

# ARTWORKS

PUPPET THEATRE ADDS COLOR TO MAIN STREET



SUMMER 2011

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Why do we support the arts? The arts are more than a painting on a wall or a concert in a hall. The arts foster young imaginations and facilitate children's success in school, cultivating creative, flexible thinkers who can tackle the problems of the 21st century.

A strong arts sector is an economic asset that stimulates business activity, attracts tourism revenue, retains a high-quality work force and stabilizes property values. The arts have been shown to be a successful and sustainable strategy for revitalizing rural areas and populations struggling with poverty.

The arts provide a welcoming sense of place and a desirable quality of life. They also support a strong

democracy, engaging citizens in civic discourse, dramatizing important issues and encouraging collective problem solving.

From West Virginia's large art centers to small town theaters in rural areas, the arts create an environment for unity and progress. They work to preserve our unique culture and heritage, ensuring that precious cultural character and traditions will continue to be passed along to future generations.

### ARTWORKS:

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# Stringfever

## LONDON MUSCIANS INFLUENCE LOCAL STUDENTS

BY ROSE MCDONOUGH

Self described as the “World’s First Genetically Modified String Quartet,” Stringfever ,comprised of Giles Broadbent, Ralph Broadbent, Neal Broadbent and Graham Broadbent, brought their own brand of classical musical interpretations on rare custom made ‘Violectra’ string instruments all the way from London, England, to St. Albans High School Auditorium on February 7, 2011. Students were offered a rare intimate performance and question-and-answer session with the group the day following its performance in Charleston as part of the Community Music Association’s concert series. Instrumental and vocal music students, community members as well as fine arts and even a math class were able to attend the special performance provided to the students due to the diligent work of Tim White, Director of bands at St. Albans.

White had discovered the group on YOUTUBE about five years ago when searching for material for his fine arts classes at St. Albans High School. Upon hearing the group would be performing in Charleston, he began emailing the group’s manager to see if they would add on an educational concert to the performance scheduled with the Community

King, education manager for the West Virginia Symphony, White was able to reach out to music programs within Kanawha County as well as statewide string programs offering this rare opportunity. Although no other schools were able to participate, the students at St. Albans High School had a wonderful opportunity to learn about the music, the musicians and the importance of being a good audience member.

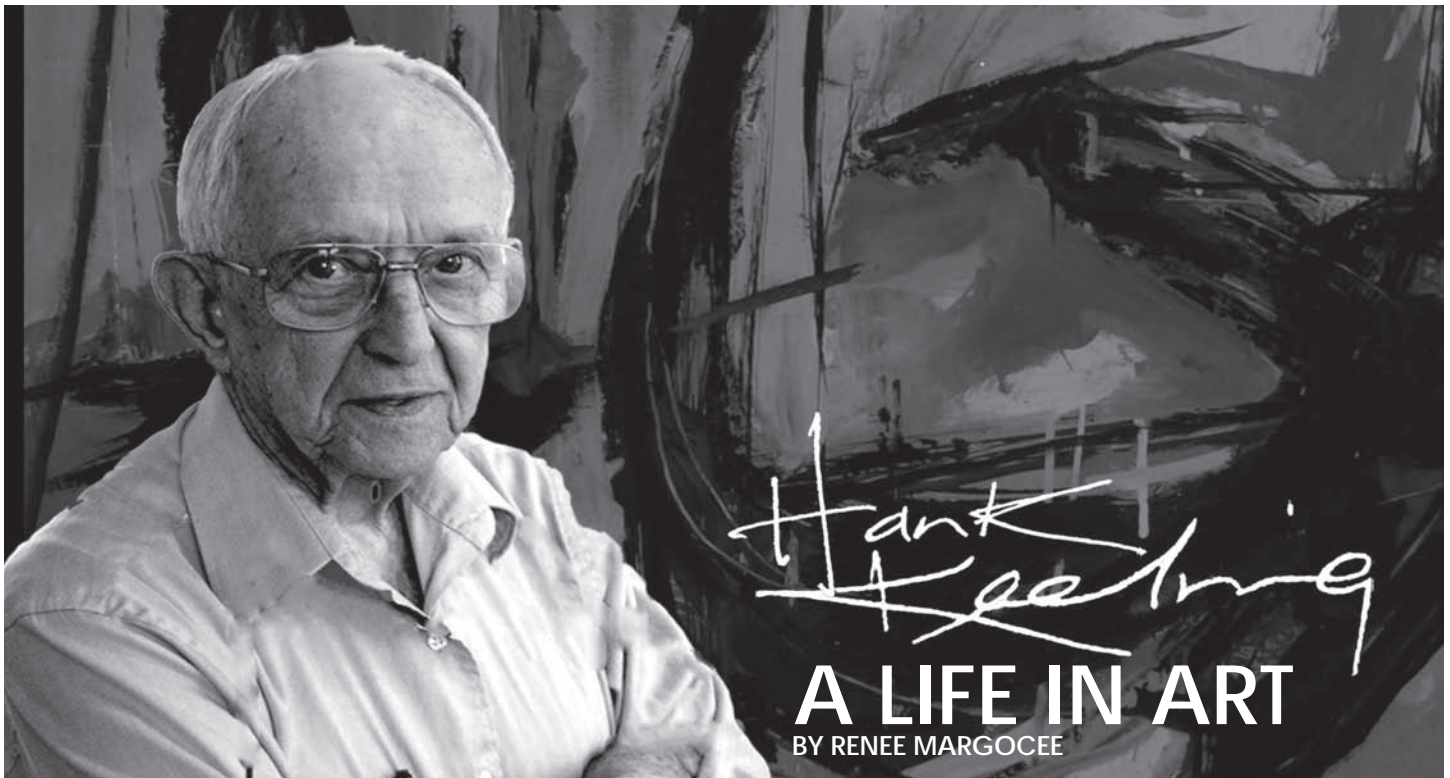
In a question-and-answer session with the four musicians, students inquired about the unusual musical instruments that were played only to find they were created by one person, Bruce Johnson, a Canadian living in Birmingham. The sounds of the string instrument can be altered electronically to include guitar, organ, percussion and other various sounds.

Several students were interested in the fact that the band members are all related, three are brothers and the fourth is a cousin. They also became interested in how this familial relationship played a role in the group’s success and unique energy. The musicians felt very strongly about their family ties and that they played a strong role in the joviality they experience as part of the performance, stating the relationships were a “great bonus.” Growing up together has allowed them to know each other’s characters very well. All four performers come from strong musical families and training.

More information on the group’s background can be found at [www.stringfeverusa.com](http://www.stringfeverusa.com).



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Ralph Broadbent, Neil Broadbent, Graham Broadbent, and Giles Broadbent of Stringfever.



This past spring, adjunct professor Mark Tobin Moore of the Marshall University Graduate College Humanities Program in South Charleston created a dynamic graduate seminar which allowed him to fulfill his mission of exploring exhibition, curatorial, installation, and educational methods with students, while honoring his long-time artistic mentor, Henry C. “Hank” Keeling, who passed away last September.

Moore feels very fortunate to teach for the Humanities Program with visionary program director Dr. Luke Eric Lassiter, who “encourages collaborative endeavors with the local community.” Having the freedom to think outside of the box gave Moore the room to design a unique experience for graduate students, while realizing his dream of a Keeling retrospective.

Over the years, Moore had discussed the idea of a retrospective with Keeling. “Again and again, he declined. He always felt there was someone more deserving than himself, no matter how much I insisted,” Moore said. After Hank’s death, his nephew, Fred Keeling and wife, Tena, encouraged Moore to honor Hank through a retrospective, giving him complete curatorial freedom. “For this act of trust and kindness, I will be forever grateful,” he said. This seminal event was the beginning of a special opportunity for Marshall University Graduate College Humanities Program students to learn the art of creating an exhibition, while showcasing the important artistic and cultural contributions of Hank Keeling.

Keeling was born near St. Albans, West Virginia in 1923. Like so many West Virginians, he left to serve his country in the Army during WWII. After the war, Keeling moved to New York City, where he

vigorously pursued his education, earning a degree from the prestigious Pratt Institute. Moore notes, “Hank studied with some of the most influential art teachers of the 20th century, most notably painter Hans Hofmann and Leo Manso, whom many consider the premier collagist of the 20th century. I consider myself fortunate to have had Hank as my mentor and teacher. Hank’s stories of his historic experience in the 1950s New York art scene inspired me as an artist.” Keeling returned home in the 1960s to teach at Morris Harvey College (now University of Charleston), and earned his Master of Arts degree at Marshall University in 1969.

Moore first became aware of Hank Keeling during his first college art class at the University of Charleston, in the late 1970s. “I was stationed here in the Navy and was attending college classes during my after-duty hours,” he said. “I really liked Mr. Keeling, as I called him then, and decided to take more art classes. Eventually, I switched my major to art.”

After Moore completed undergraduate school, received his MA from Marshall University then went to West Virginia University almost fifteen years later, where he earned an MFA degree in painting. “Hank’s influence on my artistic path is undeniable,” he said.

As a labor of love, Moore set about constructing the Keeling seminar. Moore’s extensive history with Keeling enabled him to take students beyond paint and paper to explore how contemporary culture affected and fueled Keeling’s work, making it a reflection of the times. Through Moore’s biographical stories, students were able to feel a personal connection to both Keeling and his work.

“His method of teaching was simple: love, compassion, acceptance, forgiveness, and patience.”

-Mark Moore on Hank Keeling

“Hank’s art is consistently authentic, skillful, playful, insightful, experimental, colorful, conceptual, and heartfelt”, said Moore.

The seminar was restricted to eight students and met at Moore’s personal studio, Blue Door Art Studio, located in downtown Charleston, West Virginia. In this intimate, artistic environment, students took on the monumental task of curating a retrospective exhibit of artwork that spans nearly 70 years, in a matter of months. Even the most seasoned curator would find this a daunting project, yet Moore and his students fearlessly managed to pull it off.

During their time at the Blue Door Art Studio, students accomplished an impressive list of objectives. Students wrote essays for the exhibition catalogue and researched art movements in the United States and West Virginia, examining how world events shape art on the local level. Museum curators were interviewed in order to gain insight into the world of curating. Local artist, Eric Pardue, visited the class to demonstrate how to mat and reframe art work.

Together the students matted and reframed 42 art works by Keeling. Interpretive text and photo panels were created by some of the graduate students for selected exhibition pieces, and a public forum was established to collect remembrances from the public. These shared memories were included in a section of the exhibition catalogue, *As We Knew Him*. The seminar experience imparted a rather impressive set of skills, which are essential for future teachers, historians, artists, or other humanities related professionals to understand and possess. Through hard work and critical thinking, the seminar participants executed a successful, well-thought out exhibition and catalogue. The catalogue was designed by a volunteer, Terry Asseff, a former Keeling student and graduate of Marshall University, who also produced the exhibition posters and invitations.

It is now Mark Tobin Moore’s chance to shape future artists or exhibition producers. The planning and culmination of the exhibition, *Hank Keeling: A Life in Art (A Retrospective)*, provided the perfect innovative platform for Moore to impart essential exhibition related skills, while honoring an influential West Virginia artist, continuing the legacy of giving through art - a perfect circle.

“Art is an essential element for the survival of the individual and society”

-Hank Keeling



ABOVE: Mark Moore working on Keeling exhibition.

BELOW: Collection of Hank Keeling’s works at the Blue Door Studio. photos by Tyler Evert.

# GROWING INTO AN ARTISTIC CAREER

BY NANCY WU

I grew up in Charleston, West Virginia. I am lucky to be able to say that the artistic community I experienced there was vibrant and colorful. It was intimate enough to be a part of, to feel safe in, and to belong. As a kid in the late 80's, I hung around at "Mountain Stage" and went to the symphony orchestra with my parents. I began doing theater. I was one of those little kids that started with Dan Kehde in Children's Theater of Charleston, singing and dancing in hoop dresses. Working with Charleston Light Opera Guild under the helm of Nina Denton (Pasinetti), I debuted as the Cat in Pinocchio, and played in the chorus of Scrooge and Robin Hood. I played the flying Monkey King at Sunrise Museum, and as a teenager, in a production of Hair, I played Chrissy. I began to gain confidence as an actor. I fell in love with the theater my first time backstage on the set of Pippin. There was a sense of belonging and magic when the lights went down, and the musty summer box theater went quiet then swelled into song. After I went to college, I started a career in Hong Kong and Shanghai as a business consultant. However, I always harbored aspirations to become a performing artist. The short experience overseas was exciting because I was exposed to international business and the booming growth of Asian economies. Upon my return to New York, I ventured to study at the Neighborhood Playhouse, continuing on to do an excellent two-year Meisner training program with Ron Stetson. In New York, I did loads of theater, film, TV and commercial work, including three episodes of "Law and Order" and the world premier of Warren Leight's "No Foreigners Beyond this Point" at Baltimore Centerstage.

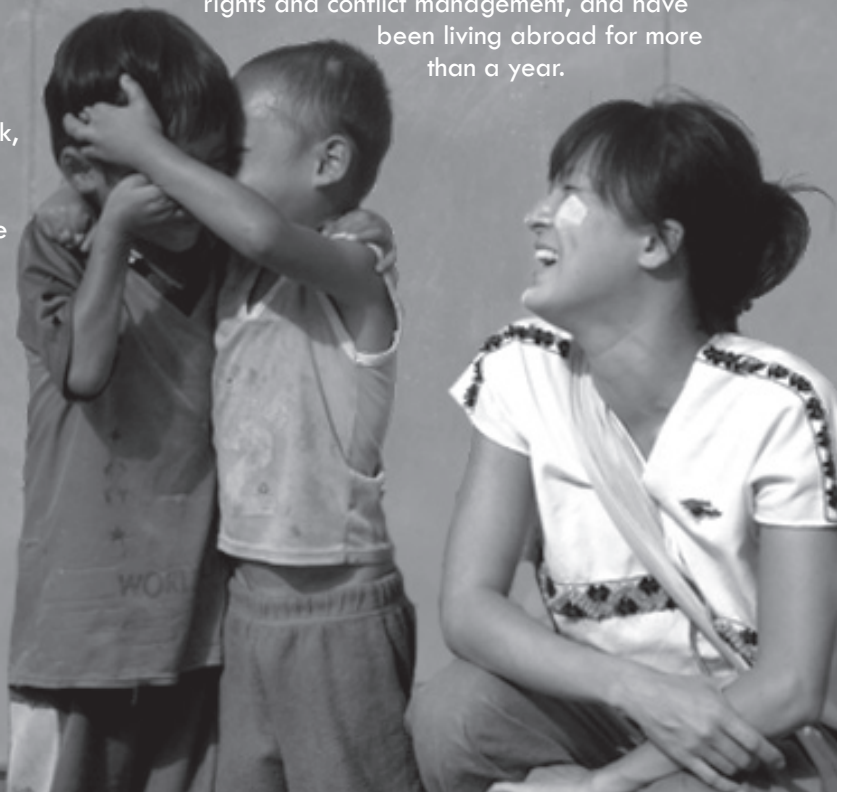
During this time, an interesting facet of performing opened up for me. It was the world of audio books, which proved to offer great stability in the world of performing. Soon I began working steadily as an audio book narrator for production houses such as Audible.com, Recorded Books, Brilliance Audio, and Scholastic Books. I also voiced an animated series that ran on "Nickelodeon."

I find myself inspired by my New York and Los Angeles colleagues, who are well known in the voice-over world. They voice cartoons and commercials, plus the best-selling books you find on the shelves of Barnes and Noble. Many are well-known

from television and theater. Their voices fill your car or your headphones, weaving grand stories or informing you in the realm of non-fiction.

I find working as a narrator extremely satisfying and enjoyable. The ability to create a world from the printed page is wonderful. I find such joy when I bring a good book crackling to life. There is power in working very intimately with a microphone, in a small room where your energy can be channeled and honed in nuanced ways. One of the most fun genres I am cast for is young adult adventure and coming-of-age stories. Exciting scenes and action-filled chapters give me the stage to create new worlds for others. I have fought through sequences with dragons, flying bird-kids, and have had epic battles. I perform full casts of character voices.

Another fantastic thing opened up for me: the ability to take my work anywhere in the world. I recently started doing humanitarian and human rights work, which brought me to the Thai/Burma border working with Burmese refugees. I worked with a Non-Governing Organization, which documents human rights abuses. They use video as a medium to collect testimony and interviews. This gives citizens the chance to record abuses, communicating their stories and oppression to the larger world. I am now working on masters in human rights and conflict management, and have been living abroad for more than a year.



One day, a producer called to book me for a job. Sadly I declined because I was not in New York. However, since I'm an experienced narrator and can self direct, my employer asked me to find a studio abroad and record the sessions there. I was able to upload the work onto an ftp site and get feedback from New York via Skype.

I've been working at the United Nations at Geneva, and am currently in Southeast Asia. I have recorded books in Florence; Italy, Geneva, Switzerland, and, most recently, in Bangkok Thailand, where I am currently posted. It's been a treat to find great studios and engineers and I've made good friends. This has been the most fun of all. When I realized that my performing work could be global, I was over the moon. What a fantastic way to make a living! The power of technology and creative overseas collaborations are very fitting for this global age.

When thinking about this interview, it occurred to me that I actually started my voice-over career early. When I was 15, I did my first narration as a reader for West Virginia Public Radio's "Hear's To You," a program for the blind. We recorded downstairs in the Culture Center building. I think I picked out two articles from National Geographic; *Something about Blue Whales*. I was nervous. I remember sweaty palms. I didn't realize it at the time, but that first time in front of a microphone in my hometown of Charleston, West Virginia, was the birth of a profession I could never have imagined for myself.



ABOVE: WU recording in the studio BELOW: Nancy Wu with Burmese Refugees



# POETRY OUT LOUD: ROAD TO NATIONALS

BY CICELY J. BOSLEY



This past March, 21 high school students from 19 counties, along with friends, family and teachers, filled the Norman L. Fagan Theater at the West Virginia Culture Center for two days of fierce competition. The talented competitors, winners of their local Poetry Out Loud competitions, gave our four judges the difficult task of selecting the best student to represent the state of West Virginia at the national competition in Washington, D.C. The competition is held at the famed Lincoln Theater, where students from 53 states and territories compete for the national award of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends.

West Virginia's Poetry Out Loud program is presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation and has grown since being implemented six years ago. To accommodate the increasing number of competitors, this year's competition was expanded to a two-day event with the semi-finals held on Friday, March 5th and finals on Saturday, March 6th.

Carolyn Rose Garcia, West Virginia's 2008 Poetry Out Loud champion, returned from her studies at Notre Dame to emcee Friday's semi-final round. Saturday's finals were hosted by acclaimed actor and native West Virginian, Chris Sarandon. Sarandon graduated magna cum laude from West Virginia University and received his master's degree in theater from Catholic University of America. He has performed in such films as *Dog Day Afternoon*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Loggerheads*.

The 2011 Poetry Out Loud Champion was named Saturday afternoon. South Charleston High School junior, Anthony Braxton, was awarded a trip to Washington, D.C. to compete in the national contest. He was accompanied by speech teacher, Jacqueline Eye, and after-school mentor, Tim McClung.

Collectively, they coached Anthony's performances of his three chosen poems: "Teaching English From An Old Composition Book" by Gary Soto, "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley and "The Empty Dance Shoes" by Cornelius Eady.

Many of the competitors are students of performing arts or participate on speech teams, but Anthony joined the competition on a whim telling *Charleston Daily Mail*, "I just wanted to give something else a try." His stage presence and understanding of the poems got him to nationals, and his coaches helped him step up his game for the two-day competition in Washington.

At the conclusion of the nationals, Anthony's teacher, Ms. Eye, commented, "Anthony represented West Virginia flawlessly. He came across with enthusiasm, a jazzy personality, and perfect memorization." While he did not advance out of the regional semi-finals, Eye notes, "neither did fifteen other talented young people from the Mid-Atlantic region."

While winning is a driving force for participants and their coaches, the state and national events are designed to celebrate their collective love of poetry. Ms. Eye reflected on the trip "we were treated so specially and made to feel so important. The opportunity to get to know kids and adults from other states was an experience we will never forget. It motivated Anthony to try again next year. Attending the nationals gives me a better idea of how to help better prepare future competitors." Anthony concurs, "I got to meet some incredible people and I got some memories that will stay with me for a long time." Tim McClung, Anthony's after-school mentor said plainly, "I believe that the 53 contestants are what hope is all about."

*For more information about Poetry Out Loud, contact Cicely Bosley at [cicely.j.bosley@wv.gov](mailto:cicely.j.bosley@wv.gov) and visit our website at [www.wvculture.org/arts/pol](http://www.wvculture.org/arts/pol)*



# CORIANNE CARVER: THE UNSHAKEABLE POWER OF ART

My name is Corianne Carver. An incredibly lucky 22-year-old woman, I perform onstage from my wheelchair. My story reflects the importance of arts in education and therapy. It has helped save my life.

My interaction with the arts began in high school, before my accident. I worked very hard with my music teacher, John Deskins, a wonderful advocate for the arts. He prepared me to audition and be accepted into West Virginia's state vocal performance as a soprano my senior year of high school. I became the valedictorian of my class and received a full scholarship to Concord University.

In the summer of 2008, I was preparing for the technical rehearsal for Cinderella. The play opened in less than a week. Little did I know that on July 8, 2008, my life would be changed forever. I was on my way to a doctor's appointment when I was clipped by an impatient driver as I merged onto the interstate. I hydroplaned and slid into a guardrail and was thrown into the path of an oncoming semi-truck. The driver said I looked him in the eye before he hit me. He has not driven a truck since that day.

I do not remember that day or the month following my accident due to the severity of my injuries.

I was in a coma and had severe damage to my aorta. My pelvis was broken and nerves in my vocal chords were damaged. My organs were bruised and a rib was broken, causing swelling around my heart.

After 15 days, I awoke from my coma a paraplegic. I cannot stand or walk, though that was not the scariest thing to me. Doctors told my parents of the damage to my laryngeal nerve.

I would need to relearn to talk and I would never sing again--this scared me. However, I am stubborn and singing is my thing. I never lost my speaking or singing voice. My therapy began by re-teaching me to tell time on a clock, and ended with me taking Philosophy 101, receiving an A.

Looking back, I had lost so much--my singing, my intelligence and my ability to walk. I thought for sure I would never have a job on stage again, but I never lost the drive to try. I can honestly say my life is a miracle. I do sing, I do act and I do love my life. I am almost brought to tears when I see all of the opportunities I continue to receive. No doubt, my life has changed, but that simply means I have to be creative in finding new ways to accomplish my dreams. I am constantly inspired by the people in my life and my goal is to never waste time or my life--I am blessed to still be able to sing my own praises.

I study education at Concord and will graduate with a bachelor's degree in education, specializing in elementary K-5 special education, 5-9 general science and 6-adult special education. This keeps me busy and it is my intention to earn my Ph.D. in education.

I still have a passion for the arts. Last summer, I worked with children in Willy Wonka and was inspired by my students every day. My newest dream is to perform the roll of Kaa, the serpent in the Jungle Book. I am definitely a character actor and playing the jazzy vocal role of Kaa's song, "Trust in Me" would bring me great joy. I also plan to spend more time with Toneta

Akters-Toler of West Virginia Dance Company. Her attention and direction inspire me to do more.

Big things are happening in the world of arts and accessibility. Last October, stem cells were given to a paraplegic patient. The ReWalk device, which was woven into the storyline of the television show, Glee, is a real device yet to be released for home use, but has reinvigorated my dream of walking again...I know I will walk again; how or when has yet to be determined!

Since her accident, Corianne Carver has performed as an actress, dancer and vocalist for Theatre West Virginia. Her credits include: Honey in the Rock, Suessical and Willy Wonka.

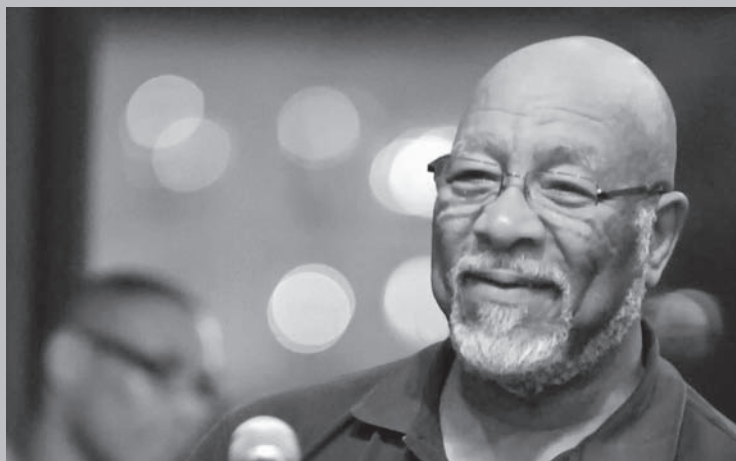


# SEVEN QUESTIONS

WITH MUSICIAN BOB THOMPSON

**ARTWORKS:** Did you grow up in a musical household?

**BOB THOMPSON:** I did grow up in a musical household. My mother loved music. She liked to play the piano, mostly hymns and spirituals. She also had lots of records that she liked to play in the evenings. We listened to a wide range of music, from Duke Ellington to Hank Williams, as well as classical music. My mother, brother and I always sang in the choirs at our church. Music was always a big part of our family life. There was a big upright piano in the living room that played the old piano rolls. It was fun to sit there, pump those pedals, watch the keys move, and hear the music of great piano players.



**ARTWORKS:** What is your earliest musical memory?

**BOB THOMPSON:** I think my earliest musical memories were in grade school. There was a music appreciation teacher who came to our class every now and then and played music of the great masters and performances by great artists. She would ask us to identify the instruments that were playing, and we would talk about how the music made us feel. She would also take a little part of the melody of a classical piece and teach us a little song with lyrics that included the title and the composer. It was a lot of fun, and whenever you heard that piece again you always knew what it was, and who wrote it. I still remember some of those little songs.

**ARTWORKS:** How many instruments can you play?

**BOB THOMPSON:** I started out playing congas for a dance school in my neighborhood, and then the bugle in junior high school, which led to the trumpet and later the euphonium. I had a few piano lessons when I was growing up, but I really wasn't that interested in taking lessons at the time. When I came to West Virginia State College, I majored in instrumental music. The trumpet was my instrument, but we had to develop a working knowledge of all families of instruments. There was a jazz group on the campus, but they already had a great trumpet player. When their pianist graduated, I started playing piano with them. I continued playing the trumpet for a long time, but now it's only the piano.

**ARTWORKS:** What caused you to choose piano over other instruments?

**BOB THOMPSON:** It was a gradual process. A big part of it was having some early success playing jazz piano. I had a piano, bass and drums trio when I was in college, called the Modern Jazz Interpreters. Twice, we went to the Notre Dame Collegiate Jazz Festival and won awards, which led to trips abroad performing for the State Department. That's when I decided, "This is fun. I'd like to do this". Also, nobody was calling me for gigs on the trumpet. The other reason is that I just feel at home playing the piano. I love the fact that I can play harmony. It's like having an orchestra at your fingertips.

**ARTWORKS:** When did you start composing music?

**BOB THOMPSON:** When I was a teenager growing up in Jamaica, New York, I sang in what they now call a Doo-Wop group. We were called the "Chanters". We made several recordings for King Records. Some of them were in the top ten on the Billboard charts. We started out singing on the street corners, just having fun. We always made up our own songs. I guess that was my first experience creating music. Around that time, I wrote a musical production with my friend Dorothy Turner-Lacy, called "From the Beat to the Beatnik". It was performed at our church, which always provided opportunities for young people to be creative.



Writing the opening and closing songs for that show was probably my first serious attempt at musical composition.

**ARTWORKS: How has being a part of the Mountain Stage Band affected you as a musician?**

**BOB THOMPSON:** Being a part of Mountain Stage has really been great for me. It has affected me on many levels. Being involved with such a highly professional, well-run show has taught me a lot about musical production from both an artistic and technical point of view. The fact that I get to hear and play with such a wide variety of well-established artists from all over the globe, has broadened my musical perspective and caused me to investigate and appreciate other genres of music. Mountain Stage has also given me an opportunity to get my music out to a wider audience.

**ARTWORKS: Do you find yourself learning from your students?**

**BOB THOMPSON:** I always learn from teaching. I find that conveying concepts to someone else requires that I first crystallize those concepts in my own mind. For me, each student is different and may call for a different approach in order to motivate his or her learning. This sometimes makes me develop another point of view of the material, and as a result I grow in the process. I also learn a lot when I hear my students play. I encourage them to develop their own style after they've internalized the material I give them. Then, I get to hear how they utilize it in their own creative process.

“When you play music you discover a part of yourself that you never knew existed.”

- Bill Evans

# SASSAFRAS JUNCTION

PUPPET THEATRE ADDS COLOR TO MAIN STREET  
BY RENEE MARGOCEE



Chris Lilly, Tara Barton and Ben Levesque with their Creek Critters of Sassaras Junction. photo by Tyler Evert.

Sassafras Junction is an independent puppet theatre located at 74 Olde Main Street in Saint Albans, West Virginia. The theatre's mission is to celebrate Appalachian culture through humor and puppet artistry, providing entertainment that will be loved by ages from 2 to 92. Theater-goers are advised to show up a half-hour before show time to meet the puppets, sing a song and do a dance. It is the perfect way for children to meet some of the characters and take care of pre-show jitters.

In order to learn the history of Sassafras Junction, Tara Barton invites you to take a short jaunt back in time. Luke Skywalker was riding shotgun in the Millennium Falcon with Hans Solo; Kermit The Frog was entertaining the entire family; and pressing silly putty on the funny pages to make copies was just as fun as watching your slinky slide down the stairs. In this time, two imaginative children, Chris Lilly and Tara Barton, sat drawing

together in a first grade classroom at Fairview Elementary with a 64-pack of Crayola crayons. Busily, they drew pictures of muppets while humming the song John Denver had sung the night before on "The Muppet Show." Though the children had no way of knowing, this was the beginning of Sassafras Junction.

Flash forward some thirty-two years, when a fateful phone call from Chris to Tara would bring the friends together again for a wonderful purpose. Chris had the idea of beginning a mobile puppet troupe. He and his family had purchased some puppets to put on a show for his family reunion, so they had a head start. In Tara's words it was, "the greatest idea EV-AH!". Tara had a full time office position, but she knew the Lilly Family had a way of turning good ideas into gold, so she threw caution to the wind and jumped on board.

Out of imagination and dreams, the Creek Critters were born. They embody our Appalachian culture and may remind you of your crazy aunt or quirky cousin. These puppets and their stories honor our culture and proudly announce, "I am from Appalachia and I am proud of it!" According to Barton, "our goal is to showcase our West Virginia heritage, focusing on the positive aspects of West Virginia life."

After finding the perfect spot on Olde Main Street in St. Albans, the First Family of Sassafras Junction was joined by Benjamin Levesque, a recent graduate of the WVU School of Puppetry. Levesque got hooked on puppetry while watching television. "As a child, I always loved watching "The Muppet Show." One day, I realized someone had to do this kind of stuff. It seemed like something I could really excel in." He generally makes Muppet-style puppets, but also makes marionettes, hand puppets and paper machée puppets. Fellow puppeteers Courtney Gleason, Julie Miller and Dawn Hong complete the Sassafras Junction family.

Dr. Opelia Tottlebottom is the only non-puppet character you encounter at the junction. She is an aviary expert and the only human character to live at Sassafras Junction. She has a husband, Captain Charles Spurlock, the "crusty barnacle" whom she rarely sees.

November 27, 2010 marked Sassafras Junction's Grand Opening. The Junction crew has created five shows which have been performed to sold-out crowds. "We have entertained field trips from as far away as Kentucky and have taken our mobile puppet show on the road to places such as Glade Springs Resort, Summersville and Beckley."

The Sassafras Junction Facebook page has more than 800 members and continues to grow daily. "Our loyal fan base of Sassafans keep asking for more and we are here to meet the challenge. Audience response has been gratifying," Barton said. "It is absolutely amazing to entertain such a broad audience." Barton said, "My grandmother, who is 88, has been three times! I have been absolutely floored at the response."

The Junction also hosts private parties for birthdays and other special events. Barton proudly reports, "I just booked our seventh field trip, and there are more in the works."

"Come and join us for a walk down Sassafras Lane. Simply go past Twig's Peaks, beyond Bait's bait shop, just around the corner from Dr. Tottlebottom's Exotic Bird Aviary and down the lane from Shell's Gas Station. There, you, too, can meet up with the Creek Critters and sit around Gabby's Tree to sing songs, tell some funny jokes and show those "big city puppet types" what it is to enjoy an evening on the Creek!" Barton said.

For more information go to [sassafrassjunction.com](http://sassafrassjunction.com)



ABOVE: Children visit with *Plumpy*, the Penguin.



Ben Levesque with *Stump* the puppet. Photos by Tyler Evert.

# CONCERT AS CATALYST:

SYMPHONY PROVIDES FOR LEARNING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM  
BY BETTY KING

What do you get when you combine more than three thousand students from nine counties with three little pigs, one wolf, a dozen library books, some lesson plans, a musical score, staffs of teachers loaded with creativity, sprinkled with generous grant funding and stirred by a host of educational and community partners? ARTS-INTEGRATED LEARNING!

The Young People's Concerts have been part of the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra's mission for many years. Within the last decade, the organization received funding to develop more in-depth cross-curricular interactive materials on CD-ROMs thanks to the Segal and Davis Family Foundation. According to survey data, the resources were primarily being used only by music teachers who were preparing students for a "music" field trip. In the fall of both 2009 and 2010, the symphony's education department teamed up with RESA 3 staff development team to pilot a different approach.

The Arts-Integration Project is an opportunity for elementary school teachers to build or establish Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) using a common theme. The goal is to create student-centered learning environments including the arts as a catalyst to promote multidisciplinary and hands-on activities.

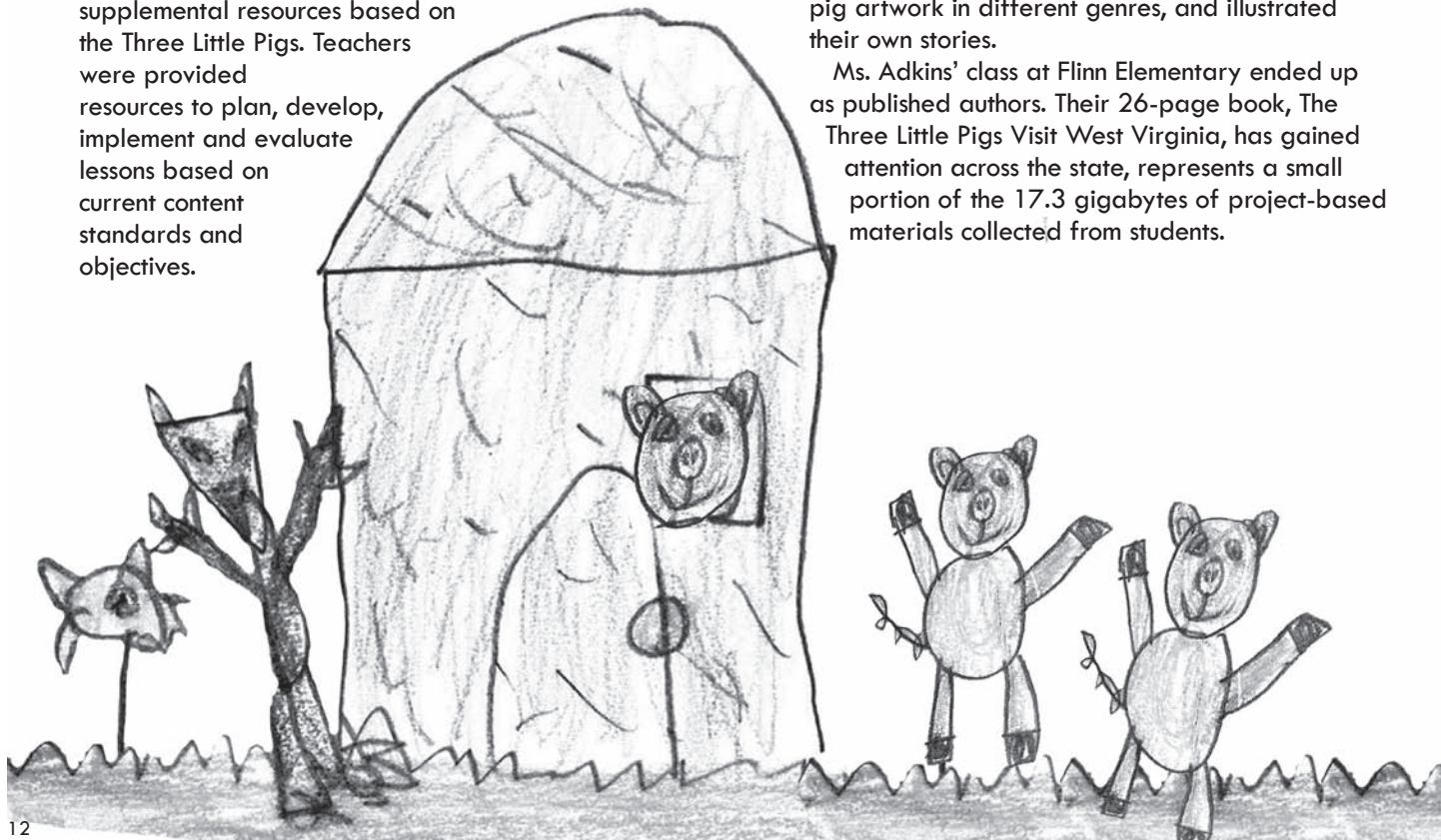
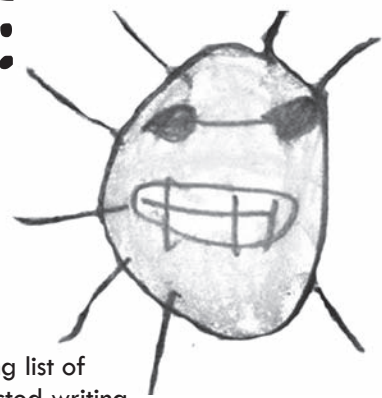
Elementary schools in the pilot received supplemental resources based on the Three Little Pigs. Teachers were provided resources to plan, develop, implement and evaluate lessons based on current content standards and objectives.

Resource materials featured variations on "pigs stories" in several cultures, math and science-based resources, and a shopping list of project ideas and suggested writing assignments.

Funding provided program materials to thirteen elementary schools: Poca, Whitesville, Clay, Big Otter, Alderson, Glade, Dixie, Frametown, Eastbrook in Winfield, Flinn in Sissonville, Watts in Charleston, Brookview in Foster, and Divide in Lookout. Additionally, teachers from Fairplain, Lost Creek, Blennerhassett and the Lincoln County 21st Century Afterschool program also received pilot materials through their RESAs.

Community partnerships gave students and teachers opportunities to visit real courtrooms to conduct their own trial of the Wolf, and to learn about oral traditions, West Virginia folklore, and bluegrass music. All the huffing and puffing facilitated talk about tobacco prevention and healthy choices. Students scripted and recorded their own movie versions of the plot in different settings, composed and performed raps, created wolf and pig artwork in different genres, and illustrated their own stories.

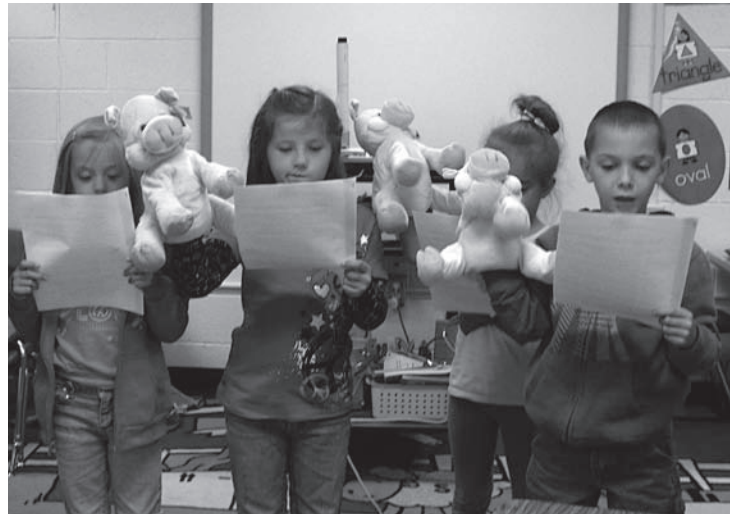
Ms. Adkins' class at Flinn Elementary ended up as published authors. Their 26-page book, *The Three Little Pigs Visit West Virginia*, has gained attention across the state, represents a small portion of the 17.3 gigabytes of project-based materials collected from students.



The pilot will expand in Fall 2011 with Grant Cooper's Rumpelstilzkin: Straw Into Gold. Interested teachers should contact Betty King at [education@wvsymphony.org](mailto:education@wvsymphony.org).

On November 16th and 17th, 4956 students and 556 teachers and parents filled the performance hall at the Clay Center to enjoy performances of Song of the Wolf by the symphony. On November 18th, another 1500 students in Wood County attended performances at Blennerhassett School. Students were treated to orchestral arrangements of "Country Roads" and "The West Virginia Hills" by Grant Cooper, Artistic Director and Conductor of the WVSO and the composer of Song of the Wolf. (3000 students and 200 teachers were directly involved in the pilot.)

Transportation and admission support for WVSO Young People's Concerts is provided by Segal and Davis Family Foundation and by the Katherine B. Tierney Foundation. Additional resources for the 2010 arts-integration pilot were provided by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, the West Virginia Office of the Secretary of Education and the Arts, and the WV Humanities Council. School visits by the Montclair String Quartet were partially funded by the WV Division of Culture and History.



For more info, contact Betty King at [bking@theclaycenter.org](mailto:bking@theclaycenter.org)



# WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S *Arts* AWARDS

## *Legislative Leadership Awards*

For the first time on March 15, 2010, ten members of the West Virginia Legislature received Legislative Leadership Awards for their significant accomplishments in the arts at the Governor's Arts Awards gala. The event was hosted at the Culture Center by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History and the West Virginia Commission on the Arts.

### **Cultural Facilities**



**Senator**  
**Roman W. Prezioso**  
(Marion County)



**Delegate**  
**Richard J. Iaquina**  
(Harrison County)



**Senator**  
**Robert H. Plymale**  
(Wayne County)



**Delegate**  
**Linda Sumner**  
(Raleigh County)

### **Arts in Education**

### **Community Arts**



**Senator**  
**Dan Foster**  
(Kanawha County)



**Delegate**  
**Jim Morgan**  
(Cabell County)

### **Lifetime Achievement**



**Senator**  
**Earl Ray Tomblin**  
(Logan County)



**Delegate**  
**Thomas W. Campbell**  
(Greenbrier County)

### **Folk Arts**



**Senator**  
**Ron Stollings**  
(Boone County)



**Delegate**  
**Harry Keith White**  
(Mingo County)





## **“West Virginia Moon” by Joe Moss**

Text by Andrew Wood

“West Virginia Moon” won best of show in an art contest sponsored by the West Virginia Centennial Commission more than 40-years ago. The contest was created to celebrate the state’s 100th anniversary and was juried by James Sweeney, then director of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. The winning artwork, an assemblage, was created by Joe F. Moss. At the time, 30-year-old Moss was teaching at his alma mater, West Virginia University.

Moss’s piece was created from six beat-up boards and the wreck of a screen door frame, with a man and a moon scrawled on them. The piece won the exhibit’s coveted firstplace cash award prize of \$1,963. James Sweeney reported “being drawn” to “West Virginia Moon” saying, “I picked what I liked best.”

The choice sparked a statewide controversy. Art critics praised the piece, but state residents did not agree. The Centennial Commission was deluged with calls from concerned citizens, who felt the piece would damage the state’s image. Then Charleston mayor, John Shanklin, found the piece “atrocious” and “sickening.” When the work was displayed at the Huntington Galleries (now Huntington Museum of Art), a record breaking crowd of 15,000 people came to view the controversial artwork.

The Washington Post and Time magazine both wrote stories about the controversy. Critical letters to the editor appeared in newspapers around the state, with one writer accusing Moss and other contemporary artists of participating in a “communist-inspired movement, which is intended to aid in the destruction of democracy.”

“West Virginia Moon” now hangs in the West Virginia Culture Center’s State Museum. Moss spent 10 years at West Virginia University and then taught at the University of Delaware until 1998, when he retired. His sculptures have been shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and other museums across the United States.

As part of West Virginia’s sesquicentennial celebration, four themed exhibitions, dubbed the “Inspired Series” are being hosted at the West Virginia Culture Center. The exhibits focus on West Virginia’s landscapes, historic buildings and structures, wildlife, concluding with portraits of historical figures.

*Additional information and the “Inspired” prospectus can be found at [www.wvculture.org](http://www.wvculture.org).*

# What is happening in ARTS IN EDUCATION in West Virginia

## West Virginia Schools Showcase the Arts at Arts Alive by Jack Deskins

Student artists and musicians sang, danced, acted and illustrated their talents at the West Virginia Department of Education's fifth annual Arts Alive event celebrating the arts achievement of public school children.

Arts Alive, held at the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences, included student performances and artwork from students statewide. The signature event included elementary students for the first time.

Artwork displayed at the event was chosen by the West Virginia Art Education Association, while music performers were selected through regional solo ensemble festivals. Other groups were included by invitation or through other existing contests and adjudications across the state.

"Arts programs encourage students to think creatively, adopt fresh approaches and develop ways of thinking that are visual rather than verbal," said state Superintendent Joreca Marple. "Arts programs involve skills that are essential to the education of the whole child."

West Virginia launched the Arts Alive event at a time when many public schools across the country are struggling to keep their art and music programs going even though the arts are considered a core academic subject by the United States Department of Education.

Research shows the arts not only impact how young people learn to think, but also how they feel and behave. Arts-rich educational experiences engage students and enhance learning in other subjects.

"We must make sure that every student across West Virginia has access to arts-rich educational opportunities," Marple said. "A child's education is not complete unless it includes the arts."

For more information, contact Jack Deskins at [jdeskins@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:jdeskins@access.k12.wv.us)

## 2011 WV Thespian Festival: Where The Wild Things Are! By Michael Stiles

More than 550 students, teachers and parents traveled from all parts of the Mountain State to the West Virginia University Creative Arts Center in Morgantown to take center stage for the 2011 WV State Thespian Festival. In three separate venues and in dozens of classrooms, West Virginia middle and high school students performed in one-act plays, monologues, scenes, musical theatre solos and duets as well as displayed their technical theatrical skills. Theatre Teachers also attended workshops to further their theatrical skills for their classrooms. The three-day festival of the arts culminated with guest artist Tim Mooney performing Shakespeare monologues in a one-man show, and an awards ceremony that gave out over fifteen thousand dollars in grants and scholarships.

For information contact Martha Loudon at [mblouden@yahoo.com](mailto:mblouden@yahoo.com)





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# GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

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[www.wvculture.org](http://www.wvculture.org)

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation  
[www.midatlanticarts.org](http://www.midatlanticarts.org)

Pennsylvania Performing Arts on Tour  
[www.pennpat.org](http://www.pennpat.org)

National Endowment for the Arts  
[www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov)