



Courtesy of Lisa Wandel

Renovations to Pollock Dining Commons will begin in January and is scheduled for completion by fall 2011.

Renovation plans near completion

By Julie Mastrine
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The walk from Simmons Dining Hall to Pollock Commons isn't a long one. Just ask James Hopey — he's timed it twice.

"It's a three minute and 30 second walk from the Pollock doors to touching the doorknob of Simmons," said Hopey, assistant director of residence dining. "It's a quick walk, but I never ran."

Though it may be a challenge to convince students to walk the extra distance to Pollock when Simmons Dining Hall closes at the end of the year, the revamped commons won't disappoint, said Lisa Wandel, director of residence dining.

Plans for the renovation of Pollock Dining Commons are close to being finalized. Nearly everything about the commons will change — including its layout, décor and hours of operation, she said.

To alleviate long waits, students will enter the dining commons from what is currently the exit. They'll swipe their IDs and then be free to roam about the north and south sides, which will feature all-you-can-eat dining at various food stations, much like Waring Commons.

From Jan. 3 to April 22, the south dining area and the Nittany Lion Training Table will close for renovations, Wandel said.

Students who used the Training Table will be moved to the Gold, Silver and Bronze rooms located in the north side of the commons, and rigaTony's will move downstairs. The Training Table will reopen during spring break, and the north side will close on May 9. All of Pollock will re-open next fall.

Plans for the south side include four dining stations — an Asian station, a grill, a hickory smoker and a chef's table, which will feature popular dishes currently served in Pollock and Simmons, Hopey said.

The north side will include a station for gluten-free options, a pizza/pasta bar, a fresh fruit bar and an extensive salad bar. Restrooms will also be added.

Some students are concerned Pollock will not be able to handle the influx of students once Simmons closes, but Wandel said plans to eliminate the Gold, Silver and Bronze rooms, which are currently used for dining by private groups, will alleviate these concerns.

The rooms, located next to the north dining area, will be open to all students and will include a bakery/café and a lounge with a fireplace, soft seating and big-screen TVs.

Many students expressed the desire for more intimate seating in Pollock, Wandel said.

"Right now, Pollock is a sea of tables and chairs," she said. "By breaking it up with different colors and textures, we'll be able to break up the bigness."

The current serving line will be converted into corridor seating areas, and private dining rooms will be constructed where rigaTony's is.

This spring, residence dining officials will evaluate which recipes were most popular in Simmons and add them to Pollock's menu.

When Pollock reopens, some students said they hope to see more vegetables like those offered at Simmons.

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Moscow orchestra performs

By Hannah Rishel
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

State College got a taste of culture all the way from Russia on Tuesday night.

The Moscow State Symphony Orchestra performed in Eisenhower auditorium with guest Jennifer Koh, an American violin soloist.

The orchestra — directed by Pavel Kogan — began the concert with "Capriccio Italien" by Piotr Illyich Tchaikovsky. Koh joined the orchestra on stage for "Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor: Op. 26."

Unlike the other violin players in the orchestra, Koh stood beside the conductor during her performance. While playing, she swung her head and moved her shoulders the way a guitarist at a rock concert would.

After an intermission the orchestra returned to the stage, sans Koh, to play "Pictures at an



Tyler Szempruch

The Moscow State Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Pavel Kogan, performs Tuesday night at Eisenhower Auditorium.

Exhibition" by Modest Mussorgsky, a 10-piece composition.

Kogan, Koh and the orchestra received a standing ovation from the crowd afterward.

Symphonies and other classical music events are not typically well attended by Penn State students, John Mark Rafacz, Editorial Manager for the Center for the Performing Arts, said prior to the concert.

But the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra's concert

had a large number of students attending for classes.

Justin Conklin and his friend Jason Becker attended the concert because of Conklin's integrative arts class, which requires him to attend five concerts during the semester.

Conklin (sophomore-English) said that he liked the second half of the concert better because it was "more animated and easier to follow."

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Author's memoir highlights loss

By Courtney Warner
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Robin Romm confronted an audience of more than 60 people Tuesday night with the harsh realities of abandonment, starting a family, dying relatives and heartbreaks.

Robin Romm is the author of the memoir "The Mercy Papers," and an unpublished story, "Adulthood."

The memoir has been named a Top Ten Nonfiction Book of the Year by Entertainment Weekly, a Notable Book of the Year by the New York Times and Top 100 Nonfiction Book by the San Francisco Chronicle.

Romm began the night by reading an excerpt from "Adulthood." The story criticizes men from the perspective of a woman who "has a heart, it's been broken, and now [she] needs to start rebuilding it."

During this story, the audience was given a glimpse of Romm's personality through her expressions of humor, disagreement,

reverence, and despair. Romm also read from her memoir "The Mercy Papers," which follows her family's struggles with her mother's cancer. Romm said the memoir didn't "savagely" describe a hospice nurse, "like editors thought. She said that it showed a woman who dealt with the fact that her patient was dying, not how the sickness was affecting the patient and the patient's family."

William Cobb, professor of English, said he brought Romm to Penn State because she's a young and timeless writer.

"Robin compassionately yet roughly writes about personal issues that others are hesitant to address," Cobb said.

A Q&A session followed the readings where she talked about her inspirations and the process of becoming a writer. Romm said her nonfiction is inspired by what people tell her she shouldn't write. She said her fiction is inspired by minute details that "glimmer" her mind, adding that people should learn by how they

see the world around them. Daniel Story (graduate poetry) said he agrees with how Romm approaches her creativity.

Story said the event was a good opportunity for future writers to interact with someone who is going through what they will have to.

Luke Miller (senior English) said his favorite part was her readings, especially the reading of "Adulthood."

"Her stories were engaging, and I liked her openness with a project that's still a work in process. Many people are afraid to hear criticism. She's not," he said.

During her storytelling, Romm frequently took out a pencil to correct stories that didn't say what she wanted them to.

Sonja Cooper (senior biology) said she appreciated watching Romm correct her own work.

"People aren't open to acknowledging their mistakes, but she had no shame in making what was wrong better," she said.

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Contact Information:

- direct all questions to Rodney Hughes by e-mail at BOTstudent@psu.edu or leave message by phone at 814-865-2521



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LEVEL For example, TRAPEZII becomes ZITI and PEAR.

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P L A Y P E N C A D

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Yesterday's Answer: REGULAR MATURE MORES OGLER

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