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## Getting Technical at Campo

By Lou Fancher



From left to right: Bryan Gertz, Rory Baker, Sam Crissle, Hamed Sheikholeskmi, Charlotte Martin and Miles Lindheimer Photo Doug Kohen  
system hummed and had big-time wiring problems."

He has also inspired students. Arielle Swernoff, a 2010 graduate of MHS, writes in an email, "I learned a lot about wiring, patching, microphones, speakers, acoustics--I now know about all sorts of things that had seemed terribly complicated and obscure before. Knowing about sound has also led to other opportunities--last year, I worked with students, teaching them to use the sound board so they could incorporate more technical theater into their final projects. I am definitely interested in continuing to work on sound in college. Learning about sound was one of the most valuable things I did in high school."

Gertz is mild when it comes to talking about himself, but a braggart when it comes to his students. "There's a three-and-a-half minute song from American Idol on YouTube. There's only nine microphones to control and he makes eight mistakes! My kids did a 3-and-a-half-hour show, with 32 mikes, and made only four mistakes. I've gotta send you the link to the video-it's bad!"

Jamie Donohoe, the Drama Director at Campo is a big proponent of the new program. "Bryan has extensive theater tech knowledge and we're really, really excited about having such an expert work with Campolindo's students," he says. "The whole idea for the program was a group idea. We said, 'we really need someone who can come in and run CPAC. Little jobs were getting done haphazardly, with a lot of good will, but not with oversight. You'd have one person setting the theater up one way, then another person changing it. It could take half a day just to get it back to where it was!'"

Sam Crossley, 16, is signed up for the class. "We had a drama class that had a tech side of it that wasn't officially a part of the class. When the new drama teacher came in, the tech part diminished because he didn't know about it. He and some teachers developed this class. I'm excited: I want it to be more of a group thing, because last year, tech was basically me and another guy."

Jenna Guergah, also 16 and a junior at Campo, has done video production, but not theater tech. "It's great to be able to come back here, behind the scenes, and see what our tax dollars are paying for. And hopefully, Campo will start hiring students to run the productions, instead of having to hire professionals."

Harvey Benstein, part of the planning group and the school's Instrumental Music Director, explained the financial arrangements for the after-school program. "It is funded through the student activities account overseen by the student council at Campolindo going directly to student programs."

The seminar and work-study/certification program will begin in October. It is open to 15-20 students and will meet 1-2 days per week. "Already, we have a bunch of students signing up and I just got more emails," Donohoe said. The drama staff, interested students, and their leader, Gertz, will meet to decide the when and where of the course. Students in the program will work directly on productions presented by Campolindo organizations and assist in hall usage by Campolindo students, staff and the community.

Campolindo High School's Performing Arts Center, known on campus as CPAC, is getting a new light.

It's not a Fresnel, the spotlights common to film and theater, it's Bryan Gertz, the guru of technology at Miramonte High School. Gertz will be guiding a new after-school program for students interested in theater tech, stagecraft, lighting and design.

"I'm still working with the staff and students at Campo to develop the course," Gertz said, in a recent phone interview. "I'll be teaching them how to run the mixing board, set up sound equipment, create sound and lighting design, use surround effects, wireless microphones, compressors, and basic electronics."

Gertz has been the Acalanes Union District Computer Tech for 11-and-a-half years. "I was working at a computer shop and I needed a better job," he said. "Sound is my true love. This all started from music."

He's referring to the work he has been doing in Miramonte's theater department. There, he has been the unofficial tech master, stepping in to drama classes and productions to assist and instruct. "I completely rebuilt the sound system at Miramonte," he said. "The old

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