To see my notes leap off the page into her feet, hands, body and face— it has been unbelievable.

Running from late March through June at the Fine Arts Gallery are works by New York artist Lesley Dill. A Word Made Flesh features large-scale, photo-based tapestries, merging images of the human body with poetry by the 19th-century American poet Emily Dickinson literally drawn on the figures themselves.

Paranirvana (Self-Portrait) by San Francisco State University professor Lewis DeSoto reclined at the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery during February and March. The 26-foot-long, air-filled, fan-inflated sculpture was inspired by a well-known statue of Buddha at Gal Vihara in Sri Lanka, but in this sculpture the artist replaced the face of Buddha with his own, thereby portraying both himself and the reclining Buddha at the moment of death and supreme consciousness.

Summer Reading: Artists’ Books from Nashville Collections presents a number of artist-made books, some illustrating important works of literature, others that are distinct, independent works of art at Sarratt Art Gallery, June 16–Aug. 2.

The John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development recently added four works by Laura McNellis to its permanent art collection. McNellis, a Nashville native with developmental disabilities and autism, was introduced to artists of the Riddle Institute in North Carolina five years ago when their show traveled to the Kennedy Center. That connection led her to move to North Carolina where she now works full time as a painter and sculptor. Since 1992 McNellis has been represented by the Ricco/Maresca Gallery in New York City.

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ACCOLADES

Michael Aurbach, professor of art, reprised his exhibit “The Administrator” in February at Belmont University’s Leu Gallery of Art. First seen in spring 2001 as the inaugural exhibit at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville, Aurbach’s consummately crafted piece uses hidden symbols to poke fun at small-minded people in positions of power.

Professor of Art and Art History, Emeritus, Don Evans celebrated his 64th birthday with an exhibit titled “Be One of These” at Ruby Green Contemporary Arts Center in Nashville through March and April. Evans, who is famous for his doodles, enlarged a number of these drawings—some done during “boring faculty meetings”—transferred them to plywood, cut them out, added color, and hung them from the Ruby Green ceiling suspended by fishing line. For the opening, he invited participants to come as their favorite doodle.

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The Blair String Quartet joined the concert to perform Charles Ives’s First Quartet.

Early this semester, numerous master classes brought some of the nation’s best musicians to teach students and community members at the Blair School. In January, Paul Kantor, chair of the string department at the University of Michigan and a member of the artist-faculty at Aspen, conducted a violin master class, and Roberto Diaz, principal violist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted a viola master class. In February, Blair was visited by the trumpet/guitar duo Spanish Blue whose members, trumpeter Richard Carson Steuart and guitarist Christian Reichert, taught for the Del Shawey Endowment Artist Concert and Master Class. Just a few days later, the Baltimore Consort, a six-member ensemble specializing in popular music of the 16th to 18th centuries, shared their expertise, while internationally acclaimed pianist Emanuel Ax, in town to perform with the Nashville Symphony, closed out the month.

Emergence!, a collaboration between the Blair School of Music and the Nashville Ballet, featured new music by Blair faculty Michael Alec Rose and Stan Link, and traditional Celtic music newly arranged by Crystal Plohman, director of Blair’s fiddle program. The mid-March performances marked the most extensive collaboration yet between the Blair School and a local arts group. Rose’s music for Night of the Iguana, based on the Tennessee Williams short story and choreographed by Nashville Ballet artistic director Paul Vasterling, was rhythmically complex, composed only after Vasterling’s request to present a program, “Emergence!,” in which Rose and choreographer Paul Vasterling emerged with a new take on Tennessee Williams’s short story “Night of the Iguana.”

Rose had seen the dancers rehearsing it in silence. Link’s music, entitled LAPsDANCE, for Robert Philander-Valentine’s abstract piece Promediitated, was described by the composer as “Stravinsky played on a two-dimensional piano.”

Michael Alec Rose, associate professor of composition, Blair School of Music

In mid-March 2003, Michael Rose witnessed his original classical score interpreted in a way few composers ever experience—by a troupe of professional ballet dancers. The Nashville Ballet and the Blair School of Music joined in a first-time collaboration to present a program, “Emergence!” in which Rose and choreographer Paul Vasterling emerged with a new take on Tennessee Williams’s short story “Night of the Iguana.”

You’ve said that initially you weren’t sure you were the right composer for this piece. Why not?

A: That’s OK; his choreography wasn’t what I was expecting, either. He was expecting something more regional, more southern, in sound; I was trying to capture something universal. This is a story of mythic consequence. The music seemed to me to be stretching beyond the Mason-Dixon Line.

Q: What was your reaction when you first saw the dancers perform to your score?

A: I was at rehearsal for three days, and I was just crying. These are all great dancers. Jennifer McNamara (the lead ballerina) is a celestial being. I’ve never seen anything like what she does with my music and Paul’s choreography. It’s astonishing. To see my notes leap off the page into her feet, hands, body and face—it has been unbelievable.

—Lisa Dulius
THE ARTS & CULTURE

Wife, who has stripped a room in a featureless cell, beside his American hostage, held captive tensions and self-centered In April, VUT presented Lee York Drama Circle Award for the Tony Award and the New Shakespeare comedy won both Guare ("The House of Blue lyrics by playwright John Galt MacDermot ("Hair") and motives for war. With music by musical adaptation of the Shakespeare play: The happy coming-of-age story celebrates sprung and its promise of love with a satirical undercurrent involving the government’s sometimes less-than-pure motives for war. With music by Galt MacDermot ("Hair") and lyrics by playwright John Guare ("The House of Blue

HUMANITIES:

As part of this year’s Brain Awareness 2003 events on campus, Robert Zatorre of the Montreal Neurological Institute at McGill University presented a lecture on how the human brain perceives, understands, remembers and imagines music in "Music and the Brain" at the Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall. The event was co-sponsored by the Vanderbilt Department of Psychology, the Blair School of Music, and the Vanderbilt Brain Institute.

In April, Kanan Makiya, professor of near eastern studies at Brandeis University, presented a lecture on the United States and Post-Saddam Iraq as part of the "Understanding the Middle East" lecture series sponsored by the Robert Penn war. His vision of modern dance, theater and kinetic storytelling. In April, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, an all-male comic ballet troupe, dazzled the audience at Ingram Hall with its unusual spin on such traditional masterpieces of classical ballet as "Swan Lake" and "The Dying Swan" by combining technical virtuosity, parody, and the wearing of women’s clothing.

Two very different dance companies graced the stage in Vanderbilt’s Great Performances Series this spring. Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, performing in Langford Auditorium in mid-February, had as its mission to "focus on developing African contemporary dance and to discuss" issues of race, class, gender and assimilation through Brown’s vision of modern dance, theater and kinetic storytelling. In April, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, an all-male comic ballet troupe, dazzled the audience at Ingram Hall with its unusual spin on such traditional masterpieces of classical ballet as "Swan Lake" and "The Dying Swan" by combining technical virtuosity, parody, and the wearing of women’s clothing.

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"A Letter to Harvey Milk," a one-man show about a week in the life of Harvey Weinberg, a widower and Holocaust survivor living in San Francisco, was performed at the Ben Schulman Center for Jewish Life at Vanderbilt in late March by local actor Yaron Schweizer. The humorous play, told through the voice of a 77-year-old man, examines questions of personal identity for a young woman trying to reconcile being lesbian and Jewish.

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