

Fine and Performing Arts

For Alumni and Friends of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

CELEBRATING



JOHNNY CARSON

*The Carson family joins faculty, students and alumni
for the dedication of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film*

FROM THE DEAN

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings from Lincoln, Nebraska! I hope this finds you all well. I write to you in mid-June, as our season of exciting summer arts events is about to unfold here on campus. Starting this weekend with our annual Chamber Music Festival, the pace picks up towards the end to the month with our annual hosting of the International Thespian Festival and the opening of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre's 41st season, and continues in high gear into mid-August, concluding just in time to welcome everyone back for the start of another fall term.

This May our College marked the conclusion of its 15th year. Thinking back on all that has been accomplished over 15 years, I am sure you will agree that we are remarkably different in so many ways from what we were when the college was founded in 1993. So much of what we have achieved can be seen in the roles that many have played in our steady progress, and our faculty has led the way in this regard. Three of those faculty members, Professors Keith Jacobshagen from Art & Art History, Randy Snyder from the School of Music, and Tice Miller from the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film, concluded their distinguished careers at UNL this year. Together, they have contributed 110 years of service to the university and to their respective arts disciplines as teachers, scholars and creative artists. Please take an opportunity to congratulate and thank them for all that they have done.

The college's 15th year also celebrated the renaming of the Department of Theatre Arts as the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film and the dedication of the wonderful, state-of-the-art facilities that were made possible by the generosity of UNL alumnus Johnny Carson. As you will read in the pages that follow, the entire dedication weekend was a resounding success and a most enjoyable event for the entire campus.

A significant milestone also was reached this past year, in terms of an important and long-awaited addi-

tion to our array of academic programs. Just prior to the end of the spring term, the Board of Regents and the Postsecondary Coordinating Commission approved the new Master of Arts graduate program in Art History. There were many folks who deserve credit for assisting us with this endeavor over the past several years, and we thank them all. The program will be up and running with the start of the coming fall term.

We cannot speak about our accomplishments without also addressing the issue of quality, in terms of our programs, the work of our faculty, and the steady growth and success of our students. There are, of course, a variety of ways in which to document quality, but perhaps one of the most valuable of these is through the process by which our programs in the arts are accredited. In this edition's feature article, Sam Hope, executive director of the National Office for Arts Accreditation and an executive editor of Arts Education Policy Review, speaks to this point with respect to our programs here at UNL, as well as to the importance of arts accreditation in general in this age of increasing and ever-present accountability in higher education. Mr. Hope will also serve as guest speaker for the College's Annual Fall Convocation on Aug. 19.

In closing, let me express my continuing gratitude to you, our alumni and friends, for the roles that each of you has played in helping us achieve the things we have set out to do. Your contributions are highly valued, as we are indeed much richer as a college due to your generosity and thoughtfulness. Please keep us informed regarding your activities and accomplishments as it always makes us proud to celebrate and call attention to all that you are doing.



With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Giacomo M. Oliva". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature is the printed name "Giacomo M. Oliva, Endowed Dean".

Giacomo M. Oliva, Endowed Dean

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For Alumni and Friends of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Cover Photo
The Carson Family gather on the steps of the Temple Building for the Dedication of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film on Oct. 12, 2007. Photo by Kelley Hascall, UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications.
Front Row L-R: Karlyn Carson, Dick Carson

(Johnny's brother), Alex Carson (Johnny's widow), Kit Carson (Johnny's sister), Ralph Sotzing, Cory Carson (Johnny's son), Maria Carson.
Middle Row L-R: Jeff Sotzing (Johnny's nephew; Kit's son), Peggy Sotzing, Mike Sotzing (Johnny's nephew; Kit's son), Gail Sotzing, Jacki Elphinstone (Alex's niece), Ryan Elphinstone (Alex's nephew).
Back Row L-R: Chris Carson (Johnny's nephew; Dick's son), Debbie Carson, Kathy Tucker (Johnny's niece; Dick's daughter), Lindsey Tucker.

Photography
All photographs by Kathe C. Andersen except as noted

Special Thanks
UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications Dean H. Will Norton, Jr. and Professor Charlyne Berens for their guidance and collaboration on this project.

Hixson-Lied Endowment for assistance with the funding.

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Hixson-Lied graduating fellows

The third class of Hixson-Lied graduate fellows graduated this May. The three students began their careers at UNL in the fall of 2005.

The Hixson-Lied Graduate Fellowship program, created with funding from the Hixson-Lied Endowment, provides supplemental funding to the regular graduate assistantships that each academic unit awards, making them the most prestigious fellowships in the college. The supplement varies by department. Members of the graduating class of Hixson-Lied Fellows included:



Xanthe Isbister, Department of Art and Art History. Isbister received her master of fine arts in ceramics and served as the gallery assistant for the Eisentrager-Howard

Gallery. Isbister is applying for teaching positions at universities, as well as national and international artist residencies.



Cecilia Lee, School of Music. Lee received her doctor of musical arts degree in piano performance.



Anne Ruehrmund, Department of Art and Art History. Ruehrmund received her master of fine arts degree in printmaking. She plans to establish a

studio and create a body of new artwork. In the future, she plans to apply for a college teaching position. ■

Chang-Barnes is Lied Center interim director

The executive and artistic director of the Lied Center for Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Charles Bethea, announced May 12 he is retiring from the post he has held since 1997 to pursue other opportunities.

Chancellor Harvey S. Perlman has appointed Ann Chang-Barnes as interim director. She began her duties on May 19 and will serve until a permanent director is named.

Chang-Barnes, artist-in-residence as a pianist in the UNL School of Music, was a long-time member of the Lied Center's advisory board until 2007. She is also the founder of the Meadowlark Music Festival, the award-winning summer music festival.

"I am pleased that I have had the opportunity to help the Lied Center evolve into a nationally-recognized performing arts center," Bethea said. "The Lied Center staff and its programming have attracted a strong

core of patrons, and those relationships are so important to what we have been able to accomplish."

Bethea was the 2006 recipient of the Lincoln Arts Council Leadership in the Arts Award, and under his leadership, the Lied Center was named Organization of the Year in 2008 by the Nebraska Arts Council. Bethea worked to strengthen partnerships with other UNL entities, connecting the mission of the Lied Center to the academic mission of UNL through projects such as "1984 Crimethink," "Fate or Faith," and "Project X." Bethea also implemented AdventureLIED, statewide outreach programs to connect artists to new and diverse audiences. Programs within the AdventureLIED project include Arts Across Nebraska, Free at 6, and LiedFAMFEST.

Bethea will continue to serve in an advisory capacity until mid-September in order to assure a smooth transition of leadership for the center. ■

Oliva wins alumni award from NYU

Giacomo M. Oliva, the endowed dean of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, was selected to receive the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award of New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development.

The award recognizes exceptional individuals whose achievements in his or her profession, vocation, social and/or cultural endeavors are of extraordinary merit. The award is the Steinhardt's highest alumni honor.

The award was presented to Oliva at the Steinhardt's Doctoral Convocation on May 12 at the New York University Skirball Center for the Performing Arts in New York City. Oliva attended the ceremony and addressed the graduates.

Oliva received his Ed.D. in music education and administration in 1980 from New York University. He received his bachelor's degree cum laude in music

education and his master's degree in applied music (piano) from Montclair (N.J.) State College.

He taught in the New Jersey public schools for 12 years before becoming assistant professor and head of the department of music at Mississippi State University in Starkville. He was professor and director of the School of Music at the University of Florida at Gainesville from 1992-2001.

Oliva became dean of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts at UNL in July 2001. He leads the Hixson-Lied Advisory Board, which oversees the \$18 million endowment for the college, and oversaw NU alumnus Johnny Carson's \$10.3 million donation to the University of Nebraska Foundation to support the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film.

He recently completed a two-year term as president of the International Society for Music Education and is currently serving as president of the Lincoln Arts Council. ■

Student Achievements

“Temper Espresso,” written and directed by Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film junior **John Albrecht** (B.F.A.) won the Best Nebraska Short Film Award at the Omaha Film Festival in February. The film was made by the Film Production II class in March 2007.

Christopher Barrick (D.M.A.) had his proposal “‘Prez’ versus ‘Hawk’: A Cutting Contest for the Ages” accepted as a paper by the program committee for presentation at the 2008 College Music Society “Two Greats” SuperRegional Conference of the Great Lakes and Great Plains Chapters in Normal, Ill.

Sean Burton (D.M.A.) published his book review of Robert Summer’s “Choral Masterworks from Bach to Britten: Reflections of a Conductor” (published by Scarecrow Press) in the October 2007 issue of *The Choral Journal*. He published his performing edition of Franz Schubert’s “Grab und Mond for a cappella” men’s chorus with Colla Voce Music, Inc. Burton was a featured clinician for the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association’s “Young Scholars’ Conference” on Nov. 1, 2007. He was also a featured clinician for the University of Nebraska at Omaha Men’s Vocal Workshop on Oct. 25, 2007.

Jen-Kuang Chang (D.M.A.) has been awarded a two-week residency this summer at the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts in Nebraska City. His audiovisual composition “Drishti II” was accepted to the 17th annual Florida Electroacoustic Music Festival in April at the University of Florida. His multimedia work “Sahasrara” (a mixed ensemble for seven players plus electronic sound and animated visualization) was accepted for the Spark Festival of Electronic Music and Arts at the University of Minnesota Feb. 26-March 2, 2008. His composition, “The Death March of Bataan,” was performed at LaSalle University as part of their “War & Peace” Electroacoustic and Fixed Media

Festival. His “Beethoven Fifth” was performed at Lewis University and Illinois Wesleyan University in November as part of the Vox Novus 60x60 Midwest Minutes Mix 2007. His composition for 11 instrumentalists, “Chakra” has been selected to be part of ERMmedia’s new CD series, “Made in the Americas.” The recording took place this summer, and the CD will be released in September.

Autumn Cipala (M.F.A. Art) received a \$2,000 NCECA (National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) Graduate Student Fellowship. She will give a presentation of her research and work at the 2009 NCECA conference in Tempe, Az.

Erika Navarrete (M.F.A. Art) was featured in the March 2008 College Art Association News for her honorable mention selection for the 2007 CAA Fellows program. Navarrete was one of only six students out of 90 applicants nationwide to receive grants or honorable mentions through the professional development fellowship program.

Laura Sedivy’s (B.A. Dance) dance, “this is not quite the beginning,” was selected for the Gala at the Regional American College Dance Festival Association Conference in March. Only eight of 26 dances were selected, and of these, only three were student works.

Kimberly Thomas (M.F.A. Art) won the Midwest Society for Photographic Education (SPE) Graduate Student Scholarship to attend the SPE National Conference in Denver in March.

Trace Vardsveen’s (B.F.A. Film and New Media) review of Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema has been accepted for publication in the Quarterly Review of Film and Video, edited by Ryan Professor of Film Studies Wheeler Dixon. His review will appear in an issue of the publication in late 2009. ■



Jenna Higgins , recipient of the 2008 Dean’s Purchase Award, with her untitled handmade paper and wire wall sculpture.

Jenna Higgins receives Dean’s Purchase Prize

Jenna Higgins, who received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in studio art this May, was the recipient of the 2008 Dean’s Purchase Award, as well as the Jean R. Faulkner Memorial Award, in the Annual Undergraduate Studio Art Competition in February for her handmade paper and wire wall sculpture.

The show was juried by David Help, a sculptor and chairman at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Higgins is originally from Valentine, Neb. She plans to continue building her portfolio and participate in regional arts programs following graduation. ■

University Singers, Philharmonic perform at Carnegie Hall in NYC

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln School of Music’s University Singers and UNL Philharmonia Orchestra, along with Assistant Professor of Voice Kate Butler, mezzo-soprano, were featured in concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City on Jan. 20.

“We are thrilled to see this opportunity unfold for our students. Very few music venues have the iconic resonance associated with Carnegie Hall in New York City,” said School of Music Director John W. Richmond. “This concert invitation comes on the heels of so many external affirmations of the vitality and competitiveness of our School at this juncture in our history. It was great to see Big Red in the Big Apple once again.”

The University Singers are conducted by Associate Professor and Director of Choral Activities Peter Eklund. The UNL Philharmonia, the University’s Opera and Chamber Orchestra, is conducted by Associate Professor and Director of Orchestral Activities Tyler White. More than 100 students and faculty made the trip, including 60 in the University Singers and



Photo courtesy of the School of Music

The UNL Philharmonia Orchestra and University Singers onstage at Carnegie Hall in New York on Jan. 20.

40 in the UNL Philharmonia Orchestra.

The program included the classical music of Johann Sebastian Bach, Johannes Brahms, Joseph Haydn and Emile Paladilhe, as well as traditional Hebrew folk music.

Eklund was looking forward to his students experiencing Carnegie Hall.

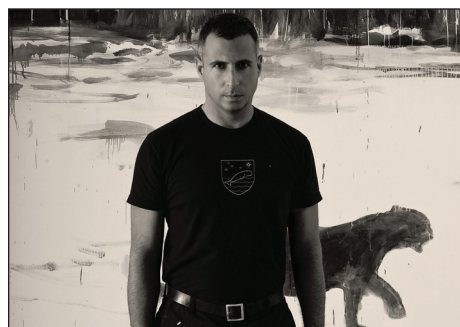
“I’ve conducted at Carnegie Hall numerous times before, and it is a real treat to share it with our students,” he said. “It is a great reward for their hard work and places them on an appropriate national stage. It also gives them an opportunity to perform great music in a great place.” ■

Visiting Presidential Professor Martinez Celaya begins term

Internationally renowned artist Enrique Martinez Celaya began his term as Visiting Presidential Professor at the University of Nebraska last fall, appointed by University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken. His appointment runs from 2007-2010.

“Presidential Professors serve as public scholars who enrich the cultural and educational life of the university and the state,” Milliken said. “Enrique’s role will extend well beyond the classroom. His visits to our campuses and communities will create unique educational opportunities for students, faculty and Nebraskans.”

During his three-year appointment, Martinez Celaya will work with art students and lead faculty and graduate student seminars and colloquia on art, philosophy



and literature.

He spent one week in residence at UNL in the fall and spring semesters this year. Next year, his work will be concentrated at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. In addition, students will have the opportunity to participate in internships in Martinez Celaya’s studios in Florida and California.

Born in Cuba, Martinez Celaya also spent his childhood in Spain and Puerto Rico, where he developed an interest in art, science, philosophy, and literature before attending Cornell University, where he majored in applied physics. He pursued a Ph.D. in quantum electronics at the University of California-Berkeley but ultimately decided to abandon his doctoral work for art. He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture in Maine and received his M.F.A. from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He was Associate Professor of Art at Pomona College and the Claremont Graduate University (1994-2003).

His work is exhibited around the world, in places such as Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Berlin, Japan, Australia, and the United Kingdom. ■

School of Music's Chang-Barnes receives Fulbright

The U.S. State Department Foreign Scholarship Board has selected Ann Chang-Barnes, School of Music artist-in-residence in piano, as Fulbright Scholar to Belgium. During the summer months of 2009, she will be doing research on advancement of keyboard curriculum models and performing in concerts at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, Belgium.

"The keyboard works of the late 18th and early 19th centuries by the great masters Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, are a standard part of the modern pianists repertoire. To achieve proper understanding and performance of these pieces, pianists would be well served by referring to the early pianos for which they were written," Chang-Barnes said.

That early piano, the fortepiano (in use from 1770's-1850's), has a wooden frame on which the strings are strung, and the strings are strung with less tension than the modern piano.

"Unlike the Harpsichord, it is truly an early piano in that the strings are struck by hammers to generate sound. The sound decays faster than the modern piano, and the tone is more pure and clean," Chang-Barnes said.

Composers of the day, including Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn, wrote in a manner suitable for its unique sound, but as the modern piano, especially in the U.S., became the standard instrument, the music had to be more or less "transcribed" for the modern piano.

"The unfortunate result is that we give piano students only one kind of piano for vastly different kinds of repertoire," she said.

Chang-Barnes hopes American schools will begin to offer a similar kind of study for piano students that their European counterparts are receiving, where they still have the option to study and perform on both fortepianos and modern pianos interchangeably, depending on the repertoire.

"When a student, or professional pianist for that matter, begins work on a Mozart

Sonata, for example, the ideal process is to at least have the fortepiano available for reference, as a pedagogical tool to hear exactly what the composer had intended."

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln is one of only a few schools in the United States that owns a fortepiano. UNL's early Mozart keyboard instrument, a replica of a circa 1780 Anton Walter fortepiano, was purchased more than 25 years ago under

'Our university is well poised to be a leader in offering a unique and important area of study of serious musicians'

Ann Chang-Barnes

the leadership of Professor Emeriti Raymond Hagg, Audun Ravnan and Thomas Fritz. Chang-Barnes received a UNL Research Council grant two years ago to renovate it. It resides in her studio, and she now has students utilizing it in critical thinking, and in many cases, also in performance.

Chang-Barnes said she learned several years back, that the School of Music had a fortepiano, but it was stored and neglected in the basement of Westbrook Music Building. Professor Emeritus Quentin Faulkner showed it to her, and she instantly saw its potential.

"I asked for it to be moved to my studio. Then I dusted it off, and started exploring," she said. "At first, the students just walked around it, almost like it was a piece of furniture. By the end of the semester, they started playing a note or two, and soon, some were eager to try it in earnest. It was gratifying to see their faces light up as troublesome passages or questionable markings in the score seem to finally fall into place. We were

walking down the path of discovery!"

Chang-Barnes said having the fortepiano positions the School of Music to be a leader in this field.

"Our piano majors, as well as guest artists and School of Music faculty have this extremely valuable, historical instrument available for use," she said. "Our university is well poised to be a leader in offering a unique and important area of study for serious musicians. The goal of my Fulbright research is to identify a suitable curriculum model to meet our needs for success, using the European models as a reference."

Chang-Barnes notes that the piano is fortunate to have a wide range of repertoire, from Renaissance to Modern.

"Many of us feel, however, that our objective is to play it all with the same level of perfection or we have failed in some way," she said. "That's not done in law or medicine or even in music theory or history."

She said it's time for pianists to think about specializing.

"It's becoming too big not to," she said. "And with the growing movement in this country for authentic performance practice, the future of the fortepiano, either in the studio as a pedagogical tool, or on stage as performance instrument, is a timely and exciting topic to explore."

Chang-Barnes joined the music faculty at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in 1995 as modern pianist, and recently added the fortepiano, historical instruments and classic performance practice to her areas of specialty. In addition to her active career as modern pianist, she will perform numerous fortepiano concerts as soloist and with orchestra during the upcoming season, and a recording project is underway, featuring the Walter fortepiano in performances of Sonatas and Fantasies by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

In July 2008, with grant support by the Hixson-Lied Creative Activity Travel Grant, Chang-Barnes performed at the International FortePiano Conference in Middelburg, the Netherlands, as one of the conference's featured artists. ■

New Sheldon director Veneciano brings experience

Jorge Daniel Veneciano became director of Sheldon Museum of Art on July 1.

For the past three years, Veneciano has been director of Paul Robeson Galleries at the Rutgers University campus in Newark, N.J. He has 10 years arts administration and fund-raising experience, including five years as exhibitions curator at The Studio Museum in Harlem in the 1990s. Before moving to New York in 1994, he directed three community arts centers for the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. He has taught at Rhode Island School of Design and Columbia University.

“Daniel Veneciano brings a solid background in arts administration and in developing community arts centers, and I am confident in perspective he brings to leading the Sheldon,” said University of Nebraska–Lincoln Chancellor Harvey S. Perlman. “I am excited about his enthusiasm for developing outreach programs and look forward to his leadership role in the development of Lincoln’s Arts and Humanities Corridor, with space for more of the Sheldon collection to be enjoyed by more people.”

Veneciano has a doctoral degree in English and comparative literature from Columbia University and a master of fine arts degree from the California Institute of Arts in Valencia, Calif. He also holds a master’s of art and art history from California State University, Los Angeles, and a bachelor’s degree from the University of California, Los Angeles.



Jorge Daniel Veneciano

During his tenure at the Paul Robeson Galleries, Veneciano has tripled the operating budget through multilevel fundraising, added three new exhibition spaces, and created new arts education programs serving schools, health and youth centers. Recently, he led a \$5 million campaign for a consortium of university arts interests. He has also secured funds to publish several interdisciplinary catalogs accompanying recent exhibitions.

Veneciano will lead Sheldon’s artistic and strategic programs engaging both the university and Nebraska arts communities. The museum houses collections of

more than 12,000 American artworks including prominent holdings of 19th-century landscape and still life, American Impressionism, early Modernism, geometric abstraction, Abstract Expressionism, pop, minimalism and contemporary art. Throughout the campus, Sheldon also exhibits more than 30 monumental outdoor sculptures.

Veneciano succeeds Janice Driesbach, who resigned in September. He will be the museum’s fourth director since the Philip Johnson-designed building opened in 1963. Earlier directors were Norman Geske and George Neubert. ■



Gallery now “Sheldon Museum of Art”

In March the University of Nebraska–Lincoln renamed its American art museum “Sheldon Museum of Art,” and its dedicated, non-profit support organization became the “Sheldon Art Association.” Previously the names were the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden and

Nebraska Art Association.

Completed in 1963, the Sheldon Museum of Art building was a gift of Frances and Bromley Sheldon to the University. Designed by renowned architect Philip Johnson, the museum has collections with more than 12,000 artworks. ■

Two new Hixson-Lied professorships announced

The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts has announced two new recipients for the prestigious Hixson-Lied Professorships. Professor of Theatre William Grange and Professor of Art Peter Pinnell were named Hixson-Lied Professors at the College's Honors Day Dinner on April 26.

Hixson-Lied Professorships are awarded for a three-year term and can be re-nominated for a second consecutive three-year term. These professorships carry a \$3,000 annual stipend that can be used to augment the recipient's salary or to support the recipient's creative or scholarly work.

Eligibility for consideration of these professorships is limited to tenured faculty at the rank of Associate or Full Professor who do not already hold a named professorship, who have demonstrated exceptional overall performance over an extended time frame and whose accomplishments have gained significant recognition beyond the University. They were created in 2006 with support from the Hixson-Lied Endowment.

Grange and Pinnell join Professor of Art History Christin Mamiya and Professor of Art Gail Kendall as Hixson-Lied Professors in the College. Mamiya and Kendall completed their second years as Hixson-Lied Professors this May.

Grange is the author of five books, along with numerous scholarly articles, essays, book chapters, reviews, and encyclopedia entries. He was awarded the Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Humanities and Cultural Studies at the University of Vienna for 2007 and has held other Fulbright guest professorships in Germany.

His numerous awards for research and scholarship include the Dorot Fellowship, the Mellon Family Prize, fellowships from the German Academic Exchange Service, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Nebraska Research Council, grants from the Arts and Humanities Enhancement Fund, the Jane Robertson Layman Fund, the Hixson-Lied Endowment, and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research



Tom Slocum, University Communications.

Pete Pinnell, Dean Giacomo Oliva and William Grange.

Center at the University of Texas.

A graduate of the University of Toledo, Columbia University and Indiana University, Grange teaches academic and performance courses and is head of the Graduate Committee in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. He has been an Equity actor for more than 30 years, appearing in several professional productions in New York and throughout the United States.

Grange's forthcoming volume "Cultural Chronicle of the Weimar Republic" is scheduled for publication this August. It is an encyclopedic reference work that traces developments in German theater, film, radio, music, and other art forms in the tumultuous years between the fall of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the rise of Adolf Hitler.

Pinnell made his living as a potter for 12 years before moving to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he is currently Professor of Art. In addition to his teaching, he has continued to exhibit widely, with more than 120 exhibitions since 1995.

His work has appeared throughout the

U.S., and in the Netherlands, South Africa, Japan, China, New Zealand and Australia. Images of his work have appeared in a number of noted ceramic books, *Clay Times* magazine, *Ceramics Monthly*, *Studio Potter*, and *Purple Sand*, a Taiwanese ceramics journal. An in-depth article about his work appeared in *Ceramics: Art and Perception*, a noted Australian Magazine, in 2001. In March of 2001 he was a featured artist at the NCECA (National Council on Education in the Ceramic Arts) national conference, where he spoke and demonstrated.

In addition to his teaching and exhibition career, Pinnell has been an active writer on ceramic art, with articles in American and Australian ceramic journals, and a regular column, "As far as I know. . ." which appears in *Clay Times Magazine*.

Pinnell earned a bachelor of arts in music from Columbia College in Columbia, Mo., a bachelor of fine arts degree from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred, and a master of fine arts degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder. ■

Arts Are Basic helps students explore world through artwork

BY RHEA GILL

Arts Are Basic is a program unique to Lincoln and rural Nebraska, serving thousands of elementary, middle and high school students each year. It is the only program in the Midwest that connects teaching artists, classroom teachers, after-school staff and students, and together they build a connection to a work of art.

Arts Are Basic provides arts education not to create artists, but to teach and to enhance a way of learning about oneself and one's environment. When a teacher or after-school staff member and their students work through an AAB unit of study, focused on a performance of dance, music, theater or visual art, all participants watch, learn, think and express it back or reflect about the process of creating and in so doing, they come alive to the world around them. AAB provides a different way to enhance other forms of intelligence, such as kinesthetic, visual-spatial and interpersonal skills, and it offers teachers a way to deepen learning across many disciplines.

In addition, Arts Are Basic has been cited as a Model Program by Lincoln Public Schools for its excellence in multicultural education as well as teacher training. AAB curates artwork specifically to serve multicultural learning.

In the last year, Arts Are Basic has committed to presenting local artist as focus works for school performances. This year's season consisted of University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty, undergraduate and graduate students and alumni. Arts Are Basic's 2007–2008 season included:

UNL's Brass Quintet

Through this performance, 635 students were given the opportunity experience live music as never before. The University of Nebraska Brass Quintet both educated and enchanted as they expose young people to the history and future of brass instruments. The UNL Brass Quintet is comprised of the faculty from the University's School of Music. This program of music was chosen



Photo courtesy of Arts Are Basic.

UNL M.F.A. graduate and teaching artist Michael Burton works with elementary students in the Lincoln Public Schools.

because it contained works that have a relationship to other art forms such as literature, film and poetry. Students shared in an examination of how the arts can be included under the umbrella of music by skilled composers.

Visual Artist: Michael Burton

Michael Burton's unique style opened the doors of creativity and imagination for five Lincoln elementary schools this year. Through his paintings, Michael is able to create images that excite the mind and

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warm the heart by working with the natural elements of color, texture and visual form. Originally from Fall River, Mass., Burton attended the University of Massachusetts in 1995 and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1999 from Green Mountain College in Vermont. He graduated from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln with an M.F.A. in painting in May of 2007. Burton’s work had been exhibited nationally in venues in Boston, New York City, New Jersey, Vermont, and Nebraska.

Theatrix Presents: “Sweet Dreams”

For the first time ever, a complete theater production was created specifically for Arts Are Basic students. An original work has been written, produced, directed and cast by Theatrix, the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film’s student producing organization. The play “Sweet Dreams,” produced by Brian LaDuca, is the story of Jo, a young child who upon a restful slumber finds herself face to face with the magical brothers of dream: Morpheus, the master of those people you dream about; Phantasos, the master of those things that make no sense in your dream; and Phobator, the master of nightmares. This tale of fantasy and adventure is inspired by Greek and Roman mythology. Through stunning mask work and dynamic movement, students witnessed an exciting and awakening play that teaches them to find their inner strength to conquer one’s fears. Through this project, UNL students have had the opportunity to create an original piece of work. The play was also the foundation for the Theatrix Inaugural New Artist Festival and was used to teach UNL students taking Theatre 101 about the process of creating original works. In May 2008 more than 300 elementary and middle school students attended “Sweet Dreams” at the Howell Theatre.

MYArts Project

In the last year, the MYArts project has focused primarily on the youth who attend the Lighthouse program. In partnership with the Department of Art and Art History, Arts Are Basic has created an art mentoring project, connecting four gradu-



Photo courtesy of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film.

Sophomore theatre major Sarah Carlson stars in “Sweet Dreams.”

ate students from the Art and Art History department with youth at the Lighthouse. The graduate students and the youth have created original pieces of artwork for both the new facility and the garden. The focus of the project is to provide new learning opportunities for both parties and create original works that represent the youth and the mission of the Lighthouse. The four graduate students who participated in this were Kimberly Thomas, Kayleigh Speck, Joshua Norton and Nelson Ahrnsbrak.

In-School Performance

Associate Professor of Piano Pedagogy Brenda Wristen and Assistant Professor of Voice Kate Butler created a whimsical and sweet music concert for elementary students, which includes virtuosic piano playing, singing and theatrical narration. The artists went to great lengths to select pieces that allowed young audiences to experience music in both a fun and educational way. This concert was designed to give young audiences an opportunity to hear high quality music in a live performance. The centerpiece of the performance was “The Story of Babar” by renowned French



Photo courtesy of Arts Are Basic.

Associate Professor of Piano Pedagogy Brenda Wristen (left) and Assistant Professor of Music Kate Butler.

composer Francis Poulence, which is based around the famous children’s book by Jean de Brunhoff. The live musical performances for 130 teachers and students used moving visual illustrations created by art major Jonathan Nielsen as part of the UCARE (Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experiences) program. Students had the opportunity to dream, imagine and be part of the action. ■

COVER STORY



Thank you, Johnny!

Family, friends of legendary entertainer gather over Homecoming weekend for dedication of Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film

BY JOEL GEHRINGER

At the end of an exhausting weekend, Cory Carson stood near the corner of the Lied Center stage, taking photos of the scene.

On stage, a few dozen tables were surrounded by his family and friends and faculty, staff and alumni from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts.

Carson snapped a few shots of his table, mostly occupied by family members, and said he wished he could climb up into the rafters to get a shot of the whole stage.

Surveying the scene, he commented to the person standing next to him about what he had seen that weekend.

“Yeah,” he said, “my dad did a good thing here.”



Cory, along with his family and Uni-

versity of Nebraska–Lincoln Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts alumni, visited the university Oct. 12-14 to celebrate the dedication of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film, named after Cory’s father, Johnny Carson.

The legendary Carson, who was raised in Norfolk, Neb., graduated from the university with a degree in radio and speech in 1949. He went on to become one of television’s and entertainment’s biggest stars on “The Tonight Show” and in November 2004, donated \$5.3 million to the University of Nebraska Foundation to renovate and expand the Temple Building, home of his namesake school. An additional gift of \$5 million was received following his death in 2005.

Nearly three years after his initial gift was announced, the celebration began.

The Carson dedication weekend in-

troduced the renovated Temple Building to the public. Carson’s gift provided for the creation of a black box theater and sound stage, a new scene shop, a renovated lobby, classrooms and laboratories, all in the Temple Building.

As an undergraduate student, Carson studied and went to classes in the Temple Building. It was his wish that \$4.3 million of his donation be used to update the building and \$1 million to create an endowment that will fund future updates to the school’s technology.

On hand to commemorate the man, the gift and the school named after him were Carson’s relatives: brother Dick Carson and sister Kit Sotzing, both UNL graduates, and their spouses, Karlyn (also a UNL alum) and Ralph; widow Alex and her nephew and niece, Ryan and Jaclyn Elphinstone; son Cory Carson and his wife, Maria; nephew Jeff Sotzing, now

With a chorus of “Thank You, Johnny,” the students of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film ended the program Oct. 12 with a flurry of confetti in celebration of the gift. *Photo by Kelley Hascall, UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications.*

COVER STORY



Photo by Kelley Hascall, UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications

Alex Carson (left) and Chancellor Harvey Perlman reveal the lighted display tribute to Johnny Carson in the lobby of Howell Theatre in the Temple Building.

head of Carson Entertainment Group, and his wife, Peggy; nephew Mike Sotzing and his wife, Gail; nephew Chris Carson and his wife, Debbie; and niece Kathy Tucker and her daughter, Lindsey.

The weekend, UNL's 2007 Homecoming weekend, centered around Johnny Carson and his accomplishments. The Homecoming theme, "Big Red Studios: A Tribute to Johnny Carson," allowed students to pay homage to Carson's life through floats, displays and music. Even Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman got in on the act, declaring Oct. 12 "Johnny Carson Day" in the state.

"Johnny Carson Day" began with a morning dedication ceremony in the Tem-

ple Lobby, which proudly displays Carson's name on the wall and, for this weekend, displayed Carson memorabilia, including Emmy Awards and his Kennedy Center award in display cases. That morning, it was filled with students, faculty and media as the Carson family gathered. UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman addressed the gathering, as did University of Nebraska Foundation CEO Terry Fairfield, College Dean Jack Oliva and film and new media junior Josie Azzam.

"Looking around, you can see that the facilities dream we had in 2004 has now become a reality of the highest order," Oliva said. "John Carson's giving back to the Uni-

versity of Nebraska says something special to our faculty and our students about the value that he placed on his education here.

"It also reminds us, however, that in the end, students and their education were his highest priority, first and foremost. As those students pass through this building now and in years to come, they will be following in John Carson's footsteps.... This is truly what we are most grateful for."

Next, Perlman presented Alex Carson with a custom-made glass necklace created by a university scientific glass blower, and the two unveiled a centerpiece of the lobby—a backlit, triangular display that greets Temple visitors with photos and a quote

COVER STORY

from Carson.

Afterward, the family and guests crossed the street for lunch in the Lied Center.

"We're very grateful that the family is here," Perlman said in an interview after the ceremony. "They give a personal side to Johnny Carson."

Perlman said Carson's gift should take the school to another level of prominence and opportunity.

"It clearly elevates the school," he said, "and I think it will free the faculty and students to do things they wouldn't otherwise do. I'm hopeful the gift raises our expectations for what we can expect of that school, and we hope it can meet those expectations."

Many in the Carson family enjoyed the opportunity to gather together and remember Johnny, who died in January 2005, just two months after making his donation.

In addition, family members said they were impressed by what they saw that morning.

"It's amazing the amount of work they've done is such a short amount of time with the amount of money; it would have cost probably 10 times this if it were done in Los Angeles," said Jeff Sotzing, Carson's nephew. "I'm honored to be involved."

As president of Carson Entertainment Group, Sotzing is essentially a keeper of all things Carson, and a certain level of expectation comes with the legendary name. For some in the school, it's a high mark to live up to.

Sotzing helped some of the students live up to those expectations by providing access to Carson footage and material to a team of two broadcasting students and two film students who worked seven months to create a student film honoring Carson's life and his time at the university. The film debuted during the weekend at the Temple Building.

After seeing the finished Temple Building, Sotzing said he's confident the school

will live up to Carson's name.

"That's obviously why Johnny has contributed to the university for so many years, because he does feel they're able to live up to the expectations and have a very successful program," Sotzing said.

Later that "Carson Day," the celebrants gathered on R Street just north of the Temple Building to watch the Homecoming parade.

Many student floats paid tribute to Carson and "The Tonight Show," and as the university marching band passed, they played the show's theme song for the gathered guests, to much applause.

Richard "Pete" Petrashek watched the parade. A UNL grad who worked with Carson in the 1950s at WOW-TV in Omaha, Petrashek said he thought the parade, and the weekend, was a great event for UNL alumni.

"We had ringside seats (for the parade)," Petrashek said. "We thought it was great, my wife and I."

Petrashek was a student at UNL in 1947 and knew Carson through classes. He also worked with Carson at WOW-TV in Omaha. Now a magician at 81, Petrashek said he appreciated the chance to reunite with fellow students and revel in his memories.

"This was the first time I'd been back to the Temple," Petrashek said. "Of what I saw, it was really great. I'd like to come down again sometime and go through all of it."

After the parade, the guests returned to the Temple for dinner and a program in the Howell Theatre. The event featured comments from University of Nebraska President J.B. Milliken, Perlman and Carson School director Paul Steger and the debut of the student-produced film.

At the end of the program, Carson School students poured into the theater and showered the audience with confetti, screaming "Thank you, Johnny!" in a show of gratitude for the gift.

'Johnny would have loved it... Hopefully he knows.'

Dick Carson



Photo by Leisha Smith, UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications
Johnny Carson's brother, Dick, speaks at the Dedication Dinner on Oct. 12 in the Howell Theatre.

Senior David Ackermann was one of the students who stormed the Howell.

"Johnny's so huge in the entertainment industry," he said. "I feel like I'm a part of something bigger now."

To Steger, the weekend's events had the feel of a true homecoming.

"If you're a theatre major or film major, you live in the Temple Building, pretty much from eight in the morning until, well, overnight sometimes, because that's the kind of stuff we do. That's what Johnny did, and for us, there's this idea of Johnny having a home in the Temple Building."

Steger also noted that 2007 represented major milestones for the school. In addition to the dedication, the Temple Building was celebrating 100 years of live performance, and the Nebraska Repertory Theatre was marking 40 years of shows.

"For the school, it's enormous," Steger said. "This weekend is about celebrating all of those things and about honoring Johnny Carson and trying to do everything in our power to help continue his legacy of both contributing to the university and to this state by providing funds for people to en-



Chancellor Harvey Perlman with (L-R) Cory and Maria Carson, Ralph and Kit Sotzing, and Karlyn and Dick Carson during the Cornhuskers Homecoming football game.

hance their cultural enrichment through theater and film.”

The next morning, a Husker football Saturday, the celebration continued at the Chancellor’s Pre-Game Breakfast in the Nebraska Union. Then, at the football game, Dick and Karlyn Carson, Cory and Maria Carson and Ralph and Kit Sotzing were introduced to 84,000-plus fans between the first and second quarters. At halftime, the band’s program focused on music related to Carson’s life.

After the game, alumni gathered at Lincoln’s Pioneer Park for a reunion picnic.

Meanwhile, the Temple Building remained open throughout the day, and many who had come for football dropped in to see the updates. A few wandered through the new theater and scene shop, taking in the renovations, but most gathered in the lobby, viewing the memorabilia and watching memorable “Tonight Show” clips on video screens.

“It’s nice to be [a student] here at a time of positive change,” said senior Matt Miller, who worked as a greeter and tour guide at the open house. Miller lamented his coming graduation and wished he could have more time to take advantage of the new facilities. “I wish we could show our gratitude more,”

he said. “We really are glad for the gift.”

On the final day of the dedication weekend, the school’s guests gathered in the Lied Center’s Johnny Carson Theater and then moved to the Lied’s main stage for breakfast. The meal marked one last hurrah for the group, as Carson’s old friends shared stories with his family and faculty reconnected with former students and classmates.

Petrashkek, Carson’s classmate, shared a table with some of Carson’s fraternity brothers and reintroduced himself to Dick Carson, whom he had met years before when Johnny Carson worked at the Omaha television station. One lucky group of current students shared a table with “Tonight Show” writers Andrew Nicholls and Darrell Vickers, who told tales of the entertainment biz and shared advice.

“This weekend celebrated two things,” said the University Foundation’s Fairfield. “First, somebody that always loved the state

and loved the university gave back to it. That kind of loyalty is precious. Second, in the last 10 years, it [the school] has grown so tremendously, and adding the Carson name enhances that program.”

Steger said the school is now prepared to “think bigger” and tackle more ambitious projects as well as better train its students for the professional world.

“What we can do now is dream,” he said. “We can actually put together plans to do the things we’ve always dreamt about. We always think of what we could do if we had a little bit more. And now we have a little bit more. That ability is there now.”

At the close of the weekend, an exhausted but ever-friendly Dick Carson had no shortage of praise for the renovations and the celebration.

“My son Chris saw the theater, and he used to work at Sony,” Carson said. “He walked in and saw it and said, ‘They’ve got more than Sony’s got. They’ve just got everything here. You could walk out of there and work anywhere.’”

Dick Carson said he enjoyed having his family gathered in Nebraska again. Carson grew up in Norfolk but now lives on the West Coast. Many family members hadn’t been back in some time, and for a few, it was their first trip.

“They just loved it here,” Carson said. “My son, he doesn’t want to leave. It just felt so good to have them here.”

Carson said his brother would have been embarrassed at all the attention he had received.

“He would probably break up,” Carson said. “He was very shy. But he would have loved it—of course, he would have loved it.”

Just then, Dick Carson almost broke up himself.

“Hopefully,” he said, “hopefully, he knows.” ■

Joel Gehringer, of Omaha, Neb., is a senior news-editorial major in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications.

‘What we can do now is dream.’

**Paul Steger,
director of the Johnny
Carson School of
Theatre and Film**



Journalism graduate student Trevor Hall interviews Conan O'Brien in his office for the Johnny Carson video.

Film, journalism students team up for Carson tribute

BY JOEL GEHRINGER

As an entertainer and television star, Johnny Carson was a legend. He was a master of comedy and of good TV, and he seemed to have his crafts perfectly honed every night.

But before all of that, he was a student at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, where he fine-tuned his skills in entertainment, theatre and broadcasting.

Toward the end of his life, Carson decided to help give students at the university a chance to experience the same useful les-

sons he did. Carson died in 2005, but in the summer of 2007, four students became the first beneficiaries of an endowment supported by Carson's gift.

The four students, two from the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film and two from the College of Journalism and Mass Communications, worked together on a 20-minute film project that commemorated the life of Johnny Carson and his significance to the university. The film, "Johnny Carson: Student of Comedy," debuted at the Carson School dedication ceremony in October 2007.

As part of an initiative by the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, the College of Journalism and Mass Communications and Nebraska Educational Television, the students—Josie Azzam and John Albrecht, both junior film and new media students; Trevor Hall, a graduate journalism student; and Justin Peterson, a senior journalism student—worked as interns with NET to create the film.

The internship allows students from both schools to work at NET in a professional environment and get valuable experience working on real projects for broad



Photo by Kelley Hascall, UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications
Jeff Sotzing with students John Albrecht, Justin Peterson, Josie Azzam and Trevor Hall at the dedication of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film.

cast.

The initiative began as part of the university's strategic planning process. FPA Dean Jack Oliva, COJMC Dean Will Norton and NET General Manager Rod Bates recognized each other's desire for interdisciplinary cooperation.

The colleges wanted to be able to get students into real-world situations and provide them opportunities to get used to the updated technologies available at NET. At the same time, NET had an interest in developing new talent and getting a chance to work with the best and brightest at the university.

"I didn't know that was coming (from the deans), and what was astounding was that I had the same thing in mind," Bates said, "and that was a surprise to them."

From there, a discussion began and developed into the student internship program.

"You couldn't have scripted it any better," Oliva said.

With the internships in place, Oliva,

Norton and Bates chose the Carson film as the first project for the student interns to tackle. Both the internship and the film would allow journalism and film students to bring their respective talents together.

"The idea was to mix those personalities and these kids who would normally never be in the same room together and develop the idea," said Paul Steger, director of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film.

The students said they got the feeling the project needed to stand out from other Carson tributes, and they decided their project should take a different direction from other Carson videos they had seen. Theirs would examine Carson's early life and education and show how he used those experiences throughout his career.

"Most everything else you see is about the 'Tonight Show' and stuff like that, and you don't see much on his childhood and his early career," Albrecht said.

With the 2007 spring semester coming to a close, the students began work on the

project, deciding to create a documentary-style video which would include insight from both those who knew Carson before he was a star and those who were affected by his work and legacy.

They brought together skills learned from both the film and broadcasting programs to brainstorm ideas, write scripts and develop a plan for executing their vision.

"All four of us were co-producers, so we all had a say," Hall said. "We worked together on everything from who to interview to the final script."

Bringing the students together seemed to have the intended consequences: They said they had to take time out to learn about each other's methods and techniques in order to produce the best possible project. Sometimes their different backgrounds in broadcast or film resulted in disagreements, which all four students said they found enlightening.

"The main thing was that we didn't agree on how to light interviews and stuff like that," Peterson said. "It was an eye-opener in the fact that we did stuff differently, and so we had to talk out why we did it our way and why they did it their way."

In addition, Hall noted the students had varying levels of experience with different aspects of film production. He said everyone had his or her own strong point, and he saw the benefits of working with film students, whom he said were skilled in editing.

"There was a lot of heart and passion in their work," he said.

Bates said the challenges were beneficial to the students and that their respective backgrounds probably weren't as different as the four originally thought.

"Storytelling is storytelling," he said. "I think the art of storytelling crosses technology, whether it's on film or video."

The students also faced a challenge in learning about Carson's life—all but Hall were too young even to remember watching Carson's show on television.

"There was so much to know and say about Johnny Carson," Azzam said. "We had no idea where to start or where to end."

In the summer of 2007, the students split up to interview people who might

CARSON FILM

help provide them insight into Carson's life. All four spent time in Nebraska talking with classmates and co-workers from Carson's early life.

Peterson and Azzam also traveled to Los Angeles to interview TV writers, producers and stars, including Jay Leno and Ed McMahon. They also interviewed Carson's brother, Dick.

Albrecht and Hall traveled to New York for similar interviews with the likes of David Letterman, Conan O'Brien and Dick Cavett.

The students said they received much help and constructive criticism from NET and from Jeff Sotzing, president of Carson Entertainment Group and Johnny Carson's nephew. He gave them access to seemingly any Carson footage and material they wanted.

"We consider Jeff our executive producer," Hall said. "He probably had as much say in the project as anyone else because we knew he knew Johnny Carson better than anyone. He believed in what we were doing."

Toward the end of the summer, the students worked with NET to bring hours of footage into a 20-minute video, a task that sometimes seemed impossible.

"How many times during the summer did we hang our heads and say, 'This is never going to work?'" Azzam said. "But I'm really proud of the end product."

The project was going through revisions until the last minute, and some of the four didn't even see the final version until it screened at the dedication ceremony. But their six months of work seemed to pay off—the film evoked plenty of laughs and tears and received a standing ovation after it premiered.

"They were doing the most important project they have ever done, and it really was a professional job," Norton said, "and I think the audience recognized how good it was, because it seemed like they applauded for 10 minutes after the video."

In addition, the students received kind words from members of the Carson family.

"It was beautiful," Dick Carson said after seeing the video. "Johnny would have loved it."

The success of the video has done much



Film and New Media junior Aaron Nix films the halftime presentation to the Carson Family at the Cornhuskers football game on Oct. 13. Nix and College of Journalism and Mass Communications senior Allison Wilson-Adams worked as media interns for the Carson Dedication as part of the NET internship program.

to strengthen the administrators' views of the program, and while there are no other projects currently in the works, Norton, Oliva and Steger said there undoubtedly will be soon.

"It would be foolish not to have more projects like this," Steger said.

Norton said more collaboration between the schools is needed to better develop well-rounded students.

"You get a chance to meet a different kind of cat," he said. "It brings diversity of perspective. I'm hoping a lot of our students will take film courses, and I'm hoping a lot of their students will take our courses. I think this place will produce among the best documentary specialists in the country."

Oliva said he hopes the internship opportunity will help those involved make the transition into real-world jobs and situations.

"I personally feel very strongly that what will set our programs apart from those that are strictly academic will be opportunities

to connect in a meaningful way to the real world of work and particularly putting students in collaborative situations where they have to make decision together, because that's the way the world works in the business they're going into," he said.

In addition, Bates said the staff of NET learned as much from the students as the students did from the NET staff. For example, he said the students seemed more comfortable than NET veterans with NET's new digital equipment.

"There's no doubt we want this continue," he said. "The trick will be getting sustainable funding."

Hall said he felt proud to help build confidence in the students from the Johnny Carson School and the journalism college.

"I feel like with this project we put a lot of trust in the system," Hall said. "If this is what's going to happen, think about the next thing. The opportunities are going to get greater. To students considering doing any future projects, I say do it, and enjoy it." ■



Aisha Harrison, Meredith Sandberg and Associate Professor Eddie Dominguez inspect final projects in an advanced ceramics class.

Ceramics program counted among nation's best

BY LINSEY MARSHALL

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln is known for many things. Football. Academics. Volleyball. Journalism. Ceramics.

Ceramics?

Believe it or not, UNL has one of the top five ceramics graduate programs in the nation, as per *US News and World Report*. Although many people outside the world of ceramics may not have even heard of the program, it is famous among those who live and work within it. UNL was even featured in the August/September issue of *Ceramics Monthly*, a top ceramics magazine.

According to Gail Kendall, one of three faculty members in the ceramics program,

the ranking and national attention are results of the extensive growth the program has seen over the past 20 years. Specific advancements include the expansion of the graduate program, which is one of the most sought-after ceramics graduate programs in the country, she said.

Ceramics began at UNL in the 1940s. When Kendall arrived in 1987, she believed the program was in need of a face-lift. She envisioned the program moving from Woods Hall to Richards Hall, the building on campus that housed the other art media. She also imagined a larger program, meaning more kilns—the machines that heat to thousands of degrees Fahrenheit to harden the clay—more students and more faculty.

Kendall has worked to get most of her

goals accomplished and has succeeded thus far. The department eventually decided to add more faculty members, Kendall said, and she was able to hire fellow faculty members Pete Pinnell in 1995 and Eddie Dominguez in 1998. In 2001, she got exactly what she had been asking for—space in Richards Hall—when various art departments moved into that newly remodeled building.

“I always said ceramics will be in Richards someday, and they would tell me it would never happen,” she said. “And now we’re in Richards.”

Kendall said the faculty members were allowed to design their own space in Richards Hall. They now have several outdoor gas kilns and indoor electric kilns, an in-

CERAMICS

door gallery for displaying student work, a clay mixing room, a glaze mixing kitchen, large classrooms with high ceilings and tall windows to allow in plenty of natural light, private studios for the graduate students and a photography lab that allows students to produce professional-quality work.

Sarah Barnard-Blitz, a second-year graduate student who visited several other schools across the nation when considering a program, said she thought the studios at UNL are much nicer than at most schools. The rooms all have individual ventilation systems and large windows, making it easier and safer for the students to work, she said. The locks and temperature controls are an added bonus. Blitz said most schools she visited didn't have them.

Blitz said another plus to the UNL studios is the fact that ceramics students share the studios with another artist who isn't necessarily a ceramics student. For example, Blitz shares her workspace with Erika Navarrete, a graduate painting student. Sculpture, printmaking, photo and graphic design graduate students also share the space, and Blitz said it's nice to have all of the media working close together.

"Art is art—everyone can choose to make it in their own ways," she said. Sharing a studio with another artist "allows you to see what's going on with other mediums, and you don't get that at most schools."

Most graduate art students who come to UNL aren't fresh out of college, Blitz said. In fact, most students take a few years off between finishing their undergraduate degree and starting a graduate program. She herself took four years off to teach high school art and said the break was necessary to improve her skills and give her the edge she needed.

Pinnell said many undergraduate students apply to become special students in UNL's post-baccalaureate ceramics program. Every year for the past eight years, one or two students who have finished their undergraduate degrees have spent a year working with the advanced undergraduate ceramics students to help develop their work. The mentors pay regular tuition and fees, he said, and make themselves more competitive for highly sought programs like UNL's.

"It's a service we do for students who are



Nationally known ceramic artists Steven Heinemann, Matthew Metz and Linda Sikora give a demonstration to ceramics students in Richards Hall in February.

very talented and very motivated, but their work just isn't quite developed enough to get into grad schools," he said.

Blitz said the life of a ceramics graduate student consists of 12-hour days during the school year, though aside from the times they have to be in class, the students get to set their hours.

"Some people like to work until 4 in the morning and then go to bed," she said. "I'm more of an 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. person. During the summer I'll scale it back a bit, maybe 8 a.m. to 5 p.m."

Blitz said all graduate students have keys to the building, allowing them access to their work 24 hours a day, seven days a week—even over the summer and on football Saturdays.

"You don't have much of a life outside of school," she said, "but you have to take it seriously at this point. They don't require you to make X amount of pieces in X amount of time, but if you're not putting in the time, it will show in your work. They'll know."

The three-year program sees at least 50 applications a year from all over the world. Recent students, Kendall said, have come from Singapore, China, Canada and more. Most are female, although the program this year has two men.

While the program has an especially large group this year with 11 students, Kendall said it normally has nine. Three students graduate each year, and three more are chosen from the large applicant pool. Blitz said she really likes the smaller class sizes because it makes it easier to work with other students and get to know everyone within the program on a more personal level.

Matt Kelleher, a 1999 graduate of the program, agreed the small class size makes the program stronger.

"The size keeps UNL in the top five or six places to apply for grad school," he said. "Smaller programs have less of a draw."

While most incoming students have degrees in fine arts, Kendall said, some come into the program with degrees in biology, journalism, sociology and even mathematics. She refers to it as the back-door approach.

"Many students touch that clay, and they're seduced," she said.

Once students have joined the program, they take different types of ceramics classes along with three art history courses, Kendall said.

Classes include glaze mixing and kiln

CERAMICS

building, which teach students how to build and maintain their own equipment and materials once they graduate.

"We give them some invaluable tools for the real world," she said.

Pinnell, who teaches the kiln building class, said it not only teaches the students how to make their own gas kiln once they are on their own, but it saves the department money. A new kiln costs nearly \$30,000, while making one from scratch costs less than \$5,000. Pinnell said every three years, students tear apart and rebuild the department kiln that is in the worst shape.

Pinnell said most funding for the department comes through donations. In 1993, MEDICI (Most Esteemed Donors Intellectuals Colleagues & Individuals) was formed through the University of Nebraska Foundation to help support the Department of Art and Art History. Pinnell said the majority of the ceramics' program funding comes through fundraisers sponsored by MEDICI because very little is given to the program by the state.

In addition, Pinnell said, students pay semester lab fees—\$100 for undergraduates, \$250 for graduates—that cover the costs of raw materials, like clay and glazes. Clay can become very expensive for students to buy individually, and because the department is the second-largest purchaser of clay materials in the state, Pinnell said it has enough buying power to significantly lower the prices.

Blitz said the UNL Clay Club hosts a fundraiser sale every semester, and hundreds of pieces created by the students are sold. Twenty-five percent of the proceeds go to the Clay Club and is used to bring in visiting artists from across the nation to spend a few days working with and teaching the students. The sales raise anywhere from \$2,000 to \$4,000 a pop, Blitz said, and the students then select three or four artists to invite to UNL.

"It's important for the artists because the students have chosen them, not the faculty," she said. "We learn so much from them when they're here."

Blitz, who wants to set up her own studio after she graduates in May 2009, said most students go on to become teachers themselves after they leave the program. Aside from becoming an independent artist, she

said, there aren't many other options.

Kendall said all three faculty members were independent artists at one time in their careers, but they don't promote that lifestyle to their students because it can be a difficult way to make a living if they don't become famous as artists.

But Dominguez said the success rate of students who leave UNL's program shows that students don't seem to have trouble finding jobs after college. That kind of security makes it more attractive to students looking for somewhere to go, he said.

"We are spoken well of across the country, and that's not an easy reputation to acquire," he said. "Students are getting jobs, grants, and residencies. It's good, solid evidence of the quality of our program here."

Kendall agreed. "We are known for turning out ambitious students, and incoming students want to be associated with that success, so they come here."

Since 1998, Kendall has seen 42 graduate students come and go. The connections she makes with her students last lifetimes, she said.

"I have a nice daughter, but they're like my other children," she said.

Kelleher said the professors each had a specific impact on him while he was a student at UNL.

"Gail's optimism is contagious, Pete is full of technical knowledge and historic references, and Eddie displays the passion it takes to be a career artist," he said.

Their support and connections within the ceramics world have helped expand his career as well, he said.

"The faculty continues to go to bat for me today," he said. "They help open doors to new opportunities."

Kendall said the connection she has with her fellow faculty members is also crucial to the program's success.

"We decided early on we were going to get along," she said. "We could have half as many kilns and still have a wonderful program because we're all on the same page with each other and have hardly any contradictions."

Pinnell said that although it may sound funny to promote collegiality among the faculty as an important part of the program, the truth is many academic departments are split by disagreements and rivalries.

"Some places have friction within the faculty," he said. "It's nice that I have co-workers I enjoy to go to lunch with."

Kendall said the experience all three faculty members have as artists also helps them relate to one another and their students.

"We know what it is to live it (the life of an artist), and we continue to make and exhibit work," she said.

Kendall said she hopes the ceramics program continues to grow, not only at UNL but around the nation. While she doesn't discredit computer-generated art, she said she appreciates a more traditional, hands-on approach.

"The big trend in art is making things that are hands-off, like on computers," she said. "It's so important to touch the material and bring it back to the basics."

Pinnell said that while no big changes are in the works for the program in the near future, the faculty members continue to find new ways improve what they offer.

"We're always trying to make things better and do what we can to benefit the students," he said. ■



'We are known for turning out ambitious students, and incoming students want to be associated with that success.'

Gail Kendall

Originally from Sidney, Iowa, Linsey Marshall graduated in May from the College of Journalism and Mass Communications as a news-editorial major. She will be attending law school at UNL's College of Law this fall.

Endowment funding fuels creative projects

BY AUDREY PRIBNOW

Dana Fritz spent Christmas in 2005 in a Japanese garden. Actually, she traveled from garden to garden for several days, and she wasn't just taking in the gardens' beauty. She was lugging around camera equipment, taking photographs and "getting really sore" in the process.

Fritz, an associate professor of art at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, said her best photos from that trip to Japan came by a stroke of fate. The night before she visited one particular garden, a snowstorm hit. In Japan, Fritz said, snow doesn't linger—it melts.

So, when she arrived at the garden the next morning, everything was wet. Fritz said the gardens "always look great when they're wet."

"I had the kind of photos that I had never been able to make before," she said. "That's probably when I did my best work."

Fritz said the snowstorm was a lucky occurrence for her.

"It was not something anyone could've predicted," she said.

While the snowstorm may have been luck, the reason Fritz was even in Japan was no accident.

After spending hours laboring over a grant application, Fritz was awarded money from the Hixson-Lied Endowment fund, which helped pay for her photography mission in Japan. The trip resulted in her "Garden Views" display of photos.

Fritz is one of many faculty members and students in the fine and performing arts who have benefited from Hixson-Lied Endowment funding.

Giacomo Oliva, endowed dean of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, said in 2000, Christina Hixson and the Lied Foundation Trust directed an \$18 million endowment to the University of Nebraska Foundation to be given to the college.

When the first chunk of interest money from a small portion of that \$18 million became available for the college's use in 2000,



A grant from the Hixson-Lied Endowment fund helped Associate Professor Dana Fritz pay for a trip to Japan, where she shot photos for her "Garden Views" series.

Oliva decided to build up a small reserve before first giving away money in the fall of 2002. After receiving a little bit more each year since then, the College now has access to the interest building on \$13 million of the endowment.

And ever since 2002, faculty and student grant applications have been pouring in.

Fritz has actually received a number of Hixson-Lied grants that have allowed her to develop professionally. In addition to two trips to Japan to photograph gardens and six weeks spent as an artist-in-residence at a French chateau, Fritz has attended numerous conferences and art-related events — all thanks to Hixson-Lied funding.

"My work is not possible without university support like this," Fritz said. "It's flat out not possible."

Fritz isn't the only one singing the praises of this support for student and faculty projects.

Matt Miller, a senior theatre and theatre arts double major at UNL, is currently using Hixson-Lied money to build puppets that are three-quarters the size of humans.

Miller is working with colleagues at Rough Magic Productions in Lincoln to produce a puppet show with a storyline similar to that of "Pinocchio." The show, performed this summer, calls for 10 puppets — each with working hands.

HIXSON-LIED PROJECTS

A Hixson-Lied grant is funding the creation of the puppets.

“The amount they gave us has done wonders,” Miller said.

As a student who is volunteering his time to help produce the puppet show, titled “Pure Anima,” Latin for *being* or *soul*, Miller said he already realizes the line of work he’s chosen isn’t likely to make him millions.

“It’s not profitable. You don’t do it for money,” Miller said. “There’s an understanding that whatever show we do (at Rough Magic Productions), we’ll apply for as many grants as we can.”

When it comes to “Pure Anima,” though, Miller’s passion is so deep that he said he’d be doing the production anyway, but would be spending his own money on the project if it weren’t for the grant.

“And that’s a line that you just don’t want to cross,” Miller said. “The grant money has become just completely inseparable from the process now because when we need something, we can get it.”

Along with helping to fund individual projects, the Hixson-Lied grant money helps to finance special initiatives.

Oliva said while half of the available money gets split between faculty and students each year, the other half gets put into a “programs account.” In the past, money in the programs account has been used to bring in visiting artists or purchase special equipment.



Photo courtesy of Matt Miller

Theatre senior Joseph Lupo (left) and Ben Tibbels of Rough Magic Productions work with the creatures from “Pure Anima.”



Photo courtesy of Matt Miller

With help from the Hixson-Lied Endowment, theatre and theatre arts major Matt Miller created puppets that were used in the summer Rough Magic Productions show “Pure Anima.”

Three years ago, money from this account was used to establish Lincoln as the home base of the Chiara String Quartet.

The quartet, which is composed of violinists Rebecca Fischer and Julie Yoon, violist Jonah Sirota and cellist Gregory Beaver, came to UNL in the fall of 2005 after completing the Lisa Arnhold Residency at the Julliard School of Music in New York.

Sirota said the quartet became acquainted with Lincoln during a performance at the Meadowlark Music Festival.

“We really hit it off with the people at UNL,” Sirota said.

Before heading back to New York City, he said, they approached John Richmond, director of the School of Music, and said: “This is a really wonderful, interesting place. Have you ever thought about having a string quartet in residence?”

Richmond called them two weeks later to ask if they were serious about coming to Lincoln, and the rest is history. The quartet signed a three-year contract, thanks in part to Hixson-Lied funding, and this spring, their residency was renewed for another three years.

Sirota said the quartet’s partnership with UNL is unique because, while the members of other faculty chamber music groups are full-time professors, the members of the Chiara String Quartet have a different primary responsibility.

“We are first and foremost a performance ensemble,” he said. “This is the first time they’ve had a group such as us have this kind of long-term relationship with the school.”

The foursome also coordinates the school’s chamber music program and teaches a limited number of private students.

They also do a significant amount of traveling across the globe. In the past year, the quartet has performed in Sweden, New York, Texas, Washington, Vermont, Colorado, Connecticut, and of course, Nebraska.

“We’re always bringing part of the banner of UNL wherever we go,” Sirota said. “People are always asking about our home institution.”

And what do they tell them?

“It’s a very unusual thing to have a school that puts such a strong commitment

HIXSON-LIED PROJECTS

in music in general and in teaching,” Sirota said. “We feel like Nebraska’s a very special place to be.”

A great appreciation for this “unusual” funding seems to resonate among its recipients.

Xanthe Isbister, a graduate art student who has used Hixson-Lied money to support an exhibition at the Hayden Art Center and who received a Hixson-Lied graduate fellowship, said few universities have similar programs.

Isbister said she has benefited in multiple ways.

“The experience gained in writing and applying for the grant is important for future opportunities in applying for grants once out of academia,” she said.

“The funding promotes students to go above and beyond their academic requirements, gaining experience outside of the classroom. It helped me to gain experience that would have not been possible otherwise.”

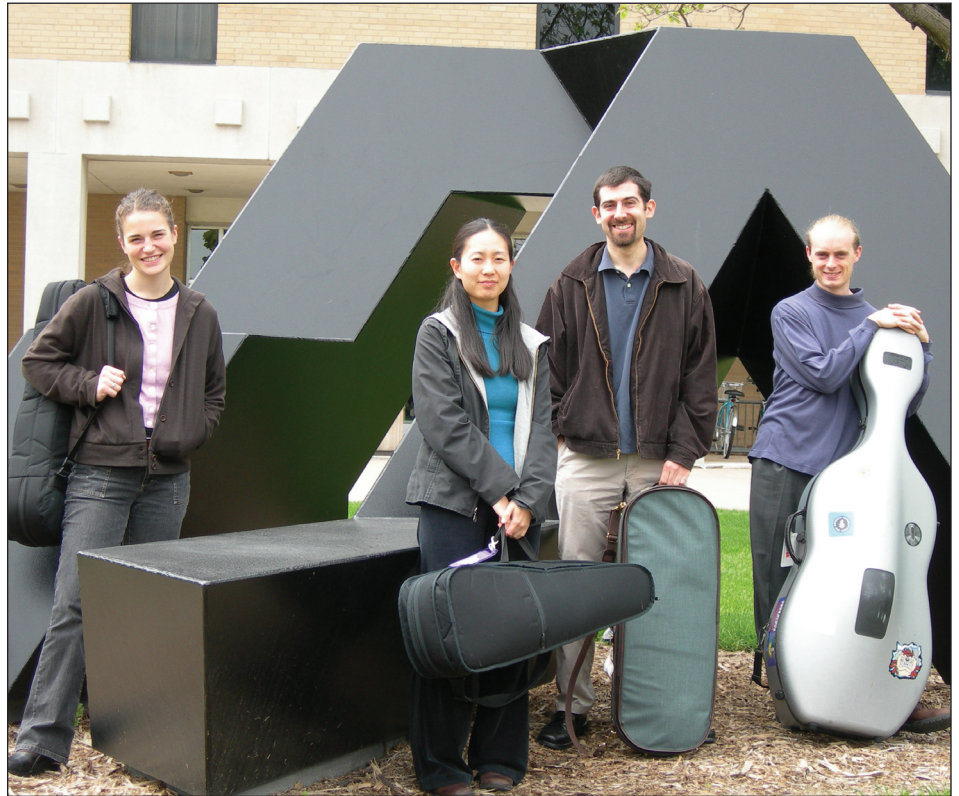
Fritz agreed.

“I could not have the kind of resume that I have now without the university making a serious investment in me,” she said.

As a working artist and professor, Fritz said the Hixson-Lied funding has helped her connect to people worldwide. Those connections, she said, are crucial.

“People don’t usually discover you out of nowhere,” Fritz said. “Especially when you live in Lincoln, Nebraska.”

While big city professionals in art, music and theater might have limited knowledge a comparatively small college town, Oliva is proud of the statement UNL is making by offering its faculty members and students



The Chiara String Quartet recently had their residency renewed for another three years, thanks to funding from the Hixson-Lied Endowment.

such extensive grant opportunities.

“I would say with confidence that this college is the exception rather than the rule nationally in terms of providing various types of money,” Oliva said. “It’s very difficult to find money for the fine and performing arts. It’s nobody fault; there just isn’t money.”

Thanks to the Hixson-Lied Endowment fund, though, UNL has made finding money just a little bit easier for its students and faculty.

“(The fund) made resources available for faculty and student excellence that you would not find in too many other places,” Oliva said.

Maybe that’s why talented people like the musicians of the Chiara String Quartet are doing more than giving Lincoln a second glance.

They’re calling it home.

“For us, it provides a home base and stability that performing musicians don’t always get,” Sirota said. “And it allows us to work with wonderful, wonderful colleagues to collaborate.”

Furthermore, the generous fund has helped convince the renowned quartet to stick around.

“We believe it’s really a win-win for everyone,” Sirota said. “We love being here, and we don’t have any plans to move on.”

Audrey Pribnow, of Fremont, Neb., graduated from the College of Journalism and Mass Communications in May with a degree in news-editorial.

‘The funding promotes students to go above and beyond their academic requirements, gaining experience outside of the classroom.’

Xanthe Isbister, graduate student





a life-long passion

Rawley's contributions have left indelible mark on community

BY AUDREY PRIBNOW

DEVELOPMENT

Sometimes life doesn't pan out as expected. As a 5-year-old, Ann Rawley was given a puppet-making kit that she says first sparked her interest in theatre. And from that point on, there was no turning back.

Rawley attended a private school in New York City that had a good theater department, and she performed in numerous plays throughout high school. She even majored in theatre arts at Smith College in Northampton, Mass.

She chose college jobs and summer internships that would hopefully help her progress toward becoming an actress, but theatrical work proved hard to find in New York City after graduation.

Though she got a few acting jobs that consisted of "saying two words and walking off," Rawley's job at a public relations firm that specialized in entertainment eventually pointed her in a new direction.

"By that time I had pretty much decided it was going to be a lifelong interest rather than a career, because I got very wrapped up in being a wife and a volunteer," Rawley said. "And so it went."

That career decision of Rawley's has paid dividends for the Lincoln community.

Following a stint at Sweet Briar College, where her husband taught and Rawley participated in faculty performances, the Rawley duo came to Lincoln, and she's been here ever since.

Rawley said she immediately became interested in the city's theatre and art scenes, and she became active on boards for the Lincoln Community Playhouse and the Nebraska Repertory Theatre.

"I've been on the boards as long as I can remember," Rawley said. She added that she'll stay on the advisory boards "as long as they'll have me."

She also served a term as president of the Lincoln City Ballet, where she wrote an adaptation of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" for ballet.

"That was a wonderful creative experi-

ence for me," Rawley said.

Lucy Buntain Comine, director of special projects for the University of Nebraska Foundation, said she has known Rawley for "many, many years through arts organizations in the community."

Buntain Comine said the two cross paths at theatrical performances and art galleries across Lincoln, and they even live in the same neighborhood.

"(Rawley) is an inspiration and a role model for me, in addition to being a friend," Buntain Comine said. "And that's so important to have those role models in our lives."

"She has this incredible zest for life—a boundless energy for the arts," Buntain

'I feel a very personal connection to the theatre department, which I absolutely love.'

Ann Rawley

Comine said. "It's infectious. I love to be around her."

Julie Hagemeyer, general manager of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film, said she also sees Rawley on a regular basis, though in a different setting.

Rawley's husband, James, a history professor at UNL for many years before his death in 2005, established the Ann Keyser Rawley Scholarship in his wife's name in 2000, and Hagemeyer invites Ann Rawley to attend the ceremony each year when the scholarship is awarded.

The invitation is certainly appreciated.

"Very kindly, the theatre department

does acquaint me with the current scholarship winners, so I've gotten to know a number of students that way," Rawley said. "I feel a very personal connection to the theatre department, which I absolutely love."

Both Buntain Comine and Hagemeyer's accolades about Rawley suggest they, too, appreciate her connection to theater at UNL and in the Lincoln community.

"I think Ann symbolizes the very best in an arts patron," Buntain Comine said. "Her passion, particularly for the performing arts, is so true, and she gives without limit of her time, energy and talent."

Hagemeyer agreed, saying Rawley is "an extravagant supporter."

"It certainly makes my job so much easier because you know there are people out there in the community who value what you do," Hagemeyer said.

While Rawley could be tempted to sit on her laurels considering the "various plaques and pieces of plastic" she said she's won, including a 2006 Award of Merit from the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts and 2001 induction into the Nebraska Repertory Theatre Hall of Fame, Rawley is still on a mission to promote theater in Lincoln.

"We're trying to build an audience," Rawley said, "but it's the same people that do it all. It's very hard to convince the general public when you're asking for \$16 an evening, but they think nothing of going to an \$8 movie and spending another \$8 on popcorn and drinks."

Rawley said she is confident in her and her colleagues' ability to draw in crowds, though.

"We do our darndest to attract an audience, and we usually succeed," she said.

Although Rawley's life may not have panned out as originally hoped, she seems to be OK with the fact.

"I'm just terribly glad I live in Lincoln, because there is a lot of activity in the field that interests me, and I treasure my association with these groups." ■



Photo courtesy of the School of Music

The UNL School of Music Opera production "The Most Happy Fella" won six awards including the Waterford International Trophy as the top overall production of the Waterford International Festival of Light Opera in Waterford, Ireland, last September.

hitting all the right notes

BY AUDREY PRIBNOW

Friends of Opera paves way for program's success

DEVELOPMENT

Ariel Bybee was a little disappointed in her first year as an artist-in-residence and associate professor of music at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1998.

“We had auditions for the operas that were going to be performed that year, and we had 11 people audition,” Bybee said. “I sort of scratched my head.”

During her 10-year stint at the university, which ended this spring when she retired for health reasons, she saw interest in opera grow tremendously. Bybee said between 65 and 70 students auditioned last fall to be part of the school’s opera performances.

The reason for this increase is simple, Bybee said. “The program is just better now than it was 10 years ago, and people like to be in something that’s successful.”

Thanks in part to the support group Friends of Opera, UNL’s opera department has certainly found success — most recently in Ireland.

The department, headed by William Shomos since 1994, confirmed its improvement last fall when cast members of “The Most Happy Fella” claimed the Waterford International Trophy for top overall production at the Waterford International Festival of Light Opera in Waterford, Ireland.

The cast members, most of whom were UNL students, also claimed awards including best male and female singer, best choral presentation, best musical director and best sets.

Bybee and her husband, UNL Associate Professor of English James Ford, co-directed the production and organized the trip to Ireland, which was sponsored by a gift to the University of Nebraska Foundation by James and Rhonda Seacrest.

“I think the trip was wonderfully educational project for the students,” Bybee said. “Many of them had never been outside Nebraska.”

Shomos agreed the trip was worthwhile. “It was just pretty awesome the way that

(the students) all rolled up their sleeves and did the work,” he said. “And just the amount of energy and love that went into that show was a real inspiration for me.”

While Bybee and Shomos both spoke highly of the opera department’s vast improvement over the past decade, they also were quick to also highlight short-term, student-generated advancement of “The Most Happy Fella” when cast members recognized the high stakes involved.

Bybee said the students learned “that excellence is required in order to win.”

“When we were first rehearsing, I think they thought our show was pretty good,” she said. “And I think they thought they were doing their best.”

These early rehearsals were in the spring of 2007, when the show was performed for the Lincoln community to enjoy. Rehearsals reconvened in late summer in preparation for the Ireland competition in September 2007.

Because Bybee had been to the competition before, she said she knew cast members needed to step things up a notch.

“I think they started to catch on that what they thought was good wasn’t good enough, and we weren’t going to let it be good enough,” she said.

Another reason the opera department has improved in recent years is the existence of Friends of Opera.

The group was formed in 2001 “to encourage support to the opera program,” Shomos said.

“It was a combined effort between the University of Nebraska Foundation, the School of Music faculty and some members of the community who were very enthusiastic about what was going on with opera,” Shomos said.

The 200-member group not only helps the opera department financially, Shomos said, but it also does publicity work and outreach projects while serving as “a good bridge between the opera program and

community.”

Shomos singled out Don Burt, president of Friends of Opera, and said he “has been the best advocate we could hope for.

“He’s been unbelievably supportive and enthusiastic about the program and it’s a contagious enthusiasm that I think has spread throughout the community,” Shomos said.

Burt said he has taken voice lessons from Shomos since 1999, and through Shomos, he also met Bybee. Burt’s relationship with the two professors initially sparked his interest in opera, in addition to his participation in UNL’s 2001 production of “Die Fledermaus.”

Burt said Friends of Opera, which has donated nearly \$200,000 to the University of Nebraska Foundation for the opera program in its short existence, is focused solely on students.

“Our mission is not to try to make Mozart or Puccini any greater than they are, because we can’t do that,” he said. “Our mission is to help UNL students.”

Bybee also helped get the group off the ground, along with Shomos and Burt, and she said the organization has already become indispensable to the UNL opera department.

“We couldn’t do most of what we do without Friends of Opera,” Bybee said.

During Bybee’s time at UNL, she has seen the opera department come a long way. From 11 people auditioning 10 years ago to 70 last fall, Bybee said it has been wonderful seeing the department and Friends of Opera develop together.

“There’s something kind of contagious about opera once you get to know it a little bit,” she said.

Shomos went even further.

“Opera is the greatest art form there is,” he said. “And I think if you present it to students as that—with the enthusiasm, joy, love and a desire to discover what opera is all about—the program builds itself.” ■



Tom Slocum, University Communications

Dean Jack Oliva and Ernie Weyeneth, CEO of the Richard P. Kimmel and Laurine Kimmel Charitable Foundation.

steward of a legacy

Kimmel Foundation CEO
Weyeneth continues
couple's wish to support
arts, youth, agriculture

BY AUDREY PRIBNOW

For most people, one full-time job is enough.

Ernie Weyeneth, however, keeps up with two. In addition to his position as vice president and senior portfolio manager at Citigroup Smith Barney, Weyeneth is also CEO of the Richard P. Kimmel and Laurine Kimmel Charitable Foundation.

After helping Richard Kimmel create the foundation in 1986, Weyeneth now moves it forward with Kimmel's voice in the back of his mind.

"I try to stick to the things that I think the Kimmels would want me to support on their behalf," Weyeneth said.

The Kimmel Foundation's Web site says the foundation's primary purpose is to provide support.

"We like to support the arts, we like to support agricultural areas, and also we're interested in young people and their development," Weyeneth said.

Recently, the foundation has helped fund 4-H national conference participants' travel expenses, helped University of Nebraska-Lincoln students attend regional and national livestock judging contests, and commissioned an artist in conjunction with an NET Television fundraiser.

Fellowships are also given to graduate students in the art and art history department at UNL on behalf of the Kimmel Foundation.

As CEO, Weyeneth has helped to expand the foundation's influence to Nebraska City, Neb. In partnership with the Nelson Foundation, Weyeneth directed the opening of the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts in Nebraska City in 1998.

The center awards two- to six-week residencies for budding writers, visual artists and composers, which allow them to work uninterrupted for a period of time. Residents receive a weekly stipend, free housing and a private studio for the length of their stay.

Lucy Buntain Comine, director of spe-

cial projects for the University of Nebraska Foundation, said she admires the contributions Weyeneth has made both in Nebraska City and in Lincoln.

"Private support is the life's blood for the future of the arts, and particularly at the university," Buntain Comine said. "Ernie's generosity through the Kimmel Founda-

*'I'm a blessed man.
I love what I do,
and I always have.
That's why I do the
same thing I've
always done in the
same place. In no
matter how small of
a way, we can touch
people's lives in a
positive way.'*

Ernie Weyeneth

tion has enabled numerous graduate students to complete their degree.

"And without those dollars, it simply would not have been possible," she said.

Buntain Comine appreciates Weyeneth for more than the money he directs toward the arts, though.

"He became very engaged in the (Kimmel Fellows') activities," Buntain Comine

said. "He came to their shows, he knew them by name, he was supportive of them in a very personal way. And I think that's equally valuable and important in their lives."

Ed Forde, chairman of the Department of Art and Art History at UNL, has also seen Weyeneth's interactions with graduate students.

"Ernie has a very winning personality," Forde said. "He's extremely generous and very supportive, and he's a great joy to be around."

Although he obviously enjoys his position with the Kimmel Foundation, Weyeneth said it is not without challenges.

"The big challenge is that you can't say yes to everybody," he said. "There's not that much money."

Forde also acknowledged the shortage of money and said Weyeneth is valued for his constant support of the arts.

"Nebraska does not have a very large population, so there are a limited number of people in the philanthropic area who do support the visual arts," Forde said, "and Ernie has always been one of them."

Weyeneth will continue his support as long as he thinks Richard Kimmel would want him to—which will likely be for years and years to come.

Weyeneth said he once asked Kimmel if they should develop a set of guidelines to help them decide when and where to fund certain programs, trips and projects.

"(Kimmel's) comment was quite simple," Weyeneth said. "You know whether or not I would go for it."

So with Kimmel guiding him, Weyeneth continues providing necessary money to the arts in Nebraska.

"I'm a blessed man," Weyeneth said. "I love what I do, and I always have. That's why I do the same thing I've always done in the same place. In no matter how small of a way, we can touch people's lives in a positive way," he said. ■

Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Giving

The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts gratefully acknowledges the following contributions to the University of Nebraska Foundation to support the College from May 1, 2006, to May 1, 2008.

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Hixson-Lied Endowment Funding 2007-2008

The Hixson-Lied Endowment continues to fund exciting and innovative projects. The Hixson-Lied Advisory Board meets twice a year, in October and April, to review and approve expenditures.

The Hixson-Lied Advisory Board was created to review and react to requests for expenditures of income from the Hixson-Lied Endowment to benefit the College and its affiliated organizations. The board encourages requests for funding that will truly advance excellence in the college and enhance its national reputation. Additionally,

the Board is involved in overseeing the investment of the endowed funds in cooperation with the University of Nebraska Foundation's Finance Committee.

What follows is a report on the new projects that were approved in 2007-2008 for funding in the three funding areas: Program Support, Faculty Support and Student Support. These do not include the on-going, multiple-year projects that were covered in previous alumni publications. A new three-year report on the Hixson-Lied Endowment will be published this fall.

Program Support

Lied Center for Performing Arts, \$40,000 over two years, for partial funding to support the Creative Campus Research Partnership Initiative. The Lied Center for Performing Arts, in partnership with the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, Department of Computer Sciences, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, Nebraska Educational Television and Troika Ranch Dance Company of New York and Berlin, is currently engaged in a research and commissioning project that will result in a new dance/theatre/music work using digital technology and exploring the relationship of movement data and control of digital media. The Hixson-Lied grant will support the documentary film component of the Troika Ranch Dance project.

Sheldon Museum of Art, \$30,000, for **TRANSactions: Contemporary Latin American and Latino Art**. The exhibition will present art created by contemporary Latin American and Latino artists moving across and beyond geographical, cultural, political and aesthetic borders. Featuring the work of 48 artists, the exhibition highlights how these artists, despite their differences, have commonly explored

the question of identity through their own cultures and life experiences. The exhibition will be on display at Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery from Nov. 1, 2008, through January 18, 2009.

Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film, \$87,040 over six years, for the creation of the Carson Film Series. The Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film (JCSTF) is proposing to create the "Johnny Carson School Film Series" and produce two, half-hour film projects over a six-year period. Hixson-Lied Program Enhancement Funding would be split between Projects #1 and #2. The Hixson-Lied funds would be coupled with Carson Endowment funds to create the needed budgets for the production of the two short films. Based upon the success of these two short film productions, it is expected that the Johnny Carson School Film Series will become an ongoing, unique and invaluable experience for both JCSTF students and students in other units of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, with a new film created every three years. The proposed film project would replace one theatrical production in every third year.

School of Music, \$230,100 over three years, to renew the Chiara String Quartet Residency, matched with three-year

funding from the University. The Chiara String Quartet has enhanced significantly the national reputation of the College, the School of Music, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln since their residency began in the fall of 2005. Through a wide variety of activities, both local and national in scope, that included significant enhancements to the academic curriculum in the School of Music, along with performances in traditional and non-traditional venues, recordings, outreach initiatives, musical recordings, and reviews in local and national media, the Quartet has established themselves competitively with chamber groups in similar positions in research universities with a national profile.

Faculty Support

The establishment of a Faculty and Staff Awards Program, \$20,000 annually. Funding establishes an ongoing awards program for faculty and staff, to recognize outstanding performance and accomplishments in the areas of teaching, research and creative activity, faculty service, outreach and engagement, and staff service to the college and university. Proposed recognitions would include four awards totaling \$10,000 in teaching, two



Tom Slocum, University Communications

This year's Nebraska Young Artist Award honorees included 71 high school juniors from more than 40 Nebraska high schools. The program will receive \$5,000 annually from the Hixson-Lied eEndowment.

awards totaling \$6,000 in research and creative activity, one award in the amount of \$2,000 for faculty service, outreach and engagement, and one award in the amount of \$2,000 for staff service to the college and university.

The establishment of a Distinguished Artist/Scholar Residency in the Arts, up to \$60,000 annually. Funding establishes the Hixson-Lied Distinguished Artist/Scholar in the Arts residency, which is designed to bring a nationally/internationally known artist or scholar to campus for a special extended residency each year. The program is fashioned to attract someone who can speak to the arts in a collective sense, and who is also capable and willing to engage in one or

more activities that integrate the arts with each other, as well as with other disciplines, while on campus.

Student Support

Expansion of Specialized Study Opportunities for Students, up to \$10,000 a year annually. This funding expands the Student International Studies Program, currently funded at \$10,000 per year, to include opportunities for similar study in the United States. The proposal creates a total sum of \$20,000 per year to support both types of activities.

Nebraska Young Artist Awards, \$5,000 a year annually. Funding supports the

expansion of the Nebraska Young Artist Awards, which has been in place to recognize outstanding Nebraska high school juniors in the arts, since 1998. Requested funding matches funding provided by the college, the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs already in place. The additional funding will enable the expansion of several aspects of the program to include the enhancement of state-wide publicity about the award winners, the recognition of the teachers of the award winners, and the development of a more systematic process for following up on student winners in an effort to attract a greater percentage of them to UNL and to the college. ■

Theatre professor Miller leaves UNL after 36 years

BY LINSEY MARSHALL

Tice Miller doesn't like the word "retirement."

Sitting in his office in the Temple Building on the University of Nebraska–Lincoln campus, Miller smiled while discussing the party his fellow faculty members are throwing for him in June. He refused to use the word "retirement," but that's exactly what they will be celebrating.

For many students and faculty members of UNL's Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film, it's hard to believe Miller's era has come to an end. After 36 years as a tenured professor and the former chairman of the theater department, Miller said he finally decided it was time to go.

"I always said when I turned 70, I would retire," he said. "This summer, I turn 70, so it's time."

A Nebraska native, Miller was born and raised in Lexington. He graduated from high school with nine other students before attending Kearney State College (now UNK), where he earned the Bachelor of Arts in Education in 1960. From there Miller went on to UNL, where he completed the Master of Arts in Speech and Dramatic Art in 1961.

Miller moved to Kansas City to teach theater after completing the master's. It was there he met his wife, Carren Hammerstrom, and proposed to her over Christmas in 1962.

They were married less than a year later and moved to Long Beach, Calif., where Miller was a supply officer for the United States Navy on the USS Bennington. When his service ended in 1965, he and Carren both decided to go back to school, and they moved to Urbana, Ill.

Miller went on to earn the Doctorate in Speech and Dramatic Art in 1968 from the University of Illinois-Urbana. At that point, Miller said, he had no plans to move back to Nebraska. In fact, he only intended to visit the Midwest for short periods to see friends and family—never to stay for long.

It was the death of an old friend that



Professor of Theatre Tice Miller receives a ceramics piece as a gift from the department from Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film Director Paul Steger and student Jenny Schenck.

triggered Miller's return Lincoln in 1972. He had been teaching theater for four years at the University of West Florida in Pensacola when he and his wife traveled home for the funeral. While he was back in the state, Miller said, UNL offered him a job.

"I told my wife we would only be here for a short time," he said. "And we've been here 36 years now."

Paul Steger, the director of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film, said Miller isn't just another professor who's been on the faculty for 30 years. He's a celebrated scholar, Steger said, which is evident by the numerous awards and honors he's received.

Over those 36 years, Miller has written six internationally renowned books, 14 articles or book chapters, four journal editorials and 24 papers for professional presentations. He has directed 29 plays, taught 17 different courses and supervised 31 gradu-

ate students.

One production Miller is especially proud of is Chautauqua, a traveling theater program Miller created in the summer of 1975 to celebrate the Bicentennial in 1976. For three weeks, the program toured the state, using theatre to teach Nebraskans about the historic event.

Miller said a 10-day trip to Japan in 1991 is another fond memory he has of his career. The university sent a production of Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire" to give two performances in Tokyo as part of an exchange program with Senshu University. Miller said Japanese students arrived at the performance with translation books in hand so they could follow the plot.

Ronald Wainscott, a former theater professor at UNL who is now a theater professor at Indiana University, directed the production and accompanied Miller and the students to Tokyo. Wainscott said Mill-

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er had only seen one play he had directed before the trip, but still chose Wainscott to lead the production in Japan.

"I was very happy he gave me the opportunity to do it," he said. "He had really worked very hard to make the whole thing happen, and it was the highlight of my time at UNL."

Miller said the trip was especially memorable for him because Sheila Griffin, then director of the Lied Center, had connections to Japan's empress, and the group was invited to visit the palace and perform for the Japanese royal family. Better yet, Miller said, his 12-year-old son, Dane, was able to join them on the trip.

"I have a great photo of Dane shaking hands with the emperor," he said.

Today, 29-year-old Dane lives in Oakland, Calif., and works for a Web-based company called Greatschools.com. Miller's younger son, 24-year-old Graeme, lives and works in Chicago. Miller said he and his wife will continue to visit their boys on a regular basis, especially now that they will have more time.

"They really are good boys," he said. "We like them."

Many of Miller's students have said their teacher has always treated them like they were his own children. Susie Baer-Collins, a former student of Miller's who is now the director of the Omaha Community Playhouse, said he would often invite them over to chat after class.

"He seemed to make a significant effort to bridge the gap between the faculty and the students, creating opportunities for them to socialize outside of the classroom or the rehearsal hall, often in his own home," she said. "I can only imagine that there were many more students to follow who benefited greatly from such expertise, encouragement and guidance."

Becky Key, another of Miller's former students, agreed and said her mentor always encouraged her to do more than just act.

"I had never felt so inspired to write, and the honesty he taught me on paper has benefited me in every way as an artist," she said.

Julie Hagemeyer, the manager of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film and a former student of Miller's, said his



Tice Miller (back row, far right) as a sophomore at Riverdale Public School in 1954. He was voted the all-around student of the 1953-1954 school year and was president of his class. The yearbook also notes that he received a Superior in his original oratory.

own writing is an impressive example for his students to follow.

"He was the toughest grader I've ever had on papers because he's such a good writer that he expects that out of his students," she said. "He will continue to give you notes until you've written and re-written it the best you can."

Robert Schanke, one of Miller's first graduate students and a current member of the College of Fellows of the American Theater, also credited his teacher with improving students' writing skills.

"From working with Tice, I certainly learned how to be concise and clear in my writing," he said. "Avoid theatre jargon, make reading accessible, cut out unnecessary verbiage."

Schanke said he also caught onto Miller's love for history. When Schanke took Miller's History of American Theater course, he said, he fell in love with the 20th century opera and the detective work the class required of him.

"I learned then and still believe that a historian is something of a Sherlock Holmes," he said. "Tice opened doors and allowed me to see that. Soon after I received the Ph.D., my interests turned from directing to re-



Photo courtesy of Julie Hagemeyer. Tice Miller and his students scout Nebraska opera houses in this circa 1980-81 photo.

search and writing because of Tice."

Megan Black, a current student of Miller's, said he found ways to make lectures more interesting for his students.

"Tice encouraged us to get the hell out of the classroom," she said. "He lived the philosophy that life isn't experienced be

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hind a desk.”

Hagemeier said that after she graduated from UNL in 1977, she began teaching high school theater. When she became frustrated with her students, she went to Miller for help. The advice he gave her, she said, changed her entire perspective on teaching.

“He fixed it with one sentence. He said, ‘You’re not teaching these students to work in professional theater, you’re teaching them to learn about life through theater,’” she said. “I realized, ‘Yeah, I guess you are,’ and it makes more sense, and makes it a whole lot easier to do it.”

Steger said Miller enjoyed learning from his students as much as he loved to teach them.

“He’s there as much to share in what they know and their perspective as he is to learn what they know and their perspective,” Steger said. “He would walk into a situation with eyes wide open, thinking, ‘What can I learn from this? What can I gain from this?’”

Steger added that Miller was as much of a mentor to his faculty as he was to his students. Miller encouraged them to become more than teachers, he said.

“Tice was the chair who hired people (on the UNL faculty) to one day become chairs and deans themselves,” he said.

Baer-Collins said Miller’s teaching wasn’t the only influence he had on her life; he even introduced her to her first husband by casting them opposite each other in plays for the Nebraska Repertory Theatre while they were both theater students at UNL.

Years later, she said, her son Benjamin attended UNL as a theatre major and was cast by Miller in the play “A Flea in her Ear.”

“There’s a personal history there as well as an academic and artistic one,” she said.

Steger agreed that Miller’s connection



Tice Miller in front of the Temple Building in the 1980s.

with the students has always been unique.

“He finds what really ignites them and what’s their passion,” Steger said. “He encourages them to continue to explore without saying, ‘This is the right way or the wrong way,’ but by saying, ‘Keep looking at that and keep working on that.’”

For now, Miller said, he and his wife intend to spend summers in Lincoln and winters in Austin, Texas, where they have another home. He plans to do a lot of traveling and writing, and he won’t be leaving any unfinished business at UNL.

“Everything I haven’t got to do, I’m planning on doing,” he said. “It will all get finished.”

Steger said he hopes Miller will stay in close contact with UNL faculty members.

“He’ll go all over the place and see shows, and I just hope he continues to call and say,

‘Hey, you wouldn’t believe this show I just saw!’” Steger said. “By now, I expect it.”

Baer-Collins said she hopes to see more of Miller at the Omaha Community Playhouse now that he has retired.

“Who knows, he might choose to come play with us in his retirement,” she said.

Baer-Collins said she knows the impact Miller has left on the university will not easily be forgotten.

“It seemed that he became a teacher of theatre for all the right reasons—to impart knowledge to and share experience with students, to create a creative learning environment and to mentor and advise future theatre artists,” she said. “The university is fortunate to have had such a dedicated and distinguished individual in service to its high standards, who has contributed greatly to its strength and significant quality.”

Black said her fellow students have already realized their good fortune, and have a special way of remembering their beloved teacher.

“My class actually has a Facebook group to celebrate the honor of taking a class with Tice,” she said. “I don’t know how many lecturers share in this distinction.” ■

‘Tice encouraged us to get the hell out of the classroom. He lived the philosophy that life isn’t experienced behind a desk.’

Megan Black, recent student of Tice Miller

Snyder counts final composition students among his best

BY AUDREY PRIBNOW

Walk into Dr. Randall Snyder's music composition studio at any given moment and who knows what style of music you might hear being played.

Snyder, a professor and composer-in-residence at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln since 1974 who just completed his final year of teaching, said the graduate composition students who turned out to be his last were among his most talented and diverse. The studio of three included Jen-Kuang Chang, Kurt Knecht and Jeff Richmond.

"The three of them are all outstanding, and they've all sort of staked out their own aesthetic terrain, or territory," Snyder said. "They're true to themselves."

The three students and their varying musical interests accentuate Snyder's diverse abilities as a composition mentor.

Chang focuses on what Snyder calls "avant-garde" music.

"Much of his work is electronic, created with synthesizers," Snyder said. "And also he creates his own visual images."

Richmond, on the other hand, composes music in the jazz and big band genres, in addition to what he classifies as "third stream" music.

"This is a blending of classical art music traditions and modern jazz vocabulary," Richmond said.

Knecht writes music of yet a different style. Knecht is a nationally recognized choral composer, Snyder said, but he also has written pieces for organ, piano and instrumental ensembles.

"It would be unfair to just label him as a choral composer," Snyder said.

While each of these three composers writes different styles of music, Snyder is somehow able to guide them all.

Chang said his music style of choice is the furthest stretch for Snyder.

"(Snyder) is always willing to be open-minded," Chang said. "My professor is not doing electronic music even though I am



Randall Snyder has been a professor at UNL since 1974.

doing electronic music, but he always encourages me. He always guides me, which is very important."

Knecht said although the three students write "in extremely different styles with very different aesthetic points of view," these differences work together to create a composition student that is "extremely strong."

Knecht said Snyder has "one of the biggest minds I've ever encountered." But Knecht goes on to point out Snyder's knowledge of not only music, but other things, too.

"It was kind of cool because the first lesson that we had, all we did was talk about literature," Knecht said. "And I found that he has an amazing grasp of literature."

"And the second time I came in to meet with him, we sat around and talked about visual arts," Knecht said. "Then, after that, we started talking more about composition."

Snyder also remembered his discussions with Knecht that veered from composition.

"Often we'll end up in lessons talking about Kierkegaard," Snyder said. "It's just a real delight to have a student that has such a broad background in Western European culture."

"Kurt is kind of a throwback in a way—a renaissance man," Snyder said. "I like to

think of myself as being from a similar kind of background."

Of course, Snyder and his students also share a similar background in music and composition. The son of two musicians, Snyder grew up in Chicago surrounded by opera, symphony and jazz. By the time he entered high school, Snyder said he had become focused on writing music and had decided he'd like eventually to teach at a university.

His students began composing at early stages of life, as well.

As a young boy, Richmond was given a computer program that allowed him to write music. Chang said his start in music composition evolved from a hobby of writing poems and short stories when he was young.

No matter how young they started, though, Snyder said all three of his students are now "master composers."

"They know what they're doing," Snyder said. "At the doctoral level, we're really not teaching them so much as being a consultant."

In fact, Snyder said he focuses on the teacher-student relationship from a non-traditional angle.

"I try to learn more from them than they learn from me," Snyder said.

"After I work with their music, I go and work on my own music, and there's a certain amount of influence from all three of those composers," he said.

In addition to seeing their influence in his own music, Snyder admires other aspects of his students, too.

One thing he appreciates about Richmond is "his ability to recruit players to play his music as an entrepreneur." Snyder said this was most obvious when Richmond was commissioned to write a symphony for the Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center. Richmond not only wrote the symphony, but he also recruited the orchestra, went to Omaha to record the piece and conducted the performance at the hospital.

Snyder also said he is continually amazed at the quantity of Richmond's work.

“He brings in new pieces every week,” Snyder said. “The quality of someone’s work is a matter of opinion, but the quantity is a matter of objective reality.”

Chang also produces a high quantity of work. Snyder said Chang comes with something new to each of their weekly one-hour sessions.

Snyder said he has enjoyed watching Chang put together “his own little band of musicians” to showcase his work at festivals around the world.

“He sort of handpicked and developed a cadre of players that are particularly sensitive to his style of music,” he said.

Snyder said Knecht has a certain advantage in this area because he serves as music director at St. Mark’s Church on the UNL campus. This position allows him to write choral music and then have his own choir perform it.

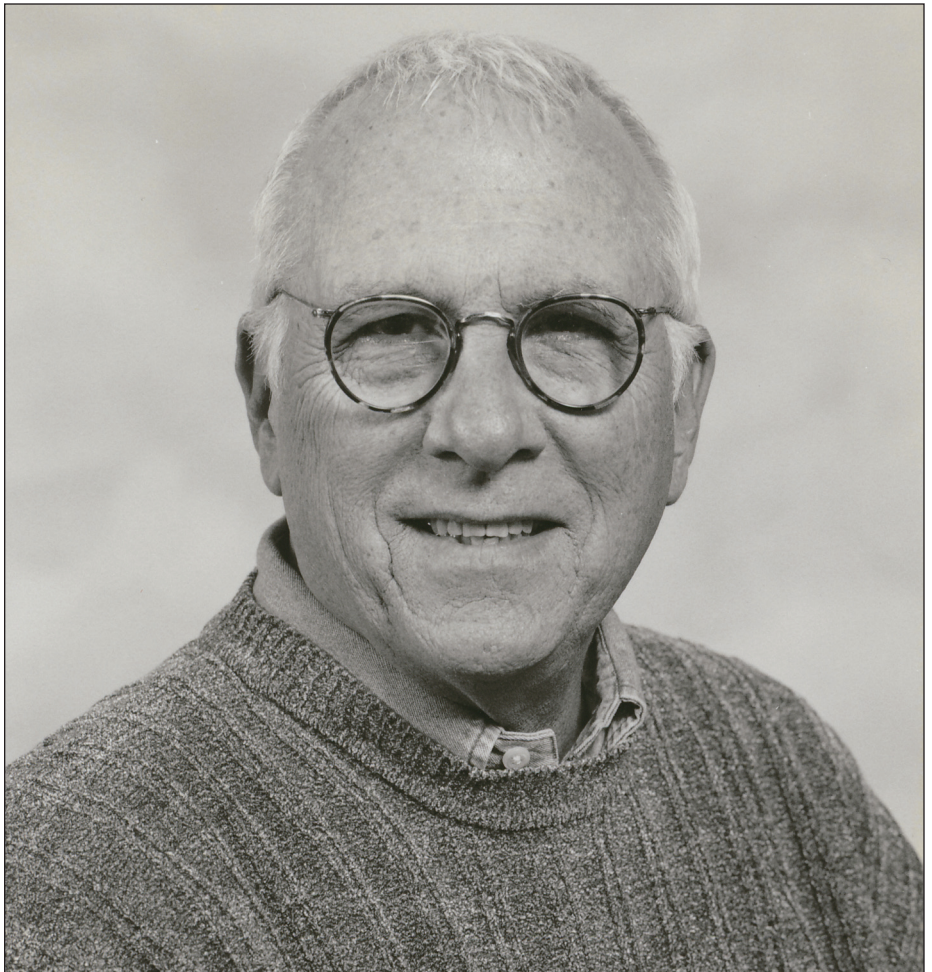
While Snyder is quick to list Knecht’s many musical accomplishments—nationally recognized choral music, master organist, professional accompanist—he most admires Knecht for his “raw background in the humanities.”

“A lot of times, students in this era are very knowledgeable in music, but because they spent so much time studying music, they haven’t had much time to study other things,” Snyder said. That’s not the case with Knecht, he added.

It is clear that as these three graduate composition students have learned much from Snyder, he has learned much from them, as well. Despite his students’ differing musical styles, Snyder rolls with the punches and offers whatever input he can.

“I personally find it enjoyable because if I had all students writing in the same medium it would be kind of tedious personally for me,” Snyder said. “I try to reinforce to provide some enthusiasm for what they’re doing.”

Snyder said, “These three are among the very, very best I’ve ever had. It’s been great for me to end my career working with such fine persons, as well as composers. It was certainly a mutual experience, which is the best of both worlds.” ■



Jacobshagen ready to paint full time

BY KATHE ANDERSEN

Cather Professor of Art Keith Jacobshagen retired this spring after 40 years of teaching at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Department of Art and Art History.

“It certainly was not because of being exhausted by teaching,” he said. “But in turning 66, I decided what time I have left, I want to paint full time. I believe I have another level to go to as a painter, and I need to be able to focus on that to get to that next level.”

Jacobshagen spent his entire teaching career at UNL, having joined the faculty in 1968.

“Through his landscape paintings of Nebraska, Keith Jacobshagen has

celebrated the natural wonders of this state more than any other artist that has taught at UNL,” said Department of Art and Art History Chairman Ed Forde.

Jacobshagen is known as one of the “Heartland Painters,” contemporary artists who revived the idea of American Regionalism, depicting dramatic landscapes of the plains. Working in both the field and studio, he paints images which define visually the vastness that is part of the flatlanders’ spirit and experience.

Jacobshagen has had more than 70 solo exhibitions across the United States, including New York City, San Francisco, Chicago and Kansas City. His work is in both corporate and museum collections, including Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, Chemical Bank in

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New York, Chicago's Art Institute, Kansas City's Nelson-Atkins Museum, Brandeis University's Rose Art Museum and the Sheldon Museum of Art.

Jacobshagen came to UNL originally for a one-year appointment.

"I didn't think I'd be here more than one year," he said.

He was replacing a faculty member who went on leave for a year, but when that faculty member decided not to return, Jacobshagen stayed and was eventually offered a tenure-track position. He enjoyed being near the Sheldon Museum of Art and what Director Emeritus Norman Geske was doing at that time.

"It's been the best job in the world," he said. "I needed that work continuum in my life. The last 10 years have been the best years of teaching, and the last three to four years with Ed Forde as Chairman have been keen years for teaching. So I decided to bow out on an up note."

Jacobshagen was born in Wichita, Kan. As a child in the 1940s, he grew up with a strong interest in comic books and began painting and drawing as a child.

His father was a professional pilot, who gave private pilot lessons on the weekends at an airstrip five miles north of Wichita, which was surrounded by farmland. Jacobshagen enjoyed the best of both worlds—flying and looking at the landscape. His father taught him about weather and pointed out things in the sky for him.

"The landscape was a fundamental part of my spirit and personality."

His father also had friends who were painters and writers, and the like.

"I saw adults doing that," he said. "I began to have the cognition that it was not just for kids."

Trained as a graphic designer and illustrator at the Kansas City Art Institute, he worked in the Contemporary Design Department of Hallmark Cards in Kansas City, Mo., after graduation. He painted on the side.

"I had a sense that there was a lot of information I just wasn't getting as a painter," he said.

In 1966 he decided to enroll in the MFA program at the University of Kansas, where he met Professor of Drawing and Painting

Robert Sudlow and began painting the landscape.

"I began to see my potential to become a painter and to see that I could make some kind of small contribution to painting," Jacobshagen said. "At heart, I knew I was a painter and had a passion for the act of painting."

Sudlow was himself a landscape painter and a mentor for Jacobshagen.

"I was really impressed with his work," Jacobshagen said. "It struck a deep, resonant connection with me. I looked for him when I got to the University of Kansas, and he got me to start painting from the landscape."

While at Kansas, they also convinced him to get a teaching assistantship.

"I gave it a try and discovered that I like it," he said. "I was learning a lot from teaching, both from the students and the faculty."

'I am not one of those guys who will sit around and swat flies and watch the garden grow.'

Keith Jacobshagen

After completing his MFA, he decided to apply at a few schools for a teaching position, but otherwise planned to get back into illustration and keep painting on the side. Instead, he came to UNL for that one-year appointment and remained for 40 years.

Originally hired to revive the graphic design program, Jacobshagen said initially he "didn't know if I'd ever teach painting." They later began using him in drawing classes.

"Eventually through attrition, I taught painting and drawing classes," he said, laughing.

One of the highlights of his career at UNL was winning the university's Outstanding Research and Creative Activity Award (ORCA) in 1990.

"That was immensely pleasing to me," Jacobshagen said. "I had committed a lot of

time to my research as a painter, and so I was pleased to have that rewarded."

His other career highlights include his participation in several national and international exhibitions, including six one-person exhibitions in New York City, and his invitation to participate in a survey entitled "Contemporary American Realism Since 1960," by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, which traveled throughout the United States and Europe in the early 1980s.

"When I arrived here, I always felt I was an artist who would teach, rather than a teacher who was an artist," Jacobshagen said. "The studio was my first priority, both for me and for my students. I think students benefit when they have a working, committed artist teaching them."

Jacobshagen said he will definitely miss the interaction with the students.

"There was a satisfaction I got out of teaching that went beyond painting," he said. "It was about a basic communication with human beings. There is a social discourse that takes place that is instrumental in coaching them."

He saw himself as an advocate for the students.

"I was helping those students who were searching to be an artist," he said. "My excitement for kids who were immensely talented was equaled by those who weren't. There was a unique problem-solving that happened with students who didn't necessarily have the natural 'chops' for painting. It was very satisfying to do that, whereas the work in the studio is more solitary. I'm going to miss that a lot."

Next year, he will have an exhibition in Santa Fe, N.M., at the Gerald Peters Gallery and also hopes to have another show with his dealer, John Cacciola, in New York City.

There may also be a retrospective of his work at a museum "close by," Jacobshagen said, along with other group shows and a book that is in the works. He may also continue to work with some graduate students at UNL with occasional studio visits.

"I am not one of those guys who will sit around and swat flies and watch the garden grow," he said. "I love to work. I can't imagine not working." ■

FACULTY NOTES

Scott Anderson, Associate Professor of Trombone, performed a solo recital on Feb. 8 featuring Music for Trombone and Organ from the Czech Republic including the U.S. premier of Juraj Filas' *De Profundis*. He also performed as soloist on Feb. 23 with the Twin Ports Wind Orchestra on a program featuring the music of Johan De Meij at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Anderson performed De Meij's *T-Bone Concerto*. In addition to performing, he presented two masterclasses. Immediately following the performance in Duluth, Anderson performed for a week as second trombonist with the Minnesota Orchestra on a program featuring the Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, Blue Cathedral by Jennifer Higdon and the Piano Concerto #1 by Sergei Rachmaninov.



John Bailey, Larson Professor of Flute, was a featured guest artist at the 2008 Orlando convention of the Florida Flute Association. He performed a headliner recital, judged a high school and collegiate young artist competition, gave a morning warm-up session and worked with collegiate flutists in an advanced masterclass. In addition, he performed a piece for piccolo and piano written for his Orlando appearance by Florida composer Howard Buss. Bailey also performed at Florida State University, where he gave a guest recital, conducted a performance of the Florida State Flute Choir, and gave graduate and undergraduate masterclasses.

Carolyn Barber, Associate Professor and Director of Bands, conducted the Dorian Festival Honor Band in February at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. In early March she traveled to Baltimore, Md., to conduct the Maryland Music Educators Association Junior All-State Band. At the 2008 College Band Directors National Association Conference in mid-March, Barber presented Percy Grainger's "The Merry King" in a session with the U.S. Air Force Heartland of America Band. Barber has also been invited to conduct New York All-State Band.



Kate Butler, Assistant Professor of Voice, sang the solos for the Brahms' "Alto Rhapsody" at Carnegie Hall in New York City with the University Chorus and Orchestra in January. She presented a lecture-recital, "Programming and Presentation of Creative Christian Concerts" for the 2008 National Conference of the Forum on Music and Christian Scholarship in Waco, Texas, in February. Butler also presented a lecture-recital, "Gli amanti impossibili" on the songs of Gian Carlo Menotti for a Menotti Weekend in February at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Okla., on the first anniversary of Menotti's death.



Ann Chang-Barnes, Senior Lecturer of Music, has received a Fulbright Scholar Award for next year. She will be doing research and performing at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, Belgium, in the summer of 2009.

The Chiara String Quartet (**Rebecca Fischer** and **Julie Yoon**, violins; **Jonah Sirota**, viola; and **Gregory Beaver**, cello) embarked on a concert tour of Sweden in April.

Mark Clinton, Associate Professor and Co-Chair of Piano, was the featured guest soloist with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra on Feb. 1. His performance of the Shostakovich Piano Concerto No. 1 was praised by the Lincoln Journal Star as "one of both command and caress, strongly leading the orchestra while manipulating phrasing and dynamics to achieve lyricism." On March 2, Clinton also appeared with violist **Clark Potter** in a UNL faculty recital featuring works for viola and piano by Glinka and Juon.

Associate Professor and Director of Choral Activities **Peter Eklund**, Assistant Professor **Therese Hibbard** and Associate Professor **Rhonda Fuelberth** presented clinics, and the Varsity Men's Chorus and University Women's Chorale performed concerts at the American Choral Directors Association North Central Division Conference in March.

Gretchen Foley, Associate Professor of Music Theory, and **Stanley Kleppinger**, Assistant Professor of Music Theory, were invited to present papers at an Arnold Schoenberg Retrospective Conference at the University of Missouri-Kan-

sas City Conservatory of Music in March. Foley's presentation was titled, "Perle and Schoenberg: Two Approaches to Serialism," while Dr. Kleppinger discussed "Copland on Schoenberg and Serialism." Foley also attended a three-day meeting of the Society for Music Theory (SMT) Program Committee in Nashville, Tenn., the location for the national SMT annual conference next November.



Dana Fritz, Associate Professor of Art, and her husband, Larry Gawel, are curators of the new Workspace Gallery, located in the Sawmill Building at 440 N. 8th St. in Lincoln's Haymarket. Their first exhibition, "Temples of Democracy: photographs by Keith F. Davis" was on display through April 30. Workspace Gallery is dedicated primarily to exhibiting fine art photographs.

Paul Haar, Assistant Professor of Saxophone, conducted the Jazz Ensemble I when they represented UNL at the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley Jazz Festival in April.



Jeffrey McCray, Assistant Professor of Bassoon, has been selected to perform on the 2008 Conference of the International Double-Reed Society in Provo, Utah, this July. He will be performing Samuel Adler's Canto XII (1989) for solo bassoon.

Giacomo Oliva, Dean and Professor of Music, was selected to receive the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award of New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development. The award recognizes exceptional individuals whose achievements in his or her profession, vocation, social and/or cultural endeavors are of extraordinary merit. The award is Steinhardt's highest alumni honor. The award was presented at the Doctoral Convocation on May 12. Oliva also served as a curriculum consultant in December for the Department of Music at Kean University in N.J.

FACULTY NOTES

Alison Stewart, Professor of Art History, attended the opening and symposium for “Grand Scale: Monumental Prints in the Age of Dürer and Titian” at Wellesley College’s Davis Museum and Cultural Center in March. She contributed an essay on large woodcuts as wallpaper for the exhibition catalogue and attended the symposium as an invited guest.

Tyler White, Associate Professor and Director of Orchestral Activities, has been commissioned to write a new work for chamber orchestra for the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C.



The University of Nebraska Brass Quintet (**Darryl White** and **K. Craig Bircher**, trumpets; **Alan Mattingly**, French horn; **Craig Fuller**, tuba; and **Scott Anderson**, trombone) recently toured Missouri and Kansas. The quintet presented recitals at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music, Washburn University and Kansas State University.

Eight UNL School of Music faculty and one doctoral student have been invited to present at the biennial World Conference of the International Society for Music Education in Bologna, Italy, in July. The faculty include **Gretchen Foley**, **Rhonda Fuelberth**, **Kevin Hanrahan**, **Glenn Nierman**, **Giacomo Oliva**, **John Richmond**, **Robert Woody** and **Brenda Wristen**. The doctoral student is **Jeffrey Richmond**.

The following UNL School of Music music education faculty presented at the peer-reviewed Music Educators National Conference National Biennial Conference in April in Milwaukee: **Dale Bazan**, **Brian Moore**, **Glenn Nierman**, **Giacomo Oliva**, **John Richmond** and **Robert Woody**. In addition, Bazan presented at the national conference of the American Education Research Association.

New Faculty

The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts welcomes the following new faculty members this Fall:



Dr. Eric Richards joins the School of Music as assistant professor of composition. Richards comes to UNL from Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, Neb., where he served as Music Department

Coordinator, Director of Instrumental Music and Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Technology. He is a composer-arranger, conductor, trombonist and keyboardist active in a wide range of musical media and styles. As a composer who defines himself as a “contemporary American eclectic,” Richards has written music for groups ranging from nationally recognized wind ensembles, big bands and symphony orchestras to various chamber media to small rural high school marching bands.

Richards received his D.M.A. from The University of Maryland at College Park, and he received his Master of Music and Bachelor of Science in Music Education from Duquesne University. He recently completed 20 years of service as composer-arranger with The United States Army Field Band, the Army’s premier musical ambassadors based near Washington, D.C. Richards has served on the faculties of Duquesne University, The University of Maryland at College Park, Anne Arundel Community College, and Washington Bible College.

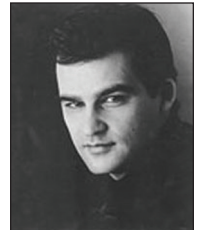
His works have been heard in concert at Carnegie Hall, the Montreux, Nice, and North Sea Jazz Festivals, the Berlin Philharmonie, the Mid West Instrumental Music Conference, the annual conventions of the International Association of Jazz Educators and the American Bandmasters Association, and at performances in the United Kingdom, Western Europe, Asia, and the Republic of India.

Ian Borden joins the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film as Assistant Professor of Practice in Theatre from Grand Valley State University. He is a Certified Teacher of Stage Combat with the Society of American Fight Directors and is a member of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, the American

Society for Theatre Research, the Voice and Speech Trainers Association, the Association of Theatre Movement Educators and Fight Directors Canada.

He recently completed a tour of *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* with the Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company where he played Macbeth and Bottom, and has acted in numerous films and television commercials. He has published several essays and presented several papers at national conferences.

Borden received his Bachelor of Arts degree in theatre from Simon Fraser University and his Master of Fine Arts degree in acting and directing from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He is presently completing his research and writing to earn a Ph.D. from Florida State University.



Sandy Veneziano joins the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film as Assistant Professor of Theatre in scenic design. She is a freelance director and set designer.

Since graduating from UNL with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Arts and Master of Fine Arts, she has worked in the film and television industry. Her long list of credits includes “Dead Poet’s Society,” “Outrageous Fortune,” “Home Alone II,” “Star Trek: The Next Generation,” “Dallas,” “Terms of Endearment,” “Stripes” and the feature film of “My Favorite Martian.”

She recently completed work on the film “Blood Done Sign My Name” and worked as the production designer for the television show “Gilmore Girls.” She also has taught film design classes at UNL between Hollywood assignments and was honored for her professional success as a University Master in 1994. She received the 2003 Alumni Achievement Award in Theatre Arts, a UNL Alumni Association Alumni Achievement Award in 2000 and is a member of the Hixson-Lied Advisory Board, which reviews and reacts to requests for expenditures of income from the Hixson-Lied Endowment.



Joseph Curiale was once nominated for an Emmy for his work in television music. Today he's raising money for indebted widows in India.

Graduate student Curiale leads fight against injustice in India

BY KATHE ANDERSEN

Joseph Curiale, a graduate music composition student, had already seemingly done it all.

Born in Connecticut, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in music education from the University of Bridgeport. He started to pursue a Masters degree in music composition at the University of North Texas, but instead took up residency in Japan, where he taught and composed new music.

"Even as an undergraduate, I always wanted to go to Hollywood," Curiale said.

So he moved to Los Angeles "cold turkey."

"I always had the intuitive sense that if you live your truth, there will be a place for you," he said.

His career in film, television and recording began with writing music for "The Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson from 1982 until the final show in 1992. His song "Sick of the Blues" became the closing theme for the show.

Shortly thereafter, he signed an exclusive six-year contract as the first staff songwriter for Columbia Pictures, leading to platinum records for his work on the "Breakin'" soundtrack and his songs in films such as "Roxanne," "Summer School," "Quicksilver" and "Little Nikita."

He was nominated for an Emmy Award

for his work orchestrating the TV special "Tribute to Sammy Davis." He also worked on specials honoring Frank Sinatra, Elizabeth Taylor, Quincy Jones, Richard Pryor and Muhammad Ali.

His other television themes included the long-running, Emmy Award winning show "Nick News," as well as "Ace Ventura Pet Detective," "The New Monkees" and "Wake Rattle and Roll."

"Sometimes I look at my own resume, and I don't know when this all happened," Curiale said. "But something is always pushing me to experience new things."

In the early 1990s, despite his success in Hollywood, he decided to explore concert music. In 1995, he went to London to re-

STUDENT PROFILE

cord “Gates of Gold” with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1997, his first CD, entitled “Awakening” was released, followed by “The Music of Life” in 2001.

Life was good.

Then, on March 2, 2006, his whole world changed again. He saw a TV report on CNN by international correspondent Satinder Bindra on the near quarter of a million farmers in India who have been driven to suicide by a vicious cycle of ongoing drought and rising debt. He was moved by the plight of widows left to fend for themselves against the moneylenders. In particular, he was touched by the plight of Anjamma, whom he saw in the report.

Anjamma owed more than \$1,100 to moneylenders after her husband committed suicide. She only earned 50 cents a day rolling tobacco, and it was not enough to support herself and her son, let alone repay the debt.

“I always remember her eyes,” Curiale said. “Despite her plight, they were filled with dignity.”

After seeing the report, he heard a voice: “Pay her debt.”

The problem was, Curiale didn’t have the money to pay her debt. Then, an unexpected music royalty check arrived with more than enough to pay Anjamma’s debt. He also asked his friends to help and within a month, he had around \$9,000.

So after contacting the reporter at CNN, he boarded a plane to India and set off to repay Anjamma’s debt. She broke down in tears after her debt was paid.

“To her, this guy came out of nowhere with a bag of money,” Curiale said. “But I felt so insignificant next to them. They had such dignity. It was a really beautiful feeling.”

He repaid the debts of four other widows on that trip, and returned to Los Angeles to do more fund-raising.

Since then, he has sold off nearly everything he owned to raise money, suspended his own composition work, made 10 trips back to India, and created The Joseph Curiale Foundation, which has raised more than \$70,000. A documentary about the Foundation’s work entitled “Sowing Hope” aired on New Delhi Television.

He jokingly calls himself a “homeless



Photo courtesy Joseph Curiale

Fathima, Swapna and Joseph Curiale.

jet-setter.”

But a corrupt system in India that allows bribery and worse has made his goal of helping as many widows as possible very difficult.

“I have hope for individuals, but I have no hope for India,” Curiale said.

In 2007, he adopted four girls (two sets of sisters) that he rescued from an orphanage, and now they are his priority. Swapna, 13, and Shailaja, 10, live with their grandmother and paternal uncle, while Fatima, 10, and Shagufta, 9, live with a family friend, all in Andhra Pradesh.

Curiale has paid the tuition for them to attend the leading private school, and he pays for their transportation to school and for their care.

“I want them to finish their education in their area,” he said. “And I want them to see what life can be like elsewhere. I want them to have the chance to live in a culture where people are caring and let them decide where to live.”

He calls them daily and makes visits to India as often as he can. But it’s never easy.

“I’ve had my life threatened. I have suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. I busted an orphanage that was abusing my girls,” Curiale said. “I’ve given up and sold

every possession that I own. But it’s joyful to see the children happy and have hope they didn’t have before. I never want to give up my ideals unless I do something that might endanger their lives. I have the most incredible life and no life at the same time.”

He started work on his Master of Music degree this spring. Even though he didn’t necessarily have a desire to go back to school, he wanted some leverage to raise his four girls.

“I’ve been out of school for 33 years. It’s worn me out,” he said. “But if I make the decision to do something, I give it 100 percent.”

Immediately after taking his finals at UNL in May, he hopped on a plane on his way to do fund-raising in Japan and then to visit his daughters in India.

“There is an urgency,” he said. “Sixty-seven percent of India’s children are abused.”

He wants to make sure his daughters are doing okay.

“This is the grand orchestration of life,” Curiale said. “My life in music has been a surreal dream. But all of it doesn’t add up to the beauty of holding one of my daughter’s hands.”

To learn more about Curiale’s work in India, visit www.savinglivesindia.org. ■

HONORS DAY

College Alumni Weekend held in April

The Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts celebrated its annual Alumni Weekend with its Honors Day Dinner on Saturday, April 26 in the Nebraska Union.

More than 140 people gathered to celebrate the achievements of students, faculty and alumni at the Honors Day Dinner.

Alumni Achievement Award, Award of Merit and Student Leader-

ship Award winners are selected by the College's Alumni Board from nominations submitted by the general public, faculty and alumni. The alumni achievement award winners met with students on Friday, April 25.

Other scholarship award recipients are selected by their respective academic departments.

Honorees:

Dean's Award for Academic Excellence

Andrew Gades
School of Music

College Alumni Board's Undergraduate Student Leadership Award

Matthew Miller
Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film

College Alumni Board's Graduate Student Leadership Award

Kimberly Thomas
Art and Art History

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award

Mary Gaetz
Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film

F. Pace Woods Scholarships

Emma Clute
Art and Art History

Kurt Knecht
School of Music

Trace Vardsveen
Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film

Anne and William (Laurie) Porter Awards for Creativity in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film and the Dance Division in the School of Music

Brooke Stevens
Theatre and Film
Undergraduate Student

Kathleen Lorenzen
Theatre and Film
Graduate Student

Laura Sedivy
Dance Division
Undergraduate Student

Francis William Vreeland Awards

Jennifer Lambrecht
Art and Art History
Undergraduate Student

Sherry Black
Art and Art History
Graduate Student

Ida M. Vreeland Awards

Luke Polipnick
School of Music
Undergraduate Student

Kurt Knecht
School of Music
Graduate Student

College Alumni Board's Faculty Service Award

Dan Howard
Art and Art History
Professor Emeritus

College Alumni Board's Award of Merit

Ernest Weyeneth
Kimmel Foundation
President and CEO

College Alumni Board's Alumni Achievement Awards

Christopher Ervin
Art and Art History
B.F.A. 1995

Dr. Eugene O'Brien
School of Music
B.M. 1967, M.M. 1969

Dr. Alan Nielsen
Theatre Arts
M.A. Playwriting 1977

Recognition of the graduating Hixson-Lied Fellows:

Xanthe Isbister, *Art and Art History*
Cecelia Lee, *School of Music*
Anne Ruehrmund, *Art and Art History*

College Distinguished Teaching Award:

Michael Hoff
Art and Art History

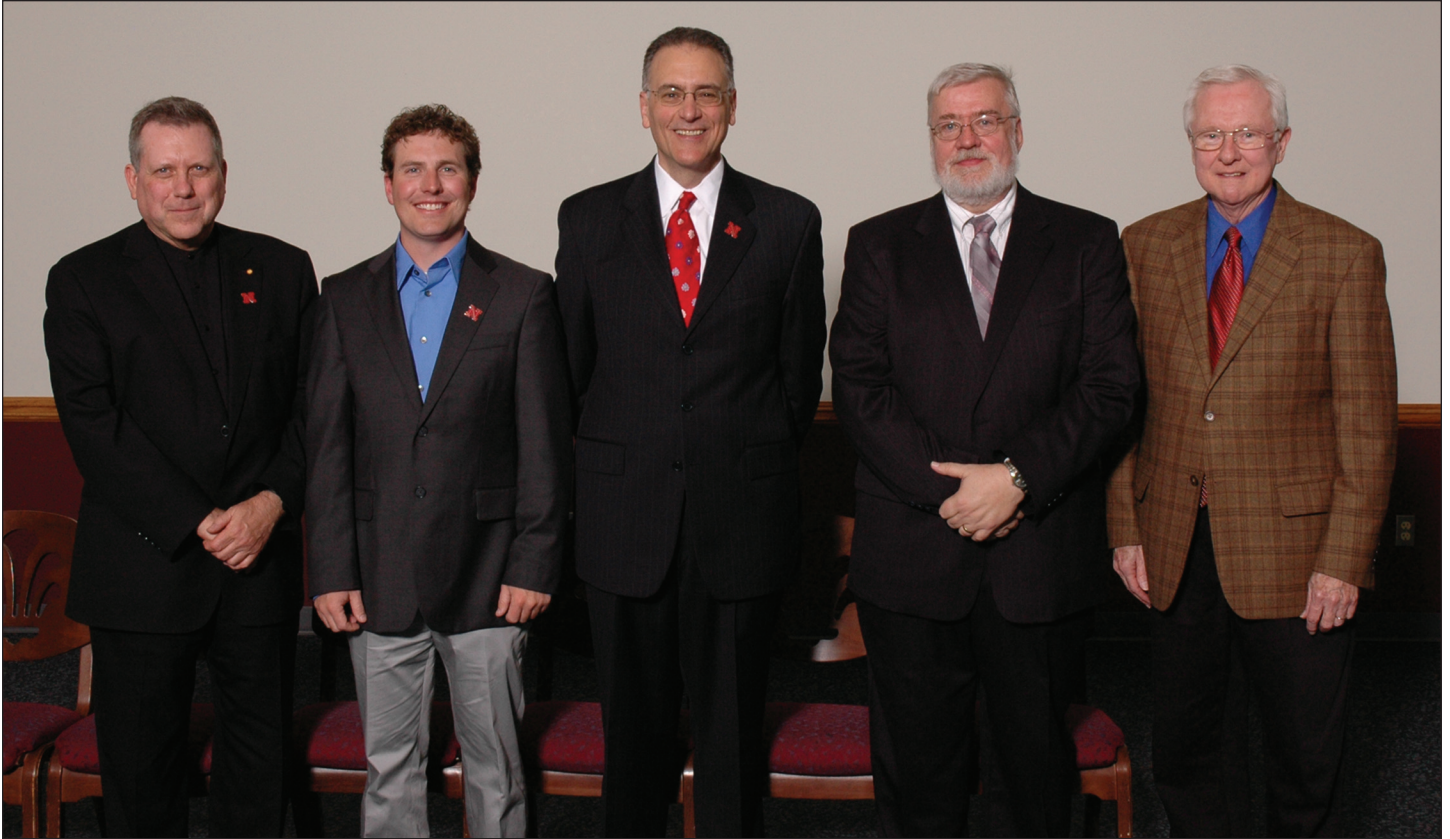
Recognition of the Hixson-Lied Professorships:

William Grange, *Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film*
Peter Pinnell, *Art and Art History*

Recognition of our retiring faculty:

Keith Jacobshagen, *Art and Art History*
Tice L. Miller, *Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film*
Randall Snyder, *School of Music*

HONORS DAY



Eugene O'Brien, Christopher Ervin, Giacomo Oliva, Alan Nielsen and Dan Howard.

Tom Slocum, University Communications



Sr. Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Barbara Couture and Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development Prem Paul greet Lincoln Mayor Chris and Judy Beutler at the Honors Day Dinner on April 26.

Tom Slocum, University Communications



Tom Slocum, University Communications Professor of Theatre Tice Miller, who retired after the spring 2008 semester, with Associate Dean Robert Fought.

At 36, Ervin creating graphics for Oscars, music videos

BY LINSEY MARSHALL

Many people could tell you that the 78th Annual Academy Awards in 2006 were hosted by Jon Stewart. They could probably also tell you that the award for Best Picture went to the racially-charged *Crash*, the dark horse in a race that heavily favored the gay cowboy drama *Brokeback Mountain*.

What most people couldn't tell you is that Christopher Ervin, a 1995 graduate of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, prepared the graphics for the ceremony's introduction.

Ron Bartels, a UNL art professor who teaches graphics design, called the show opener the “peak” of 36-year-old Ervin's work.

“It really was a highlight of his career,” Bartels said.

Bartels was so impressed with Ervin's work that in December 2006, he nominated his former student for the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Alumni Board's Alumni Achievement Award, and Ervin received the honor this spring.

Ervin, a native of Durango, Colo., moved to Los Angeles after graduating from UNL with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with an emphasis in graphic design to begin his career in the film and television industry. Bartels said Ervin was always trying to meet the right people to help launch his career, and he took several odd jobs when he first moved to California, like holding cue cards, setting up sets and putting tape on flooring. He said Ervin knew it would get his foot in the door.

“He did not let the fact that he was in school or a student keep him from contacting other professionals and seeking work with them,” Bartels said. “He was always involved in generating independent client-sponsored work when he was a student.”

His first job as a “grip” on the set of *Melrose Place* required him to keep birds away from the actors—specifically actress Heather Locklear—while they were shooting scenes on the beach.

As odd a job as it was, it gave Ervin connections to the digital production world, and within a year he landed a job with 525 Post Productions in Hollywood. The com-



Photo by Sam Rapien.

Christopher Ervin looks at the work of senior Ben Kamprath during an April 25 graphic design class.

pany was famous for creating music videos for artists like Fiona Apple and Madonna, and his experience there gave Ervin the clout he needed to create his own company.

In 1997, Ervin left 525 Post Productions and created VelocityApe FX, the creative studio in Long Beach, Calif., that he still owns and operates today. Some of Ervin's most famous clients include Ashlee Simpson, Linkin Park, Eminem, Metallica, Gwen Stefani and The Red Hot Chili Peppers. He has contracts with companies like Sony, Nickelodeon, ABC, Disney, Warner Brothers, Universal Pictures, Miramax and many more.

Bartels said Ervin's approach to his work makes his designs highly sought-after.

“I taught him digital video creation while he was in my first video editing class on campus,” he said. “He studied the program tutorials and manuals and didn't hesitate to work and create his own unique mix of filters and track transitions. He is not afraid to put in extra time on a project to see the full range of visual possibilities.”

“He devotes time and energy to his creative pursuits, and he discards many creative endeavors until he finds the right solution for a visual design problem,” Bartels said. “In 1995 there were considerable skeptics who did not believe that there was merit in digital design work. Chris understood and accepted the power in harnessing the digital frontier for his own creative ends.”

Even though his time in Nebraska was short, Ervin said, he appreciated the experience.

“I learned a great deal about the arts and my place among artists,” he said. “I really enjoyed the collaboration and interaction with friends and classmates on creative assignments.”

Ervin started out working with ceramics and painting, but said graphic design, desktop publishing, and interactive multi-media classes drew him away after his junior year.

“I really found my true passion while attending professor Ron Bartels beginning graphic design class, and those classes that really launched me in the direction of where I am today,” he said.

Cather Professor of Art Keith Jacobshagen, who taught Ervin, said his personality made him a strong artist.

“He's visually oriented to the things around him, as well as his own inward sensibilities and ideas,” he said. “Those influences from the outside, which can be other students, teachers and artists, are very well balanced with a very strong inner sense of who he is, and he knows how he can best use those influences as an artist.”

Bartels said Ervin's knack for technology was apparent early on. He even had e-mail in the mid-1990s before anyone else, he said.

“He took a lot of risks, and he accelerated his learning of individual software,” Bartels said. “In 1995, motion and sequential graphics was relatively new for the Internet and the Web. He stayed with the work and more or less let the industry catch up with him.”

Today, Bartels said Ervin continues to be one step ahead of his competition, both technologically and professionally.

“He has mastered the digital effects realm, and his work stands up to the very best effects production facilities in the United States, Canada and Europe,” he said.

Jacobshagen said Ervin's honesty and trustworthiness help give him an extra edge.

“It's a very difficult business to be in, and I'm sure Chris is a refreshing personality to a lot of people,” he said. “It helps him stay a strong player within the competition out there.” ■

O'Brien says experience as UNL student shaped career

BY LINSEY MARSHALL

He still remembers that day vividly. Nov. 22, 1963. Gene O'Brien, a freshman at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, was preparing for a written music theory test he would have to take that afternoon. Around lunchtime, he heard the news: The president, John F. Kennedy, had been assassinated in Dallas.

"I can remember every detail of the rest of the day, including many of the questions—but not my answers—on the examination," O'Brien said. "It was just about the only class that afternoon that wasn't cancelled."

Although that day in particular is especially memorable for O'Brien, his next six years at UNL were just as unforgettable.

"I have particularly colorful memories of a 7 a.m. advanced Latin course taught by an excellent but grumpy young faculty member who used to tell us that living in Nebraska was only for the newly wed or nearly dead," O'Brien said.

While O'Brien left UNL in 1969 after earning both his bachelor's and master's degrees in music composition—as neither a newlywed nor nearly dead—he said the impression the university made on him affected his entire career.

"The faculty made deep impressions on me and taught me what it means to be a serious and committed musician and composer," he said. "Whatever I've been able to achieve in my career would not have been possible without their mentorship and their example."

His first few years out of UNL were spent in Germany as a Fulbright scholar. O'Brien earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition degree in 1983 from the Cleveland Institute of Music and Case Western Reserve University.

Since then, he has lived and worked in Italy, Cleveland, Washington, D.C., and Bloomington, Ind., where he is currently in his sixth year as executive associate dean at Indiana University's School of Music.

Although O'Brien's career has mainly been in composition, Professor Emeritus Audun Ravnán remembers O'Brien as a talented pianist. Ravnán, who taught O'Brien piano, said he most appreciated how seriously his young student took his studies.

"Most freshman want to be flashy and play



Photo © University Communications.

Eugene O'Brien (right) receives his Alumni Achievement Award in Music from Associate Dean Robert Fought.

fast and loud, but not Gene," Ravnán said. "He knew you have to play the classics like the composers wanted them to be played."

Raymond Hagg, another professor emeritus, said he remembers the day O'Brien came into his office with a three-page piano piece he had written.

"We went in the office next to mine, and he played it for me, and I was astonished at the quality," Hagg said. "It was so professional."

Since then, O'Brien's career has been nothing but professional. He has received numerous grants, awards and fellowships, and symphonies from Omaha to Rome, Italy, have played his compositions.

Recently O'Brien was given the Alumni Achievement Award from the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Alumni Board.

Dr. John W. Richmond, the Director of UNL's School of Music who nominated O'Brien for the award, said he was impressed by O'Brien's love for his alma mater.

"Dr. O'Brien introduced himself to me at a national conference in California to remind me that he was an alumnus of our school, and he was so proud of and grateful for the excellent education he received here," Richmond said.

Richmond said O'Brien's celebrated career made him an excellent candidate for the award and called him "one of America's most important classical composers and music administrators in academe."

"I hope that he continues to find time to compose more important music," Richmond said. "The demands of music administration can be all-consuming, but I hope he can continue to find the balance to maintain this vital musical contribution to our culture."

Though his life has seen many changes over the years, O'Brien said that on his most recent trip back to Lincoln, he was pleased to see that some things have stayed the same.

"I'm glad to know the university is still selling homemade ice cream out on what we used to call the 'Ag' campus," he said. ■

Nielsen's long resume all started with horse named Flash

BY LINSEY MARSHALL

Composer. Actor. Director. Teacher. Horse.

During his career, Alan “Butch” Nielsen has been all of the above. Leta Powell Drake remembers him best as the horse.

Drake and Nielsen first met in 1974 on the set of “Cartoon Corral,” a Lincoln children’s television show. Drake starred as Kalamity Kate, while Nielsen manned the puppet Flash the Horse, Kate’s sidekick. Although working the puppets for hours at a time could be physically exhausting, Drake said Nielsen was always in good spirits and loved what he did.

“Live television can be unpredictable, and sometimes you have to improvise,” she said. “Butch was multi-talented, and he filled in everywhere if he was needed. If someone wasn’t there, he could do the women’s voices and the children’s voices too.”

Nielsen, who had received a bachelor of education in music composition from Concordia Teachers College in Seward in 1968, also wrote the opening and closing theme songs for “Cartoon Corral.” His friend David Landis sang the lyrics.

Landis said Nielsen was a talented character actor with the ability to play an eerie, spooky character one day and a comedic light-hearted character the next.

“What a compelling figure on the stage Butch was,” he said. “He really was very skillful across a very wide spectrum of characters and genres.”

Nielsen was used to multi-tasking. In addition to the morning children’s show, he worked with the Nebraska Repertory Theatre and was a full-time student at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Drake said his contribution to theatre while at UNL made him a deserving candidate for the for the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts Alumni Board’s Alumni Achievement Award, so she nominated him in December 2007. He received the award this spring.

Landis said Nielsen deserved the award for his quality work as a director, writer and teacher.

In 1977, Nielsen earned a Master of Arts



Photo courtesy of Leta Powell Drake.
Alan Nielsen with Flash the Horse from the Lincoln children’s television show “Cartoon Corral.”

degree in playwriting from UNL and moved to New York, where he worked for the BMI Music Theatre Workshop, writing, composing and arranging for theatre companies across the nation. Nielsen still found time to go back to school, and in 1989 he earned his Ph.D. in Theatre Arts from the City University of New York.

It was in New York that Drake and Nielsen’s paths crossed again. In 1980, Drake was in the Big Apple for a national workshop for children’s television show hosts. When she was charged with producing a show from scratch in five days to present to the other attendees, she immediately thought of her former sidekick.

“I called him up and said, ‘Come down here and help me with this!’” she said. “And sure enough, he came down, and we created a musical number that we presented to the other groups, and it was a smashing success.”

Landis said Nielsen’s creativity was an influence on everyone around him.

“He constantly had ideas and perceptions about how something could be or should be,” Landis said. “He’d have insights that made something better—deeper, richer, funnier, more touching, sentimental.”

It would be another 30 years before their paths crossed yet again, this time at a Nebraska Rep performance in Lincoln during the sum-

mer of 2006. A man Drake hardly recognized approached her on the way out and called her something she hadn’t heard in years.

“He said, ‘Hey, Kate! It’s me, Flash,’ and I immediately gave him a hard time for not calling me,” she said.

They agreed to keep in touch better this time around, Drake said, so when she was asked to submit nominations for the Alumni Achievement Award, she remembered her summer encounter with her old friend.

“I tracked him down, got his number in Texas, called him up and said, ‘Is Flash the Horse there?’” she said. “And he said, ‘Yep, Kate, it’s me.’ I asked him to send me his bio, and when he did, I realized he’d been busy.”

And busy he has been. Nielsen spent 10 years in New York before moving to Nacogdoches, Texas, where he has been teaching at the Stephen F. Austin State University for the last 18 years. The tenured professor has still found time to write, direct, arrange and compose for more than 50 college productions in addition to teaching and serving on several college and university advisory boards.

Landis said Nielsen’s students are especially fond of their teacher for listening to them, challenging them and inspiring them.

“A distinguishing characteristic in Butch’s academic career will be the level of personal involvement with his students,” he said. “You’re going to find a whole lot of kids who are going to say this guy changed my life.”

Nielsen said he credits much of his writing and researching skill to time spent on his master’s thesis at UNL. Without the atmosphere UNL provided, Nielsen said, he wouldn’t have gotten the full college experience.

“Lincoln really is a college town,” Nielsen said. “I don’t live in one now, and it’s amazing what a difference it makes.”

No matter what he does in life, Nielsen said, he will never forget his time in Lincoln.

“I will always be grateful for my experience at UNL,” he said.

And no matter what else Nielsen does in life, Drake said, she will never forget Flash the Horse.

After all, “It’s how he got started,” she said with a smile. ■



**HIXSON- LIED COLLEGE OF FINE & PERFORMING ARTS
2009 ALUMNI BOARD AWARDS
Nomination Form • Nomination Deadline: Dec. 5, 2008
Honors Day: April 25, 2009**

Nomination for the following award:

Alumni Achievement Student Leadership
 Award of Merit Faculty Service Award

I nominate the following person:

Name: _____

Class Year(s)/Degree(s): _____

Department: Music Dance Art Theatre/Film

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: Home () _____ Work () _____

E-mail: _____

Current employer or status: _____

Please attach the following to this nomination form:

- a) A resume, vita or biography of the person being nominated.
- b) A letter of nomination/recommendation that lists the qualifications and reasons for the nomination.
- c) (Optional) You may attach additional pages of information or supporting data. Please do not send original supplemental material, as nomination materials will not be returned.

Alumni Achievement Award. This award is made to an alumnus who has demonstrated outstanding achievement and overall professional excellence. Three awards will be presented, one each in Art and Art History, Music (including Dance) and Theatre Arts (including Film and New Media). The Alumni Achievement Award recipients will be invited to interact with current students in classes during the alumni weekend.

Student Leadership Awards. Currently enrolled students or recent graduates of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts who have demonstrated leadership in academics or in student life are eligible to be nominated.

Award of Merit. Presented to an individual, not necessarily an alumnus of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, who has demonstrated continued interest in the College and has shared his or her time, energy, and guidance.

Faculty Service Award. Presented to a current or emeritus (emerita) faculty member in the College who has demonstrated outstanding and dedicated service to the community and to the College. "Service" is defined as contributions to professional and public service activities. Professional and/or public service activities may include activities in the faculty member's discipline, art, profession or society, or activities outside of the faculty member's discipline. The award honors significant contributions that strengthen the ties between the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts and the community.

Your name: _____ & Signature _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: Home () _____ Work () _____

E-mail: _____



**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY DECEMBER 5, 2008, TO:
HIXSON-LIED COLLEGE OF FINE & PERFORMING ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN
102 WOODS ART BUILDING
LINCOLN, NE 68588-0144
or e-mail to kandersen1@unl.edu**

ALUMNI NOTES

1958

Jim Cantrell (B.F.A. Ed.) had a solo exhibition of paintings titled “Jim Cantrell: A Painter’s Odyssey” at the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art in St. Joseph, Mo., from Nov. 16, 2007, to Jan. 13, 2008. In 2007, he received a Professional Development Grant from the Kentucky Arts Council and was the juror for the Professional Fine Art Division of the Indiana State Fair. On Sept. 29, an oil portrait of John H. Schroeder by Cantrell was unveiled and hangs in the new Schroeder Family School of Business Administration Building at the University of Evansville in Indiana.

1983

James “Ken” Goodwin (B.M.E.) is entertainment manager at Sing Sing dueling-piano club in Denver and has been appointed Executive Producer of Performance Now Theatre Company, which presents four musicals each year.

1986

Maura Kenny Parrott (B.A. Art History) was appointed to the Las Vegas Arts Commission in May 2006. She has previously served on the Cultural Arts Commission for Rockville, Md.

1993

Michael Morgan (M.F.A. Art) was featured in an article in *Ceramics Monthly* in November.

1997

Jim Bockelman (M.F.A. Art) is the recipient of an Individual Artist Fellowship award from the Nebraska Arts Council. His work was on view in December at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art in Omaha in the “State of the Art Exhibition.” His other recent exhibitions included a solo exhibition at the Fred Simon Gallery in Omaha and the Kunstoffice in Berlin, Germany. His 2008 exhibitions will include a solo exhibition at the Walker Gallery of Art at the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the Farnham Galleries at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. Bockelman is an associate professor of art at Concordia University in Seward, Neb.

1999

Jason Briggs (M.F.A. Art) was awarded the Virginia de Groot Foundation in Sculpture Award for \$25,000. He was also nominated and awarded as Emerging Talent at the 2008 NCECA (National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) Conference in Pittsburgh.

He was one of six recipients out of more than 200 nominees, along with **Matthew Kelleher** (below). Briggs was also awarded a prize at the NCECA National Juried Exhibition in 2007.

Timothy Fredstrom (Ph.D. and M.M. 1991) was recently appointed Assistant Director of the School of Music at Illinois State University in Normal, Ill. He just completed his fifth year at ISU. This summer, he taught for the Center for Teaching and Learning workshops on curriculum development and assessment for faculty. He has been invited to conduct the Illinois Music Educators All-State Chorus next January.

Matthew Kelleher (M.F.A. Art) was nominated and awarded as Emerging Talent at the 2008 NCECA (National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) Conference in Pittsburgh. He was one of six recipients out of more than 200 nominees.

Michael Strand (M.F.A. Art) was hired in 2007 to be the Department Chair and Ceramics Professor at Concordia University in Seward, Neb.

2000

Sarah Detweiler (B.F.A. Art) had her work published in a new photography textbook called “Photography for the 21st Century” by Katie Miller. She is also serving a three-year elected term as an officer for the Midwest region of the Society for Photographic Education.

Nicholas Phillips (B.M.) recently graduated from the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City with a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance. While pursuing his degree, he taught applied and class piano as a graduate teaching assistant at UMKC and was awarded the 2006 Muriel McBrien Kauffman Award for Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant. He also served as an adjunct instructor at the Kansas City Kansas Community College, where he taught piano and music appreciation classes. Phillips recently accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Piano at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, teaching applied and class piano. He received his M.M. in 2003 from Indiana University.

2002

Nathan Knutson (B.M.), a pianist and adjunct professor at Minnesota State University

in Mankato, won first place in the National Federation of Music (NFM) Clubs Biennial Young Artist Competition in June. He was sponsored by the South Dakota Federation of Music Clubs, the Aberdeen Area Music Teachers and the Minnesota Federation of Music Clubs.

2003

Scott Raymond (B.F.A. Theatre Design/Tech Production and Film and New Media) graduated this past summer Cum Laude and with special appreciation from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco with an M.F.A. in animation and visual effects. He is currently employed as a crowd animator for the upcoming production of “Madagascar 2” at Dreamworks Animation Studios.

2004

Ian Anderson (M.F.A. Art) was a prize winner at the 2007 NCECA (National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) Juried Competition.

J. Lynn Batten’s (B.F.A. Art) artwork was selected by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons for display in “eMotion Pictures: An Exhibition of Orthopedics in Art.” The exhibition ran March 5-8 at the Moscone West Convention Center in San Francisco.

Bradley Peters (B.A. Art) received his M.F.A. in photography from Yale University this spring. His work can be viewed at www.bradleypeters.com.

2006

Firth MacMillan (M.F.A. Art) had an exhibition at the Charles Cowles Gallery in New York City Jan. 8-Feb. 2, 2008. The large-scale sculptural installation reflected her concern with society’s state of malaise and fear as we struggle to navigate urban life.

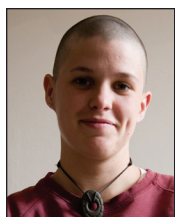
Joseph Pintz (M.F.A. Art) was recently appointed to a tenure-track faculty position at Bowling Green University in Ohio. He also had a solo exhibition “Sense of Place” and two-day hands-on workshop in May at the Clay Art Center in Port Chester, N.Y. Pintz and UNL alumnus **Meredith Brickell** (M.F.A. Art 2005) will have a two-person exhibition, “Constructed Spaces” at the James Gallery in Bedford Hills, N.Y. in October.

Diana Sanchez (B.F.A. Art) is a senior graphic designer for The Map Network (a map company) in Washington, D.C.

Melinda Yale (M.F.A. Art 2006) had an installation, "Pipes and Bursts!" installed at the Proteus Gowanus Gallery in New York City in February. Her work was created at the Women's Studio Workshop with the support of an AIE Fellowship. She was also selected for a 2008 NEA Hands-on-Art book arts grant and residency at the Women's Studio Workshop in Rosendale, N.Y. This grant sponsored the publishing of an editioned artist's book, as well as Yale's solo exhibition at the Women's Studio Workshop Gallery in April 2008. Her solo exhibition, "Idlers Just Rousing: Recent Prints" was on display at the Women's Studio Workshop Gallery in Rosendale, N.Y. in April. Her other recent works were included in "2008 New Prints/Spring" at the International Print Center in New York May 1-June 7.



2007



Caitlin Applegate (M.F.A. Art) received a \$12,500 grant from the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation of Canada, which provides awards to candidates in the early stages of their careers working in painting, drawing, printmaking or sculpture. Applegate was an artist-in-residence at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art in Omaha for three months last year.

Jenni Brant (M.F.A. Art) had her work featured in the May issue of *Ceramics Monthly*, the largest circulation magazine in ceramics. The magazine features the work of 15 "emerging artists" each May, and Brant was one of those selected this year.

Christopher Foss (M.M.) auditioned and placed into the highly successful, 12-member male professional chorus ensemble *Cantus*, which is based in Minneapolis.

Jessica Graff (B.A. Theatre) appeared as a settler at a Thanksgiving dinner in the History Channel's "Andrew Jackson," which aired in November.

NEWS & NOTES



van Oort discusses fortepiano at Geske Lecture

Bart van Oort, who teaches fortepiano and is a lecturer in historical performance practice at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague (The Netherlands), the Conservatory of Amsterdam and at the Royal Flemish Conservatory in Antwerp, presented the Geske Lecture last year on Nov. 5, 2007.

His lecture/recital included a short history of the differences between the fortepiano and the modern piano, and a demonstration of the consequences for actual performance.

As with all instruments, the piano developed from an instrument that could speak into an instrument that could sing. Much of what was notated with great care and sense for detail by composers from the classical period cannot, or only by compromising, be performed on the modern piano. Starting in the early 19th century, this 'corruption' has led to a performance tradition that, in many ways, does not do full justice to the original intentions of the composers. Using an early instrument we can get new insights in the score, in piano technique and the style in general.

After completing his modern piano

degree at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague in 1983, van Oort studied fortepiano with Stanley Hoogland, also at the Royal Conservatory. In 1986 he won both first prize and the special Prize of the Audience at the Mozart Fortepiano Competition in Bruges, Belgium. In 1988 he won third prize at the CPE Bach competition in Hamburg, where he competed on both the fortepiano and the clavichord. He subsequently studied with Malcolm Bilson at Cornell University (Ithaca, NY) and received a Doctor of Musical Arts in Historical Performance Practice in 1993.

Van Oort has performed in many European countries and appeared at festivals in Utrecht, Florence, Berlin, Antwerp, Bruges, Melbourne, Brisbane, York, Clisson, Montpellier, and Esterhaza. He has also performed in the U.S.A. and New Zealand, and makes yearly concert and lecturing tours throughout Australia.

The Norman and Jane Geske Lecture-ship in the History of the Arts was established in 1995 through the generosity of Norman and Jane Geske and features noted scholars in the history of the visual arts, music, theatre, dance, film, or architecture.



Photo courtesy of Sandra Williams.

Students at Park Middle School show their ceramic planters.

reaching out

Art professor Sandra Williams' new class helps UNL students connect with the community through projects, teaching

COMMUNITY ARTS

A new class entitled “Art in the Community,” taught by Associate Professor of Art Sandra Williams, is giving art students real-world experience in community art projects and grant writing.

In its third semester, this spring semester’s class worked with students at Bryan Community School in Lincoln to create silkscreen posters, in a project entitled “American Dreams and Disasters.” University of Nebraska–Lincoln students helped students at Bryan and assisting teacher Jan Deets in her classes. The school provides alternative education for students ages 16 to 21 years in the Lincoln Public Schools.

Previous classes have worked with Arts and Humanities Focus students on Sheldon Museum of Art’s “Day of the Dead” project last Fall, where they created large banners and life-size skeletal figures, as well as collaborative public art projects at Park and Humann Middle Schools.

In addition, Williams received a Woods Foundation grant to bring the first Art-o-Mat machine to campus at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center. The machine, one of 90 on display internationally, is a retired cigarette dispenser converted to vend art. The pieces are created by artists from around the world.

UNL receives a portion of the money from the machine, which enabled Williams to award a \$500 scholarship to an Art in the Community class student this spring.

Students in the class are also creating work that is available for sale at other Art-o-Mat machines. Currently, her students’ work is available in machines at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Chambers Art Hotel in Minneapolis, the Rayko Photo Center in San Francisco, and the Frost Art Museum at Florida International University in Miami.

In addition to completing community art projects, the class studies art activism, grant writing and preparing a budget. Nationally renowned community arts advocate Peggy Diggs was a guest artist this semester.

“The whole concept of service-learning has been very valuable in my own experience,” Williams said. “Students want hands-on learning that is useful to them.”

The students in the class are a mix of



Photo courtesy of Sandra Williams.

Some of the artwork created by UNL Art in the Community students to be put in Art-o-Mats nationwide.

studio art majors from the Department of Art and Art History and art education majors in the College of Education and Human Sciences. Students can take the class more than once.

“It’s something I’m interested in doing in the future,” said Bachelor of Fine Arts senior Chad Olsen, of Lincoln who took the class this semester. “It’s my little way to help art out in the community. We’re using art as a medium of communication. Through my volunteering, I see the positive effects on people.”

Olsen continued volunteering on his own at Bryan Community School for the remainder of the semester.

“I wouldn’t be an art student without great teachers in elementary school and high school,” Olsen said. “Most of the time, it doesn’t feel like work. It feels like we’re doing it for fun. Our class has a lot of fun interacting with the students [at Bryan]. The students appreciate us.”

Lindsay Petersen, a Bachelor of Fine Arts senior from Omaha has taken the class all three semesters it has been offered. This semester, she received a Hixson-Lied Un-



Associate Professor of Art Sandra Williams and Lindsay Petersen.

dergraduate Creative Research Grant for \$1,300 to complete her own community arts project with The Friendship Home, which supports, shelters and advocates for women who are survivors of domestic violence and their children.

Petersen had previously volunteered at Friendship Home, but noted that they did not have an art therapy program, so she attended a variety of support groups and

COMMUNITY ARTS



Photo courtesy of Sandra Williams.
Above: A student at Bryan Community Focus School works on her silkscreen print.



Photo courtesy of Sandra Williams.
Right: Students in the fall Art in the Community class pose next to one of the skeletal figures created for Sheldon's Day of the Dead celebration Oct. 27.

training sessions at Friendship Home.

She then used her Hixson-Lied grant to buy supplies and held sessions to teach the women at Friendship Home how to paint and provide assistance to them to complete paintings and mixed media works.

The works were on display in an exhibition at The Cup at 643 S 25th St. in Lincoln from April 12 to May 8.

"It's not about the technique, it's more about the process," Petersen said. "It's how they feel when they're painting, and the emotions they get out that they cannot say or write."

Petersen said she was impressed with the quality of the work produced by the women at Friendship Home.

'Students want hands-on learning that is useful to them.'

Sandra Williams, associate professor of art

"They produced excellent art," she said. "It's above and beyond my expectations. I liked seeing how different the pieces all are—from poetry to images of how they express their experiences."

Art, she says, provided the women with a new way to express themselves.

"It gave them a new identity and a new voice," Petersen said. "Art can give you that.

They can do something now they didn't know they could do. It's made them stronger for taking this step."

Williams looked forward to seeing the exhibition.

"I am anxious to see what she's been doing," she said. "I admire Lindsay, and I'm really proud of her."

Olsen said community art helps him as an artist step outside his normal comfort zone.

"A lot of times you have to be selfish as an artist to focus on your work and block everything else out," he said. "You have switch modes to do community art. You soon learn that you can't control everything. It's a good experience to do something different through these collaborative pieces. You don't get to do that in studio classes."

Williams hopes her students, like Lindsay and Chad, continue to see the value of community art projects in the future.

"I want them to see how they can incorporate their art into their volunteer work in the future," she said. "That's the value of art—everyone needs it. But there's never going to be a classified ad in the paper that says 'artist wanted.' Sometimes if there isn't an opportunity available, you just have to make one." ■

Junior Magnuson selected for first Art-o-Mat scholarship

Mollie Magnuson, a junior art major from Grand Island, Neb., was selected as the first Art-o-Mat scholarship recipient for achievement in community arts.

"I was very surprised when my name was called," she said. "And I was very excited."

The \$500 scholarship for a student in the Department of Art and Art History's Art in the Community class was made possible by proceeds from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Art-o-Mat machine, which was installed at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center last November. The Ross also received \$150. In addition, Magnuson was featured on the national Art-o-Mat website blog at www.artomat.org/news.html.

Art-o-Mat machines are retired cigarette vending machines that have been converted to vend art. The pieces in the machines are created by artists from around the world. There are 82 active machines installed throughout the country.

The Lincoln machine moved to the Haydon Art Center April 30 and debuted at the First Friday event May 2.

Associate Professor of Art Sandra Williams, who teaches the community art class, said selecting one scholarship recipient was difficult.

"I was looking at students that engaged and mentored our target audiences at Bryan Community School and Park Middle School," Williams said. "Mollie understands the content and mission of the class. She is a committed and active mentor in the classroom. I can see what she is learning in the Art in the Community class is informing her other art classes."

Magnuson said she will likely buy art supplies with the scholarship money.

"It's a great opportunity to have a little extra money to buy art supplies," she said. "I'm a typical poor college student."

Now in its third semester this spring, Art in the Community gives art students real-world experience in community art projects and grantwriting. This semester, students worked with high school students at Bryan Community School in Lincoln to create silkscreen posters in a project entitled "American Dreams and Disasters."

"These students haven't had the opportunities that other students have had," Magnuson said. "This one girl I worked with was so grateful we were there and excited to tell her mom about what we were doing. That's the reason we're there."

Students in the class also worked with students at Park Middle School to create ceramic pots and planters in a project entitled "From Pangea to Present." The school then held a plant sale to help raise money to support their art program.

The Art in the Community class also created work that is available for sale at other Art-o-Mat machines around the country.

"We each made 10 pieces to go into the Art-o-Mat machines," Magnuson said. "It's a great way to get our names out there."

In addition to completing community art projects, the class studies art activism, grant writing and preparing a budget. Nationally renowned community arts advocate Peggy Diggs was a guest artist this semester.

"The whole concept of service-learning



Mollie Magnuson is the first recipient of the Art-o-Mat scholarship.

has been very valuable in my own experience," Williams said. "Students want hands-on learning that is useful to them."

The students in the class are a mix of studio art majors from the Department of Art and Art History and art education majors in the College of Education and Human Sciences. Students can take the class more than once.

Magnuson, who plans to teach art at the college level in the future, plans to take the class again next fall.

"There's self-satisfaction in sharing an experience with a younger generation of kids," she said. "I want to be an educator, so it's a great way to get out in the community and work with students."

Williams said the class is designed to give students a broader knowledge about what art can do.

"The class is designed to look at other purposes of art and art education—art as a learning tool to teach students about culture, the environment, geography, politics, women's studies, literature—art as an active way of learning. ■

'There's self-satisfaction in sharing an experience with a younger generation.'

**Mollie Magnuson
Art-o-Mat Scholarship
recipient**

Multiple Missions of Arts Accreditation

BY SAMUEL HOPE

What does “being accredited” mean, especially for arts programs at the collegiate level?

The answer is complex because accreditation has multiple missions. Institutions and programs also have multiple missions. Therefore, each relationship between accreditation and an institution or program is somewhat unique. Being accredited is similar to holding a baccalaureate. All baccalaureates have commonalities, but each is different depending on discipline, institution, and even personal choices about elective courses. The specific meaning of the baccalaureate to individual holders is even more diverse, and virtually impossible to codify. Like so much else in academe and in life, accreditation means working productively with the relationship between what is held in common and what is unique, both institutionally and individually. Therefore, being accredited means meeting standards, but not in ways that produce standardization. Multiple missions are respected and supported. This principle underlies the time-tested American approach to accreditation. Given the natures of the arts disciplines, it is a crucially important basis for accreditation in art and design, dance, music, and theatre.

Accreditation in the arts began in the United States in 1924. In that year, the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) was formed by a small group of institutions. Among their purposes was agreement on certain commonalities with regard to professional preparation. For example, what, in general, should the Bachelor of Music degree mean in American higher education? What should the common national standards for this and other credentials be? And, how can professional and public assurance be provided that accredited institutions offering a degree are meeting the common standards? From the beginning, principles respecting institutional independence were in evidence as such questions were answered, and indeed, many safeguards were built into

standards-setting and review systems. NASM balanced standards and independence, and thus was successful. Twenty years later, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) was formed for similar purposes. Theatre (NAST) followed in 1965, and dance (NASD), in 1980. Today, these associations together have over 1100 member schools and departments. Their standards and procedures cover a broad range of degrees and specializations, are respected both nationally and internationally, and continue to make many important contributions to the strong development of the arts in American higher education.

What does all this mean for the various constituents of the arts programs at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln? One of the best ways to start answering is to think about participation. Institutions volunteer to participate in arts accreditation for several primary reasons. They want to be involved in setting the commonly accepted academic standards of a field. They want to be reviewed externally in light of those standards and have public recognition that they are meeting the standards appropriate to the content and levels of programs they offer. They want to work for improvement both locally and nationally. Being accredited means all of these things. Participation is an element of field-wide citizenship with many local benefits.

Institutional participation means engagement in five areas that accreditation encompasses in interrelationship: expertise, consensus-based standards, self-evaluation, peer review, and public information. An underlying premise of accreditation is that expertise in the content of what is being reviewed is essential for making valid, helpful decisions about educational achievement and the conditions necessary for it. Expertise in the amount needed can come only if personnel affiliated with arts programs in higher education volunteer in significant numbers. The development of consensus-based standards obviously requires institutional expertise and participation, as do self-

evaluation, peer review, and public information. Expertise is essential also because institutions and programs being reviewed have different missions and ways of working. Disciplines and specializations have different habits of mind, processes, and evaluation systems. Given all the possibilities and variables, especially in creative fields such as the arts, only expertise can provide the basis for effective judgment at the highest levels of practice.

Institutions with arts programs accredited by NASAD, NASD, NASM, or NAST apply local expertise to do several things every time they are reviewed, usually every ten years. One is to conduct a self-study, a process that results in a document. Self-study addresses continuing fulfillment of national standards established and amended by vote of the appropriate association membership. In established institutions, however, the self-study normally focuses most on improvement. In fact, for most arts schools and departments the self-study is a major planning event, a time to analyze, evaluate, develop aspirations, and create specific goals for advancement. Self-study engages faculty, students, and administrators most directly, but alumni and other constituencies are also involved. Self-study brings people together to shape the future of a program, to make it better constantly.

The result is unique to each institution. How do visitors and commissioners work with the standards and all these institutional differences in ways that do not produce standardization? For one thing, accreditation standards constitute a framework of common expectations. They are not detailed blueprints. They leave means to the institution as much as possible. This is consistent with the way that almost all requirements work in a free society. Laws about driving create a framework for all to follow, but they do not stipulate what kind or color of car one must drive. Most details are left to the driver. Another aspect is that standards are applied in light of the mission and goals set by the institution. To oversimplify for exam-

ple, composite faculty resources needed for a graduate focus on creation and performance are different than for a focus on scholarship. Accreditation reviewers concentrate first on whether a particular institution is fulfilling the requirements of the standards consistent with its mission and programs offered, and whether conditions present enable them to project that applicable standards can continue to be met during the next accreditation period. The reviewers then concentrate on how the review can help the institution improve and develop productively, primarily in terms the institution sets for itself, but also in terms of how the profession is developing. However, the accreditation decision is based only on present and projected fulfillment of published standards.

What about quality? Where does it come from? The arts accrediting associations believe that it comes primarily from individuals. Therefore, a fundamental purpose of accreditation is to support the work of individuals, especially students, but also faculty and administrators and all others associated with teaching and learning. Standards can set forth and promote conditions, elements, and attributes of quality, but they do not in themselves constitute quality. Standards can provide a framework for individual and institutional pursuit of quality, but the proof of achievement is always in the details of specific works of art, scholarship, teaching, and so forth. In most senses, we have standards because we have art, not art because we have standards. This is why standards are developed and applied in a system of reason and cooperation that enables a large group of institutions and programs to help each other individually and specifically.

This brief overview makes clear how so many of the principles underlying arts accreditation, and indeed all accreditation are the same as those underlying the governmental structure of the United States. Separations of powers, delineations of authority, checks and balances, rule of laws or standards established democratically, all support prudent balances among what is held in common and what is the responsibility of local and individual decision makers. Indeed, our laws about education have traditionally assured that the federal government may not intrude into decisions about aca-

democratic matters. In other words, the United States has never embraced the concept of a federal ministry of education. Our statutes, regulations, and policies reflect a belief that local responsibility works better than centralized control.

Over the last two decades, certain interests have advocated one-size-fits-all assessments and comparisons. Their arguments rest on several fallacies, among them, institutions are 100% responsible for every student's education, and all institutions are the same. Obviously, neither is true. But if these interests are to prevail it is essential to create conditions that invite or require people and organizations to act as though they were true. The ramifications are fairly direct:

Being accredited in the arts means something far beyond meeting standards or public notice of accredited status or membership in large national organizations.

policies that force all institutions to be the same are centralizing policies. To enforce such policies, one must have centralization of academic authority far beyond the campus level, or even the state system level.

The federal relationship with accreditation is too complex to describe here, but suffice it to say that in order to preserve the American principles we have outlined, extreme care must be taken with legislation and regulation lest accreditation become a means for federal centralization and ultimately, direct control over institutions.

For more than four years, staff members of the arts accreditation associations have been invited to play important negotiating roles with regard to the accreditation portion of the federal Higher Education Act. Through work in small groups of delegates representing accreditors and institutions, and eventually by gaining broader under-

standing in higher education and bipartisan support in both houses of Congress, new legislative language has been drafted making clearer than ever that institutions and accreditors, not the federal government, have responsibilities for specific and common standards and for academic decisions. We hope the final bill contains this language. Efforts of this kind depend on being organized in advance, and on having years of experience as a basis for working with many sectors influencing education policy.

Obviously, being accredited in the arts means something far beyond meeting standards or public notice of accredited status or membership in large national organizations. For alumni, faculty, administrators, and others concerned about a specific institution such as University of Nebraska–Lincoln, it means a commitment to and the results of serious, local, in-depth analysis that supports development of the arts discipline being considered, all in the context of peer review against national standards. For all institutions and individuals involved, it means, in part embracing and advancing a set of assessment values consistent with the way the arts work, and the way excellence in the arts is produced and evaluated. It means a perpetual investment in mutual responsibility and reciprocity, both far larger, richer, and more productive concepts than one-way accountability. And, it demonstrates publicly a continuing commitment to rigorous thought, planning, and action consistent with tenacious pursuit of high achievement in the content of one or more arts disciplines. For many years, hundreds of institutions have helped to build and promote these values and the achievements these values nurture to their own benefit and to the benefit of the arts in higher education, the United States, and the world. This is a powerful and ever-radiating legacy and potentiality, a contribution to self and community that ennobles, enriches, and teaches as it proceeds.

For more information, please visit www.arts-accredit.org ■

Samuel Hope is executive director of the National Office for Arts Accreditation and an executive editor of Arts Education Policy Review.



Last summer, the Nebraska Repertory Theatre celebrated its 40th anniversary season and the grand opening of the renovated Temple Building. A pool was built in the new Studio Theatre for the performances of Mary Zimmerman's "Metamorphoses," directed by NRT Artistic Director Virginia Smith. Set in and around a pool of real and metaphorical water, "Metamorphoses" is based on the myths of Ovid. This summer's Nebraska Repertory Theatre Season, July 10-Aug. 10 includes "Souvenir, A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins," by Stephen Temperley, "Doubt A Parable," by John Patrick Shanley, and "The Cripple of Inishmaan," by Martin McDonagh.

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