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Galaxy of Music: Noteworthy for Families

"Music influences a child's character," says Galaxy of Music Executive Director Vicki Vorreiter. "We hope to integrate music into the home—to invite families to experience music together."

Galaxy of Music is a new concert series for the children of Chicagoland sponsored by The Contemporary American Music Program at Columbia College under the direction of William Russo. Designed to introduce classical music to young people, ages five to 13, and their parents, the program includes music from many cultures, countries and time periods.

Nearly 300 attended the June 4, 1988, opening of this program held in Columbia's Getz Theater. Guests were treated to music performed by the Chicago Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Dieter Kober. Selections included "Concerto in C Major for 2 Trumpets" by Antonio Vivaldi; "Concerto for Percussion" by Darius Milhaud; "Ragtime Dance" by Scott Joplin; and "The Stars and Stripes Forever" by John



Photos by Steve Arazmus

Thirteen-year-old violin soloist Jennifer Turner receives an affectionate tribute from maestro Dieter Kober and members of the Chicago Chamber Orchestra following her performance of Mozart's "Concerto #3 in G Major, K. 216."

Philip Sousa. The orchestra was joined by WLS-TV's Harry Porterfield who narrated Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf," and also by 13-year-old violin soloist Jennifer Turner for Mozart's "Concerto #3 in G Major, K. 216."

The afternoon program was punctuated by educational interaction between the musicians and the children. Before the "Concerto for Percussion," Maestro Kober explained the various voices in the percussion section from whip, gong and triangle to timpani, and before "Peter and the Wolf," he introduced children to the wolf (two french horns assisted by trombone),

Peter (violins), the bird (oboe), the duck (clarinet), and the hunters (kettle drums).

As the program is also designed to inspire and encourage, Kober also gave simple rhythm lessons to show children how fun and easy learning rhythms can be. "He had everyone clapping and stamping their feet," says Vorreiter. Two children were also invited to conduct the Sousa march as a rousing finale.

"In future programs, we hope to include music from Japan, Africa, Spain—we want to cover the globe—and from the looks of things, we have many families who will be joining us for the journey," adds Vorreiter. ■

Columbia Offers New Film/Video M.F.A.

A new four-year Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) degree program will be instituted at Columbia College this fall. The new 60-hour degree program replaces the previous 36-hour M.A. program and shifts the emphasis from academic criticism to studio production. "Columbia is among only a handful of Midwestern institutions awarding the M.F.A. in a visual medium," says Columbia Vice President and Academic Dean Lya Dym Rosenblum.

Approved by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (the accrediting body for this region), the program will concentrate on both the technical and conceptual aspects of the film and video mediums. Its goal is to prepare students for careers in film and video production, college teaching, theatrical and non-theatrical fiction film, documentary film and video, animation and independent filmmaking.

"The M.F.A. represents an opportunity to focus more intensely on the development of the directing process, especially as it pertains to the making of documentary films," says Tony Loeb, Chairman of Columbia's Film/Video Department. It will enable us to involve every M.F.A. student in a comprehensive film experience before they are required to do their thesis work."

Loeb says the department and the college are very proud of this benchmark. "In the world of production, when the issue is studio work, the making of art, the

M.F.A. is understood to be the highest recognition of achievement. The approval from North Central signals to the educational community that Columbia College has reached a place of sufficient eminence—that we are now in a position to grant the highest terminal degree in this field."

The M.F.A. program in film/video is open to everyone who holds an undergraduate degree. Students currently enrolled in the M.A. program will have the option of completing that degree, or converting to the new M.F.A. program and completing the additional work. "Student applicants are also not required to have previous film/video experience," says Loeb. The whole point is to bring people from other fields into this world. The truth of the matter is that most often filmmakers are made from people with English degrees, the humanities, or those who have a strong sense of history. Also, there are many kinds of filmmaking. Everything isn't focused toward the coast where features are made. Some people are interested in political film. Some are interested in anthropology. So we're looking to draw from a broad cross section of backgrounds."

Columbia's film/video department features one of the most sophisticated filmmaking facilities in the country, including a 3,300 square-foot lighting stage, nine screening facilities, a professional sound studio and 13 editing suites. Students in the program will

also benefit from interaction with faculty members who are all professionals in their respective specialties. At the end of their studies, each student will produce a thesis—a short film or videotape of professional sophistication in dramatic or documentary form. "The more comprehensive program means that now thesis work will improve, which in turn means that students' professional opportunities will too," says Loeb. "The M.F.A. also affords the opportunity to teach that the M.A. never provided."

Loeb looks at this milestone as yet another testimony to the excellence and creativity of the college and its students. "This is a department that is in some regards unprecedented. Given Columbia's size and financial limitations, it's virtually unprecedented for a program like ours to have won three Academy Awards in the last eight years. It was just announced that our Jim Richardson won an Academy Award in animation for 'Cat & Rat.' This means that over the last eight years the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has recognized Columbia students in three separate categories—documentary, dramatic film, and now, animation."*

*The other two alumni Academy Award winners are Lisa Gottlieb, 1980, for "Murder in a Mist" (dramatic); and Loretta Smith, 1983, for "Where Did You Get That Woman?" (documentary). ■