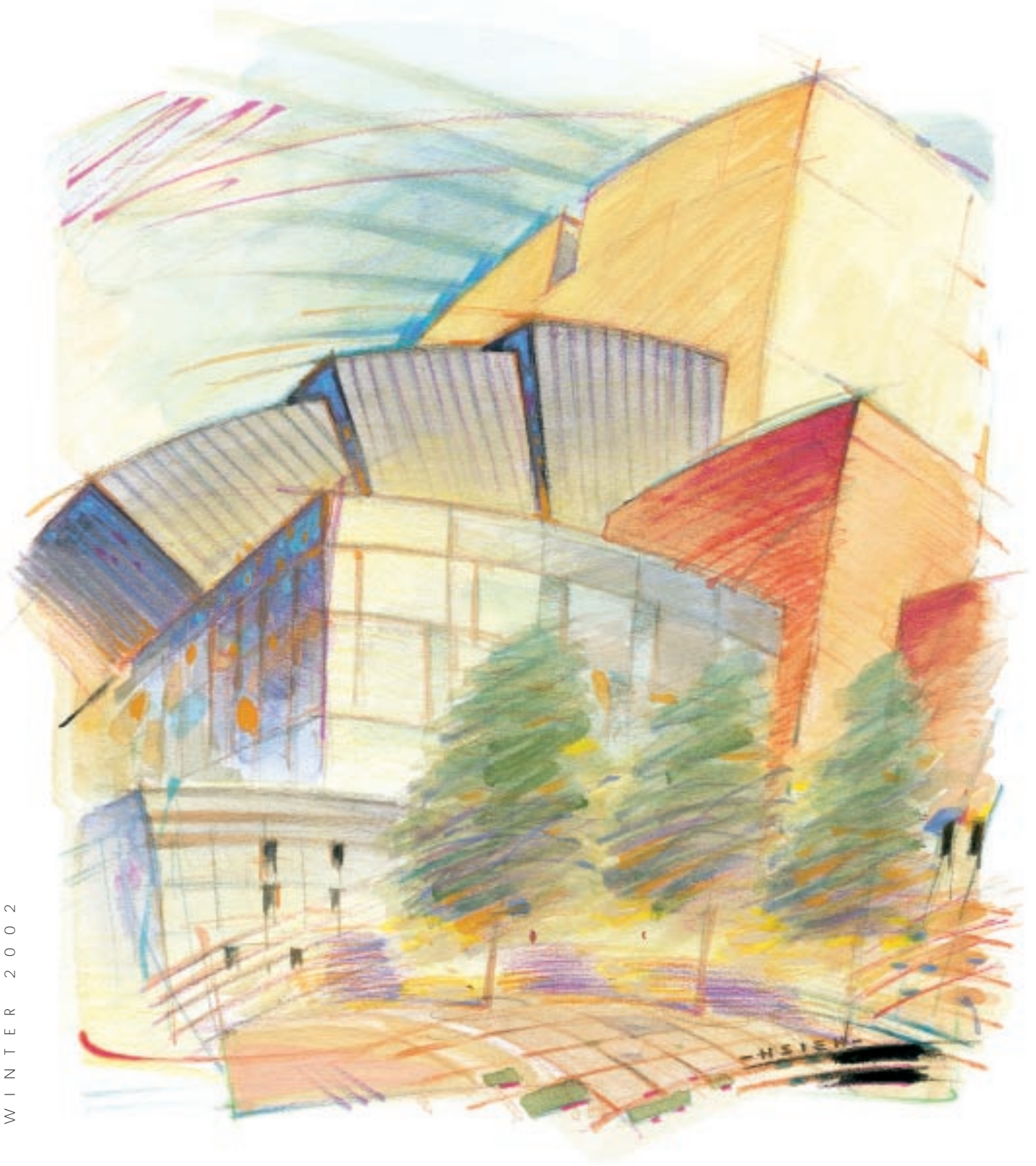


BLAIR

Quarter Note

Vanderbilt University



WINTER 2002



from the dean

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This semester marks a milestone in the history of the

Blair School of Music. Perhaps more than at any other time since the School's affiliation with Vanderbilt University began in 1981, we mark a new beginning in Blair's progress. Since 1964, the Blair School of Music has offered musical instruction and performance of quality and distinction to the students and citizens of Nashville and the Middle Tennessee region. With the inception of the collegiate program in 1986, these were extended to college students from states throughout the nation.

Now, with the completion of a construction project that has almost quadrupled our facilities (from 36,000 square feet to 130,000), the Blair School and Vanderbilt University offer our students and the community a truly comprehensive performing arts center. Classrooms, teaching studios, and practice rooms afford the finest equipment, technology, and acoustical conditions. Meanwhile, the Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall, our principal performing hall for the past twenty years, has been improved to provide an intimate, acoustically superior setting for solo and chamber music.

And the new Martha Rivers Ingram Center for the Performing Arts will provide a dramatic new hall seating over 600 and capable of producing fully staged opera, orchestral and choral concerts, and other important cul-

tural events in our own facilities, with superb acoustics and state-of-the-art stage equipment (and, I might add, convenient and inexpensive parking at the Capers garage, just across the street). Together, these facilities will be a new focal point for the arts in Nashville and the Middle Tennessee region.

While these facilities will enhance our own offerings, the Blair School intends to make them available to other cultural organizations, as well, both within Vanderbilt University and the community generally. The Nashville Chamber Orchestra has already scheduled concerts in the new Ingram Hall, and several other groups have also expressed interest. Assisting and cooperating with these organizations is entirely consistent with the Blair School's mission—providing our community with the finest instruction, performances, and facilities. Not only is it what we can do—it's what we *should* do.

I hope you will enjoy reading in this issue of THE QUARTER NOTE about our new construction and the wonderful people who have made it possible. And I hope you visited the New Blair during our open house on Sunday, November 11, and will come to the many events that will occur during the coming year.

As always, please know of my gratitude for your interest in the Blair School, and of my best personal wishes.

Mark Wait
Dean

The BLAIR QUARTER NOTE, the newsletter of the Blair School of Music, is published three times a year in cooperation with the Office of Alumni Publications for alumni, current students, and other friends of the School.

Cover illustration by Jim Hsieh

In keeping with the new Blair, this issue of the QUARTER NOTE features a new design. Key to this effort were designer Suzanna Spring, art director Donna Pritchett, and calligrapher Diane Jones.

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The Anne Potter Wilson Music Library on the Move

By Lew Harris

You can book it—the Anne Potter Wilson Music Library was literally on the move all summer. The dust finally settled in August when Blair School of Music freshmen arrived for orientation to find a renovated and expanded library of 8,250 square feet, more than twice the size of the previous music library.

The day after final exams ended last spring, the library staff and a moving company began packing books and musical scores into about 700 boxes. The volumes were temporarily housed in a Blair classroom all summer.

"The move was incredibly hectic," admits Dennis T. Clark, director of the music library since March. "We're excited about doubling in size. A lot of libraries at Vanderbilt have been undergoing renovation, but none have gotten that kind of increase in space."

Beginning in late July and continuing through the four weeks remaining before the new academic year began, the library staff reinstalled old and added new shelving in the greatly expanded facility. They unpacked and re-shelved 40,000 volumes and scores, and also stored 5,500 CDs, 14,500 LPs, 600 cassettes, and 700 additional video format items. New library and office furniture was arranged and audio-visual equipment—18 CD players, three DVD players, and five VHS players—installed.

Named for Anne Potter Wilson, long-time supporter of the Blair School and late wife of Vanderbilt Board of Trust member David K. Wilson, the music library's new space will be well utilized. Clark is most pleased with the number of options students will have for places to study. Overall seating in the library has jumped from 21 to 88 seats, or about one for every two students at Blair's current degree program enrollment.

"In the old library, students really didn't have a place where they could spread out a book, read for an exam, or study," Clark says. "In the new configuration, there will be 10 different tables at which students can study, as well as 10 carrels they can use for studying or reading. All of the tables and carrels will have network data ports so if students want to bring their laptops to the library and work on a paper, they will have that option."

There are 20 independent listening stations equipped with high quality headphones. Students could theoretically be listening to 20 different musical performances without a sound being audible in the library itself.

"I hope the new space brings back students, who otherwise may have been frustrated by the lack of space in the library," Clark says.

In another effort to be user-friendly, the library was open until 11 PM one night a week on a trial basis during the fall semester.

The library is open seven days and 70 hours a week. The facility normally closes at 9 PM, but may be found 24 hours a day on the Web at <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/music/>.



Clark came to Vanderbilt from Samford University in Birmingham, where he served as music librarian and also taught music appreciation. A classically trained tenor, he earned his BA at Samford in 1995, and an MLIS (master of library and information studies) at the University of Alabama in 1997.

"I became a music librarian because I'm fascinated by the diversity of knowledge that musicians must assimilate in order to perform intelligently," Clark says.

His full-time staff—circulation coordinator Rodger Coleman, reference assistant Robert Rich, evening and weekend assistant Michael Jones, and Saturday assistant Kelly Randall—all have music degrees or training.

"I see the music library as a repository of sources that both enliven and enhance performances," Clark says. "Whether you're coming to the library to listen to a recording of a previous performance or to study different editions of the same work, the music library is fundamental for experiencing music to its fullest."

The Anne Potter Wilson Music Library's expansion has more than doubled the space of the previous library. Students, faculty, and staff now have 8,250 square feet in which to study, research, and listen to music.



The internationally renowned **Fisk Jubilee Singers** officially open Ingram Hall on Tuesday, January 15th at 8:00 PM. This free event, their first performance at Vanderbilt, is cosponsored by the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Series and the Blair School.

The Jubilee Singers have received numerous awards, including the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award bestowed on them by The National Arts Club in New York in 1996. The ensemble is made up of young men and women from all over the United States currently studying at Fisk University.



The Blair School introduced a new **Kindermusik** program this fall with Kindermusik Our Time™ designed for children 1 1/2 years to 3 years of age, and led by Amy Alley, adjunct artist teacher of Kindermusik. Along with an accompanying parent or caregiver, children meet weekly for a 45-minute class to enjoy singing, moving, listening, interacting socially, and playing simple instruments. The program focuses on the child's emotional development as confidence, curiosity, self-control, and communication begin to take shape.



Blair faculty are featured regularly on "Live from Studio C," a program on Nashville Public Radio with live classical music every Tuesday morning at 11:06 and rebroadcast on the same day, by tape delay, at 7:30 PM. Each week, listeners enjoy great performances as well as insights into the works being performed and the musicians performing them. This fall Cynthia Estill, the

Blair String Quartet, Craig Nies, Felix Wang, Chris Teal, and Rob Thompson graced WPLN's Studio C with their music. Performances scheduled for the spring include the Lassiter/Phillips Guitar Duo with Blair's Joe Rea Phillips (February 5), the Blair String Quartet with Amy Dorfman (February 12), Blair's Norma Rogers and Bradley Mansell with Leah Bowes (March 5) and the Blair String Quartet (March 19).



The Nashville Chamber Orchestra will present its Guitar Festival on April 6th at 8 pm in Ingram Hall. The program will include Conni Ellisor's *No Place To Get To*, for English horn and guitar. The world premiere of Michael Levine's Concerto for Steel Guitar will feature Paul Franklin, Nashville's preeminent steel guitar player. Internationally renowned classical guitarist Ernesto Bitetti will perform Rodrigo's *Fantasy for a Gentleman*, and Blair School guitarist **John Johns** performs 16th century lute music alongside the NCO for Respighi's *Ancient Airs and Dances*.

THE MAGIC of MUSIC



**OPEN HOUSE FOR THE
MARTHA RIVERS INGRAM
CENTER FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11,
2001**

If, as Flaubert once said, success should be a consequence and not a goal, then the success of the open house celebration held on a mild, sunny November afternoon, was nothing less than the consequence of the entire Blair School of Music family working together for an event unlike any in the School's history. Over 200 performers and between 2,500 and 3,000 visitors celebrated the new Blair in a building now complete and ready to fulfill dreams. It was a potent reminder of the ability of music to draw together people of diverse backgrounds and talents.



PHOTOS BY JONATHAN RODGERS AND DAVID CRENSHAW

conmoto

British architect John Newenham Summerson once said “music can, in a few moments, admit us through vast portals into avenues, courts, and halls of infinite extent and variety.

Music can suddenly raise up an entire structure and, by the device of modulation, lift it on to a podium, abruptly recess its facades, and turn them bodily into the sunshine.”

The supporters of the Blair School of Music understand the power of music to build on and elevate life, and because of their confidence and beneficence, Blair now has a physical structure that greatly enhances its mission and music. On these pages, some of Blair’s long-standing benefactors share their thoughts on the importance of music and the Blair School to their lives.



I’m a great lover of music. To me, it’s the fourth necessity of life. I became enamored with Blair when it first started as an academy, and I sent my sons there. A great music school also educates people in the arts to benefit the community. There is no greater opportunity to elevate humanity than that of supporting such a school.

—Ken Roberts, The Anne Foster Roberts Atrium



My interest in the Blair School of Music stems from my devotion to Anne Potter Wilson, a dear friend whom I adored. Her family made the founding of the Blair School possible. It is gratifying to be a part of a school so committed to the community, and my involvement with the expansion honors Anne’s influence in my own life.

—Wilma Ward, The Wilma Ward Courtyard



Music has always been a part of the other side of me. It’s how I recreate myself. It soothes and calms and makes life wonderful. Throughout my life I’ve studied music privately. Because of my upbringing in a home with an appreciation for music, I think any education without exposure to good music lacks a needed dimension. I’d like for Blair to be an agent to reach out to the community and help improve the quality of life for Nashvillians.

—Cal Turner, Cyrus Daniel Choral Rehearsal Hall, in memory of Mr. Daniel, who was University organist and lecturer, 1946-68



I’ve been an enthusiastic Blair supporter from the beginning. My late wife, Anne, was instrumental in the beginning of the Blair Academy, which was named for her grandmother, Myra Jackson Blair. Blair was originally precollegiate, and still provides strong precollegiate training for our community’s young people. Students receive excellent training, and it’s well respected in our community. The Blair School is one of Vanderbilt’s highest achievements. With these additions, an already outstanding school will become one of the country’s very best.

—David K. Wilson, The Anne Potter Wilson Music Library

Because much of my adult life has been committed to enhancing professionalism in the performing arts in Nashville, I have singled out Blair as my favorite child. It is a jewel in Vanderbilt’s crown. Mark Wait, with his incredible energy and vision, has dared to dream the dream, and as a result Blair now has a splendid place for students to receive instruction, to perform, and to maximize their learning years.

—Martha Ingram, Martha Rivers Ingram Center for the Performing Arts

People and personality are essential to Blair’s success. The people who have led Blair have each improved the school in a unique way. Future students will benefit from Dean Mark Wait’s vision for a more functional, pleasing campus, now realized with these new additions.

—Judy Turner, The Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall

One of the real benefits of any city is exposure to cultural arts through the university. Blair has long exemplified that. We’re Music City USA—and with the growth of the symphony and other musical outlets, we’re becoming more comprehensively deserving of the title. Blair’s outreach and collaboration with other schools is critical to Vanderbilt’s success in the community and its perception by Nashvillians.

—Steve Turner, The Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall

My mother, an accomplished pianist, adored music and I loved her, so I am delighted to honor her memory through the Frances Hampton Currey Rehearsal Hall. We regard our gift to Blair as an investment in what is becoming one of the best music schools in the country. High schools across the nation send their best students here. We hope our gift will benefit many future students and help attract world-renowned faculty to Blair.

—Brownlee O. Currey Jr., The Frances Hampton Currey Instrumental Rehearsal Hall, named by Mr. and Mrs. Brownlee O. Currey Jr. in memory of his mother

I graduated from Vanderbilt 50 years ago, and since then my wife and I have tried to lend our support to as many parts of the University as possible—including Blair. We’ve thoroughly enjoyed hearing the Blair String Quartet, piano recitals, violin recitals, and other performances. Our gift to Blair honors Grace McCullough Tate, who was an exceptional piano teacher and a wonderful musician. Under Mark Wait’s remarkable leadership, Blair has a promising future, and offers gifted students a first-rate place to grow as musicians who perpetuate the spirit of Mrs. Tate.

—John and Norma Rich, Grace McCullough Tate Piano Wing, in memory of Norma Rich’s mother

music that builds

A Deep Feeling for the Violin

Profile | Susanna Perry Gilmore

by Angela Wibking

When Susanna Perry Gilmore was eight years old she tagged along with her younger brother to his music lesson—and it changed her life forever. Though Gilmore had been studying piano, her brother's violin lessons introduced her to the instrument that would become her passion.

"I think I was attracted to the communal nature of the violin," recalls Gilmore, a former Blair precollegiate student (1985-1988) and currently concertmaster of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra. "I did both piano and violin as a kid and studied with Mimi Zweig (whose students have included Joshua Bell) at Indiana University." Then Gilmore's parents both accepted history faculty positions at Vanderbilt University, and the family moved from Bloomington, Indiana, to Nashville. At age 13, Gilmore began studying violin with Chris Teal, professor of violin and a member of the Blair String Quartet.

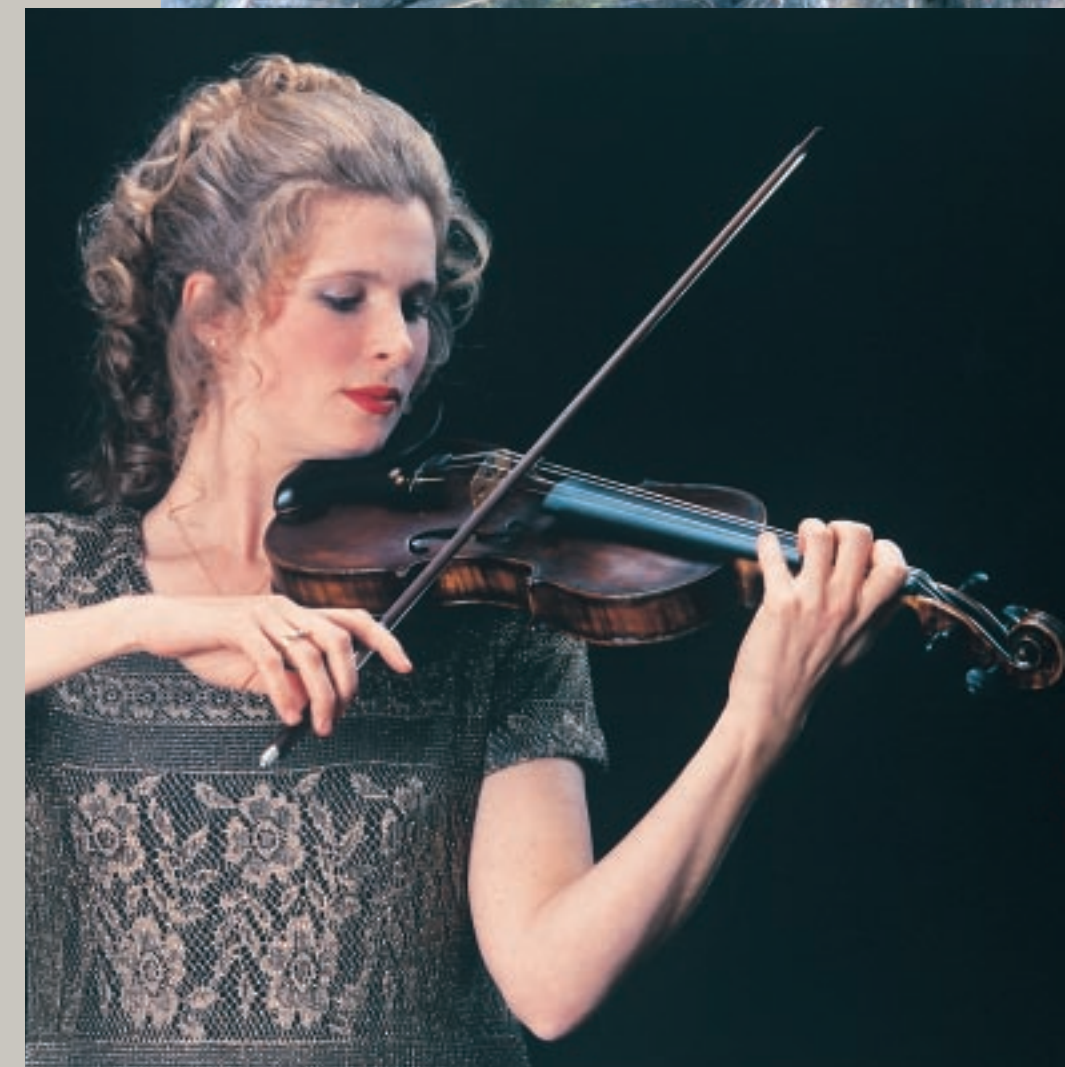
Like her discovery of the violin as a young child, Gilmore's studies as a teenager at Blair would have a lasting effect on her life. "I'm so grateful for the entire Blair precollegiate experience," says Gilmore. "Though I left Nashville when I was 17, I have continued to value Chris's mentorship. He had a profound effect on who I am as a musician—and as a teacher. Chris is one of the most patient teachers I've ever had and now that I'm working with teenagers myself I really appreciate that." This past summer Gilmore taught young violinists at the Sewanee Summer Music Festival at the University of the South. She is also on the music faculty at the University of Memphis and plays in the Ceruti String Quartet.

"I first heard her at age 13," Teal says. "She was always easy to teach and had a deep feeling for music and the expression that music affords." Since leaving Blair, Gilmore went on to study in England, earning her bachelor's degree in music at Oxford University and spending a year of post-graduate study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. After earning her master's degree in violin performance at the New England Conservatory in Boston, Gilmore spent two years as a member of the Rackham String Quartet in California. She accepted the concertmaster position with Memphis Symphony Orchestra in 1997.

Gilmore's return to Tennessee has given Teal a chance to catch up with his former student's progress as a musician. Last October, Teal was in the audience for the Memphis Symphony Orchestra performance of Berg's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, which featured Gilmore. "Her playing was on the highest level," Teal says. "It was a very convincing performance of an extremely difficult piece."

In addition to her classical playing, Gilmore has always enjoyed the lighter side of music. She and her husband Barry, a high school English teacher, have played Celtic music together since forming a band called Bards of a Feather during their student days at Nashville's Hume-Fogg High School. The Gilmores' current group is called Planet Reel. "The classical violin is an endless challenge," says Gilmore. "It's not something you ever perfect. Celtic fiddling, on the other hand, is not as demanding technically, and I get to do more creating because there's such room for improvisation."

Gilmore is also willing to improvise when it comes to her future career plans. Having had her first child in November, she's taking off a few months from her orchestral and teaching duties but plans to return to both pursuits next year. "Then I'll see where things take me," she says, "but the quest to understand my art form will keep me opening my violin case every day."



Profile



By Bonnie Arant Ertelt

Good Vibrations

THE BLAIR SCHOOL OF MUSIC'S
new INGRAM HALL combines the
art of *architecture* with the
science of *acoustics*
to make **beautiful music**



What makes a Stradivarius violin sound so incredible? Why can the audience hear more and better quality sound in some musical venues than others? When is it important to be able to hear a pin drop?

A key component in answering all these questions is acoustics, the area of physics that governs how sounds are made and how we hear them. When applied to music, the field becomes, as Blair's Technical Director Rudi Aldridge characterizes it, "more art than science." In the Blair School's new Ingram Hall, the art and science meld seamlessly into one glorious performance space unlike any in the region.

If size is considered the precursor to greatness, then Ingram Hall is not groundbreaking. It seats about 620 as opposed to around 1200 in Vanderbilt's Langford Auditorium or 2400 in the Tennessee Performing Arts Center's Jackson Hall. However, the details making up Ingram are what combine to put this complex of performance, rehearsal, and recording space in a class by itself.

Raked seating with no central aisle allows good views at every level, and seats in the first few rows retract to reveal the orchestra pit or convert the stage into a semi-thrust performance area. Two rehearsal halls—one for choral groups that will double as a lecture hall and one that is fully stage size and can accommodate full orchestra—are available and both have recording capabilities courtesy of conduits connecting them, the main stage, and the Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall with a recording studio underneath Ingram Hall. In this studio, the recording console custom-built by the late systems designer John Mosely

will reside for use by the Blair School and the larger music community. The technical booth, high above the seats in the back of the hall, has three separate rooms—for controlling light and sound and for observation.

None of this, however, means anything unless the facilities supported by such state-of-the-art embellishments have good sound. The acoustics team—led by architect David Baird of Street Dixon Rick Architects and joined by George C. Izenour, R.

Duane Wilson and Jim Read, theater consultants with George C. Izenour Associates—have made sure that the sound in this hall is phenomenal. To do that, they first had to assess what sounds were already prevalent in the area *outside* the hall.

"The first step in the design process was to observe, with our ears and eyes, the existing environmental conditions surrounding the Blair School," says Baird. "The sources and high levels of noise that we found were pretty surprising and frightening at the same time. Visually Blair appears to be located on the quiet side of campus; however, our ears told us that Blair is located on one of the noisiest streets in Nashville, is near a flight path and heliport for helicopters, and is across the street from another building's giant air conditioning system."

"The first thing you have to do is get rid of all the outside noise," says Wilson. "The shell of the building has to be fairly heavy. Mass is the only thing that really controls noise. So, when you as a theater consultant meet with the architect and structural engineer, and you tell them you want 6 to 8 inches of concrete on the roof, they all gasp loudly," he laughs.

"But Duane's suggestions made sense for us because as in many urban areas, Blair faculty, students, and concert-goers have experienced a drastic increase in environmental noise over the past 20 years," says Baird. "For the new performance, rehearsal, and recording spaces, we integrated an extremely massive concrete structure with architectural acoustic elements to nearly eliminate the high level of outside noise that exists today."

Once the extraneous outside noise is under control, the real job of an acoustician begins. The next element in the design of a hall with good acoustics is to make sure the design of the interior will optimize the sounds made inside the hall. Wilson likens it to the Star Trek prime directive.

“Our prime directive as theater consultants is that you must be able to see, you must be able to hear, and you must be relatively comfortable for two-and-a-half to three hours,” says Wilson. “Because of the way people experience performances these days, they’re not used to working hard to hear. People are used to watching most performances in their living room with a device that easily makes it louder or softer for them. If you have a full orchestra on stage playing as loudly as they can, they’re generating about as much sound energy as a 60-watt light bulb emits in light waves. So, you have to take that small amount of energy and make sure it gets to all the ears in the room.”

The difficulty with doing this is best illustrated by understanding the sheer number of differing sound frequencies, notes, and range of volume that can be made by instruments, not to mention the human voice. Sounds produced by different instruments create differing wave patterns. Stringed instruments produce a range of sounds, their strings vibrating at different frequencies depending on the physical characteristics of the instrument and the way in which they’re manipulated: plucked (like a guitar or harp or harpsichord), bowed (like a violin or cello) or struck (like a piano or hammered dulcimer). Wind instruments produce sound waves by making vibrations in air, with the shape of the instrument and the open versus closed end of the instrument governing the difference in frequencies.

The human being boasts the most complex instrument—the voice. Partly a stringed instrument, because of the vibration of the vocal cords, and partly a wind instrument, because sound is formed by reverberation in the airways and mouth, the possible range of vocalizations is simply astounding.

Add to this equation (and acousticians do, but the mathematical formulas themselves are best left to the professionals) the ways in which the energy of sound waves is attenuated by absorption, redirected by reflection, and dispersed by diffusion, and it becomes clear that what is needed is a team who can design a hall that can be tuned like an instrument. The optimal amount of absorption, reflection, and diffusion of sound waves depends on whether the performance is by a chamber music ensemble or an opera theater group, a large choir or a full symphony orchestra. Fortunately for the Blair School, Baird, Izenour, Wilson, and Read have designed a hall that can take into account the differences in reverberation time and

sound dispersal required by these very different performances.

“Wallace C. Sabine developed a formula for reverberation time,” explains Wilson. “It’s basically a constant and uses the volume of the room and the amount of absorption of the surfaces in the room. The higher the volume, the longer the reverb time will be; and also the harder, more reflective the surfaces in the room are, the longer the reverb time. Typically, it’s difficult to change the volume of a room, although we do have some buildings built back in the sixties where we could change the volume of a room considerably. These buildings have big, heavy sound-reflecting ceilings that will move anywhere from 20 to 40 feet and change the size of the room from a seating capacity of 3000 down to about 800. That inherently changes reverberation time. We also use a lot of curtains, on the order of an acre of drapery, to provide absorption of sound. Ingram Hall uses the curtain approach.

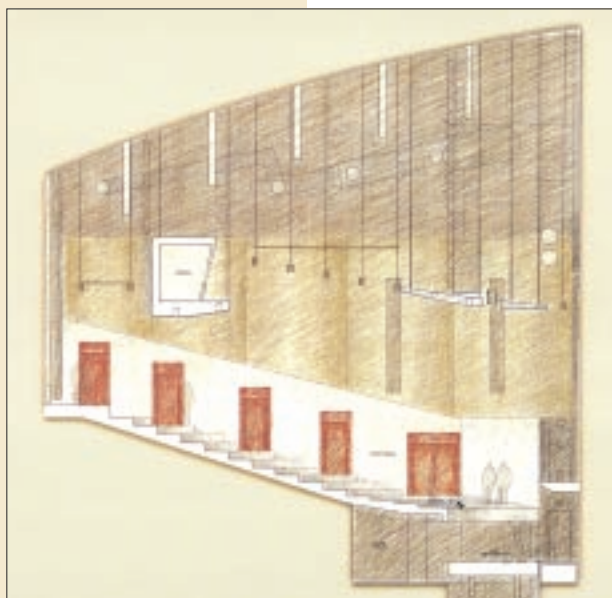
“We try to make it very simple for the user,” Wilson says. “We have a computer driven control system that has choices like ‘stage,’ ‘drama,’ ‘musical,’ ‘opera,’ and ‘concert,’ and those selections have to do with pre-set program settings for the draperies. Also, they’re each controllable individually, so that if you find that you want something else, you can open and close the individual curtains to provide additional tuning. There are four curtains, and these curtains move up and down and pull all the way up to store at the top. When you have this in large concert mode [with the curtains pulled up all the way], you have the longer reverb time you want in a symphony concert so that you get this nice gradual trailing away as the music decays.”

The acoustic shell for the hall is a steel enclosure that makes the stage part of the room. Designed to be installed by as few as two people in 20 minutes, it combines architectural and acoustic elements. It looks like beautiful design, but it is beautiful design with a purpose: its panels reflect and absorb sound so that when in place, the audience hears the music as though they are on stage with the performers.

“What I love about Ingram Hall is that the pattern of curves on the walls are incorporated into the acoustic shell,” says Aldridge. “At the proscenium, the pattern opens up to continue the curves and meet the ones at the back of the stage. With the shell in, it is one seamless environment. It looks and sounds like you’re in the acoustic shell with the performers. It’s like being onstage, visually and acoustically. It works as one beautiful unit.”

So, how well can one hear in this hall?

“From any seat you can hear a musician running her fingers across the fret board on her violin,” says Aldridge. “That’s how well you can hear in here.”



Cross-section of Ingram Hall showing the acoustic shell. Drawing by David Baird of Street Dixon Rick Architecture.

By Bonnie Arant Ertelt

On TOUR

WITH THE BLAIR CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Since the days of wandering minstrels in merry old England, touring has been an accepted reality in the lives of many musicians.

This summer for a week in August, the Concert Choir of the Blair Children's Chorus Program, composed primarily of junior and senior high girls, toured England, not as wandering minstrels, but as part of the International Children's Choir Festival. Invited to participate along with children's choirs from Milwaukee and Waukesha, Wisconsin, and Austin and Houston, Texas, the Blair Children's Chorus sang at Canterbury Cathedral in Canterbury, England, and Westminster Hall, next door to Westminster Abbey. They also sang solo concerts in Saint Paul's Cathedral, London, and at London's historic John Wesley Church.

“It’s an exhausting schedule,” says Pam Schneller, senior lecturer in choral music and director of the children's choral program. “The day would start at 8 AM for breakfast, and most of the time, we wouldn't get back to our dorm rooms until 10:30 or 11 PM, and then we'd have our group meeting to talk over things. But all the performing opportunities were spectacular, and singing with the Festival Choir [composed of all the participating choirs] in the service of evensong and for the concerts at Canterbury and West-

minster was a thrilling experience. Saint Paul's in London was also spectacular, and when we sang at John Wesley Church for the worship service on Sunday, it happened to be the weekend they were hosting the World Methodist Council Meeting and dedicating a new stained glass window, so the place was packed with people from all over the world.”

This was not the first tour for the chorus. Since 1994, the Blair Children's Chorus has toured Toronto and the Niagara Falls area, Texas, Seattle, Boston, Chicago, Iowa and Nebraska, and even Austria. One of the expectations upon being accepted into the chorus is that there will be a tour at the end of the performing year.

“Our goals are educational and cultural,” says Schneller. “We see it as a performing tour—not as a reward for working hard and having fun, but as the culmination of everything we did during the course of the year. So, we plan a lot of cultural activities,

like going to museums and plays and the opera.

“This organization is about making music at a higher level, but when you ask families to make the sacrifice of having their girls in the choir and spending all that time and money, we want to offer them these opportunities. I want to make sure it's something that feels worthwhile to them.”

This year on tour, the girls saw the London production of *Les Miserables*, visited Leeds Castle and the Tower of London in addition to rehearsing and performing works by Henry Purcell, John Rutter, Jonathan Willcocks, Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Holst. Their tour ended with a banquet at a small Italian restaurant in London.

During the school year, the children's choral program is administered by Susan Kirby, whose four children are alums of the choral program, and who started as a parent volunteer in 1990. “Susan is responsible for a great deal of our success as an

organization,” says Schneller. Schneller's husband, Roland Schneller, senior artist teacher of piano, has accompanied the choir since 1988.

For more information about the Blair Children's Chorus and other choral opportunities for children at Blair, contact Pam Schneller at (615) 322-4647.



The Blair Children's Chorus



The Blair School's Bobby Taylor suns himself in a field of drying cane in southern France. The region is known world-wide for producing the best cane for making woodwind reeds.

FRANCES TAYLOR

The Mystery

It is said that oboe players are crazy. Just ask an oboist—they're the ones who say it most often. And the source of their craziness is their obsession with their reeds.

"It's like splitting diamonds," says Bobby Taylor, associate professor of oboe. "A really good oboe reed tip is thinner than three hundredths of a millimeter. Research has been done that compares the reeds of some famous oboe players, and every one of them uses reeds that have tips measuring one hundredth of a millimeter. A reed that thin produces a very warm sound with smooth tonal quality. But making a reed that thin is really hard to do. The next step beyond one hundredth of a millimeter is zero, so as you finish scraping a reed, you are very close to ruining it. On the other hand, if you stop too soon, you make a reed that functions, but doesn't have the right sound. This may explain our obsession with reeds."

In an effort to understand more about the sound they want from their oboes, their reeds, and to better know the cane used to make reeds, Taylor and four of his students—Somerville Aston, '01; Kristin Cameron, '02, Robert Boxie, '02, and Jennifer Bernard, '03—traveled to France this summer for 17 days to work with John DeLancie and Wayne Rapier, two oboists known for their playing and their association with Marcel Tabuteau, the "father" of American oboe playing.

"Tabuteau was a real innovator in oboe playing," says Taylor. "He came here from France to play with the Philadelphia Orchestra with ideas of his own and started experimenting with a different way to make reeds. Now, almost every American oboe player, with very few exceptions, is either a student of Tabuteau or a student of one of his students."

Taylor studied with Rapier, former assistant principal oboist of the Philadelphia Orchestra and Boston Symphony. DeLancie succeeded Tabuteau as principal oboist of the Philadelphia Symphony, and also taught at and was director of Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, long known as the premier school in the United States for woodwind players.

"The quality of the oboe sound is comprised of several things," says Taylor. "The way the reed is made, how much of the reed is in your mouth when you play, and how much lip pressure or biting is applied to the reed. The idea is never to force the sound. You want it to sing. A free, unencumbered sound with the oboe is a beautiful thing; it's what we're all striving for."

While helping the younger oboists prepare for orchestral auditions was one aspect of the workshops in France, another was to study and research the cane used for woodwind reeds by visiting where it's grown and interviewing those who grow and sell it. Workshop participants traveled from Paris to Toulon on the southern coast of France, where almost all of the cane used for reeds is grown. Why this location? Cane is grown all over the world at the same latitude, but apparently the same environmental conditions that make good grapes for winemaking also make good cane. The climate, the

soil, and the relationship between the Mediterranean Sea and the *mistral* winds offer a combination of elements not found in other parts of the world.

"One of the growers there, Madame Duchin, said that the cane has to suffer," Taylor explains. "She says it's better if it has a tough time of it, if it doesn't get quite enough rain or it's subjected to the *mistral* wind that blows from the Mediterranean. But every piece of cane that you make a reed from is different."

The process of reedmaking for oboists is complicated and involves equipment with names like gougers, splitters, planers, shapers, and guillotines. In order to both make the reed and later to play it, the cane first has to be soaked. Taylor starts with a segment of tube cane. At this point, it's not very far from having just been cut from the field.

"You take a piece of tube cane and split it into three pieces with the splitter, which is like an arrowhead," explains Taylor. "Then you cut it to a very precise length on the guillotine. After that you plane it to change it from a curved piece to one that's absolutely flat on top."

"Next, you take the shaper and shape it by folding it in half, then put it on the shaper tip and carve it down with a razor blade so that it has a tapered shape." After shaping, the reed is tied on to a silver tube with nylon string, and fitted

into the oboe with an airtight seal of cork.

"When you tie on the reed, you also have to make a good airtight seal, because if the reed leaks, you can't use it. It's too unpredictable."

Taylor estimates that he makes about four or five reeds every week, tailoring each reed to the demands of the pieces he's scheduled to play. At this point in his career, he thinks he spends more time making reeds than actually practicing.

"It's such a tricky process," he says, "but if you have a good reed, life is good."



Blair students (from left) Somerville Aston, '01, Robert Boxie, '02 (playing English horn), and Kristin Cameron, '02, play a trio during workshops they attended in France this summer with John DeLancie and Wayne Rapier.

FRANCES TAYLOR

of the Reed

PRECOLLEGIATE

Kimberly Phelps, Abby Schoenfeld, George Meyer, Clara Marsden, Jack and Sam Quiggins, Nathaniel Gillette and Jena Lee, all students of **Anne Williams**, senior artist teacher of Suzuki violin and cello, or **Carol Smith**, senior artist teacher of violin, attended the Chicago Suzuki Institute in July.

Michael DeBruyn, student of **Felix Wang**, assistant professor of cello, was a co-winner of the Nashville Youth Symphony Competition held earlier this fall. Honorable mention was given to the following Blair students: **Hamilton Berry**, student of **Felix Wang**; **Christen Farr**, student of **Chris Teal**, professor of violin; **John Gattis**, student of **Joy Worland**, adjunct artist teacher of horn; and **Jeong Yeon**, student of **Roland Schneller**, senior artist teacher of piano.

UNDERGRADUATE

Chris Genovese, '02, student of **Frank Kirchner**, adjunct associate professor of saxophone, performed this summer as a background musician, arranger, and manager with the Decatur Park Singers, a touring show choir in Decatur, Illinois.

Blair senior **Amanda Martin**, student of **Amy Jarman**, lecturer in voice and assistant dean, was selected to participate in the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria, this summer. Blair Sophomore composition/theory major **John Sands**, student of **Michael Alec Rose** and **Michael Kurek** both associate professors of composition, was also a member of the staff and the AIMS Festival Orchestra. AIMS is an intensive training program in the study of vocal music as it relates to the singer, the pianist, and the instrumentalist.

Scott Seaton, '04, student of **Frank Kirchner**, served this summer as the concert office assistant at the Interlochen Music Camp in Michigan.

the South Bend, Kalamazoo, and Indiana Symphony Orchestras. She is also an associate faculty member at Indiana University, South Bend. She owns a small Internet business called *Subscription Strings*.

Aaron Goen, '00, former student of **Wilma Jensen**, adjunct professor of organ, and **Amy Dorfman**, assistant professor of piano, is currently pursuing an MM degree in organ performance at Indiana University in Bloomington. He is organist for Trinity Lutheran Church in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Laura Gregory, '00, former student of **Gerald Greer**, is currently pursuing a graduate degree in speech pathology at the University of Texas, Austin.

Alison Young Howard, '91, former student of **Tracy Prentice**, adjunct assistant professor of voice, received her MM in 1993 from the Royal Academy of Music, London and is completing her PhD at London University. She has played the roles of Laurey in *Oklahoma*, Adelaide in *Guys and Dolls*, Maria in *The Sound of Music*, and Princess in *Aladdin* in London, England. In Hamburg, Germany, she played Jennyanydots and Jellylorum in *Cats*. She lives currently in Los Angeles, California, where she does more studio singing than theater.

Nicole Matlock McVey, '93, former student of **Bobby Taylor**, associate professor of oboe, is oboist with the U.S. Army Europe Band, based in Heidelberg, Germany.

Jill Perkins, '99, former student of **Wilma Jensen** and **Amy Dorfman**, is director of music and Christian nurture at South Presbyterian Church in Bergenfield, New Jersey and has created a weekly after school music program for grades 1-8. While working on her master of art in music education degree from Teachers

College, Columbia in New York City, she observed the violin classes of Roberta Guispatti, author of the bestselling *Music of the Heart*, made into a movie last spring by Paramount Pictures.

Virginia Ann Rogers, '93, former student of **Cornelia Heard**, is a Suzuki violin teacher at the Hartt School and a strings teacher in the Windsor Public Schools in West Hartford, Connecticut. She served as violinist for the Utah Festival Opera Company in Logan, Utah, for the summer 2000 season.

In May, **Daniel Bernard Roumain**, '93, former student of **Michael Kurek** and **Chris Teal**, premiered his work *CHILD*, at Memorial Hall in Cincinnati, Ohio, with the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra. The work, composed for and dedicated to Timothy Thomas, an innocent man slain by police last spring in an incident that spawned race riots in Cincinnati, is a minimalist, hip-hop, techno setting of the spiritual, *Motherless Child*. Elementary-aged children participated in the premiere, performing percussion instruments and reading from personal essays incorporated into the music as "moments."

Molly Sharp Ruze, '90, former student of **Kathryn Plummer**, associate professor of viola, received her MM from the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1992. She is principal violist with the Richmond Symphony Orchestra and has been violist with the Oberon Quartet in residence at Richmond's St. Catherine's School. She lives on a small organic farm outside Richmond in an old Virginia farmhouse.

George Speed, '97, former student of **Edgar Meyer**, adjunct associate professor of bass, completed a master of music degree in bass performance from Boston University in 1999. He has been a regular substitute with the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, touring twice with the ensemble.

Kristin Stevenson, '97, former student of former voice faculty **Lonny Bond** and **Paul Rowe**, writes that she "recently gave up a more corporate life for a job at the Exit/In [in Nashville]," where she is involved in many aspects of the music club.

Donovan Earl Stokes, '95, former student of **Edgar Meyer**, received his MM degree last year from Indiana University and entered the doctoral program there this past January as a student of Lawrence Hurst. He serves on the faculty of the String Academy at Indiana and has been a featured performer and composer at the Brian Deneke Memorial Festival for the last three years.

Maia Ann Surace, '93, former student of **Enid Katahn**, professor of piano, emeritus, received a master of music degree in piano from Northwestern University in 1995 and a master of music in voice from Roosevelt University in 2000. She has sung with the Opera Theater of Lucca in Italy and was an apprentice artist with the Des Moines Metro Opera.

Alicia Walker, '00, former student of **Norma Rogers**, adjunct artist teacher of flute, piccolo, and recorder, is pursuing a law degree at the University of Iowa.

Kathleen E. Walsdorf, '95, former student of **Chris Teal**, received her MM degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 2000, and serves as coordinator of the UT String Project. She also has a private studio, teaching violin and viola to 30 children ranging in age from 4 to 18 years.

ALUMNI

UNDERGRADUATE

Julia Bryan Barnard, '93, former student of **Cornelia Heard**, associate professor of violin, married William Barnard in May 1998, and one year later moved to Prague, Czech Republic, to become a partner in Pyxis International, an Internet start-up company with offices in the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Karen Burciaga, '99, former student of **Gerald Greer**, adjunct artist teacher of violin, is pursuing a graduate degree at Indiana University in Bloomington.

Whitney Crowley, '99, former student of **Jane Kirchner**, associate professor of flute and associate dean, is director of instrumental music at St. Andrews Episcopal School in Austin, Texas, where she is pursuing a master of music education degree at UT Austin. During her first year of graduate studies, she was principal

flutist in the UT Symphony Band and a member of the percussion section in the Austin Symphonic Band.

Lauren Denney, '00, former student of **Cassandra Lee**, assistant professor of clarinet, attended the University of South Carolina Conductors Institute in June. She was one of 14 people chosen for the Associates Program and conducted the orchestra as well as chamber groups. Denney is currently pursuing a master of music degree in clarinet performance at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and will be graduating in May of 2002.

Sarah Dorian-Lawrence, '91, former student of **Grace Mihi Bahng**, former associate professor of cello, received her MM degree from Notre Dame in 1993. She teaches in South Bend and plays cello in

Emelyne Bingham, senior lecturer in aural studies and conducting, presented a lecture/demonstration at the Indiana University school of Music on October 6 titled "From the Podium: A Woman's Perspective."

Joe Jones, adjunct assistant professor of music, appeared as a member of Slide Advantage-Pro Edition, a professional trombone octet, at the Kentucky Music Educators Association meeting last February. The group is conducted by Ray Conklin, professor of trombone at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky.

Douglas Lee, professor of musicology, emeritus, has completed an agreement with Routledge Press, New York and London, for the publication of his book *Notes from the 20th Century: The Modern Repertory of the American Symphony Orchestra*. The book is a collection of descriptive essays, in program-note format, describing those modern works that have been performed most frequently by American symphony orchestras during the last decade of the twentieth century. It projects 126

works as the basic repertory of the modern era, based on their durability in the contemporary concert hall.

Carol Nies, adjunct senior artist teacher of conducting, received her DMA in orchestral conducting this June from the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati. While completing the degree, she served as conducting assistant and cover conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, where she was ultimately associate conductor.

Michael Alec Rose, associate professor of composition, has been chosen as one of this year's recipients of the ASCAP Plus Standard Awards. The awards are granted by an independent panel of composers, performers, and critics. They are intended to reward writers whose works have a unique prestige value for which adequate compensation would not otherwise be received, and to compensate those writers whose works are performed substantially in media not surveyed by ASCAP.

Faculty Additions and Changes

This fall nine new faculty members join the Blair School. They include **Amy Alley**, adjunct artist teacher of Kindermusik; **Keith Christopher**, adjunct instructor of music theory; **Robert McNeily**, part-time lecturer in music; **Ljerka Rasmussen**, adjunct assistant professor of music history and literature; **Kaye Kyunhee Rhee**, adjunct artist teacher of piano; **Rachael Short**, artist teacher of piano; **Christopher Warren**, adjunct artist teacher and director of the Blair Boy Choir; **Wayne White**, adjunct artist teacher of percussion; and **Andrzej Zabinski**, part-time lecturer in music theory.

Amy Jarman is now assistant dean and lecturer in voice, and **Michael Slayton** is now assistant professor of music composition and theory.

New staff include **Rudi Aldridge**, supervisor of technical services; **Roxana Imam**, secretary/receptionist; **Barclay Dwight**, stage technician; and **Cindy Steine**, director of external relations. **Tara Scheyer** has moved to the position of accounting assistant.

Dean Mark Wait Named to Country Music Foundation's Board

Like thousands before and since, a love of music brought **Mark Wait** to Nashville. After eight years of hard work and dedication, he has achieved the sort of music industry recognition most of his fellow travelers only dream of: an invitation to join the Country Music Foundation (CMF) Board of Directors.

Wait, a classically trained pianist has, since his arrival in 1993, worked with civic leaders and several Blair faculty members to nurture a quiet but powerful partnership with Nashville's music industry.

"Classical music is and always will be the heart and core of our mission, but there is also much for us to learn from the outstanding musicians, diverse music and wonderful heritage of Southern culture," said Wait.

"Virtuosity and musical insight are all around us in Nashville, from the concert halls and local clubs, to recording studios.

"The gap between classical and popular music is often more perception than reality," said Wait. "Classical music has always borrowed freely from the popular music of its day, and many popular groups have regularly incorporated themes and techniques pioneered in the classics. The learning process goes both ways."

"We are delighted to have Dean Mark Wait on the Country Music Foundation's Board," said Kyle Young, CMF director. "We first got to know Mark as an active and involved member of the advisory council for our educational outreach initiatives and feel that he is a really good fit. He knows music education."

Although this will be the first time that the major university music schools have been directly represented on the board, the CMF reaches out to a variety of civic leaders and community-oriented organizations. Other newly inducted members of the CMF Board of Directors include Allen Butler, Sony Music Nashville president; Dr. Robert Fisher, president of Belmont University; Donna Nicely, executive director of the Nashville Public Library; Jim Ed Norman, president of Warner Brothers Records Nashville; and



NEEL BRAKE

Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell, a member of Vanderbilt's Class of '79. Country Music Hall of Fame member E.W. "Bud" Wendell was elected as the board's new chairman.

"It is a distinct privilege for me to serve on the Country Music Foundation Board of Directors," said Wait. "I am honored to have been selected."

—David Glasgow

Dwayne Sagen, Vanderbilt band director and assistant dean at the Blair School of Music, served as guest conductor of the U.S. Army's famed Pershing's Band this summer. The July 24 performance was part of a free weekly concert series that takes place on The Mall throughout the summer months.

"It was an honor to be invited to guest conduct one of the top professional bands in the world," said Sagen, prior to leaving Nashville. "If I were a singer, it would be like singing at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, or for an orchestra conductor to conduct the New York Philharmonic."



MELANIE BURFORD

Peter Fyfe, adjunct professor of organ, retired as University organist this spring after almost two decades of filling Benton Chapel with reverent, joyous and sometimes mournful music. During his 18-year tenure, he accompanied hundreds of weddings, memorial services and special University events, made a recording of the alma mater that was played at several Commencements, and along the way established himself as an integral part of Vanderbilt.

"I know I speak for innumerable students, faculty, staff and family members with whom we both worked in saying thank you to Peter for his many gifts to us," said University Chaplain Gay Welch.



NEEL BRAKE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25

Violist Kathryn Plummer
and Friends

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27

Beethoven Sonata Series, Part 2

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2

From Baroque to Bluegrass,
featuring Butch Baldassari,
mandolin

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Baritone Jonathan Retzlaff
and Pianist Enid Katahn

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Pianist Craig Nies

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25

The Music of BMI Composer-
in-Residence William Bolcom and
Antheil's *Ballet Mechanique*

THURSDAY AND SATURDAY,
MARCH 14 AND 16

Faculty Opera: Menotti's
The Old Maid and the Thief

FRIDAY, MARCH 22

The Blair String Quartet with
guests Robert Mann, Grace Mihi
Bahng, Kathryn Plummer, and
Carolyn Huebl

SATURDAY, MARCH 23

The Blair Student Showcase

MONDAY, APRIL 8

Trumpeter Allan Cox and
Friends

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

Violist John Kochanowski
and Pianist Mark Wait



All concerts begin at 8 pm. Events are subject to change.
Visit our web site at www.vanderbilt.edu/Blair for schedule updates.

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