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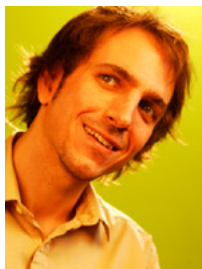
Monday, November 17, 2003
Rasbury's art makes buzz, wins billboard-size acclaim - karcher

Louisiana Tech's Michael Rasbury is on an artistic roll.

Like the proverbial rolling snowball, his career is gathering momentum and mass.

Translation? In just over a month, Rasbury has won three sizeable honors from state and regional art associations. The assistant professor of theater in Tech's School of Performing Arts:

- received a \$5,000 artist fellowship grant in theater from the Louisiana Division of the Arts
- was named to the Shreveport Regional Arts Council Artist Roster and
- earned two spots in SRAC's Highway Haiku outdoor highway gallery with his photographs.



Michael Rasbury

Even before this recent rash of recognition, however, Rasbury was part of significant artistic endeavors. Among them: working with the John Cage Trust in New York City to provide original composition and sound design for a production of "Alphabet," a newly discovered Cage work. The late Cage was an internationally acclaimed avant garde composer and musician.

"I've always been a jack-of-all-trades," Rasbury says of his broad-based accolades. "I even messed with my car one time. I get bored if I do the same thing too long."

If pressed, he sums up his passion in one word: art.

Because of that variety of interests, Rasbury says he "thought long and hard" about which category to enter in the Louisiana Division of the Arts fellowship competition. After all, he's not only a theater professor; he also pursues graphic design, excels in digital photography (witness the Haiku billboard awards) and plays keyboard in two local bands. He ultimately decided to concentrate on his work as a theatrical composer and sound designer, but also made use of other proficiencies to snag the prize.

Rasbury entered a five-minute documentary about himself using what he terms "Ken Burns' effects," referring to the celebrated PBS filmmaker. The entry included still photographs of productions Rasbury has worked on – with special attention paid to the accompanying music. He used his own voice underneath.

"I wanted it to be entertaining," he said.

The John Cage project is a prime example of his theatrical accomplishments. The production of "Alphabet" premiered in 2001 at the International Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, and continued to Ireland, Germany, Australia and the University of California-Berkeley. Rasbury served as master sound technician and sound designer.

"That project changed my life," Rasbury said. "I flew out of New York on September 10 (2001), and in a year's time I went to so many cultures so quickly."

Then he jokes: "I never understood culture shock before. I always thought it was going to Ruston from Shreveport."

Quite seriously, though, Rasbury's immersion in Cage's experimental philosophy has left its mark on him. "I'd be interested in doing more drama that way," Rasbury says. "Drama is an extension of humanity, and humanity is unpredictable."

Cage is recognized as the initiator and leading figure in the field of indeterminate composition by means of chance operations. His best-

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Dr. Mark Kroll, head of marketing and management and the Maurice Tatum endowed professor of business, has been honored by Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, as one of the university's four Distinguished Alumni of 2003.

Dr. Mike McShane,

assistant professor of biomedical engineering and research associate at the IFM, is featured in this week's issue of [NanoBiotech News](#) on his "smart tattoo" glucose monitoring research. The newsletter focuses on up-to-the-minute news and analysis of the emerging nanobiotech market.

For helping produce a publication for national dissemination to rehabilitation service providers, **Ron Gardner**, director of the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness at Tech, was recognized with a certificate of appreciation in Washington, D.C., at the national Institute on Rehabilitation Issues.

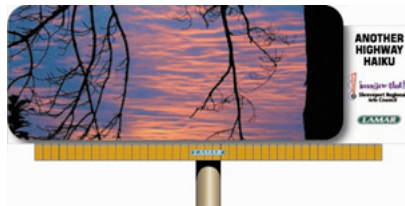
known piece is "Four Minutes, 33 Seconds" from 1952, which has no sound added to that of the environment in which it is performed.

Rasbury was put in touch with the John Cage Foundation by Mikel Rouse, who has a three-year tenure as composer-in-residence in Ruston, overseen by the North Central Louisiana Arts Council.

Indeed, Rasbury had credentials the Cage family would be interested in: Five years earlier, he had written the original music for "One Flea Spare" that played as part of the New York Shakespeare Festival. It won the 1997 Obie (Off Broadway Theater Award) for Best New Play.

Rasbury brought that talent back home in 2001 with original composition, arranging and sound design for Tech's production of "The Leafmen and the Brave, Good Bugs" by children's author William Joyce. Rasbury has also worked at the Actors Theatre of Louisville, Ky., First Frontier in Xenia, Ohio, and numerous other venues.

His selection as a state Division of the Arts fellow is what led to his recent listing in the Shreveport Regional Arts Council Artist Roster. Two other professors in Tech's School of the Performing Arts were also chosen for that honor: Drs. Kenneth Robbins and Alan Goldspiel. (See accompanying story.)



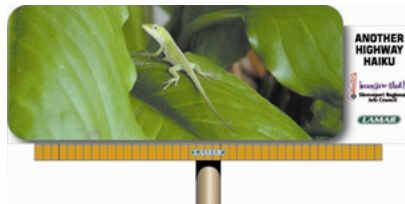
Sky

Robbins says of Rasbury: "Michael is a most deserving young man with so much to offer that he often surprises himself. He's doing an outstanding job of representing the School of the Performing Arts with all his activities and successes."

Rasbury's other recent honor – his photographs' being chosen for the Highway Haiku billboard project – "is the first time anyone has patted me on the back for my photography," he says. "I was honored and thrilled to be selected because I know how many good artists there are in the area

One photo shows "a little green lizard on green leaves -- he thought he was camouflaged." The other showcases "a drastic Louisiana morning sky with shadows and trees."

The haiku venture features billboard-sized photographs and poems alongside highways in the Shreveport area. Of 131 entries in the competition, 10 were selected. Two Tech architecture professors' photographs were also chosen, those of Walter Green and Tim Hayes. (See accompanying story.)



Lizard

"It's nice to have three out of the 10 awards going to Louisiana Tech," Rasbury says.

The locations and time frames for placement of the billboards have not yet been announced.

As if these projects aren't enough, Rasbury has a plethora of other artistic irons in the fire:

- mastering, mixing, engineering and cover design for local bands' and churches' albums ("I like the fact that I start with nothing -- with air" and carry the project through shrink-wrapping the CD. "It thrills me to do it all.")
- composing original music for non-theatrical undertakings (He penned original music for a hunting video produced in Franklin, Tenn.)
- performing keyboard and vocals with The Lightnin' Bugs (Good enough for the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival in 2002 and 2001; he also plays and sings with Monty Russell and the Hardcore Troubadours.)
- designing Web sites ("It's a side business.")
- assisting with the Folklife Program housed in Tech's School of

