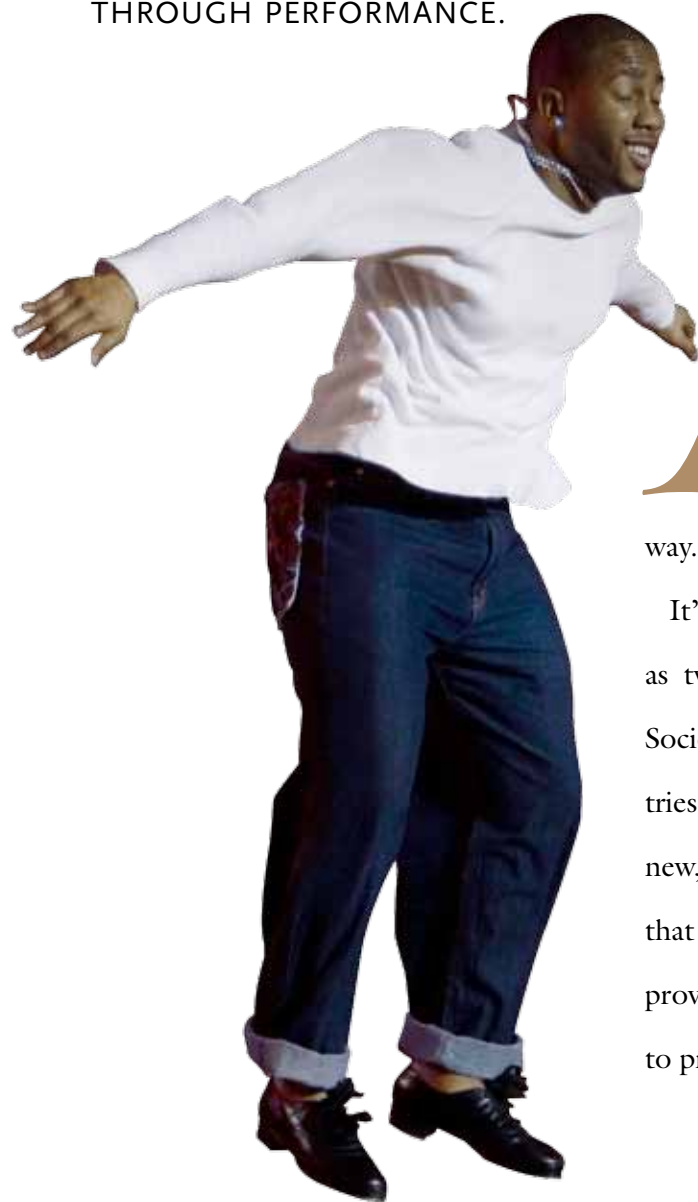


Modes of Expression

TREYVON JACKSON '10
HELPS KIDS DISCOVER
THEIR POTENTIAL
THROUGH PERFORMANCE.



A veteran performer even as a college junior, **Treyvon Jackson '10** had heard plenty of applause in his young life, but the acclaim of Jose touched him in a special way. It all goes back to tap dancing.

It's the fourth grade, and Jackson sits among friends as two women from the Washington Performing Arts Society volunteer to teach the students tap dance. He tries it out like "a piece of playground equipment." It's new, novel, potentially exciting. What he doesn't realize is that putting on tap shoes will create connections that will provide a supportive network and, eventually, inspire him to provide opportunity to others.

BY MEGAN ZARODA '07 | PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHUCK ZOVKO



Modes of Expression, a mentoring program begun by Treyvon Jackson '10 (center), exposes Easton middle school students to the performing arts.

"Tap dance is what has gotten me where I am today," Jackson says. "I mean it in more ways than one. It put me in a position to realize that things happen for a reason."

In middle school and high school—Friendship Collegiate Academy in Washington, D.C.—he was a member of Tappers With Attitude, the well-known ensemble based in Silver Spring, Md. Tap dancing saw Jackson through a rocky childhood—a broken family, a parent's depression, eviction, a murder in his grandmother's apartment. It wasn't just the immersion in dance, but also the support that came from relationships made in the studio: tap teachers-turned-mentors Yvonne Edwards and Myrna Sisen, the second home he found with fellow dancer Justin Lewis' family.

"On that first day when they told me about that tap program, there was a reason why I raised my head and said, 'Hey, I want to do it.' If it hadn't been for that day, I wouldn't be here today," Jackson says.

"Looking back on these years, I realize all the support I had and how many kids don't have parents who care for them and get them the support they need," he says. "If they have just one person to sit down with them and show how much they care, it's that much more

motivating to want to do better. That's why I wanted to put this program together."

Modes of Expression, that is: the program that touched Jose.

When Jackson arrived at Lafayette, he thought about forming a tap group, but instead, inspired by **Michael O'Neill**, he channeled his talent and passion for his art form into a mentoring program called Modes of Expression.

Jackson had a vision of bringing together the College's performing arts groups to do something that would open kids' minds and open doors for them by exposing them to the performing arts. He thought, "We're here because someone told us, You can tap, you can sing. Someone provided you with the opportunity to develop those skills to be where you are today. This is a good opportunity for us to step up. This gives us a way to help someone else realize what they're capable of."

He talked about it with a friend, **AJ Ernst '09**, who had mentored students at Shawnee Middle School. Ernst thought Shawnee's principal would welcome a new mentoring program with a performing arts component,

FEATURE

and Modes of Expression debuted in the spring of 2009 with heavy participation by members of WORDS (Writing Organization Reaching Dynamic Students), Dance Crew, and the College's a cappella groups. The daily program included an hour of homework help and an hour of arts-related mentoring for at-risk fifth-graders and sixth-graders.

Jackson developed Modes of Expression as an independent study with O'Neill, who was Jackson's adviser as the student created a customized, interdisciplinary major called performance studies. This year, Jackson continued the work in an internship with **Bonnie Winfield**, director of the Landis Community Outreach Center, and Modes of Expression became an established Landis Center program.

"I was thrilled when Treyvon told me he wanted to bring Lafayette students into the community to work with school kids on arts-related projects," says O'Neill, the director of theater and an associate professor of English. O'Neill first connected with Jackson in his Introduction to Theater course, where he learned that Jackson had studied with the tap dancer Savion Glover, the star and Tony Award-winning choreographer of *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk* on Broadway. "Like a physics student telling his professor he had studied with Einstein," O'Neill says.

"I've seen Treyvon tap—he's amazing, by the way—and as we talked, I kept visualizing him as a 10-year-old learning to tap, starting the process that got him here to continue the cycle," O'Neill says. "The fact that he wanted to help kids discover their potential through performance was exciting enough. The fact that Modes of Expression was modeled on his own experience learning tap as a kid made me believe in his dream as much as he did."

The program has been beneficial and the students blessed, says Gina Ambrusico-Lynn, who coordinates Modes of Expression at the Shawnee end. Her youngsters "feel that they are important to the college students and the community," she says. "They would like to grow up and do what the college students are doing, mentoring and helping others."

Elyse Schunkewitz '12 brought experience tutoring in Easton schools through other Landis Center programs to her work in Jackson's initiative. She misses Julio, with whom she bonded at Shawnee, since he moved back to his native Puerto Rico.

"It takes time to familiarize yourself with someone new, no matter what age you are. But Julio expected me and looked forward to my visiting him twice a week," she says, adding, "Seeing him actually helped me get through *my* week."



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Then there's Jose. A performer of a sort, he seemed to enjoy entertaining himself and disrupting his classmates with loud outbursts in defiance of his teacher. Jackson challenged Jose to change his behavior, and eventually Jose began taking responsibility for his actions.

A questionnaire Jackson later gave the students asked the youngsters to name influential people in their lives.

"Surprisingly, Jose wrote my name. I barely knew this kid for even two weeks! It was one of those moments. . . . For him to even consider putting my name on there—that made me feel good to know that I made that much of an impact on him in such a short time," Jackson says. "If all of these kids had an individual who cared about them, they would be so much more successful in what they want to do and have that much more confidence."

Stories like Jose's and Julio's fuel Jackson's motivation to ensure that Modes of Expression continues after he graduates in May. As for Jackson, after he completes the capstone semester of his performance studies major—which includes doing the choreography for College Theater's production of *As You Like It*—he'll join the currency operations department at Goldman Sachs. A member of Lafayette's first group of Posse students from Washington, he served internships at Goldman during the past two summers.

Goldman will be Jackson's next act, but it's not his ultimate goal, he says. "One of my greatest aspirations is to have my own talent agency. It's my number-one priority. I can use my future to fuse mentoring and arts together. Having that agency is a gateway to provide opportunities and resources for the kids." □

ALUMNI IN FOCUS

Tilger '94 is Honored



Shawn Tilger '94, senior vice president for business operations of the Philadelphia Flyers, is the recipient of a 2010 Forty Under 40 Award from Street & Smith's SportsBusiness Journal and SportsBusiness Daily. The annual awards honor promising young executives in the sports industry.

In his six seasons with the Flyers, Tilger has hosted externships for several Lafayette students. He is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organization's business operations, including marketing, broadcasting, communications, finance, budgeting, community relations, fan development, ticket sales, game presentation, customer service, new media, publicity, and merchandising.

A government and law major at Lafayette, he holds a master's degree in sports management from Springfield College. He previously served as Comcast-Spectacor's vice president for marketing and as a regional marketing manager for the Harlem Globetrotters. □

Return to the Lafayette Classroom this Summer

The Office of Alumni Affairs, in collaboration with the Office of the Provost, is proud to offer an Alumni Summer College for alumni, parents, and friends July 15-18.

Enjoy a three-day academic immersion on campus led by President **Daniel H. Weiss**; **Diane Cole Ahl**, Arthur J. '55 and Barbara S. Rothkopf Professor of Art History; **Jamila Bookwala**, associate professor of psychology; **David Brandes**, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering; **Dru Germanoski**, Dr. Ervin R. VanArtsdalen '35 Professor of Geology and Environmental Geosciences; and **Robert I. Weiner**, Thomas Roy and Lura Forrest Jones Professor of History.

Ten 90-minute course sessions will include "Art and Culture in the Age of the Crusades" and "Writing About the War in Vietnam" (Weiss), "Leonardo da Vinci: Beyond the Last Supper" and "From Boyz to Men: The Early Works of Michelangelo" (Ahl), "Successful Aging" and "Our Relationships, Our Health" (Bookwala), "River Form and Function and Their Ecological Impact" and "The World Water Crisis: New Challenges & Opportunities" (Brandes and Germanoski), and "The Nature and Impact of World War I" and "The Origins of World War II" (Weiner).

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Join alumni, parents, and friends on a spectacular journey to Italy's Amalfi Coast with President Daniel H. Weiss Sept. 22-30.

The itinerary includes Campania, "Italy's breadbasket"; three UNESCO World Heritage sites, Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Paestum; the World War II landing beach in Salerno; the Isle of Capri; the cliffside town of Positano, and much more.

Talks by Weiss will be among the highlights of the trip. He will speak on the legacy of Greece, Herculaneum and the beginnings of archaeology, and also discuss writing about war, citing case studies from World War II and Vietnam.

To learn more, visit www.lafayette.edu and select Alumni, then Alumni Travel Program. □