

The Arts Culture

“We can look at the arts ... as making pictures, [or] we can look at the arts as tasks which develop the mind because of the kinds of thinking they evoke, practice and develop.”

—ELLIOTT EISNER, Chancellor's Lecturer

Dance: An Irish Dance Equation

For some, the connection between math, music and dance is found in their shared structure of numbers and rhythms. At Vanderbilt the connection between the three could be said to be alumna Wendy Windsor-Hashiguchi, BS'87. A math major during her undergraduate days, Windsor-Hashiguchi is a numbers cruncher by day and teacher of Irish dance by night.

She has taught Irish step, set and social dances with the Vanderbilt Dance Group since the late '90s. A few years ago she founded her own school, the Scott-Ellis School of Irish Dance (www.scott-ellis.com), and she plays hammer dulcimer with The Jump Gypsies, an Irish band she and her husband, Franko Hashiguchi, co-founded.

One might assume that someone so immersed in Irish

Wendy Windsor-Hashiguchi



NEIL BRAKE

Irish dance until I was 30 years old and pregnant with my first child,” she says.

A gymnast and member of a drum and bugle corps in high school (“I played flag,” she says), she became intrigued with Irish dance after seeing a dancer perform with the legendary Irish band The Chieftains not long after she finished her undergraduate work at Vanderbilt. Enthusiastic, but finding no teachers in Nashville, she tried the closest thing she could find: Scottish Highland dancing.

“I started really late. I mean 22 back then was ancient to be starting Highland. I was competing in the ‘12 and over’ category,” she laughs, “but I kept doing it because I wanted to do it, and I wanted to do it well. And I competed up to championship level, though I did not win any championships.”

When her husband pointed her to classes in Irish dance at the Augusta Heritage Center in West Virginia, she was finally on her way. She became a certified *ceili* (pronounced kay-lee) teacher, or one who teaches Irish social dances, in 2000 and received her full certification as a TCRG—*Teasgicoir Choimsiúin Le Rinci Gaelacha* (Gaelic Commission Dancing Teacher)—through the Irish

Dance Commission in Dublin several years later by passing a rigorous weekend-long exam in four parts: written, music, teaching and dance.

“I think they do it like that so that you really have to want it or you wouldn’t subject yourself to it. I could teach Irish dance no matter what my certification was, but if I want my students to be eligible to compete at a *feis* [pronounced fesh], which is an Irish dance competition, I need to be fully certified.”

At Vanderbilt, Windsor-Hashiguchi teaches mostly college students and some staff, but at her studio in nearby Franklin she has taught kids as young as 3. One of her adult students won the adult championship in Washington, D.C.

In addition to her work as a human resources analyst at Hospital Corporation of America and teaching Irish dance at Vanderbilt, at her Franklin, Tenn., studio, and in Franklin, Ky., she’s now learning button accordion to go along with her hammer dulcimer work for The Jump Gypsies. She encourages all her dance students to play music as well as dance.

“I think being a musician makes you a better dancer and being a dancer makes you a better musician, because they’re really two sides of the same coin,” she says. “But given my druthers, I’d rather be dancing.”

—Bonnie Arant Ertelt

Visual Art: Common Ground Comes Full Circle

Lain York, director of Zeitgeist Gallery in Nashville, sits before a group of eager artists, parents of artists and art enthusiasts who have come to the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center (VKC) to hear about his experiences as a painter, to discuss marketing, and to brainstorm about the possibilities that could arise from creating a community of artists with special needs in Nashville.

“I know what it is to want to pursue painting in an environment with limited prospects of sales and subsidies,” says York, who for years has served as the

identify common goals and to share resources.”

“Creating Community and Opportunity for Artists with Special Needs” was just one in a series of workshops that has been offered through the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center University Center for Excellence, thanks to a Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission grant. Judging from the ideas that were shared and the enthusiasm among workshop participants, a community of artists seems not only plausible but necessary.

Leisa A. Hammett, mother of an 11-year-old visual artist with autism, has been advocating for some time to meet the need for an established community in the form of an art center for people with disabilities in Nashville. (See related story, p. 32.)

“I came here tonight thinking I could plant a seed,” Hammett said. “I want to have a place where people with disabilities can go and experience the joy and the therapeutic nature of making art. I know that creating art has been right there with speech and behavior therapy, with occupational therapy and education as being an important factor in my daughter’s development.”

The advantages of creating a community of artists with special needs are many, say supporters. Not only would it



“Mandala”

VKC’s preparator of art exhibits featuring artists with developmental disabilities. “What works is identifying and stressing what makes you different. It is a matter of coming together as a community to

Upcoming

Visual Arts:
Harold Lowe Jr. shows civil rights photographs at Sarratt Gallery Jan. 15–Feb. 16, 2007. The collection contains



powerful black-and-white photographs of civil rights activities in Nashville taken by Lowe for *The Tennessean* between 1960 and 1964, including the well-known Kresge’s lunch counter photograph.



Music: Jon Hendricks and LHR Redux bring jazz to the Great Performances at Vanderbilt Series on Feb. 14 at 8 p.m. in Ingram Hall. A vocal innovator, Hendricks has been dubbed the “Father of Vocalese and James Joyce of Jive.”

Theatre: Vanderbilt University Theatre presents *The Playboy of the Western World*, John M. Synge’s rustic, irreverent commentary on Irish rural life at the turn of the 20th century, Feb. 16–24 at Neely Auditorium.

provide a supportive atmosphere in which to create, share experiences, and develop stronger survival skills as artists, but it would also benefit parents, caregivers and friends who are often given the task of marketing the art.

One window into the world of the artist with special needs opened in the form of the *Common Ground* art exhibit. The exhibit, held this summer

at the VKC, was the product of a series of workshops facilitated by Full Circle Art. In the workshops, participants first invited and engaged the artistic muse through drumming and movement. They then carried out the Full Circle Art mission to “communicate a shared vision of peace, love and hope” with paint brushes and canvases, ceramics and stained glass. The result was a colorful and

Verbatim

“What we need in American education is not for the arts to look more like the academics ... but for the academics to look more like the arts. We need programs that pay much more attention to the imaginative, to the playful, to the stimulation of curiosity, to the pursuit of unanswered questions, to the opportunity to work to the edge of incompetence. We need schools that promote risk-taking of an intellectual kind and in which meaning matters.”

— Elliott Eisner, the Lee Jacks Professor of Education and professor of art at Stanford University, delivering the second of the 2006–07 Chancellor’s Lectures Sept. 29, titled “What Do the Arts Teach?”

Accolades

Frye Gaillard, BA'68, writer-in-residence at the University of South Alabama, author of 20 books, and frequent contributor to *Vanderbilt Magazine*, has won the prestigious Lillian Smith Award for his most recent book, *Cradle of Freedom: Alabama and the Movement That Changed America* (University of Alabama Press). The Lillian Smith Award recognizes authors whose work challenges all Americans on issues of social and racial justice.



Virginia Derryberry, BA'73, MA'76, a noted painter and University of North Carolina-Asheville art professor, returned to Vanderbilt for a solo exhibition at Sarratt Gallery during the month of October. The paintings for *Second Nature* featured complex figure scenarios in Eden-like landscapes and were begun during Derryberry's 2004 residency in Auvillar, France. The exhibit, held in conjunction with Derryberry's award of the

2005–06 juried Southeastern College Art Conference Artist Fellowship, coincided with SECAC's annual conference in Nashville. Derryberry held her first professional solo exhibition at Sarratt Gallery in 1980.

An album produced by **Dale Cockrell**, professor of musicology, and **Butch Baldassari**, adjunct associate professor of mandolin at the Blair School of Music, is the first music selection to be added to a National Endowment for the Humanities collection of works that are perceived to strengthen students' understanding of American history and culture. *Happy Land: Musical Tributes to Laura Ingalls Wilder* is part of the new *We the People* collection from the NEH. This year's collection has the theme of "Pursuit of Happiness," and includes *Those Happy Golden Years* by Wilder, *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and other classics of literature. The NEH will distribute the chosen works to 2,000 public, school and military libraries in the United States and overseas.



Baldassari and Cockrell

energetic display of common ground among the Full Circle artists and youth and adults with developmental disabilities. (View the exhibit online at kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/art/art0406.)

"As the University Center for Excellence grows, there will be an increased number of workshops in the areas of education and the arts," says Elise McMillan, the center's associate director. "It is an exciting time, and we are honored to contribute all we can to help forge relationships for community artists with special needs."

—Courtney Evans

Music:

Sound Space

Sept. 9 marked the grand opening of the Schermerhorn Symphony Center, a new, \$123 million centerpiece for music performance in downtown Music City. For the more than 20 members of the Nashville Symphony who are also teachers and professors at the Blair School of Music, the occasion was the culmination of many weeks of practice for a singular opportunity to perform publicly in a brand-new space specifically designed acoustically to enhance symphonic music. Not least in the list of first-ever experiences was performing with the interim music director for the Nashville Symphony, renowned conductor Leonard Slatkin.

"I couldn't be happier with the sound in the hall," says Bobby Taylor, the symphony's principal oboist and Blair associate professor of oboe. "It allows us to play the full range of dynamics with confidence. I thought Mr. Slatkin was the perfect choice to navigate



Blair faculty members and Nashville Symphony musicians William Wiggins (left) and Bobby Taylor inside the symphony's new, \$123 million performance hall

through all the gala activities for the opening of the hall—with the experienced perspective that allowed the orchestra to stay focused on the most important thing, the music."

William Wiggins, the symphony's principal timpanist and Blair assistant professor of percussion, echoes Taylor's sentiments.

"It was the most rewarding experience to be able to hear my colleagues while playing—and play in an unforced manner to produce the best sound possible from my instrument," says Wiggins. "The sound is wonderful: resonant, yet clear and clean. Everything can be heard—that's the good news and the bad news!"

Mark Wait, dean of the Blair School of Music, serves as

chairman of the Nashville Symphony's official committee searching for a permanent music director in the wake of the death last spring of Kenneth Schermerhorn, for whom

the hall is named. Slatkin has agreed to serve in the interim and assist in the selection process of the permanent director.

—Cindy Steine

The Nashville Symphony includes more than 20 Blair faculty members, in addition to Bobby Taylor and William Wiggins: Jeff Bailey (trumpet*), Denise Baker (acting assistant concertmaster*), Larry Borden (trombone*), Cynthia Estill (bassoon*), Gerald Greer (acting concertmaster*), Erin Hall (acting associate concertmaster*), Charlene Harb (keyboard/harp*), Cassie Lee (clarinet*), Erin Long (first violin), Gil Long (tuba*), Brad Mansell (cello), Ellen Menking (oboe*), Leslie Norton (horn*), Gil Perel (bassoon and contra bassoon), Dan Reinker (viola*), Joel Reist (bass*), Norma Rogers (piccolo), Chris Stenstrom (cello), Julia Tanner (cello*), Glen Wanner (bass*), and Roger Wiesmeyer (English horn).

*Indicates either principal or assistant principal

All Souls' Eve

Polish Military Cemetery, Kraków

Dusk and so many flowers, lit votives, mourners who come leaning leggy baguettes on headstones with vodka shots, steaming containers of soup—some open their gifts directly on the graves. One woman, a friend, upends the local pilsner, her dead man's pleasure, and the piss-steam hisses a hillside specter. I'm here but somewhere else: my mind, racing, moves at the speed of dreams. The woman's son climbs from my shoulders and sprints the length of cobbled graveyard wall toward some inscrutable fury, becoming all voice—like the white-bearded cantor on Rosh Hashanah who for one vast moment arrived at a resonance I could almost taste as it held us alive and at the brink of shattering.

—Rick Hilles, senior lecturer in English, from his book *Brother Salvage: Poems*, published in September by the University of Pittsburgh Press and winner of the 2005 Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize

Symphony Honors Alumna Amy Grant

On Sunday evening during the new symphony hall's opening weekend of gala festivities, a sold-out crowd enjoyed "An Evening with Amy Grant," the hall's first truly public performance. Vanderbilt alumna and Grammy-winning performer Amy Grant, '82, was surprised by Nashville Symphony executives during her performance with the announcement that the hall's stage has been named the Amy Grant Performance Platform.

The honor recognizes Grant's many contributions to the symphony through the years. When the symphony was struggling to overcome a bankruptcy in the 1980s, Grant began pairing with the symphony for a series of concerts and turned over net income to the organization, single-handedly paying off the debt, says the symphony's president and CEO. Numerous collaborations between Grant and the Nashville Symphony have followed ever since.