Innovative Symposia

A New York Poet Finally Gets His Due

By Sacrameh Branel

Loiis Zukofsky, who grew up in New York and attended Columbia University (CC-24), is a poet’s poet. A pioneer of experimental verse in the 1920s and 1930s, he was not widely recognized outside a small circle of literary friends, Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams. He would become better known for his influence on other poets, such as the Beat poet Allen Ginsberg, also a Columbia alum.

But recognition of Zukofsky’s work has grown significantly over the decades. A major biography of the poet is in the works, and two symposia on his poetry are to be held at the University. The symposia will be held at the University, and the poet himself will expand his horizons.

After graduating from Columbia College in 1924 (where his best friend was Whitaker Chambers, the author of Alger Hiss), Zukofsky began teaching and writing in the esoteric lyrical and challenging style that came to be called Objectivism; establishing him as revolutionary.

‘His impact on the art is only now being realized,’ said Goldstein. ‘It is appropriate for him alma mater to honor and pay respect to this important poet and distinguished alumnus.’

By the time he left Columbia in 1924, Zukofsky had studied with some of Columbia’s most prominent scholars, including the poet Mark Van Doren, the philosopher John Dewey, and the novelist John Irvin.

Born of Lithuanian Jewish par.

SOA Alum Wins Student Academy Award Gold

By Alina Kaplan Michaels

For the seventh time in eight years, a Columbia University alumnus has garnered a Student Academy Award gold. This prestigious honor was received by Randall Dottin, SOA’93, who won in the narrative category for his short film A-418, which Dottin wrote and directed, depicts two brothers from a hostile political and social spectrum who struggle to overcome differences in order to save their family and themselves.

Dottin spoke about how his experience at Columbia’s School of the Arts helped him to hone his craft. ‘Words can’t explain this incredible journey. Columbia taught me the importance of developing my craft and my discipline,’ as an artist, Dottin said. ‘All of the faculty were instrumental in my development, and encouraged me to try harder and to go beyond my limitations as a filmmaker.’

His film prevailed over more than 200 entries from around the country in the highly competitive narrative category at the 31st annual Student Academy Awards, held June 13. The Student Academy Awards is a national competition conducted by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) and the Academy Foundation. Each year, more than 300 college and university film students from across the United States compete for awards and cash grants in four categories: animation, documentary, narrative, and alternative.

‘We are proud of Columbia’s record, which indicates pretty clearly how strong our filmmaking program has become,’ said the film.

Kreitler, chairman of the School of the Arts Film Division, said, adding, ‘Congratulations to Randy, who is having a wonderful year and deserves all this recognition.’

As he has already garnered other accolades. In October, the Director’s Guild of America (DGA) honored Dottin, naming him Best African-American Student Filmaker for A-418. He also took second place in the National Board of Review for Motion Pictures Award for the short film and was a finalist in the HBO Short Film Competition at the American Black Film Festival HBO Short Film Competition.

Dottin is a Columbia alumnus, gaining his BA in 1989 and has been working in the film industry since 1993. He has seen his films screened at the Sundance Film Festival, the Los Angeles Film Festival, the New York Film Festival, and other prestigious film festivals.

Dottin’s film process seemed to have a strong influence on his work. ‘I didn’t think about how my work would be received, I just focused on telling the story and making the film,’ he said.

Dottin is currently working on a feature film, which he hopes will be released in 2007.

Columbians Celebrate 250th in Europe, Forge New Initiatives

By Katie Howe

Leading world historians, as well as other notable alumni, gathered in London and Paris to honor their alma maters, at Columbia’s 250th anniversary events. President Lee C. Bollinger and his wife traveled to London on June 21-27, as part of a yearlong tribute to Columbia that has included several stops in key world capitals. Intellectual colloquia highlighted the University’s role in contributing to debate on contemporary concerns and its strong partnerships with European institutions.

At a time when Americans and Europeans are focusing critically about issues of self-determination, Columbia and long-term partner the London Business School collaborated in a series on the subject of self-determination in the United Kingdom and the United States. With an eye to bridging differences, distinguished historians and world leaders explored the meaning of freedom and its role throughout Western history, from the 18th-century American Revolution to present-day conflicts.

Bollinger shared the stage with Richard Descamps, director of Sciences Po and the leading advocate of higher education reform in France, in another symposium focusing on the meaning of freedom and its role in encouraging equality in education.

‘Affirmative Action: A Transatlantic Perspective’

The forum was sponsored by The Alliance program, in collaboration with the University. Catherine Bessette, who is one of the organizers of the symposium, said, ‘The United States and France have a unique relationship, and Columbia and Sciences Po announced a joint research project to explore further affirmative action policies in the U.S. and France.

Anniversary events in Europe included a day-long open house at Reid Hall, Columbia’s academic center in Paris, with alumni and their families attending a screening of the documentary Columbia University: A Celebration by Ric Burns, and other events at Columbia’s and shared views with New York faculty and University leaders. A dozen Columbia alumni turned out to run in the Millenium Run, a 5K race held at the Luxembourg Gardens on June 26. Bollinger and GSA Dean Henry Park, who closed the race under $30.00, although much money was spent talking with alumni running partners about upcoming Columbia events and new initiatives.

International outreach and contact with the growing number of prominent alumni overseas will continue. With the third-largest number of international students among all universities in the United States, Columbia’s international student body is expected to increase in coming years. In an interview with The Financial Times during the trip, Bollinger said that he envisioned the proportion of foreign students at Columbia rising to 20 percent over the next decade.

‘That’s the future,’ he said, noting that the University wants to attract ‘the brightest young people in Tokyo or Singapore, or London, or Budapest.’

Wasn’t she an alluring, otherworldly creature whose gaze could pierce the veil of reality and summon the past?...