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Hammers and harmonies

Music department, art school collaborate to present two operas in Bixby Gallery

The banging of hammers that recently echoed throughout Bixby Hall’s Bixby Gallery will be replaced with the strains of singing when the Washington University Opera presents its spring opera fare this weekend.

The melodies, however, couldn’t have been more different.

The Department of Music in Arts and Sciences and the School of Art have combined their creative energies — and respective societies — to present a unique double bill of one-act operas in Bixby Gallery. The double bill begins with Thomas Benjamin’s 20th-century tale “The Rehearsal” and ends with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s “The Impresario.” The set will transform Bixby Hall’s Bixby Gallery into a grand ballroom of New York City’s Algonquin Hotel, circa 1939.

Thanks to a computer-mapping database developed by George Warren Brown School of Social Work students, social-service agencies working to improve the handling of child-abuse problems in south St. Louis soon will have a wealth of information on neighborhood resources at their fingertips.

The mapping database, which provides social-service workers with easily accessible information on where families can find help, has caught the attention of Missouri Division of Family Services (DFS). Several social work students have been hired part time to train DFS personnel to use the mapping database and to explore its uses in other state social-service programs.

The program displays maps showing the locations of counseling services, child-care centers and other resources. This makes it easier for social-service providers to direct families to the most appropriate and convenient sources of assistance — including details on hours of operation, fees, bus routes and other important information.

The mapping database is an outgrowth of an interdisciplinary Washington University course on community development. The course, a cross-listed offering of the social work school and the School of Architecture, was co-taught last semester by John Robertson, Ph.D., assistant professor of social work, and Janne Pena, associate professor of architecture.

As part of the class, students from various disciplines form small teams that work with community leaders on neighborhood problems. In the fall of 1995, a student team decided to use geographic-information system software to help leaders from the Sigel Community Education Center organize neighborhood social-service data into an easy-to-use mapping database.

Emergency situations, child-abuse hotline operators could use the database to instantly generate a map showing a caller’s home address and the locations of relevant resources in the neighborhood.

“If caseworkers can direct their clients more quickly, it may reduce stress and avoid situations where there is a potential for child abuse,” said Kim Wier, a recent graduate of social work who selected as one of five communities statewide in which various approaches to child-abuse investigation are to be explored and assessed.

During a three-year demonstration period, state investigators are working closely with Sigel administrators and other neighborhood social-service providers to test a two-track approach to the investigation of child-abuse reports.

Although “high-risk” cases will continue to be handled through the traditional DFS investigative process, minor cases will be channeled through a new “Family Assessment” track in which neighborhood-based social-service providers remain closely involved in the evaluation process and provide immediate help. The on-site visit is a voluntary basis, according to Missouri law, aims to involve community-based social-service providers to test a two-track approach to the investigation of child abuse.

The computer-mapping project at the Sigel Community Education Center in south St. Louis was spurred by Missouri Senate Bill 595. Signed into law during the 1993-94 legislative session, the law is designed to encourage greater collaboration between state child-abuse investigators and the families and communities they serve.

The legislation is based on the belief that neighborhoods and communities are the primary sources of opportunities and support for families and have the responsibility of assuring the safety and vitality of their members.

The law mandates that the Missouri Division of Family Services (DFS) collaborate with communities to provide a continuum of services to prevent and remedy problems of child abuse and neglect. The Sigel neighborhood was selected as one of five communities statewide in which various approaches to child-abuse investigation are to be explored and assessed.

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The computer-mapping database gives the community-based social-service providers a wealth of information on where families can obtain immediate assistance in the neighborhood.

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One of the country’s best

The George Warren Brown School of Social Work is tied for No. 1 among neighborhood programs, services and other factors, such as poverty or poor access to health care.

The program provides a valuable tool for long-term planning and analysis by allowing community leaders to create customized maps that show relationships among neighborhood programs, services and other factors such as U.S. Census data. For example, a church group looking for a place to locate a community youth program might create a map showing residential areas that have many young people but few recreational facilities.

Second-year social work graduate students Christy Castner and Jodi de la Pena took over the South St. Louis neighborhood during the computer-mapping demonstration last spring.

Continued on next page
Medical Update

Gene-carrying virus might help hemophiliacs

Hemophilia is a hereditary and potentially fatal blood condition that causes people to bleed excessively. A shingler, or blood clots, fail to congeulate in the wake of injury because clotting factors are missing or are poorly expressed in the blood. The most common form is hemophilia A. It results from a deficiency in clotting factor VIII and affects one in 5,000 men in the United States.

The researchers are studying a different form of the disease that results from a deficiency in clotting factor X. This rare but serious disorder affects one in 50,000 American males. By engineering a virus to carry the human factor X gene into liver cells, the researchers enabled rats to produce sustained levels of the blood component. After more than a year, some of the rats are continuing to produce stable levels of factor X.

Maintaining concentrated, long-term levels of missing clotting factors has been a major obstacle in hemophilia research, Ponder said. She added that the sustained levels of factor X achieved in the rats would be considered therapeutic for Factor X-deficient humans.

The approach also might work for clotting factor IX deficiency. Factors IX and X are similar proteins, and their genes can be manipulated in similar ways, she said. Factor IX deficiency contributes to hemophilia B, which affects one in 50,000 American males.

The retrovirus technique is not limited to hemophilia, Ponder said. “We’re now looking to see if we can apply our gene-delivery techniques to cure other liver deficiencies,” she said. “Once you get the (retrovirus) into the liver, you could essentially target any genetic disorder you want. It should be applicable to a tremendous number of genetic disorders that affect proteins made by the liver.”

George Consiglio

Researchers testing drug that might lessen brain damage after stroke

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved one drug, IPA (tissue plasminogen activator), for treatment of ischemic stroke. The drug dissolves blood clots, restoring the flow of essential substances to threatened tissue.

Cerestat — arginyl hydrochloride — was developed by Cambridge Neuroscience Inc. after decades of basic research at Washington University and other institutions.

The screening, trial-related examinations and follow-up examination are free.

George Consiglio

Volunteers needed to test treatment of post-shingles pain

School of Medicine investigators are recruiting patients for a study of an investigational drug for the treatment of postherpetic neuralgia, the severe pain that can affect patients months or years after they have had shingles. Shingles is one of 10 sites involved in the study of the drug, called gabapentin.

The drug originally was developed as a treatment for epilepsy. It helps prevent seizures — which essentially are 'short circuits' in the brain — might also prevent damage to nerves.

If you think of the pain as a 'short circuit' in peripheral nerves, then it makes sense that a drug designed to prevent seizures — which essentially are 'short circuits' in the brain — might also prevent damage to nerves.

Shingles is an inflammation of nerves in the skin, legs, chest or elsewhere. The virus that causes the chickenpox rash also causes shingles. The virus (varicella zoster) can reawaken older people and result in the skin lesions and pain associated with shingles. About 20 percent to 30 percent of people older than 60 suffer from shingles, and half of those develop postherpetic neuralgia. In patients older than 70, about three-fourths suffer from postherpetic neuralgia.

“We’ve treated people with a different drug for many years, but there can be side effects because it damages the nerves. For patients with other medical problems,” Dunteman said. “And once patients pass 70, most have other medical problems.”

Volunteers for the study must be 18 or older, have postherpetic neuralgia for more than three months after a shingles eruption. This is an eight-week study period, participants will receive either gabapentin or placebos. Subsequently, volunteers will be invited to use the Washington University Pain Management Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital during the course of the study. For more information, call (314) 362-8820.
Kahl’s experiences connect her with students

When students walk into Leslie Kahl’s office to discuss their quandaries and dilemmas, they encounter someone who has walked a mile in their shoes. Kahl, M.D., associate dean for student affairs at the School of Medicine, knows how these students feel because she agonized over her decision to become a doctor.

When she was a junior at Stanford University, Kahl took some time off from school. Like a third of her Stanford classmates, she was a pre-med major. But she wasn’t certain she wanted a medical career. So she rented an apartment, got a job and thought about what had happened and to decide whether this was a decision I had fallen into or something I had consciously chosen," Kahl said.

Not many of Kahl’s high school classmates dreamed of becoming physicians. She grew up in the rural New York town of Corning, population 15,000, and home of the multi-million-dollar Corning Glass Corp. Kahl noted that people worked for either Corning or the school district.

Kahl’s father worked for Corning, as did her grandfather, who held the patent for the glass in stoplights and in the nose cones of rockets. Her mother worked for the school district when Kahl began high school.

“In retrospect, it was a really neat place to go to school,” she said. “There was much more going on than in your average small town. It was filled with lawyers and designers and people who required a lot in terms of culture.”

Many of Kahl’s childhood memories are of people rather than of people from foreign lands. Her mother played flute in the local symphony, and her father was president of the symphony society. Her grandparents lived extensively and played host to many fellow travelers.

“The Sunday dinner table was frequently graced with foreign students or fellow travelers — people from all over the world,” she said. “At a child, I remember these extraordinary wooden crates coming back from everywhere and would anticipate them.”

Her grandfather, a chemist, taught Kahl to use a slide rule and helped her figure out math problems during concerts. Kahl has always enjoyed music, math and languages.

During her time off from Stanford, Kahl shadowed a married couple — one was a general practitioner and the other was the general surgeon. By the time she returned to Stanford, Kahl was convinced medicine was the correct career choice for her because she saw how the couple interacted with people and how they were making a difference.

When Kahl graduated from Stanford in 1973 with a bachelor’s degree, she hadn’t finished her pre-med requirements. She had been accepted for a year in a series of unusual, full-time jobs while she took more science courses and prepared credentials for medical school applications. While living in Berkeley, Calif., co-op, she worked as a switchboard operator, which she confesses wasn’t her calling. She also worked briefly as an assistant loan officer in a Japanese bank and then as a civilian associate director of a literacy school at California’s Fort Ord.

“At the time, I was a嵌人 at a small town. I spent a lot of time at the beach and was backpaking,” she said. “When I entered medical school, I was very focused and knew I wanted a career and not just a job. I think the year off gave me much better direction than if I had gone straight through.”

“She’s a good listener.”

Kahl’s ear-opening experiences have contributed to her noted listening skills and rapport with students — traits that immediately come to mind when students and colleagues describe her.

“I think she can see all the different sides of an issue very clearly, even before you’ve presented the issue to her.” — Todd Vedder

“She’s very good,” said Gerald Medoff, M.D., professor of medicine and of molecular microbiology and director of medical education for the Department of Medicine. “I think her clinical expertise and her rapport with students is admirable and an important contribution to our teaching program.”

Teaching has been a common thread throughout Kahl’s life. When she graduated from high school, she received an award as most likely to become an outstanding teacher.

“At the time, having experienced small-town, somewhat mediocre classes, I didn’t consider this to be the highest form of compliment,” Kahl said. “But now I understand what teaching is, teaching gives me the highest form of compliment, “But now I think that teaching is, teaching gives me the highest form of compliment.”

During medical school at New York’s Albany Medical College, Kahl spent a summer helping develop a class curriculum. She was also in charge of fellows at an arthritis clinic affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh, where she taught before joining Washington University.

She earned a medical degree from Albany in 1978.

It’s clear what she likes about teaching. “Seeing the ‘Oh, yeah, now I understand.’ That’s the same look you get from the teaching a house officer, a student or a patient,” she said.

In some ways, Kahl said, the information she conveys to patients is just as important as the help she teaches to medical students and house officers. She has discussed lupus patients and their diseases so many times that she is well-educated about a disease cope with it better. They also are more reliable and are good observers and reporters who motivated her, after being up all night on call, to go home and read about their illnesses. “Their diseases seemed so exciting, and exciting, and exciting,” she said. “It was a very easy decision for me.”

Kahl and her husband, George Matuschak, M.D., completed fellowships at the University of Pittsburgh and joined the faculty there for four years before moving to St. Louis in 1987. They have a year-old son, Matuschak is a professor of medicine and director of the medical intensive-care unit at Saint Louis University.

Kahl’s main assignment when she joined Washington University was to try to bridge the gap between a large patient population and a growing bench research program in rheumatology. For the past several years, she has built a computerized database of lupus patients and looked at the issue of education, such as the natural history of the illness, disease treatment and its complications, and infection. In her role as director of the Lupus Clinic, she provided patient data and specimens for ongoing studies, including several national multicenter research protocols.

In 1992, Kahl became director of the clinical section of the Division of Rheumatology.

Since she entered the field, scientists have learned a great deal about the immunogenetics of arthritis — which eventually might unravel the causes of the disease.

“I used to be that only patients who got diagnosed and treated were the ones who had catastrophic illness — full-blown lupus with all the complications, many of them life threatening,” she said.

Kahl strongly believes physicians must remember that the prescription pad is not the only tool for treating arthritis. “There are lots of other tools available now, including education of the patient and family, weight loss, diet, and the use of splints and assistive devices,” Kahl said.

She recently completed an educational video on arthritis for primary-care physicians.

Kahl admits that juggling her roles as physician and administrator is difficult. “But one of the things I like about my job is that every day is different,” she said.

“Never have you any idea what to expect.” — Diane Duke
Exhibitions


Art Center/City Faces exhibits. Features works by participants in City Faces, a summer drawing program for at-risk youth. Through March 29. Centro De Contempo-

mány Arts, 524 Trinity Ave. Hours: 1 to 5 p.m. weekends. 935-4523.


Films

All Filmboard movies cost $3 and are shown in Room 300s. For the 24-hour Filmboard hotline, call 935-5983.

Friday, March 14

7 and 9:30 p.m. Filmboard Feature Series. "The Partisan," 1969 (See story on page 5.). Also March 15, same time, and March 16 at 7 p.m. Midnight, Filmboard Midnights Series. "Batman" (1966). Also March 15, same time, and March 16 at 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18

6 and 9 p.m. Filmboard Classic Series. "Grave of the Fireflies" (1989). Room 219 South Building. 935-5510. (Also March 25 and at 3:30 p.m.)

6 and 9 p.m. Filmboard Classic Series. "Born Yesterday." Also March 19, same time.

Friday, March 21

7:30 and 10 p.m. Filmboard Feature Series. "Wallace & Gromit: The Best of Animatronics." Also March 22, same time, and March 25 at 8 and 10 p.m. Midnight, Filmboard Midnights Series. "Back to the Future." (Also March 22, same time, and March 23 at 9:30 p.m.)

Lectures

Thursdays, March 13

11 a.m. Pathology seminar. "Protein Mod-"

ification of Nerve Growth Factor by Survival". Terry Therneau, assoc. prof, of biochemistry, Mayo Clinic. Room 1112. Shrine's Hospital Bldg. 362-3614.

4 p.m. Pathology seminar. "Regulation of Nitrogenase Activity by Reversible ADP-ribosylation." Paul W. Ludden, prof, of anatomy, UI. Room 322 Rushbrooke. 935-6800.

Monday, March 17


Musica

Friday, March 21

8 p.m. WU Chamber Choir concert. "On New York City" by Antonio Lotti and the world premiere of "'The Last Time I Saw Paris" by Washington, Seattle. Room 725 McDonnell Scientific Building. 935-4528.

Wednesday, March 19

6:30 p.m. Anthropology Grand Round. "The New University" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. (Also March 20 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. 935-6800. 935-5983.

8 a.m. Obstetrics and Gynecology Grand Round. "Towards to a Multicultural Century," Clarence Page, tribune. Graham chapel. (See story on page 1.)

1 p.m. Math lecture. Waves and P.D.L.s Seminar. Topic to be announced. Speaker is Wim Sweldens. Lab Rooms. 935-9526.

4 p.m. Biochemistry and molecular biophysics seminar. "The True Free Energy of Protein Folding is Difficult to Use for Structure Prediction and Sometimes Falls at the Unknown Regions of Protein Structure." Thomas H. Steinberg, prof, of anatomy and physiology, U of Minnesota. Room 311 McMillen Lab. 935-6530.

8 p.m. School of Architecture's Monday Night. Lecture Series. "Organic Metabolism and Control System," Joel Price, prof, of anatomy and physiology, School of Medicine. Room 426 McDonnell Medical Sciences Bldg. 362-6950.

3 p.m. Biology thesis defense. "Population Genetic Characterisation of the Helicobacter of the Otter and Flat Hills by the Eastern Canada Zoo (Crotalophyris collardi) and of Flat Hills Frugivora (Fragilis)". Delbert Hathorne, graduate student. Room 322 Robbetch. 362-3365.

Saturday, March 22

8 a.m. Obstetrics and Gynecology Grand Round. "Towards to a Multicultural Century," Clarence Page, tribune. Graham chapel. (See story on page 1.)


March 21-22

Wallace & Gromit: The Best of Animatronics. (See story on page 5.)

Alzheimer's Disease (April 4); "Clinical Pulmonary Update" (April 5-6)."
Diverse blend of musical influences anchors Zap Mama, performances

Across-cultural musical melting down the lines when Zap Mama performs at 8 p.m. March 21 in联动剧团, the one-night-only performance is part of Edison’s "OVATIONS!" series and is co-sponsored locally by Ars Music Productions.

Zap Mama, which originally built a reputation as an exuberant Afro-European female a cappella group, has expanded into new musical frontiers. The group now includes acoustic instruments to complement the electrifying voices. The current lineup — starring Zap Mama founder Marie Daulne with backup vocalists, bass drum — incorporates the best of their former incarnation with a new sense of drive and energy. But, like before, Zap Mama promises a powerful evening of music that mixes the souls of Africa, Europe and the United States.

Daulne draws from a range of musical influences, including Afro-American jazz, European choral styles, Asian chants and African cries, among others. Zap Mama’s music epitomizes a selection of Daulne’s diverse heritage spanning two continents. She was born in Zaire to a Belgian father and Zairean mother. Her father was killed in a political revolt, and her mother moved with her three children to hide out in a Pygmy tribe before settling in Belgium with her in-laws.

Daulne started Zap Mama in 1989.

Assembly Series features columnist Clarence Page

Nationally syndicated columnist Clarence Page will deliver the Benjamin E. Youngdahl Lecture in Social Policy at 11 a.m. Wednesday, March 19, in Hillel Chapel. His lecture, titled "Bridge to a Multicultural Future," is part of the Assembly Series and is free and open to the public.

Page, the 1999 Pulitzer Prize winner for commentary, has been a Chicago Tribune columnist and an editorial writer for the newspaper’s editorial board since 1984. His column addresses such issues as education, politics, economics, the environment, housing, hunger and crime. He has been based in Washington since 1982-84. Page occasionally is a panelist on "The McLaughlin Group" and has been a contributor of audio commentary to "MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour." His commentary also is broadcast on National Public Radio’s "Weekend Edition."
A magazine incorrectly ranked law schools

An error by U.S. News & World Report in calculating its 1997 rankings of the nation’s best law schools resulted in the Washington University School of Law being incorrectly placed too low among the top 10 law schools.

According to U.S. News, the school was incorrectly ranked 37th when it should have been ranked 13th, the same as its 1996 ranking.

The magazine is recalling its original rankings guidebook from newsstands and will replace it with a new version that has the corrected law school rankings. U.S. News also will run a revised copy of the rankings tables for all of the law schools in the Monday, March 17, issue of the weekly magazine.

In a teleconference last week with representatives of law schools across the country, U.S. News officials said they would consider re-evaluating their methodology for future rankings to iron out any inconsistencies in ranking.

"Our goal is to train the staff at Sigel and the agency to help them to use the database so that they can take over the operation and use the information to make it easier for them to serve their clients more effectively," Castner said. "We know how to use the software, but our instructors will train the clients on what they need from the computer program. Hopefully, it is a partnership that benefits everyone."
Obituaries

Larry J. Snyder, human resources specialist

Larry J. Snyder, training and organization development specialist in the Office of Human Resources, died of a heart attack Monday, March 3, 1997, in his St. Louis home. He was 39.

Snyder had worked at Washington University since 1992, when he was hired as a policies and procedures writer in the Employee Services. In 1993, he became manager of employee training in the Office of Human Resources.

"Larry was a very dedicated worker and a really good team member," Jouett said. "He was a truly excellent team player and also did a great deal of creative work to the University. We're really going to miss him."

Novelist Joanna Scott to read from her works

Joanna Scott

A native of Champagnie, Ill., Scott received a bachelor's degree in business management from National-Louis University in 1969. She had just completed a work on a master's degree in management and human resources development at Webster University.

"Larry was a very dedicated worker and a really good team member," Jouett said. "He was a truly excellent team player and also did a great deal of creative work to the University. We're really going to miss him."
Managing Editor 973073-R. Requirements: high school graduate or equivalent; experience in a research environment; excellent organizational, relating, and decision-making abilities; ability to work independently; ability to handle confidential information; ability to work effectively with computers; proficiency in Lotus Notes or Microsoft Word preferred; excellent written and oral communication skills; tact and diplomacy required; proficiency in word processing, spreadsheet, database, and desktop publishing programs preferred. Responsibilities include assisting with the general program of the University; coordinating and implementing special projects; assembling and distributing reports; maintaining files and records; preparing correspondence; handling confidential data and other information. Application required.

Medical Professional Staff 970422-R. Requirements: high school graduate or equivalent; a minimum of one year of experience in patient assistance; knowledge and experience in purchasing and sales experience; excellent interpersonal skills; computer competency; ability to communicate effectively with persons of different backgrounds; ability to handle confidential information; ability to work independently and with others; ability to work under pressure; attention to detail; willingness to work nights and weekends; ability to travel independently and within the State; ability to handle confidential information; knowledge of IBM-compatible computers; proficiency in Lotus Notes preferred; experience in a research environment preferred. Responsibilities include assisting with the general program of the University; coordinating and implementing special projects; assembling and distributing reports; maintaining files and records; preparing correspondence; handling confidential data and other information. Application required.

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