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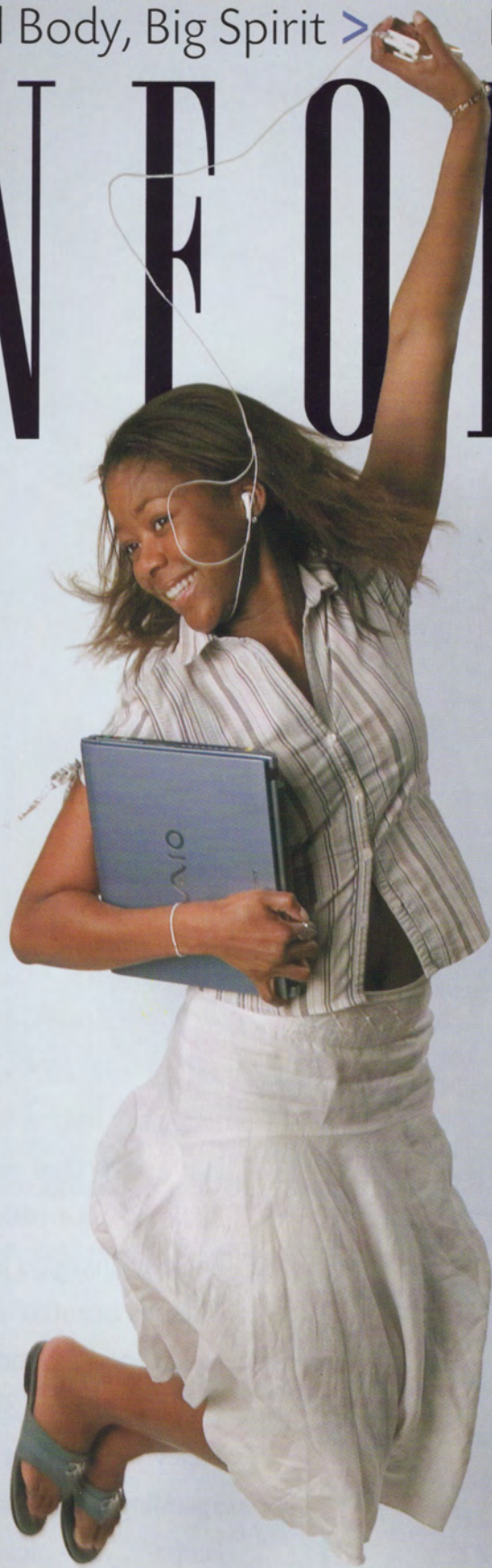
STANFORD

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The ups
and downs
of the
wired
student.

Laptop Life



that's when I started calling myself a composer," he says. With good reason: he won the college's Horowitz composition prize and was commissioned by the U.S. Embassy to write his string quartet *Lacrymosa*.

If it wasn't glamorous work, it finally got Tin into the Internet Movie Database. "The industry is a series of hills you have to climb over," he muses. "The first one is the biggest; it took me more than a year and

Tin cites composers Thomas Newman, who received an Oscar nomination this year for *Finding Nemo* and whose credits include *American Beauty* and *In the Bedroom*, and Elliott Goldenthal (Oscar winner for *Frida*), especially his *Interview with the Vampire* score, among his favorites. He admires the "unique sound combinations" and "ambiguity" of Newman, and describes Goldenthal as someone who is "uncompromisingly avant-garde and has a stellar command of the orchestra."

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Then he struck out for Los Angeles. The first year, "I was doing shorts, low-budget anything, making no money." Tin realized he'd have to be more aggressive. On a trip back to London he met the head of the Fulbright Commission, which by then had started a mentorship program, and asked if something similar could be arranged for him. The commission obliged with what Tin calls a "very generic" letter of recommendation. Returning to L.A., Tin sent would-you-help-me packets to a range of top film composers. He included the Fulbright reference, his transcript from the Royal College of Music and a cover letter asking if they'd be willing to talk with him. Nine composers replied.

Tin networked hard—follow-up notes, Christmas cards, keeping in touch generally—and ultimately enjoyed close mentoring relationships with five professionals. First he interned with Hans Zimmer, the composer for *The Lion King* and *Gladiator*. Soon Joel McNeely, who was working on *Uptown Girls*, offered work on three movies he was scoring. Tin still wasn't composing his own music, but he prepared the MIDI demos—electronically generated previews of new compositions, made before a live orchestra is hired for thousands of dollars a day—for Disney's *Mulan 2*.

Then John Ottman, with whom Tin had kept in touch for a year, sought help on *X-Men 2*. "Want to write some music for it?" he asked Tin.

Tin did. He worked as an orchestrator, converting Ottman's sketches for background music into a written orchestral score. Tin also wrote some of the "source music," which is integral to the movie itself. For example, the song listings at the end of the film include "TV News Theme" by Christopher Tin.

half and a really fortuitous set of circumstances to break in."

The next hill is doing his own composing. In September, he wrote 23 minutes of music for a New York Times Television/Discovery Channel documentary on various Martin Luther King boulevards throughout the country, and he recently finished another documentary about the war on terror for PBS and a German broadcaster. Tin also wrote demo music for Apple's new Garage Band software.

As for his own aspirations, Tin says, "In the past, I wanted to do the big summer blockbusters. But lately, I'm really attracted by what independent cinema has to offer." One attraction: during the winter he got to score *The Lodge*, an independent film produced in Luxembourg. ■

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Short Take: Water Works

Mindful of the old saw that honey draws more flies than vinegar, Linda Gass uses lush, colorful works of art to attract attention to conservation issues. At first glance, Gass's silk wall hangings, art quilts and mixed-media collages are striking representations of skies, rivers and deserts. Closer inspection reveals panel edges that are unstitched and fraying or mended with hand stitching, to symbolize the despoiling of nature and the possibility of repair. As a Californian, Gass, '81, MS '83, often focuses on the use and abuse of natural waterways; a recent solo show was titled "No Swimming."

Textile art is her second career, launched a decade ago. A math major with a master's in computer science—she also squeezed in fine arts courses—Gass worked in software development for 10 years. She exhibits regularly in juried shows and galleries across the country, and her work has been featured in numerous books on fiber art and quilting. The Los Altos resident also designs clothing and accessories. For inspiration, she frequents Western wilderness areas.

HOPE: "River Mend" celebrates free-flowing water.

