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What do our professors do when they are not teaching?

Some of our faculty members are academics who spend their time pursuing research in their fields and publishing their results. They present at conferences, and review journal articles written by their peers. Others are professionals in the performing arts fields. They have diverse skills, and when time permits they pursue work in a wide arena. They perform, design, choreograph, direct, record, conduct and more. All of this work, whatever its nature, helps build the reputation of our programs and raise the profile of the university.

Last semester, an image of dance professors **Ali Woerner** and **Thayer Jonutz** and the members of their company **Take Root** was included in the new photography book *Dance / Box / Lens, Portraits in Motion* by **John Sobczak**, published by Lorien Books. It's available on [the publisher's website](#).

Theatre professor **Jeremy Barnett** traveled to Cambridge, Massachusetts to work on stage design for performances in Harvard's famed Memorial Mall, which was built to honor Harvard students and alumni who died in the Civil War.

Theatre professor **Lynnae Lehfeltdt** had a very busy fall. She flew out to New York City in November to vocal coach actor **Keegan-Michael Key** on the set of the **new Netflix series *Friends From College***, which also stars **Cobie Smulders**.

In an interesting coincidence, Lehfeltdt and Key are "friends from college" themselves. They met in 2000 and performed together in 2001. They both taught at University of Detroit Mercy and even team-taught a movement class there. "We have remained close throughout the years," said Lehfeltdt. "Whenever we are together we share different movement and vocal exercises."

"Lynnae is very adept at reconnecting an actor to their training very quickly," said Key. "It helps that she always brings a positive, proactive energy to her working environment. In the midst of a difficult scene, she helped me reconnect to a sense of ease that not only allowed me to speak with less strain, but connect to the truth of the moment."



Take Root Dance Company - Photo courtesy of John Sobczak



Lynnae Lehfeltdt with Keegan-Michael Key



(l-r) Emma Griffin, Keegan-Michael Key, Olivia Griffith

After checking with the *Friends From College* team, Lehfeltdt invited alumni **Olivia Griffin** (BFA '16) and **Emma Griffith** (BFA '16) (stage name **Emily Michelle Griffith**) to the set for a day. "It's wonderful Lynnae reached out to continue providing educational experiences," said Emma Griffith. "I learned so much. I had the opportunity to watch a real television set in action. And, beyond that, I got to see one of my professors work with a celebrity. That shows how valuable our training is from OU and proves that you never stop learning, even when you're the star of a Netflix TV series. I am so appreciative that Lynnae thought of us and wanted to help us continue growing. It was an experience I'll never forget."

"It was such an amazing experience to get to go on set with Lynnae!" said Olivia Griffin. "We got to observe the highest level of professionals hard at work. It was also very enlightening to see that very established actors are still training and doing the homework that allows them to go on set and deliver so well. Knowing that Keegan-Michael Key values Lynnae's voice work puts an extra added weight and strengthens both the value of my training, and Oakland University's reputation as a Theatre program! It was amazing that Lynnae invited us and recognized that even though we have graduated, we are still feeding our minds and seeking more training and knowledge. Acting is making discoveries... and we are all still making discoveries about acting!"

Earlier in the year, Lehfeltdt spoke at the second annual Statera Foundation Conference. Her session was titled "Trish Arnold Movement Work:

And in December she spoke at an international conference in St Petersburg, Russia. Lehfeldt shared her expertise in vocal training at the conference, which focused on English for Specific Purposes (ESP). She was part of a slate of speakers addressing the theme of adapting ESP teaching methods to today's student profile.



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