

BLAIR

Quarter Note

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

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Competitions and Auditions
Two sides of musical life

page 3

On the cover: Brian Woods and Jeannette Mathieu, co-winners of last year's Blair Concerto Competition, play back to back in Turner Recital Hall. See the story on page 3.

Cover photo by John Russell

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Editor, Bonnie Arant Ertelt
Art Director, Donna DeVore Pritchett
Designer, Christopher Collins
Contributors, Maria Browning, Lisa DuBois, Michael Patrick Holland, Kristin Whittlesey

Associate Dean for Pre-college and Adult Programs, Pam Schneller
Associate Dean for Development and Alumni Relations, Virginia Payne
Director of External Relations, Kristin Whittlesey

Pre-college, adult and undergraduate alumni are encouraged to send their professional or personal news to:

The Blair Quarter Note
2400 Blakemore Avenue
Nashville, TN 37212-3499

Or by email to:
quarternote@vanderbilt.edu

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From the *Dean*



Dean Mark Wait

This issue of the *Quarter Note* goes to the very heart of what we do at the Blair School, and why we exist: our students. In these pages, we will focus on the critical moments in the lives of Blair students, from their auditions for admission to their professional lives after graduation. You will also learn why we emphasize chamber music in our undergraduate curriculum, and how that emphasis contributes to greater musicianship generally, and to the training of seasoned professionals. In addition, you will learn about one example of what makes life at the Blair School quite special: the opportunities for our students to encounter intensive experiences that are rarely found at other institutions. In this case, that experience will be the performances and seminars around the music of John Cage, whose centenary is being observed this year, with choreography from former dancers in the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, which is being disbanded following Cunningham's death. This will be the last tour by members of the company. It is a wonderful opportunity for our students and audiences to witness a fusion of music and dance that is already both historical and contemporary.

In all these activities, our primary focus is on students—preparing them for lives in music, whether as professionals or as amateurs in the best, literal sense of that term. It is affirming to see that Blair training and a Vanderbilt education have served both types of students well. The breadth of education is important. As you may know, the Blair School is one of the few schools of music where students are encouraged (by their dean, anyway) to pursue a double major. I like to say that they have the best of two worlds at Blair: the intensity of conservatory training and the breadth of a superb liberal arts education. As you will see in these pages, that combination has served alumni Bzur Haun and Jonathan Chu very well.

Ultimately, of course, a focus on students is really about the future: preparing the artists, scholars, and composers of the mid-21st century, and therefore creating still-evolving art forms. That is an exciting and noble mission, one that we at Blair embrace with enthusiasm and fervor.

Mark Wait, Dean and Professor
Martha Rivers Ingram Dean's Chair



Sophomore Brian Woods and senior Jeannette Mathieu were co-winners of Blair's Concerto Competition last January. In recent years, the competition has been open to the public during the final round. Both Woods and Mathieu like the new format, because it feels more like playing a concert or recital and less like a competition.

TOPSPOT

*For music students, preparing for competitions and auditions
has to be about more than winning*

By Bonnie Arant Ertelt

They say everyone loves a winner, so musicians, like athletes and entrepreneurs, spend an inordinate amount of time preparing to outperform the competition. There's no scoreboard or balance sheet. Musicians leave their progress lingering in the air to hear every time they perform.

"There's no way of avoiding competition," says Roland Schneller, Chancellor's

Professor of Piano. "They play in recital, they all hear each other, they compare themselves, and they want to be as good as they possibly can be."

But there are few winners declared in a competition and limited numbers of scholarships or chairs in an orchestra. How, then, do music students prepare for a lifetime of auditions and competitions, when the outcome is anything but certain?

Working toward a goal

Culture and competition don't usually go hand in hand. But all disciplines of the arts at some point become competitive.

"Music is not inherently competitive," Schneller states. "I have students who are not interested in competition, and I think that's fine. But when you share music, it is only human to compare yourself to others and it becomes competitive. I have all my

[pre-college] students do the yearly local music club auditions, as we call them, in which they play for a judge and get comments. I ask them to do that because it's a motivating goal to work toward."

Melissa Rose, associate dean and associate professor of piano, agrees that competing strengthens a student's skills. Many teachers have their pre-college students prepare for these auditions, sponsored by the local music teacher associations, where students are given a rating and comments. At the state level, however, the auditions become more identified as a competition.

"I coordinate the Tennessee state instrumental competitions for the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) which include both pre-college and college students," Rose explains. "They get comments, and a winner, runner-up and sometimes honorable mentions are declared in each category. The winners of those categories go on to the division level, which includes eight states. Ours go on to the southern division.

"In that case, they are competing against one another," Rose says. "Most teachers emphasize that this is a way to perform for somebody else. As long as it is promoted in a healthy way by the teacher and the

“There’s definitely a difference whether you’re doing it with a group or by yourself. Each individual musician has to figure out what motivates them and be able to use it in any situation.”

—Lindsey Reymore

family, I think it can be healthy for the student, because it shows them what's out there. You might be a big fish in a little pond here, but then you go to this level, and you see that another student can do this [particular piece]. It can encourage the student. You try to avoid the demoralizing aspect of it. I think that's the responsibility of the support network for the student and the organizers [of the competition]."

Emphasizing the journey and not the end result is also important to get through a competition without debilitating stage fright. Jared Hauser, assistant professor of oboe, thinks the word "competition" is a stumbling block. "When you go to an orchestral or solo competition, you're

being compared to everybody else," he says. "That can [turn into] a mind game, so it's a lot more effective in my experience to say, 'I know this music; I have a way of playing this that's my way, and I'm going to show you how it goes.' If I worry about what they want to hear, then I tie myself up in knots, and I can't execute anything."

Schneller concurs, noting that the younger the student is, the less stage fright they have. "Even students who have no stage fright can develop it as adults. Once the onset of puberty arrives, you become very self-conscious, and it becomes a bit more common. Competition affects you more when you're older," he says, "because you are aware you're being judged, when before it felt more like a chance to show off your talent."

"The more you compete, the more comfortable you are," Rose says. "That's another valuable part of competition."

A different mindset

Whether a student is performing in a local music audition or a more intense competition, repertoire frequently comes from several contrasting styles of music. Mindset varies depending on the context—a solo competition judged by a panel of three requires a different mental approach than a chamber music competition in which a student is playing as part of a group in front of judges and an audience. The context affects the way the student prepares the repertoire and the performance.

Lindsey Reymore, a senior oboe performance major at Blair, has competed in



JOHN RUSSELL

(Above and opposite page) Each year students are nominated for and then compete to perform on the Blair Student Showcase. Above, Natalie Taylor, soprano, accompanied by Jennifer McGuiere on piano, rehearses "Tornami a vagghegiar" from the opera *Alcina* by G.F. Handel for the 2011 Blair Student Showcase.



JOHN RISEBELL

The Apollo Trio, (Lillian Johnson, violin; Jennifer Pittman, cello; and Paul Dab, piano), performed the first movement (allegro vivace e con brio) of Beethoven's *Piano Trio in D, Op. 70, No. 1* "Ghost" for the showcase.



ANNIE BANNER

Susan Yang performed *Rhapsody in B minor, Op. 79, No. 1* by Johannes Brahms.

both solo competitions and in chamber music competitions.

"There's definitely a difference whether you're doing it with a group or by yourself," she says. "Each individual musician has to figure out what motivates them and be able to use it in any situation. I'm much more naturally motivated in a chamber music setting," she explains, "because I'm working with other people who I respect

and support, so I have a responsibility to them, and that motivates me to practice.

"That same reasoning doesn't apply to a solo competition," she says, "so I have had to figure out how to get the same degree of motivation in a different way."

The mental preparation for solo competitions and orchestral auditions is also different. Orchestral auditions are usually behind a screen, even for the Vanderbilt Orchestra. Students walk in without speaking, play the excerpts and leave. On the other hand, auditions for summer festival spots or solo competitions are done in view of the judges.

Reymore auditioned for several summer festivals last year. "[Professor Hauser] prepared me for how I walked into the room and what I [would] wear," Reymore says. "All these details don't matter with an orchestral audition because you don't interact with the judges at all."

"Preparing for a solo competition, the process is going to be more lengthy and involved than for an orchestral audition, where you're playing small snippets of orchestral pieces or solos out of context that may be only eight bars long," Hauser says. "For a solo competition, the student should be thinking big picture: broad, long phrases, direction within the piece, how one movement relates to the next,

and how their own personal appearance is important.

"At a solo competition you want to look bigger than life when you're on stage. Every detail is important, from what you wear, to how you walk on stage, to the way you bow, if you bow."

Practice makes perfect

Preparation also entails picking repertoire that the student can learn and perform well by the time the competition happens. Because of the time it takes to pick and learn repertoire specific to a competition, students frequently pick something they already feel comfortable performing.

"With MTNA, you apply early in September and auditions are in November," Rose says. "So you have to predict in September what you're going to be able to play in November. I always get the question, 'I couldn't get the piece ready, so can I change it?' No, you cannot.

"I think if you really want to win a competition, you're going to want to take your seasoned repertoire. You generally don't take something new."

Reymore, along with Thomas Crespo, BMus' 11, (bassoon) and junior Valerie Hsu (piano) made up Troika two years ago. The undergraduate chamber music trio made it to the live rounds of the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition along with the pre-college Parthenon String Quartet, made up of Alvin Kim (cello), Will Bender (viola), Jacob Schafer (violin) and Annie Bender (violin). The Fischhoff is one of the best-known and influential competitions in the United States. Reymore and her trio only decided to compete at the end of the fall semester.

"We put together the whole thing in one semester. They came over to my house for a week during winter break to rehearse all day, and then after that we had as many coachings as we possibly could at school," she says. "We rehearsed five days a week and then every day coming close to the competition. I think it was a little too much, looking back on it," she says.

Their youth as a recently organized trio made it even more significant that

they were chosen by the Fischhoff, which only selected 48 entries from a total of 130 to play in the live rounds that year.

“They were pretty young, compared to most of the field for Fischhoff,” says Hauser. “The judges were looking for the overall package of a group and not the individual virtuosity of each player. It doesn’t mean that the players aren’t virtuosic,” he explains, “it just means they’re looking for a blend and a maturity.”

liked the more educational component, and that they could actually talk to the judge and get some feedback.”

With big competitions like the Fischhoff, competing is a way for a performer to launch a career. However, only concentrating on competitions does not necessarily lead to a well-rounded educational experience for a musician. “Competitions sometimes get a bad rap, too,” Rose says. “If you’re only always working



Bassoonist Thomas Crespo, who graduated last spring, oboist Lindsey Reymore and pianist Valerie Hsu made up the trio called Troika that competed at the national Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition.

“Our biggest comment from the judges as to why we didn’t advance [to the semi-final round],” Reymore says, “was that we had balance issues. We had played in various places—at Blair, in people’s houses—but it shows maturity for a group and for individual musicians to be able to adjust to a hall right away, which is not even something I had thought about until then. It was a learning experience to realize that there were subtle things like that that can make such a huge difference.”

“The Fischhoff does a really nice thing,” Rose says. She helped coach Troika and her son was a member of the Parthenon String Quartet. “After they announce the finalists, they have an ice cream social for all the groups, and they have all the judges available to talk to each of them. They can go over things that the judge didn’t write in the comments. I really

toward a competition, I think that’s very limiting. You’re limiting your repertoire and not working on other areas of your musicianship.”

The bottom line is that competitions are not necessary to enjoy making music, but they can help serious students progress in technical skill, planning and musicianship, whether they win or not.

“If you use competitions as a tool to help you grow, then they’re great,” Rose says. “You always have to enter a competition thinking, ‘Gee, if I win, it would be really nice.’ Don’t go thinking, ‘I’ve got to win this competition,’ because there’s no point in it. You need to think that this is an opportunity to play for other people, to get comments and to grow as a musician. If you go with that attitude, you’re fine, and I think most teachers try to promote that.”

Music Teachers National Association

November 12, 2011

State competition winners

String Chamber Music

Alternate: Camellia Trio (Natalie Fritz, Lucy Turner and Susan Yang), students of Melissa Rose/Leslie Norton

Junior Strings (ages 11-14)

Winner: Allison Pao, violin, student of Connie Heard

Alternate: Kaili Wang, violin, student of Carolyn Huebl

Honorable Mention: David Bender, cello, student of Kirsten Cassel-Greer

Senior Strings (ages 15-19)

Winner: Annie Bender, violin, student of Carolyn Huebl

Alternate: Marie Akimoto, violin, student of Chris Teal

Young Artist Strings (ages 19-26)

Winner: Caroline Hart, violin, student of Connie Heard

Alternate: Blake Johnson, cello, student of Felix Wang

Blair Pre-College Young Pianists Competition

November 20, 2011

Grade 1-2

Winner: Matthew Williams, student of Jama Reagan

Honorable Mention: Jennifer Li, student of Lauren Coplan

Grade 3-4

Winner: Gitae Park, student of Elizabeth Eckert

Honorable Mention: Wednesday Link, student of Elizabeth Eckert

Grade 5-6

Winner: Lu Zheng, student of ChiHee Hwang

Honorable Mention: Tristan Tournaud, student of Valerie Middleton

Grade 7

Winner: Lindsey Tucker, student of Elizabeth Eckert

Honorable Mention: Erika Pratt, student of Valerie Middleton

The Art of the Admissions Audition

Auditioning to be admitted to a collegiate school of music or conservatory is a very different process than auditioning for an orchestra or to get comments or ratings. Blair has refined the audition weekend process, and, according to Dwayne Sagen, assistant dean for admissions at Blair, current students are his best recruiters.

“Our current Blair students really help to sell the school,” Sagen says. “They remember what it was like when they came, and they show [the prospective students] the ins and outs of the school.”

Early-decision students come in December to audition. Additional audition weekends happen the last weekend of January and the second and fourth weekends of February.

Prospective students play for the faculty in their particular department. Auditions are short, averaging 12 minutes for most instrumentalists, though piano auditions can take a little longer. “That’s where some of our students are at their best; they put the students at ease,” Sagen says. Blair students work shifts as runners to greet the students, get them to their practice rooms and then to the audition.

“They get the student and take him or her where they need to go, and they can also calm them down,” Sagen says. “They may say, ‘What are you playing? Oh, the Hummel trumpet concerto—I played that last year.’”

At the audition, preparation is key. “I understand that people get nervous and make mistakes. I look past mistakes quite a bit,” says Jared Hauser, assistant professor of oboe. “However, if they seem unprepared, that’s different. I also listen for musical spark,” he says. “Does this person speak to me?”

After the audition, faculty members will take the students to their studio and talk to them one on one or give a lesson.

“The personal interaction in the lesson and their growth in the lesson is sometimes more important to me than the audition itself,” Hauser adds.

The audition weekend also includes a Friday-night dinner where prospective students and their families can meet faculty and hear Blair student musicians perform. Often they attend a recital afterward where they may hear a Blair faculty ensemble or a student group such as the wind ensemble, choir or orchestra. They take a required music theory quiz, and at noon on Sat-

Each year, approximately 450 students audition for one of about 50 spots in Blair’s first-year class. Though Blair does allow students who live more than 400 miles away to send tapes and DVDs or attend a regional audition site, the Blair admissions office prefers that they come in person to audition.

“That way we get to know them,” Sagen says. “The whole point of the audition weekend is for them to be a student here and get a feel for what it’s like to go to class, to rehearsals,



Blair first-year student Allison Connelly, right, escorts a prospective student to her admissions audition.

urday, parents of current students meet with parents of prospective students, while their sons and daughters meet with current Blair students. “They can ask questions without mom and dad around,” Sagen says. “The whole point is to get their questions answered and leave with as much information as they possibly can.”

After the audition weekend, Dean Mark Wait and the Blair faculty keep in touch with students. “Dean Wait and the faculty are excellent at following up,” Sagen says. “They write them emails, call them, ask if there is anything else they need to know about Blair.”

to eat the food and walk the campus. We’ll pair them up with our students, so if they’re a trumpet player, we pair them up with a trumpet player, and they follow the student around and shadow them.

“So, the [Blair] students really help to sell the school,” he says. “We know that, because the parents tell us that. They say, ‘We didn’t find many students like that at other schools.’”

For more information on Blair admissions weekends and requirements for auditions, visit: blair.vanderbilt.edu/prospective-students.

—Bonnie Arant Ertelt

The Treble and Bass of a Balanced Life

By Lisa A. DuBois

In music, balance is the harmonic poise, the requisite equilibrium given to a chord, a melody or a group of instruments. In life, balance is the constant recalibration of obligations and passions. Quarter Note spoke to two graduates from the Blair School of Music—Bzur Haun, BMus'93, who chose

to pursue a career away from music, and Jonathan Chu, BMus'03, who is a professional musician—to discover how divergent paths could lead to a fulfilling euphony. Both alumni noted that it was the entire Vanderbilt experience that prepared them for life beyond college.

Bzur Haun, who graduated in 1993, was a well-known figure around the Vanderbilt campus. Double-majoring in musical arts/piano at Blair and in human and organizational development at Peabody, Haun was involved in many campus-wide activities—from leading orientation tours to performing in musical ensembles and involvement in student politics. After graduation, he made his way to California where he worked in several “starter jobs” in the hospitality industry while playing piano for the random paycheck. He eventually realized, however, that what he really needed was a career.

Using some Vanderbilt connections, he landed a job with Andersen Consulting (later Accenture), where he developed expertise in human performance management or “performance technology.” Right about then the 1990s high-tech boom hit the nation. Fortuitously living



Haun

“I got to the point in my life where I thought, ‘Wow. If I don’t diversify my experience, I’m going to become pigeonholed.’”

—Bzur Haun

on the West Coast in the nerve center of the industry, Haun was primed to ride that wave.

“I basically had a 10-year runway, where it was textbook,” Haun explains. “You got your experience in a big company, then moved to a small company, which went through a dot.com phase and eventually sold.” He ultimately wound up as an authority in distance learning, or e-learning.

By 2003, however, he was ready to hang up his e-learning spurs to try something different. “I got to the point in my life where I thought, ‘Wow. If I don’t diversify my experience, I’m going to

become pigeonholed,” Haun says. “I just wasn’t ready at the age of 33 or 34 to say that the rest of my life would be e-learning.”

Since leaving e-learning, Haun has been focusing on the world of enterprise mobility at two different companies. He has been with Visage Mobile since late 2008. At the time, it was a midstage wireless technology start-up that hadn’t yet launched a product and didn’t have a single customer. Fast forward, and today he is the president and CEO of Visage, which now has more than 200 customers, including members of the Fortune 500, and 50 full- and part-time employees. The

company weathered the recent economic downturn and continues to do well.

Haun is married to Page Shaper Haun, BA'92, whom he dated briefly in college, lost touch with and then reconnected to 14 years later. They have three children, 4-year-old son Hamer, 2-year-old daughter Tempo, and daughter Zigi born in November. After a long stint away from

musical performance, Haun is now planning a piano recital jubilee for friends, family and colleagues to celebrate his 40th year. He's also involved with Blair as a member of the KeyBoard.

"Little creatures who look like you do strange things to your mind," he says with a laugh. "All of a sudden I thought about the impression I want to make on my

children and what's important to me.

"No one in my professional network has any idea that I'm a musician. But if I can get my hands back, [the recital] might actually sound good. I need music for balance in my life, and I'm excited to share it with people."

Jonathan Chu wasn't sure whether he wanted to be a musician or a financier. After graduating from Vanderbilt in 2003 with a double major in violin performance and economics, he went on to earn a master's degree in violin at the Juilliard School, thinking he'd like a career with a chamber music quartet.



Chu

That is until his mentor, famed Juilliard violinist Robert Mann, warned him off. The music world was changing, Mann said. Venues were cutting budgets, searching for different types of music ensembles and canceling concerts. Chu, who had performed and toured with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra, decided to cast his lot with a symphony.

"I was concerned about basic supply and demand," says Chu, his economics background coming into play. "The demand wasn't growing and the supply [of opportunities] was shrinking."

He joined the St. Louis Symphony that year, and although the pay was satisfactory and the job was stable, something about it didn't feel right. At Vanderbilt, he'd studied violin under Chris Teal, but for one year had also played viola in a string quartet under the tutelage of John Kochanowski. He went out and purchased a viola "just to have." Chu left the St. Louis Symphony and moved to New York City to freelance and explore career opportunities on Wall Street or with a hedge fund in Connecticut. In the end, however, he chose to stay with music.

"I was concerned about basic supply and demand. The demand wasn't growing and the supply [of opportunities] was shrinking."

—Jonathan Chu

Basically, he says, "I love playing more than I love banking."

He took odd jobs, such as playing violin and viola on the debut album of a then-unknown, now hit-maker indie rock band Vampire Weekend.

In the summer of 2008, he migrated to Vermont to audition for the Marlboro Festival on the viola, simply because there were no violin openings. He won the try-out and spent a full three months playing viola. That fall he heard that the Philadelphia Orchestra had an opening in viola, and importantly, anyone who made the finals of the auditions was automatically placed on the "sub list." Aiming for a spot on the sub list, Chu instead was hired as a company member after his audition.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is considered one of the top five orchestras in America, and one of the best in the world. Chu says, "The sound of the orchestra is very distinct. The strings sounds are rich and warm and lush. We have a thing called the 'Philadelphia Sound.' You can hear it in the audience, and you can feel it on stage. It's very edifying and fulfilling to be a part of that."

Unfortunately, the most recent Philadelphia sound was that of lawyers and

union negotiators arguing in backrooms. In April 2011, the management of the Philadelphia Orchestra filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy after disagreements with the players' union over salaries and pensions. Even though he was one of the newest and youngest members of the orchestra, his colleagues respected his dual degree in economics from Vanderbilt and elected him to the negotiations committee. After months of slogging through 12-hour days during the negotiations, Chu says that the two sides have reached an agreement, and he hopes the orchestra will emerge from bankruptcy in the next few months.

"Despite the dispute, we have a full season. No concerts were canceled and we're going on a China tour in the spring," he says. "Every article written about us says that in spite of having filed Chapter 11, the orchestra never sounded better."

In 2010, Chu married violist Beth Guterman, and their son, Apollo, was born in 2011. "I've been happy with the way my life has gone," he says. "Vanderbilt prepared me for what I've been able to accomplish musically. And having a broader education has enabled me to do other things—like working on resolving problems during times of uncertainty."

Making Music

for Each Other

Perfecting the chamber music experience

By Maria Browning



Chamber music, with its graceful, intimate character, presents a special set of challenges and pleasures to the musicians who play it.

In the same way that listening to Beethoven string quartets is a different experience from listening to Beethoven symphonies, there's a significant difference between playing in a small, leaderless ensemble and performing in a large orchestra under the baton of a conductor. Both genres require a high degree of musicianship, but the methods and goals are quite distinct.

Bil Jackson, associate professor of clarinet at Blair and a veteran performer in both orchestras and chamber ensembles, describes it as "driving a Ferrari versus a Cadillac Escalade—both elegantly serve a different purpose." Jackson also likens the unique interaction within a chamber ensemble to a musical dance. But with no designated leader, how does the group achieve the cohesiveness needed to attain that perfect musical choreography?

It starts, according to associate professor John Kochanowski, violist with the Blair String Quartet and coordinator of university student chamber music, with each member's strong desire to shape the performance. Good chamber players, Kochanowski says, should have "a tremendous belief in the way they want to make phrases in music." He believes that phrasing is "all about emotion," and he tries to help his students learn to express their own emotional interpretation of the music. "Ultimately, if they can't talk about love and hate and angst and all these things in front of me," Kochanowski says, "they aren't going to be able to do it in their practicing and, in the end, come out with a performance that's going to be what all these great composers put notes on a page for."

Each member's strong feelings, however, must go hand in hand with a willingness to compromise. "You may have one, two, three or four opinions in a string quartet," Kochanowski says. "So how do

you get your idea across when there may be three other ideas? That comes down to compromise. You take some of your idea and put it with the other ideas, and you come up with the solution." The players must respect each other's opinions, he notes, and be willing to honor a group vote or even an occasional coin toss. Kochanowski approvingly cites a mentor's advice to him that a chamber ensemble should ultimately function "as one big head with eight hands."

Of course, in addition to opinions and emotions, the players must possess a mastery of their instruments. Technical competence is critical for any musician, but

Each member is responsible for keeping up with the group, or, as Kochanowski notes, they're "going to be exposed for what they haven't done."

Jackson, Hart and Kochanowski all agree that, ultimately, a responsive, attentive relationship among the members is at the core of a successful chamber ensemble. "The greatest quartet players are dynamic listeners," Hart says. "At no given moment is anyone playing louder or softer, faster or slower without complete awareness of the ensemble." Jackson emphasizes the need for a "unified musical concept," and agrees that the players must have a heightened aware-



Opposite: Blair student chamber ensembles presented fall recitals in Turner Recital Hall. Shown performing are Hunter Guthrie and Allison Connelly. Above: The Blair String Quartet, one of Blair's signature chamber music groups, performing.

in a small ensemble it is essential that the members' skill levels are well-matched. Benjamin Hart, BMus'10, violinist with the Ars Nova String Quartet, believes that a group "is only as strong as its weakest member." Jackson compares a chamber group to a team climbing Mount Everest and says that it "only takes one person who is not up to the task to significantly compromise the success of summiting."

ness of each other if they are to deliver a great performance. For Kochanowski, the ideal relationship goes even deeper, with the group experiencing a real emotional bond. "When I sit on the stage—and I think my colleagues would say the same thing—even though I love the energy the audience is bringing, we're playing for each other. We're making music for each other."

Join us for these Spring Concert Season Highlights

Signature Series

Craig Nies, Piano

Friday, March 30, 8 p.m.

Ingram Hall

After five years, indefatigable and prodigious pianist Craig Nies concludes his *Well-Tempered Clavier* concert series. In the spring of 2007, Nies embarked on a journey to perform in concert the entire *Well-Tempered Clavier* of J. S. Bach, which includes 48 preludes and fugues. These concerts have also featured signature works from other important composers, including the complete Debussy Preludes.

This final installment will feature the last three preludes and fugues by Bach; the last six Debussy Preludes; and Beethoven's mighty "Hammerklavier" sonata, which, fittingly, ends with what Nies says is the

most demanding fugue ever composed for piano.

"It has been a great pleasure to work on the complete *Well-Tempered Clavier*," Nies says. "While I enjoy the variety in every program, I am very happy just working on Bach for hours!"

Sponsored by the parents of a current Blair student

SPECIAL EVENT: A Celebration of the 100th Birthday of John Cage

Revolutionaries in the Academy! — John Cage and Merce Cunningham. A Conversation on Form, Composition and Creativity

Thursday, March 29, 3 p.m.

Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall

Michael Holland, artistic director of Blair Percussion VORTEX, introduces this dialogue on the intersection of music and dance, featuring Jennifer Goggans, a former dancer with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and Michael Slayton, chair of Blair's music composition department

**Blair Percussion VORTEX celebrates John Cage with former dancers of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company
Plus: COMPANY ROSE**

Sunday, April 1, 8 p.m.

Ingram Hall

Michael Holland, artistic director

Marsha Barsky and Erin Law, choreographers

7 p.m. Cage *Musircus* in Ingram Lobby and Plaza. "You won't hear a thing. You'll hear everything!"

7:40 p.m. Pre-concert talk with Professor Robert Fry in Ingram Hall

Witness history. Make history. Join VORTEX and artistic director Michael Holland in the centennial birthday celebration of John Cage and his 50-year collaboration with Merce Cunningham. Rare, archival photographs, audio clips and historic film footage let Cage and Cunningham speak to you as VORTEX performs with former members of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, just off their historic international farewell Legacy Tour.

A reception in Ingram Lobby follows the performance.

For information on related Cage/Cunningham/VORTEX events, call (615) 322-7651 or see p.16.

Support for these programs is provided by a Curb Creative Campus Innovation Grant.

Sundays in April at Cheekwood

Blair faculty artists will perform Sundays in April in the drawing room of the Cheekwood mansion. Performances will start at 2 p.m. and last about an hour. Performances are free with paid Cheekwood admission.

April 1: John Johns, guitar

April 8: The Ars Nova Quartet (Caroline Hart and Ben Hart, violins; Christopher Lowry, viola; Emily Nelson, cello)

April 15: Blakemore Trio (Carolyn Huebl, violin; Felix Wang, cello; Amy Dorfman, piano)

April 22: Lauren Coplan, piano

April 29: Christian Teal, violin, and Jennifer McGuire, piano

Signature Series

The Annual Appalachian Celebration

Saturday, April 21, 8 p.m.

Ingram Hall

Matt Combs, director

This annual hoedown features Blair's own folk and instrument performance faculty, plus plenty of surprise guests from the Nashville music industry. Come for the unexpected and stay for the joy of our region's favorite folk music performed by some of the very best players in the country.

Sponsored by the David Schnauffer Fund

This concert is a benefit for the Jerome "Butch" Baldassari Pre-College Scholarship Fund at the Blair School of Music. Donations at the door will be accepted but are not required.

Additional support provided by: Mark Wait, Dean, Blair School of Music; Frank Wcislo, Dean of the Martha River Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt; Sandra Stahl, Office of the Dean of Students; and by JoEl Loguidice, Office of Creative Engagement. Blair thanks the Hutton Hotel for providing accommodations for all visiting artists.

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



A Note of Thanks

Musicians know that without the help of arts patrons, there would be no music to fill concert halls and teach the next generation of music students. At the Blair School of Music, the support of so many in our community—alumni, parents, faculty, staff and friends—contributed to the enormous success of Vanderbilt’s *Shape the Future* campaign. The campaign secured more than \$1.9 billion across the institution in an historic initiative focused primarily on investing in people through scholarships and endowed faculty chairs throughout the university.

We at Blair would like to say
thank you.

Through *Shape the Future*, donors supported the creation of four faculty chairs at the Blair School: the Martha Rivers Ingram Dean’s Chair to Dean Mark Wait; the Chancellor’s Chair to Roland Schneller, professor of piano; the Joseph Joachim Chair in Violin to Chris Teal, professor of violin; and the Valere Blair Potter Chair to Connie Heard, professor of violin. Ten students receive aid as a result of scholarships endowed during *Shape the Future*.

Thank you, also, for your contributions that have supported Blair’s educational programs, community outreach programs and a concert season that provides the Nashville community with some of the most enduring and entertaining performances and master classes available in any city in the United States.

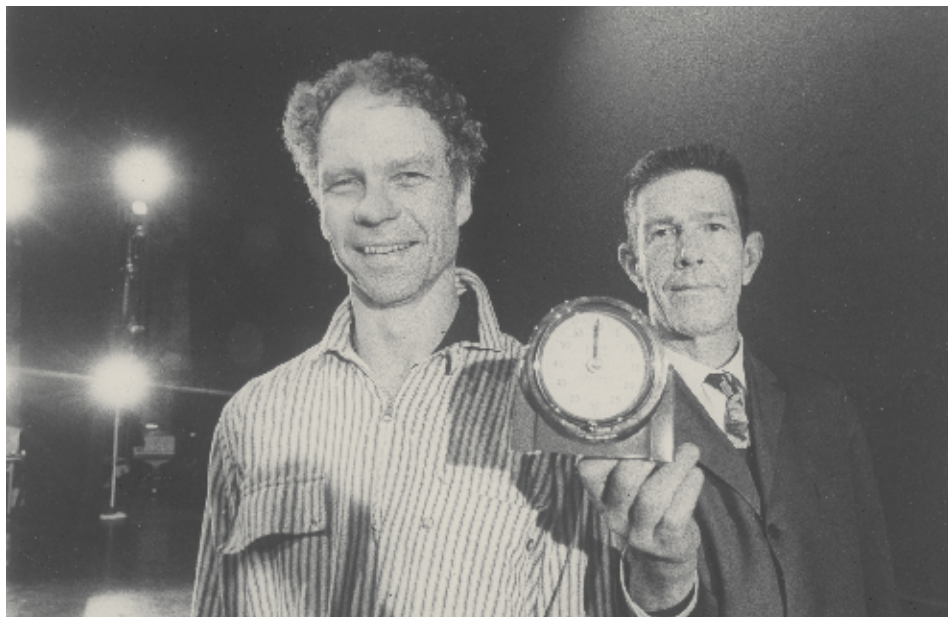


(From left) **Mark Wait**, Martha Rivers Ingram Dean's Chair and professor of music; **Rebecca Boelzner** and **Jason Gnasigamany**, recipients of the Wilma Ward Scholarship, endowed during *Shape the Future*; and **Chris Teal**, Joseph Joachim Professor of Violin.

Ongoing support for scholarships continues

More than 62 percent of undergraduates at Vanderbilt receive financial assistance. For Blair undergraduates, that number increases to 91 percent. Through your generosity, gifts through Opportunity Vanderbilt support the university's commitment to expand financial aid. With your support and that of others committed to arts education, Blair will continue its role in advancing some of the best musicians and arts educators to be heard at Vanderbilt and beyond.

In the VORTEX with Cage and Cunningham



JOHN MITCHELL/COURTESY OF THE JOHN CAGE TRUST

Dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham, left, with composer John Cage

From John Cage aficionados to new listeners, surprises are in store when Blair's percussion ensemble VORTEX joins with former dancers of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and Nashville's Company Rose on Sunday, April 1. The two-hour production will feature works spanning four and a half decades, including a presentation of Cunningham choreography in a 30-minute "MinEvent" with the percussion students of VORTEX.

"With the closure of the company on December 31, any collaborative performance of John Cage's music with Cunningham-trained dancers is a rare event," Artistic Director Michael Holland says. "To put this in perspective, this is comparable to having Nijinsky's dancers from the Ballet Russe on hand for a student performance of the *Rite of Spring*. One cannot understand Cage without taking into account the artistic relationship with Cunningham. These are giants who changed the landscape of art and waited for the world to catch up to them."

Nashville's Company Rose will restage the lost Cage work *Fads and Fancies in the Academy*. Created by Cage and 1940s modern dance pioneer Marian Van Tuyl,

this barely known piece was originally subtitled by Cage and Van Tuyl as *A Gentle Satire on Progressive Education*. For the first time since the work was created, Company Rose and VORTEX will reunite Cage's rhapsodic program music with choreography created by Marsha Barsky and Erin Law and informed by Van Tuyl's original work. The new staging was made possible by Michael Holland's recent uncovering of archival film footage and notes from Van Tuyl's work with Cage.

This retrospective concert is one of the largest in the nation and will involve students and faculty from across the campus in addition to guest artists in Nashville. Music, art, theater, dance and film studies are pooling talents and resources to make this a once-in-a-lifetime event. And at the center of everything are the students of VORTEX: Alexander Carter, Daniel Closser, Robby Hill, Orion Phillips, Lucas Polson, Kevin Rilling, Ian Shaw, Tarique Shotwell, Shelby Flowers, Valerie Hsu, Revanth Sanne, Olivia Smith, Rami Grossman and Daniel Corona.

None of this would be possible without the support of the John Cage Trust, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, the Other Minds Archive in San Francisco,

and the scholarly assistance of Holling Smith-Borne, director of the Anne Potter Wilson Music Library.

The project is funded by a Curb Creative Campus Initiative Grant with additional support from Mark Wait, dean, Blair School of Music; Frank Wcislo, dean of The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons at Vanderbilt; Sandra Stahl, Office of the Dean of Students; and JoEl Logiudice, Office of Creative Engagement. Admission is free.

Planned events include:

Thursday, March 29, at 3 p.m., Turner Recital Hall

A panel featuring Merce Cunningham Dance Company Assistant Director of Choreography Jennifer Goggans with Blair's Michael Slayton, Joy Calico and Michael Holland in a discussion on form, composition and creativity in the collaborative works of John Cage and Merce Cunningham.

March 29 and 30

Master classes in Cunningham movement with Jennifer Goggans

Sunday, April 1, 1:30-5 p.m., Blair Choral Rehearsal Hall

Mini-Cage symposium organized by Joy Calico, associate professor of musicology, showcasing Cage's work in various media (music, performance art and film). It features musicologist David W. Patterson, performance artist Amelia Winger-Bearskin, assistant professor of art, and Jonathan Rattner, assistant professor of film studies, who will screen and discuss some of Cage's avant-garde film projects.

Sunday, April 1, Ingram Hall

7:00 p.m. *Cage Musicircus* in Ingram Lobby and Plaza

7:40 p.m. Pre-concert talk with Professor Robert Fry

8:00 p.m. Blair Percussion VORTEX celebrates John Cage with former dancers of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, plus Company Rose with Marsha Barsky and Erin Law, choreographers

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Alumni
Association

The Blair School of Music thanks

The Hutton Hotel

for its generous support of music education and performance by providing accommodations for this year’s guest artists, including:

Audra McDonald and Andy Einhorn

Kim Kashkashian and Lydia Artymiw

Thomas Hampson and Craig Rutenberg

and five former members of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company



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TOMMY LAWSON

Longtime patron of the Blair School and for 16 years chairman of Blair's KeyBoard, Martha Rivers Ingram was honored with a concert celebrating her affiliation with Blair in September at Ingram Hall. Pictured are Mrs. Ingram with Dean Mark Wait (left) and Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos at the reception following the concert.

Planning your legacy with Vanderbilt



Build a lasting legacy with a planned gift to the Blair School of Music. Your gift today will support student scholarships, faculty chairs and facility improvements for generations to come. Help the people who will help change the world.

Talk with your planned giving team about tax-effective options: establishing a trust, setting up a charitable gift annuity or creating a gift through your estate. Contact Linda Ray Miller in Vanderbilt's Office of Planned Giving at (615) 343-3113, (888) 758-1999 or plannedgiving@vanderbilt.edu.

vanderbilt.edu/alumni/plannedgiving



The Perfect Job

Meagan Nordmann Rhodes, BMus'09, says the perfect job “fell into my lap.”

After having a self-described “crisis moment” during her senior year that left her doubting her aspirations as an oboist, Rhodes began looking for something that combined the arts with the regular hours of an office job. After confiding her interests to Kip Bennett, chef and manager of C.T. West, the restaurant in the basement of Carmichael Towers on campus, he handed her a copy of *Nashville Arts Magazine* and asked if she would be interested in working for something like it.

“His wife had written for the first issue,” Rhodes says, “and he mentioned me to her, and she mentioned me to the editor, who called me up and said, ‘Would you like to work for us in an internship?’”

Ten days later, he offered her a paying position at the monthly magazine. Now production manager, Rhodes has worked her way up since the internship started in November 2009. On September 1, she added website maintenance



Meagan Nordmann Rhodes

to her roster of job duties after the magazine launched Art Now Nashville, a website that provides timely criticism of classical music and jazz performances, visual arts, theater, dance and

opera—something the production schedule of the printed monthly could not accommodate.

“John Pitcher, former music critic for the *Washington Post* and NPR, came up with the idea,” Rhodes says. “He had moved here and was used to fast-paced classical music criticism and there was none. Alan Valentine [CEO of the Nashville Symphony] sent him to us, and a week later we were signing the paperwork. A month later we had the site up.”

It was a crazy month for Rhodes, but the work has been worth it.

“We’ve had more than 40,000 views since September 1,” she says. “The other day I looked at it and there were 700 views in one day.”

Rhodes loves the variety in her job. “It has worked out great for me these last two years,” she says, “and every time I see Kip, I say thanks for the job!”

For more, see the Art Now Nashville website at artnownashville.com.

—Bonnie Arant Ertelt