

NEWS

THE FINE ARTS CENTER
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SPRING 2009

Director's Comments

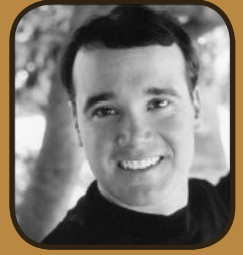
"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." Written in 1859, Dickens could have been reporting today for *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New York Times*. From my perspective, from the walks I daily take through the building, seeing the students and faculty at work, it is the best of times. The work remains astounding, the students fully engaged—mind and spirit—and the faculty continues to find new ways to challenge these extraordinary young people. But, when I sit at my desk, when I make and erase marginal notes on the budget worksheet for fiscal year 2009-2010, trying to make things add up, when I trouble over the lower figures to be met, when I sit with the faculty and, together, we search for places where we can find another dollar or two so that we can meet our share of the budget cut, so we can protect our students and our studios, it is the worst of times.



There is very little money for supplies next year and, for an art school that consumes supplies like some ravenous, though happy, beast, that consumption could affect our students' ability to compete for scholarship dollars when they graduate. We can't have that; as parents, you can't have that. We must find a way, even a small way, to begin to deal with this financial problem. So, we've come up with a plan: a plan we'd like your comments on, for, after all, you, too, are part of this equation, just as much as our faculty and staff. In the 20 years I have served as Director of The Fine Arts Center, we have never charged for a performance. Oh, we have asked for donations at some of our theatre performances and, sad to say, the response, more often than not, has been less than gratifying. Well, now, in these awkward times, in these times when all of us are being careful at the pump and in the grocery store, I am proposing that, beginning in the Fall of 2009, we start charging for our performances—\$5 for adults and \$2 for students. (Fine Arts Center students would be free.) That means that if you have a student in one of our performance areas you would now pay to see them in recital. And, in paying to see them, you make a contribution to the continued excellence of the entire school. Your dollars would not only be helping the performance programs, they would be distributed across the school, helping to buy supplies for those programs that need them, giving all of our students the opportunity to succeed. Obviously, we will continue to be on the lookout for grants, and we will continue to seek corporate and foundation support. However, there must be a reliable source of basic funding, and we believe this plan is a start. We can make these worst of times the best of times for our students.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray".

- Countertenor **John Gaston** recently sang the title role in Philip Glass's *Akhnaten* with the Atlanta Opera.
- **Anna Barton**, '06 Visual Arts alum, will be studying International Trade at the Universidad Blas Plascal in Cordoba, Argentina for the next six months. Anna is a junior at Clemson.



John Gaston

C R E A T I V E W R I T I N G

Sarah Blackman, creative writing instructor, was solicited to contribute to and has a short story, entitled "We Can Be Jack and Sally," forthcoming in *3:AM Magazine*, an internationally edited online magazine. She also traveled to Chicago in February to take part in the annual Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference.

In November, Creative Writing students hosted and performed in a slam—a spoken word poetry competition—hosted by R3V3RB. The event was a fundraiser for the FAC creative writing program with all proceeds going to buy books to update the school's library. Young poets and writers from all over the Greenville area performed their original pieces for a panel of working professionals in the field and an audience of over seventy friends, family members and other Greenville residents. Fine Arts Center student **Nina Raheja** was awarded the grand prize—a night at R3V3RB to host her own cultural event—and FAC freshman **Kevin Emery** walked away with second prize—a collection of gift certificates generously donated by area merchants and totaling \$180 in value. Students were also on hand to man the refreshments table and write poetry-on-demand for interested audience members, some larger pieces of which will be delivered in the Spring. Over \$300 was raised to support the Fine Arts Center students and the creative writing program.

Senior **Nina Raheja** spent a week in Miami in January participating in the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts YoungArts Week. Ms. Raheja was a part of a weeklong series of workshops, panels, readings and performances involving talented youth in a wide variety of artistic genres from around the nation. Upon her return to South Carolina, she was awarded a second level prize in poetry from the NFAA, which amounts to \$1,500. Nina has decided to put that money aside in a separate bank account and use it to fund her participation in further writing contests and conferences.

Madeline Elledge, a senior in the afternoon class in Creative Writing, was awarded second place in the South Carolina Young Poet's Prize, a contest sponsored by the South Carolina Poetry Initiative founded by nationally recognized poet Kwame Dawes. The judge, Susan Meyers, author of *Keep and Give Away* from the University of South Carolina Press, said of Elledge's poem, "'The Barrel Maker' is a poem full of leaps and implications that enhance its mystery. It is grounded by particulars and enlarged by ambiguities; its voice is sure and confident. As images and statements accumulate, the mystery abides as much in what is not said as what is." **Geoffrey Billetter**, a junior, was awarded Honorable Mention in the same competition for his poem "The First Rule of Sales," which Meyers described as "relying on strong rhythm and a conversational, street-wise voice to tell its chilling story. With minimal description the poem uses dialogue to carry both story and emotion. The ending is pure understatement." Elledge and Billetter were awarded a \$50 and \$25 prize, respectively.

Afternoon Creative Writing students **Geoffrey Billetter**, **Jana Wilson** and **Nina Raheja** have also published their poems online at the Small Press Distribution site. All three students took part in the Poetry Trading Post, an initiative developed by the organization's New Lit Generation project which allowed writers from all over the world to trade an original piece of poetry for a book of their choosing from SPD's archive. Geoffrey, Jana and Nina's poems can be found at www.spdbooks.org

M E T A L S

The Metals Department was pleased to host visiting artists **Corey Ackelmire** and **Nathan Dube**, a married team of metalsmiths originally from Missouri and Texas and now in Ohio teaching at the University of Akron and Kent State University. During their three-day visit, each artist presented an artist lecture, demonstrated one technique for the visual art students, and finally juried the 2009 National Juried High School Metals Exhibition. The best metalwork from high schools across the country, including work from the Fine Arts Center and Governor's School, will be on display in the Sheffield Wood Gallery from February 20 to March 20.



Corey Ackelmire demonstrates sinking a bowl. Here she is planishing the surface, which means smoothing out lumps with light blows from a polished hammer. Elizabeth Seward (right) is a senior at Riverside and a morning metals student at the FAC. Said another student, Jena Heaton, who watched the demonstration, "It was so cool to see how a flat sheet of metal became a more complex shape."

T H E A T R E

Under the direction of **Shannon Robert**, the Advanced Theatre Ensemble successfully completed its run of the mythical compilation, *Metamorphoses*. The show drew and satisfied crowds for all of its performances, measuring the extent of Shannon's wonderful direction. While the class welcomes back **Teri Parker Lewis** from maternity leave, losing Shannon was anything but easy. The ensemble's next performance is March 26. The members will be presenting scenes from contemporary plays and commedia dell'arte.



The Peace Center Sponsors Dance Events at the Fine Arts Center

The Peace Center for the Performing Arts commissioned dancers **Brian McGinnis** and **Kate Skarpetowska** to create an original work of choreography and to be in residence for three weeks in Greenville. The Artist-in-Residence Dance Program, titled "The Big Leap 2009," is underwritten by The Peace Center as part of its goal to support high quality dance education and expand the understanding of dance to new audiences. Throughout the residency, FAC dancers were able to take advantage of a variety of dance classes open to the public with both Brian and Kate, who just completed their international tour with the renowned Lar Lubovitch Dance Company. In addition, many Big Leap Outreach events are taking place at the FAC. Brian and Kate performed two lecture-demonstrations at the Fine Arts Center for the student body and one for the ARMES students after school. Skarpetowska, a Juilliard graduate who has also performed with David Parsons and Battleworks, taught a master class to both the morning and the afternoon dance students at the Fine Arts Center during the first week of their residency. The Fine Arts Center dance students were fortunate to observe an open rehearsal as Brian and Kate delved into the choreographic process of their new work, "Romeo and Juliet — A Death Marked Love," which will premiere March 2 in the Gunter Theatre.



Photo by Chris Roesing



Photo by Sharen Bradford

District Dance Showcase 2009

Brian McGinnis has been a guest artist at the Fine Arts Center for three years, and all of us have been impressed with his impeccable artistry. His original choreography, "Sirens and the Undercurrent," which he created on all of the students the first week of school, was performed in the District Dance Showcase on February 8. Fine Arts Center dancers also performed a reconstructed piece of choreography, "Drifting," by Lisa Wheeler.

Sponsors for the event were Greenville County Schools, The Peace Center for the Performing Arts and Renée Carolla Photography.

Also performed in the District Dance Showcase were pieces choreographed by **Lauren Miller** (Dance III Honors) for the Dance II ARMES class and by **Jennifer Becker** (Dance 2006) for the Dance III ARMES class. Jennifer is a junior majoring in dance at Columbia College.



Kate Skarpetowska and dancers



Lauren Miller, Amanda Porter, Maggie Base in "Sirens and the Undercurrent" choreographed by Brian McGinnis



Lauren Miller, Maggie Base in "Drifting" choreographed by Lisa Wheeler

Photos by Renée Carolla

Anna Jordan, a graduate of NYU with a degree in dance, will be creating a piece of choreography for the morning dance students in March. Most of the fee for the guest artist will be paid from money raised by their bake sales.

The afternoon dancers had a ballet master class on December 9th with **Vladislav Soldatenko**, the Artistic Director and Ballet Master of the Dance Department of the Ukrainian National Academy of Dance. The International Ballet in Greenville brought Mr. Soldatenko and several dancers from the Ukraine as part of their exchange program and generously sponsored the master class.

Dance students **Ashley Becking, Ashley Brown, Allison Leisgang, Jill Leisgang** and **Lauren Miller** were inducted into the National Honor Society for Dance Arts on February 8. The primary mission of the National Honor Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA) is to promote and honor outstanding dance achievement and to encourage well-rounded dance artists to become leaders in their communities after high school graduation.

All of the dancers are taking a field trip to see the POP! performance of *Pilobolus* at The Peace Center for the Performing Arts. The modern dance company has been featured in several television commercials and on stage during the 2007 Academy Awards.

Keep Them Dancing

ARMES Dancers Need Your Help!

Due to budget cuts at the State level, the ARMES Dance Program is in jeopardy: there just isn't any money to pay our teacher, Jeana Nitsche. Simply, we need \$9,000 to continue the program. The Fine Arts Center has already raised \$3,000 and will continue to seek more funding. This is a difficult time for all of us, but please send whatever you can to The Fine Arts Center Foundation at 102 Pine Knoll Drive, Greenville, SC, 29609.

Let's keep these talented young dancers dancing!

ARMES Program "Keep Them Dancing" Donation Form

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Amount: _____

Please make checks payable to "The Fine Arts Center Foundation." Thank you. A receipt will be mailed to you for tax purposes.

Fine Arts Center Foundation; 102 Pine Knoll Drive; Greenville, SC 29609

Sarah Rogers has been named the winner of the SC All-State Orchestra concerto competition. She will perform Wieniawski's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D minor with the All-State Senior Honors Orchestra. Twenty-three strings students from the Fine Arts Center won positions in the orchestra, including **Kevin Tompkins** as concertmaster, **Anna Catherine Bowden** as principal viola, and **Samuel Johnson** as assistant principal cello. Freshman violist Preston Barbare won the assistant principal position in the Senior Orchestra. The 23 students from the Fine Arts Center comprise the largest group from any high school in the state. The concert will be performed Sunday, March 1, at 2:00 pm, in Twichell Auditorium at Converse College in Spartanburg.



In January, soprano **Lexi Aimé** won first place in the state division of the Classical Singer competition. Accompanied by FAC voice instructor Michael Rice, she sang music by Gaetano Donizetti and John Duke. She will advance to the national finals in Chicago on May 30.

Brass and percussion students from the Fine Arts Center auditioning for the Region I and All-State Band Festival all earned chairs in their respective sections:

REGION I CLINIC BAND (GRADES 9 & 10)

Trumpet: **Kerry Whatley** (Eastside HS)

Mallets: **Nathan Colbert** (WHHS)

ALL-STATE CLINIC BAND (GRADES 9 & 10)

Timpani: **Wesley Strasser** (Eastside HS)

REGION I SENIOR BAND (GRADES 11 & 12)

Horn: **Jay Belanger** (WHHS)

Tuba: **Eric Spivey** (Berea HS)

Snare Drum: **Moses Andrews** (JL Mann HS)

ALL-STATE SENIOR BAND (GRADES 11 & 12)

Horn: **John Belanger** (home school)

Students participating in the Region I band festival rehearse and perform with other outstanding students from the Upstate region on February 27 & 28 at Furman University. Students passing the rigorous auditions for South Carolina's All-State Band participate in its festival on March 13, 14 and 15, also at Furman University.

Fine Arts Center students also fared well in the recent All-County Band auditions. Musicians earning chairs included **Merritt Huff** (flute, Riverside HS), **John Belanger**, **Jay Belanger**, **Nathan Colbert**, **Kerry Whatley** and **Eric Spivey**. The All-County Band Clinic will be held at JL Mann High School March 2 and 3.



*All State Clinic Band Timpanist
Wesley Strasser*

GREENVILLE COUNTY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Greenville County Youth Orchestra's "Young Artist Orchestra" teamed up with members of the Greenville Symphony Orchestra for their annual "Shoulder-to-Shoulder" concert on January 29. Led by Fine Arts Center faculty member and YAO Music Director Dr. Gary Auguste Robinson, the concert was staged at the Peace Center for the Performing Arts' Dorothy Gunter Theater.

"Shoulder-to-Shoulder" combined the Young Artist Orchestra with twenty members of the Greenville Symphony Orchestra, who were engaged and organized by the GSO's Education Coordinator, Dr. Braxton Bellew. The combined ensemble joined for two rehearsals and then the Thursday night concert, which featured a compelling performance of Antonín Dvořák's Symphony No. 8 in G, Opus 88 and Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor, Opus 16. Turning out a commanding and expressive performance, YAO Principal Violist Lydia Minnick (home school) served as piano soloist for the Grieg.

"Shoulder-to-Shoulder" has changed over its many years, but its intent has remained constant. It began as a single concert that combined students and professionals and then, for a number of years, became a project in which selected students participated in each GSO masterworks concert. Still later, equal numbers of student and professional musicians were paired for a special January concert. Currently, however, the Young Artist Orchestra has been given the responsibility of carrying its own concert while a team of pros is brought in to model the music and to mentor the students. The role of the professionals, however, has always been to educate, encourage, and inspire, which was carried out ably by Dr. Bellew's exceptional recruits.



The Greenville County Youth Orchestra is now accepting audition applications for the 2009-2010 season for both its Young Artist Orchestra and the Philharmonic. To learn about the audition requirements and to complete the application form on-line, go to www.gcyo.net and click on the audition link at the bottom of the Membership area.

For more information, contact Jeff Purtle at (864) 292-3532. Auditions will be held by appointment March 6, March 7 and April 18.

The GCYO Young Artist Orchestra is comprised of the finest, most gifted and talented high school musicians in the upstate. They perform three concerts each year at the Peace Center's Dorothy Gunter Theatre and receive one full honors level credit through the Greenville County School District. Weekly rehearsals are on Tuesdays from 6:30 to 9:30 at the Fine Arts Center.

The Philharmonic is comprised of both middle and high school musicians who display exceptional ability. They perform in three concerts each year. High school age Philharmonic members receive ½ honors level credit. The Philharmonic rehearses on Tuesday afternoons from 4:30 to 6:00 also at the Fine Arts Center.

Students are strongly encouraged to apply early, schedule an audition time and take time to prepare for the audition.

February 20-March 20
National Metals Juried Show, Gallery

March 11 at 7:30 pm
PM Jazz Concert, Recital Hall

March 13 at 7:30 pm
Strings Chamber Music Concert, Recital Hall

March 15 at 2:00 pm
ARMES Chamber Concert, Recital Hall

March 23 at 7:00 pm
Creative Writing Senior Reading, Handlebar

March 24
End 3rd Marking Period

March 26 at 7:00 pm
Theatre Performance, Black Box Theatre

March 27-April 23
Generation to Generation Show, Gallery

March 28 at 9:00 am
Hand and Heart

March 29 at 3:00 pm
ARMES Chamber Concert, Recital Hall

April 14 at 7:30 pm
Young Artist Orchestra Concert, Gunter Theatre

April 17 at 7:30 pm
Strings Chamber Music Concert, Recital Hall

April 23 at 6:00 pm
Generation to Generation, Reception

April 26 at 2:00 pm
ARMES Chamber Concert, Recital Hall

April 27 at 7:00 pm
Theatre Performance, Black Box Theatre

May 1-29
FAC Juried Student Show, Gallery

May 1 at 7:00 pm
Theatre Performance, Black Box Theatre

May 6 at 7:30 pm
AM Jazz Concert, Recital Hall

May 7 at 6:30 pm
Voice Concert, Recital Hall

May 8 at 7:00 pm
Dance Recital, Recital Hall

May 10 at 2:00 pm
ARMES Chamber Concert, WHHS

May 12 at 7:30 pm
PM Jazz Concert, Recital Hall

May 13 at 7:30 pm
Brass/Winds/Percussion Recital, Recital Hall

May 14 at 7:30 pm
Strings Chamber Music Concert, Recital Hall

May 15 at 9:15 & 1:15
Showcases

May 15 from 8:00-11:00 pm
Anti-Prom

May 15
Last Day for Seniors

May 17 at 2:00 pm
Awards Day, Black Box Theatre

May 21 at 7:30 pm
Graduation, WHHS

May 22
Last Day for Underclassmen

May 29 at 7:30 pm
Film/Video Screening, Recital Hall

June 4
End 4th Marking Period



**GREENVILLE COUNTY
 SCHOOLS**
Where enlightening strikes.

The School District of Greenville County
 Dr. Phinnize Fisher, Superintendent

Fine Arts Center
 Dr. Roy S. Fluhrer, Director
 102 Pine Knoll Drive
 Greenville, SC 29609

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