

style

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3.5

Average increase in billions of national debt per day.

Music to Our Ears

Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra Performs at the Center for the Arts

IJEOMA NWATU
Staff Writer

A one-two, a one two three four.

A little dim lighting, a touch of coffeehouse vibe, a towering bass in the back and a count by enthusiastic Artistic Director James Carroll kicked off a night with the Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra. The acclaimed area band played a variety of tunes for jazz enthusiasts and music lovers alike at the Center for the Arts last Saturday night.

Before playing their first selection, Frank Foster's "Blues in Hoss Flat," Carroll encouraged the audience members to read the resolution in their programs honoring jazz "as a rare and valuable national American treasure."

Along with the resolution, the evening's program featured Martin Luther King, Jr.'s opening address to the 1964 Berlin Jazz Festival. In that speech, King declared, "Jazz speaks for life." In the spirit of Black Heritage Month, King's words ring true, "It is no wonder

that so much of the search for identity among American Negroes was championed by Jazz musicians."

With the historical documents provided in the program, Carroll and his bass jazz orchestra were able to connect the influence and effect the music and genre of jazz has had since its early beginnings in African-American culture and worldwide.

The variety of jazz music spanned many decades with important and impressive musicians. The jazz orchestra played "Daybreak Express" by Duke Ellington, a native of Washington, D.C. The 1930s song is unique in that the instruments actually capture the sound of a train with all its bells and whistles. The beginning percussive drum line with the accompanying brass instruments climaxes into "choo choo" sounds. With no technological or digital advancements, the sound was authentic, rich and fun.

One of the highlights of the first half of the show was seven-year-old Geoffrey Gallante, who plays a Bb Cornet. Gallante and

Carroll had an improvisational "talking" session with their instruments. Carroll played a series of riffs on his saxophone, while Gallante mimicked them on his instruments. The boy's pitch was very impressive for someone so young. He later performed Bart Howard's "Fly Me To The Moon," which was made famous by Frank Sinatra in the 1960s.

Another highlight of the show included a talented steel drum player, Victor Provost, from the U.S. Virgin Islands. He joined the jazz orchestra on "Take the A Train," by Billy Strayhorn, a friend and collaborator of Duke Ellington. The steel drums added a touch of the islands to the otherwise soft, jazzy and piano-inspired melody. Both Gallante and Provost received lengthy applause for their contributions to the concert.

The evening also featured a third special guest, Lynn Seaton from Oklahoma. In addition to being an experienced classical guitarist, Seaton is also a member of the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame. He concluded the latter half of the concert with



PHOTO BY RANDY BRICK

The Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra performed at the Center for the Arts this past Saturday with special guest Lynn Seaton.

three of his own compositions, "Patrician Commission," "Seat-Sat" and the finale "Major's Grand Slam."

The Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra played jazz music that reflected well upon its

history and the meaning of freedom through expression. In the spirit of the struggle jazz represented, it continues to "speak for life" and all its difficulties.

As King said, "If you think

for a moment, you will realize that they take the hardest realities of life and put them into music, only to come out with some new hope or sense of triumph. This is triumphant music."



PHOTO BY J MARIAN McLAUGHLIN

At the first annual winter sidewalk parade, attendees rode hand-made bicycles while toting sculptural artwork through Old Town Fairfax. The parade was held to support George Mason University's College of Visual and Performing Arts .

Celebrating the Arts

Center for the Arts Hosts 24-Hour Arts Marathon

MARIAN McLAUGHLIN
Staff Writer

The College of Visual and Performing Arts put on their first annual 24-hour arts marathon, Making Connections, held this past weekend. Activities began at 8 a.m. last Friday, but coordinators arrived hours before that, running on little sleep as they prepared the open studios for participants.

Erwin Thamm, a printmaking major, was one of those early arrivers. He had to help Professor Helen Frederick get all of the ink, papers and presses ready, since printmaking was one of the first activities of the day. The printmakers were showing people how to make monoprints and silkscreen images, which were all going to be part of handmade visual books. At one table, a few students were putting together these books by folding and gluing different varieties of paper together. Some of the more advanced students were working on their

projects, allowing participants to observe how they made etchings and operated their equipment.

In the Performing Arts Building, there was a selection of music and dance classes open for observation all day. This was a great opportunity for people to get a feel for the performing arts classes and to see students and professors in action. There were lecture-based classes, like Music Fundamentals, that took place earlier in the morning, while master classes and workshops dominated the afternoon. The master classes were rather small, only focusing on one instrument, like Linda Monson's piano repertoire class. Lab orchestras were much larger since a symphony of instruments took part in the class.

In the dance studios, professor Karen Reedy disrupted a large group of advanced dancers. They practiced modern dance movements to the slow, steady melody of a piano. After observing the class for a while, participants were given a list of

emotions, or rasas, and were asked to shout out a different emotion every few minutes. The dancers were supposed to react to the chosen emotion and interpret it through movement. Reedy told observers that "with moods, the dancers will change their qualities." As "grief" was selected, the dancers moved about sluggishly, and as "wonder" was picked, they leapt around with great strides. About 10 different emotions were covered during this dance experimen, and the participants were in control of the energy in the room.

Down in the theater, people made masks out of tinfoil, masking tape, paper, cardboard and other materials. These were later used in the photography studio to create self-portraits. Sue Wrbican, a photography professor, put together a slide show that demonstrated how masks have been used throughout photography as elements of mystery, identity and humor. After educating mask-makers on some interesting topics, Wrbican led

them outside so they could make visual narratives and self-portraits of them in their masks.

After all mediums in the areas had been explored through the marathon, a parade took place as the final event. A group of students, teachers and bystanders marched down University Drive to Old Town Fairfax, creating the first annual winter sidewalk parade that supported the art departments at George Mason University. All night long, the sculpture studio remained open and people welded together sculptures for the parade. There were crazy contraptions of altered shopping carts and handmade bicycles which people rode in the parade. Everything that was carried and made was put into a gallery at the intersection of University Drive and North Street for display.

The purpose of the marathon, the parade and the gallery was to learn more about different studies, meet new people and to bridge the connection between Mason and its surrounding communities.

Just Dance

Parsons Dance Coming to Mason

EMILY SHARRER
Style Editor

This Saturday at 8 p.m. Parsons Dance, a New York City company featuring George Mason University alumnus Billy Smith, will perform contemporary dance at the Center for the Arts.

Described by *The New York Times* as "snazzy, sly and sexy," the group, which has been featured on PBS, Bravo, the A&E Network and the Discovery Channel, is composed of 10 full-time dancers who perform a repertory of more than 70 pieces choreographed by artistic director David Parsons.

Parsons, whose work has been performed by many reputable dance companies, including Hubbard Street Dance and the Paris Opera Ballet, has been called "One of the great movers of modern dance" by *The New York Times*.

The performance will feature the pieces *Caught*, a solo piece featuring a gravity-defying dancer, and *In the End*, an

"athletic, full-throttle" piece set to music from rock artist Dave Matthews Band.

"[David Parsons' choreography] goes down like ice cream . . . his dances are entertaining, good-humored and handsome," according to *Village Voice*.

Attendees will also get to see Parsons' 2006 piece, *Nascimento Novo*, set to the "sensual percussion music" of Brazilian composer Milton Nascimento.

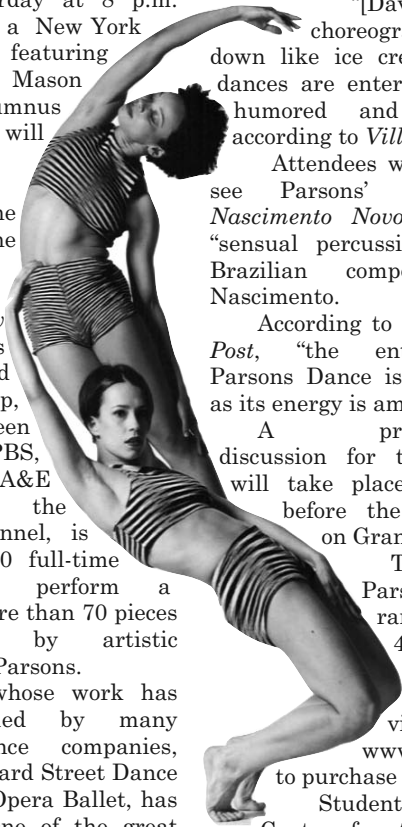
According to the *New York Post*, "the enthusiasm of Parsons Dance is as infectious as its energy is amazing."

A pre-performance discussion for ticket holders will take place 45 minutes before the performance on Grand Tier III.

Tickets for Parsons Dance range from \$22-44. Charge by phone at 888-945-2468 or visit www.tickets.com to purchase seats.

Students can visit the Center for the Arts box office to receive a limited number of free student tickets.

Visit www.gmu.edu/cfa for more information on Parsons Dance and other Center for the Arts events.



Artist Profile:

Tim Fite

New York Artist Embarks on Tour

MARIAN McLAUGHLIN
Staff Writer

Each time Tim Fite performs, his audiences are in for a unique treat.

Fite has been called a chameleon, changing from genre to genre and blending different musical sounds together with his distinct crooning voice. In between songs at his shows, Fite will sometimes share home movies, short animations and bedtime stories.

His imagination has led him to be a genuine, intimate songwriter, a fervent performer and a wholesome entertainer.

His brother, Dr. Leisure, usually accompanies him when he performs. He creates different beats and samples while providing backup vocals and nonsensical blurbs during Fite's numbers.

Some of his Fite's songs,

such as those from his *Over the Counter Culture* album, are strewn together with rap lyrics and hip-hop beats.

Other songs, like "Away From the Snakes" or "Yesterday's Garden" are more gentle acoustic, folk songs. His latest album, *Change of Heart*, was released on Valentine's Day as a free downloa and features content that deals with heartbreak.

In his own words, Fite asks his listeners to "handle these songs with care, as they are very fragile."

To share his new songs, as well as his collection of older ones, Fite will be touring the East Coast in February.

He'll be making an appearance at the Black Cat this Saturday in Washington, D.C. Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased through Ticketmaster at 202-397-SEAT, online at www.ticketmaster.com or at the venue.



Local band Melodime rocked out in the Johnson Center for the latest Every Freakin' Friday.



DYLAN HARES
Staff Writer

Seeing Melodime, a local alternative rock band, gave me the feeling of being in a smoky bar in the south, like the kind from *The Blues Brothers* movies.

This four-piece ensemble from the Washington, D.C. area is a funk, soul, folk, blues, pop-rock tidal wave that rocks as hard as any seasoned club-band, but comes off as a casual garage band.

Their set, mostly consisting of up-tempo blues

and soul tunes, was rather energetic, even if the band members themselves were not.

Many of their original tunes were definitely funky and toe-tap worthy, but mostly all sounded the same.

Male lead singer Bradley Rhodes gave a throaty vocal performance, harnessing a soulful sound which worked in all of the songs except those with a slower tempo.

As soon as female lead Rachel Beauregard opened her mouth though, I, like most of the audience, was taken aback by her big and soulful voice.

Both singers displayed good voices for their chosen genre and unlike most bands with male and female leads, their voices worked really well together.

The set was delicately sprinkled with soulful covers of The Beatles' "All You Need Is Love," Billy Joel's "It's Still Rock and Roll to Me," Ben Harper's "Steal My Kisses," and a flawless cover of Tracy

Chapman's "Give Me One Reason," familiar tunes which the audience didn't hesitate in lending a voice.

They even surprised us with a very pleasant rendition of the classic "My Girl" by The Temptations which, to the band's credit, made me fall back in love with the song.

Again, I think it was the spice of the great covers that really saved the performance.

Overall, Melodime is just that—mellow and fun. Nothing too crazy.

Their album, *Memories in the Form of Sound*, is available on iTunes and would probably be a great album for a party or road trip—which seems to be a consistent theme of Every Freakin' Friday bands.

Overall, it was a real fun show and if you missed it, you can catch Melodime back here at George Mason University in the Johnson Center this Thursday playing a benefit show for Relay for Life with The Independent.

Check out the band's MySpace page at myspace.com/mymelodime for a full listing of shows.

MICHELLE RENAUD
Broadside Correspondent

Program Board will host a benefit concert for Relay for Life on Thursday featuring the bands Melodime and The Independent.

The proceeds for this event go to the American Cancer Society for their Relay for Life event at George Mason University on April 18 at the Field House.

"Although there are usually bands performing at Mason's Relay for Life event at the Field House, as far as I know, this is

the first time that there will be a benefit concert prior to the event," said Megan Nasir, vice chair of the Concerts Committee for Program Board.

Students interested in participating in the event can join the Program Board team for Relay for Life.

"My goal in coming up with this benefit concert [is to] have a big event to raise awareness about Relay for Life and the American Cancer Society so that Mason could be a big part of raising money to go toward cancer research," said Nasir.

The concert will be held in The Bistro from 8-11 p.m.

Admission will be free for everyone with a suggested donation of \$5, although any amount will be appreciated.

For more information on the artists performing at the benefit concert, or to learn more about Relay For Life, visit:

Melodime
myspace.com/mymelodime

The Independent
myspace.com/theindependentva

Relay For Life
GMUrelay.org

Very Superstitious

Students Recall Memories Surrounding Mason Myths

EVAN BENTON
Broadside Correspondent

Friday, Feb. 13 may have been last week, but that does not mean the ominous shroud of the unknown has left.

Somewhere in the back of our minds lies that pesky little notion that sometimes calamitous luck and things that go bump in the night can rear their ugly heads.

George Mason University students, like any other college students, have their own superstitions and fears. Some are good, positive ones—like rubbing George Mason's statue (preferably his foot, or big toe) for luck before exams.

Others, however, may dish out more dire providence. It is said that stepping on the Mason Plaque next to the aforementioned statue reputedly leads to bad luck, particularly the inability to graduate on time.

"I was walking with two of

my friends last year, and while I stepped over the Mason plaque they made a point of stomping on it," said Randolph Stone, a sophomore government and international politics major, laughing at the memory, but then abruptly stopping. "That same year both of them flunked out of school . . ."

"I usually don't put much stock into superstitions," said Stone, who is an avid horror movie fan, despite his disbelief.

Stone's views are similar to many students on campus, who do not seem to have the time to worry about spooky superstitions between 300-level classes, keeping fit at the gym and working to stay afloat.

But for those that do not pay mind to legends and fables, seeing is believing.

"I don't know about rubbing any foot," said Bill Nanns, a super-sophomore government major, "but I'm pretty sure I saw something in that pond last semester."

But Nanns is not sure what exactly he saw.

"It was late at night, and I was coming back from a party. When I was walking past, I looked over at the pond and I swear there was some kind of strange shape dipping in and out of the waves."

The Mason Pond Monster? "And don't tell me going across that wooden bridge on the east side of Student Union Building II late at night won't have you looking over your shoulder."

Whether it was mere conjecture or an actual sighting, Mason can be just as scary walking around as it is when taking some of its toughest classes.

Between plaques that may serve as credit-robbing booby traps and a strange creature in the university's main body of water, the most rigid non-believers could be doomsayers come next Friday the 13th.



I've stumbled across something this week that almost chills me to my musical core: the YouTube commercial for Microsoft Songsmith. If you haven't seen this thing yet, do a YouTube search for Microsoft Songsmith, find the four minute and seventeen second commercial and watch it.

If you were working on an active scale of things that are lame, one being never-lame *Empire Strikes Back* and 10 being the too-lame-to-be-true ShamWow, the YouTube ad for Microsoft Songsmith is a full blown 10, maybe even a 10.5.

The people in this ad look lame, act lame, and good grammar aside, sing lame. It's embarrassing to sit and watch the whole thing; every time I do (which is not that often) I'm worried my roommates will walk in and I'll have to explain what I'm doing and why there are so many lame people on my computer. It's worse than a guilty pleasure—the Microsoft Songsmith ad just makes me feel guilty.

If you've never heard of Microsoft Songsmith before and are too scared to go watch the commercial, let me explain the premise. Songsmith is a program that is designed to make songwriting as easy as shaking hands. You sing into a microphone attached to your computer while Songsmith plays a drum track to keep tempo.

After you're done singing, Songsmith will internalize your melody, interpret it in the most sophisticated way possible and play back for you a completed song with your voice over it. Do I approve of Microsoft trying to make music more accessible for

everyone? Yes. Do I approve of putting artistic license in the hands of computers? Not at all.

To illustrate how unbelievably bad computers are at music, one need go no further than the related videos to the right of the Microsoft Songsmith YouTube commercial. Here you will see videos of people who have taken the vocal tracks to several excellent songs and allowed Songsmith to reinterpret them.

The Police's "Roxanne" becomes a jaunty, Tito Puente-esque samba in hiding, as opposed to the rhythmically diverse original. "White Wedding" by Billy Idol becomes a bluegrass standard, casting aside electro-punk sounds and devil-may-care attitudes in the name of banjos and washboards. Perhaps the most offensive one is The Beatles' classic "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band" as a laid-back lounge jazz tune, which mixes with Paul McCartney's heaving vocals like oil mixes with water.

Go listen—you'll quickly learn a computer, no matter how sophisticated, does not possess even comparable powers with a human ear. Even if you had never heard these songs before, you would know that the backgrounds Songsmith assigned them are completely incorrect.

Maybe I'm just so appalled by the fact that Songsmith seems to take something I've worked so hard to develop and market it like you can master it in an afternoon. It might be fun to play around with, but in the end Songsmith is nothing more than a technological toy and will turn you into a musician as fast as an iPod will. If Microsoft had the gumption to advertise Songsmith

LIFE IN A. MINOR

COMPUTERS ARE NOT PEOPLE

not as a songwriting device but as a toy, I wouldn't have as much of a problem.

Yet this is not the case; Microsoft seems to think it's alright to tell people they can write songs using Songsmith and nothing else. And I guess you could, but would they be good songs? I believe those YouTube videos I just mentioned should answer that quite thoroughly.

And now, for the quintessence of a selfish, shameless plug, I'd like to extend an invitation to all of you readers to come see probably the musical event of the semester: my tuba recital. Some of you may not know this, but I do a lot more with music than just listen to it and complain about it. I've played the tuba for about ten years now, and I've thrown together some of my favorite musical friends to play for you this week.

There will be something for everyone, from Mozart to Miles Davis, and if you read my column every week it might not be a bad idea to come see that I know what I'm talking about. Before I boast myself any further, I'll end here with the specs of the event: Thursday, Feb. 26 at 7 p.m. It'll be in the Grand Tier III of the Center for the Arts (the concert hall—take the elevator in the lobby up to the third floor).

Are you broke? Good news—it's free! Do you have class? Good news—you can skip it! I'd love to see you all there, even if I don't know who you are. It will be your only chance to hear me play all semester, so take full advantage of it.

★ ★ ★

Caps

STUDENT RUSH

Presented by **Chipotle**

THURSDAY, FEB. 26, 7 P.M.

vs. ATLANTA THRASHERS

Bring your student ID to the Verizon Center box office after 10 a.m. on Thurs., Feb. 26 for a \$15 upper or \$35 lower level ticket and a coupon for a free Chipotle burrito.

Text STUDENT to 37686 to join the Caps Student Rush Mobile Club for special student offers and updates!

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www.novajobfair.org