**VISUAL ARTS:**

Creative Expressions VIII, shown October through December at the John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development, was the 21st show of artists with disabilities organized by the Nashville Mayor’s Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities. Featuring work by artists with a wide range of disabilities and ages and in a variety of media, the exhibit was one in a series of exhibits organized by the Nashville Mayor’s Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities.

Elizabeth Garlington, studio arts manager for Sarratt Student Center and first-year Divinity School student, showed narrative art quilts inspired by ethnic motifs in textile patterns and design. Her work combines stories, images and narratives from her own life with “forms where the final product is unplanned and evolves with the intuitive handling of materials.”

The Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery launched its exhibit year with The George and Helen Spelvin Folk Art Collection by Beauregard Lyons, professor of art at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. A continuation of Lyons’ critique of museology and the authority of the curatorial “voice” found within the contemporary museum, The Spelvin Folk Art Collection called into question issues surrounding folk and outsider art, namely “the mythism of folk art as based on a Romantic concept of creativity that is essentially anti-intellectual.” Lyons acted as “curator” of this fictitious collection—which he created—including biographical information on each of the “collectors” and “artists,” creating a remarkable and curious foray into the nature of the creative process.

The Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery

**ACCOLADES**

Soy la Avon Lady and Other Stories by Lorraine López (Curbstone)

“Assimilation into American culture and abrasive family dynamics are the subjects of the 11 finely crafted stories gathered in this striking debut collection. López is an original, and this fine collection, which won its publisher’s inaugural Miguel Marmol Prize for fiction, is a thoroughgoing delight.” —KIRKUS REVIEWS

Exploring the Chicano/a quest for identity in a culture characterized by great differences in language, race, class and gender, the stories in Soy la Avon Lady deal with a wide range of characters, and López’s vision ranges from the tragic to the comic.

**Q&A**

**When did you start writing?**

A: I think I was 8 years old when I wrote my first story. It was the first thing I ever did that totally absorbed my attention and I had no awareness of time passing. I thought this is what I wanted to do, but I didn’t know at 8 that a person could do that until a student teacher told me, “You could be a writer.”

**How do you see comedy and tragedy working together in your stories?**

A: I don’t sit down and say, “I’m going to write a tragic or comic story. It’s a case of the tragic and comedy, both are strength points in my approach. I write stories that are both, but I don’t know at the moment what the story will be.”

**Assimilation into American culture and abrasive family dynamics are the subjects of the 11 finely crafted stories gathered in this striking debut collection. López is an original, and this fine collection, which won its publisher’s inaugural Miguel Marmol Prize for fiction, is a thoroughgoing delight.” —KIRKUS REVIEWS**

**Books & Writers:**

Vanderbilt was well represented at the 14th annual Southern Festival of Books, Nashville’s celebration of the written word, presented by Humanities Tennessee. Faculty, alumni and students took part in panel discussions, readings, book signings and musical performances. Those involved included faculty members Kate Daniels, Thadious Davis, Tony Earley, James Ely, Sen. William Frist, Mark Ierman, Sheila Smith McGoy, Dorothy Marcic, Helmut Walser Smith, Carol Swain and Susan Ford Wiltshire; alumni Catherine Crawley, Elizabeth Dewberry, Walter Durham, Greg Miller, John Perry and Kendall Taylor; and current Blair student Charles Charlton.

**The Butcher’s Tale** (Norton) by Helmut Walser Smith, associate professor of history, tells the story of Konitz, a small town in the eastern reaches of the German Empire, where in 1900 a Christian boy was found brutally dismembered. Within weeks the town was engulfed in violent anti-Semitic riots and demonstrations. The Butcher’s Tale places the accusations, and the ensuing maelstrom of violence, under a microscope.

**Lorraine López, assistant professor of English, winner of the 2002 Marmol Prize for Latina/o Fiction for her short-story collection, Soy la Avon Lady and Other Stories**

A: When did you start writing?

A: I think I was 8 years old when I wrote my first story. It was the first thing I ever did that totally absorbed my attention and I had no awareness of time passing. I thought this is what I wanted to do, but I didn’t know at 8 that a person could do that until a student teacher told me, “You could be a writer.”

Q: How do you see comedy and tragedy working together in your stories?

A: I don’t sit down and say, “I’m going to write a tragic or comic story. It’s a case of the story telling itself—I’m just opening to it. But I do think that when you pair comedy and tragedy, both are strengthened, both are intensified.

Q: You’ve spent a fair amount of time in the South, where there is a strong penchant for storytelling. Has being in the South affected the way you tell stories?

A: Yes, it has. I would classify Soy la Avon Lady as very heavily southern influenced. They take place in Georgia, and Georgia is such a beautiful state, a fertile place, a good place for my imagination to take root and expand. It’s a great experience whenever you can dislocate yourself. Your senses come alive because of the newness.

Q: Which do you prefer writing: novels or short stories?

A: I enjoy the challenge of writing short stories. My writing group and my past professors have commented that I seem to be a novelist in my approach—that when a short story ends, they thought it would go on. But someone once said that a novel is an evolution and a short story is a revelation, and finding that revelation—I’m addicted to it. I want to do it right, and it’s so hard.
Edgar Meyer, adjunct associate professor of bass and award-winning musician and composer noted for his innovative blending of musical styles, was named a MacArthur Fellow on Sept. 25. More commonly known as “genius grants,” the fellowships are awarded annually by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to “individuals who show exceptional merit and promise for continued and enhanced creative work.” Each recipient receives $500,000 in “no-strings-attached” support over five years. In a news release announcing Meyer as one of 24 individuals to receive this year’s awards, the MacArthur Foundation called Meyer “a multifaceted musician whose expansive artistry is altering the way string instruments are played” and who is “equally comfortable in jazz, folk, country and classical styles.” Through this amalgamation of genres, “Meyer is crafting a uniquely American lexicon for symphony orchestras and chamber ensembles.”

Grammy, Emmy and Academy Award-winning songwriter, composer and musician Randy Newman was the first guest in the Blair School’s 2002–03 Conversations Series in November. From popular hit singles to film scores, including the award-winning “Monsters Inc.,” “Toy Story,” “Parenthood” and “Ragtime,” Newman’s work is eclectic and widely acclaimed. Moderated by Deanna Walker, adjunct artist teacher of piano, Newman’s appearance at the Blair School was in conjunction with performances with the Nashville Symphony.

Eleven current and former Blair faculty members including Dean Mark Wait, Amy Dorfman, Ruth Gotthardt Stith, Enid Katalin, Karen Ann Krieger, Craig Nies, Jama Reagan, Melissa Rose, Roland Schneller, Rached Short and Charlene Harb took part in the Nashville Symphony’s Piano Spectacular! during October. Ultimately, eight pianos and eight pianists took the stage as pianos were added to each piece. Wait was soloist in Elliott Carter’s seldom-heard Piano Concerto, and opening the program was the premier of Concertino for Celesta and Orchestra by Michael Kureck, associate professor of composition at Blair.

The third and fourth concerts in the Blair School of Music’s Beethoven Sonata Series took place in September and early January featuring faculty members Craig Nies (piano), Cornelia Heard, Christian Teal, and Carolyn Huché (violins), and Felix Wang (cello). The series has journeyed through the charm and virtuosity of Beethoven’s early violin sonatas to the surging power and drama of his late works. The fifth and final concert in the two-year series will take place in Ingram Hall on March 28.

In October one of the world’s finest ensembles, the Emerson String Quartet, entitled the Langford Auditorium audience with their interpretations of Haydn, Bartók and Schubert as part of the Great Performances at Vanderbilt series.

Internationally acclaimed soprano Dawn Upshaw, born at Vanderbilt Hospital, made her way back to native ground in early September for a sold-out performance at Ingram Hall and a master class at the Blair School of Music. Students and faculty alike were taken with her range of expression, and her remarkable ability to communicate meaning regardless of the language of the text. The evening consisted of challenging but beautiful music—songs by Shakespeare contemporary John Dowland, Debussy’s Songs of Bilitis, Russian songs by Rachmaninoff and Mussorgsky, a piece by South American-born Osvaldo Golijov, and a set by American popular song composer Vernon Duke. The next day’s master class included four students chosen by audition for the honor of performing for Upshaw, whose teaching was as inspiring as her performing. The students were Christopher Mann, tenor; Lillian Askew, soprano; Zachary Nadowski, baritone; and Jennifer Berkebile, mezzo-soprano.

Senior Courtney Dashe received honorable mention in the National John Lennon Songwriting Contest. At a reception in BMI’s New York office in May, Dashe received a $500 scholarship for her country/pop song “You Must Have Found a Reason.” A California native, Dashe says, “Nashville has given me the resources to strengthen my songwriting and vocal performing skills.”

“You Must Have Found a Reason,” a California native, Dashe was named a finalist in the National John Lennon Songwriting Contest. At a reception in BMI’s New York office on May, Dashe received a $500 scholarship for her country/pop song “You Must Have Found a Reason.” A California native, Dashe says, “Nashville has given me the resources to strengthen my songwriting and vocal performing skills.”

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A Dybbuk

THEATER:
Presented in conjunction with the celebration of the opening of the Ben Schuman Center for Jewish Life in early October, Vanderbilt University Theatre presented “A Dybbuk or Between Two Worlds,” written by S. Ansky and adapted by Tony Kushner. Regarded as a cornerstone of Yiddish drama, the turn-of-the-century tale of a bride’s spiritual possession by her deceased true love projected the preeminent oral history of the Holocaust—was keynote speaker for the silver anniversary and also was part of the Chancellor’s Lecture Series. “A Dybbuk or Between Two Worlds” was performed by Vanderbilt University Theatre, and a week of events dedicated to the opening of the Ben Schuman Center for Jewish Life was held on campus.

In October at Wilson Hall, pioneering public art administrator Jerry Allen, director of cultural affairs for the city of San Jose, Calif., addressed current trends in public art at the Public Art Forum, a series of talks and discussions sponsored by the Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission, Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery, Vanderbilt University Medical Center Office of Cultural Enrichment, the Visual Arts Alliance of Nashville (VAAN), and the Frist Center for the Visual Arts.

In November a passel of pirates invaded Ingram Hall as the Vanderbilt Opera Theatre, with music by the Vanderbilt University Orchestra, performed “The Pirates of Penzance,” Gilbert and Sullivan’s parody of public morality in which a band of pirates proves to be more honest than so-called “respectable people.”

In November, VUT presented “Racing Demon,” directed by Jerry Allen, which accompanied the exhibition “The Golden Mean,” which accompanied the exhibition James McNeill Whistler: Prosaic Views, Poetic Vision at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville through the beginning of the year, and work “Box of Hot Ideas” was acquired by the Huntsville (Ala.) Museum of Art for its permanent collection. In January at the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery, John Powers, BA’01, winner of the 2001 Margaret Stonewall Woodridge Hamblet Award, showed sculpture inspired by his travels in Western Europe and studies at North Carolina’s Penland School of Arts and Crafts.


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THE ARTS & CULTURE
PHILLIP FRANCK

Jewish Life in early October, Presented in conjunction with THEATER: Between Two Worlds,” playwriting awards. winner of four major British nations, mainstream religious denomi—
dations. “Racing Demon,” winner of four major British

DANCE:
The Second Hand, billed as “three men who turn dance on its head,” fused dance, theater, acrobatics and humor at Langford Auditorium in November as part of the University’s Great Performances Series. “Their hyperactive, imaginative pieces are boisterous, gymnastic and raucous, somewhere between frat-house pranks, martial arts, phys-ed class and high art,” says Dance Magazine.

Susan DeMay, senior lecturer in art and art history, displayed ceramic platters at the Messages from the Heart exhibit at the Madison (Tenn.) Arts Center last October and November.

Marilyn Murphy, professor of art, had work chosen for the 106th Annual Exhibition, Catherine Lorillard Wolfe National Arts Club in New York City during October. A hand-colored etching and a relief print were in the exhibit What’s My Line?, which accompanied the exhibition James McNeill Whistler: Prosaic Views, Poetic Vision at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville through the beginning of the year, and her work “Box of Hot Ideas” was acquired by the Huntsville (Ala.) Museum of Art for its permanent collection. In January at the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery, John Powers, BA’01, winner of the 2001 Margaret Stonewall Woodridge Hamblet Award, showed sculpture inspired by his travels in Western Europe and studies at North Carolina’s Penland School of Arts and Crafts.

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