

BLAIR

Quarter Note

Vanderbilt University



WINTER 2004

Full Cycle

*Pianist Craig Nies interprets
the Mozart/Schubert sonata cycle*

BY ANGELA WIBKING

For pianists like Craig Nies, more is better—at least when it comes to performing the works of a great composer. In the case of certain composers, in fact, everything is better.

Nies, associate professor of piano and co-chair of the keyboard department at Blair, is in the midst of an eight-concert cycle covering the complete piano sonatas of Mozart and Schubert. The Mozart/Schubert cycle began in October and culminates on January 27, 2006 in Ingram Hall on Mozart's 250th birthday. "The sonata is the equivalent of a symphony," Nies says, explaining his attraction to the genre. "They are large scale works that feature 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's and Schubert's sonatas are also a big attraction for me."

The pianist's fascination with concert cycles began 20 years ago when he presented the complete solo works of Debussy in a series of four recitals that was broadcast on National Public Radio. Since coming to Blair 13 years ago, Nies has also performed all 24 preludes by Rachmaninoff, Chopin's 24, and selections from Debussy's 24. Last year Nies completed a two-year cycle for the Blair Concert Series that covered all of Beethoven's sonatas for piano and strings. "I have been thinking of doing a major solo cycle for about 10 years now, but nothing seemed right until the idea for the Mozart/Schubert cycle," Nies says. "The Beethoven piano/string sonata cycle completed last year was a major inspiration, of course, and the Debussy cycle 20 years ago was a constant reminder of the benefits of doing such a project."

The intimate knowledge of a composer's work derived from these concert cycles impacts Nies as both a performer and a teacher. "Since this cycle is just beginning, I can only assume it will give me a greater feeling of confidence in playing these composers' works in the future," Nies says. "Having that kind of detailed knowledge is also very helpful in teaching. One of the most impressive things about master teachers is their ability in a class setting to demonstrate passages from memory due to their long association with a composer. Claude Frank, one of my teachers at Yale, did a master class for us here and in the repertoire he knows best—Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert—he simply doesn't need to look at the score to suggest ways of playing a certain phrase or passage."

Nies' immersion approach isn't confined to music. "I feel the same way about literature," he says. "If I like an author, I feel the need to read everything by them—and I've done that with several authors, including Shakespeare and Dostoevsky." Nies is also an avid reader of poetry, has formally studied half a dozen languages and is a devoted sports fan. "I suppose it amounts to drawing from as many sources as possible and doing what is most interesting at any specific time," Nies says. "Right now, I can't imagine a more enjoyable combination than Mozart and Schubert."



Cover illustration of Menahem Pressler
by Jim Hsieh

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TO LEARN FROM A

*Master classes become
an important supplement
to learning at Blair*

Master

BY LISA DUBOIS



Krystal Grant, a junior studying piano at Blair, listens intently as Menahem Pressler, pianist with the Beaux Arts Trio, gives instruction during his October master class.

Junior Krystal Grant has just finished playing Ballade op. 46 by Samuel Barber when Menahem Pressler steps forward. "You play with feeling, and technically that was very good," he tells her, "but what is it you *like* about the piece?" He asks her to return to a certain passage and change her approach. "The tempo is yada-da-dum, yada-da-dum. Play it once more. Right! That was beautiful!" he exclaims.

Pressler is conducting a piano master class at the Martha Rivers Ingram Center for the Performing Arts. A founding member of the Beaux Arts Trio and professor of music at the Indiana University School of Music, Pressler has been enticed for duty at Vanderbilt while in Tennessee for a concert at Middle Tennessee State University. On this day, four piano majors—Ms. Grant, Ralph Blanco, Michael Krewson, and Sarah Seelig—have been selected by audition to perform during the two-hour master class. Faculty members, students, and music lovers from around the area take their seats in the concert hall.

Junior Ralph Blanco plays Chopin's Prelude in C-sharp Minor, op. 45. "That was beautiful in my opinion," Pressler says when Blanco completes the piece. "You play the melody with sensitivity—but not sensitive enough for my taste." Explaining Chopin's notations in the score, he spirals his index finger into the air, "Every note, like a plant... you should see it rising up. Every note, it really climbs."



NEIL BRAKE

composers knew exactly what they were doing. You have to trust that there's never anything they've left up to chance."

Last year, Nies invited Juilliard's Emanuel Ax, who was in town for a solo concert with the Nashville Symphony, to stop by Blair to lead a master class. Nies says, "We were very lucky that someone of Pressler's stature was going to be

"We don't mind artist/teachers who really shake things up. We always try to bring in people who have something dynamic to offer."

—JONATHAN RETZLAFF, chair of the Blair Department of Voice

Throughout the class, Pressler focuses on having the students read the music as the composer intended. He wants them to see the wealth of possibilities that exist between *piano* and *pianissimo*, *forte* and *fortissimo*. Each line of music is like a line of poetry, laden with rhythm, tempo, nuance, and emotion. Pressler tells the audience, "Especially at the beginning [of learning a piece of music], you have to be a slave to the score."

Craig Nies agrees. An associate professor of piano and teacher/mentor to Grant and Blanco, Nies enlisted Pressler for the class. "I've told my students many times that if there's something that doesn't make sense to you in the piece, if the harmonies seem to be off, you still have to trust the score," he says later. "All these great

available this year. I feel so much better after these master classes. The teachers always reinforce what we've been saying to our students all along."

Master classes, in fact, have become a vital teaching tool for Blair instructors, as well as a unique conduit for spreading the word about the quality of students, the high level of musical training, the virtuosity of the faculty, and the superior facilities at Vanderbilt. The number of master classes offered has now grown to between 10 and 15 a year.

"This is a chance for our students to have input from other teachers and also to show our guests what kind of school we have. Then, when their precollege students begin looking for



college programs, they will know what Vanderbilt has to offer," explains Connie Heard, associate professor of violin.

She adds that performing in master classes is a boon to Blair students' resumes as well as their creative processes. It gives them a chance to perform before teachers who play and sing with some of the world's greatest symphonies and who work at some of the country's top music conservatories. "The more exposure our students have to great artists and great teachers the better," she says. In the past, Heard has lined up classes with famed Juilliard teacher, the late Dorothy DeLay and with Paul Kantor from the Cleveland Institute. The string department hopes to have New England Conservatory's Donald Weilerstein on the schedule in 2004.

Sometimes Blair faculty members will invite someone who represents a particular technique or personal performance style, in order to expose their students to a variety of ideas. "We don't mind artist/teachers who really shake things up. We always try to bring in people who have something dynamic to offer," says Jonathan Retzlaff, chair of the Department of Voice at Blair. "We're looking for a person who can be a wonderful teacher and who can make immediate changes to a student's voice. They should be great analyzers of sound, wonderful communicators, and expert diagnosticians." For that reason he lined up Barbara Honn, professor of voice at the Cincinnati Conservatory and one of the most sought-after teachers in the country, to conduct a recent master class.



Acclaimed soprano Dawn Upshaw showed that her teaching abilities were as accomplished as her singing during the master class following her September 2002 performance.

As with Menahem Pressler, Blair instructors often try to nab someone who is in the surrounding area performing with the Nashville Symphony or a nearby regional orchestra. Such was the case when Retzlaff suggested renowned soprano Dawn Upshaw conduct a class following her recital at Vanderbilt in September 2002. Upshaw, who was to return to Nashville in January 2004 to perform with the Nashville Symphony, give a solo recital at Vanderbilt, and conduct a voice master class at Blair, was forced to cancel due to illness.

Says Heard, "Very often the people we choose are friends. Ninety to ninety-five percent of the time we have a personal connection with our guest instructors and it is very enriching. Of course, there are great teachers who just don't give interesting master classes—and vice-versa, but generally it's an incredible experience for the student. Nearly all of the time they say similar things to what we are saying in lessons. But they may mention one thing that gets a student to come at a piece in a new way and really makes it click."

The Blair faculty lets guest artists conduct the classes however they choose. Typically, master classes are free and open to the public, and can last anywhere from two to six hours. Participating students may have been selected from auditions before a panel of faculty members; sometimes, faculty members simply choose those students they believe have the most to gain. Also, says Heard, if the Blair teachers know a student is interested in a particular master class teacher—

for graduate school, for example—they try to arrange an interface.

“The master class adds another opportunity for students to perform in front of an audience, and that is one of the main goals of our program,” Retzlaff says. “We encourage students to audition for everything. We instruct them on how to dress, how to walk on stage, and how to announce their pieces.”

“All the master classes are different,” says Krystal Grant after Pressler’s wrap-up. “The one we had last week focused on a theme—rhythm and tempo. This one focused on helping us improve our individual pieces. I’m not sure which I like best. I guess as an audience member it’s nice to have a theme to hold on to, but as a performer it’s great to have someone show you how to perfect your music.”



Soprano Lillian Askew performed during Dawn Upshaw's master class in September 2002.

Retzlaff says the faculty’s goal is for students to come away with a greater understanding of how to make their specific instruments work and how to bring poetry to a particular piece of music. After all, he says, if undergraduates choose performance careers, impartial assessment will be part of their lives. Students must develop the confidence to walk into a master class cold, display their skills, and accept both compliments and criticism. It forces young artists to grow up quickly.

Referring to Pressler’s master class, Nies comments, “What I liked was that all four students were responsive to his ideas. Sometimes master class students sulk and have a poor attitude. No matter what the teacher says, or suggests you do, you have to believe that the teacher is trying to help you become a better performer.”

MASTER CLASSES OFFERED AT VANDERBILT’S BLAIR SCHOOL OF MUSIC (A SAMPLING)

SEPT. '02
DAWN UPSHAW, VOICE

JAN. '03
PAUL KANTOR, VIOLIN

JAN. '03
ROBERTO DIAZ, VIOLA

JAN. '03
RICHARD STEUART, TRUMPET

FEB. '03
CHRISTIAN REICHERT, SPANISH GUITAR

FEB. '03
WESLEY ROBERTS, PIANO

FEB. '03
EMANUEL AX, PIANO

FEB. '03
THE BALTIMORE CONSORT

FEB. '03
MARVIN BLICKENSTAFF, PIANO

MARCH '03
AXEL STRAUSS, VIOLIN

SEPT. '03
ROBERT WEIRICH, PIANO

OCT. '03
MENAHEM PRESSLER

OCT. '03
BARBARA HONN, VOICE

OCT. '03
PAUL BASLER, BMI COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE

la Vie en . . .

In June, John Johns, associate professor and chair of the department of guitar, and Trisha Johns, Blair registrar, traveled to Italy for the ChitarrAimperia Festival di Primavera in Imperia, Italy, and then on to France. Below, John shares his impressions of the trip.

ChitarrAimperia Festival di Primavera began four years ago as a provincial guitar festival with local and regional teachers and performers and usually one or two internationally known artists. Last year, the festival became a truly international event, and last January, when I received the invitation to participate, I didn’t hesitate to accept. [Johns has been invited back to the festival this year and hopes to take along some Blair guitar majors.]

Imperia, a picturesque town in northern Italy located on the Riviera dei Fiori (Riviera of Flowers), is actually two towns—Oneglia and Porto Maurizio—merged into one by the Italian government in 1923. The name Imperia is derived from the Impero River that flows through the two communities. To get there, Trisha and I flew from New York City directly to Nice, France, and then drove to Imperia, an hour across the border. On arriving in Italy, the first thing we did was throw away the schedule. Information supplied

by our travel agent said it best, “In some parts of Italy, time tables are seen more as romantic ideals than as attainable goals.” That proved to be an understatement! Trisha and I found the pace of life slow. No one seemed to be in a hurry to do anything, and it took us two or three days to adjust.

Mariapina Roberti, artistic director of the festival, assembled a roster of artists that included some of the most famous guitarists in the world: Alirio Diaz, legendary Venezuelan guitarist who celebrated his 80th birthday during the festival; the virtuoso John Williams, an Australian based in London, flown in as a surprise birthday guest in honor of Diaz; Benjamin Verdery, professor of guitar at Yale; duo guitarists Ako Ito and Henri Dorigny, professors of guitar at Nice Conservatory; Roland Dyens, professor of guitar at the Paris Conservatory, and Eliot Fisk, professor of guitar at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. Needless to say, I was honored to be included in such

IMPERIA



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN AND TRISHA JOHNS



Johns played in the 13th-century Santuario di Santa Maria Maggiore.

humidity. My left hand felt sluggish—my fingers were sticking together due to the humidity, making it difficult to slide up and down the fingerboard. However, the excellent acoustics made my guitar sound rich and loud, and the higher notes on the top string really sang. All guitar concerts should be in venues like these! The concert finally ended around 11:30 after four encores; I walked off wringing wet and exhausted with dead strings on my guitar, but also very excited and moved that they enjoyed my music so much.

At the end of the week, we traveled to Nice to be with our dear friends Ako Ito and Henri Dorigny at their home Villa Beau Soleil in Aspremont. The villa sits at the foot of Mont Chauve, better known as Bald Mountain, the inspiration for Moussorgsky's orchestral masterpiece, *Night on Bald Mountain*. It really IS bald; nothing much grows up there. On our last night, after supper, I asked Henri if I could play his beautiful Robert Bouchet guitar. He gladly obliged, and I offered him *un cadeau de musique* by playing my arrangement of the Edith Piaf classic "La Vie en Rose." Henri, who founded the guitar program at Nice Conservatory in 1963, retired this year. What better way to honor him than by playing a great French song on a great French guitar at the foot of Bald Mountain?

esteemed company and to represent the Blair School of Music and Vanderbilt University.

The concerts were held in a different church every night, and the acoustics were incredible, with lots of natural reverberation to amplify the small voice of the guitar. My concert took place on June 17 at Santuario di Santa Maria Maggiore in Castelvec-



chio in Oneglia, built in the 13th century. The sanctuary was so ornate, it was difficult to warm up before the concert; there was so much beauty that my mind kept wandering.

My program, which included music from Europe on the first half and music from England and North and South America after intermission, started at 9:30 pm. The first half went well despite intense heat and

During the time we spent in Imperia, Trisha and I were always able to communicate with people even though we didn't speak much Italian and many of them didn't speak English. I think we all realized we were brought together by our love of music and the guitar, and sometimes words were just not necessary. Music is truly the universal language.

—JOHN JOHNS

BY ANGELA WIBKING

MAJOR PLAYER

*Blair senior
Stephanie
Trautwein
finds her place
both off-stage
and on*

Most classical musicians dream of being center stage as they perform a solo on their chosen instrument in front of a packed symphony hall. But while Blair senior Stephanie Trautwein is an accomplished flutist, she dreams of earning her applause far from the spotlight.

The Louisville native is a musical arts major whose career goal is to manage a symphony orchestra, rather than play in one. "I love performing but I knew early on—actually when I was in high school—that I wanted to go into music administration," says Trautwein. "But I think to be really effective in that field it helps to have a strong musical performing background."

Trautwein's own performance background began at age nine when she took up the flute. "I'm the only musician in my family, so I don't really know where the idea of playing the flute came from," she recalls. "It just seemed like an interesting thing to do." The flute held her interest throughout high school, and when it came time to choose a university, Trautwein was drawn to Blair because of its emphasis on performing. "At Blair students get lots of faculty attention and playing opportunities, and that was appealing to me," she says. In addition to playing principal flute in the Vanderbilt Orchestra for the past two years, Trautwein has also performed with the Vanderbilt New Music Ensemble and in a flute/harp duo. "I've actually played a lot considering I'm not a performance major," she says.

With three symphony internships to her credit, Trautwein has also had plenty of hands-on experience in music administration. During the summer following her freshman year at Blair, Trautwein interned with the Louisville Symphony Orchestra, working with the marketing, production, and ticketing departments. "I really enjoyed working

with the production department, which involved me with guest artists, programming, and auditions," Trautwein says. "I worked 40 to 50 hours a week and was always on the go." This past summer, Trautwein completed an internship with the National Symphony Orchestra at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., one of 20 interns chosen from hundreds of applicants. A highlight of her internship was working on the National Symphony Orchestra concerts that were televised on PBS on Memorial Day and on the Fourth of July. "I got to work with Dolly Parton on the July 4th concert and also with Itzhak Perlman in a concert at Wolf Trap."

Trautwein is currently in the midst of an internship with the Tennessee Arts Commission that involves bringing the National Symphony Orchestra to Tennessee for a statewide tour in April. The orchestra will perform in several cities, including Nashville, Memphis, and Knoxville. "All the proceeds of the tour go to the local symphony in each city," Trautwein explains. "There are also opportunities for outreach and educational programs in the cities on the tour, and that's what I am coordinating."

Trautwein's internships, together with her studies at Blair (including several independent study projects with Bill Ivey, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts), have strengthened her resolve to become a major player off-stage rather than on. "I've realized that making the music happen rather than making the music itself is what I want to do," she says. "It's so fulfilling when you work and plan for a concert for weeks and then the musicians walk out and start playing. It's a great feeling."



DANIEL DUBOIS

The Blair School **String Department** sent 45 students to 15 different summer festivals both in the U.S. and abroad. Aspen, Brevard, Encore, Killington, Rocky Mountain, and the Sewanee Music Festivals each had at least three students and as many as 10 representing the Blair School. Others included the Adriatic Chamber Music Festival in Italy, Avignon Chamber Music Festival in France, Bowdoin Music Festival, Eastern Music Festival, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Mancini Institute, Oberlin Summer Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, and the Sunflower Music Festival.

PRECOLLEGIATE AND ADULT

The **Blair Suzuki Players**, under the direction of **Carol Smith**, with **Celeste Halbbrook Tuten** accompanying, performed at the Tennessee Statehood Day Festival for the 96th Bell Dedication in June.

The **Suzuki Reading Orchestra** and the **Youth Strings Orchestra** presented a "warm-up" concert at Bellevue Center in Nashville; participated in the Metro/ASTA Orchestra Festival at McGavock High School in Nashville; presented a concert at the Nashville Downtown Public Library; and presented their first "solo" concert without the assistance of the Nashville Youth Repertory Orchestra in Ingram Hall in the spring. Thirteen of **The Suzuki Reading Orchestra's** current and former members, under the direction of **Celeste Halbbrook Tuten**, performed as the "Kids" Orchestra for a July videotaping of "Let Them Be Little" with Nashville country music artist Billy Dean, which aired on the Great American Country program on the Country Music Television network in the fall.

The following students were winners of the Tennessee Music Teachers Association Young Artist Achievement Awards held in April at Bel-

mont University in Nashville. All winners of the competition, out of 32 participants, were Blair School students. Each received a \$50 scholarship: **Victoria Sellers, Derek Shyr, and Monica Guan**, piano, students of **Roland Schneller; Gabriel Huang**, piano, student of **Jama Reagan; Eli Bishop** and **Jason Wallace**, violin, students of **Carol Smith; John Lee**, piano, student of **Karen Ann Krieger; Paula Chen**, piano, student of **Amy Dorfman**.

Annie and **Will Bender**, Suzuki violin students of **Katherine Mansouri**, gave a Book 1 and 2 recital in August at Blair; **Benjamin Clayton**, also a student of Mansouri, attended the Ithaca Suzuki Institute in July.

Rebekah Bennett attended the Sewanee Summer Music Festival and served as concertmaster of the Cumberland Orchestra for the first concert. **Heather Engebretson** was chosen to be co-concertmaster of the Intermediate Symphony Orchestra in Interlochen, Michigan, last summer and was a winner of the concerto competition. **Margaret Cerjan** and **Arthur Kim** attended the Killington Music Festival summer in Vermont and studied with Kathryn Lucktenburg from the University of Oregon. Arthur appeared as a soloist with the Nashville Symphony in November. All are violin students of **Connie Heard**.

Cecelia Huerta, cello student of **Felix Wang**, also appeared as a soloist with the Nashville Symphony at their November concert.

George Meyer, Suzuki violin student of **Carol Smith**, was selected by audition to solo at the Ithaca Suzuki Institute student recitals. Along with cellist **Abby Schoenfeld**, student of **Anne Hall Williams**, and **Derek Shyr**, piano, he performed in the **Chin-coteague Trio** in a May recital in Turner Recital Hall.

Sophie Pilkinton, Caroline Waters, and **Emily Wohl** attended the Snowmass Suzuki Institute; **Caroline** and **Katie Awh** attended the Hartt Institute. **Libby Rush** presented a solo recital. All are students of **Celeste Halbbrook Tuten**.

Sam Quiggins and **Michael DeBruyn**, students of **Felix Wang**, and **Jack Quiggins**, student of **Anne Hall Williams**, participated in the American Cello Congress in Tempe, Arizona. Michael, selected through auditions to present a solo performance, has started collegiate studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Sam was a concerto competition winner at the Sewanee Summer Music Festival.

Katie Rush, Suzuki violin student of **Carol Smith**, presented a solo recital in Turner Recital Hall.



Crystal Plohman works with students during her second annual International Fiddle Festival in late July and early August.



Michael McEvoy, an adult composition student studying privately with **Michael Rose**, is currently studying at the master's level at the Royal College of London.

COLLEGIATE

Lisa Bryington, flute student of **Jane Kirchner**, attended Eastern Music Festival and played in the joint faculty-student orchestra.

Alicia Enstrom, student of **Chris Teal**, attended and performed at the Sunflower Chamber Music Festival in Topeka, Kansas, which attracts both professional artists and outstanding students from around the nation.

Andrew Helgerson, student of **Connie Heard**, appeared as soloist with the Kennedy Center/National Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Institute Orchestra at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., with conductor Andre Raphael Smith. The Washington Post wrote, "the aristocratic poise and silvery finish of his phrasing gave consistent pleasure."

The **Oriyah String Quartet**, coached by **John Kochanowski**, received a fellowship to attend the Brevard Music Festival. The

PREPARATORY CHORUS for Children Grade 1 and Up!

Beginning in January, boys and girls in grade 1 and older can participate in a new preparatory chorus. Basic musicianship and singing skills will be taught. Participation and music activities will be stressed; performances will be limited. The chorus will meet Mondays, 4:30-5:30 pm. Interviews for the chorus took place January 8 and January 10 at Blair.

Teaching the Preparatory Chorus is Hazel Somerville, who joined the Blair faculty as Boychoir director this fall. Hazel comes from Boston Youth Pro Musica, where she served as artistic director and conductor.

Oriyah Quartet's members are **Amy Helman** and **Laura Speck**, both violin students of **Chris Teal**, **Angie Spong**, viola student of **Kathryn Plummer**, and **Ashley Walters**, cello student of **Felix Wang**. As a fellowship quartet at Brevard, they coached with David Salness and members of the Diaz Trio. The group will continue to perform this season with **Eliza Barley** as violist in the ensemble.

Abigail Mace, student of **Craig Nies**, was a music camp assistant at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, Summer Music Camps. During Senior High School week, Abigail played piano in the Wind Ensemble under the direction of the University's professor Kevin Collins, and later under the direction of guest conductor, Blair's **Tom Verrier**. Abigail also performed with her twin sister, **Angela**, in the camp's talent show on July 24.

The **Vasari Quartet** attended the RMFC Music Festival in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, last summer. Members are **Emily Mahler**, student of **Connie Heard**, **Angela Cassette**, student of **Chris Teal**, **Noah Moe**, student of **Kathryn Plummer**, and **John Koon**, student of **Felix Wang**. The group is coached by **John Kochanowski**.

Lin Ong, percussion student of **Bill Wiggins**, studied abroad fall semester in Sydney,

Australia. Fortuitously, Sydney held its first-ever citywide percussion concert/gala, and she was invited to play.

John Sands, composition student of **Michael Kurek**, was the 10th annual fanfare composer for the 2003 Glimmerglass Opera Festival. Glimmerglass Opera fanfares are a tradition dating from the opening of the Alice Busch Opera Theatre in 1987. Members of the orchestra play the fanfare from the exterior balcony of the hall. This year, rather than commissioning a composer, the festival held a competition open to all. John was selected from a field of 353 entries, and his fanfare was heard prior to each of the 43 performances at Glimmerglass.

Shannon Thomas, violin student of **Connie Heard**, was selected by taped audition to attend the Sarasota Music Festival, a signal honor. Shannon played in the violin master classes of Joseph Silverstein, James Buswell, and Mauricio Fuks, had chamber music coachings with William Preucil, James Dunham, and Eli Eban, and was one of three violinists at the festival to be selected to perform in legendary violinist Ida Haendel's master class. Shannon also went to Encore where she, along with violinist **Preetha Narayanan** and precollege student **Sarah Bennett**, also students of Heard, studied with Robert Lipsett.

Abigail Wilensky, violin student of **Chris Teal**, attended the Brevard Music Festival, where she was concertmaster of the Transylvania Symphony, and studied with William Terwilleger at Brevard.

PRECOLLEGIATE

Hamilton Berry, former cello student of **Felix Wang**, has started his collegiate studies in the joint program of Columbia University and the Juilliard School of Music.

Violinist **Kathryn Eberle**, former student of **Connie Heard**, is the concertmaster of the University of Southern California Orchestra. She played the Tchaikovsky Concerto with that orchestra last season and with the Colonial Symphony in Morristown, New Jersey, under conductor Yehuda Gilad. Kathryn's quartet, the Rousseau Quartet, participated in the Banff Chamber Music Festival in Alberta, Canada.

David Mansouri, former violin student of **Connie Heard**, is a scholarship student of Sergiu Luca at Rice University this fall.

Brooke Quiggins, former violin student of **Chris Teal** and **Connie Heard**, received the bachelor of music in performance from Manhattan School of Music in May. Brooke began violin at age 5 in the Blair Suzuki Program with **Anne Hall Williams** and **Sharon Rogers**.

Melissa Kaye Shippen, former voice student of **Amy Jarman**, completed her bachelor's degree at Juilliard and is working on her master's there. She recently received the Culture Award from the American Scandinavian Society at the United Nations. She was the winner in the student division of the Orpheus National Music Competition at Middle Tennessee State University in 2002 and also a winner at The Palm

Beach Opera Competition. In 2003 she made her professional opera debut with the Palm Beach Opera Company

and will return during their 2004 season. Most recently Melissa sang the role of "Mimi" in *La Boheme* with the



TRAVEL WITH THE VU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

THE MUSIC AND MAGIC OF SALZBURG, VIENNA, AND PRAGUE

May 11-20, 2004

Join Mark Wait, dean of the Blair School of Music, and Maestro Kenneth Schermerhorn, conductor of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, for this unique experience in these musically renowned cities.

Rich in culture, talent, and history, this tour will excite the music lover in all. In Salzburg, visit Zum Eulenspiegel Institute of Musicology, Mozart Wohnhaus, and a concert at Castle Mirabelle. In Vienna, tour the backstage of the State Opera, lunch with a Vienna Philharmonic member, and see Neue Burg's ancient musical instrument collections. In Prague, enjoy a private concert at Villa Amerika, tour the Estates Theater with the conductor, and visit historical landmarks including Prague Castle, St. Vitus Cathedral, and Golden Lane. With performances in all cities and accommodations in five-star hotels, this is a rare opportunity to see and hear the sights and sounds of these magical lands. Contact Cary Allyn (615-322-3673 or cary.allyn@vanderbilt.edu) for more information.

Approximate cost: \$4,930/person (does not include international flight)

Aspen Music Festival under Maestro Julius Rudel.

Tony Silva, former piano student of **Roland Schneller** and currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Memphis, was recently a guest artist at Huntington College, performing a lecture-recital and also collaborating with Huntington faculty member John Thompson in a recital.

Amanda Smith, former student of **Connie Heard**, is a scholarship student of Paul Kantor at the Cleveland Institute of Music this fall.

FACULTY

The **Blair String Quartet** along with **Amy Dorfman**, associate professor of piano, presented a chamber music program at the 2003 Music Mountain Summer Music Festival in Connecticut. The Quartet performed eight concerts last spring, including concerts in Montgomery and Fairhope, Alabama, and Americus, Georgia.

Blair faculty appearing recently on *Live from Studio C* on Nashville Public Radio include the **Blair String Quartet**; the Nashville Mandolin Ensemble with **Butch Baldassari**; voice faculty **Amy Jarman**, **Jonathan Retzlaff**, and **Gayle Shay** with pianist **Melissa Rose**; and cellist **Julia Tanner**.

Butch Baldassari, adjunct associate professor of mandolin, recorded a CD in Turner Recital Hall with his group, The Nashville Mandolin Ensemble. *Bach, Beatles and Bluegrass* was released in September on the SoundArt label.

Gregory Barz, assistant professor of musicology (ethnomusicology), addressed the Vanderbilt community at its Fall Faculty Assembly with a talk, "HIV/AIDS, Jackfruit and Banana Weevils: Music and Medical Interventions in Uganda." Barz lectured at Vanderbilt's Medical School on the topic "Dancing

the Disease: HIV/AIDS and Music as Medical Intervention in East Africa." At the 2003 annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Miami, Florida, he presented the paper "My Children Must Know About HIV/AIDS!": Music, Memory and Identity in Uganda."

Keith Christopher, lecturer in music theory, in April won the Dove Award given by the Gospel Music Association in the category "Choral Collection of the Year" for *More Songs for Praise and Worship* published by Word Music. Written with his friend, Ken Barker, the collection of contemporary worship songs features a full complement of accessory items including orchestrations and compact discs.

Allan Cox, professor of trumpet, was adjudicator for the Montgomery (Alabama) Symphony's Blount Young Artists Competition in March; attended the International Trumpet Guild Conference at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth in May; and presented trumpet/organ concerts in Schmalkalden and Steinbach-Hallenberg, Germany, with his wife, Hildegard Holland Cox; the duo presented a lecture-recital at the European Trumpet Guild Conference in Wurzburg. His CD *Petite Pieces for Trumpet and Piano* with pianist **Amy Dorfman**, was recently released by Mark Records.

Cynthia Cyrus, associate professor of musicology, published an article on "Girl Groups of the 1960's" in *Popular Music 22/2 (2002/03)*, and completed four book reviews that demonstrate a range of diverse interests: 14th-century hero Machaut for *H-France*; 15th-century theory and analysis for *Early Music*; 16th-century Huguenot adaptations of songs for *Journal of the American Musicological Society*; and 19th-century composer Schubert for *Music and Letters*. She attended an NEH Summer Institute on "A Literature of Their Own? Women Writing - Venice, London, Paris - 1550-1700" held at UNC-Chapel Hill. She serves

on the editorial board of *ORB: the On-Line Reference Book for Medieval Studies*. Recently, her husband, 1st Lieutenant Tom Dowling, returned from his long months of service in the Middle East, and they look forward to a year of two-parent family life.

Connie Heard, associate professor of violin, played two concerts at the Roycroft Chamber Music Festival in East Aurora, New York, last summer, then went to the Killington Music Festival in Vermont for a ten-day residency to perform, teach, and coach student string quartets.

Karen Ann Krieger, assistant professor of piano, presented "How to Teach and Play Jazz, Blues, and Rock" in Tacoma, Washington, and Austin, Texas. She also served as forum leader on "remedial reading for the transfer student" at the National Keyboard Pedagogy Conference in Chicago.

Douglas A. Lee, professor of musicology, emeritus, received a grant from the Packard Humanities Institute of Cambridge, Massachusetts, for the publication of a critical edition of six keyboard concertos by C.P.E. Bach. These will be published as part of the *Collected Works of C.P.E. Bach*, sponsored jointly by the PHI and the Bach Archive in Leipzig.

Carol Nies, adjunct senior artist teacher of conducting, guest conducted the Black Sea Philharmonic in Romania and has been asked to guest conduct the Rome Festival Orchestra next summer.

Joe Rea Phillips, senior artist teacher of guitar, with his duo partner, guitarist Stan Lassiter, released a CD entitled *Flight Dreams* which features compositions by Phillips. The duo's music reflects influences of classical, flamenco, and New World jazz.

Melissa Rose, assistant professor of piano, was official accompanist for the International Primrose Viola Competition in Birmingham, performed

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Michael Kurek's *Matisse Impressions* with the **Blair Woodwind Quintet** at the Tennessee Music Teachers Association Convention, and served in her 10th season as pianist for the Summerfest Chamber Music Series in Kansas City in July.

Michael Rose, associate professor of composition, and A.J. Levine, Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School, took their interdisciplinary course

week Ithaca College Suzuki Institute and for one week with the Hartt Institute in Hartford, Connecticut.

Bobby Taylor, associate professor of oboe, received critical acclaim as a soloist with the Peninsula Music Festival's "Baroque Splendor" concert.

Christian Teal, Joseph Joachim Professor of Violin, was the string adjudicator for the Juanita Miller 2003 State Youth Competition in Dallas.

together conductors from across the country for a three-day symposium on the advancement of the wind ensemble and its repertoire and the role of the college band in the 21st century.

Felix Wang, assistant professor of cello, performed in March at the Tucson Winter Chamber Music Festival for a week of concerts with artists from around the world. In April, he was concerto soloist with the Germantown Symphony Orchestra. In May, he received critical acclaim as principal cellist of the IRIS Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Michael Stern, and was also a guest artist on the Alias chamber music concert at the East Nashville Center for the Creative Arts. In June, he performed in the Harmony Creek Chamber Music Festival in Franklin, joined by pianist **Melissa Rose**. In July, Wang taught and performed at the Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. And if that weren't enough, he and wife **Carolyn Huebl**, assistant professor of violin, became proud parents to daughter Nora Mae-Ying Wang in May.

William Wiggins, assistant professor of percussion, performed Concerto Art Nouveau for Timpani and Orchestra, written for him by Daniel K. Sturm, with the prestigious Peninsula Music Festival Orchestra during the 51st annual Peninsula Music Festival in Wisconsin, garnering exceptional reviews in area media. He presented timpani clinics last spring at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Lindenwood Percussion Studio, Memphis; and Washington University, Saint Louis.

Anne Hall Williams, senior artist teacher of Suzuki violin and cello, attended the American Cello Congress held at Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

Celeste Halbrook Tuten, senior artist teacher of Suzuki violin, was accompanist for seven solo recitals in the spring, for the Blair Suzuki Players "informance" and concert at Hull-Jackson Magnet School, and with the Suzuki Cello and Violin graduation and festival concerts in May and June.

Thomas Verrier, associate professor of wind studies, was selected to serve as chair of the College Band Directors National Association "New Era Think Tank," a group of forward-thinking conductors that shape the organization's national agenda. He hosted a conductors' retreat at the Blair School in September, an event that brought

"The Bible and Music" on the road this summer in a series of lectures at the Wild- acres Institute in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. Rose and Levine first offered the course, supported by a team-teaching grant from the VU Provost's office, in spring 2003.

Gayle Shay, assistant professor of voice, spent most of June performing at Songfest 2003 in Malibu, California, working with Martin Katz, Jon Harbison, and Graham Johnson, among others.

Carol Smith, senior artist teacher of violin, taught last summer at the two-



With Blair freshman Glen Thomas Rideout in the role of King Balthazar (left) and Blair voice faculty Kristofer Johnson and Jonathan Retzlaff (center and right) in the roles of King Kaspar and King Melchior, the Vanderbilt Opera Theatre presented Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* as this year's Blair Holiday Celebration.

Tutti

Martin Katahn Places Valuable Amati Violin at Blair

Bach and Beethoven might seem worlds apart from country and bluegrass, but in Music City, home of the Grand Ole Opry and also Nashville Opera, the two definitively divergent styles of music traversed the same path across the bridge of an unlikely conduit: a rare, centuries-old Amati violin. That violin began its cross-cultural and international voyage in Cremona, Italy, in the early 1600s. In 2003, it was placed on permanent loan to the Blair School of Music by retired Vanderbilt psychology professor and one-time Nashville Sound session player Martin Katahn.

"We have had some wonderful gifts over the years," says Chris Teal, Joseph Joachim Professor of Violin at Blair and first violinist with the Blair String Quartet. "But this is truly a milestone."

The violin Katahn donated was made by the master Nicolo Amati in 1633, though the instrument's credentials hardly mattered to the millions of people who unknowingly heard it played on record or in concert for nearly 20 years.

When Katahn moved to Nashville with his wife Enid, now professor of piano, emerita, in 1962 to join the Vanderbilt faculty, the former member of the Degan String Quartet found a side job almost immediately—one that required him to pull the valuable Amati out of its case.

Over the next many years, particularly during the glory days of the much-vaunted Nashville Sound, Katahn with his Amati violin performed on nearly every Nashville-recorded album that required a string section. His work was so highly regard-



Dean Mark Wait and Martin Katahn with the violin made by Nicolo Amati in 1633.

ed within the industry and among artists that he became Johnny Cash's concertmaster, working closely with Cash on national television.

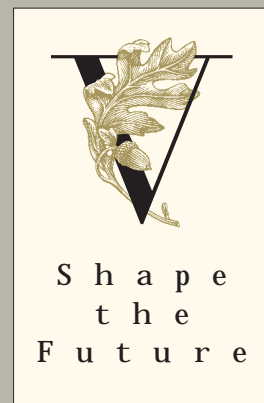
His last recording session was in 1981 for Barbara Mandrell; Katahn once again put away the Amati, and subsequently wrote several best-selling diet books.

"I wasn't using the violin, and it seemed that it would be nice for it to be played—by students or faculty—who would appreciate it. So I decided to make a permanent loan to Blair."

"New instruments in the violin world are considered a little dangerous," says Teal. "They're unknown, unproven. But, after 300 years, you know what you've got. With the Amati we have a very exciting prospect not only for the school, but the entire music-loving community."

—KAY WEST

All gifts help support Vanderbilt's comprehensive campaign, Shape the Future. For more information, please contact the Blair School Development Office at (615) 322-7650.



POTTER TRUST MAKES GIFT

During fiscal year 2003, the Valere Blair Potter Charitable Trust made a substantial gift to the Valere Blair Potter Precollege Scholarship Fund. This endowed fund provides need-based scholarship support to precollege Blair students. The Potter Trust has long been the most generous supporter of the Blair School's precollege program. This recent gift will enable the Blair School to offer music instruction to many area children who otherwise would not be able to afford it.



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