

# Eye on the prize: Brewing success again!

I've been in the business of preparing young men and women for careers in the brewing industry for many years: since 1962, in fact.

I — and those who've helped me teach these programs over many years — have been blessed with some spectacular successes, whether these students earned a master of science degree or a bachelor of science degree from UC Davis, during my long tenure there as a professor; or a certificate or diploma through my master brewers program, which I continue to offer through University Extension.

This year has been particularly satisfying. Kevin Wright, one of our master brewers program students, won the prestigious J.S. Ford Prize of the Institute of Brewing and Distilling. This prize recognizes the best set of examination papers submitted by any student, anywhere, on the IBD diploma examination; roughly 250 to 300 students, worldwide, sit these examinations each year.

Most students are highly selected by their companies, and provided with mentors and special learning opportunities as they prepare for this tough test of brewing knowledge. Coming first among this group of peers therefore indicates a very bright young man working very hard to learn the knowledge-base of his profession.

The prize comprises 1,000 pounds, an engraved quaich (a two-handled Scottish drinking cup) and accommodation and a stipend while

in London to receive the prize; the brewery where Kevin works will fly him and a companion to London.

Kevin completed his bachelor of science degree in biomedical engineering at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, before coming to Davis. This provided an excellent background for a student of brewing, but that alone did not attract him to the profession. As is the case for so many of our master brewers program students, the key motivation was enjoying craft-brewed beers, and especially home-

brewing to emulate those products. Another master brewers program student, Don Oliver, won last year's J.S. Ford Prize as well, so I look forward to our 2010 class and the hat trick (three in a row).

Kevin has taken a job in Redlands, with the Hangar 24 Brewing Company — owned and operated by Ben Cook, a master brewers program student from several years ago — while Don has decided to paddle his own canoe and is working on his own brewing project.

This year, as well — our tankard frotheth over! — Tyler Laverty, also a master brewers program student, won the Crisp Malting Prize for the best submission in the Paper-1 division of the IBD diploma examination. This paper includes malting topics.

Each year, the 40 or so students in our University Extension master brewers program conclude their studies in June, with the diploma examinations written and scored by London's Institute of Brewing and Distilling. Three examinations

make up the diploma: Paper-1, on malting and brewing; Paper-2, on fermentation and beer chemistry; and Paper-3, on processing technology (engineering) and packaging.

Each examination is three hours long, and requires a candidate to answer six of eight offered questions. This comprises four challenges: reading and understanding the questions, in all their possible ramifications; knowing enough brewing science to answer the questions; having the language skill to transmit what one knows to the examiner; and legible handwriting.

Over the years, the master brewers program has focused on the second objective most intensely, as you might expect; after all, a post-graduate instructor might presume the skills of reading and writing from his charges. Although the exam questions are technically demanding and searching, I cannot believe that anyone who has studied brewing science intensively for 18 weeks — with the finest instructors money can buy — could possibly fail.

Yet among our seminal successes, we have experienced failures; our pass rate is never 100 percent, as I always expect. A few students distinguish themselves by failing all three exams!

I cannot believe that such catastrophic failure results from the lack of brewing knowledge; the other factors surely figure into the equation. These days, therefore, we also spend a good deal of time analyzing former questions and writing practice answers. From these exercises, I also know that some students have such illegible handwriting that, were they brewing Einsteins incarnate, they could not pass muster.

I can't do much about this, except



COURTESY PHOTO

Kevin Wright, who hails from Wisconsin, won this year's J.S. Ford Prize for the best set of papers submitted to the Institute of Brewing and Distilling (London), from the annual diploma examination. He was photographed in front of the brewing equipment at Sudwerk, where our class sessions take place, on the day the master brewers program opened in January.

to wish that computers and keyboards were examination options.

Some students also cannot read the questions with critical accuracy, and so tend to answer questions the examiner never dreamed of asking; these students fare badly.

I'm always sensitive to (and perhaps stung by) George Bernard Shaw's comment: Those who can, do; those who cannot, teach. I prefer Henry Adams' response: A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.

Teaching's everlasting reward is to be surrounded by young people who want to listen to one, and learn from one's experience and knowledge. When they're successful, it's

fun to share in their delight with themselves, and to glow — just a little, at least — in the reflected glare of that success.

I guess that's what this column is about: not just Kevin, and his spectacular success this year, but all the splendid men and women who have gone before over these many years ... who have allowed me to be a part of their lives, and who have made use of their time in Davis to pursue full and productive careers in the brewing profession, and live satisfying lives.

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## POTPOURRI: One production will explore themes relating to old age

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On Feb. 7, the UC Davis Symphony will present Bela Bartok's Violin Concerto No. 2, with Icelandic-born performer Hrabba Atladottir as the soloist. Baldini also will conduct "Kikimora," by Russian composer Anatoly Liadov (1855-1914): another name that may be unfamiliar. "His music is championed these days by conductor Valery Gergiev," Baldini said. (Gergiev appeared at the Mondavi Center in 2005.) "This piece is very mysterious, and you also have a little bit of mystic feeling with the Bartok, so the Liadov prepares the evening."

The program will conclude with the Mussorgsky/Ravel "Pictures at an Exhibition." For the orchestra's May 16 concert, Baldini has scheduled a Beethoven piece still to be announced, as well as a piece with Russian/Soviet origins, the Symphony No. 10 by Dmitri Shostakovich.

Baldini's predecessor at the podium, D. Kern Holoman, pretty much avoided this composer during his long tenure. (Among composers from the Soviet era, Holoman preferred Prokofiev.)

"The Shostakovich is dark at the opening, and gets darker," Baldini said. "My first contact with the piece was when I was a student in Buenos Aires. I heard it played by the City of Birmingham Orchestra under conductor Simon Rattle. It's a great tour de force for the orchestra."

Finally, the orchestra will give a family concert in June; details still are being worked out.

The University Chorus, under conductor Jeffrey Thomas — a familiar face who has led the group for some years now — will sing Vaughan Williams' "Dona nobis pacem" on Dec. 4.

"It's an incredibly powerful and moving work: a plea for peace," Thomas said, fur-

ther explaining that it was written between the two world wars. "It juxtaposes poetry by Walt Whitman against ecclesiastical and scriptural texts. It's one of my all-time favorites."

On May 14, the University Chorus will perform two sacred works with operatic associations: Anton Bruckner's Te Deum, written in 1884; and Gioacchino Rossini's Stabat Mater, written in 1842. Rossini is known primarily for his operas; he composed his setting of the Stabat Mater at the end of his career. Thomas expects that some listeners will be reminded of the Verdi Requiem.

Thomas added that the music by Bruckner also "epitomizes grand operatic 'scenas' that demand virtuosic singing."

Finally, on May 28, the chorus will perform "one of the most famous works in the choral repertory, Stravinsky's Mass," Thomas said. "It

will be followed by one of the sweetest, most tender works I know, John Rutter's Requiem, in which he uses texts from the 'Book of Common Prayer' and from the psalms, in addition to the standard words of the Requiem mass."

The music department season also will include new works from the Emyrean Ensemble (Nov. 17, Jan. 25 and March 15); the annual Causeway Band Festival (Nov. 8); and concerts by the UC Davis Baroque Ensemble, Early Music Ensemble and other groups.

A special performance of Indonesian music and puppetry will take place April 16, featuring a shadow puppet play accompanied by an ensemble from UC Berkeley, using century-old instruments in the gamelan tradition. This program will be presented in the Mondavi Center's Studio Theatre, where the audience can view the action from multiple angles.

Moving to UCD's theater/dance department, season highlights will include:

■ In October, a new work called "Elephant's Graveyard," written and directed by faculty member Jade McCutcheon, and featuring the Sideshow Physical Theater group, with original music by faculty member Laurie San Martin. The piece will explore themes relating to old age, and the cast will include a number of local performers.

■ In November, back-to-back productions of "Tribes, the unified field," written and choreographed by Granada artist-in-residence Sara Shelton Mann; and "Corpo/Ilicito," written and directed by Granada artist-in-residence Guillermo Gomez-Peña. "Tribes" is described as "a journey into the past and future fluctuating between verbal and nonverbal language," while "Corpo/Ilicito" explores "the

legacy of the fear of the other" in the context of recent political and social events and trends.

■ In March, a classic play from the 1890s, Chekhov's "The Seagull," directed by Granada artist-in-residence Katya Kamotskaia. The characters include successful and not-so-successful artists: a fading actress, a struggling playwright, a writer of middlebrow short stories, and a young woman who wants a career on the stage, but has trouble realizing that dream. Comedy and sadness walk hand in hand.

The theater/dance department season also will include annual events such as the THIRDeYE Theater Festival, the UC Davis Film Festival, new work by graduate students studying choreography, and more.

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## LOVE: Parrots are always great for a quick laugh

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There is, it must be mentioned, a good reason for this; Camp and Thompson deftly cover that base. Even so, eyes will roll when Burke encourages his followers to take a walk on a bed of hot coals; in terms that Eloise would understand, that gilds the lily a bit *too* much.

Mostly, though, I was enchanted by the small moments: Burke's discovery that Eloise likes big words; the wonderfully romantic way that she takes him to a sold-out concert one night; the awkward corporate oversell by immaculately dressed drones who envision Burke fronting his own line of weight-loss supplements.

Eckhart also gets a lot of mileage from his encounter with Rocky, a white-feathered, yellow-crested parrot that once belonged to his wife, and now resides with the in-laws. Droll as that scene is, it's topped by Rocky's later exchange with Sheen, which brings the film to a whimsical conclusion.

Films of this type demand quick payoffs: resolutions that arrive within (in this case) 109 minutes. We're much more likely to buy the progress made between Burke and Eloise, than the notion that any of Burke's "patients" can achieve serenity after 72 quick hours, a walk across the hot coals and a couple of field trips. Even Walter's eventual epiphany is much too pat, although Lynch sells the moment as best he can.

But that's OK. Camp and Thompson grant their primary characters just enough closure to be satisfying, and the journey is engaging. The gentle tone is a breath of fresh air after a summer of bombast; I worry, actually, that Camp's film might be too quiet for viewers accustomed to grander gestures.

Sometimes the ordinary can be completely satisfying. This is one such time.

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## MISCELLANY: The Emyrean Ensemble will end the season

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■ Saturday, Feb. 27: 8 p.m. at the Studio Theatre — "The American Piano," works celebrating the diversity of American piano literature, from the nightclub to the concert hall, by John Cage, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Scott Joplin, Frederic Rzewski and others, with Anthony de Mare and Steven Mayer, pianos. Joseph Horowitz, artistic director.

■ Sunday, Feb. 28: 2 p.m. at the Studio Theatre — "The American Piano: Copland, the Piano and Politics," exploring Aaron Copland's piano works, the influence they had on the American piano repertoire, and the politics that influenced his writing. Joseph Horowitz, artistic director. \$30 general, \$15 students and children.

■ Wednesday, March 3: 7 p.m. at the Studio Theatre — UC Davis jazz bands, in a program titled "New Jazz for Big Band." Contemporary jazz charts for big bands. Delbert Bump, director. \$12 general, \$6 students and children.

■ Wednesday, March 10: 7 p.m. at Jackson Hall — The University Concert Band's

Festivity of Bands, with Sacramento State and Davis High School bands. Pete Nowlen, director. \$14/\$12/\$8 general, \$7/\$6/\$4 students and children.

■ Saturday, March 13: 7 p.m. at Freeborn Hall — The UC Davis Gospel Choir. Calvin Lymos, director. \$12 general, \$6 students and children.

■ Sunday, March 14: 8 p.m. at Jackson Hall — The University Chorus, Alumni Chorus and the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra, with Arianna Zukerman, soprano. Jeffrey Thomas, conductor. \$16/\$14/\$10 general, \$8/\$7/\$5 students and children.

■ Friday, April 16: 7 p.m. at the Studio Theatre — Wayang Kulit (shadow play), featuring Midiyanto as dhalang (puppet master), accompanied by UC Berkeley's Gamelan Sari Raras. The shadow play will be accompanied using century-old instruments of Gamelan Kyai Udhan Mas, a full Central Javanese orchestra. Midiyanto and Benjamin Brinner, directors. \$18 general, \$9 students and children.

■ Sunday, April 18: 7 p.m. at the Studio Theatre — The

Emyrean Ensemble, featuring artist-in-residence Haleh Abghari, soprano. Premieres by Philippe Bodin, Eric Moe and Jesper Nordin. Mika Pelo and Kurt Rohde, directors. \$18 general, \$9 students and children.

■ Saturday, May 1: 3 p.m. at the Mondavi Center's Grand Lobby — The UC Davis Baroque Ensemble. Phebe Craig and Michael Sand, directors. \$12 general, \$6 students and children.

■ Saturday, May 15: 7 p.m. at Freeborn Hall — The UC Davis Gospel Choir. Calvin Lymos, director. \$12 general, \$6 students and children.

■ Sunday, May 16: 8 p.m. at Jackson Hall — The UC Davis Symphony Orchestra, in a program of Beethoven and Shostakovich. Christian Baldini, conductor. \$16/\$14/\$10 general, \$8/\$7/\$5 students and children.

■ Wednesday, May 19: 7

p.m. at the Studio Theatre — UC Davis jazz bands, in a program titled "Organ and Big Band." Tunes by Delbert Bump (jazz organist, director) and others. \$12 general, \$6 students and children.

■ Wednesday, May 26: 7 p.m. at Jackson Hall — The University Concert Band. Pete Nowlen, director. \$14/\$12/\$8 general, \$7/\$6/\$4 students and children.

■ Friday, May 28: 8 p.m. at Jackson Hall — The University Chorus. Jeffrey Thomas, conductor. \$16/\$14/\$10 general, \$8/\$7/\$5 students and children.

■ Wednesday, June 2: 7 p.m. at the Studio Theatre — The Emyrean Ensemble, in a program of new works by graduate student composers Hendel Alméus, Ben Irwin, Scott Perry, Garrett Shatzer, Liam Wade and Ching-Yi Wang. \$18 general, \$9 students and children.



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