Professor Donates Talent to Charity

Over the summer, Mark Anderson, Presbyterian College’s Marianne and Elwood Gray Lassiter Professor of Art, applied for and was chosen to paint two new Perzina pianos for charity.

Learning about the project through the Spartanburg Artists’ Guild, Anderson donated his time and talent to painting the two pianos.

“As a life-long amateur musician and former piano teacher, I’ve always loved music in general and the instrument in particular,” said Anderson. “More broadly and more fundamentally, I believe the arts play a crucial role in humanizing, inspiring, healing and restoring our culture.”

The first piano was raffled off at the Third Annual World Masterwork Series Benefit Concert on Aug. 29 at Chapman Cultural Center in Spartanburg to support the Spartanburg Music Foundation. The second piano is to be auctioned off on Sept. 5 at the Diana Wortham Theatre in Asheville to benefit Asheville’s Mission Foundation program “Ladies Night Out,” which provides free mammograms and health screenings to uninsured and underinsured women.

The concept for the two pianos began first with the program for the benefit concert, titled “A Night at the Opera: A Rare Two-Piano Fantasy.” Featuring the young piano prodigy Christopher Tavernier and his teacher, John Cobb, the well-attended dual concert featured Mozart’s Don Giovanni and Bellini’s Norma to many standing ovations.

These two operas became the basis for Anderson’s first piano, titled “Vision after the Sermon: A Night at the Opera.” The two opera figures frame “a conceptual space rooted in St. Francis preaching to the birds [and] St. Francis of Paola windsurfing his cloak toward a bridge and a heavenly or cosmic dream vision unfolding under the piano lid.”

The second piano, “Resonance,” focuses more specifically on breast cancer. Anderson painted the piano as a tribute to family members and friends who had survived or died from breast cancer. This piano features St. Agatha of Sicily, the patron saint of those with breast cancer, and a central image of Raphael as the Archangel of Healing dropping a golden staff into a pool of healing waters.

Both pianos complement each other as opposites "aiming at the two sides of one significant revelation," Anderson explained. Inspired by Van Gogh and Gauguin’s own back-and-forth artwork discourse, Anderson sought for these two pianos to do the same and added elements of both artists’ styles as tributes within the paintings.

See page 2.
The visually stunning images on both pianos attest to Anderson’s skill as a painter and demonstrate his expressionist and dream-based interests. He approached both pianos as dreams with overlapping layers and landscapes. His background in psychology, art and music culminated in the creation of two pianos possessing vibrantly ethereal dreamscapes that combine the heavenly with the earthly into one extraordinary visual and emotional experience.

Quoting a jazz pianist’s advice that music was more than just playing the right notes, but also about finding the “sweet stuff [between] the cracks”, Anderson said that “making visual art on the body of a musical instrument is a little like that.”

“Something interesting happens in the parallel spaces of visual and aural resonance,” Anderson continued. “That resounding pattern, like the expectation built by rhythm or the memory evoked by a rhyming word, is the art that makes experience meaningful and pregnant with human connection.”

For more information, contact Anderson at mranders@presby.edu.

Written by Allison Cooke, a junior English major media studies, journalism track minor from Winnsboro.

Theta Chi Upholds an Old Tradition in Service Project for Soldiers

“Thank you for everything you do for our country. You protect my right to get an education and dream big.”

“I really respect what the military does for this country and it goes unnoticed every day. You deserve all the recognition and honor for what you are doing.”

“No matter the trials and tribulations you face, just know that you have the whole student body of Presbyterian College with you and supporting you along with many, many more!”

The quotes above come from some of the 82 handwritten and heartfelt letters sent to members of the armed forces from students at Presbyterian College.

As part of the Dum Vivimus Servimus Day of Service, the Theta Chi fraternity helped to organize a service project called Operation Gratitude. The project aimed to give back to members of the armed forces by sending letters and care packages to injured veterans and deployed soldiers.

The Rev. Rachel Parsons-Wells, director of Religious Life and Services, came up with the idea of participating in Operation Gratitude and helped Theta Chi get involved. She believes the letters not only greatly benefit the soldiers receiving them, but also the students who wrote them.

“ Asking someone to write a letter to a soldier makes them stop and think what it must feel like to be in their place. It creates an opportunity to get to know someone and reach out,” Parsons-Wells said. “A handwritten letter is so personal, that I think it can connect to someone in a powerful way.

She also believes that the service project embodies the motto of the Presbyterian College, “While we live, we serve.”

“Serving is a way of life,” said Parsons-Wells. “It is how you carry yourself and how you see and understand the lives of people around you. It is about relationships that change you. Taking a moment to say thank you to someone who is serving or has served in the military does seem like one powerful way to embody our motto.”

Historically, other members of the Presbyterian College community have also held this belief. During WWII, the then first lady of PC, Lillian Brown, also wrote to soldiers. She sent letters every two weeks to Blue Hose alumni fighting in the war giving the soldiers news, kind words, and encouragement. The letters and their responses were then collected and published into a volume entitled “The Bee-Mail Letters” in 1989. While Theta Chi members did not know about the tradition they worked to continue, sophomore member Thomas Burke is proud of their work.

“Thank you for everything you do for our country. You protect my right to get an education and dream big. I hope this tradition is continued in the future”

For more information about service at PC, contact Parsons-Wells at reparsons@presby.edu.

Written by Justin Davidson, a freshman biology major from Columbia.

Lillian Brown
BOOT 2015 and a Twist on Freshmen Orientation

Right before students returned to campus in August, a group of eight new students, three professors, and a staff member attended a trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains. The trip was the Blue Hose Outdoor Orientation Outdoor Trip (BOOT) 2015. For three days and two nights, the group enjoyed a mix of rafting on the Nantahala River and hiking the Black Balsam Knob.

This was a new way of welcoming incoming freshmen to Presbyterian College. The students who attended moved in early, and then left with the others. They had a chance to make connections with each other as peers and student-professor relationships as they hiked, rafted, and explored the Blue Ridge Mountains.

“All the students listed friendships, relationships, or community as one of the chief gains of the trip,” Daniel Adams, director of student involvement said. “By the end of the first car ride they were already a solid group of students and each sought ways to include the others into all our activities. We had about two-thirds of the students who had never been whitewater rafting and all enjoyed the beautiful scenery and the thrill of the Nantahala River.”

For Dr. Bob Bryant, Kristen Herrington Professor of Bible, a professor that has spent more than a decade as a part of the PC community, this twist to the orientation process created treasured memories with the students already.

“In a word, my experience with this freshmen outdoor orientation group is without a question, a highlight of my 17 years at PC,” said Bryant. “I look forward to seeing it grow in the years ahead.”

The students experienced a similar memorable trip through the development of friendships with their classmates. The bond has continued since their return to campus and start of the academic year.

“Personally my favorite part of the trip was the rafting since it was a new experience for me, and I loved it. Everyone that went on the trip is still in contact with one another and we hang out daily,” said Chris Plummer, a pre-pharmacy student from Aiken. “That was probably the best part of the trip; the long lasting friendships we made, which otherwise would have been more difficult or taken longer to forge.”

Another professor saw this as a chance to not only build relationships, but expose the students to the values of Presbyterian College.

“To me, both developing and going on this trip is what I love about PC: building great relationships with students, faculty, and staff,” said Dr. Suann Yang, assistant professor of biology. “I see BOOT as a way we can introduce students to the Presbyterian College Mission, especially the goals related to environmental stewardship and a healthy lifestyle.”

This trip was one that these freshmen and professors hope is only the beginning, not only of the physical trips, but the deepening of PC relationships as well. Brendon Mitchell, a freshmen business major from Charlotte, N.C., summarized a common theme among all attendees.

“I hope to still have connection with all the people and hope to do more fun and exciting things, such as the experiences I was able to do during the BOOT trip,” Mitchell said. “Can’t wait to see what adventures I do next.”

Written by Rebecca Rowell, a senior English major, minoring in media studies and women and gender studies, from Lugoff, S.C.

English Professor Joins Others in Upcoming Publication

Dr. Kendra Hamilton, assistant professor of English, has been published in the Summer 2015 edition of Common-place, a magazine publication of the American Antiquarian Society. Her article in this edition is a reflection on the Nat Fuller Feasts.

The Nat Fuller Feast was an event held in downtown Charleston, on April 15, 2015, and at PC on April 9, 2015, that was a reflection of the significance of the original celebratory dinner hosted by Nat Fuller in April 1865. This dinner marked the end of the American Civil War and slavery while signifying hope for racial equality. This feast was convened by David Shields of the University of South Carolina.

Dr. Hamilton joined a roundtable of articles by the various sponsors of the Nat Fuller Feasts. She adds this article with growing lists of commentary for 2015. Most recently, she had an op-ed appear in The Statehouse Blog, which is a weekly roundup of what’s going on in policy and politics within the state of South Carolina.

This article can be accessed online or in the Summer 2015 edition of Common-place.

Written by Rebecca Rowell, a senior English major, minoring in media studies and women and gender studies, from Lugoff, S.C.
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