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SMC Jan Term Speakers Series Delves into Diverse and Delicate Topics

By A.K. Carroll



Emily Hause and Grete Stenersen

Photos provided

Every year Saint Mary's January Term provides students and instructors alike with the opportunity to explore new academic realms and engage in perspective-changing conversations and thought-provoking activities. Saint Mary's January Term Department also hosts a series of talks given by diverse and talented speakers who share deeply from their personal experiences on a broad range of topics. This year's speaker series, which is free to the public, features author Roland Merullo, social justice activist Rev. Osagyefo Uhuru Sekou and an engaging discussion between psychology professor Emily Hause and leadership professor Grete Stenersen. Lectures will take place in the afternoon and evening in various locations on campus.

Hause and Stenersen will kick off the series with a presentation entitled, "Before I Die," a discussion on death and dying. The presentation will take place at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 13 in the Hagerty Lounge of De La Salle Hall and will be based on one of Saint Mary's most popular January Term courses, Death and Dying.

"My team teacher Emily Hause, came to me with the idea some years ago," said Stenersen. "She suggested that we team up and create a class that would be as hands-on as possible. We've had a wait list every single year we've taught it." Now in its seventh year, the class focuses on insights from "Before I Die," a public art installation created by artist Candy Chang. Originally done on an abandoned building in New Orleans, the work invites locals to share their life's wishes on a public wall. It has since become a global phenomenon and has been replicated in over 60 countries around the world.

"We were really struck by how many of these young people had been touched by the death of someone close to them," said Stenersen. "Part of what we're helping them to do is give them tools to talk about their experiences." During the presentation on Jan. 13, Stenersen and Hause will show a couple of videos and share the background of the course, as well as what they've learned individually as instructors. At the close of the presentation, audience members and community members will be invited to take part in SMC's own "Before I Die" installation, which will be located in Dryden Hall and will remain on display for several weeks.

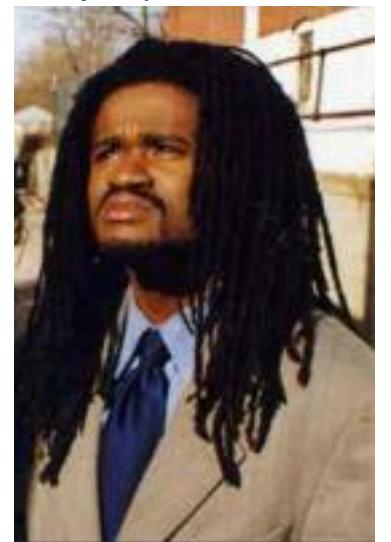
"It's much more about living than it is about dying," said Stenersen. "Our intention (for the lecture) is parallel with our intention and goal with the course itself in that all of us—whatever we believe might happen after we die—will at some point have that experience. By having healthy ways to look at and explore it we believe we have a more positive experience of embracing what life itself is."

The following week, Reverend Osagyefo Uhuru Sekou will speak on the topic "After Ferguson: The Dream for Justice." A leader within the Black Lives Matter protests that followed the shooting and death of Michael Brown, Sekou has since trained over 800 people in nonviolent civil disobedience and is considered a leader in his generation. His collection of writings includes "Gods, Gays, and Guns: Essays on Religion and the Future of Democracy." Sekou will speak at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 19 in the Soda Center.

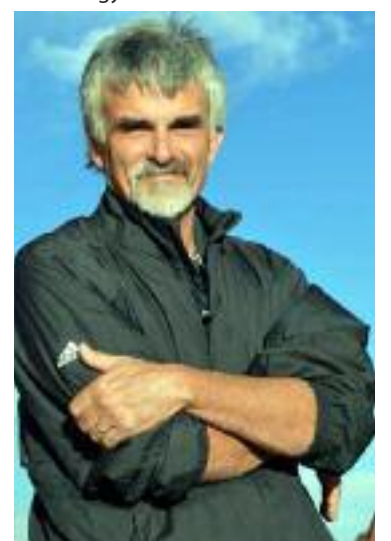
The series will conclude with Roland Merullo, renowned author of 20 books, including the much-loved

trilogy "Breakfast with Buddha," "Lunch with Buddha" and "Dinner with Buddha." Merullo will speak at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 26 in the Soda Center.

For more information on the Jan Term Speaker Series, contact the Jan Term office by phone at (925) 631-4771 or by email at janterm@stmmarys-ca.edu. Visit the Speaker Series online at stmmarys-ca.edu/january-term.



Rev. Osagyefo Uhuru Sekou



Roland Merullo

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Sardines Insalata: calamata olives, green beans, potato, feta cheese, balsamic olive oil9

Niman Flat Iron Steak: potato gratin, green beans, chimichurri sauce18

Fresh Seafood Cioppino: in a rich tomato-basil sauce, parmesan, garlic toast...19

Roasted Scallops: spinach, saliccia sugo19

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Under Arrest: Tales of Classical Music's Most Notorious Felons

Submitted by Pamela Freund



Gold Coast Chamber Players with Soprano Christine Brandes at a concert last January.

Photo provided

Although the connection between classical music and notorious crimes may seem obscure,

the Gold Coast Chamber Players' collaborative spirit will be highlighted in Alessandro Stradella's Sinfonia for Strings and Harpsichord. Each player gets a chance in the spotlight, yet the ensemble ultimately works as one unit. Stradella was also a well-known philanthropist in his day, which ultimately led to his sticky end. The most dramatic of the crimes involves Carlo Gesualdo, who caught his wife and her lover in flagrante and brutally murdered them on the spot. His song, "Moro,

Carlo Gesualdo – lay scandal, intrigue, and mystery.

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