught it under the new title 'Richard Wagner, the Jews and the Nazis' as part of the offerings of the 'Holocaust and Genocide Studies' concentration. Richard Wagner, 'the most controversial artistic figure of all time' (F. Spotts), exerted a profound influence on many diverse people, and due to his virulent anti-Semitic pronouncements is considered by some to be among the decisive models of Hitler's career and his ideology of destruction. In this course we attempt to arrive at a balanced critical perspective on Wagner's anti-Semitism and the ideological dimension of seven of his operas; but we also try to understand what aspects of his theoretical and artistic works Hitler and the Nazis found so appealing and exploited for their own ghoulish intentions.

"My published research concentrates on Mozart in literature, the Don Juan and Faust themes, and the structural parallels between literature and music. My most recent paper presents a new reading of Thomas Mann's much-discussed novella 'Tristan,' pointing out its hitherto overlooked burlesque relationship to Richard Wagner's operatic tetralogy *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

"In my off-campus professional life, I have participated in three Summer Seminars for College Teachers, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities (1985, 1989, and 1994), and I have lectured widely in this country as well as in Germany, Sweden and Australia on a variety of subjects. I have always considered myself to be primarily a teacher, and I see the primary purpose of my research efforts as improving my teaching style and enhancing my ability to present the material in my various courses as clearly and convincingly as possible."

This approach seems to have worked: Professor Kaiser won Clark's Outstanding Teacher Award for 1999-2000.

The Department will miss his energetic presence. We hope he will keep us in mind and visit us often.

**OUR NEW SECRETARY**

A warm welcome to Zinta, the new Foreign Languages secretary, who began work at the beginning of February.

Zinta Licis Moskalew was born in Riga, Latvia, and grew up in Boston. She has traveled extensively in Germany, Russia, Latvia and Greece. She has been a classical music host for WICN, and currently serves as a classical DJ with *ClassiCollage* on WCUW. We're glad to have her with us!

**FACULTY NOTES**

Instructor of Hebrew TZILLA BARONE is involved in a project called *L'chaim*, a celebration of the triumph of survival. This program is run by the South Area Solomon Schechter Day School. Elie Wiesel is the honorary chair of this project.

The program focuses on the achievements of survivors who started their lives anew following World War II. Survivors share their life stories through interviews by students of the school.

Ultimately the *L'chaim* team will produce a study guide to be used by other schools interested in incorporating this curriculum. Mrs. Barone is simultaneously working on matching schools in Israel to share the same project and bring it to an international level.

The first year of the project will culminate in a community-wide Gala Celebration including a Tribute Ceremony and Award Event on May 19, 2002.

Associate Professor of German HARTMUT KAISER's essay "Intertextuelles Spiel mit Wagner-Analogien: Thomas Manns Burleske *Tristan* und *Der Ring des Nibelungen*" appeared in *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch*, vol. 14, 2001.

Associate Professor of Spanish WILLIAM FERGUSON continues to write for *The New York Times Book Review*. His reviews of two recent novels are currently in press: Timothy Findley's *Spadework*, and Hans Koning's *Zeeland*.

Professor of Spanish MARVIN D'LUGO is the editor of the Winter-Spring, 2002 issue of *Post-Script, Essays on Film and Literature*, a special issue dedicated to recent Spanish cinema in global contexts. Professor D'Lugo also contributed an article entitled "The Geopolitical Aesthetic in Recent Spanish Films." On February 26, he will be speaking at Dartmouth College on "Antonio Banderas Re-images Chicano Cinema." He is also one of the invited speakers at the Center for European Studies University of Wisconsin-Madison Conference on Contemporary European Cinemas; his talk will be on the current state of Spanish cinema with a presentation entitled "Old and New Genealogies of Spanish Cinema."

**7TH LATINO FILM FESTIVAL**

The seventh annual Latino Film Festival will take place April 2-7. Details of time and place will be announced in the next issue of the *Newsletter*. Films to be screened include *Calle 54 / 54th Street*, *Cosas que dejé en la Habana / Things I Left in Havana*, *Fonda azul / Blue Dinner*, *Ela Troyano x 2*, *Carmelita Tropicana*, and *Latin Boys Go to Hell*.

**A VISITOR FROM TANDEM**

In the third week of March, ALMENDRA STAFFA-HEALY, the Tandem director of programs for American students, will be visiting Clark and Worcester State College. There will be a reception for her; students who have been to Tandem or are planning to study there are cordially invited to attend.

On Thursday, March 21, Almendra will meet with students in the Arndt Room (ES 310) Her schedule at Clark:

- 2:00-2:30 Reception with students returned from Tandem programs
- 2:30-3:30 Meeting with students planning on going to Tandem I
- 3:30-4:15 Meeting with students who want to go to Tandem in the summer
- 4:15-5:00 Meeting with students who intend to go to Tandem II (Internship Program)

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGES NEWSLETTER is published by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Estabrook Hall 301, Clark University, Worcester, MA 01610. Please send news items and announcements of coming events to Newsletter Editor, in care of the Department, or call us at (508) 793-7342, 793-7234. If you are not yet on our mailing list, please fill out this coupon and return it to us so that we can keep you fully informed of Foreign Languages Department activities.

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