

The Arts

“Carter’s Piano Concerto is a kind of metaphor ... *with the piano*”

VISUAL ARTS:

At the **Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery**, “Morality Tales: Engravings by William Hogarth” was exhibited through early December. Considered to be a leading figure in British art of the first half of the 18th century, Hogarth is best remembered for his satirical engravings, particularly pointed critiques that revealed a number of the less-than-savory aspects of English society of the time. This exhibition presented five of his most important sets of engravings, all based on paintings he himself created. Included in the exhibit were “A Harlot’s Progress” (1732), “A Rake’s Progress” (1735), “Before and After” (1736), “The Four Times of Day” (1738), and two new acquisitions, lifetime impres-



DANIEL DUROIS

Jan-ru Wan

sions of the companion engravings “Beer Street” and “Gin Lane” (1751), and an insightful self-portrait, “The Painter and His Pug,” engraved by Benjamin Smith in 1795 after a painting by the artist of the same title.

ACCOLADES

Susan DeMay, senior lecturer in art, participated in “Primary Colors: A Survey of Contemporary Craft in Red, Yellow and Blue” at the Virginia Artisans Center in Waynesboro. A wall platter titled “Pathways” was selected by the Tennessee State Museum for its permanent collection. In November a two-person exhibit at the Heydel Fine Arts Center at Cumberland University featuring DeMay and textile artist Diane Apple was supported in part by grants from the Tennessee Arts Commission.



Throughout October, Vanderbilt’s **Sarratt Gallery** exhibited works by sculptor and fiber artist **Jan-ru Wan** in “Everyone Looking for Good Life.” Influenced by Taoism and Buddhism, her central theme is the human longing for a life of fortune. Using a multiplicity of small images, details and objects symbolic of both the individual and the universal, Jan-ru employs repetition of form and the discrepancy between materials to produce a balance between the chaotic, the sublime and the beautiful.

The Fine Arts Gallery launched its spring program in January with “Gestation: Recent Works by Nicole Pietrantoni.”

Pietrantoni is the recipient of the 2003 Margaret Stonewall Wooldridge Hamblet Award in studio art. She earned her B.S., magna cum laude, in both art history and human and organizational development in 2003, traveling extensively after graduation to Iceland, England, and throughout the United States. The pieces in “Gestation” were created in 2004 using a combination of printmaking, painting and collage that incorporates whimsical characters from damsels in distress to bees, crows and nesting birds. Pietrantoni described the pieces in the exhibit as “a series of maps and records from my



past 18 months of travel, work and the everyday.”

“The Fat Cat” was the unifying theme for an art exhibit on view through March at the **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center**. Developed by Pacesetters Inc.,

Culture

being the individual and the orchestra representing the state. ” —BLAIR SCHOOL DEAN MARK WAIT



“She’s going to run away” by Nicole Pietrantoni

the art is based on a Danish folk tale about a cat that was so fat and greedy he consumed everything in his path. The exhibit featured two-dimensional artwork in a variety of media. Pacesetter’s art program is designed to enhance verbal and visual com-

munication skills as well as the self-esteem of the adults who participate in the program, which is one of the largest community-based day-training and residential programs serving people with developmental disabilities in Tennessee.

Memphis, Tenn., artist **Jed Jackson** showed paintings at Sarratt in his November show, “C.E.O.” Placing the viewer in the position of voyeur, Jackson exposes slick characters from society’s underbelly who “call less for a review than for an exorcism.” Showing influences as diverse as French culture, traditional landscape painting, urban genre and popular culture, his images contrast with implied metaphors that are expressed in cartoon thought balloons and movie iris shots.

It has been 20 years since the first Margaret Stonewall Wooldridge Hamblet Award was presented by Vanderbilt’s Department of Art and Art History. Works by some of the former recipients were gathered for the **Hamblet Anniversary Show** at Sarratt in January and February.

BOOKS & WRITERS:

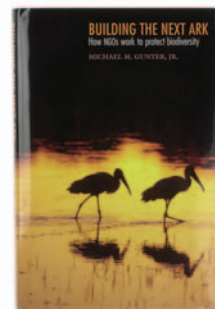
David Sedaris entertained a sold-out audience in Langford Auditorium in October as part of the Great Performances Series at Vanderbilt. Author of the current best-seller *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and*



“Eat Caviar” by Jed Jackson

Denim: Essays, Sedaris is best known for the strange-but-true tales of his job as a Macy’s elf in the “Santaland Diaries” on National Public Radio’s “Morning Edition.” Sedaris’ sardonic humor and incisive social critique earned him *Time* magazine’s “Humorist of the Year” recognition in 2001.

A new ark is needed. With the extinction of perhaps 50,000 species per year, mankind is at a critical juncture in history, according to a book by alumnus **Michael Gunter**, BA’91. Ominous storm clouds have gathered, he argues, to threaten humanity’s most basic resource of all, the diversity of life on earth. In his book *Building the Next Ark: How NGOs Work to Protect Biodiversity*, the Rollins College professor concludes that nongovernmental organ-



izations (NGOs) are the best and perhaps only actors situated to negotiate the powerful array of political and economic interests involved in species loss as well as species preservation.

Elizabeth Brack Flock's (BA'87) novel *Me and Emma* is narrated by 8-year-old Carrie Parker, a precocious child whose daydreams and hiding places cannot veil the violent reality of her life with her abusive, alcoholic stepfather. When

he begins to take a special interest in her 5-year-old sister, Emma, Carrie realizes that keeping Emma by her side won't shield her sister for very long. *Kirkus*

Reviews characterizes this second novel from former print journalist and CBS correspondent Flock as "captur[ing] Carrie's powerlessness and



resourcefulness beautifully... tremendously touching."

Novelist **Julie Otsuka** read from her debut novel, *When the Emperor Was Divine*, in November. Her critically acclaimed novel is the story of a Japanese-American family separated and interned by the U.S. government during World War II. Otsuka graduated magna cum laude from Yale University and received her M.F.A. in creative writing from Columbia University. She is a 2004 Guggenheim Fellow. The event was sponsored by the English department and the Gertrude and Harold S. Vanderbilt Visiting Writers Series.

THEATRE AND DANCE:

Performance artist **Will Power** conducted a master class at Vanderbilt in November. A pioneer in hip-hop theatre, Power explores race, HIV and violence by fusing original music, rhymed language and intense choreography. Power performed "Flow," a b-boy fairy tale about the quest for survival in urban America, in Blair's Ingram Hall as part of the University's Great Performances Series.

UPCOMING



ART

"Diverse Visions" highlights a broad range of work in various media by faculty of the Vanderbilt Department of Art and Art History. The exhibit runs through May at the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery.

"The Visionary" by Marilyn Murphy

THEATRE

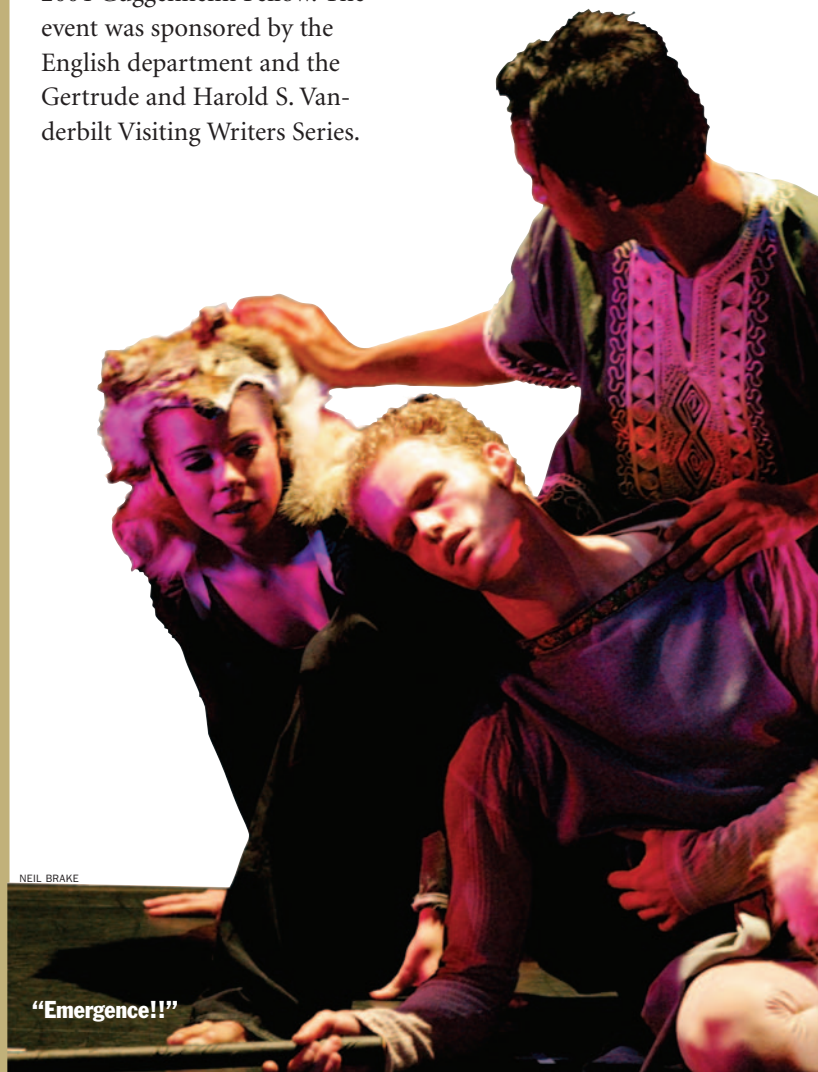
Actors Bridge Ensemble, a professional, nonprofit theatre company formerly based at St. Augustine's Chapel at Vanderbilt, presents "Jesus Hopped the A Train" by Steven Adly Guirgis April 22-24 and April 28-May 1 at the company's Neuhoff site in the Germantown area of Nashville.

MUSIC

The Curb Youth Symphony, Nashville's pre-collegiate symphony based at the Blair School of Music, plays a free concert Monday, May 9, in Ingram Hall, with Benedict Broy as the featured violinist.



DANIEL DUBOIS



NEIL BRAKE

"Emergence!!"



PHILLIP FRANK

During Vanderbilt's Homecoming/Reunion weekend in November, Nashvillians and Vanderbilt alumni alike witnessed **"Emergence!"** Four new works by up-and-coming choreographers merged with music by Blair composers—performed by Blair musicians and danced by members of the Nashville Ballet—to

give the audience the opportunity to see works in progress performed in an informal, workshop style, with commentary from the artists.

Are love and marriage actually necessary? Is getting married today more important than finding happiness in a relationship? Stephen Sondheim, the acclaimed genius of American musical theatre, asked these questions in his landmark show **"Company,"** performed by **Vanderbilt University Theatre** last November. The Tony Award-winning work explores the benefits and burdens of being single in modern society as we strive to find love and companionship.

In February, VUT produced **"The Barber of Seville,"** the first installment of the famous "Figaro" trilogy by French playwright Pierre Augustin de Beaumarchais. Full of slapstick and wit, the deceptively simple

plot follows the antics of Figaro, the barber, as he aids Count Almaviva in wooing—and ultimately kidnapping—the beautiful and feisty Rosine from her guardian, Dr. Bartholo. Bernard Sahlin's new adaptation and translation bring Beaumarchais' classic tale of the poor valet who beats the odds and outwits everyone, including his own master, into the 21st century.



DAVID GREENSHAW

HUMANITIES:

One week before election day in November, **Joe Klein**, political columnist for *Time* magazine and the author of *Primary Colors*, discussed on campus the issues at stake in the 2004 presidential election. A political journalist for 35 years, Klein highlighted the importance of issues such as Iraq, the impending Social Security and Medicare burden for the baby-boom generation, and massive trade and budget deficits, then led these issues back to his own profession, seeing this time as a revolutionary moment for political journalism. The lecture was sponsored by the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities. Klein's *Primary Colors* often is compared to, and was clearly influenced by, Warren's political novel *All the King's Men*.

The longest continuously held Holocaust lecture series at an American university began its

27th year last October at Vanderbilt and expanded to consider genocides beyond those perpetrated by the Nazis.

The series was renamed the **Vanderbilt Lecture Series on the Holocaust and Other Genocides.**

Included this year were discussions of the Sudan, Rwanda, the former Yu-

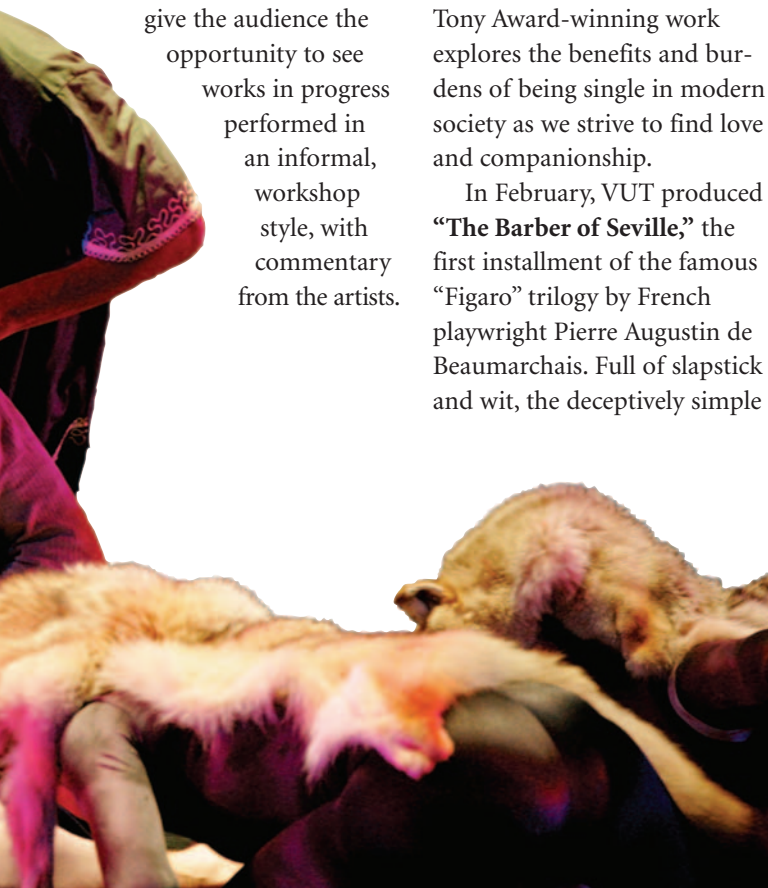
goslavia, and present-day anti-Semitism in France.

"We think it's entirely consistent to the spirit of the series to take a hard look at genocide wherever it occurs or may occur," said Robert Barsky, director of the 2004 lecture series and a professor of French and comparative litera-



DANIEL DUBOIS

ture in Vanderbilt's Department of French and Italian. The theme of the 2004 series was "The Fragility of Democracy."

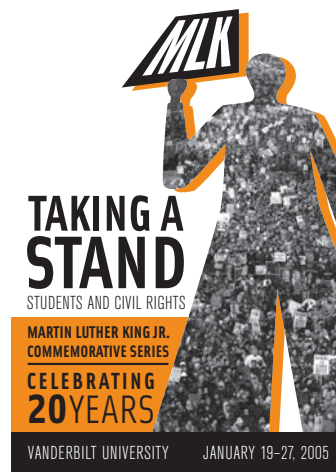


Bernice Johnson Reagon, a renowned scholar and artist in African-American cultural music and history, delivered the keynote address for Vanderbilt University's **2005 Martin Luther King Commemorative Series**, which took place Jan. 17–27. This year's events, which marked the 20th anniversary of the series, kicked off with a candle-light vigil at Vanderbilt's Benton Chapel, sponsored by the Organization of Black Graduate and Professional Students. The vigil featured a talk by Bishop Joseph W. Walker III of Nashville's Mount Zion Baptist Church and a performance by the University's Voices of Praise gospel choir.

Reagon's keynote address, "Over My Head I See Freedom in the Air: A College Student Steps Across the Line of Safety and ...," on Jan. 19, highlighted the 2005 series theme, "Taking a Stand: Students and Civil Rights," and explored the important role students played

in the Civil Rights Movement.

A singer and composer, Reagon recently retired after 30 years of performing with Sweet Honey in the Rock, the internationally renowned a-cappella ensemble she founded in 1973. Reagon produced most of the group's recordings, including the Grammy-nominated "Still



the Same Me." She is the Cosby Chair and Professor of Fine Arts at Spelman College in Atlanta, professor emerita of history at American University, and curator emerita at the

Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

Other events during the Martin Luther King Commemorative Series included an exhibit of the **Harold Lowe Civil Rights Photograph Collection** at the Schulman Center for Jewish Life Gallery. The collection of black-and-white photographs documents the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville and was exhibited courtesy of the Nashville Public Library's Special Collections Division and Nashville Room.

MUSIC:

Last October at the Ingram Center for the Performing Arts on campus, **Ethel**, the hippest quartet since Kronos, took the stage for what was a passionate and entertaining example of musicianship at its finest. The night before, Ethel kicked off the Vanderbilt Great Performances Series' first "Performance



on the Move" event of the season at Zeitgeist Gallery in Hillsboro Village, sponsored by Fugitive Art Center. In addition, the Blair School of Music sponsored a master class with the quartet prior to the evening performance.

"Extreme Strings," a concert by the entire string faculty of the Blair School of Music, took place in November at Ingram Hall. The event featured **Kathryn Plummer**, associate professor of viola and chair of the string department, who celebrates 30 years with the School this year. This was one of several concerts celebrating Blair's 40th anniversary.

ACCOLADES



Georgia Stitt, BMus'94, served as production music coordinator for a remake of "Once Upon a Mattress" for a "Wonderful World of Disney" episode to be aired this year on ABC television. She was vocal coach to the production's stars, including Tracey Ullman, Denis O'Hare, Tommy Smothers, Brooke Shields and Carol Burnett. "Sing Me a Happy Song" by Stitt was included on Broadway star Susan Egan's new solo album. The University of Michigan is producing "The Water," with music by Stitt, lyrics by Jeff Hylton, and book by Jeff Hylton and Tim Werenko.



Works by BMI Composer-in-Residence **Michael Torke** were heard in a November concert in the Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall at

the Blair School of Music. Best known as a post-minimalist who cut short his graduate study at the age of 23 to begin his professional career, Torke became an exclusive recording artist with Argo/Decca records and began a five-year collaboration with Peter Martins and the New York City Ballet. His composition “Adjustable Wrench” also was featured in a new dance piece by Nashville Ballet artistic director Paul Vasterling in “Emergence!!” earlier that weekend.

In January composer **Joan Tower** came to Blair as BMI Composer-in Residence. Her visit culminated in a concert in Ingram Hall featuring the Vanderbilt Wind Symphony and Chamber Winds, the Blair String Quartet, and the Vanderbilt University Orchestra featuring Blair School Dean Mark Wait as piano soloist. Tower’s compositions are a standard against which many contemporary works are measured, and have been performed by hundreds of major symphonies around the world.

Hailed around the world for her extraordinary grace and flawless voice, soprano **Dawn Upshaw** returned to Ingram Hall in January for a much-anticipated reprise of her 2002 concert. The *Los Angeles Times*



Michael Torke

says of Upshaw, “All the world, it would seem, loves Dawn Upshaw. And there is simply no reason not to succumb to her versatility, her ingenuity, her questing mind, her exquisite tone, her dazzling technique or—best of all—her emotional directness.”

Upshaw also conducted a voice master class at Blair as part of her visit.

The Blakemore Trio is the newest signature ensemble at the Blair School of Music. Performing in their second season, they already are being praised by critics as one of the area’s best chamber-music ensembles. With Amy Dorfman on piano, Carolyn Huebl on violin, and Felix Wang on cello, the Trio performed works by Beethoven, Schnittke and Dvorak in a January program at Ingram Hall.



DANIEL DUBOIS

The Blakemore Trio

Q&A

Mark Wait, dean of the Blair School of Music and holder of the Ingram Dean’s Chair, received two Grammy nominations in December as piano soloist on an album recorded at Blair’s Ingram Hall. He was nominated along with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Kenneth Schermerhorn, in the Best Classical Album category for “Elliott Carter: Symphony No. 1, Piano Concerto, Holiday Overture,” released on Naxos. He also was nominated for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance (with Orchestra) for the same album for his work on the Piano Concerto.



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Q: *What is the background of the Piano Concerto?*

A: Carter composed this piece in Berlin in 1964 and 1965 at the height of the Cold War. The Berlin Wall was up, and Carter, in fact, was living near an American military base, where he could hear machine-gun fire regularly. Carter has said that the Piano Concerto is a kind of metaphor for the struggle of the individual against the state, with the piano being the individual and the orchestra representing the state. So when it’s seen in those terms, the conflict in the piece makes a good deal of sense.

Q: *It strikes one as more a mathematical composition than a melodic one. How did you prepare for playing it?*

A: It’s ferociously difficult; learning it had to be a very methodical process. I started about six months before and worked quite intensively on it.

[Wait played the piece with the Nashville Symphony at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center as part of the Symphony’s “Piano Extravaganza” on Oct. 25 and 26, 2002, then recorded it with the Symphony at Ingram Hall on Oct. 27]. Just getting it up to tempo, up to the speed it’s supposed to go, was a real challenge. The Orchestra was magnificent. Kenneth [Schermerhorn] had actually conducted it before, and he knew the piece quite well, but the orchestra had never played anything like that.

Q: *What was it like recording the piece in Ingram?*

A: It’s a dream. The acoustics are wonderful. Because I know Ingram Hall well, I felt very comfortable during the recording process. Naxos had everything miked very clearly, and I really enjoyed it. We recorded the whole thing in about three and a half hours.