

Quarter Note

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY



Blair Broadens Its Horizons

Blair's reach goes international as it cultivates programs with Costa Rican educators and others

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On the cover: Roxana Patricia Borges Rojas, Ana Cecilia Umazar Rodriguez and Christian Alvarado Rodriguez look on as Blair's Karen Ann Krieger works with Marco Mora Solis in the keyboard harmony studio at Blair. The four Costa Rican music instructors spent three weeks in residency at Blair as part of outreach between Blair and Costa Rica's music education program known as SiNEM. See the story on page 3.

Photo by Joe Howell

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From the *Dean*



Dean Mark Wait

This issue of the *Quarter Note* features an increasingly important (and rapidly developing) aspect of life at the Blair School of Music: the international outreach of Blair faculty and alumni and the many opportunities our students have to study abroad.

For some years already, Blair students have been able to spend a semester abroad in Vienna and Sydney, and we have recently added Amsterdam as a place where they can live, study and earn academic credit—all while paying Vanderbilt tuition. We are now working on developing musical opportunities in Aix-en-Provence, where the Vanderbilt-in-France program affords academic excellence in conjunction with the Conservatoire Darius Milhaud, a government-supported music conservatory.

Our international profile has assumed another important dimension in Costa Rica, where Blair is working with the Sistema Nacional de Educación Musical (SiNEM) to help train teachers who work with students throughout the country. Nearly all of these students are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and music proves to be a lifeline for many of them. During the coming year, five Blair faculty members will travel to Costa Rica, working with the teachers and students there. In addition, two Blair students will work with SiNEM. In February, four SiNEM instructors were in residence at the Blair School for three weeks. SiNEM is in its infancy, but it already holds extraordinary promise for the future of these students and of music generally. It is a privilege for Blair to play a role in this great effort.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will read of the achievements and important work of our alumnae Blythe Bonnaffons and Amanda Earnest. Their work in Egypt and Afghanistan represents a new dimension for Blair—one that will expand dramatically in the coming years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Wait".

Mark Wait, Dean
Martha Rivers Ingram Dean's Chair

An Investment Beyond Boundaries

Blair's involvement in training music teachers in Costa Rica brings rich rewards both in Central America and Nashville

By Maria Browning

The small Central American country of Costa Rica is famous for its rich natural resources and for its exceptional political stability in a part of the world that has seen much upheaval. In spite of these advantages, Costa Rica is troubled by poverty and its attendant problems. The country's democratic government is committed to offering the Costa Rican people opportunities to improve their lives, and one of its initiatives is a remarkable music education program, Sistema Nacional de Educacion Musical, generally known as SiNEM. Modeled on Venezuela's renowned El Sistema youth orchestra program, SiNEM is dedicated to providing high-quality music training to children from all walks of life in all areas of the country.

When Thomas Verrier, associate professor and director of wind studies, traveled to Costa Rica two years ago at the invitation of SiNEM's director, Ricardo Vargas, he was impressed with the vast potential of the program, which was then in its first year. He also saw a possible role for the Blair School. "I was excited to come down and see what was happening," he recalls. "I immediately saw an opportunity to help them in several ways."

Verrier returned to Nashville with a proposal to create a partnership between SiNEM and Blair—an idea that was warmly received by Dean Mark Wait.

"I spoke with Dean Wait about what was happening there, the energy and commitment of the instructors, the joy in the kids' faces," Verrier says, "and he shared



Thomas Verrier, associate professor and director of wind studies at Blair (in green shirt), saw great potential for Blair's involvement in Costa Rica's SiNEM program during his first visit to the country two years ago.

my excitement at the potential for the Blair School to assist on a larger scale."

For his part, Dean Wait saw involvement with SiNEM as very much in keeping with Blair's primary mission. Noting that Blair began as a pre-collegiate academy, he observes that music education for younger students is "part of our DNA." He saw support of SiNEM as an exceptional chance for Blair to extend its work.

"To be able to participate in that kind of effort at the ground level is a great honor," Wait says, "and an opportunity that we simply could not let pass."

Last April, Wait and Verrier traveled

to Costa Rica together to meet with Vargas and the Costa Rican Minister of Culture to discuss specific ways that Blair might assist SiNEM, and, as Verrier puts it, "come to a mutually beneficial understanding between the institutions." Wait, who had not previously visited Costa Rica, became even more enthusiastic about the partnership after witnessing SiNEM in action. He was particularly impressed by a visit to an orphanage, where he saw a dozen or more children under 12 playing violins.

"Seeing these children, so accomplished in spite of their circumstances," Wait says,

“was one of the most deeply moving experiences of my life. For us to have any kind of role in that is a great privilege.”

A blueprint for training teachers

The blueprint for Blair’s partnership with SiNEM is designed to assist the Costa Rican program in its unique challenges. Unlike Venezuela’s El Sistema, which serves a largely urban population, SiNEM is focused on reaching children in rural, often remote communities. The program currently has more than two dozen established programs across the country. About half that number are music schools where the students have the opportunity to take theory and musicianship classes, while the rest are orchestral or ensemble programs, which often have just three instructors for 200 or more children. These students get little individual instruction, though—unlike in the Venezuelan El Sistema program—they all get real instruments to play within a few months of beginning the program. The universal allocation of instruments represents a substantial financial investment and is a measure of the Costa Rican government’s commitment to the program.

The focus of Blair’s contribution has been on the training of SiNEM instructors. As Verrier points out, university music degrees in Costa Rica are essentially performance degrees.

“Their instruction in pedagogy and teaching is not sufficient for the demands on an instructor in SiNEM,” Verrier says, “especially in the programs with only three instructors.”

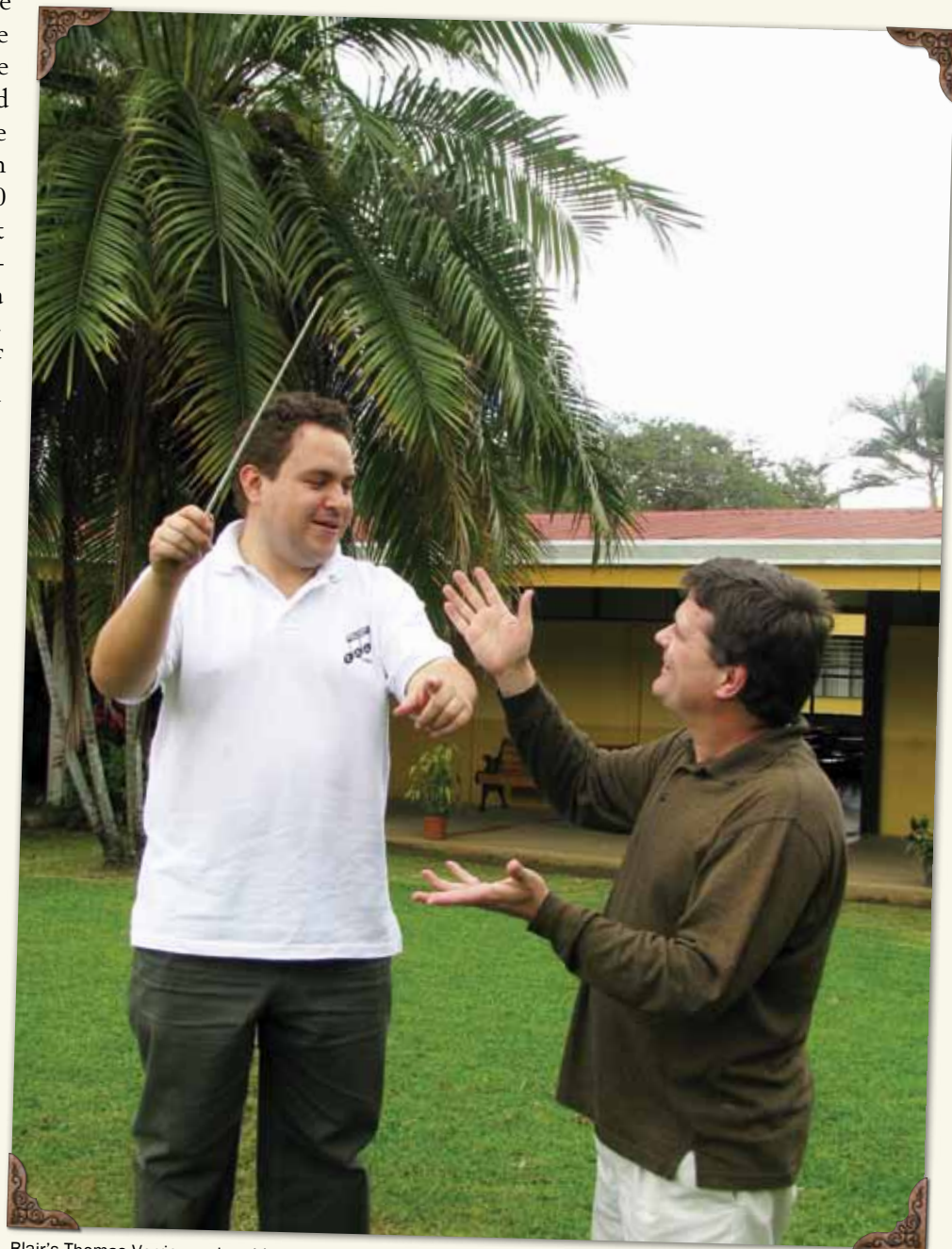
To supplement the instructors’ training, Verrier began teaching workshops in Costa Rica, and in January 2010, four SiNEM instructors arrived in Nashville for three weeks of study on conducting, pedagogy and musicianship.

In 2011, Blair and SiNEM will commence a formal program, the SiNEM Institute for Professional Development (SiNEM Instituto de Desarrollo Profesional), which will provide a two-track course of study,

each track consisting of eight classes covering the different instruments. All of the classes will be taught in Costa Rica by Blair faculty, during two-week sessions in February and August. The 2011 courses will focus on pedagogy, and in 2012, the institute will add another track devoted to conducting. Participants will receive certification for each track as well as a professional credential on completion of the entire two-year program. That accreditation will come with the stamp of Blair as well as the Ministry of Education of Costa

Rica. In addition, Blair will continue to bring a few SiNEM instructors to Nashville every year, eventually instituting a third level of professional study.

In addition to development classes for SiNEM personnel, the partnership will provide opportunities for Blair’s fifth-year master’s students in teacher education to do internships in Costa Rica. The first group of three students went last year, each one spending 10 days with a different SiNEM program out in the countryside. They stayed with SiNEM instructors and,



Blair’s Thomas Verrier works with conducting student Sergio Cubero Mata during a Thanksgiving workshop with SiNEM instructors in Costa Rica.

COURTESY OF TOM VERRIER

says Verrier, “lived locally, ate locally and really were immersed.” He describes the experience as “enormously valuable” for the students, and looks forward to sending a group every November. Beyond the formal course program, Blair faculty will also be taking part in SiNEM-sponsored master classes and performances. Robin Fountain, professor of conducting and director of the Vanderbilt Orchestra, will be conducting the Costa Rican National Youth Symphony Orchestra this spring, and the Blair String Quartet has been invited to appear.

SiNEM’s administration sees the Blair partnership as an invaluable aid to the program. Sandra Herrera, SiNEM’s national academic coordinator, says the training has already been “extremely helpful” to the instructors, and describes the partnership as a “great opportunity to encourage and support our instructors with pedagogical tools that will greatly benefit the students.” Melissa Pacheco, who heads the production department at SiNEM, notes that, with the high student-to-teacher ratio, the Blair training helps instructors teach each instrument and conduct rehearsals more effectively. Beyond that, she says, “It has been encouraging to have such a prestigious school help us so generously.”

Nashville Symphony Music Director Giancarlo Guerrero, who grew up in Costa Rica and has worked extensively with Venezuela’s El Sistema, observes that SiNEM has radically improved the opportunities for music education across the country.

“It makes me very happy,” Guerrero says, “to see that in my own country now, kids in little towns and little communities are starting to have access to music education.” He regards this kind of grassroots training as “the future of classical music,” and he lauds the role Blair is playing in this change. “It’s very important that they are providing them with expertise and advice.”

As everyone involved in the Blair-SiNEM partnership is quick to stress, the benefits of the program go far beyond music education. Pacheco says that the primary goal is “to help children and



Four Costa Rican music educators traveled to Nashville in February for three weeks of instruction and observation with Blair faculty. Here (second row, from left), Christian Alvarado Rodriguez, Marco Mora Solis, Ana Cecilia Umanzar Rodriguez and Roxana Patricia Borges Rojas observe as Blair junior Phillip Franklin (foreground) takes a turn in a choral conducting class. Blair students (front row, from left) Sarah Wood, Ryan Parker and Drew Silverstein look on.



Roxana Patricia Borges Rojas (center) and Ana Cecilia Umanzar Rodriguez (back to camera) in a keyboard harmony class with Blair’s Karen Ann Krieger (left), associate professor of piano and piano pedagogy.

teenagers transform their lives through music. It gives them a chance to change their future and open their minds to new opportunities.” Herrera notes that the positive change in the children ultimately benefits “family, neighbors and the whole community. As Guerrero puts it, “First and foremost this is a social program.” Along with bringing the kids to classical music, he says, programs like SiNEM and El Sistema are about “keeping young

people off the streets and giv[ing] them something meaningful to do.”

As Dean Wait sees it, the long-range benefits of SiNEM provide an enormous return on Blair’s investment.

“This is a project that will have significant ramifications in the lives of these students 50, 60 or 70 years from now,” Wait says. “That’s about as good as it gets in terms of having influence and bringing good into the world.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMANDA EARNEST

At the International School of Kabul in Afghanistan, Blair alumna Amanda Earnest leads her students in music-making activities not unlike those taught to children in the United States.

A Commodore in Kabul

By Amanda Earnest, BMus'03

Boom! The cannon blasts at the end of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*. The eighth-graders in my music class don't react, they just listen. To me, it is a great moment of pure genius. To end a piece of music celebrating the victory of war with a cannon blast should get some sort of reaction of excitement: wide eyes, a jump in the seat, a quick turn of the head. I get no reaction from them. However, I, on the other hand,

am fighting back tears. Just to take a moment and analyze what I am doing, playing an almost 200-year-old piece of music about war to a group of students who have grown up in war can be a little overwhelming at times. After the piece ends, I ask the class, "What was that sound at the end of the piece?"

"A bomb?" one student asks. I tell him that is a good guess, but that it is a cannon blast, because in those days they didn't

use bombs in war, they used cannons. "Oh," the student says.

Then I ask, "What if someone here in Afghanistan wrote a piece of music to celebrate the end of the Soviet invasion, the end of the Taliban regime, or to celebrate the new democracy? Wouldn't that be a great way to celebrate your country's victory?"

"Yes!" they all chime in with agreement. As a class we talk about how cool

it would be, and how the composer could take the melodies of their childhood songs and incorporate them into the work. "Then people would recognize it," one student says.

Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* is an orchestral piece historically associated with war. There are other pieces that are not conveying the sounds of war at all, yet these children hear war sounds. For instance, a few weeks later I play Handel's "Hornpipe" from *Water Music* for my second-grade class. As we pass out their music listening journals, I remind them of the instructions. I say, "Listen to the piece of music and finish the sentence, 'When I listen to this piece of music, the picture I paint in my head is ...,' then draw a picture at the bottom of the page of the picture you see in your head."

It's Handel's *Water Music*. It's majestic and somewhat triumphant. Surely they'll associate it with a happy image. Though a couple of girls draw pictures of princesses in castles, as I collect their journals I am mostly face to face with pictures of war—battles, blood-stained people and people in victory standing over dead bodies holding a gun in the air.

These children live in a world that is not normal, and I teach at a school that is the only one of its kind. I live in Kabul, Afghanistan, and teach music at the International School of Kabul. I teach preschool through eighth-grade music, direct the high school choir and teach a high school general music class that takes an academic look at the history of music and hopefully instills in the students a new appreciation of all music. This school is the only college preparatory, U.S.-accredited school in the country of Afghanistan. I live in a gated compound and walk across the street to my classroom. At our gates are guards holding guns ready to protect us at a moment's notice. There are many times that we do not get to leave the compound, because there are direct threats to Americans outside our gates. This is

normal life here, and for my students, it's the only life they know.

The music of Afghanistan is comprised of the sounds of helicopters flying overhead so low that the house shakes. The sound of a bomb blast is more common than the sound of a thunderstorm. The kindergarten teacher told me a story of a thunderstorm that came through last spring, and the whole class jumped in fear, running to the windows of the classroom to see the dark clouds.



Earnest teaches music to students at the International School of Kabul from preschool through eighth grade, directs the high school choir and teaches a high school music appreciation class.

When I shake the thunder tube instrument in music class, the children scream, but then they suddenly hear a low tremolo coming from outside that is quickly making its way toward our building. As the ground starts to shake violently, we wonder if it's a bomb. After it passes, the debate begins. Was it a bomb or an earthquake? After a few seconds they realize that it was just a bomb. Just a bomb. Really? I ask myself, have I become so numb to the reality of this war zone that even I think, "It's just a bomb"?

The next day at school, there is no discussion about it. Not even the kindergartners talk about it during morning circle time. But, if there had been a thunderstorm, they would have walked into the classroom talking about it.

Last spring a bomb hit a loaded public bus about a half-mile from our school. We heard and felt the blast in the classroom. There was a pregnant pause at the time, and then life went on. I remember some of the students talking about it the next

day, only because as they rode home after school, they had seen the bodies of the victims lying on the side of the road. No tears were shed. These children have not been taught to cry when someone dies. This is normal life here, but it is not normal. I am a Commodore living in Kabul, and my music is not the music I played at the Blair School when I was an undergraduate. My music is comprised of the sounds of helicopters flying low, bombs blasting so close that the ground shakes and children crying at thunderstorms.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BLYTHE BONNAFFONS

Blythe Barkley Bonnafons' first teaching job has taken her to Cairo, Egypt, where she has had the experience of riding a camel to visit the pyramids of Giza in the desert outside Cairo.

An American in Cairo

By Joanne Lamphere Beckham, BA'63

The sound of "Allahu Akbar" several times daily and the permeating dust of the desert surrounding the Nile Valley have changed very little since Napoleon's entourage first described the city of Cairo, Egypt, in the early 19th century. But for Blythe Barkley Bonnafons, BMus'09, MEd'10, a "world of experiences" awaits outside her classroom door, and every experience becomes a lesson for this newly minted educator.

As a first-year teacher of English and music to primary students at the International School of Choueifat, Bonnafons has the opportunity to visit many of the glories of Egypt: the pyramids and the

Sphinx, the Citadel and the Egyptian Museum. She's also experienced the challenges of life in an unfamiliar country far from home.

"This city is dusty and polluted, the traffic is crazy and often the simplest errand becomes a huge ordeal," she says. "But Cairo also holds extraordinary beauty. Alongside the most dismal of buildings, mosques and other magnificent structures are built. Above car horns and the shouts of vendors, you can always hear the call to prayer projected over loudspeakers. I love it here."

Bonnafons is the first graduate of Blair's five-year bachelor of music/master

of education program to teach abroad in the program's 14-year history, says Associate Professor Thomas Verrier, director of teacher education and wind studies. "She's a wonderful musician and incredibly open to new possibilities," he says.

The International School of Choueifat, a private school with close to 1,700 students, attracts the sons and daughters of leading Egyptian families, including the country's minister of education.

"I have taught privately and spent time in classrooms connected with my education degree, but this is my first 'real' teaching job," Bonnafons says.

Her students are remarkably similar

“I can admit that I don’t know anything. I am as much a learner as I am a teacher.”

—Blythe Barkley Bonnaffons

to American children. “They’re full of energy, generally want to please and often get distracted by their peers,” she says. “And their parents are very, very heavily involved in their children’s academic life.”

Her two English classes are very small, but the 10 music classes contain 32 students each. All instruction is in English, which is the second language for most students, and teachers and students alike are discouraged from speaking Arabic.

“Classroom management is a huge challenge,” she says. “But it still amazes me how a neon bassoon sticker can make the worst kid behave for 55 minutes.”

A flutist, Bonnaffons has difficulty finding time for her own music since she’s staging two musicals this year: *Oliver* for



Blythe Bonnaffons leads her music students during the annual Christmas concert at the Choueifat School in Cairo, where she teaches.

the middle-school students and *Annie* for the second- to fourth-graders. “Most of my free practice time is spent trying to get the piano score under my fingers,” she says ruefully.

Her Blair classes definitely helped prepare Bonnaffons for her new position. “All the courses I took on general music were really helpful as far as offering me practical knowledge and tons of resources I can

use in the classroom,” she says.

She notes that teaching in a foreign country can be “incredibly lonely” at times. “Teaching itself is a challenge, stepping outside your own culture puts you at another level of vulnerability. But that vulnerability is largely what attracts me to teaching abroad. I can admit that I don’t know anything. I am as much a learner as I am a teacher.”

Editor’s Note:

At press time, President Hosni Mubarak had just stepped down as president of Egypt after 18 days of protests. Blythe Bonnaffons left Cairo at the end of January, after two days at the airport, taking an American chartered flight to Istanbul. Prior to leaving, she took photos of the protests on Friday, January 28, the “day of wrath,” as labeled by Cable News Network. She writes, “My friend Carla and I went to the top of Cairo Tower to watch as the protesters gathered in Midan al Gala, and the police fired tear gas and rubber bullets into the crowd. We watched as a nearby building caught on fire, and protesters sent a police truck up in flames. The protesters made it onto the bridge leading to Tahrir Square, but were knocked back by water hoses. When the call to prayer went off, everything stopped. The protesters kneeled down on the bridge. The police stopped firing. Prayer lasted for about ten minutes, after which the fight continued.”

Bonnaffons returned to Cairo on Sunday, February 20, for the reopening of Choueifat School. She plans to finish the semester teaching there.



World premiere in Paris

The Atlantic Ensemble (Kirsten Cassel Greer, adjunct artist teacher of cello; Seanad Dunigan Chang, adjunct artist teacher of violin and viola; and Wei Tsun Chang, adjunct associate professor of violin), gave the world premiere in November of *Trio for Violin, Viola and Violoncello: Savannah Shadows* by Associate Professor of Composition Michael Kurek in Paris, France, at the American Cathedral of Paris, the Fondation Danoise at Cite Universitaire (sponsored by the Danish government) and a few days later at L'Eglise St. Merri.



The Atlantic Ensemble (from left, Seanad Dunigan Chang, Kirsten Cassel Greer and Wei Tsun Chang) in front of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

What's in a Name?

Carl Smith, senior lecturer in music theory and composition, organ and harpsichord, has been actively involved for several decades with the writings—poems, letters, aphorisms—of Renaissance sculptor, painter, architect and poet Michelangelo, whose signature included his last name, Buonarroti. He has composed musical settings for more than 40 of the artist's letters and poems. A number of the poems, both sacred and secular, comprise the libretto for *Set My Heart Aright*, a cantata for men's chorus and chamber orchestra. There have been numerous performances of the work around the country, the most recent at Blair in 2009. Other poems and portions of numerous letters comprise the libretto for *Fire and Ice*, a masque for singers, narrator and instruments presenting Michelangelo's life through sung performances of his own words.

While doing research for these compositions, Smith noticed many interesting

and often puzzling things in the artist's signatures as reproduced in some of the thousands of books published about him over the years.

"Often, the signatures are either forged or else significantly altered from how he actually wrote them," Smith says. "In quite a few cases such misrepresentations are the result of publishers' insistence on spelling his name in the usual way—Michelangelo, which it appears he never used—so readers will recognize it."

But in reviewing the hundreds of surviving examples of his signature, Smith discovered that Michelangelo preferred some of the older spellings from Florentine and Tuscan dialects. These spellings, along with his overwriting certain letters and his peculiar use of a common abbreviation, are often dismissed as some of his many idiosyncrasies, if even commented upon.

"It appears that his use of these elements in signing his name is not arbitrary at all, but is really quite meaningful to

him," Smith explains. He has demonstrated Michelangelo's use of these elements in a number of public presentations, most recently to Vanderbilt's Group for Early Modern Cultural Studies and the Nashville Calligraphers' Guild.

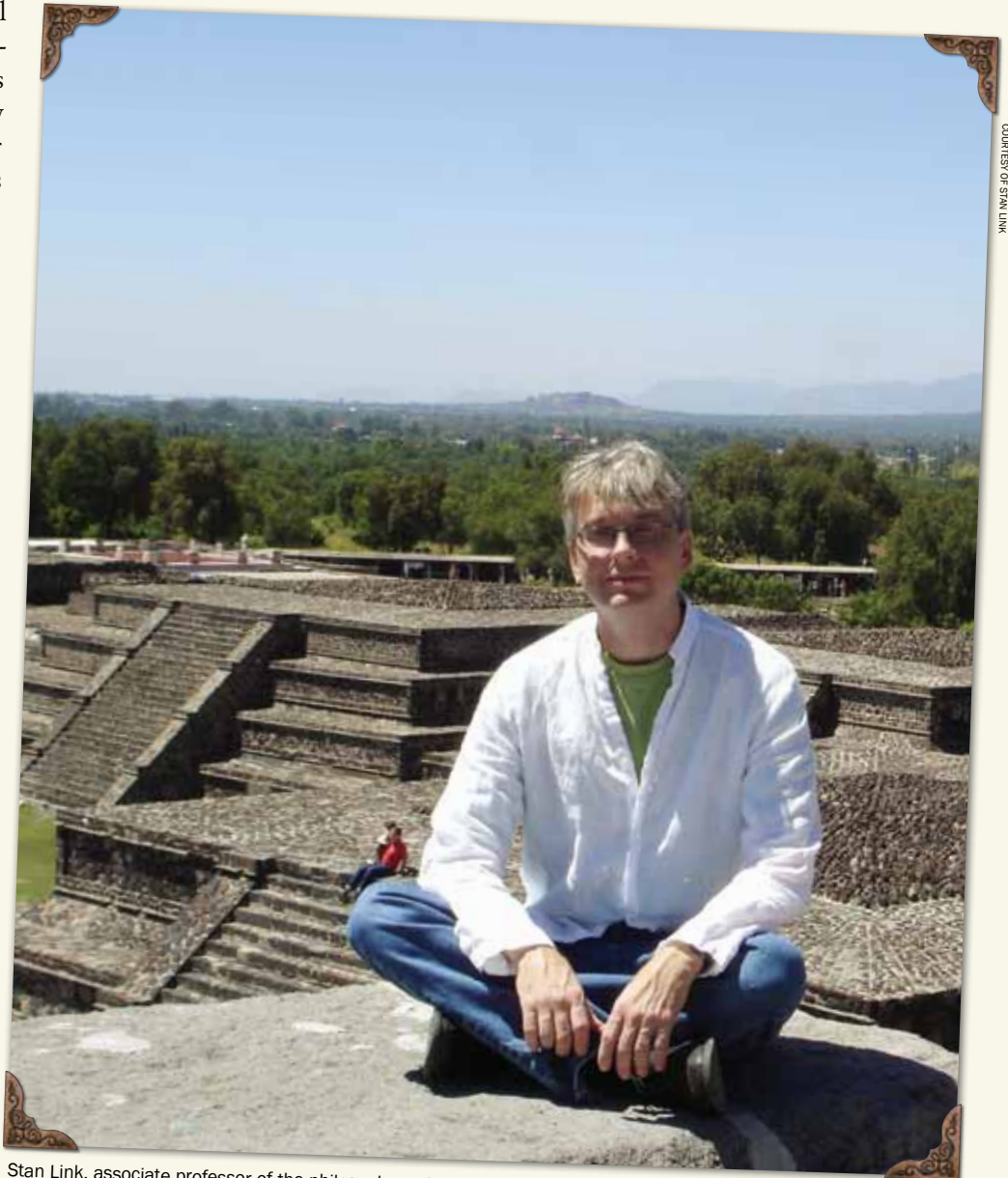
Smith's work has taken him to the Buonarroti Archives in Florence and to other libraries in Italy the past two summers to examine the more than 300 of the surviving signatures. He is currently writing a book and two articles about his discoveries under the title *What's in a Name? A Study of Michelangelo's Signatures*. His thesis?

"Shakespeare's Juliet got it wrong in this case. A rose by any other name does not smell just as sweet," Smith says. "It smells like something very different." Since "it" happens to be the name of the most famous of all artists, that difference is significant.

In a Musical Labyrinth

Josh McGuire, senior lecturer in aural studies, and Stan Link, associate professor of the philosophy and analysis of music, traveled to Mexico City to premiere Link's *Toda la Tierra*, for amplified classical guitar, two speakers and computer-generated accompaniment at the El Chopo Museum last September. The concert was part of the Music of the Stones project, in which visual artist Will Berry commissioned musical responses from several composers, including Blair alum Zach Miskin, BMus'06, to a series of large works he created by printing with rolling discs of lava rock on 30-foot-long Japanese paper. The installation of the scrolls in a gallery of the museum was also accompanied by ambient sound installations, including two extended works commissioned from Link at the beginning of the Music of the Stones project. The source sounds for these pieces included a clay flute that Link brought back from the pyramid city of Teotihuacan 34 years earlier. Ironically, this little souvenir was ultimately what brought McGuire and Link to Mexico City.

McGuire performed *Toda La Tierra* from a score that Link composed to simulate the 10 paths of the lava disks across the paper as well as the eye's wandering path over the image. In this respect, McGuire became a kind of "co-composer" of the piece, which is never played the same way twice. By following the connections among the 10 cycles Link composed to represent the 10 lava disks, a new event emerges every time he plays it. McGuire's trip through this musical labyrinth takes place against a background soundscape that Link constructed entirely from sounds made from paper and rocks. McGuire's guitar in conjunction with the



Stan Link, associate professor of the philosophy and analysis of music, on the Pyramid of the Moon in Teotihuacan.

soundscape then forms the setting for four texts. The texts consist of Mexican poems, both contemporary and ancient, that refer to paper and stones. The title, *Toda la Tierra*, comes from an Aztec "flower and song" poem by Nezahualcoyot (Hungry Coyote), a poet/ruler who lived in pre-Cortes Mexico from 1402-1472. The poem describes the transience

of human life, and ends with the line, "Vanished are these glories, just as the fearful smoke vanishes that belches forth from the infernal fires of Popocatepetl. Nothing recalls them but the written page." Each of McGuire's performances then mirrors the transience of human existence—which might be recorded, but can never be recreated.

The Spring 2011 Blair Concert Series

Featured events in March and April include:

The Pridonoff Piano Duo

March 3, 8 p.m.

Ingram Hall

Elisabeth and Eugene Pridonoff formed the Pridonoff Duo in 1982 and have been compared to the great husband-wife piano duos of Josef and Rosina Lhevinne, and Vronsky and Babin. They are co-artistic directors of the CCM Prague International Piano Institute.

The duo will conduct a master class on Thursday, March 3, in Ingram Hall and Friday, March 4, in Turner Hall. The public is invited to observe. Call (615) 322-7651 or check the Blair website for more information.

An Evening with Bassist Edgar Meyer

March 19, 8 p.m.

Ingram Hall

In demand as both a performer and a composer, MacArthur award recipient Edgar Meyer has formed a role in the music world unlike any other. Hailed by the *New Yorker* as “the most remarkable virtuoso in the relatively unchronicled history of his instrument,” Meyer’s unparalleled technique and musicianship work in combination with his gift for composition.

Sponsored by the Sartain Lanier Family Foundation Inc.

Valet parking provided

Piano Trio Dali

Vineta Sareika, violin

Christian-Pierre La Marca, cello

Amandine Savary, piano

April 22, 8 p.m.

Ingram Hall

The Piano Trio Dali is already considered to be one of the most remarkable trios of its generation. Some of their awards include first prize and winner of the gold medal at the sixth International Chamber Music Competition in Osaka (Japan), first prize at the prestigious International Piano Trio Competition of the Frankfurt Commerzbank (Germany) and second prize at the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York.

Valet parking provided

The Blakemore Trio

Amy Dorfman, piano
Carolyn Huebl, violin
Felix Wang, cello

April 1, 8 p.m.

Ingram Hall

The trio opens their spring program with Beethoven's sixth trio, followed by Shulamit Ran's *Soliloquy* written in 1997. The program will close with Brahms's magnificent C minor piano trio.

*Sponsored by an anonymous friend of the Blair School
Valet parking provided*

Guest Artist Recital

Alex Kerr, violin,
Anton Nel, piano

April 23, 8 p.m.

Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall

In 1996, at the age of 26, Alex Kerr was appointed to the prestigious position of concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. After nine successful years at that post, he left in June 2006 to assume the endowed Linda and Jack Gill Chair in Music as Professor of Violin at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Anton Nel, first prize winner in the 1987 Naumburg International Piano Competition at Carnegie Hall, captured first prizes in all the major South African competitions while still in his teens, then toured his native country extensively and became a well-known radio and television personality. Their program will include works by Debussy, Beethoven and Franck.

Kerr and Nel will conduct master classes in Turner Recital Hall on Friday, April 22. The public is invited to observe.

*2 p.m. – Master class with Alex Kerr, violin
4:30 p.m. – Master class with Anton Nel, piano*

These are just a few of the concerts scheduled for your enjoyment. Visit the website at <http://blair.vanderbilt.edu> for more information about concerts and events at the Blair School of Music.

Widening the Parameters with International Study

Music transcends all national and cultural boundaries, and in programs as far-flung as Australia and Japan, Blair students are taking advantage of the chance to educate themselves as citizens of the world. They are broadening their horizons with the full support of their home institution, according to Associate Dean Melissa Rose. “If students can incorporate study abroad into their current degree track,” she says, “it’s easy for them to go.”

According to Rose, 37 Blair students have traveled abroad for academic study during the past three years. Most of them—26—have gone to Vienna through IES Abroad, formerly known as the Institute of European Studies. As Associate Professor of Musicology Joy Calico points out, the students in this program have the opportunity to take private lessons with members of the renowned Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. “They get to experience musical life in one of the cities that has been most important for the historical development of the Western art music canon,” she says. In addition to living and learning in the city that was home to Mozart and Beethoven, the students can hear world-class performances several nights a week.

Other students pursue study in cities around the globe. There is an established IES program in Amsterdam, and through a program at Butler University in Indiana, Blair students have attended the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in Australia. The cities of Leeds, Tokyo and Florence

have all served as study destinations for Blair students. Four students go to the Royal Academy of Music in London every other year, part of an exchange program

that sends four Royal Academy students to Blair.

As part of the Vanderbilt-in-France program, Blair students can attend the Conservatoire Darius Milhaud during the academic year. This for-credit study is a separate opportunity from the summer program, Vanderbilt Music Academie, which sends a student string quartet and a woodwind quintet to the Aix-en-Provence festival each year. VMA seeks to provide the students with a rich cultural experience during their brief time abroad. In addition to attending master classes with members of the Berlin Philharmonic, the students learn about French cooking and winemaking, as well as devoting time to study of the visual arts and theater.

—Maria Browning



The Ars Nova Quartet (Ben Hart, violin; Caroline Hart, violin; Emily Nelson, cello; and Chris Lowry, viola) attended the Vanderbilt Music Academie in Aix-en-Provence, France, last summer.

COURTESY OF TOM VERBIER

Alumna premieres roles in Germany

Jena Carpenter, BMus’09, recently completed her first year in the master’s degree program at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Mannheim in Germany. After one year in the masters program, she was awarded a scholarship to attend the Bayreuth Festival by the Wagnerian Society of Mannheim. She has been contracted in her first professional engagement with The National Theater Mannheim as Servilia in Mozart’s *La Clemenza di Tito* and has been cast in four leading roles at the Hochschule: Adina in *L’elisir d’amore*; Ännchen in *Der Freischütz*; Despina in *Così fan tutte*; and Sister Constance in *Dialogues des Carmélites*. In addition, she has scheduled two debut concerts in Nevada and Arizona for 2011. She is a former voice student of Jonathan Retzlaff.



Jena Carpenter in the role of Adina in *L’elisir d’amore* by Donizetti at the National Theater Mannheim.

NATIONAL THEATER MANNHEIM

Blair student volunteers in Haiti

Sarah Danielle Williams, composition student at Blair, volunteered as part of a seven-person AidWEST Humanitarian Missions in Haiti team in early August. She organized and participated in a spring fundraising concert in Atlanta that raised nearly the entire \$900 participation fee so she could volunteer for the team. She contacted various music schools in the weeks prior to the trip, focusing on the Ambassador Music Institute near the capital of Port-au-Prince to address their urgent needs for music education and replacement of instruments (most of which were crushed in the earthquake). While attending the Bard College Conducting Institute earlier in the summer, she met and encouraged another music

student to join the AidWEST team and bring down brass, woodwind and string instruments to donate.

While working in the Orphanage Loyal in Croix des Bouquettes and the Muslim Hands Emergency School in Delmas, she learned popular songs in Creole and sang and played flute and guitar to the students. (Despite having only just learned how to play guitar earlier in the summer, she was able to teach some students how to play.)

She hiked to various tent camps in the mountain foothills north and south of the capital, to help in medical aid and to help the team distribute 900 pounds of humanitarian and medical supplies and French books to many victims. She also



Sarah Danielle Williams (top right) went to Haiti last summer as a member of an AidWEST Humanitarian Missions team. While there she learned popular songs in Creole and sang and played flute and guitar with the students.

donated her personal laptop computer to the team translator, so he is now able to continue working as a liaison for AidWEST via the Internet.

In England with the Blair Children's Chorus

More than 50 members of the Blair Children's Chorus (Boychoir, Concert Choir and Young Men's Chorus) gathered on a beautiful summer afternoon last July in London's historic Southwark Cathedral for a festive concert. This was the grand finale to a week of touring by the Boychoir and Young Men's Chorus. The tour included two days of singing with Ely Cathedral Choir, a chance to sing for noted British conductor Stephen Cleobury in the world-famous King's College Chapel (where they also teamed up with former Blair chorister Parker Ramsay, who started as organ scholar there in the fall), and two days of concerts in Yorkshire in the north of England.



The Nashville Boychoir and Young Men's Chorus sang with the Ely Cathedral Choir (above) for two days during their summer tour of England. They also worked with British conductor Stephen Cleobury at Kings College Chapel. The Concert Choir also toured England, though the groups traveled to different areas of the British Isles.

Meanwhile, the girls of the Concert Choir embarked on a week of workshops and concerts in the west of England, staying at Sherbourne School, with concerts at

Sherbourne Abbey and Wells Cathedral and visits to Stonehenge and the city of Bath. The tours were a triumph for the groups and a wonderful experience for the young singers, their parents and chaperones, accompanists Lauryn Moody and Valerie Matney—not to mention a logistical challenge for Alison Warford as administrator and quite a marathon for Director Hazel Somerville. Somerville was particularly happy when her weekend of chasing choirs all over London (Boychoir arriving on a coach from Yorkshire, Concert Choir arriving at

Heathrow, boys staying at one end of London and girls rehearsing the other end of town) came to a successful and satisfying conclusion.

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Jean Heard, musician and former first lady of Vanderbilt University, dies

Jean Keller Heard, widow of former Vanderbilt University Chancellor Alexander Heard and a social, musical and civic presence in Nashville for more than four decades, died Jan. 2. She was 86.

After moving to Nashville with her husband in 1963, she was the hostess for many Vanderbilt functions and played a key role in the merger of the Blair School of Music and Vanderbilt University in 1981. She was a past president of the Vanderbilt Aid Society and the Friends of the Vanderbilt University Library, which she founded with her husband. The library was renamed for them in 1984.

Mark Wait, dean of the Blair School of Music, said: "Jean devoted her life to music, and her role in the Blair School's affiliation with Vanderbilt was absolutely critical. It is no exaggeration to say that without Jean Heard's wisdom and efforts, the Blair School would certainly not be part of this great university, and it probably wouldn't even exist today. Our debt to her, and the university's, is incalculable."

"As anyone who knew my mother was aware, she was a passionate woman," said her daughter,



Jean Heard flanked by her daughter, Connie Heard, and Connie's husband, Edgar Meyer, both Blair faculty members, at the Blair Celebration Dinner in 2000.

Connie Heard, Valere Blair Potter Professor of Violin at Blair. "She was passionate about music, about her family, about politics and about education. Her behind-the-scenes influence was far-reaching and her sense of humor something that will always bring a smile to my face. ... She cared deeply about those around her, and our family will miss her."

Jean Heard was born Laura Jean Keller on Aug. 7, 1924, in Andalusia, Ala. She was a graduate of the University of Alabama and Juilliard School of Music and during her career as a musician she performed with the symphonies at the University of Alabama and the University of North Carolina and later the Nashville Symphony Orchestra.

Heard is preceded in death by her husband, who died July 24, 2009, following an extended illness.

She is survived by sons Stephen, a Nashville attorney; Christopher, acknowledgement coordinator in Vanderbilt's development office; Frank, a Washington, D.C.-based management consultant; and daughter Cornelia, who is married to Edgar Meyer, adjunct professor of bass at Blair. Heard is also survived by two grandsons, George Alexander Meyer and Alexander Michael Heard, and by her sister, Anne Parrish of Chapel Hill, N.C.

Memorials may be sent to the Jean and Alexander Heard Memorial Fund at Vanderbilt University (PMB 70227, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240) or online through the Vanderbilt website, www.vanderbilt.edu.