

# THE BOHEMIAN

## MK ASANTE

how to stay calm, keep cool, and roll with Maya Angelou

## ETHEREAL FASHION

designer Nolla Yuan lends us her secret garden of garments

## MOBTOWN MICROSHOWS

a return to personalized concerts

## REAL FOOD?

organic versus local: John Shields and local farms make the distinction

## PLUS:

Ed Schrader; oysters galore; the Union party promoters; the BSO on folklore



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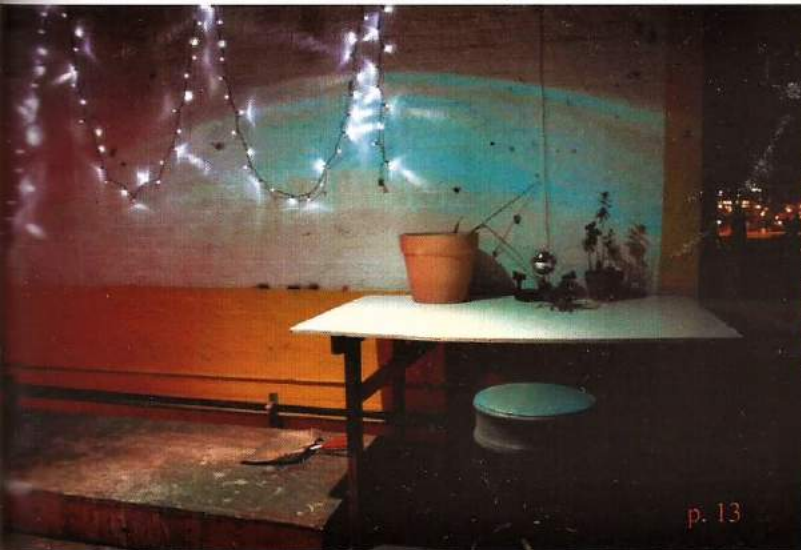






# THE BOHEMIAN

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# welcome [back] to the BOH

Baltimore exists in a state of perpetual flux. Contrast is the concrete beneath our feet: the pavement is composed of deprivation and renewal, creation and rediscovery, and the warring impulses to redefine while nurturing our history. Yet more often than not, these forces become magnetic.

We see it in ourselves—as a magazine and as residents of this city—and our pages attempt to make sense of the dichotomy.

What can constant change mean for a city of reinvention? Inherent in a city's existence is the constant flow of people and ideas, chipping away at what already exists and adding their own pieces, forming something entirely new as a result. The Reflection Eternal barbershop was opened by two men determined to bring art, culture, and intellect to Charles Street by way of a nontraditional venue (p. 16). To the founding members of the Ruintown warehouse, renewal meant giving themselves a voice before others moved in to fill the void (p. 32). The Union got its legs from

one visionary who saw Baltimore's potential for "hustling" through legal avenues (p. 25). Cover star MK Asante wears a new persona each day—professor, artist, author, speaker, and student are all titles he inhabits—and Mobtown Studios gives new meaning to the word "concert" (p. 12). Designer Nolla Yuan challenges the notion that fashion and creativity can't coexist (p. 19).

Each of these initiatives has been met with resistance; each has overcome opposition. As summer dawns and the long days lend light to exploration, we begin to see the payoff of persistence.

Now we bring to you stories of flesh against steel and brick against home, in hopes that you will continue to thrive. Make your own stories in a city that celebrates, appreciates, and calls for you. Keep creating—we won't be far behind.

With love,  
*Stephanie Delman*  
*Payal Patnaik*  
*Editors-in-Chief*

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# IN THE RAW:

## DON'T FEAR THIS

# FISH

Alexandra Byer  
dives for her dinner

MAMA'S ON THE HALF SHELL  
2901 O'DONNELL STREET  
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SALT TAVERN  
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TALARA  
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As that Baltimore humidity descends upon us, the cherry blossoms cover the trees, and our white flesh is once again revealed to the sun, we no longer crave the hearty stews and meats and potatoes that kept us warm all winter. Spring is here and with it comes light, fresh flavors. Most spring menus boast seasonal vegetables; green peas, asparagus, morel mushrooms, basil, and fresh berries.

But there is another type of cuisine that is perfect for spring and summer dining: fish. *Raw* fish. Maybe this doesn't conjure the most appetizing of images, but I'm talking sushi, oysters, and ceviche. Cool, fresh, light fish that pairs so perfectly with a warm night and an icy mojito or glass of white wine.

Baltimore has an abundance of sushi restaurants, each vying for top marks. But the most important thing about sushi is its quality, and it's worth bypassing your corner pan-Asian restaurant that serves bulgogi, sushi, and General Tso's chicken for high-grade fish. Sushi Hana (of both Baltimore and Towson) offers an impressive range of sushi in a clean, friendly environment.

Aside from the typical range of nigiri (a strip of raw fish over a rectangular bed of white rice), sushi and sashimi (just the raw fish), Sushi Hana has an extensive—even overwhelming—variety of sushi rolls. From the exotic, such as Oshinko (pickled radish roll) to the classics, like California roll, they serve it all. My favorite was the dragon roll. Though not actually raw, the fried roll was stuffed with rice, avocado, shrimp, and barbecued eel. Heavier than

most sushi dishes, the dragon roll balanced the lighter tuna and salmon nigiri well.

For a different environment and if you're entertaining a larger party, I highly recommend Asahi Sushi in Fell's Point. The décor and service may not be as nice as Sushi Hana, but the well-priced sushi comes on boats and the restaurant is BYOB.

I was raised on oysters, but being from the Northeast, the range of oysters I've tasted is limited. Usually they're from Massachusetts, Prince Edward Island, Maine, and maybe New York. Naturally, I jumped at trying the Virginia Chincoteague oysters at Mama's on the Half Shell in Canton—three of these and three Blue Point oysters from Long Island, NY. The Virginians were small, but had a burst of sweet, sea salty flavor. The Long Island oysters, though much larger, were also more disappointing—they were far too salty and required oversized dollops of cocktail sauce. To make sure I quelled my oyster craving, I also ordered a "blue on blue"—an oyster in four ounces of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer with cocktail sauce. A poor man's



oyster shooter. Though the oyster was quite bland, the drink was fun—a great combination of carbonation, spice, and bitterness. It probably paired better with fish and chips or fried clams, though.

Last on my Baltimore raw adventure was "ceviche" or "seviche" (a heated debate proved that both spellings are correct). First I went to the Salt Tavern, a highly acclaimed restaurant that specializes in new American cuisine. Simply put, the fluke and Meyer lemon ceviche blew my mind. The fluke—a type of flounder—was marinated in lemon and paired with red onion, aji Amarillo (a yellow chili pepper), jicama, red pepper, avocado, and boniato (sweet potato) chips. Served cold, the dish awakened my taste buds—the creamy avocado balanced out the chili pepper's heat, the crunchy chips added texture and lemon gave a bright freshness.

Coming off a ceviche high, I

was determined to try a restaurant that specializes in the food. This quest brought me to Talara, a raw bar in Harbor East. Here it is spelled "seviche" and it boasts a bar with five different raw fish choices and five different preparations. The curried tropical fruit seviche featured ahi tuna marinated lime and was served with onions, mango, and plantain chips.

While the mango complemented the robust lime flavor, the combination of scallion and red onion remained overwhelming. The fire and ice seviche with yellowtail came with habanero peppers and a prickly pear granita, all served in a compact spoon. Though the presentation was outstanding—the granita was a pink icy dollop atop the fish—the experience was less than. The granita melted quickly and wasn't enough to meld with the spiciness of the peppers. Instead of being hit with the heat first, and having the ice to cool your palate, the dish was backwards. Both seviches were good, but for less money and more satisfaction I would recommend Salt.

My gusty side now wants to try making these dishes on my own...but out of the fear of food-borne illness I may just leave it to the real chefs.



# M

**“IF YOU MAKE AN OBSERVATION, YOU HAVE AN OBLIGATION.”**

written by *Stephanie Delman*  
photographed by *Will Manning*

“Listen,” he says, turning the rim of his signature baseball cap to block the mid-spring sun, “It’s not like I go into the classroom each morning and think, ‘Oh man, I’ve got to be a role model today.’ That’s not how I feel at all.” But dozens of creative writing and film students at Morgan State, as well as his thousands of international readers, would admittedly beg to differ.

A handsome 29-year-old with bright smiles and kinetic energy, MK Asante looks more like a boyish young artist than a tenured professor. In fact, he’s both. His charm is certainly not the only force behind his success. The artist-of-all-trades has already lived on three continents, earned two degrees, produced three films—one with Maya Angelou as his co-star—published two books of poetry and one book of non-fiction, and headlined an international book tour. But, he tells me, he’s never been to Carma’s before.

“I don’t make it over here enough,” he sighs, referring to the lovely Charles

Village enclave where we’re meeting for lunch. It’s not for lack of getting out of the house. When he’s not working late into the night at his Bromo Seltzer (featured in *The Bohemian’s* March issue) studio or catching a few hours of sleep at home in Bolton Hill, Asante is travelling the world. Born in Zimbabwe, he credits his parents—originally from Brooklyn and Georgia—for instilling in him a restless, curious internal compass.

“It’s in my DNA; I’ve always wanted to see the world,” he says.

I point out that he’s made a considerable dent; London, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Harare (in Zimbabwe) are all cities he calls home. He laughs, shaking his head.

“I haven’t been anywhere yet. I want to see Asia, I want to move around—I can’t stay in one place for too long. Bob Marley said it well: ‘Home is where my head is.’”

Though Asante comes from an academic background—his parents are both professors at Temple University—he isn’t quick to forget his darker ancestral past. Asante’s

grandparents were sharecroppers and his father worked on a plantation until he was 12, “picking cotton and being spat on.” This motivates every step he takes.

“My ancestors were slaves, in chains; they worked for 400 years and didn’t get paid. I feel like I have to go hard for them, too,” he says.

I ask about Asante’s other heroes. With such a variety of passions, it would seem difficult for him to pinpoint relevant models—not so, he says. At the top of his list is Paul Robeson, a slave-born African American football champion, concert singer, and actor who was perhaps best known for his

political activism. Another mentor is Native American writer, poet, and filmmaker Sherman Alexie, whom he met at an event in college.

“Most artists think you have to choose just one thing. Meeting [Alexie] was like a wake-up call—he was doing all these things, speaking the language of the arts, and doing an excellent job at all of them.”

Asante says that one of the most rewarding moments of his professional career was

**“You’ve got to know how to speak every language. Everything has its own language—art, poetry, marketing, film, everything.”**



# meet your next professor

**MK Asante:** Filmmaker, poet, professor, world traveler. And he's only 29.

he was compared to Alexie. A member of the juvenile council in Olympia, Washington thanked Asante for his work and told him, "I give your books and [Alexie's] books to kids who hate reading."

That's Asante's highest ambition, no matter the art form—he wants to inspire those who wouldn't otherwise have access.

"It's always been important to me to reach across cultures. I don't just want college kids reading my stuff; I want it to be available to everyone, to those who never thought reading could be fun," he says.

Part of this goal stems from Asante's own experiences as a young student. He was far from inspired, kicked out of private school by the time he was 12 and shuffled through public schools with a record of disruption and violence. He was "the class clown—not the scholar," challenging his teachers and never considering education past high school. Then, when he was 16, he took a creative writing class. His teacher told him that he could write whatever he wanted—literally.

"I tested her at first, you know, just writing curse words. But she took it seriously. She said 'Good; what else can you show me?' No one had ever told me that I had that kind of freedom before," he says.

By the time he got to college, he already had a manuscript burning a hole in his backpack. He was upfront with his professors from the beginning, he says, and that allowed him a certain degree of autonomy.

After his sophomore year, when his first book of poetry was published, he knew he would no longer have a traditional education. He was constantly travelling—first to promote, then to make films—and he often had to miss whole weeks or months of class.

"At the end of the day I've got to put my creative stuff first. A degree is not really anything if it's not deeply connected to where I want to go," he says. "If I have the opportunity to go to Jamaica and work on a film, I'll take it. Sorry professor, I'm not going to make it to class—it's as simple as that."

I ask if this has any bearing on his relationship with his own students now that he's on the other side of the desk. Is he as lenient with them as professors were with him?

"Sure—as long as they're really serious

about it. Some kids come to me and say, 'I really want to do this music thing.' I tell them that if they drop out of school to do music, they better go really hard. They better be ready to make five songs each day," he says. "It's harder to be your own boss than it is to be a student."

Asante often speaks to the idea of being one's own guide, one's own supervisor. He credits this to his work "in the field," where he's learned more, he says, than he can learn in any classroom.

"When I'm out making a film, the people I interview are my professors. If I'm out [in Baltimore], the arts scene is my teacher."

How can he navigate the different worlds so smoothly—how can he film in Zimbabwe one day and show up at an urban poetry slam the next day? It's all about fluency, he says.

"You've got to know how to speak every language. Everything has its own language—art, poetry, marketing, film, everything."

Is he multilingual, I ask: has he learned every language?

"No, man," he shakes his head. "I've got so much more to learn. If this were a basketball game, I'd only be in the warm ups. The game hasn't even begun."

As we finish lunch and mosey down the street, I ask him what's next on the agenda. He hesitates for a moment and says he never discusses work-in-progress. Then he tells me anyway.

"I'm working on a memoir. Right now it's called *Buck*, but that

might change. Oh, and a narrative feature film based on the book." These are due out in the next year, he tells me.

Is he concerned about being overly ambitious? Not even for a minute.

"I look at guys like Woody Allen and Spike Lee, they produce incredible amounts of work each year. Those guys are my heroes. Next to them, I'm hardly doing anything at all."









# CHATTER with ED SCHRADER:

the “hard-art-rocker” talks Bowie, Wham City, and the *smelliest* job he ever had

told by Sarah Grant

If you ride the JHMI shuttle enough, you are bound to bump into Ed Schrader. If Baltimore were Hollywood, this would be like bumping into Diana Ross, with all the shock, wonder, admiration and fear that accompany it.

Ed Schrader has a charm and a brilliance that is equally hard to place and impossible to mistake. The electric-eyed pop star is a member of the Baltimore arts collective, Wham City. Over the last several years, he has hosted his own talk show, written columns for *The Sun's* offshoot, the *b Weekly*, and performed as a one-man drum show-cum-firing squad, with hilariously batshit songs like, “Beautiful Transvestite in the Rain,” “Teenagers,” and “I Get Fucked for the Fuck of It.”

*Ed Schrader's Music Beat* features the same bare-chested drummer, now accompanied by bassist Devlin Rice, formerly of the Nuclear Power Pants. The addition of Rice's thundering bass has revitalized Schrader's token military-style syncopation. Songs that Schrader has played solo like, “I Think I'm a Ghost,” sound faster and fleshier than ever. Rice, who may be the friendliest person living in Baltimore, plays with the ferocity Iron Maiden's Steve Harris and with the subtlety of Pixies' Kim Deal. The loud-quiet-loud bass lines add layers to Schrader's shrieks, moans and eerie crowdchants (“Drive me crazy, drive me crazy, you amaze me.”) The duo has a knack for pairing back-to-basics rock with avant-garde flourishes, like on the hieroglyphic head-banger, “Egypt.” The wild reception of this new material, coupled with the simultaneous popularity of fellow rockers Dope Body and Weekends, may signal an emerging wave of hard-art-rock in Baltimore.

By day, Rice is a barista at Hampden's haute-coffee lab, Spro. He explains, “[Ed and I] had met in 2005 briefly, but it wasn't until the 2008 Round Robin Tour in Philly that we hung out...Ed needed coffee and I wanted to get a sandwich. We stopped by an Italian bakery and Ed got cookies and coffee, I ate a cheesesteak and we shot the breeze and this thief got chased down. Then

he moved into the house we live in, in 2010, and that's when shit got real.”

Indeed, shit got real when Baltimore's favorite moonage daydreamer, Ed Schrader, talked to *THE BOHEMIAN* for this month's **Chatter**:

## How did you wind up in Baltimore?

Ed: I ended up here because Allan Mozec, the guitarist from Twin Stumps, convinced me to get the hell out of Rochester, New York. Wham City, who I initially met at SUNY Purchase in my one semester, were doing great things in Baltimore, and it was cheap and way cooler than NYC. I met Wham City because they felt bad for me—Dina Kelberman and Dan Deacon, a couple at the time!—in the cafeteria at Purchase and asked if I wanted someone to sit with them. Now I can't get rid of 'em! I was too normal for the weird kids and too weird for the normal kids. That is how you end up in Wham City.

**You seem to move into different personas through various projects: solo drumming, Jack Benny-style talk show, David Bowie standup, and probably others that I don't know about.**

Ed: Well, in elementary school, deciding you wanted to be a new man every day was an issue that put me in detention quite often. But in art this works, especially in a day and age where people are fickle and the landscape changes so fucking quick. It's like we are riding a disintegrating potato chip into the devil's ass and no one remembers you unless you bang Donald Trump. I need to be in a constant state of flux because that is how I essentially, avoid dealing with the solidification of any one thing. I hate commitment, unless it is with my cats or my girlfriend, who is amazing.

**If Bowie were spending the day in Baltimore, what would you do with him?**

Ed: If Bowie were spending a day in

Baltimore what would I do (ooh behave!). All jokes on the side, I would like to just get a cup of coffee and talk about people stuff, like a *Seinfeld* episode. Take a nice walk around the Inner Harbor, and perhaps ride the ducks. I would also make him spaghetti.

## What song do you most enjoy playing live?

Ed: “Candle in the Wind,” because I love Princess Diana! No, in all earnestness, “Air Show,” because you get a moment with the audience where it is like you are two naked lovers on the precipice of discovery: a journey of flesh, if you will.

**There is a sense of abandon in your lyrics. It makes the music refreshing—like “Egypt” and “I can't stop eating sugar” and “Gas Station Attendant.” Where did these songs come from?**

Ed: The songs are like a philosophy class where you are secretly playing Tetris and catching occasional grains of thought, but riding the patterns and physical movement of play. I do not ever sit down with intentions. I put my pen down to paper and follow it. I don't force it to stop at Panera Bread. The driver is the soul and it spaces out and forgets that you have to pee once in a while. It is just the gut. And the gut is a mad man in a room full of auctioneers.

**How are Matmos contributing to the album?**

Ed: They are playing on four tracks, adding instrumental flourishes, using their usual unorthodox approach that drew us to them. We gave them all the tracks and pretty much said, if you are feeling something lay it down. The results are exciting, I can't wait to share them with you all! I did not want to stand over their shoulders, because how could I possibly know what to say to those guys, they are sages and I am a fucking dishwasher with a drum and a \$20 reverb pedal.



**What is the scariest thing that has ever happened to you in Baltimore?**

Ed: A man was shot and killed about 10 feet from me in Charles Village, while I was in bed. I had woken up from a scary dream where I just felt the presence of evil, and 10 seconds later, three rounds shot. They found a man dead in his car right behind our house at the time. It still affects me now and then. All I can think is, well that was a guy who liked a specific type of cereal, he hugged people, and enjoyed ice cream at some points, he had best friends, and favorite shows, and now the dopes in the back room just view him as a statistic that scares rich moms and dads who are thinking about sending their kid to Hopkins. **THAT IS THE REAL TRAGEDY:** it's so goddamn impersonal. The working class never get an epitaph, not the same way the rich do.

**What is the strangest job you have ever had?**

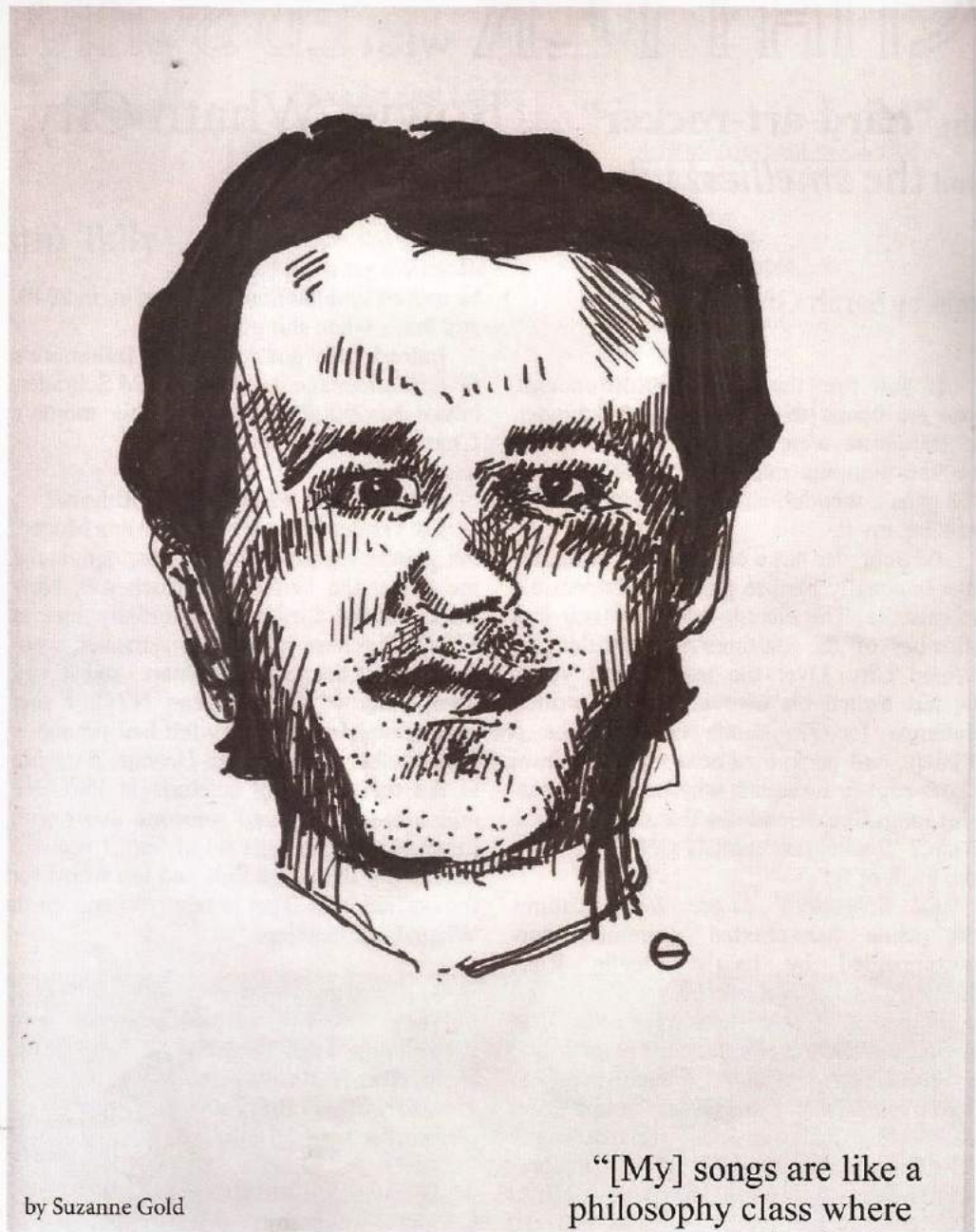
Ed: I cleaned dumpsters for McDonalds. I would get dropped off somewhere in east bum fuck New York, given a power hose, a meal voucher and four hours—it only took an hour—then I would smoke cigarettes and listen to REM on my walkman. All MICA kids should have to do this when they study abroad.

**What is your favorite thing about Baltimore?**

Ed: My favorite thing about Baltimore is its “why the fuck not” spirit. It's like “Ya got a weird idea? Okay, let's see it!” My favorite place to go is Lexington Market. Getting a big lemonade and a Thanksgiving dinner for \$5 is so awesome! I also love The Mount Royal Tavern. That is a pro's bar.

**Jimmy Joe Roche spoke on a panel a few weeks ago, and he said, “I just learned today how many of my friends are actually on food stamps.” There are a lot of similar stories from other Baltimore bands. Do you have any advice for other freelance artists supporting themselves?**

Ed: I wash dishes, keep my nose down, stay out of trouble, try not to destroy my health, and just be a decent person. My advice is to not be ashamed of washing dishes or mopping floors. Be proud, you are fighting the good fight. So much can be learned from the simple action of finishing a job. Be nice and don't be a jerk.



by Suzanne Gold

“[My] songs are like a philosophy class where you are secretly playing Tetris and catching occasional grains of thought, but riding the patterns and physical movement of play.”





## Real Food: Baltimore

On any given day, sitting at Gertrude's to eat a tasty fare of chicken salad wrap, vegetable crab soup, and a berry salad would take no time at all. But, on a beautiful Sunday in April, seated in front of *John Shields*, head chef and owner of the restaurant located in the Baltimore Museum of Art, one can't help but devour everything he has to say about being raised in his grandmother Gertie Cleary's kitchen to the future of Baltimore agriculture.

Shields, more than just a Baltimore native and lover of Chesapeake

cuisine, is a nationally acclaimed Baltimore food historian excited to see the city beginning to reclaim its roots and eat more local, seasonal food just like Cleary did when he was growing up.

"My grandmother, I guess, just like everybody else back then was a locavore. Two doors down was this German grocer, Mr. Krumholtz. Out in Mr. Krumholtz's yard they had chickens running around."

Shields beamed as he waxed on nostalgically, "We had farmer's markets that really weren't called farmer's markets. They were just

*reported by* Briana Last  
*photographed by* Clare Richardson





the municipal markets...everything was from around here."

But, Shields is no stranger to the vast changes that Baltimore, like the rest of the country, began noticing in the 1960s, when industrial food became prevalent. As the nation witnessed local food economies crash and factory farms rise in the 1970s, Shields found himself in Berkeley at the heart of the American Food Revolution among prolific figures like Alice Waters and Jeremiah Tower. Inspired by the movement, he traveled back to Baltimore to reinvigorate Chesapeake Bay cuisine, or as a plain-spoken woman from one of his many anecdotes noted, "We don't have a cuisine here. It's just the way we cook."

Shields will be the first to admit that what brought him back to his hometown isn't the only thing that's keeping him here: "A lot of my focus has changed over the years. I think I'm a lot more politically involved. From a nutritional stand point, I'm more involved."

Shields is working on a new book he'll call *The Chesapeake Kitchen* which explores the way humans traditionally ate plant based diets that were both seasonal and local.

Shields is hopeful of a shift in Baltimore back to this way of eating and producing food: "People are going back into farming who were going to let farms go and they're finding that with a lot less work and growing high value crops, meaning stuff we'll buy at the farmer's market. They can stay in business, and most of them thought they were going to have to leave the land. So, it's a remarkable thing."

The Baltimore food historian certainly practices what he preaches. The Very Berry Salad I munched on, one of his personal recommendations, is sourced almost entirely locally: lettuce from The Chesapeake Green House; goat cheese from Cherry Glenn farm; and pistachio nuts from Baltimore's favorite Jeppi, which has been around since 1884. In a couple of weeks, the berries will start to be harvested in Maryland, making the dish entirely local.

And Shields isn't the only chef who's beginning to use ingredients from around the area. A variety of kitchens in the city are reforming their once nationalized fare to more unique recipes that harkens back to a time when Baltimore ate what Baltimore produced. Ranging from the high-end entrees gracing the menus of Black Olive and The Chameleon to the soul-food centerpieces at eateries like Blacksauce

Kitchen, whose mobile food business serving their signature biscuits have made them a household name, Baltimore kitchens are changing.

These passionate food lovers and creators have one thing in common: they've start feeding Baltimore what it's already making. Damian Mosley, a Baltimore transplant and co-founder/head chef of Blacksauce Kitchen explains his mission to make food genuine. He was at first reticent to place exactly how to define genuine, "There are all sorts of ways that food can be genuine. I don't know if I want to get into how to evaluate it. It's dicey."

For Mosley, genuine food falls into the category of pornography—you know it when you see it, but you really can't say what it is. But, he still has guidelines: "I will say that often I feel a meal is most genuine when some or all of it is made in view of the folks who are going to eat it. This isn't a requirement, but it's my favorite kind of food."

He goes on, "When the process is out in the open, and when there's some interface between cook and eater, that's a huge part of what makes the food genuine. We've tried to incorporate that into Blacksauce at every opportunity."

The dedication to making Baltimoreans more connected to their food is coming from all ends of the spectrum. It's not the chefs who are passionate about gastronomy, but the farmers, the food advocates, and the city's public health officials.

Initiatives big and small have been sprouting all over the city in just the past couple of years. In January 2010, a dozen neighbors in Hampden got together and called themselves the Baltimore Free Farm.

The group, with the help of some non-profit organizations such as Fusion and an Adopt-A-Lease from the city, turned an abandoned, trash-strewn plot of land into a flourishing garden on Ash Street. Its next initiative, which is in the midst of being completed, is to install a fresh aquaculture system in the Baltimore Free Farm Warehouse across the street from the garden.

The volunteers' goals have multiplied since the initial success of their community garden, whose crops are sold to local restaurants such as the nearby gourmet eatery, Woodberry Kitchen. According the farm's website, "Baltimore Free Farm's scope has expanded from community gardening to the broader issue of local sustainability."

They've certainly been doing their part. The farmers are in the works of starting worm composting, growing mushrooms, and raising chickens in the fenced back-

yard. They're also looking forward to engaging in more education initiatives, like spreading the word about their cause and pursuing community-oriented projects.

Mike Garbinski, a member of the core group, is hopeful that the Baltimore Free Farm will serve as an antidote to some of the pressing issues facing Baltimore city: "A lot of the problems in the education system stem from the food we eat. Instead of a corner store on every block, I want see a community garden on every block... it's been proven that the big box stores aren't working anymore."

But, he admits, changes will have to start small: "Our goal is to promote sustainable living and autonomous lifestyles. Smaller economic scales can work fine."

And the way to start small, according to Garbinski is through community initiatives. "It's not a Baltimore thing. The city can't take care of itself in that way. It's Hampden, Hamilton...they need to help themselves and then they can come together and make the city what it needs to be," he said.

Real Food Farm is another perfect example of an urban agricultural project that not only works to help feed Baltimore, but to also educate the city. The project started in October 2009 out of a Food Policy Task Force, taking over underutilized land in Baltimore's northeast neighborhood of Clifton Park. The group, along with the aid of various organizations installed three hoop houses on its six-acre plot adjacent to Reach Middle High School and Heritage High School. Since then, the farm has developed seven hoop houses and hopes to grow to 15 in the near future.

Real Food Farm has a list of honorable initiatives it tries to adhere to, but one of its most ambitious goals is to ensure that its food is being circulated in the community where it is centered. The farm's goal is to sell 60 percent of its produce in the neighborhood and 40 percent to higher end institutions and restaurants. The 40 percent is essentially meant to subsidize the costs of cheaply selling its products to local residents.

The farm's philosophy is also strongly rooted in education, as it has four main programs that serve to inform the community of its efforts. Real Food has a high school internship, in which students are paid to work after school to learn math, science, agriculture, and horticulture skills on the farm. A Farm Club of students meets weekly at the plot, and the farm also invites local schools to do field trips and explore harvesting. The people at Real Food also go into the schools and lead Farm Labs in which they work with environmental science classes and teach

"There are all sorts of ways that food can be genuine...it's dicey."

— Damian Mosley,  
Blacksauce Kitchen



about agriculture.

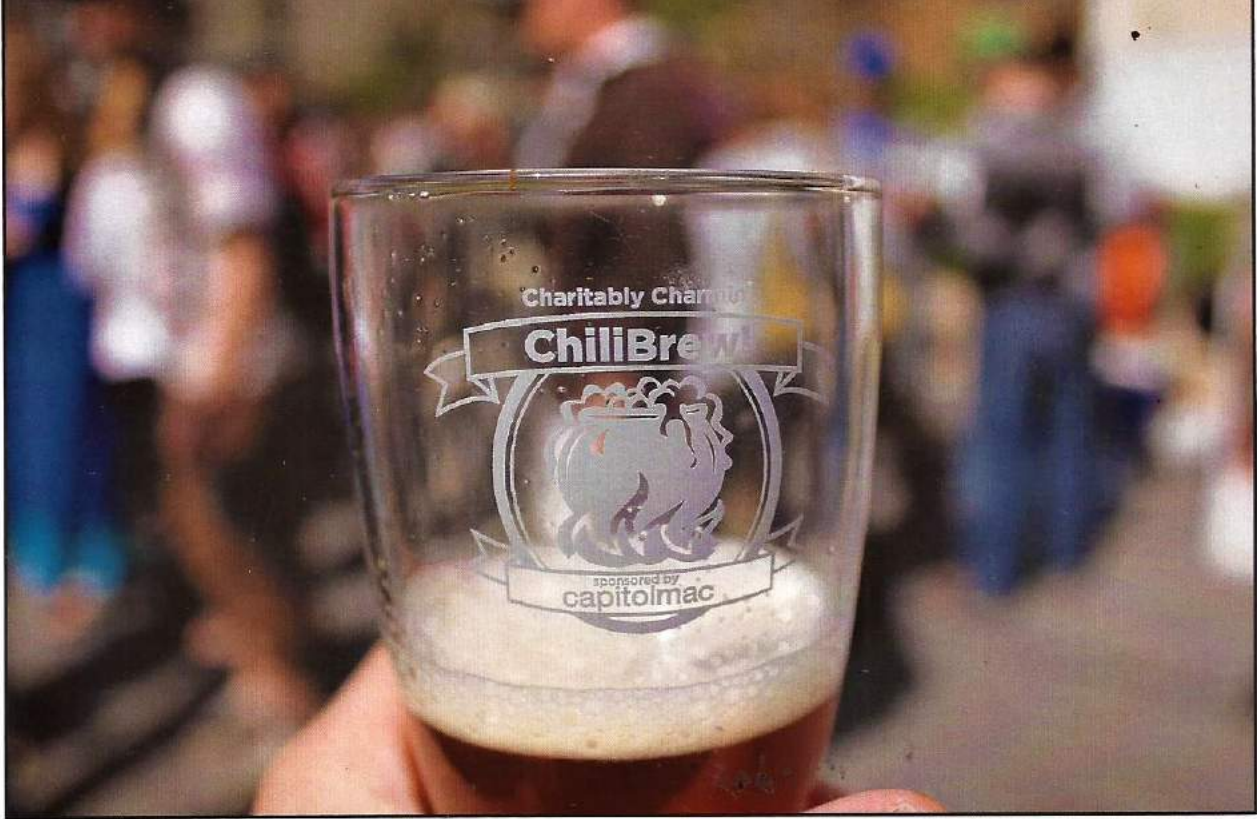
The farm also recently just bought an Old Washington Park Delivery truck for their soon-to-be mobile food business. The organization's home delivery system is as thriving as ever. Its Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, where people can buy a share before growing season as an advance for a scheduled delivery of the farm's produce to a central location, is continually expanding.

Maya Kosok, Community Outreach Coordinator for Real Food Farm recounted even more innovative projects the organization is looking forward to working on in the future. She's invigorated by the changes they've already made: "Baltimore is doing a lot of amazing things...the approach we've taken is that both the gourmet side and feeding Baltimore are important. We can't help employ people if we can't make ends meet. But, we still want to make food accessible to the people who can't afford gourmet."

Indeed, for the people that can't afford gourmet food, options are limited. Baltimore City's classification as a food desert signifies its inability to provide fresh, healthy food to its citizens who are suffering from poor diets, and as a result, contributes to the ever-rising obesity and heart disease rates.

Baltimore Free Farm and Real Food Farm's intentions are more than admirable. But, for overworked single parents with children to care for and gas bills to pay, devoting time and money to purchasing and cooking local food may not be a viable option.

Even with initiatives that attempt to cut the cost and time of transportation like Baltimarket, a virtual market where residents can order their food and pick it up at their local libraries and schools, the convenience and cheapness of buying fast food allows the city's old system to prevail.



Baltimore Free Farm hosted a local beer tasting at an Ash Street festival in Hampden.

Joan Norman, of the husband-wife duo that own the largest vegetable farm in Maryland, One Straw Farm, had a lot to say to all idealists. For one, she notes, that the people who buy from One Straw are often of a different ilk than Baltimore inhabitants, through no fault of their own: "My customers, all of them, are very well-educated and they vote...my customers typically eat dinner together at night. It's a project for them."

Making dinner a project every night just isn't the cards for most city inhabitants. Norman's solution: "We haven't made food important in our society. If rich people eat vegetables and eat healthy, then the poor people will want to as well. I want to create a demand for it—then it'll all trickle down."

These ideas may at first seem jaded coming from someone dedicated to the idea of organic, local food initiatives. But Norman and her husband, who have worked on the farm for 27 years, have seen the remarkable changes that grew from increased demand by more educated customers seeking to make better choices for their families.

She remarked, "I think

people are finally becoming enlightened. I don't think it's a trend. And I can't put a limit on what comes next."

Shields, who often buys produce from One Straw Farm, made similar remarks about the future of Baltimore agriculture. When asked whether he thought the local food movement could feed Baltimore, he responded without hesitation, "No."

He explained, "Not right now it can't. The only thing we can hope for, as in any movement, is that we hope that it grows. And you cheerlead, and you bring friends who haven't been there and get them involved or excited. That's the only way it'll happen."





How small can you go?

# introducing the "MICROSHOW"

written by *Barbara Lam*  
photographed by *Shanna Edberg*

Concerts can be sloppy affairs with sticky floors, sweaty backs, and blasted ears. Dudes in the back are texting and smoking, and those in the front are performing some rendition of band worship, their hands and hair in the air. At the other end of the spectrum are mellow gigs, casual café acoustic shows, and symphonies.

The Mobtown microshow falls into none of these categories. It borrows from all—the intimacy of an open mic, the palpable fun of basement grunge, the professionalism of chamber—and blends the three together into a refreshing house concert. No one is updating their status and no one is yelling into their phone, holding it up as they leave a bet-you-wish-you-were-here message on their friend's voicemail. This concert is a room of 20 fans lounging on the floor, sipping beers, and listening to a local

favorite.

The free microshow series began in 2008, bringing one band per month into Mobtown Studio's 1000-square-foot Charles Village rowhouse. The studio website describes the birth of the microshow as the result of "our experimental socioaudiologists [spending] many months honing a revolutionary technique of live musical brewery."

"Well," Mat Leffler-Schulman clarified, "Emily came up with this idea..." He's quick to acknowledge Emily Leffler-Schulman, who owns and operates the recording studio with him, as the inspiration behind the project, calling her the curator of the series. While she takes charge of the "socio" realm, Mat is an audiologist of the purest kind, well versed in the science of sound. He was trained at Middle Tennessee State University's music recording program before he went on to work for Warner Bros. Records. In 2006 he moved from Washington D.C. to Baltimore, where the music scene welcomed

his well-rounded background of mixing, producing, and musicianship (he's a drummer) with open arms. Mat's mix mastery, which has steadily grown in popularity among local artists, reaches beyond adjusting levels on a board into a happy exploration of wave manipulation. He frequently experiments with unique instruments, and has miked everything from an organ to his telephone to his air vents. At the end of one album he produced, there's a cameo recording of a man singing outside while barbecuing in the middle of North Charles. Whimsy, reinvented.

The microshows originated from Mat and Emily's virtuous dedication to attending concerts. "We go to shows a lot and see the same bands all the time doing the same show. There were bands we were liking and wanted to see in a different environment, a more intimate environment," Matt explained. So he and Emily did what every fan wants to do—they asked bands to come home with them.

everyone from Weekends to Rapdragons to Celebration. The concept is simple: they identify bands they like, call them, and ask them to come in and play a live show. Mobtown can promise a cozy space, an attentive audience and a free professional recording mixed and produced by Mat, who later uploads an album's worth of tracks to the studio website. The only requirement is that the bands cover a Baltimore song.

"When I was in Nashville, bands would constantly cover their friend's band's song just out of love for the band, love of the song," Mat said. "So I kind of want to continue that Nashville tradition. It could be anything from a band covering a Philip Glass song to a band covering Wye Oak song."

The most recent show in early April was headlined by Lo Moda, a band that describes themselves as "drop-out soul" from the depths of Baltimore. Sitting on top of the faded giraffe print carpet in the tiny space that is Mobtown Studios, Raili Haimila is on viola, Gillian Stewart Quinn is on keyboard (she also breaks out the occasional melodica and handclap), Jeff McGrath is on bass (actually a violin), Christian Sturgis is on guitar, Scott Braid is on percussion, and Peter Quinn (of Creative Capitalism fame) supplies a lonesome drone marked with yelps of *Yowza* and *Who!* that are executed with measured breathiness.

Artists are happy to play for Mobtown, taking advantage of the microenvironment to experiment with their sound. "Bands would just kind of evolve and change things for the microshow," Mat explained. "Because it's a small space, it's very intimate, the crowd's right there, and [the audience is] responding to people playing. It started out just people playing very square and kind of evolved into bands changing things up." The performances aren't polished. That's not what the audience of 20 came to hear. They came for the smiles thrown between Peter and Gillian, Raili's impromptu jokes and the meet-the-band intermission when everyone crowds into the back room and perches on the couch opposite Mat's station behind the mixing board.

"People like seeing a band right there," Mat said. "They like seeing the spit coming out of their mouth, you know? They love that."

The microshow hasn't changed much over the years. It's a simple concept, and expanding—Mat and Emily toyed with the idea of a macroshow for a while—would take away from the effective minimalism. The concert celebrates intimacy and is a Smalltimorean showcase of fans and musicians overlapping in a nicely crocheted way. People come to the Mobtown microshow to see friends, make friends and listen to music, knees touching and toes tapping against Raili's viola case.





# Interiors

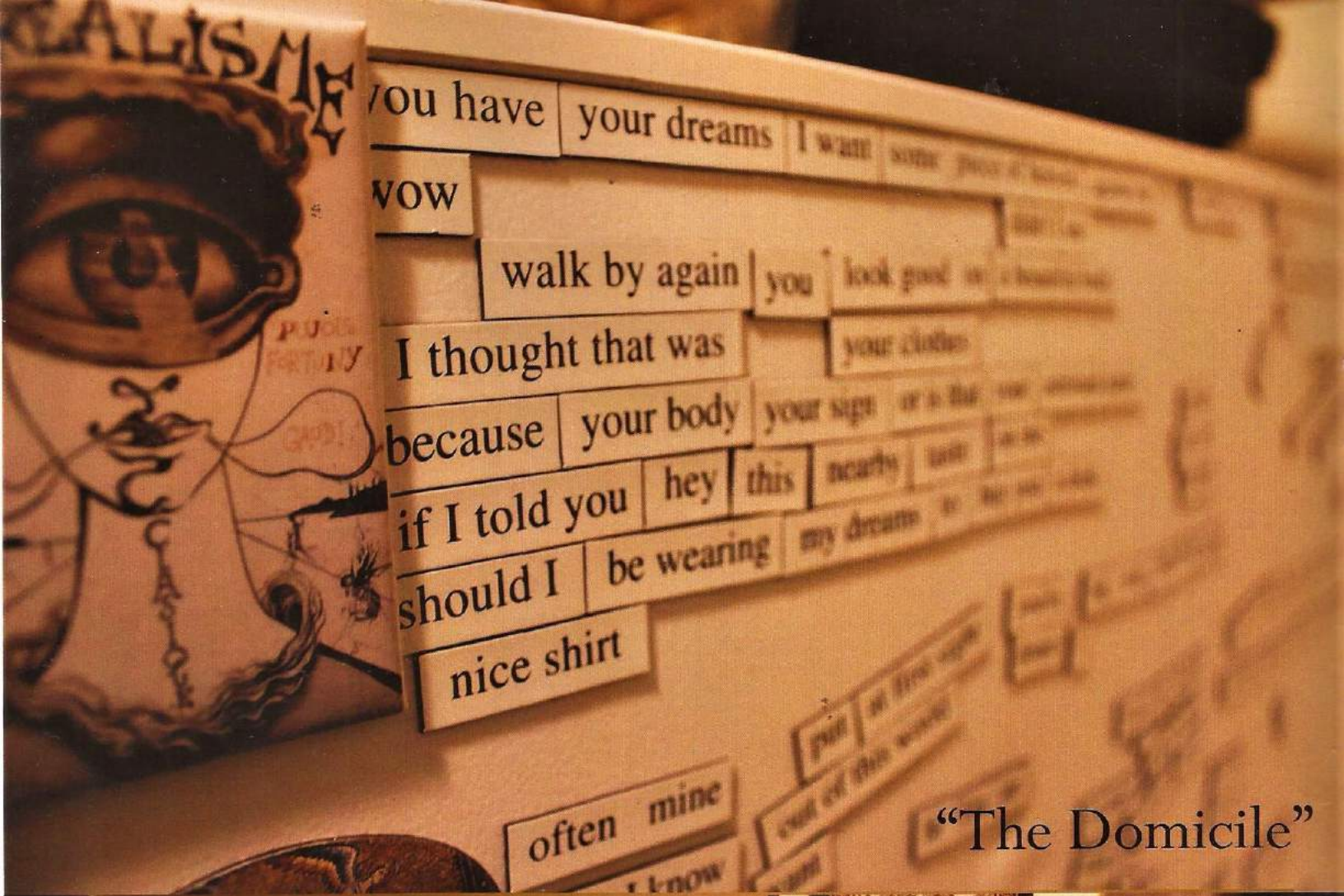
Appreciated & photographed by  
*Suzanne Gold*  
with contributions by  
Clare Richardson  
Remy Patrizio

PENTHOUSE OF THE COPYCAT BUILDING



details of our living spaces



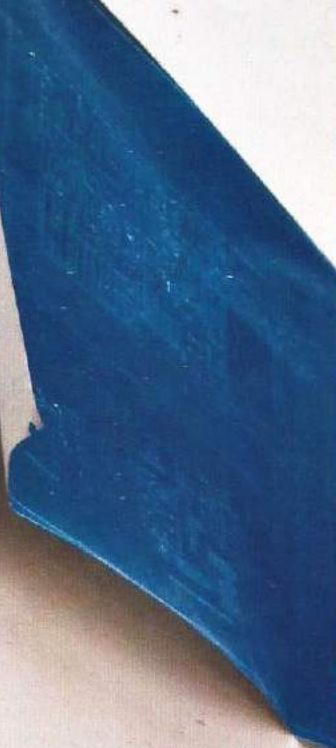
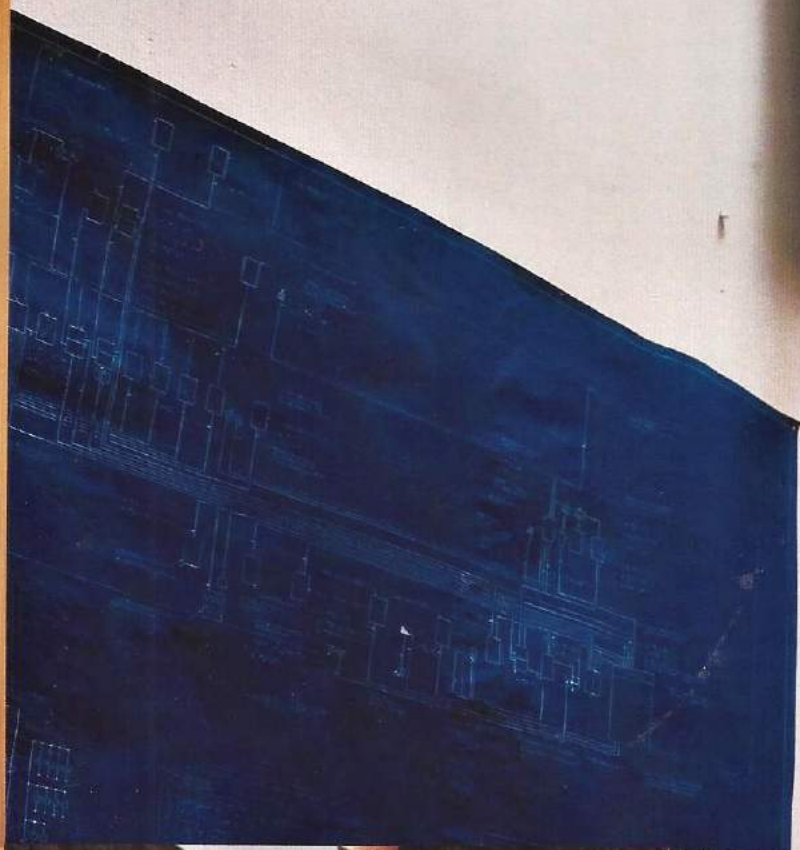


“The Domicile”





# Guilford Avenue





around the block:

## Taking a deeper look at *Reflection Eternal*

Two barbers use their shop to create an artistic hub of information

reported by Blake Edwards

photographed by Daniel Litwin



Despite Baltimore's eclectic mix of neighborhoods and residents throughout its history, barbershops have become a cultural institution with an inherent appeal to Baltimoreans.

Residents who seek entertainment often flock to city art museums and theaters—or sometimes even The Block—as the city springs new venues for artistic capital and cultural relevance.

And nestled between the 24th and 25th blocks of North Charles Street is **Reflection Eternal**, a barbershop and natural hair salon driven by an artist spirit that has inspired an unlikely pair of proprietors.

Owners Andwele Ra and Sundiata Osagie have taken their craft and created a versatile venue. It is distinctly Baltimore, as a model in which artistic space and related endeavors can locally excel in non-traditional places.

Outside, the shop sign reads “Reflection Eternal: Taking a deeper look at self.” Inside, the barbershop's walls are lined with images of people that Ra and Osagie respect and admire: Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Books and magazines, everywhere in the store though generally sectioned off to “The Wall of Knowledge,” are regularly the subject of healthy conversation or heated debate. Amongst the African statues and old hip hop stars regaling the shop from their walls, the rhythm of music playing in the background effortlessly accompanies the steady melody of clippers working, only interrupted by the chorus of laughter.

“Everything here is intentional. The music, the atmosphere, the location. This is the heart of Baltimore. East meets west. It is the city's meridian—an energy center,” Osagie says.

“People gravitate here for knowledge. For information. It's a place to feel at peace. Relationships are developed here, with everyone in the shop.”

Reflection Eternal was born in 1997 when Ra was cutting his hair in one mirror and using another mirror to cut the back.

“As I looked at the back mirror from the front mirror, I saw the reflections continually bouncing off of one another. I saw the images in the mirror that got smaller and smaller. The reflection was eternal. It



went deep," Ra explains.

"It essentially reinforced a concept of how people always focused on the outside. No one is ever really looking in themselves."

Thus began Ra's search for a partnership the next few years.

"It was very important to team with someone who understood that this would be a different kind of shop—a shop that focuses on things of substance. Culture. Information. Spirituality."

In 2002, Ra found a partner in Osagie and their plans started falling into place. They already had a growing college student base and clientele when Ra saw a sign on North Charles Street advertising space. They pooled together their money and bought the place.

"We had an idea of being quality barbers and a shop atmosphere in mind," Ra says.

The duo decided to set up a limited liability company (LLC), and settled on Osagie's idea of "Team Wise."

"A lot exists in team. We saw the power of unity. All names must have a purpose," he says.

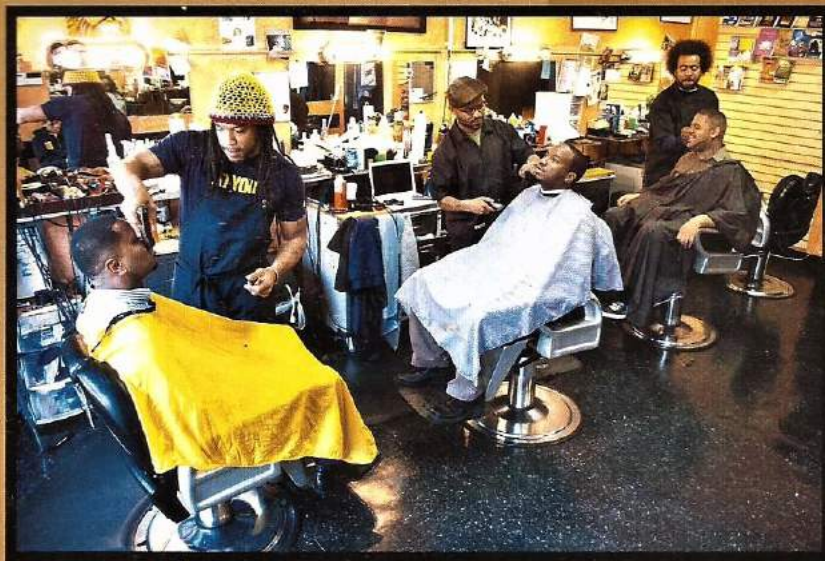
Today, Reflection Eternal's purpose is deeply rooted in community building. Although the business got its start from nearby college students making the trip from their campuses, seeking a haven of sorts within the shop's confines, a diverse client base expanded largely due to word of mouth.

"People come here from all over the world," Ra says, referring to both to the racial and neighborhood mixes.

While the old institutional guard provides the arts with a much needed face, new entities are springing up that provide the city's artistic body with a pulse as ideas, entertainment, and information circulate around the city.

The model that Ra and Osagie employ in Reflection Eternal is one that institutions not traditionally associated as artistic venues can effectively employ to grow accessibility to the arts.

Both Osagie and Ra emphasize



and embody that a sustainable artistic commodity is not an existence that avails itself to those who can afford to enjoy it, but engrains itself in the livelihoods of everyone.

Reflection Eternal represents its namesake well: everything becomes art because in everything, there is art.

"We want to continue being role models. We want to continue providing internships for city

students," Osagie says.

"We want to see the continued growth of the business community. We want to be a model for Baltimore City. We want people to feel renewed when they leave."

"It is the city's meridian—  
an energy center."

— Sundiata Osagie,  
owner of Reflection Eternal

Reflection Eternal is located at 2440 N. Charles St.





# Cinderella, five ways: The BSO revolutionizes folklore

by Amanda Boyle

by NANCY HOFFMAN

Folktales evolve in endless permutations, and the differences from one version to the next speak worlds about the variety of human experience. These legends are some of the first stories we hear and we carry them with us, so a successful reinterpretation must pinpoint something new and essential about the world we live in right now.

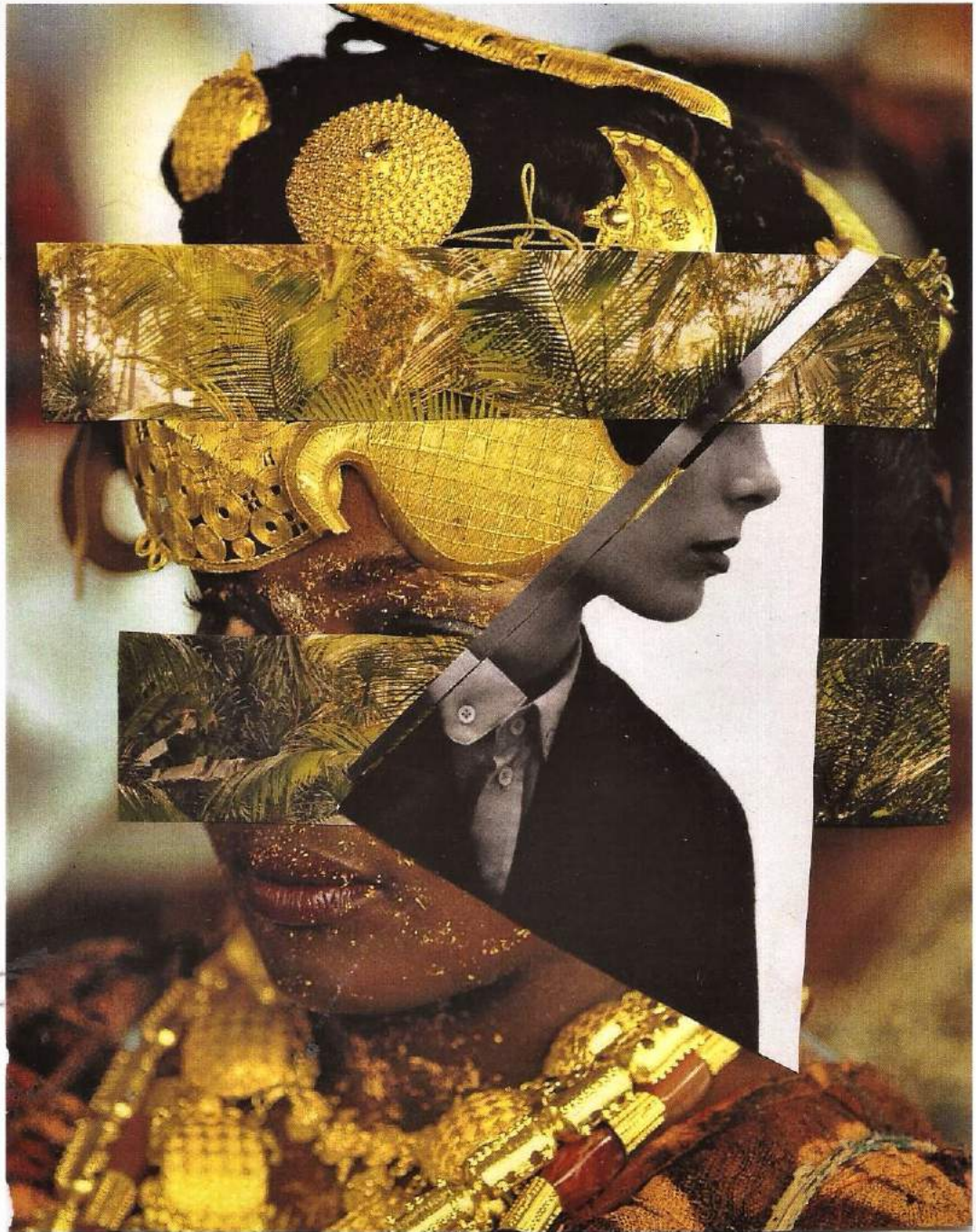
The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra recently collaborated with four young writers to perform a new interpretation of the story of Cinderella. The orchestra played selections from Prokofiev's *Cinderella*, a three-act ballet. Rather than combining the music with dance—a traditional pairing—the suite was accompanied by readings of original, modern takes on the tale.

Each of the writers comes from a multicultural background which heavily inform their retellings. Sophi Glazycheva, originally from Moscow, wrote about a housekeeper in 1990s Russia; Doyeun Kim, born in Seoul, told a more traditional story set in nineteenth century Korea. Akif Saifi, who was born in Mumbai, placed his Cinderella in a wealthy, lazy Middle Eastern city. Ana Giraldo-Wingler, a native of Bogotá, chose modern-day Bogotá as her setting.

The structure of the performance was the most intriguing aspect. After a talk from conductor Marin Alsop, the orchestra played the first part of the suite. During breaks in the music, the writers took turns reading their pieces of the Cinderella story. This approach was more or less successful; each story had a distinct voice, not only for having a different author, but because of the different settings. This helped me, listening without text, to keep the narrative straight. At the same time it allowed a comparison of the four distinct stories.

The role of the orchestra cannot be overlooked. Program music is meant to tell a story (think Prokofiev's even more famous "Peter and the Wolf"), and his Cinderella certainly fits the bill. The music itself is highly evocative. Prokofiev cuts through gorgeous Romantic melodies with dissonant chords and occasionally odd rhythms, a reminder that he was a master not only of the old traditions, but also of the new Modernist school.

Because of the expressive nature of the music, as the orchestra played, we could all imagine the story in the form we know



best. Not only did the music provide a fifth narrative, but even a sixth as the story took shape in the minds of the audience. Being familiar with the story, all in the audience could imagine their most familiar version as the musicians played Prokofiev's.

Although engaging, the format could have been somewhat smoother. The readers were not allotted equal amounts of time, so it was more difficult than necessary to follow along. Still, aside from the few moments when I

had to do a little mental catch-up, I thought the performance was a definite success. I felt surrounded by the tale in its multiple forms and was very involved as I reconsidered the essential points of my own version of the fairy tale. The music and readings romanticized each other, and I came away from the concert satisfied with this foray into multi-media folklore. Above all, the initiative itself shines brilliantly; it serves as a delightful reminder that it is, indeed, possible to reinvent the wheel.



# Art 101:

## Nolla Yuan

photographed by *Daniel Litwin*  
styled by *Amanda Boyle*  
written by *Rebecca McGivney*

New York. Paris. Milan.  
Baltimore: Fashion capitals of  
the world.

Well, perhaps not that last  
one—but that's exactly  
what makes up-and-coming  
designer Nolla Yuan's work so  
refreshing. Yuan, a senior at  
MICA, creates beautiful and  
ethereal wearable works of art.

Yuan lets us borrow her  
collection for a whimsical spin  
around town, and shares the  
ways in which Baltimore's  
collaborative atmosphere has  
inspired her work. So, *Vogue*  
can have Paris—for now,  
Baltimore is just a well-kept  
(and cheaper) secret.

All garments by Nolla Yuan unless otherwise  
noted. Shoes and accessories, stylist's own.

Black tank: stylist's.



**Rebecca McGivney:** What influenced your last collection?:

**Nolla Yuan:** The overall design was influenced by the tradition of the haute couture. I guess, particularly, if I were to categorize it to a decade, it would be the 1920s. [That era had] very flowy and drapery garments, but it was still cut on the bias, which was very big at the time. So I just felt very nostalgic for the authenticity of the past and I wanted to combine that with more modern silhouettes, simplified silhouettes. Also, for the whole collection I am using natural dyes, which are all colors derived from plants, fruits, etc.

**RM:** What are one of your favorite spots in Baltimore, one of your most “inspirational” spots in Baltimore?

**NY:** Can it be a restaurant?

**RM:** It can be anywhere!

**NY:** I would say Minato is my favorite restaurant. Yeah, I go there to eat at least once a week.

**RM:** When did you start getting into garment design, or art in general?

**NY:** That’s interesting because I came to MICA thinking that I was going to be a painter. I think everybody comes to MICA thinking that they’re going to be painting or something. But then I was exploring and I went a little bit into performance garment and performance art and sculpture, sort of, with fabric, and at some point I realized that I was interested in sculpture and fabric on the body. I realized just how important it is to choose a particular look on a daily basis, especially when I would go back New York City for the summer. By my junior year I felt like I had to choose an industry I wanted to be a part of and I realized that between textiles and fashion, I was more interested in fashion, so I just began learning more about patterning, sewing, and all the other stuff.

**RM:** So you’re from New York originally?

**NY:** Yeah, I’m from Queens, New York.





**RM:** Have you found the transition easy? Do you like Baltimore?

**NY:** That's an interesting question. I think that Baltimore is just different, really different. And some days I'm like "Man, what did I get myself into?" Other days, I feel like if I didn't go away from New York for [college] I probably would have never left New York for the rest of my life. Coming to Baltimore for four years and sticking it out, for better or worse, made me realize that I can go to different parts of the world and it's okay that it's not New York City.

**RM:** What's up next?

**NY:** I got into Baltimore Fashion Week so I'll be here for that—it'll be interesting to see what happens there. Then I am going to be interning for a boutique in New York and I'm an apprentice for these two Italian master tailors, for men's suits, so I guess I'll just see where that's going to take me.

**RM:** Are you mostly interested in tailoring vs. the pure aesthetic? Are you getting more interested in the practical aspects of clothing design?

**NY:** These are some of the practical things that I think about often, but unfortunately, at MICA, I think it's all about the overall concept of your work. I think [our department] is very art oriented, like fiber art, and within garment, construction and garment work, which can be a lot of things costume, performance garment, and I think fashion is a very small part of it.

I'm probably like one out of a handful of people at MICA who is actually interested in fashion and probably one of the fewer who is actually thinking of things like aesthetically pleasing silhouettes or beautification of the female body.

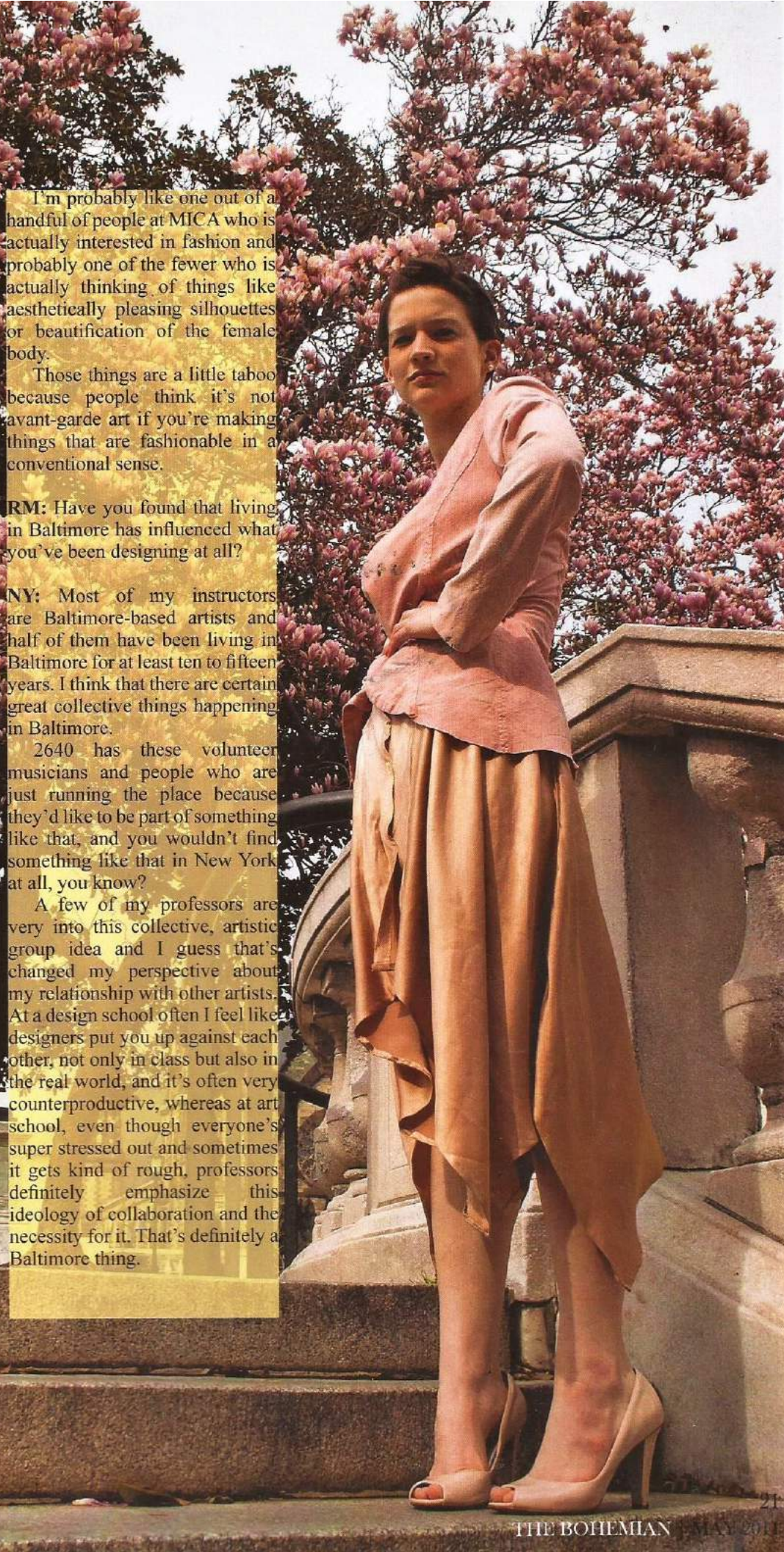
Those things are a little taboo because people think it's not avant-garde art if you're making things that are fashionable in a conventional sense.

**RM:** Have you found that living in Baltimore has influenced what you've been designing at all?

**NY:** Most of my instructors are Baltimore-based artists and half of them have been living in Baltimore for at least ten to fifteen years. I think that there are certain great collective things happening in Baltimore.

2640 has these volunteer musicians and people who are just running the place because they'd like to be part of something like that, and you wouldn't find something like that in New York at all, you know?

A few of my professors are very into this collective, artistic group idea and I guess that's changed my perspective about my relationship with other artists. At a design school often I feel like designers put you up against each other, not only in class but also in the real world, and it's often very counterproductive, whereas at art school, even though everyone's super stressed out and sometimes it gets kind of rough, professors definitely emphasize this ideology of collaboration and the necessity for it. That's definitely a Baltimore thing.

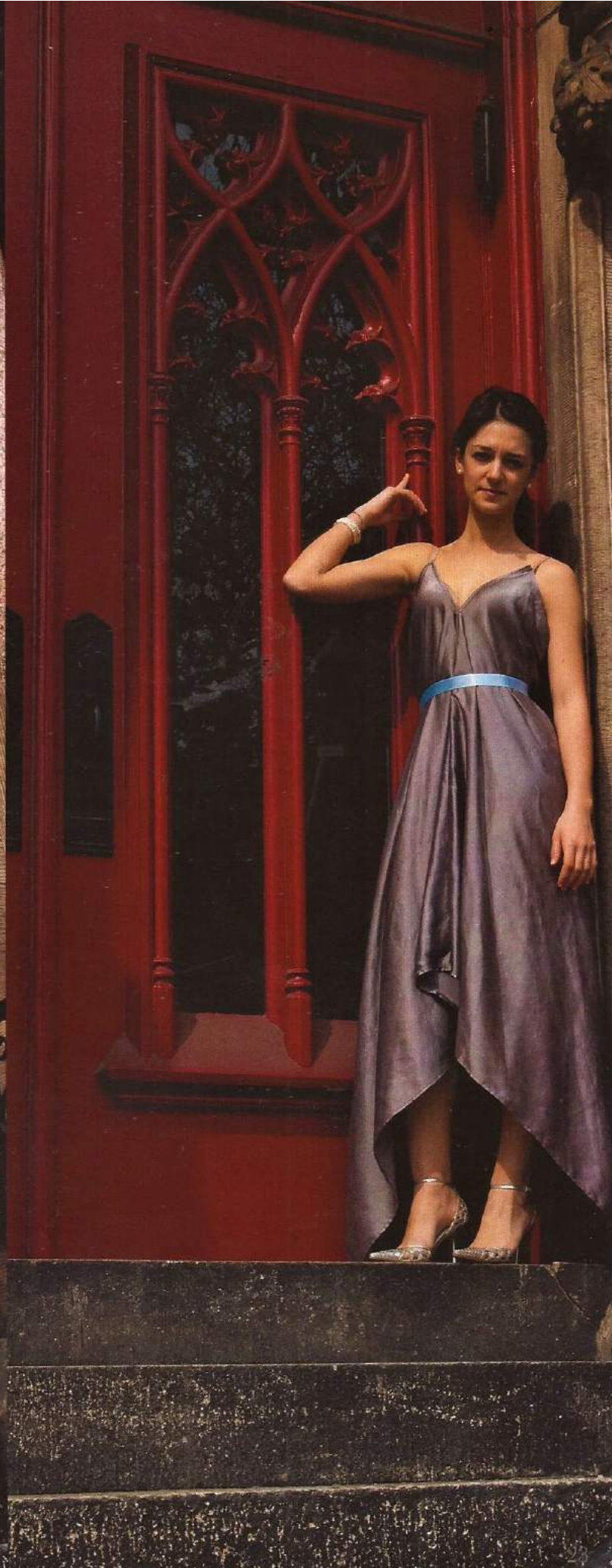






White tank: stylist's









models, from left: Alexandra Bellows, Amelie Nkodo, Cristina Veltri





## B-MORE UNITED

A party promoting Union puts a brand on *urban clubbing*

*told by J. Braedon Jones*

*photographed by Phillip Datcher*

**L**ook under I-83 on any given Saturday night and you will find three of Baltimore's most vibrant clubs. To the east there's the city's premier underground concert venue, the Sonar. To the north you'll find what was once the shining bastion of Baltimore urban clubbing, Hammerjacks, and is now the grown man's frat house known as Bourbon Street. Between the two, on a small isolated block, is a thin white building that constantly has a line of eager young men and scantily clad women long enough to touch all three clubs at the same time.

Inside the slim edifice are four levels of ascending cool. The top most level holds the vanguard of the Union Entertainment, presiding over their partying populace. The club is called One, but the party is thanks to the Union. For three and a half years Union Entertainment has used Club One as a weekly reminder to Baltimore City of how good they are at what they do.

While the Union officially calls itself a party promotions company, it will soon become Baltimore's good time depot if it's up to the president, Justin Hunt.

"I want to be able to be a one stop shop," says Hunt, and the 27-year-old Virginia native is well on his way to making good on his word. Aside from weekly hosting duties at Club One, the team is expanding into 21-and-older events at Club Lux. It regularly partners with fraternities and sororities for major events, hosts the occasional concert at Sonar, and looks to expand into other cities, while entertaining the possibility of producing two reality TV shows about the members' lives as promoters. And aside from Hunt none of the Union's core employees are older than 24.

In 2008 the Union underwent a reconstruction of management. Its founders, Justin Hunt, Kevin Bent, and Isaiah Davis dissolved their partnership, leaving Hunt with sole ownership of the Union. Bent

and Davis, now known as Trix and Zeke respectively, are successful promoters in their own right, but Hunt chose to look for more youthful assistance in keeping the Union alive.

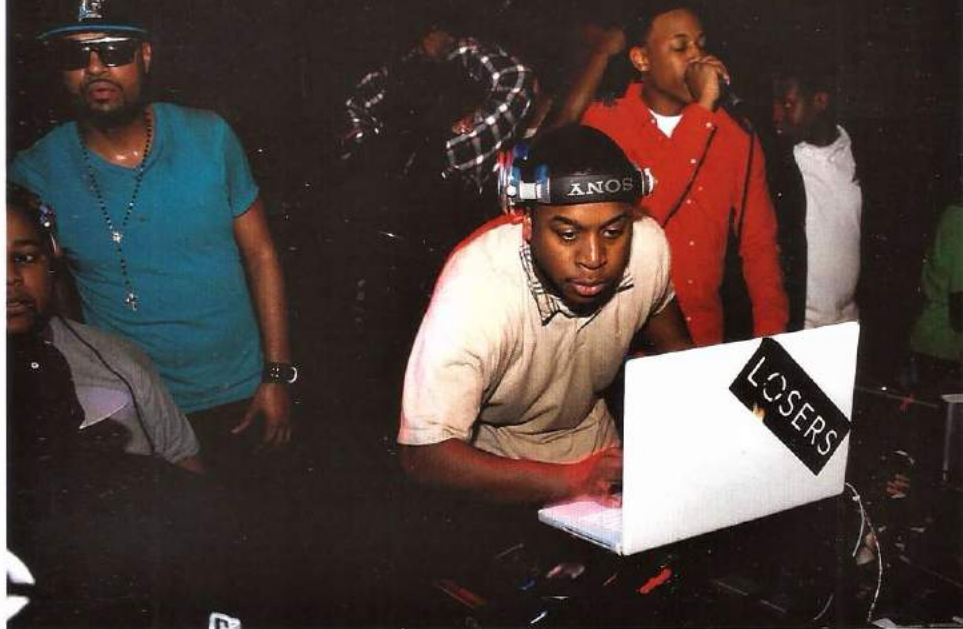
Much like a merry-making Zordon, Hunt recruited a team of dynamic teenagers with attitude to aid him in his war against the evils of tedium. All students at Morgan State University, members of the current roster of the Union's executive board are co-vice presidents Dwight "DJ Flow" Flowers and Kennan "The Fresh Prince the Host" Richardson, head of promotions Camille "Juice" Jenkins, and business manager Hannah "Jus Hannah" Konteh. Flowers and Richardson also serve as the Union's official DJ and MC. These five have become such a finely-tuned entertainment machine that pulling in 500 to 1000 attendants a week to their parties is simply second nature.

But how could such a team be so effective? While entertainment groups would



*to the right*

Dwight "DJ Flow"  
Flowers spins with  
King Flexxa behind  
him at a recent Union  
party at Sonar.



seem commonplace in cities like Los Angeles, New York, or Miami, the universal belief is that you're more likely to get killed than find a killer club in Baltimore City.

As Flowers, a Brooklyn native, said, "New York is a lot bigger in scale. There are more clubs, more connections, more venues...it's a different culture."

But where many may have been discouraged, Hunt only saw opportunity.

"Baltimore is a city for hustlers," says Hunt. "Baltimore is a good city when it comes to being able to make your own... there are a lot of ways you can make money here legally. A lot of people from here just choose to go the other route."

Hunt embodies and encourages an ethic of persistence and patience with his team. This city holds the potential for success, but by no means is it an easy task.

Navigating Baltimore nightlife presents its own challenges for the casual partygoer, not to mention those planning events. Racism and prejudices are major

concerns when it comes to interacting with club owners, and violence when it comes to club goers. In the last three months two people were shot to death, including a police officer outside of Select Lounge, and another stabbed to death at Bourbon Street. The Union has been lucky enough to never experience any major acts of violence at its events, but the danger is very real. That's without mentioning the threats that just come from competition.

There are countless promotional teams in this city, many of them are vying for the same audiences and often on the same nights. "If [they] throw an event on the same night as us, I take it personally," says Jenkins, head of promotions. "You're trying to take my money. That means at one point you didn't care if I ate."

Understanding and predicting the whims of Baltimorean audiences is a vital characteristic for the survival, not to mention the success, of any promoter.

"Baltimore's a weird city. Very weird," says Hunt. "I've seen Drake only do about 400 people. It's like, Drake, right now, is one of the biggest

artists in the world... I pulled out more people than him on the same night."

Knowledge of its audience keeps this company afloat. They are one of the few, if not the only promotions team, in the city that appeal to both college and local audiences and can successfully draw in both.

As Jenkins so eloquently states, "College kids won't go to [a] city party, but hood niggas will always come out to see some college girls." A simple ideology, but effective, the kind of common sense, business-minded logic that Hunt has developed and instilled in his

wards.

The Union crew unquestionably has a reputation for being the life of any party it attends, but hear them tell it: more than just being party animals, they're building a brand. They're commodifying fun, are damn good at it, and are expanding.

All members of the Union, while balancing academic careers and their work, are also invested in their own enterprising ventures. Flowers

is a founding member of a mentoring program named S.M.O.O.T.H. (Strong Men Overcoming Obstacles Through Hardwork) that he hopes will combat negative stereotypes of African American men. Konteh has expanded the Union's efforts into the greater Maryland area by hosting Go-Gos, and Jenkins has cre-

ated a subsidiary called the Alternative Union with a focus on same-sex entertainment. All members are working towards forming their own companies soon. All except Hunt himself.

"I wouldn't be surprised if I ended up coaching at a high-school or teaching history," says Hunt. "I came to Morgan to be a history teacher, so..."

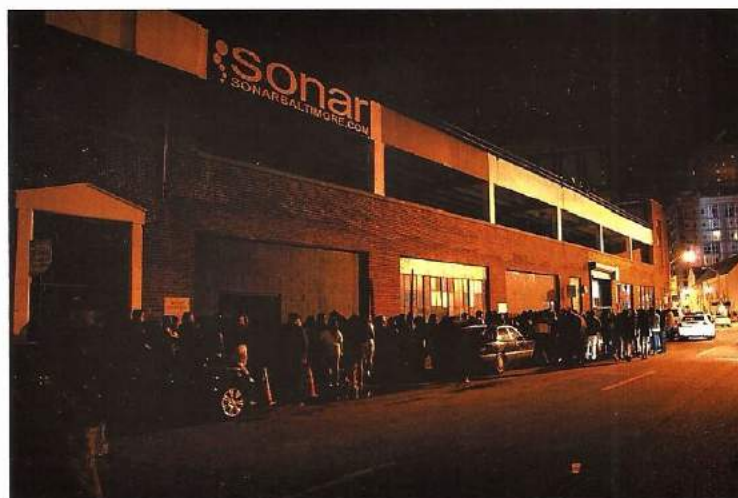
It's that sort of humility and sincerity that makes Union events so enjoyable. They genuinely enjoy what they do, and making people happy. Jenkins says it best in saying, "I love to see people enjoying themselves...life is always so stressful. For those two hours you don't think about your rent or your exams. You just enjoy yourself."

"Baltimore is a city for hustlers."

— Justin Hunt,  
president of the Union  
party promotions team

*below*

A line outside Sonar  
before a Union party





# STOP: STYLE.

It was a sartorialist's dream. We accosted dozens of Baltimoreans to ask a simple question: Where do they find their style? The answer: *it's all about your 'hood*. From Greenmount to Fed Hill, from pre-teens to senior citizens, these unassuming folk are the models of Charm City attitude.

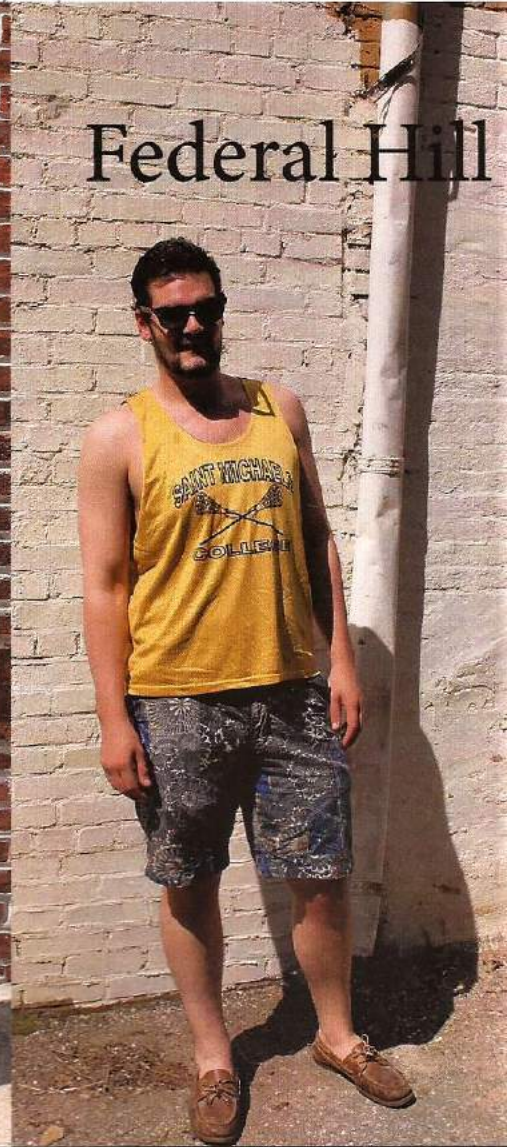
by *Suzanne Gold*



**Laurie:** Jewelry designer/artist with a studio in Fed Hill.



**Neil:** Dwells in Hampden.

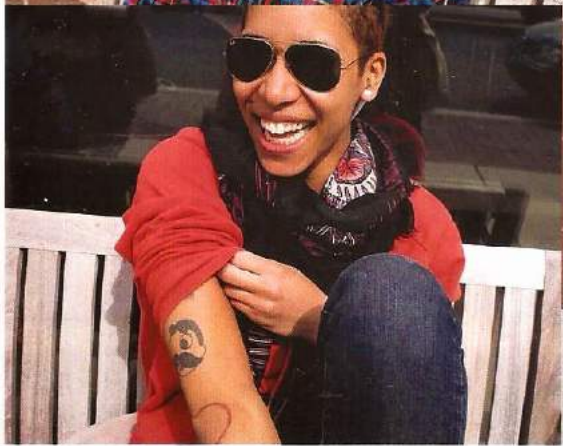


**Paul:** Recently moved from Massachusetts to Fed Hill. Digs it.

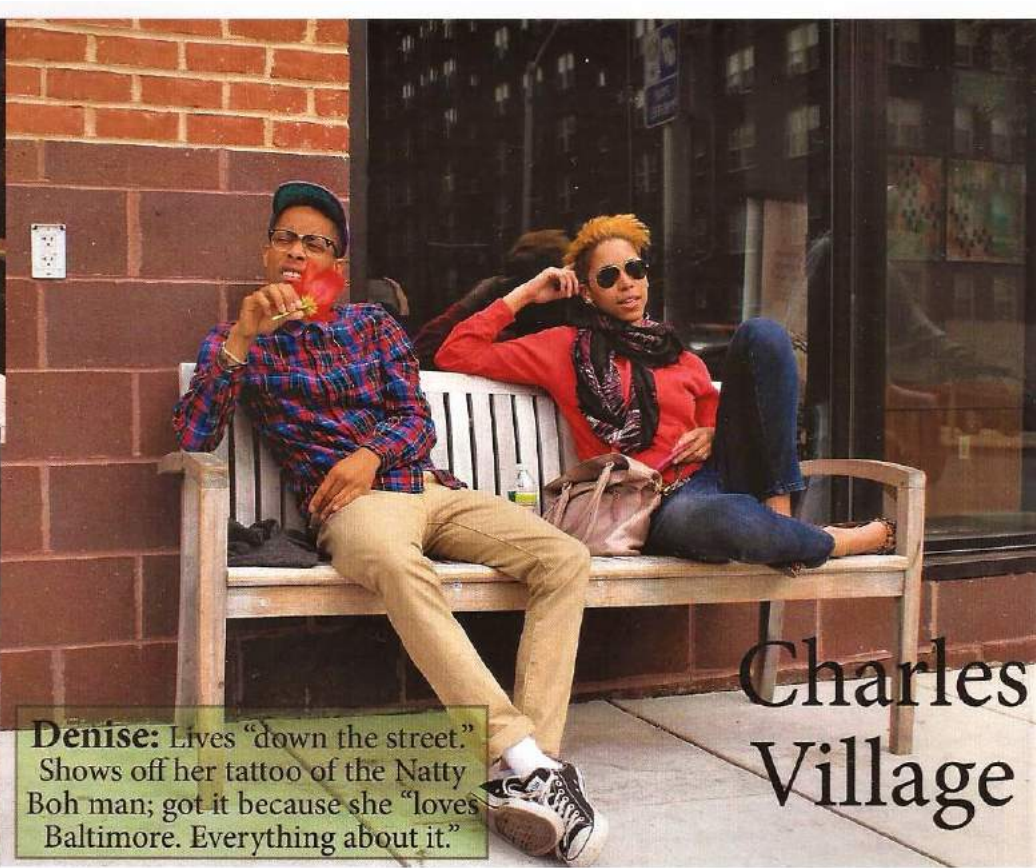




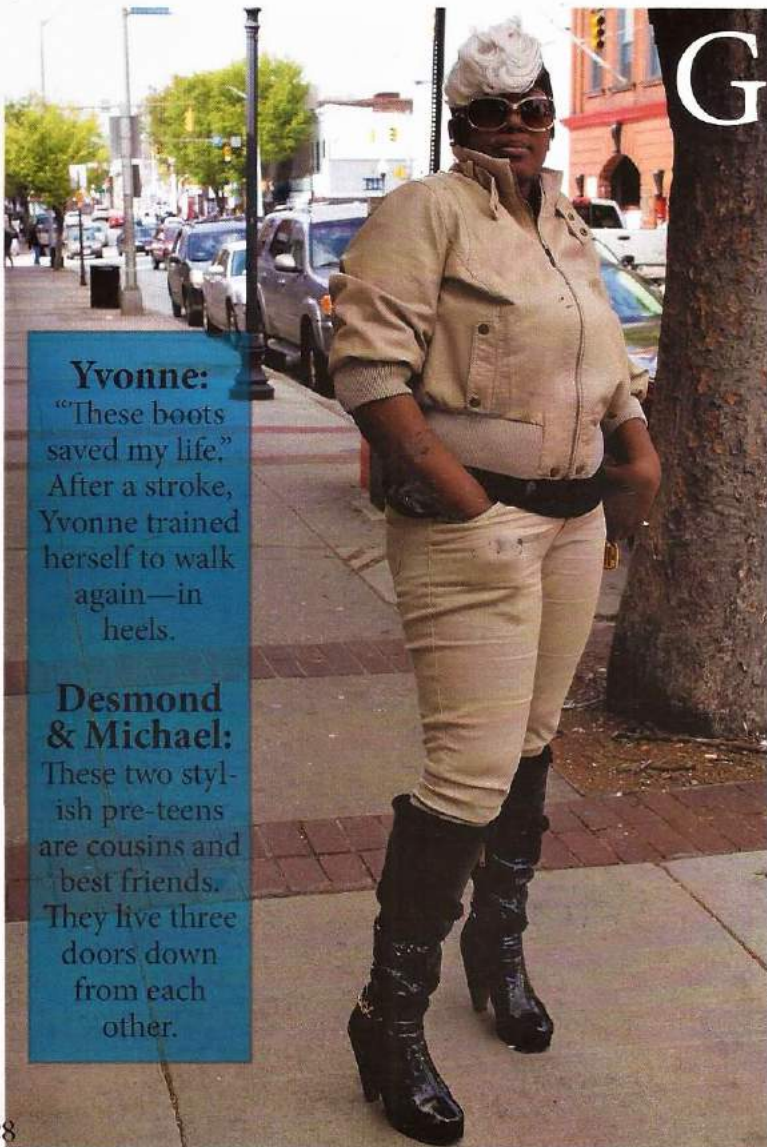
Roger



**Denise:** Lives "down the street." Shows off her tattoo of the Natty Boh man; got it because she "loves Baltimore. Everything about it."



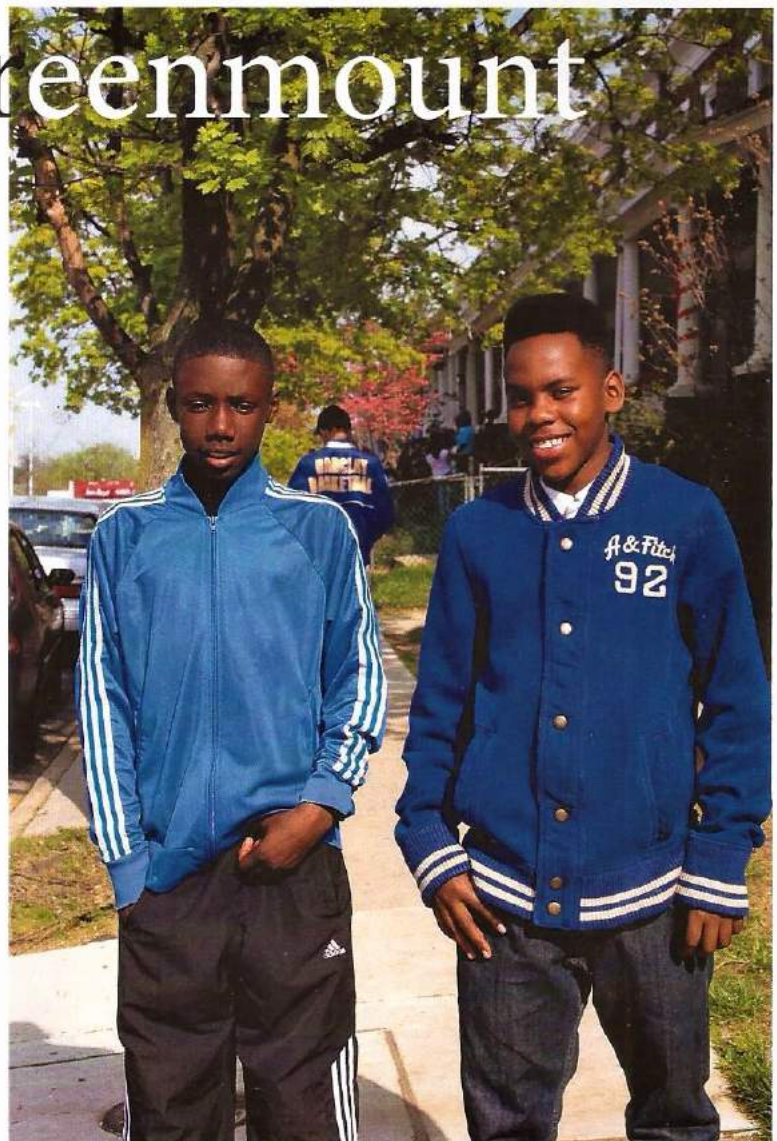
# Charles Village



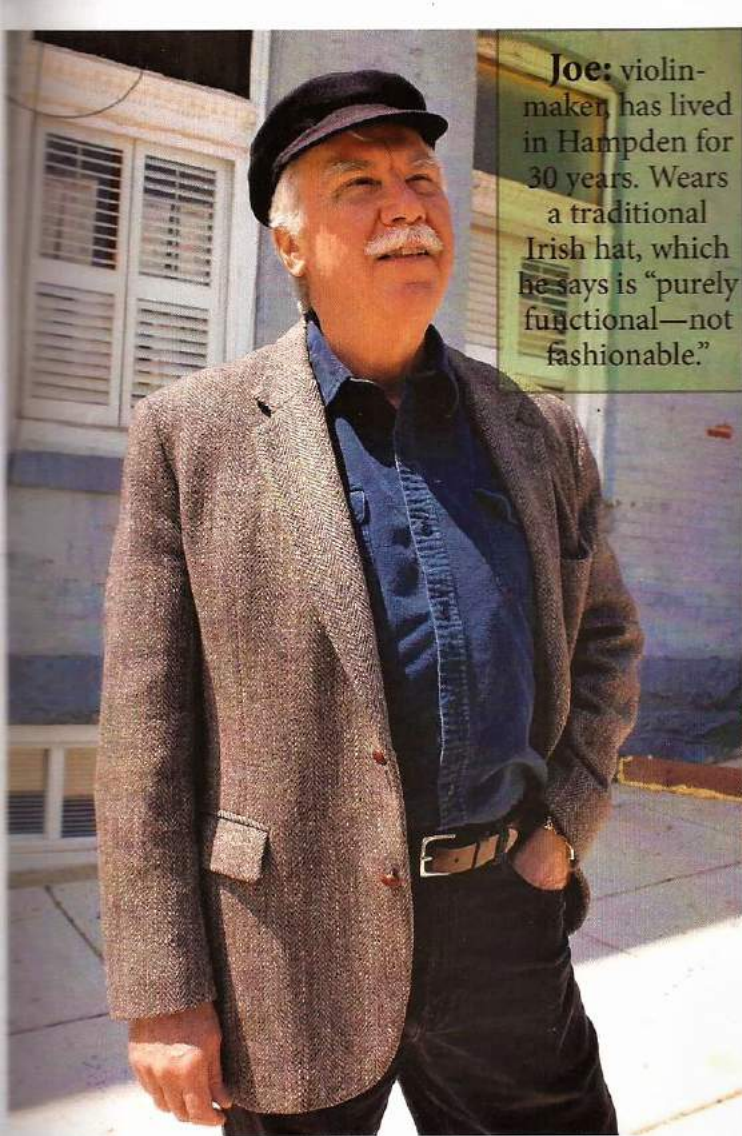
**Yvonne:** "These boots saved my life." After a stroke, Yvonne trained herself to walk again—in heels.

**Desmond & Michael:** These two stylish pre-teens are cousins and best friends. They live three doors down from each other.

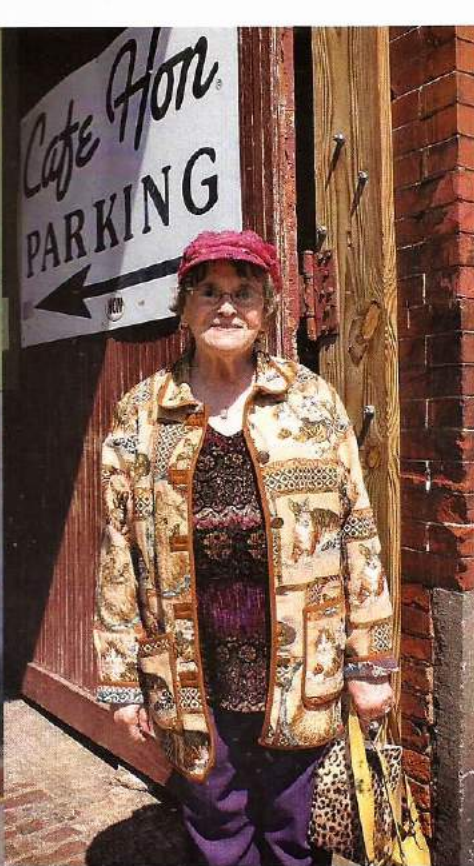
# Greenmount



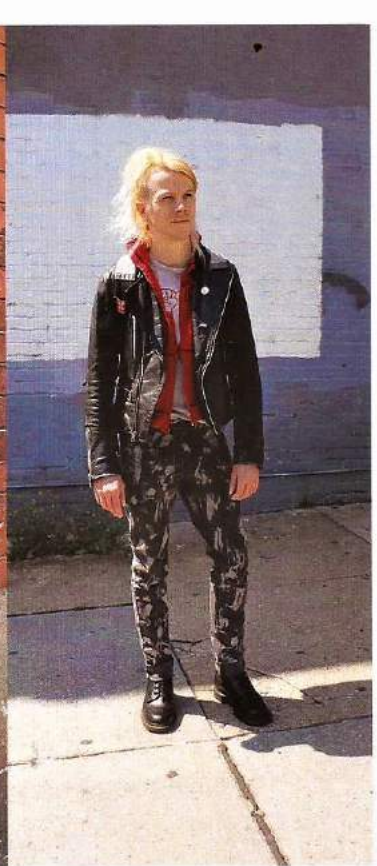




**Joe:** violin-maker, has lived in Hampden for 30 years. Wears a traditional Irish hat, which he says is “purely functional—not fashionable.”

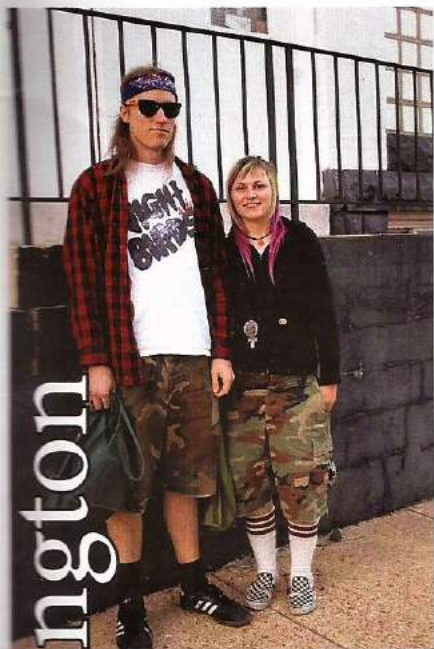


**Jayne:** From Elkridge, volunteers at the Howard County animal shelter. Loves cats and cat-themed clothing.

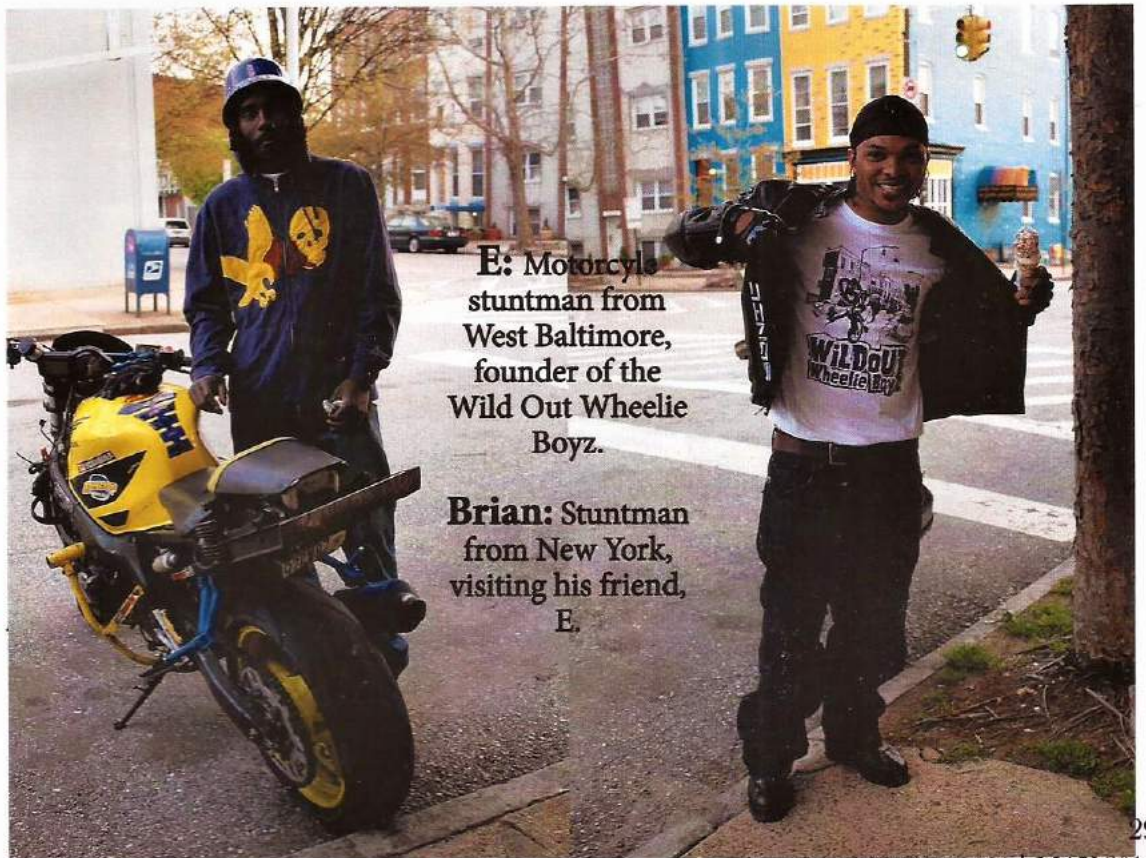


**Karl:** Transplant from Sweden. Runs a company, Knas, which makes musical instruments.

# Hampden



**Patrick & Randi:** members of a punk band.



**E:** Motorcycle stuntman from West Baltimore, founder of the Wild Out Wheelie Boyz.

**Brian:** Stuntman from New York, visiting his friend, E.

Remington



# warehouse urbex

Baltimore, in the 20th century, emerged as a bustling blue collar city with factories and warehouses aplenty. When the domestic industrial center crashed in the country in the 70s, many of those who provided the city with its economic boost closed up shop and moved out of the city as fast as they could, creating a ghost town around us that we see today with painted rowhouses dwarfed by brick and steel grime. Some warehouses have undergone facelifts as the city and its residents discover new uses for the space. But

others, like the Lebow Coat Factory (pictured below), sit abandoned, boarded, nailed, and sealed, while being protected by a barbed wire. The reason why Lebow left the city is not widely known—however, the warehouse that once sold and manufactured clothes is on the bucket list for those daring enough to hop a fence and explore the spoils of a warehouse whose inhabitants literally padlocked a door and fled along with those of its kind, leaving behind coats on their racks that are eerily accumulating time with dust.

by  
Payal Patnaik

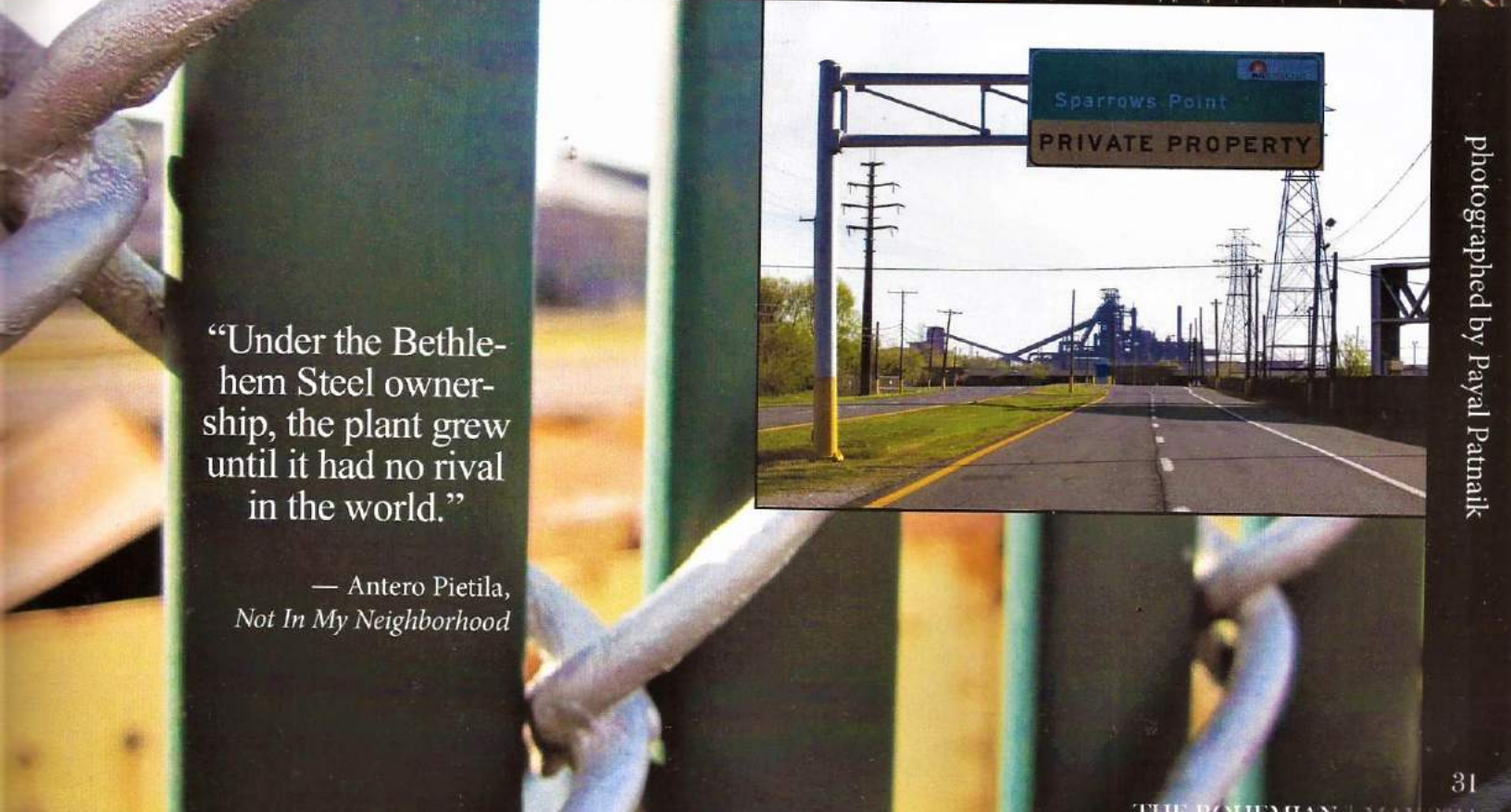
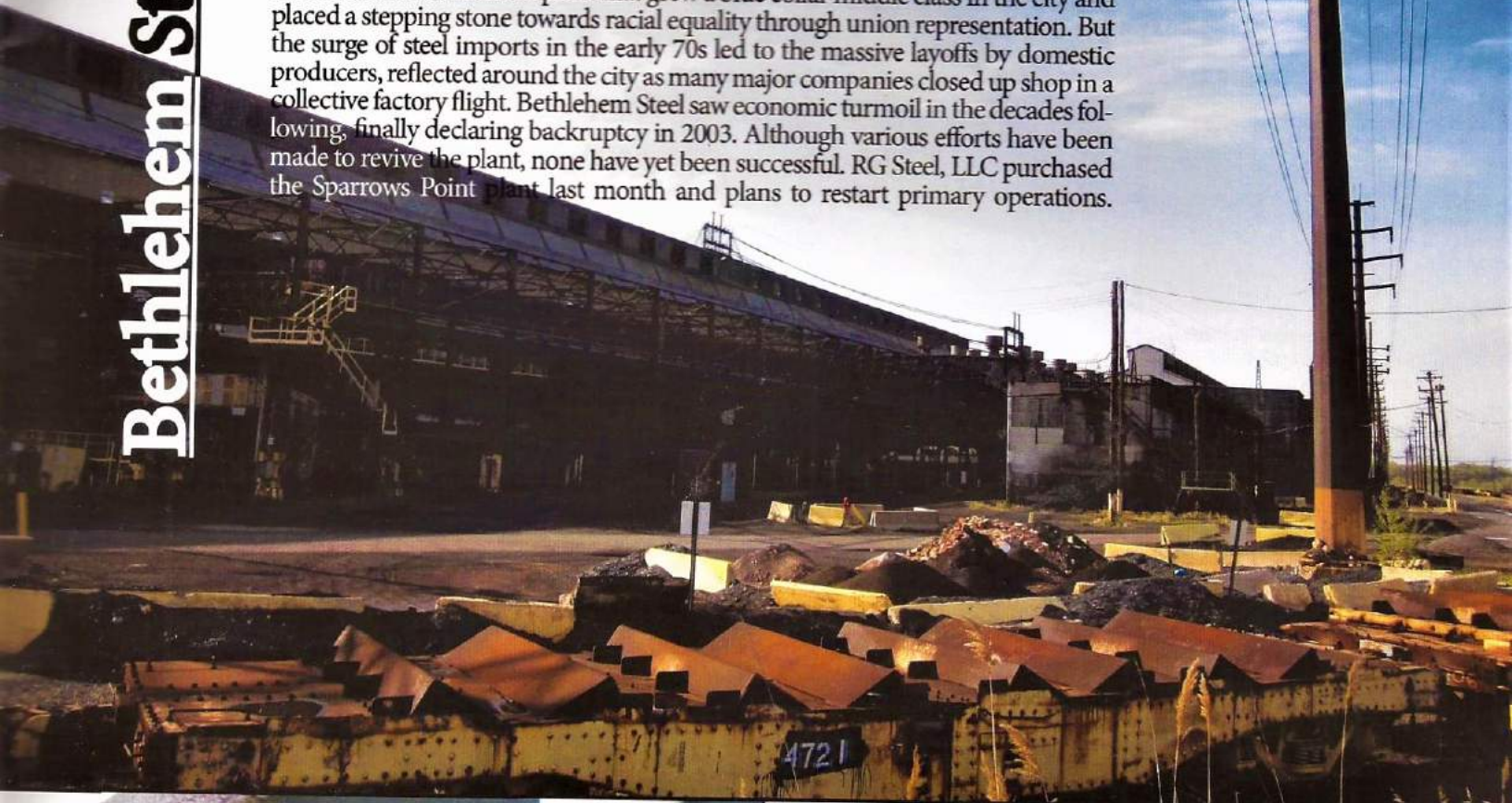
The abandoned Lebow Coat Factory neighbors the singularly Baltimorean Copycat Building, to its left.

Lebow Coat Factory photographed by Daniel Litwin



# Bethlehem Steel

Situated just south of Baltimore, the Bethlehem Steel yard dominated the local economy as the single largest industrial employer in greater Baltimore. Bethlehem Steel bought the plant and shipyard in 1916, eventually growing it to be the nation's largest steel mill in the country by the mid 20th century. The steelworkers outgrew the towns surrounding Fairfield yard and began to settle in Baltimore neighborhoods, including Highlandtown and Old West Baltimore as Bethlehem Steel became a behemoth plant that grew a blue collar middle class in the city and placed a stepping stone towards racial equality through union representation. But the surge of steel imports in the early 70s led to the massive layoffs by domestic producers, reflected around the city as many major companies closed up shop in a collective factory flight. Bethlehem Steel saw economic turmoil in the decades following, finally declaring bankruptcy in 2003. Although various efforts have been made to revive the plant, none have yet been successful. RG Steel, LLC purchased the Sparrows Point plant last month and plans to restart primary operations.



“Under the Bethlehem Steel ownership, the plant grew until it had no rival in the world.”

— Antero Pietila,  
*Not In My Neighborhood*



photographed by Payal Patraik



The idea of Ruintown was first noted on a pizza box.

"We were sitting over beers [in Canton] and griping about the lack of the ability to do what we wanted to do...I wanted to build an indoor skate ramp and a practice space for my band, he wanted to do all this metal working," Glenn Gentzke says, about a conversation he had with co-founder of Ruintown David Cummings. Then they asked themselves a question: "Why not rent a warehouse and build whatever we needed to live inside it?"

"There was a moment when we were like, Can we do this? Maybe we can just do this," Gentzke says. He had seen examples of do-it-yourself living and working spaces in the Copycat Building, but hadn't known anyone who had done what they were thinking of doing.

"We had this big empty box and turned it into a playground of freedom," Gentzke says.

They wrote everything down on pizza boxes, and got their third partner in crime: Dan DiFrancisco, one of Gentzke's friends who skated.

They had friends who worked in zoning and lists of all the warehouse and industrial spaces. They stumbled upon the former home of the Mount Vernon Mill, a cotton mill near the Jones Falls, and it "had all the right elements"—they needed a certain level of industrial zoning for the metal work, Gentzke needed a practice space for his band Pfister, and they still needed the property to be "somewhere near civilization."

The name "Ruintown" was borne from Gentzke's cat and sharpie knuckle tattoos. "I have this cat that meows all the time...he gets annoying so we were saying 'cats ruin meow town.' If you write it on your hands, you get 'cats meow' on one hand and 'ruin town' on the other," Glenn Gentzke says.

When they got the space, they eventually needed a name. "For the first show, my band was playing and this 'Ruintown' was on the first flyer, and the second flyer..."

Ruintown's success was about about word-of-mouth and timing. The Nerve Center, an underground punk house, had just closed up shop and the

guys at Ruintown inherited the Nerve Center's PA system and parts of its ramp while they were building their own ramp.

Ruintown opened, continuously hosting shows of twenty people before 100 people started coming. "We grew a name for it. We had skate nights once a week and through word of mouth, once it got big enough, bigger bands wanted to play," he says. "There's no real methodology here other than just doing it."

Although Ruintown reached its two-year anniversary May 1, the guys lived a year and a half without a real kitchen. "We built our own bedrooms and bathrooms...we washed the dishes in the bathtub," DiFrancisco recalls.

According to Gentzke, TerraLogos is moving into the area to develop high scale condos. And even though Gentzke and DiFrancisco have moved to New York and Philadelphia respectively, two others have moved in to take their place. "For the future of it: There are still three people who live here and continue to live here. I don't know what kinds of events will be here or when the funding will come through, but it's rather an organic place," Gentzke says.



# Ruintown. your average playground of the absurd

photographed by Noah Scialom



# ORIOLE PARK AT CAMDEN YARDS

## B&O Railroad's Camden Station

photographed by Katharine Watson

Camden Yards was the first of its kind when it opened in 1992. The Maryland Stadium Authority retrofitted the B&O Railroad's Camden Station to what is now known as the Oriole Park. The pioneer "retroballpark," Camden Yards has trendsetted a new wave of baseball nostalgia in design and influence.

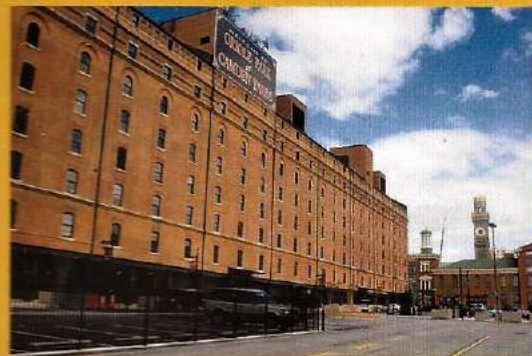
"It's fascinating to see how many of them have drawn inspiration from Camden Yards, with the aesthetics, steel masonry facade and how they're at the heart of the city," says Janet Marie Smith, Vice President of Planning and Development of the Orioles. "All of their roots, in many ways, and the kinds of design philosophy that sparked Oriole Park in Camden Yards. This puts pressure on us to stay current," she adds.

Since the first pitch was thrown on the Camden Yards mound, Smith says about 20

MLB stadiums have opened, citing the stadiums of the Pittsburgh Pirates, Minneapolis Twins, and the Denver Rockies as a few examples of designs that have followed the Oriole Park.

However, in order to stay current while commemorating its surroundings, the Oriole Park has seen many design changes the past few years, including more open spaces, pubs and food menu options that draw from the area, and a new Orioles Museum.

"We were eager to use the warehouse both functionally and spiritually," Smith says, recalling her first stint at the Orioles to give the Park its old-time feel. "We're hoping even when Camden, Yards approaches 20 years, we're responsive to our fan base while being true to our history too. As a team that's just over 50 years old we've got a wonderful story to tell."



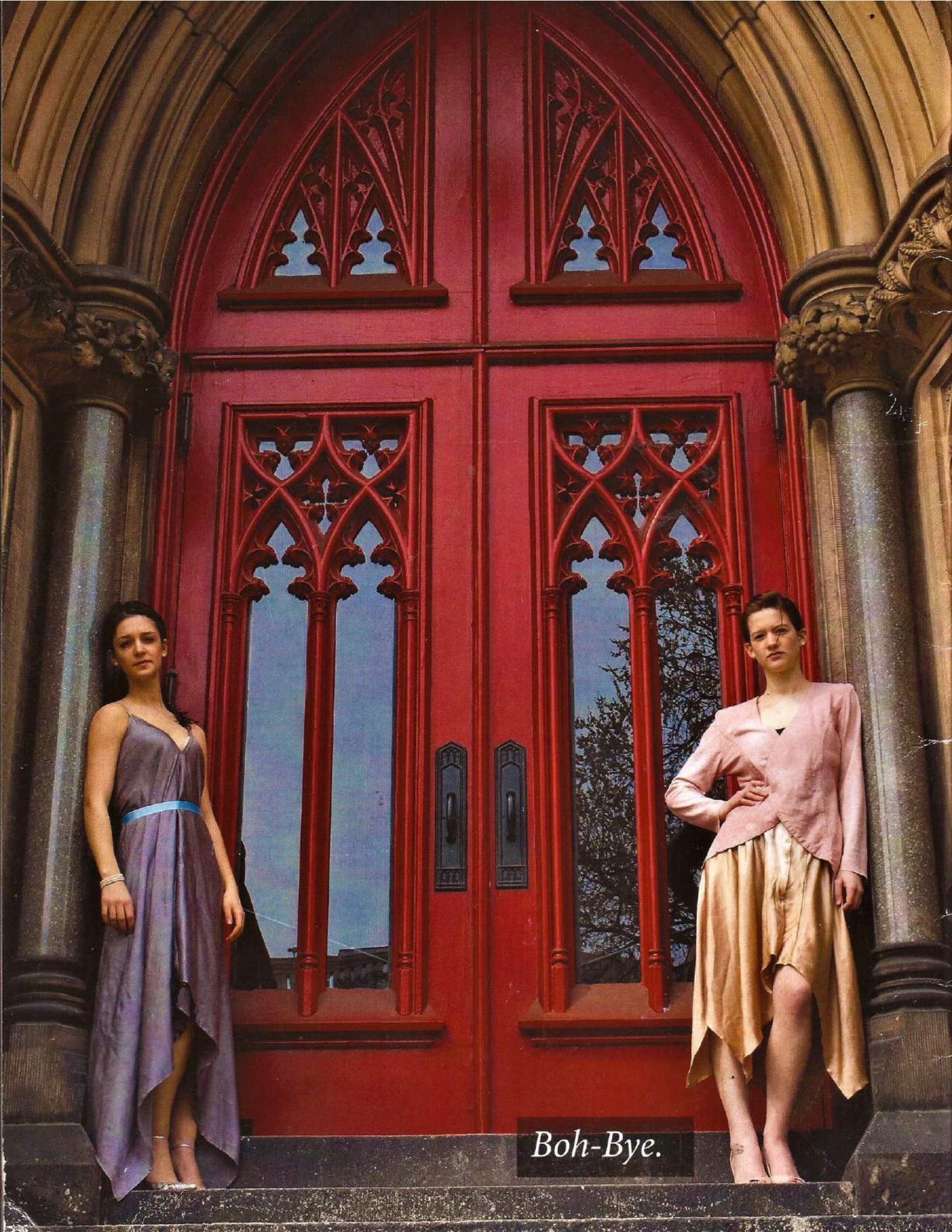
"Our history was still our present [when we first opened]. Frank Robinson was still our manager and Cal and Eddie were still making a comeback. We weren't thinking of hanging retired numbers. We didn't think of this history because all that stuff was still living and breathing. [The Orioles Museum] allowed us to take a moment of reflection and have an excuse to come back and showcase those things, particularly now when there are three generations of fans in the ballpark, some of who used to go to Memorial Park."

— Janet Marie Smith,

VP Planning and Development of the Orioles







*Boh-Bye.*