



Art and Music... Together!

COLIN WILKINSON

Not too long ago in September 2009, our teacher and friend William Franklin had a vision to have an art exhibit in our school that would show local talented artists' works. Each piece would have a song to go with it that brought the viewer into the world of the painting, sculpture, photo or architecture that they were viewing. With the beautiful musical interpretation of the pieces from our upper-level composition students, this vision came to life.

"The connection between music and the visual arts is a special one," Franklin states, "for as many common linguistic and mathematical notions, it very often presents a kind of metaphysical battle, a poetic journey."



Music and art have great powers to bring ideas, visions, feelings and emotions to life so other people can relate on a level of understanding. People want to see other people's interpretations of their own thoughts. That's why both art and music are so popular individually. When you bring them together, all of life's emotions and feelings are heightened and become more powerful. This makes us see what the visionary wanted us to see. This concept started to become more and more popular in the late 19th century, when the early modernism artists started to be seen as important. From art to poetic writing, musicians and composers found a new outlet from which to make music. From plays

and operas to art exhibits, music was being created to set the mood and texture for what was being portrayed. William Franklin has done just that and more.

Some of my favorite pieces of the exhibit were Allen Brewer's painting entitled Granddaddy. The painting has an old-time, haunting feel to it. Painted on broken wood to give it a rough, beaten look with great colors, this piece of artwork pops and is very pleasing to the eye. The centerpiece of the painting is a lonely violinist that is playing underground and underneath a single house on the red mountains. Alex Bergland, who was the composer for Granddaddy, really brought the painting to life. With the painting's fun mixture of colors and Bergland's dream music feel, the lonely violin player had his own little world with no distractions, and no worries. It seemed that he had his own utopian cloud, but with happiness there is always sadness. I could feel the loneliness and unhappiness at moments while observing.

"My goal for this project was to not only reflect the subject matter of this painting musically, but also the texture of the canvas," said Bergland, "...and the black story of the subject matter related to me by the artist."

Bergland did all of that and more to bring one of my favorite paintings of the exhibit to life.

Another favorite of mine was Rhea Pappas's photo, Release. At first I thought it was just a really great picture that showed a woman that was underwater. I wasn't sure if there was an underlying message or theme. After reading the description next to the piece, it made a little more sense. Maureen Lukas was the composer for this work, with her song titled, Indelicate Balance, in which she says, "Finding safety and freedom through water."

She also said that, "There was a recurring theme of feminism." I can see where she was going with this. The music for the photo was great. It was weird and eerie, which made the photo come to life. The accompanying music made me feel that the woman in the picture was falling away from reality and everything was lost. And certain moments made me think that something just happened and there will be some sort of end. Eventually, of course, there was. At the end of the song there were bell sounds, which made me believe that it was the end of life for the woman in the picture. I don't know if I'm right, but I loved it either way.

The whole exhibit is great for our school. Bringing in different forms of art other than music is relieving at times and it shows visitors that our

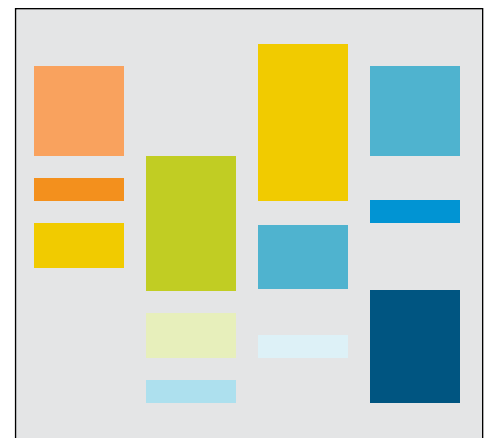
school is interested in all forms of art and not just music. All of the pieces and compositions were great. I applaud those that contributed to this exhibit, and I also applaud William Franklin for having the idea and following through with it.

The exhibit is up until April 30th and I strongly recommend that everyone take a couple minutes to participate in observing and listening to the exhibit.

Café Wall Art: Music in Graphic Form

TONI ALBERTE

Last summer semester the café made some changes. McNally Smith's administration and Café Manager Marianne Jurayj teamed up to find ideas from the work of Robert Cogan, a pioneer in spectrographic studies. The rectangular shapes painted in vibrant colors that are in the



café now are the artwork of Alana Zbaren.

The shared goal between Zbaren and McNally Smith was to create a welcoming space in the café for performing, dining, socializing, studying and relaxation. Zbaren chose Cogan, a distinguished scholar of music theory and the author of several books on the subject, for inspiration.

Cogan's work has initiated the process of "interpreting and understanding" the visual shapes of music that result from sound vibrations, which reveal the structural aspects of musical shapes in graphic form. Zbaren and Cogan agree that "musical reality above all, is composed of many interacting levels and layers". With that theory in mind, Zbaren designed her mural. Zbaren chose to use the musical visuals in an extrapolated pattern using colors that complement MIDI sequencing.

What was once bland and uninspiring is now bright and uplifting in the Café. Zbaren brought bright light and vibrancy into the café environment that will be both inviting and interactive for years to come. The artistic inspiration came directly from Zbaren's and McNally Smith students' shared passions for music.

Though the meaning behind the café's new



look is a bit of a mystery to some, the work of Cogan combined with Zbaren's artistry is in part responsible for the visual representation of the McNally Smith Café. Zbaren's hope is to get people excited about the progressive art in her interior designing.

Zbaren thoroughly enjoyed working with the members of the project committee and hopes that students may appreciate her work and that all may be receptive to her contemporary design.

I <3 NYC

TONI ALBERTE

During Spring Break this year, 22 McNally Smith students stood as pioneering ambassadors in New York City. The trip was filled with workshops, seminars, exclusive tours and samples of Midtown Manhattan's music scene. They embarked on the journey with plans for artistic exposure and career enlightenment, but all had their own agendas and plenty of free time to enjoy the city. I was among those hip "McNallyians". I went with few expectations on our business vacation, but knew that I would achieve personal and professional growth while having lots of fun!



Wednesday March 10th was day one of the trip. We arrived at our 41st floor suite in the Flatotel Hotel and raised our glasses to New York. With the evening open, groups ventured out into the "island playground". I walked with some of my peers to meet the energy and bright lights of Times Square.

The next day, some of us walked to Platinum Sound Recording Studios for a private tour of Wyclef Jean's major label recording complex. Our tour guide was none other than McNally Smith alumnus Kevin Schinstock. I couldn't help but smile with overwhelming excitement as I stood inside a vocal booth. After our tour we headed back to our hotel, where we had a workshop with DJ Hector Romero, A&R for SAW.RECORDINGS and the founder and CEO Judy Weinstein. Their honesty about their career paths was refreshing, especially when they stressed the importance of keeping our work close to our hearts.

After our lunch, we met the legendary songwriting team Ashford & Simpson from Hopsack and Silk Music Publishing. With their story of rags to riches, I further came to understand the

importance of short-term sacrifice for long-term gain. Turns out, Nick was inspired to write Ain't No Mountain High Enough based on the mountain-like skyscrapers he saw surrounding Central Park when he spent nights sleeping on park benches. It was his way of declaring that nothing will get in his way of living life.

That evening we were served delicate and delicious hors d'oeuvres in our private setting at the Sugar Bar, where NYC's most famous open mic night is held. While we were there, we got to observe a range of the city's talented and not-so-talented musicians.

We saw lots of guests at the Songwriters' Seminar on Friday, including Minneapolis native Christopher Robbins, Director of Business Development/Eastern Sales for Billboard Magazine; SESAC Director for Writer/Publisher Relations Jamie Dominguez; EMI Music Publishing Senior Creative Director for East Coast Urban Leotis Clyburn and two of his artists: producer/songwriter Darhyl "DJ" Camper and singer/songwriter/vocal producer Eritza Laues. Our questions prompted priceless advice. Something Robbins said that stood out was that "you have to consistently make yourself relevant [in today's music business world]." We were even allowed to present our personal works to Jamie for submission into SESAC and to Leotis for critical feedback.

That night, Debbie Sandridge, Bruce Cook, and the McNally students went to New York City's world famous nightclub, Pacha. The third floor DJ even gave a few shout-outs to Minnesota throughout the night!

We all experienced Broadway on Saturday when we attended the production of FELA! Which featured Afrobeat music of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti. Following the show, some of us met McNally alumnus, Nate Brown, backstage at the New Amsterdam Theatre (showing Mary Poppins) for a private tour. I was surprised to hear that pit musicians and actors don't mingle, and actually exist in completely separate worlds.

The 22 of us felt a strong sense of camaraderie as we gathered to leave New York City that Saturday. At the La Guardia terminal we joined the other passengers from delayed, canceled and overbooked flights, while we waited for our own delayed flight back to Minnesota.

I want to thank Debbie Sandridge and John Brown, an industry veteran and MSCM New York City liaison, who made the trip happen. With all of us anxious to make it back to New York again, we must remember what Judy Weinstein told us just days before: "It's all about the journey the music takes you on," she said, "[be sure that] what's next is what you should make happen."

Making Waves on Radio Noir

DANIEL HEIER

Radio-Noir has been making waves in the local Twin Cities music scene and beyond. Every

Sunday evening you can tune in at www.radio-noir.com to hear a live internet broadcast at 8:00pm featuring local and touring artists. Each show consists of performances by bands and brief interviews.

Radio-Noir was founded in the summer of 2009 by Pat Dougherty and John Peters. It is Dougherty's voice that you hear on each show, beginning each broadcast with "Welcome, Welcome, Welcome!" while Peters is backstage engineering. Radio-Noir isn't your typical radio show. The studio is a makeshift studio in a basement and on the walls is a collage of sharpie drawings from each band that has performed at the Saint Paul Opera House. Dougherty also states that, "Unlike most radio programs, Radio-Noir is never pre-recorded in hopes to capture every spontaneous moment." Take a listen and you know that statement is true!

Radio-Noir is not exclusive to any style of music either. When you tune in to their streaming broadcast, you may hear the experimental sounds of the band Mucky the Ducky, the folk songs of Derek Luttrell, the progressive music of Hawks and Oxen, or the rockin' music of Claw-throat. This variety makes each broadcast different than the one before.

The largest appeal that Radio-Noir has may be their archive of music. Every show is recorded and available to download as a podcast for FREE. You can also check out any shows you miss by listening to the podcast. Not only can you download the show, they have recently added videos of each broadcast. You can watch the artists perform at the Saint Paul Opera House.

Take the time to check out Radio-Noir's website and support independent musicians. You may find a new favorite band. They have an exciting line-up of musicians for the rest of the season, including artists from Denmark, Scotland, and Mexico!

HOW-TO:

Make Kickin' French Toast

BILLY SCHOENBURG

The Fixins:

- 4 Slices of Bread
(Fresh Baked Challah is CHOICE)
- 2-3 Eggs
- 1/2 Cup of Milk
- Vanilla Extract
- 1 Teaspoon Sugar
- Dash of Salt
- Butter
- Maple Syrup
- Powdered Sugar

How to do it:

1. Beat the eggs.
2. Mix in milk, sugar, salt, and vanilla. (It only needs a little vanilla, but if you love vanilla, go for it)
3. Put the mixture in a saucer-type plate/bowl.

MAKIN' KICKIN' FRENCH TOAST (CONTINUED)

4. Place pan on the stove, and set the heat on medium/low. (You want a slow cook so it doesn't burn before its grilled through)
5. Grease the pan with some butter.
6. Dip your bread in the mixture, making sure it has fully soaked through.
7. Place bread on pan until golden brown on bottom, then flip it and repeat.
8. Enjoy some truly kickin' French toast. Add powdered sugar and syrup as desired.

EDITORIAL

Musician: A Vital Profession

JENNA ANDERSON, DANIEL HEIER,
AND CAITI LASZEWSKI

David Cutler, author of "The Savvy Musician" book, recently launched "The Savvy Musician Challenge," asking college music students from around the globe to write essays on three topics relating to the roles of musicians in culture and society. The editorial staff of *The Decibel* - Jenna Anderson, Caiti Laszewski, and Dan Heier - tackled the Challenge's first topic, "Are Musicians Truly Important?". Jenna, Caiti, and Dan would like to thank Janis Weller, faculty mentor for this project. They also wish to thank Terri Whitman for her editing expertise. The full text of the essay appears below.

Music entertains and heals. Music connects, creating identity and community. Music remembers, teaches, and inspires. Music motivates and moves. It is true that human beings do not need music to survive; it does not keep us nourished, it does not keep us hydrated, and it certainly does not generate oxygen for our lungs. But music feeds our souls. In no way are musicians just entertainers. They are dreamers, creators, and teachers; they are storytellers, historians, soldiers, and they are politicians.

Songs come from emotions within us. As long as we feel a connection to whatever we write about, we will write effectively. It is the feeling within any piece of music that makes music authentic; to get that feeling we must be able to see the world through other peoples' eyes. In other words, musicians have a unique ability to translate human emotions into a song that describes how we feel in ways we are not quite capable of describing ourselves. When captivating musicians perform on stage, the audience pays attention to every move they make and every word they say and sing. Through song, musicians connect with people's emotions, political opinions, childhood experiences, love affairs, and break-ups.

Music not only entertains, it also provokes emotion. In his novel *A Man without a Country*, Kurt Vonnegut wrote, "Music makes practically everybody fonder of life than he or she would be without it." An upbeat song will surely break the dol-

drums of a dreary day or a monotonous job. The USO sends entertainers, mostly musicians, to raise the spirits of the Armed Forces. It is essential that soldiers keep their morale high for their own state of mind while dealing with the stress of being stationed overseas; bringing in musicians is one way to do that. Musicians have the amazing ability to transform the burdens of life into art.

The emotions associated with music become tied to events in our lives. Whether we remember being four years old, listening to Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band on vinyl or driving away from home to attend college with Tom Petty's Learning To Fly blaring through car speakers, music builds memories and landmarks. In the movie *High Fidelity*, "music junkie" Rob reorganizes his record collection. When asked how he is going about this, he answers, "Autobiographical. I can tell you how I got from Deep Purple to Howard Wolf in just 25 moves." Everyone has a set of artists or music genres that we identify with. Whether the lyrical structure pleases our ears or we just really love that rockin' guitar solo, we listen to music that helps us define who we are and the communities to which we belong.

Music creates a soundtrack to our lives and helps us understand who we are because musicians pass on folk stories and chronicle history. Joni Mitchell's song "Woodstock" tells of a youth on his way "To Yasgur's farm" to "Join in a rock'n'roll band" and "Camp out on the land" and "set [his] soul free." We do not have to witness history to write about it effectively - Joni Mitchell was not at Woodstock-but that song clearly demonstrates the attitude of that time.

Our childhoods are filled with song. The use of melody and rhyme as mnemonic devices taught us basic grammatical skills and history on shows like *School House Rock*. Growing up, we did not only learn music from our teachers, we learned life-long lessons too. Lesson one was that music is hard work. We learned that it takes an incredible amount of discipline to learn and master an instrument or a difficult piece of music. We learned to strive for excellence. If we wanted to be in the best ensembles, we had to practice. In marching band, we rehearsed for hours out in the summer heat and came in before school to rehearse more. We learned responsibility. We learned to be on time for the sake of the ensemble. Most importantly, we learned to enjoy what we do and have faith in ourselves that we can do it.

As musicians, like politicians, we have the opportunity to represent the opinions and ideals of entire groups of people through a song. A great example of this is the genre of protest songs. These songs detail the life of the underdog, the person fighting for change in his or her community. Some of them speak of specific events, but others are fairly general, crossing the boundaries of age with ease as new conflicts arise within each new generation. Music has affected large social and economic situations. Author/sociologist Artemy Troitsky said, "The Beatles...have done more for the fall of COMMUNISM than any other western institution." The Beatles may have

been just a rock band, but they had 73 million viewers on their first appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show. Paul McCartney commented on his concert film *In Red Square*, "The Beatles was a phenomenon, but a phenomenon of freedom." John Lennon's song "Give Peace a Chance" was his protest against the Vietnam War. Before that war ended, a million people marched to the White House singing Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance." Sure, you can argue it was just a song. But this song became the voice of the people.

We believe music and musicians are essential to society. We dream, we create, we entertain, and in doing so, we speak to and for the masses. So when we are asked if musicians are vital, without hesitation we answer, "Yes, they are." Lessons learned through music carry over into other parts of a musician's life. Music trains the musician's brain to think mathematically as well as artistically, and that can carry over into higher achievement in life. Musicians chronicle our lives in memorable ways that no one else can. For that we should not only consider them a vital part of our lives and communities but we should thank them and give them the support they deserve for everything they do for us.

Poll

Choose your favorite Beatle:

John: 21
George: 18
Paul: 14
Ringo: 15
VW: 20

*88 total students polled, one response per student

The Decibel is...

JENNA ANDERSON

EDITOR IN CHIEF

CAITI LASZEWSKI

MANAGING EDITOR

DANIEL HEIER

ONLINE EDITOR

COLIN WILKINSON, AJ ZAMORA

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

TONI ALBERTE

STAFF WRITER

JAKE MOHAN

FACULTY ADVISOR

mcnally smith 
COLLEGE of MUSIC