

Professor duo tickles the ivories again

TIARA NUGENT

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The final of the two Barr Piano Dedication Concerts filled Martin Hall with melodious sound the evening of March 23, as Wesleyan professors Dr. John Fisher and Dr. Bruce McDonald performed selections of Chopin, Brahms and Rachmaninoff.

The concert hall hosted a supportive audience for the occasion, a group quick to supply enthusiastic applause as the final notes of each expertly performed piece faded away. This performance marked the third Fisher-McDonald collaboration, the result of a friendship founded on the basis of a mutual enjoyment of music.

"Musicians just find each other," music chairman Fisher explains. "The topic of music sooner or later comes up in friend-to-friend conversation, and a common affection bonds."

Their relaxed friendship led to a strong work ethic.

"Fisher and I work well together, and both love music and love to introduce it to others," McDonald, professor of religion, philosophy and humanities stated. "We are both fairly even-keeled people with a goofy sense of humor, and our approach to music is pretty similar. 'Collegiality' at its best!"

McDonald and Fisher rendered their first joint recital in 2004, when a crowd numbering around 300 turned out to give ear to Impressionist pieces. An encore recital featuring classical works followed in 2005, and patrons' laudatory reviews poured in once more.

"Seems like the pressure's on," said Fisher. "Let's do it again."

This year, the recital was scheduled to coincide with the Barr Piano Dedication honoring Howard and Patricia Barr's, long time friends of the University, retirement and their generous donation of three grand pianos. Their donation included the twin Baldwins currently residing on stage in Martin Hall. The richness of these ivory-keyed instruments was heard the previous Tuesday evening in the performance of Alexey Koltakov and Katerina Makarova, a Russian piano. It was heard again as Fisher and McDonald sent Romantic music swelling through the hall Thursday.

"I thought the concert was beautiful," praised freshman piano major Karen Garcia.

"They have just the right personalities for the nature of the pieces."

Indeed, Fisher and McDonald accomplished a grand interpretation of compositions such as Chopin's *Sonata in B minor* and Brahms's *Rhapsody in G minor* respectively. At the end, they both performed Rachmaninoff's *Suite No. 2*, a two piano duet. The pair played with elegance, exhibiting grace and emotion in each division of music.

Fisher forecasted the possibility of any future partnership performances as "pretty likely."

"They are great fun, provide me with excellent camaraderie, and people really enjoy them."

The world loves music, a universal language that communicates feeling to humans through humans' communication of music. I feel music is a worthy subject to spend a life on, so why not?"

"The audience response has been gratifying," agreed McDonald. "Working with Dr. Fisher on challenging music is also refreshing. These things are addictive! I know I'm already thinking about what to do on the next one, all other things being equal, and I am sure Fisher is too. He is a joy to work with."



Photo by Colleen Burnie

This concert marked the third duo for Dr. John Fisher and Dr. Bruce McDonald.

Alumnus Returns Home

Womack brings experiences gained from all over the world

COLLEEN BURNIE

ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Wesleyan alumna Amber Womack (BA '99) returns home to campus to share her talent March 30. In summer 2005, on a Music Travel and Enrichment trip, the faculty and students heard Womack perform in the Czech Republic. The group was impressed and invited Womack back to her alma mater to perform for the Wesleyan community.

The concert will include Debussy's *Ariettes Oubliees* and many other selections from Piccinni, Giannini, Nin and Rachmaninoff.

"In preparing for this recital, I have drawn on both of my passions: music and literature. The texts of many classical songs are by very famous poets. I have written extensive program notes, which detail the correlation of the composer with the poet," said Womack.

Womack graduated with bachelors of art in both music and English in 1999. While at Wesleyan she was a member of Alpha Chi, Golden Shears and walked across the stage summa cum laude. Womack said that her favorite thing about Wesleyan was the interaction that she got with the staff.

"Wesleyan professors have a true and deep concern for their students. I was always encouraged by my professors, and they always took a personal interest in me," said Womack. "Dr. Beth Battles [English professor] was very influential. She took a special interest in me and my work. In fact, I was originally only going to be an English minor, but when I took a class from her, she encouraged me to finish up the double major. That was one of the best decisions I have ever made," said Womack.

After graduating from Wesleyan, Womack went on to Temple University in Philadelphia for a master's in music. She currently works for Broadway producer and Wesleyan alumnus Michael Skipper ('78) as his executive assistant, a career she says is exciting and leaves time to travel. It also employs both of her degrees, as she works in the music field and deals with contracts and scripts on a daily basis.

"When you live in a place like New York City, it can eat you alive on a daily basis," said Womack who feels tied to her Wesleyan roots. "All I have to do is stop and remember where I came from, and everything seems better. It feels good to know that a whole network of Wesleyan family is always there supporting me, no matter where I am."



Photo courtesy of Amber Womack

Amber Womack, Wesleyan alumna, will perform at 7:30 p.m. March 30 in Martin Hall.

Womack is surrounded by a network of Wesleyan alumni who support her.

"The networks we have are truly amazing," said Womack.

In addition to living and working in New York City, Womack has recently performed the role of Inez in *Il Trovatore* with the International Opera Workshop in Bulgaria. She has also performed the roles of Javotte in *Manon* and Little Red in *Little Red Riding Hood* and Ms. Nordstrom in *A Little Night Music*.

Womack has had many opportunities to perform but said that her career highlight is coming back to Wesleyan.

"I am excited that I have the chance to inspire other students and that they will see that Wesleyan kids can go on to do great things," said Womack.

In addition to the concert here, she said that the highlight was performing with "Joy Abbott and Davis Gaines at the Prince Music Theater in Philadelphia. Davis Gaines sang the role of the 'Phantom' on Broadway for many years. I was one of 10 singers chosen for that honor, and as it turned out, Davis Gaines is a really good friend of Claudia Stepp, who is on the board at Wesleyan! The connections never cease."

The concert will be at 7:30 p.m. on March 30 in Martin Hall. A suggested \$5 donation will benefit the Beta Kappa chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota. For more information call (817) 531-4992, or visit the music department Web site at <http://department.txwes.edu/mus>.

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— Amber Womack
Wesleyan Alumna '99

Creative Kids

The children of Wesleyan's faculty, staff and student's get a chance to display their talent

ZAINAH USMAN

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The eighth annual Children's Art Exhibition will be on display through March 31 on the third floor of the library. All Wesleyan faculty and staff are invited to enter their children's art.

The rules? Everything is accepted and will be shown. "We even had a dog enter one year," said Kit Hall head of the art department.

The art exhibition was initiated eight years ago to honor the birth of Hall's grandson, Joshua. It is an opportunity for Wesleyan families to come together in a creative way. The opening reception took place on March 26. Traditionally, the artists spend a few minutes talking about their pieces, which have included everything from carefully constructed Lego men to finger-painted abstraction. Last year, Tom Smith of the business department performed magic tricks for everyone.

"It's exciting to see how proud the kids are of their art," Hall said. "It's the perfect way to celebrate spring."



Photo courtesy of Wesleyan art department

The children of Wesleyan's faculty and staff have their own art exhibit every year in the library.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Wednesday 29	Thursday 30	Friday 31	Saturday 1	Sunday 2	Monday 3	Tuesday 4
On Campus:	On Campus:	Off Campus:	Off Campus:	Off Campus:	Off Campus:	On Campus:
*Baptist Student Ministry meeting: noon, Carter Conference Room, free lunch served	*Psi Chi meeting: 12:15 p.m.	*Roger Creager: 10 p.m., Billy Bob's	*April Fool's Day	*Daylight savings time: Spring your clocks forward!	*Rangers vs. Boston Red Sox: 1:05 p.m. at Amerquest Field	*Chapel: 12:15 p.m., PUMC, free lunch
*Methodist Student Movement meeting: noon, Poly UMC, free lunch served	*Rambler meeting: Stella Russell Hall 12:15 p.m.	*Basic Instinct 2, The Devil and Daniel Johnston, Ice Age 2 and Slither: in theaters	*Fort Worth Gallery Night: all day			*Sam's Club giving discounted memberships
			*Willie Nelson and the 25th Anniversary of Billy Bob's Texas: 7 p.m., Billy Bob's			*SOAC meeting: 12:15 p.m.
						*University College Day

To submit an event for the calendar, e-mail twurambler@yahoo.com.