Syracuse Style

Student designers strut their stuff at Collezione '95.

Crunching a carrot stick while sitting on the design studio floor in Slocum Hall, senior Stacey Cagan contemplates the daunting task ahead of her. Hidden somewhere among the yards of fabric, patterns, pins, and sheets of crumpled drafting paper that surround her are the fashions Cagan will soon create. But what direction should she take? Computerized design or classic French couture? Techno-Pop or Hip-Hop? Mohair, faux fur, or hand-painted textile design? The only certainty is weeks of late-night work as Cagan pursues the student designer’s dream—seeing an original collection modeled on the runway of Collezione, Syracuse University’s student fashion show.

“This show is the one time in your life when you have all the creative power in the world, until you really make it in the industry,” says Cagan. “As a fashion design student at Syracuse University, you have complete artistic freedom over your work. Once new designers hit the real world, they are usually under someone else’s direction, designing what others want.”

Fashion design students from the College for Human Development orchestrate and direct the annual show, which takes place each April in the Schine Student Center’s Goldstein Auditorium. Collezione is Italian for collection. The name was chosen because of Italy’s renown for fashion and because organizers felt an international name best reflected the variety of design.

Each senior in the fashion design program presents an original collection consisting of six fashion ensembles and a fully developed theme that includes choreography, music, and lighting. Underclassmen may also make submissions. A faculty jury judges the designs and presents awards based on originality, marketability, construction, and design line.

Jacqueline Keuler, director of the fashion design program, says students need to experience artistic freedom and professional responsibility, both of which are provided by the student-run show. “I want my students to experience the realities of what a designer battles with in the industry,” she says. “The emotion of creating, the realities of marketability, the promise of notoriety.”

Nearly 200 students were involved in producing Collezione, and more than 1,000 spectators turned out for the show. Clothing categories included senior collections, lavish couture, sexy sportswear, and the new post-consumer/recycled category—a hot trend in the fashion industry today.

Student designer Jessica Alpert captured the essence of that trend with her “landfill chic” collection, which earned her the outstanding junior award. “I was recycling discarded items before it was in vogue,” says Alpert. “I designed my garbage bag dress as a statement about our throwaway society. The clothes we wear reflect our social and personal philosophies.”

Among other award-winners was senior Todd Conover, whose collection was “an escapade in forward-thinking retro, a futuristic twist into the past.” Snug jackets in pearly pastels complemented flippy fifties skirts, pinched at the waist. Pillbox hats with giant, stalked flowers adorned the models’ heads. “I want to see my name in designs sold at stores such as Barney’s and Bergdorf Goodman,” says Conover.

He’s not alone. —KYLE KYRNITSZE
ON THE AIR

Khafele Khalfani, better known to some by his on-air persona of K.J. Steele, sways back and forth in a small cubicle while singing “My Love Is for Real” along with Paula Abdul. He’s also lining up the next songs to play on Z89-FM when the request line lights up.

“Can you play ‘Waterfalls’ by TLC?” asks a caller.

“I’ll do my best,” answers Khalfani.

The song may play within the hour or perhaps not for a week. It’s not up to Khalfani. He has to follow a prescribed musical program. “The good old days of Venus Flytrap on WKRP in Cincinnati don’t happen anymore,” says Khalfani. “Those people were really disc jockeys.”

Z89-FM, or WJPZ, is the University’s student-run radio station, and it’s among the hottest college stations in the country. It ranks seventh among more than 30 stations in the greater Syracuse market, says sophomore Dan Austin, the station’s general manager. He says the station has usually been in the top 10 since 1985, the year Z89 switched from a cable channel to its present FM frequency.

Today, in the basement of Watson Hall, Khalfani and several staff members toil in a narrow, three-room station adorned with bumper stickers from radio stations nationwide. “For some, the station becomes your home,” says junior Mimi Jung, a broadcast journalism major and Z89 news director.

The hours can be long—certain staffers have slept on a back-room table—but the investment usually pays off for the 150 or so students who take advantage of the station each year. Jung says the station provides an education in a professional environment. “Students get hands-on experience, which is the most important thing when they go for that first job,” she says.

Being recognized on campus is also a perk, says Khalfani. A marketing major and Z89 DJ for four years, he likes to recount his most embarrassing on-air moment, which began when a sportscaster didn’t show up for his shift. Khalfani told the news director he’d fill in as long as he had a prepared script.

Since January 1994, more than 2,300 SU employees have begun or completed training in the basic principles, skills, and tools of Syracuse University Improving Quality (SUIQ), the University-wide effort to improve administrative services. By the end of this academic year, all 3,000 staff will have completed the training, which is the first step in a long-term effort to continuously improve the way SU serves students, parents, and all of its customers.

Implementation of the SUIQ effort was begun last year by a Steering Committee chaired by Chancellor Kenneth A. Shaw. That group developed the basic concepts and training materials, set up the University-wide training program, and established an administrative structure.

With these steps nearing completion, the Steering Committee was reorganized in 1995 to reflect its new emphasis on directing operations of SUIQ. In its new form, the Steering Committee was expanded from 10 members to 19, responding to the need to be more representative of the University with regard to areas of responsibility, job level, and diversity.

“Basically, these changes do two things,” says Eleanor Gallagher, former director of SUIQ and now vice president. “They expand the Steering Committee so it’s more representative, and they focus the Steering Committee on policy-making to guide SUIQ into full operation.”

The SUIQ seminars, led by specially trained University employees, have focused on three goals: to acquaint staff with the principles of continuous improvement; to provide them with the basic skills necessary to act on those principles; and to provide the tools that enable staff to recognize and make changes.

“SUIQ asks the people closest to the process to improve the process,” says Ann Donahue, director of SUIQ. “It enables us to work toward continuously improving the services we provide for students, parents, alumni, and for one another.”

Though training is well under way and improvements already have been realized through SUIQ, the effort will not effect complete change overnight. “It’s an evolving process,” says Donahue. “SUIQ really is working over time to change the culture.”

In remembrance of the 189 Americans—35 of them SU students—who lost their lives in the terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 on December 21, 1988, over Lockerbie, Scotland, a memorial cairn is being erected at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. The cairn, a gift from the people of Scotland to the people of America, is a traditional Scottish stone monument. The Arlington cairn will be built in a tower-like form using 270 sandstone blocks cut from Corsehill Quarry in Annan, Scotland.

A Memorial Cairn Fund has been formed to raise $250,000 needed to construct and dedicate the cairn. Those who wish to contribute to the fund should send their donations to: The Memorial Cairn Fund, c/o The Victims of Pan Am Flight 103, P.O. Box 2156, Arlington, Virginia 22202-9998.
One of the stories involved former SU basketball player Conrad McRae, who was then training with the Washington Bullets of the National Basketball Association.

"I was reading along and I said Bullethead coach, instead of Bullet's head coach," says Khalfani. "The news person and another DJ started laughing, then I started laughing, and we ended up laughing throughout the rest of my cast. Probably nobody else picked up the mistake, but once I started laughing, I couldn't stop."

Such moments are what college radio is all about, says Newhouse professor Roosevelt "Rick" Wright Jr., WJPZ's faculty adviser for 20 years. He says WJPZ's goal has always been to provide students a laboratory for learning. "It's the perfect place to start a career in radio," says Wright. —HOlLY CHARRON

In the Swing

The dancers exchange cautious glances at the first sounds of music. They begin to sway with the beat, warming to the rhythms of classic jazz. Working in unison—some cautious, others bold—the dancers swing into the first steps of their jitterbug dance routine.

Auditions for a new Syracuse Stage production? Not quite. These jazzy jitterbuggers are first-year musical theater majors and their parents, sharing a taste of SU life courtesy of the College of Visual and Performing Arts. The occasion is Preview '95, the University's fourth annual summer orientation for incoming first-year students. Six schools and colleges—Management, Nursing, Visual and Performing Arts, Engineering and Computer Science, Human Development, and Social Work—have chosen to participate in a weekend meant to acclimate and inform incoming freshmen whose first college experience would otherwise come from sudden immersion in the fall.

Preview serves several purposes, some concrete, some more ineffable. Both students and parents attend information sessions, some meant for all the academic disciplines, some for individual schools and colleges. Students are grouped with others from their own school, meet key personnel, and learn their way around campus.

"Preview is a bridge between the end of our school's very personalized recruiting process and the opening weekend of school," says Grace Chickadonz, dean of the College of Nursing.

Chickadonz hopes the event can "smooth out" the emotional and logistical jolts that accompany a typical fall arrival. She also wants parents and students to leave Preview attuned to each other's fears about the upcoming separation.

One of the goals of the College of Visual and Performing Arts is "to assist parents in better understanding their students' interest in pursuing study in the arts, while at the same time preparing students for the work ahead of them," says Dean Donald Lantzy. VPA has been involved with Preview since its beginnings, and each year hosts the largest freshman turnout of any school or college at SU.

The "jitterbug experience," directed and choreographed by Assistant Professor Anthony Salatino, brings students and their parents onto the dance floor for group dance instruction. In the process, students get the opportunity to show their parents how difficult dance
performance can be, while parents leave with a new respect for the hard work ahead for their offspring.

"Parents have been away from the university environment a long time and need to understand what is expected of SU freshmen today," says Lantzy. "Students, on the other hand, need to realize that learning and living in a university environment requires things like time management, self-discipline, and being able to get along with others. Our Preview programs cover all this and more."

Incoming underclassmen get insights not only from SU faculty and staff, but also from fellow University students. "The new students' concerns run through a hierarchy," says Stacy Wilson, an SU senior and one of many student aides for Preview. "They want to know, 'Where are my classes? Where do I eat and sleep?' When these questions are answered, they want to know, 'How will I fit in, make friends? Will people like me, or do I have to change myself to make people like me?'

Amy Reddinger helps students probe these questions. She and other student aides design and perform skits dealing with issues such as drinking, date rape, the pressure to be Greek, and the academic workload. Reddinger attended Preview two summers ago as an incoming freshman. "I had such a good time myself, I wanted to do the same for other freshmen," she says. "It gives you time to adjust to campus and make new friends.

Parents seek their own answers at what Edward Golden calls the "anything you wanted to know about campus life but were afraid to ask" presentation, in which Golden, SU’s vice president for student affairs and dean of student relations, hosts a question-and-answer program with the heads of campus organizations.

Golden calls these weekends a success. Students are better prepared for the fall. Parents are closer to the University. "Involvement in the institution is the key to success and retention," says Golden. "But the ongoing benefits of Preview can’t be measured in terms of the individual students. It’s a leavening experience."