

# The Arts Culture

“It’s a flirtation with moving between the sexes to explore ideas of Freud regarding our male and female selves.” —MARK HOSFORD



Painter **Diane Tesler** used to live near two fields of abandoned cars and trucks on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. One day, she went out into one of the junkyards with a sketchbook. “What I found there has remained a constant in my work ever since: the power of light to reveal the form and beauty of the discarded.” Tesler’s oils were shown at Sarratt Gallery from June 10 to July 10.

**Mark Hosford**, senior lecturer in art and art history, showed prints, drawings, and animation in his one-man show **Sugar Boy and Other Delights** as part of Cheekwood’s Temporary Contemporary series, June 9 through July 28. Hosford’s work combines a “personal narration of my views



Scroll #4 from “The Sugarboy Scrolls.”

of society mixed with issues of gender and sexuality. . . . It’s in part a flirtation with moving back and forth between the sexes to explore ideas of Freud, among others, regarding our male and female selves.”



A crass clown from the inflated sculptures of Pat Oleszko.

The work of New York artist, performer and filmmaker **Pat Oleszko** was exhibited in the Sarratt Gallery at Vanderbilt from April 17 through May 24. Her exhibit, **The Errant Space Museum: A Compendium of Crass Clowns and Fools of Hot Air from Oleszko’s Inflated Sense of Self**, featured inflated sculptures ranging from outlandish costumes to oddball characters. The exhibit opened with a reception on April 17 that included a short performance piece by Oleszko called “Roamin Holiday: A View from a Broad” that featured over-the-top costumes and props.

**VISUAL ARTS:** The Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery opened its summer exhibition on June 18 with **The Artist Revealed: Portraits from the Collection of Peter Paone and Alma Alabalkian**. Paone, an artist who teaches at the Pennsylvania Academy of Art, and his wife, Alabalkian,

an architect, chose 30 photographs from their collection of artist portraits for this exhibit that originated at the Ben Shahn Galleries at William Paterson University in New Jersey. Portraits included Gilberte Brassai’s 1932 photo of Pablo Picasso, Philippe Halsman’s surreal 1951 portrait of Salvador Dali in top hat and tails, Henri Cartier-Bresson’s 1944 shot of Henri Matisse, and Arnold Newman’s 1942 photo of Max Ernst. Photographs by Hans Namuth of Elaine and Willem de Kooning, one taken in 1953 and one in 1989, subtly reveal both the physical and psychological changes that transpired during those 36 years.



Portrait of Max Ernst by Arnold Newman.

**Donna Glassford**, director of the Office of Cultural Enrichment, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

## Q&A

“THE MOST IMPORTANT EXPERIENCE I’ve had that relates to my position was being a patient in a hospital bed. I learned that the smallest kindness has an enormous impact.”

**Q:** Who benefits from arts programs in hospitals?

**A:** The arts in healthcare benefit all members of the healthcare community because as a result of



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these programs, the medical center environment is softened and made less stressful. For example, when our harpist plays in the neonatal nursery, the baby is not only soothed, but also the baby’s parents and attending medical staff.

**Q:** What kind of physiological effects are triggered by exposure to the arts?

**A:** Music has been convincingly shown by recent research to reduce pain, relieve stress, improve mood, and make difficult medical procedures more tolerable. Visual art has been studied less but appears to work in a similar fashion.

**Q:** How do the arts contribute to our compassion for others?

**A:** When an artist, musician, or poet presents his or her work to an audience, an exchange takes place intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually between the creator and the recipient. Within the context of healthcare, the artist sharing a special talent intends to make people feel better both emotionally and physically. When that intent is realized, some kind of intimate connection is established. You could call it compassion.

**Q:** How does being at the Medical Center affect your own work as a painter and sculptor?

**A:** My themes have evolved into personal narratives, and the colors are brighter. My mentor, Louise Calvin, passed away recently and left me her sculpture tools. I believe this to be a big nudge from her to start carving again, and so I will.



Ballet Mécanique

**MUSIC:**

**Ballet Mécanique** by George Antheil caused near-riots when it premiered in Paris in 1925. Employing an arsenal of piano and percussion instruments and introducing silences as music, the piece was shocking. The **Blair Concert Series** presented the piece this spring using four pianists—**Amy Dorfman**, associate professor of piano; **Melissa Rose**, assistant professor of piano; Maria Gall, BMus'02, and Curtis Sydnor, BMus'02—and eight percussionists—including **Bill Wiggins**, assistant professor of percussion; Adam Bernick, BMus'02; and Blair students Danna Buchanon; Travis Norvell; and Lin Ong—one of whom operated a soundtrack featuring sounds of airplanes and other urban delights such as car horns and anvils. It comprised the second half of a program that also featured the music of BMI Composer-in-Residence William Bolcom.

In April, **John Kochanowski**, associate professor of viola, in only his second solo recital since joining the Blair String Quartet in 1987, presented two

acknowledged masterpieces and a third destined to become one as **Mark Wait**, dean of the Blair School of Music, joined him for Bach's Cello Suite no. 4 in E-flat Major, Brahms' Sonata Opus 120 in F Minor, and the world premiere of Sonata for Viola and Piano by Blair composer **Michael Kurek**, associate professor of composition.



International Fiddle School

Some of the best fiddle players alive were on hand at the Blair School of Music, July 28-August 3 to conduct the first **International Fiddle School**. Crystal Plohman, veteran performer and director of the fid-

dling program at Blair, invited the internationally acclaimed Vassar Clements, along with Mark Wood, Daniel Carwile, Buddy Spicher, Randy Elmore, and others to perform and teach classes in celtic, bluegrass, Texas swing, jazz, country, old-time, and rock.

Violinist, fiddler, and composer **Mark O'Connor** returned to Nashville for three concerts July 3-5 to record a live album at Blair's Ingram Hall. Joining him



onstage were bassist Byron House, guitarist Bryan Sutton, and Chris Thile of the band Nickel Creek, who is widely

regarded as one of the finest mandolin players in the world. O'Connor, who is now based in San Diego, California, started the fiddling program at the Blair School, and continues to work with Blair's Edgar Meyer and internationally-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma on such Grammy-winning recordings as *Appalachian Journey*.

**DANCE:**

In late April, **Sankofa** the Blair School of Music's African Performing Ensemble, participated in a multimedia celebration of life as the finale of "Learning from Africa: AIDS, Religion, and Society," a symposium featuring Ugandan AIDS activist Noelina Namukisa. The six-day event, called "Meeting Point: Vanderbilt," inaugurated a cross-cultural dialogue on health care issues.

**ACCOLADES**

**Daniel Bernard Roumain**, BMus'93, premiered two new works in New York City in June. The Saint Luke's Chamber Ensemble gave the world premiere of *Fast-BLACK-Dance-Machine* at the Dia Center for the Arts as part of their Second Helpings Series, and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus gave the New York premiere of *What We Are* at Saint Charles Borromeo Church in Brooklyn Heights with Roumain as pianist. His *Voodoo Violin Concerto no. 1* premiered in May at The Kitchen with Roumain as solo violinist. September will see the premiere of *Human Songs and Stories for Orchestra, Narrator, and the People* by the San Antonio Symphony with NBA star David Robinson as narrator, and in December, Roumain will perform at the Brooklyn Academy of Music Café.



Grupo Corpo presents Brazilian culture as complex, integrated, and aesthetically singular.

**Grupo Corpo Brazilian Dance Theatre** performed as part of Vanderbilt's Great Performances series in the spring. Founded in 1975 by brothers Rodrigo and Paulo Pederneiras, who serve as head choreographer and artistic director, the company's unique style of dancing blends Afro-Brazilian,

classical ballet, and Western theatrical dance. Known for its authenticity and sincere attempts to present Brazilian culture as complex, integrated, and aesthetically singular, the group incorporates 20 dancers and performs regularly in Brazil and throughout the world.

UPCOMING

**DANCE**

Marie Chouinard, a French Canadian from Montreal, is an exceptional artist driven by an invigorating, avant-garde approach to dance. **Compagnie Marie Chouinard** will perform her "24 Preludes by Chopin," a jubilant work that melds music and dance on October 3 at Ingram Hall.



**THEATRE**

VUT will present Tony Kushner's adaptation of S. Ansky's *A Dybbuk* in conjunction with the opening of the new Hillel Center for Jewish Life October 4-6 and 10-12. Kushner is the winner of the Pulitzer Prize, two Tony Awards, and two Drama Desk Awards, among others, for his groundbreaking play, *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*. He is the recipient of a medal for cultural achievement from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.

**VISUAL ARTS**



Whether symbolizing social status, ethnicity or commitment, jewelry tells a story. Utilizing jewelry's symbolic power, artist Brad Bartlett presents narratives that employ metaphors alluding to love, loss, and a search for one's identity in **Defining Narrative**, a mixed media exhibit opening November 5 at Sarratt Gallery.

**MUSIC**

For the past twenty-five years composer **John Luther Adams** has made his home in the boreal forest near Fairbanks, Alaska. From there he has created a unique musical world grounded in the elemental landscapes and indigenous cultures of the North. "As a composer in the far North, I hope to make music that belongs here, somewhat like the plants and birds . . . music that somehow resonates with all this space and silence, cold and stone, wind, fire, and ice." Adams is BMI Composer-in-Residence at the Blair School in November, and his work will be featured in concert at Turner Hall, November 11.



Assassins

**THEATRE:**

When Steven Sondheim's musical **Assassins** premiered Off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons in December 1990, it sold out its run of 73 performances. Despite Sondheim's reputation, however, the musical never made the transition to a larger hall. In April, **Vanderbilt University Theatre** presented this controversial work that some consider one of the great musicals of the last fifty years. Dealing with the assassins who

have attempted to take the life of the most powerful man in the United States—the President—the play humanizes them, using these vilified and ostracized figures to explore the dark side of American life: the sufferings of the have-nots in a land where everyone is promised life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The **Actors Bridge Ensemble**, a professional company based at Saint Augustine's

Chapel on the Vanderbilt campus, presented **The Laramie Project** by Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project, July 19-21 and 25-28 at Darkhorse Theatre in Nashville. The play focuses on the brutal murder of Matthew Sheppard and its impact on the people of Laramie, Wyoming.

**BOOKS & WRITERS:**

Four award-winning authors were featured at Vanderbilt's spring writers symposium. **Our Favorite Year: A Celebration of Nashville Writers** included John Egerton, Ann Patchett, Alice Randall, and Diann Blakely. Egerton, winner of the John F. Kennedy Book Award and the Southern Book Critics Award in 1995 for *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement*, most recently coedited *Nashville: An American*

*Self-Portrait*. Patchett is the author of the novels *The Patron Saint of Liars*, *Taft*, *The Magician's Assistant*, and *Bel Canto*, which was a finalist for this year's National Book Critics Circle Award and won the PEN/Faulkner Award. Randall overcame an injunction earlier this year brought by the estate of Margaret Mitchell to publish her satire *The Wind Done Gone*, which went on to become a best seller. Blakely, MA'80, is the



Blakely

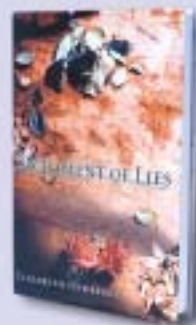
author of the poetry collections *Hurricane Walk* and *Farewell, My Lovelies*. Her current book, *Cities of Flesh and the Dead*, to be published by Story Line Press, received the Poetry Society of America's di Castagnola Award in 2001.

**ACCOLADES**

*Sacrament of Lies* by Elizabeth Dewberry, '83

"Dewberry manages to sustain a high level of suspense about what's real and what's not in this imaginatively conceived story about the social dynamics in a rich and powerful but woefully unstable family."

—THE NEW YORK TIMES



Written in a fluid and dramatic interior monologue, *Sacrament of Lies* explores how some families nurture cruel secrets at the expense of truth and redefine love in attempts to accommodate evil. A kind of modern day Hamlet with the genders reversed, the book is taut, atmospheric, and filled with intrigue.

**OPERA:**

This spring, the **Vanderbilt Opera Theatre**, with music by the **Vanderbilt University Orchestra**, performed *Gianni Schicci*, Puccini's only comedy, staging it in a 1940s Mafioso-style setting that brought out the deception, treachery, greed, and avarice of a family trying to outwit—and outlast—each other for the wealth of their recently departed relative. With stage direction by Gayle Shay, assistant professor of voice; music direction by David Childs, assistant professor of choral studies; costumes by Rowena Aldridge; and lighting and set design by Tony Award-winning Franne Lee; the production was the first fully-staged opera in the Blair School's Ingram Hall.



Vanderbilt Opera Theatre performs Puccini's Gianni Schicci.

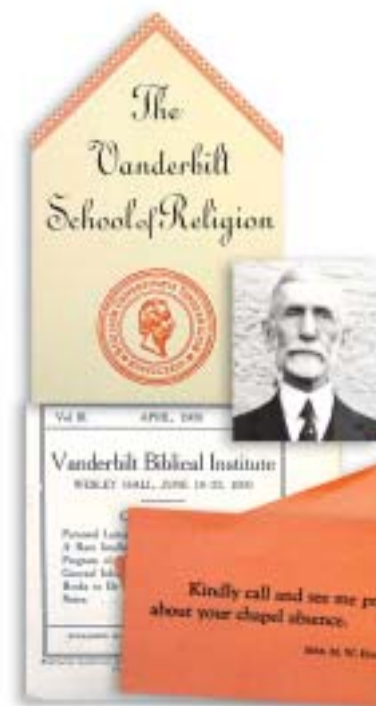
**HUMANITIES:**

An interdisciplinary graduate colloquium, **Limits of the Past: The Human Sciences and the Turn to Memory** welcomed presenters from 28 universities to campus in April. Focusing on memory studies, one of the most exciting areas of humanistic inquiry to emerge over the past 20 years, 38 scholars discussed topics such as problems of memory work in post-war Germany; memory and the unbearable; civic memories and collective pasts in early-modern England; memory as muse; memory and identity; and nostalgia, trauma, and race. The colloquium was cosponsored by the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School, the Department of His-

tory, and the American and Southern Studies Program

**Marching Toward Justice: History of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution**, an 800 square foot paneled exhibit, featured photographs, drawings, and reproductions of documents highlighting the quest of African Americans for equality under American law. Covering aspects from slavery and black soldiers in the Civil War to the Emancipation Proclamation and the ratification of the 14th Amendment in 1868, the exhibit's stop in Nashville was a cooperative effort of Vanderbilt with the Nashville Public Library in conjunction with Wayne State University. It was on display at the downtown branch of the library through Sept. 16.

**Vanderbilt Divinity School: Education, Contest, and Change**, an exhibit in the Special Collections Gallery this summer, documented the his-



tory of the Divinity School, which started as one of the primary departments of the University and has since grown into one of the premier theological schools in the nation. The exhibit coincided with the publication of a history of the Divinity School published this year by Vanderbilt University Press. On June 23, a panel discussion moderated by Dale Johnson, professor of church history at Vanderbilt Divinity School and editor of the book, featured many of the book's contributors.

The Divinity School collection chronicles the history of the school.