

# The Arts

“One should play new works as though they are established”



“Mountain #221”

## VISUAL ARTS:

**Sarratt Gallery** took nature as a prevalent theme this fall in showing works by painter

Xuhong Shang and in an installation by Nashville artists Ally Reeves and Shaun Silfer.

Shang’s “**Mountain Series**” paintings, shown at the Gallery in September, fused Modernist painting with Chinese tradition in works influenced by the Buddhist ideal of human interconnectedness with nature. Using oils and wax to produce scenes that resembled Chinese

landscape paintings of the eighth century as they might be seen in photographic negatives, the works explored the duality that exists between reality and vision, metaphor and meaning.

Johnny Appleseed, an icon of the transformation of nature that was necessary to white settlement of the West, was used as metaphor and title in the October gallery installation “**Johnny Appleseed**” by Ally Reeves and Shaun Silfer. Looking at the political implications of the impact of “the human animal” on nature, the artists

used familiar materials readily available at places like Home Depot—places which make it possible for homeowners to transform their plots of land in a fashion similar to those early settlers—to construct an ersatz “garden” in the gallery, complete with brick border and monkey grass. Meanwhile, drawings on the walls depicting plants native to Tennessee included seeds for viewers to take and disperse, with instructions on how to use these plants that do not require the kind of tending that non-native ornamentals require.

## Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery

mounted two exhibits this fall that showcased the beauty of line found in etchings and aquatints.



“Le Beguin” by Gerald Brockhurst

## ACCOLADES

**Jonathan Rodgers**, BMus’02, showed black and white photographs taken in Africa at Vanderbilt Hospital in the Mezzanine Gallery of the Main Lobby from September through December. The exhibit, “**We Bring Our Drums**,” depicted women’s groups in the interlacustrine area of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania who educate young people about HIV/AIDS through music and dance.



Members of the fine arts faculty, **Marilyn Murphy** and **Michael Aurbach**, as well as Heard Library staff member **Carrie McGee Sprouse**, exhibited work in “**New Directions: Contemporary Art of Tennessee**” at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville. The exhibit, part of the sweeping “**Art of Tennessee**” show, ran through January. In conjunction with the “**Art of Tennessee**,” Watkins College of Art and Design’s show “**Transforming the Body**” featured artwork by 10 Tennesseans, including **Mark Hosford**, assistant professor of fine art, and **Lain York**, exhibit preparator for the John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development.

“**The Sensuous Line: Etchings by Gerald Brockhurst**” opened the Fine Arts Gallery exhibition program this fall. A gift from Thomas B. Brumbaugh, professor of fine arts, emeritus, the etchings featured the work of master etcher and portrait painter Brockhurst, who was a chronicler of the fashionably rich and stylish of 1920s- and ’30s-era America and Great Britain. Evoking the style of the Italian Renaissance in his etchings, Brockhurst’s work nevertheless captured and reflected the modern tastes and aspirations of early 20th-cen-

# Culture

masterpieces and established masterpieces as though the ink is still wet. ” —CRAIG NIES

tury American and European sensibilities.

On display from Oct. 23 through Dec. 14, “**The Jolly Corner**,” a suite of 21 etchings with aquatint created by master etcher and engraver **Peter Milton**, illustrated the ghost story of the same name by American novelist Henry James. First published in 1908, “The Jolly Corner” received a new visual treatment in 1971 through Milton’s etchings, which employ a wide range of printmaking techniques, including photo-based imagery, that reappear throughout the suite. Milton, whose works are included in more than 150 museum collections throughout the world, utilized a surreal, dream-like quality in these prints that is particularly suited to illustrating James’ atmospheric story.



From “The Jolly Corner”

**Human Development** during September and October, showcased work by local artists with disabilities. The annual art exhibit offers artists with disabilities a chance to display their talents for the public and be included in the art community. The exhibit was co-sponsored by the Nashville Mayor’s Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities.

During November and December the Kennedy Center hosted a photo exhibit and forum to raise awareness of the education needs of those with vision impairments. “**Focusing on the Future of Students with Vision Impairments: Teachers in Action**” showcased photos taken by the Brentwood Camera Club of teachers and students with vision impairments interacting in different learning situations.

## MUSIC:

The **Orpheus Chamber Orchestra**, “one of the great marvels of the musical world,” according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, visited Nashville in September as part of Vanderbilt’s Great Performances series. Founded with the goal of intertwining orchestral repertoire with principles of chamber

music, the Orchestra’s season this year will include a future appearance by the Blair School’s **Edgar Meyer**, adjunct associate professor of bass, whose work was honored recently with a MacArthur “genius” award. Meyer was featured in November at Tennessee Performing Arts Center in the world premiere of Concerto for Banjo and Double Bass, a collaborative work by Meyer and banjo virtuoso Bela Fleck commissioned by the Nashville Symphony.

**Menahem Pressler**, founding pianist of the famous Beaux Arts Trio, conducted a master class at the Blair School in October. Pressler, who is professor of music at the Indiana University School of Music, worked with four piano majors—Krystal Grant, Ralph

“**Creative Expressions IX**,” on view at the **John F. Kennedy Center for Research on**



From “Creative Expressions IX”



Orpheus Chamber Orchestra

NEIL BRAKE



NEIL BRANKE

Blanco, Michael Krewson and Sarah Seelig—who were selected from auditions to perform during the two-hour master class, which was open to music lovers throughout the community.

Vanderbilt's Dyer Observatory hosted a fall **"Music on the Mountain"** community concert in mid-October, featuring the Blair School's **Brass Quintet and Tuba Ensemble**. Highlights included "Mars" from Gustav Holst's orchestral suite *The Planets* in special recognition of the planet Mars' proximity to Earth, as well as other traditional "Octubafest" works. Following the concert the public was invited to tour the observatory and view Mars through the telescope.



NEIL BRANKE

**The Nashville Mandolin Ensemble**, led by Butch Baldassari, adjunct associate

professor of mandolin, released its fourth CD in September, titled "Bach, Beatles, Bluegrass." It will soon be followed by a double-CD of live performances from 1991 through 2001,

along with a DVD documenting the NME as a much larger group that featured the late conductor Paul Martin Zonn.



NEIL BRANKE

Blair BMI Composer-in-Residence for the fall was **Paul Basler**, a French horn virtuoso who is also an acclaimed composer. His choral selections, highlighted by *Missa Kenya*, were presented in performances by Blair's **Symphonic Choir** and **Chamber Choir**, each directed by **David Childs**, assistant professor of choral studies, and accompanied by pianist Polly Brecht during an October concert in Ingram Hall. Basler was the featured French horn player on some of his own works.

The **Blair String Quartet** presented the first of its "Two by Four" concerts in November focusing on the works of Beethoven and Brahms. The November program consisted of Beethoven's Quartet in A Major, op. 18, no. 5, and the first of the two string quartets of Opus 51 by Johannes Brahms. **Amy Dorfman**, associate professor of piano, was guest artist with the Quartet in Shostakovich's Piano Quintet,

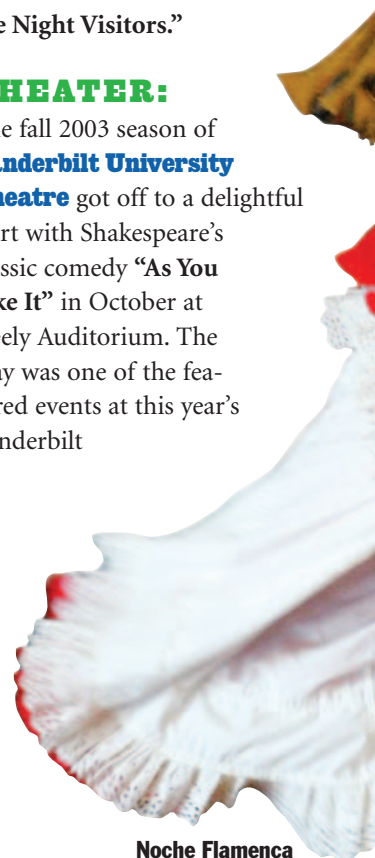
op. 57. The second of the two concerts will take place in March.

**Chancellor Gordon Gee** joined **Maestro Kenneth Schermerhorn** and the **Nashville Symphony Orchestra** on stage as narrator for Benjamin Britten's "Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, op. 34." The September concert featured guest soloist Itzhak Perlman earlier in the evening performing Beethoven's Violin Concerto.

"*Amelia Al Ballo*" by Gian Carlo Menotti premiered in 1937, but was given new life in November by **Vanderbilt Opera Theatre** directed by **Gayle Shay**, assistant professor of voice. Paying homage to the heyday of Hollywood musicals, the VOT production was the first of three fully staged and orchestrated productions offered by VOT this year. The **Vanderbilt Orchestra**, under the direction of Blair faculty member **Robin Fountain**, accompanied the singers during this madcap one-act *opera buffa*, in which Amelia seemingly stops at nothing to go to the ball. In December opera lovers at Vanderbilt were thrilled by a holiday presentation of Menotti's "*Amahl and the Night Visitors*."

## THEATER:

The fall 2003 season of **Vanderbilt University Theatre** got off to a delightful start with Shakespeare's classic comedy "*As You Like It*" in October at Neely Auditorium. The play was one of the featured events at this year's Vanderbilt



Noche Flamenca

extraVUganza, which combined Homecoming and Reunion.

In November, VUT's production of the British comedy "**Bedroom Farce**" presented a light-hearted look at modern relationships, complete with wit, insight and plenty of pratfalls. Written by Sir Alan Ayckbourn,



PHILIP FRANCK

Britain's most popular comedic playwright, "**Bedroom Farce**" provided a hysterical look at the bumpy road to love.

Great Performances presented the off-off-Broadway show "**The Guys**" by Anne Nelson in late September, performed by the Los Angeles-based touring troupe **The Actors' Gang**. Nelson, a Columbia University journalism professor, accepted a New York Fire Department captain's invitation to visit his fire station after Sept. 11, 2001, to help him write eulogies for several of his men who died in the tragedy. That experience formed the basis for "**The Guys**" in which Nick, the fire captain, and Joan, Nelson's alter ego, converse on an empty stage for 75 minutes. Nelson gave a lecture preceding the performance, which took place in Ingram Hall.

**DANCE:** **Noche Flamenca**, featuring authentic live music and dance from the cabarets of Madrid, brought the heart and soul of flamenco to

Langford Auditorium in October as part of the Great Performances at Vanderbilt series. The company, which is one of Spain's most successful flamenco troupes, treats all aspects of flamenco—dance, song and music—as interrelated, and each is given equal weight in their performances.

Focusing on one's need to communicate and the strengths and inadequacies inherent in language, Seattle-based **Lingo DanceTheater** brought its risky and physically powerful dance style to Langford Auditorium in October's production of "**Speak to Me.**" The night before the performance, Lingo gave short performance peeks at Fugitive Art Center in Nashville as the first "Performance on the Move" event sponsored by Vanderbilt in conjunction with the Great Performances series.

**HUMANITIES:** The **Back to the Classroom** events associated with extraVUganza

in October tackled subjects as diverse as civilians and space to events in the Middle East to a panel discussion on Vanderbilt's role in the progress of the arts in Nashville. About 350 guests listened as members of Vanderbilt's stellar faculty brought them back into academia once again.

Lectures, music performances and film marked this year's **Holocaust Lecture Series**, which focused its attention on the themes of justice, redress and restitution for the crimes committed during the Nazi regime's mass effort to exterminate some 6 million Jews prior to and during World War II. This year's series marked the 26th consecutive year Vanderbilt has held events commemorating the Holocaust, making it the longest-running sustained series of its kind at an American university.

The series kicked off Oct. 9 with a lecture by **Stuart Eizenstat**, U.S. ambassador to the European Union under the Clinton administration and that administration's leader on



NEIL BRAKE

## UPCOMING

### THEATER

When it opened in 1925, theater critic Brooks Atkinson wrote, “After seeing ‘Hay Fever’ you will never give week-ends again nor accept week-end engagements, but you will go to the theatre forever and ever. Amen.” The VUT production of Noel Coward’s classic comedy will play April 2–4 and 8–10 in Neely Auditorium.



DANIEL DUBOIS

Three on a Bench!

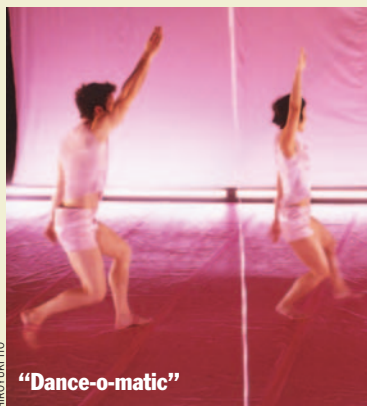
Hall on March 20 at 8 p.m., performing an eclectic program ranging from Brahms to jazz.

### MUSIC

**Three on a Bench!**, a piano concert featuring the Dorfman/Katahn Piano Duo with special guest Beegie Adair, will take place in Ingram

### DANCE

**Brian Brooks Moving Company** will present “Dance-o-matic,” a series of dances drenched in whimsy and shades of pink, on Sunday, April 18 at 3 p.m. in Langford Auditorium.



HIROYUKI ITO

“Dance-o-matic”



### VISUAL ART

To mark a major gift made by Donald and Ruth Saff, **Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery** shows mixed-media

prints from the artist’s *Wax Fire Works* series in “**Robert Rauschenberg: An American Iconoclast**,” through March 18.

### InsideOut of the Lunchbox



DANIEL DUBOIS

Holocaust-related issues. His book, *Imperfect Justice: Looted Assets, Slave Labor and the Unfinished Business of World War II*, explores how the Holocaust became a political and diplomatic battleground 50 years after the war’s end, as the issues of dormant bank accounts, confiscated property, looted art and unpaid insurance policies consumed courts in Europe and the United States.

### The InsideOut of the Lunch Box

series, sponsored by Vanderbilt and TPAC, kicked off in September with a panel discussion on Alan Lightman’s novel *Einstein’s Dreams* at War Memorial Auditorium. Panel members included **Volney Gay**, professor and chair of the religious studies department; Mockingbird Theatre’s artistic director, David Alford; and Brian Niece, artistic director of the People’s Branch Theatre. In October, **Gregory Barz**, assistant professor of musicology (ethnomusicology), took part in a panel discussion with Bill Shannon, a conceptual, interdisciplinary performance artist who suffers from a rare form of arthritis and incorporates his crutches into his street performances.

**Tony Kushner**, a playwright who won the Pulitzer Prize and two Tony Awards for his two-part stage work “Angels in America,” recently adapt-

ed for Home Box Office, appeared at Vanderbilt in November as a speaker in the **Chancellor’s Lecture Series**. “A Conversation with Tony Kushner” was conducted by **Terryl Hallquist**, associate professor of theatre, in Benton Chapel at the Vanderbilt Divinity School.



NEIL BRANKE

Tony Kushner

### BOOKS & WRITERS:

Two classic novels by **Robert Penn Warren**, BA’25, and **Walter Sullivan**, BA’47, professor of English, emeritus, were reissued this fall by Louisiana State University Press.

Warren’s *Flood*, originally published in 1963, chronicles the demise of the agrarian South from technological progress in its story of two men—one a long-absent

native son and successful screenwriter, the other a famous director and stranger to the region.

*Sojourn of a Stranger* was Sullivan's debut novel. Set in 1857, it relates the story of Allen Hendrick, whose pursuit of love proves powerless despite advantages of social standing, wealth and "good breeding" because of his octoroon mother. The novel, first published in 1957, put Sullivan on the literary map.

*Coiled in the Heart*, the debut novel by **Scott Elliott**, BA'93, is a story of love, loss, guilt and redemption offered through a critical look at contemporary Southern culture and old Southern values. The book, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons in August, is filled with exquisite prose that reviewers are comparing to Peter Taylor, Robert Penn Warren, and other great Southern writers.

Between the world wars, Paris welcomed not only American expatriates such as dancer Josephine Baker and writer F. Scott

Fitzgerald, but also jazz—the dynamic musical style then emerging from the States. Jazz soon added to the allure of Paris as a center of international nightlife and cutting-edge modern culture. **Jeffrey H. Jackson**, BS'93, examines why jazz became so widely performed in Paris during the '20s and '30s, as well as why it became controversial, in *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris* (Duke University Press).

**Marshall Chapman**, BA'71, better known as a singer and musician whose songs have been covered by artists like Emmylou Harris, Wynonna, Joe Cocker, Jimmy Buffett and John Hiatt, published *Goodbye, Little Rock and Roller* this fall (St. Martin's Press). Using 12 of her songs as entry points to some of her life adventures, the book is a map of the places she's been and what went through her mind as she traveled there.



## ACCOLADES

**Sarah Byrn Rickman**, BA'58, was named a finalist in the 2003 Willa Cather Literary Awards competition, sponsored by Women Writing the West, for her novel *Flight from Fear* (Disc-Us Books, 2002) based on WASPs (Women Air Force Service Pilots) who flew airplanes for the U.S. Army during World War II.



# Q & A

Twenty years ago **Craig Nies**, associate professor of piano at Vanderbilt's Blair School of Music, presented the complete solo works of Claude Debussy in a cycle of four recitals. Last year he completed a two-year cycle of concerts that covered all of Beethoven's sonatas for piano and strings. In October 2003, Nies embarked on a series of concerts exploring the complete piano sonatas of Mozart and Schubert, a cycle that culminates Jan. 26, 2006, the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth.



DANIEL DUBOIS

**Q:** How did the Mozart/Schubert concert cycle come about?

**A:** I had been thinking of doing a major solo cycle for about 10 years, but nothing seemed quite right until the idea for the Mozart/Schubert cycle. The Beethoven piano/string sonata cycle I completed last year was a major inspiration, of course—plus, the Debussy cycle I completed 20 years ago was a constant reminder of the benefits of doing such a project.

**Q:** What is it about the Mozart and Schubert sonatas that appeals to you?

**A:** For a pianist, the sonata is the equivalent of a symphony. In the case of most of the Schubert sonatas, they are large-scale works featuring a wide variety of moods that have a breadth of conception and use of materials not found in shorter pieces. The great melodies in both Mozart and Schubert sonatas are also a big attraction for me.

**Q:** You've played so many of the works of the great composers in your career. Do you have a favorite composer?

**A:** I can't imagine a more enjoyable combination than Mozart and Schubert, but my pleasure in working on and performing their works has not diminished my admiration and love for the music of Chopin, Rachmaninoff and Debussy—or my interest in the works of living composers. I have worked with 10 Pulitzer Prize-winning composers and have premiered six works by Blair composer Michael Rose. As my last teacher, Gilbert Kalish, once said—and I'm paraphrasing—"One should play new works as though they are established masterpieces and established masterpieces as though the ink is still wet."

—Angela Wibking