

The Foreign Languages Newsletter

Clark University · Worcester, Massachusetts

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FROM THE CHAIR

This month's *Newsletter* highlights the rich international dimension of our students' and colleagues' activities and interests. Part of that internationalism comes by way of the Worcester Latino Film Festival. Now in its 14th year, the Festival is officially co-sponsored by Clark with special help from members of our Spanish staff and secretaries. Besides offering an eclectic mix of comedy and drama, fiction and documentary films, this edition of the WLFF will include a special opening event on March 31: the screening of Juan Mandelbaum's powerful documentary *Our Disappeared! Nuestros desaparecidos*, which recalls Argentina's "Dirty War." This screening was arranged with the help of the film's Associate Producer, Lucía Mandelbaum, a Clark grad (Spanish, '08) and will include the appearance of her father, the film's director, on hand for a conversation with the audience immediately following the screening. At the Director's Showcase on Saturday, April 4, at 2:00 pm, Ángel Muñiz, director of *Thieves on Demand*, will present his film followed by a "dialogue with the audience." I hope to see you there and at the other 'international' events we are sponsoring in the coming weeks.

Marvin D'Lugo

"POETRY AND POLITICS: AN EVENING WITH ZAFER SENOCAK AND ELIZABETH OEHLKERS-WRIGHT"

Thursday, March 26th, 7:00, Traina Center. Zafer Senocak was born in 1961 in Ankara and grew up in Turkey and Germany. He now lives in Berlin, where he is one of Germany's most prominent poets and essayists. His *Atlas of a Tropical Germany: Essays on Politics and Culture, 1990-1998* was published by University of Nebraska Press. *Door Poetry* is a new volume of his poems, translated by Elizabeth Oehlkers-Wright, who will read his

poems in German and English and lead a discussion about politics and society in Germany, Turkey, Europe and the world at large.

14th ANNUAL WORCESTER LATINO FILM FESTIVAL at CLARK

Held each year at Cinema 320 and Razzo Hall, the Worcester Latino Film Festival is a collaborative among Centro Las Américas, Clark, Assumption College, College of the Holy Cross and WPI. Appropriately grouped as "Rumbos," 'destinations' or destinies, the four films chart a course across a wide and wild geography of the Spanish-speaking world. The following brief summaries will give you a feel for the variety of films to be presented. More information can be found at:

www.cinema320.com/latinofestival.html

Our Disappeared! Nuestros desaparecidos

(U.S. 2008: 99 minutes). **Dir. Juan Mandelbaum.** Guest director present at March 31st screening. Boston-based documentary filmmaker Juan Mandelbaum returns to his native Argentina to investigate the circumstances in which Patricia Dixon, a long-lost college girlfriend, was abducted and "disappeared" by the military junta during the 1976-1983 dictatorship. Combining rare archival footage with the dramatic stories shared by parents, siblings, friends and the children of the disappeared, Juan shows that when brutal regimes attack the fabric of a society with great impunity, the suffering lasts for generations.

Thieves on Demand/ Ladrones a domicilio

(Dominican Republic, 2008, 109 min.) **Dir. Ángel Muñiz,** guest director present at the April 4th screening. Tapping into a rich vein of Latin-American cinema of social protest that uses humor to expose corruption and social injustice, Muñiz, famed director of *Nueva Yol*, chronicles the ways Bruno, an honest, innocent man, is ensnared in the culture of corruption. The comedy has a Latin flavor, but its message is universal.

Make a Wish/ Tocar el ciel

(Argentina/ Spain, 2006, 109 minutes). **Dir. Marcos Carnevale.** A luminous comedy-melodrama about three generations of a family and their parallel lives in Madrid and Buenos Aires. The action is framed by the family tradition of releasing balloons at midnight on New Year's Eve and "making a wish." Cross-cutting between seemingly different worlds in Madrid and Buenos Aires, this fast-paced comedy presents a range of unforgettable characters as Carnevale reminds us of the powerful emotional bonds that unite a family.

My Mexican Shiva (Morirse está en hebreo) (Mexico 2008, 98 minutes). **Dir: Alejandro Springall.** This delightful black comedy begins when Moishe, the beloved patriarch of a Mexican Jewish family, drops dead in a brothel, and his family and friends come together for a 'shiva,' a traditional Jewish period of mourning. The mourners include Moishe's Catholic ex-lover, his grandson, an Orthodox ex-convict and a troupe of mariachi musicians. A surreal look at the rich diversity of contemporary Mexican society.

OUR MAJORS IN AFRICA

Johanna Plunkett, Karleen Porcena, Rachel Reisen and **Nicole Zimmerman**, all senior Spanish majors, joined and three other Clarkies in Ghana for an alternative Spring Break. This was no mere vacation trip. The students, all founding members of Clark's Social Entrepreneurship Club, traveled to Accra, Ghana to volunteer at the New Horizon Special School, a day school that serves autistic children and adults. The trip was organized in partnership with the Seven Hills Global Outreach program, founded last fall. The students were advised by David Jordan, President and CEO of the

Seven Hills Foundation, who also serves as Social Entrepreneur-In-Residence at Clark.

FACULTY NOTES

At the recent NorthEast Modern Languages Assoc. meetings held in Boston, Associate Professor of French **BETH GALE**, presented a paper titled "Paradoxical Evil in Novels by Amélie Nothomb" as part of a panel called "Evil in Contemporary French and Francophone Literature?" She also spoke on "An Embarrassment of Riches: Strategies for Summer Reading Selection" during a roundtable on "Summer Reading for First Year Students."

ROBERT TOBIN, Henry J. Leir Professor of Foreign Languages and Cultures, also attended the meetings where he organized and chaired a panel on "Sexology, Emancipation and Literature."

ODILE FERLY, Assistant Professor of French, will travel to Lugano, Switzerland in April to present a paper at the "Caribbean Unbound IV" Conference. Her presentation is entitled: "The Inappropriate Other: The Dominican Figure in Edwidge Danticat and Gary Victor."

DEAN SIMPSON, Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish, has traveled to Honduras for a conference on Teaching and Learning. He participated in a week-long series of seminars, working with professors and administrators from Tegucigalpa to help develop and improve ideas and practices on pedagogy, evaluation and assessment. The team of cognitive engineers, piloted by Lionza Education, will aim to facilitate this university-wide collaborative effort. Prof Simpson brings to this team his many years of experience in various learning environments and familiarity with various methodologies.

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, care of the Department, or call us at (508) 793-7342, 793-7234 (e-mail: jberg@clarku.edu). 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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