

Friends

April 2007
Spring

2007-2008 Season of Great Performances Announced

The new season announcement party is becoming an important tradition for the FCFA. This year, a wonderful evening of food, conversation, and special surprises culminated in Artistic Programming Director Tom Reynolds' preview of the exciting possibilities for the new season.

Acclaimed Broadway singer Barbara Cook will appear early in the season in conjunction with the second annual *Arts by George* event. The Virginia Opera will return with four popular operas, including "The Pirates of Penzance" and "Lucia di Lammermoor." Also appearing are The Royal Philharmonic with conductor Pinkas Zukerman and the Bergen Philharmonic with Andre Watts as piano soloist.

Additionally, the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra from Sweden will perform Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony. As part of the performance, Andrew Manze, the Helsingborg's conductor,

will present a short lecture on the history of the "Eroica."

You can look forward to outstanding dance performances by the acclaimed Martha Graham Dance Company, and return visits by Tango Buenos Aires, Ballet Folklorico de Mexico and the St.

Petersburg Dance Theatre. The Coldstream and the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards will dazzle our stage, along with annual favorites Jeffrey Siegel, Chanticleer and the Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra. Theater will be well represented by four different companies, including The Acting Company and the Aquila Theatre Company.

Finally, the Mark Morris Dance Company will present a monumental work with a full-length evening performance of Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas," accompanied by

a professional chamber orchestra and a chorus of Mason students.

We are fortunate to have such a variety of performances every year, and this coming season is no different. See you at the Center for the Arts! ■



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Join Your Friends at a Ballet Party

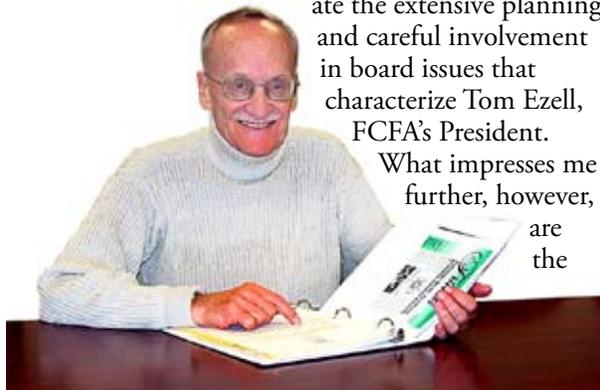
Plan to join your fellow Friends for a reception following the April 28 performance of *Susan Shields Ballet Cocktail: An Evening of Contemporary Dance*. Susan Shields, a distinguished member of Mason's dance faculty, has performed with legends such as Mark Morris and Mikhail Baryshnikov. On this special night, she will showcase her own choreography with performances by a group of five outstanding regional

ballet companies—the Washington Ballet, Boston Ballet II, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, American Repertory Ballet, and the Richmond Ballet. This promises to be a unique combination of contemporary ballet and modern dance. Celebrate this special evening of dance at the post-performance reception at which we will toast the unique talent of our own Susan Shields! Contact Kathy Beyer, 703-993-4188 for more information. ■

Volunteers and Staff Make Good Friends

My major role as Secretary of FCFA is the preparation and distribution of the Board of Directors' meeting minutes. While performing this role, I have come to appreciate the extensive planning and careful involvement in board issues that characterize Tom Ezell, FCFA's President.

What impresses me further, however, are the



Charlie Lawson

talents of the many staff members who support Bill Reeder, Dean of Ma-

son's College of Visual and Performing Arts. It is this exceptional group of people who develop and present the outstanding programs that all of us enjoy at the Center each year. In particular, I would like to praise the work of Tom Reynolds, Director of Artistic Programming, who selects and coordinates the programming for the Great Performances seasons. Additionally, Brian Marcus, Associate Dean for Development, spearheads the corporate sponsorship program. Finally, Kathy Beyer, Assistant Director of Development, serves as the FCFA staff liaison. Without their assistance and planning, the Center could

not have the world class reputation that it has earned through the years.

Another important organizational aspect of the FCFA that makes the Center so effective is its tremendous group of volunteers. These volunteers work with the Center staff and the Board on activities on such as working at the "Meet and Greet" table or hosting the intermission coffees, as well as assisting with recruitment or office tasks and coordinating special events. Please consider volunteering in support of this rewarding venture when you renew your FCFA membership next season. ■

Charlie Lawson, Secretary

The Warakomskys: Opera Lovers at Heart

FCFA member Bob Warakomsky has recently joined the FCFA newsletter staff. He and his wife Pat are frequent attendees at the Great Performances and have been season subscribers to the Virginia Opera for over 18 years.

Bob and Pat Warakomsky



They joined Friends in 2002.

In addition, Bob and Pat have been season subscribers to the National Symphony Orchestra since 1977. They enjoy classical music, opera, and ballet. Their oldest daughter, Kathy, retired from the Houston Ballet as a principal ballerina. Their other daughters are Cheryl, a CPA; Michelle, a graphic artist; and Barbara, a nurse. They have 10 grandchildren.

Bob was born and raised in New London, CT, and therefore had an early exposure to the sea-going life. His love of music stems from his early childhood when he studied the violin throughout grade school and high school. His grandfather, a profes-

sional violinist, taught in New York City. He graduated from the Coast Guard Academy and retired after 25 years of service. During that time he lived in London and Alaska and traveled extensively. He now works part time as a consultant. Pat, an emergency room nurse at the Inova Emergency Care Center in Fairfax, recently retired.

Their favorite CFA performances are the Virginia Opera productions. This year they were out of town during the *Agrippina* run. They were so distressed at the thought of missing this performance that they drove to the Harrison Theater in Norfolk to see it there. They were not disappointed, so the 6-hour round trip was not a problem. ■

What's happening, Friends

"What do you like about the 2007-2008 season?"

More than 200 Friends enjoyed a festive occasion on April 5 when the 2007-2008 season of Great Performances at the Center for the Arts was announced. It promises to be the best season yet with performances to please every taste. Several Friends were asked what they were especially looking forward to in the new season. Here's what they said:

Lisa Travis

As a fan of dance performances, I am excited to see the Martha Graham Dance Company and the Tango Buenos Aires on the program. And after tonight's



presentation, I have added the dance company Diavola as a must-see.

Barbara and Ward Morris

We're delighted with the wide variety of selections, particularly in our three favorite areas: opera, dance and symphonic music. This looks like an innovative, stimulating and colorful season. We're eager to launch it!



Lynn Gramzow

Every year seems to get better. I'm excited about the selections the Virginia Opera is offering and can't wait to see Leahy, a group I've not known before. And I'm getting out my bagpipe albums to prepare for the Royal Scots. What a great season is in store for us.



Charlie and Shirley Joyce

We appreciate the variety and the reasonable prices of the performances. We are also pleased to see two performances by our local talent in the Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra. This is definitely a season of Great Performances.



Barbara Holzapfel

This is an incredible selection for next season. The Virginia Opera presentations are performances I won't miss. The dance groups are just great, starting with Martha Graham Dance Company and Mark Morris. And Barbara Cook is legendary!

I've been coming to the Center for the Arts for the past few years and look forward to many more years of Great Performances.



Kenneth Schoonover

My wife and I are thrilled to hear world-class European orchestras performing music of their homeland. And we're excited to see the King's Singers on the schedule. Talk about "world-class" performances...this ensemble is awesome.

Joyce and Bernard Oppel

For us, the Virginia Opera selections are wonderful, especially the *Tales of Hoffmann* and *Eugene Onegin*. The dance selections

are excellent and we look forward to the appearances of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the incomparable Monterey Jazz Festival.

All in all, the 2007/2008 season of Great Performances more than meets our expectations.



Members of the Friends of the Center for the Arts continued to enjoy the benefits of membership with opportunities for social and educational experiences. There were family events as well as elegant receptions. Here are photographs of three popular activities this spring. Plan to maximize your membership by attending future events.



Judy Weltz, program chair.



Ringmaster Manny Pablo.



The craft table was very popular.



Ray and Kay Rongley and grandchildren.

Cirque Eloize (Feb. 3). To get everyone in the mood for the terrific performance, the Friends held a "pre-circus party" where more than 40 guests enjoyed hot dogs, ice cream and popcorn, and then learned to make balloon animals.



Susanne Zumbro pauses from clowning.



Gordon and Judy Canaryock and Rod Zumbro sport nice hair.

Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig (Mar. 3).

Prior to the excellent performance of the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig, Friends enjoyed an elegant buffet.



Monty and Dorothy Bodington, and Alice Heyer discuss music.



The food was as good as the orchestra.



Eileen Duggan, Kay Rongley, Judy Weltz, Fred Heyer and Mariann Baker enjoyed the reception and concert.



Eileen and Charles Duggan sign in.

The Annual Opera Brunch (Mar. 31). Peter Mark, Artistic Director of the Virginia Opera, explained the interesting points of Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* which included arias sung by cast members and a demonstration of make-up application. A tour backstage showed some of the technical aspects of the opera. Then more than 70 opera lovers shifted their focus to a sumptuous buffet and lots of conversation.



The buffet was popular.



Maestro Peter Mark.



Performers sang arias for the attendees.



Florence Adler and Gordon Canaryock have coffee.



Good conversation prevailed.

What Are Friends For?

A Guide to Understanding the CVPA Friends Groups

We have frequently received questions from some of you about the confusion related to the numerous “Friends” groups in the College of Visual and Performing Arts and how they differ from the Friends of the Center for the Arts (FCFA). Additionally, you may have received materials from these other groups. We hope the information below will clear up any confusion, beginning with a brief history of our own group.

The Center for the Arts opened in 1990 and thereafter gradually developed a loyal group of performing arts lovers. In 1996, a few of these supporters got together and formed a support group for the Center. This group grew and evolved over time and ultimately became what it is today, the **Friends of the Center for the Arts or FCFA**. Beginning with less than a dozen members, we are now a vibrant community of almost 600 households who directly support the Center through contributions and volunteer efforts.

The financial contributions generated through FCFA, **the only Friends organization that directs its efforts toward support of the Center**, are necessary to assist in supporting the high level of the Great Performances as well as maintaining the infrastructure at the Center.

Our contributions have enabled the Center to purchase the Steinway concert grand piano that is used by visiting artists, faculty and students performing in the Center for the Arts Concert Hall. Our gifts also continue to support the pre-performance discussions, community outreach, and educational programs for area students. As FCFA members, we can proudly say that we have been a major reason that the Center has grown and prospered over the years.

FCFA has also provided a sense of community that is not often found in larger venues such as the Kennedy Center. Our social events planned in conjunction with some of the performances, our discussion series held in members’ homes, and our coffee and refreshment service offered during intermissions all provide venues where we can get to know each other and enjoy shared experiences.

Our successful formula has not gone

unnoticed and has served as a model for the formation of other groups throughout the College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA). However, there is a major difference between our organization and the other Friends groups. Whereas FCFA was formed to provide financial support for the Center for the Arts and the Great Performances, **the other Friends’ groups are focused on fundraising to support Mason student scholarships within the various CVPA academic departments and programs**.

These support groups include Friends of Dance, Friends of Music, Friends of Theater, Friends of Art and Friends of Film. A portion of their support comes from Mason alumni and alumnae, but they are also eager to reach out to the larger community to showcase the talents of their students and to receive financial support. Additionally, the annual “Arts by George” celebration focuses on raising funds to support student scholarships in dance, music, theater,

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art, arts management and film studies. Last fall’s first event raised \$50,000 to assist students whose focus is on a career in the arts.

The Theater of the First Amendment (TFA), the professional theater of the Center for the Arts, has its own support group, the Producer’s Circle, which raises funds to help underwrite TFA’s productions. One major TFA project will be the 2008 launching of the Arts at

Mason Festival, a three-week long festival featuring the best of the performing and visual arts in Northern Virginia.

The Faculty Arts Board, a Mason faculty support group for the Center for the Arts, focuses on hosting pre-performance dinners for its members and lectures by other faculty that relate to the Center’s Great Performances series.

Overarching all of these groups is the **Arts at Mason Board**, an umbrella organization for the entirety of the arts at Mason. Board members include representatives from all Friends groups, the CVPA academic department chairs, the CVPA Dean and members of his staff, and representatives from the Northern Virginia business and arts community. The board advises the CVPA Dean on setting priorities and implementing programs and activities. Among its primary functions is raising private support for the Arts at Mason. *Arts by George* is the board’s signature event.

If you are interested in learning more about any of these groups, please contact Kathy Beyer, the staff liaison for FCFA at 703-993-4188. Kathy will be happy to direct you to the appropriate contact person within each group. ■

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- Jane Tombes
- Gordon Canyock
- Eileen Duggan
- Robin Auger
- Bob Warakomsky

Thanks to All Who Supported the *Friends* This Year

Thank you to all who
 helped make this season's
 events successful:

- Mariann Baker
- Gordon and Judy
Canyock
- Pat and Pat Carroll
- Charles and Eileen
Duggan
- Susanne Dunn
- Fred Heyer
- Mack and Paulette
Miller

- Don and Sonja Palomaki
- Rob and Ida Portland
- Ray and Kay Rongley
- Joshua and Elissa
Schwartz
- Sue Skaddan
- Allen and Judy Weltz
- Joan White
- Susanne and Rod
Zumbro
- and
- Trader Joe's of
Centreville

**Calendar of Events:
 Great Performances at
 Mason**

April - June

- April 22 (Sun.), 7 p.m. **Key-board Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel: *Liszt - The Devil Made Me Do It!***
- April 28 (Sat.), 8 p.m. **Susan Shields Ballet Cocktail: *An Evening of Contemporary Dance.***
- May 5 (Sat.), 8 p.m. **Shen Wei Dance Arts.**
- June 3 (Sun.), 7 p.m. **Key-board Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel: *Schubert - On the Wings of Song.***



When attending
 events, wear your pin.
 It shows you are a
Friend and supporter
 of the Center for the
 Arts. You'll soon
 see more *Friends*,
 too.



<http://www.gmu.edu/cfa/friends/>