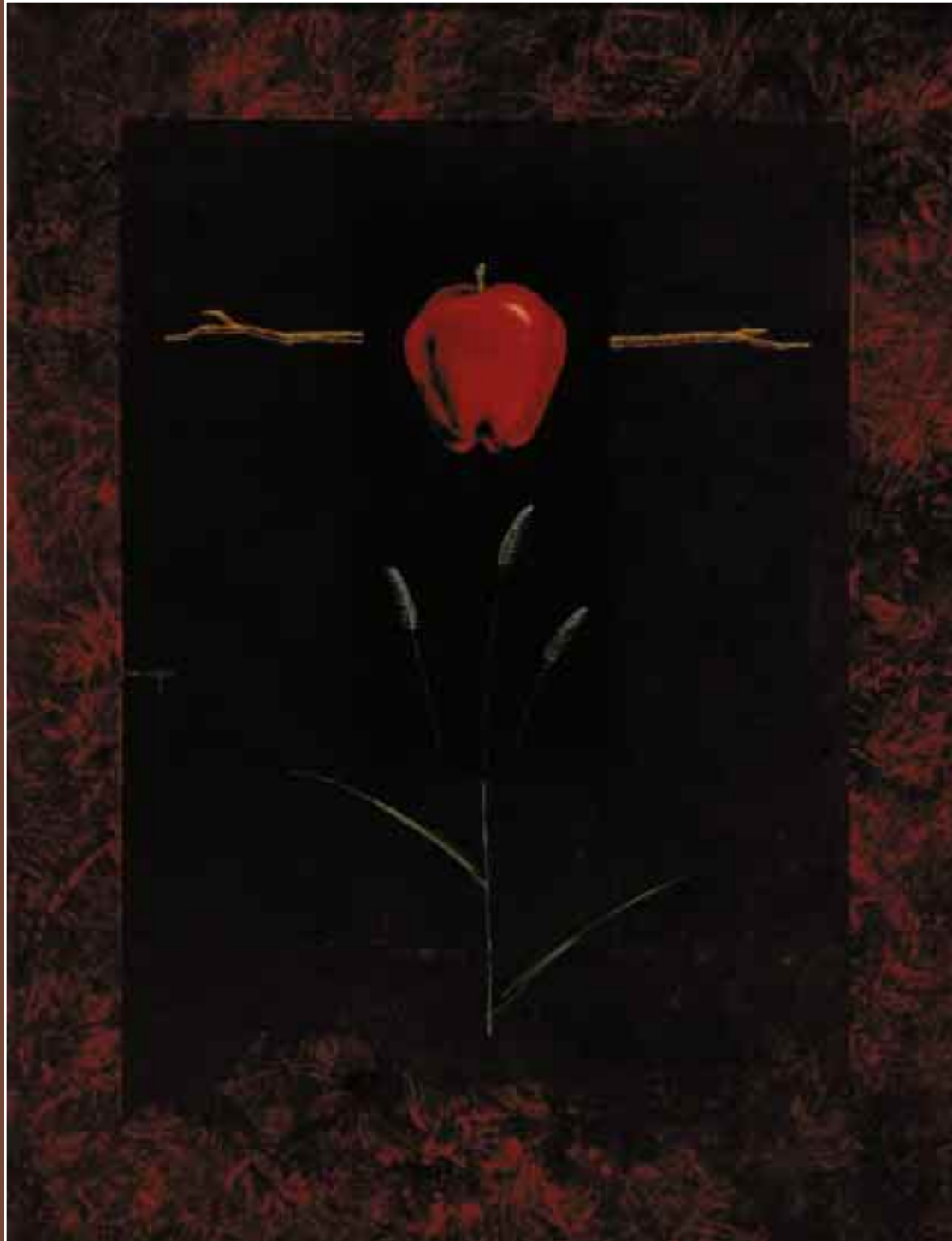


ALABAMAARTS

Volume XV, Number 3

Fall 1998



Exhibition Schedule

Alabama Artists Gallery

The Alabama Artists Gallery was created by the Alabama State Council on the Arts as part of its mission to promote Alabama's diverse artistic and cultural resources. Located on the first floor of the RSA Tower, 201 Monroe Street in Montgomery, the Gallery presents approximately seven exhibitions per year showcasing a wide range of work, including fellowship recipients, crafts, photography, painting and drawing, printmaking and sculpture. Artists interested in showing in the gallery are encouraged to contact Georgine Clarke, Visual Arts Program Manager and Gallery Director.

September 10-November 5

By Example: College and University Art Faculty

Faculty members James Rodger Alexander and Sonja Rieger, UAB; Frances de La Rosa, Wesleyan College; Allyson Comstock, Auburn University; and Bruce Crowe, Northwest-Shoals Community College are included in this exhibition.

November 17-January 12

A Little Tickle: Humor and Whimsy in Alabama Art

Works in this presentation range from whimsical sculpture and painting to furniture, pottery, face jugs and the work of self-taught artists.

January 26-March 23

Business and the Arts: Collections, Patronage and Friendship

This exhibition includes paintings by George Cooke (1793-1849) and celebrates his friendship with early Alabama industrialist Daniel Pratt. The presentation also features the work of contemporary Alabama artists from corporate collections and documents the important role of the business community in the support of individual artists.

April 5-April 23

Visual Art Achievement:

A Showcase of Award-winning Work by Middle and High School Students

Volume XV
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Library of Congress
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- 8** **Birmingham Counts on the Arts**
Dollars and cents benefits add up to big business.
- 12** **History, Culture & Commerce**
A restored movie palace puts Talledega on the cultural map.
- 16** **Minding the Arts Business**
Business and arts partnerships herald Huntsville's new art museum.
- 20** **Reflections and Visions** David Rockefeller
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- 24** **It's Everybody's Business** Elmore DeMott
Montgomery Area Business Committee for the Arts is a forum for businesses that support the arts.

INTRODUCTION

What is the value of the arts ... to the actor waiting on tables to get by ... to the business leader contemplating sponsorship of a major art exhibition ... to the volunteer costume mistress of a community theatre production ... to you? There are many ways in which the value of the arts is expressed: tourism dollars, salaries, purchases of goods and services by arts groups, improved quality of life that contributes to economic expansion.

As we know, much of what we value about the arts is not quantifiable. Music, theatre, dance, literature and visual arts enrich our lives immeasurably, and in the most profound and personal ways. The arts also allow us to experience other cultures, eras, and lives ... to feel the blues for example. The bigger question becomes, what are the arts worth in terms of human understanding and quality of life?

continued on page 28

On the cover:

Front: *Element 'T'*, 1998, by Gary Chapman, Birmingham. Oil and gold leaf on canvas, 21 x 27 in.

Back: *Element '6'*, 1998, by Gary Chapman, Birmingham. Oil and gold leaf on canvas, 21 x 27 in.

ALABAMA ARTS

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Patrons and Partners

AL HEAD

Make no mistake, business is the primary patron of the arts in this country; government is clearly a junior partner. While there is little to argue about in this conclusion, business leaders will be the first to state that a public-private partnership in support of the arts is the only way to nurture artistic growth and increase audience exposure to excellence in artistic expression.

The private sector's support of the arts in America certainly predates public subsidies or government grants. Corporate leaders have long realized that their business success is directly related to community health and vitality and that their support of the arts is an investment in community growth. With economic expansion, their investment pays off.

The arts are good business. It is well-documented that the arts can contribute significantly to educating the work force, to community revitalization, to cultural tourism, and to a host of other factors resulting in business and economic growth. Winton Blount, business leader and major supporter of the arts, puts the proposition this way: "Business support of the arts is a matter of enlightened self-interest."

It is only natural for business to support the arts for selfish reasons (or maybe ulterior motives) but there are also plenty of examples where corporate generosity is associated with pure elements of good citizenship. After all, isn't it in everyone's interest to improve the places we live?

In Alabama we do not have a long history of business support for the arts, at least in comparison to other areas of the country which were more likely to be the site of major corporate headquarters. Within the past ten to fifteen years, corporate leaders like Winton Blount of

Blount, Inc. in Montgomery, Elton Stephens of Ebsco Inc. in Birmingham, and the Delchamps family in Mobile have set fine examples through their business contributions to the arts.

The enthusiasm for business participation in community and statewide arts activities has grown immensely. We have, in recent years, seen the construction of major museums, theaters, concert halls, as well as improved artistic productions, all made possible due to corporate support and contributions made directly by leaders of the business community.

In Alabama, though the junior status of government support is clear, the growth in public allocations for the arts is having an important impact in artistic development on all fronts. At the state government level, increased grant support is specifically designed to match community efforts and private giving. Through this matching feature, state grants have been matched by private dollars by over three to one. Appropriations by the state legislature have more than doubled in the past three years to a level of over \$4.5 million. The corporate community in turn has responded to the pool of grant-funded projects with more than \$12 million in additional support. The public-private partnership in Alabama is working at levels never before thought possible.

The benefits of public and private cooperation for arts support, (including important municipal appropriations) can be observed in the expanding area of educational initiatives and arts programs for children. Statewide, we have identified quality of education as a top priority, and improving scores in reading, math, and science as the major concern. However, upgrading performance in all areas of the curriculum, including the arts, is also vital.



During a Sneak Peek at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Charles Caldwell (left), Associate Artistic Director, and Kent Thompson (right), Artistic Director, share the scenic design preparation for their production of *The Merchant of Venice*. (See story on page 24.)

More and more research documents that sequential exposure to the arts contributes to students' achievement in academic subjects, and enhances learning in general. Business leaders realize that a better educated work force is needed if Alabama is going to keep pace economically in the future. These same business leaders are learning that creative problem solving skills are essential for individuals entering the work place of the twenty-first century and that the arts are about creative problem solving, creative learning and creative employees. The days of building an economy around an unskilled and uneducated labor force are over. Business leaders anxious to turn the page to the future are at the forefront in not only supporting education, but supporting the arts and arts education.

Alabama is full of examples of successful partnering between business and government in support of the arts, but more collaboration, more resource sharing, and more unified vision are needed if the state is to compete successfully with other areas of the country. There was a report issued by the Southern Growth Policies Board some years ago entitled "Half Way Home, But a Long Way to Go." The assumption behind the title is both obvious and appropriate in describing the situation in the South in general and in Alabama in particular. We can point to success stories and signs for optimism, but here in Alabama we have a long way to go before our potential is realized as a state where business nurtures the arts as major human and natural resources.

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BIRMINGHAM BUSINESSES BOOST THE ARTS

*B*arry Copeland would like to see more businesses donating to Birmingham's united arts fund. Businesses don't have the time and expertise to make sure the money they contribute to the arts goes where it is most needed and produces the greatest benefit for the community, he said.

That's one of the missions of the Birmingham Metropolitan Arts Council (MAC).

"There could be a special project or need of an arts group; maybe they are really stretching to reach a new segment of the market and as a business person I wouldn't know about it," said Copeland. "We need to make sure the money is there so that MAC can make the decision and help them."

MAC was started in 1986 by a group of prominent business people. They wanted the organization to be the "arts chamber of commerce" and more, said MAC Executive Director Cathy Rye Gilmore. "They were tired of all the little arts groups hitting them for money." Not only is MAC the central arts agency for programs, information and arts advocacy, it is the clearinghouse for financial support. MAC distributes arts funding from Jefferson County and the City of Birmingham, as well as donations from businesses. Businesses like the convenience of letting MAC handle the bank account, Copeland said. For 1998, MAC distributed \$2 million.



Southern Danceworks is the only professional modern dance company in the state.



**"Leaving Home" by Gilbert Gaul
is part of the collection of the
Birmingham Museum of Art.**

Copeland, district manager for external affairs for BellSouth and chairman of the MAC board, recommends that companies which designate money for "the museum or ballet or whoever," also give undesignated funds to MAC. "A united arts fund represents an ideal, so it's difficult to achieve as a corporate and political reality," said Copeland.

For some cities, a united arts fund is the norm. "In Chattanooga, they hold a fund drive like United Way and all the money in the fund is given out by an allocation committee, first to the major groups, then the smaller ones. Cincinnati and Lexington have large united fund drives, too," said Gilmore.

Employee giving programs are another source of dollars for the united arts fund. "It is labor intensive to go into corporations, but it pays off," said Gilmore. The amount of undesignated corporate donations to MAC increased from \$156,000 in 1996 to \$175,000 in 1997 and \$200,000 in 1998. MAC has a board of directors from the business community which meets quarterly. "We work closely with

businesses and respond to their needs and interests," said Gilmore. "And we encourage them to get their employees involved with arts activities. It's important to have business people involved and educated in the arts. Young executives are the people who will serve on boards of arts institutions in the future."

MAC Varies the Gift According to the Need

MAC works with 35 arts groups; some are professional, some semi-professional and others are all volunteers. "We know what arts organizations are doing in Birmingham, so we can help new ones find their niche," said Gilmore. "And we discourage duplication."

Budgets for visual and performing arts providers range from "practically nothing" to millions annually. MAC monitors groups for fiscal soundness and reports on how they spend their money; accountability is important to corporate donors. MAC may act as the fiscal agent for a group which hasn't received its non-profit status. "That way they can accept tax deductible donations from individuals," said

Gilmore. Working with MAC gives a stamp of credibility to smaller groups as well as nice extras, like free newspaper ad space, which they wouldn't have the clout to get on their own.

"We help arts groups get organized and learn how to operate smoothly," said Gilmore. For two years, while the Alabama Symphony Orchestra was reorganizing and getting its financing in order, MAC contributed day-to-day management which included planning, contracting musicians, and coordinating the ten-event symphony season as well as orchestral accompaniment for ballet and opera concerts.

Every December, arts organizations send applications for funding to MAC. They complete a two-page form that indicates what the group is planning for the following year. The application and request for funding is considered by the allocation committee of MAC board members. A qualification committee looks at new applicants. They have to show that they have board meetings and present on an annual basis.

The amount of undesignated corporate donations to MAC increased from \$156,000 in 1996 to \$175,000 in 1997 and \$200,000 in 1998.

This year for the first time MAC categorized arts groups by their budgets:

1. \$1 million-plus ("These are major organizations that get primary funding. They employ more people, so they get the first cut," said Gilmore.)
2. \$500,000 to \$1 million
3. \$250,000 to \$500,000
4. Groups with smaller budgets. (They get grants of up to \$10,000 for specific projects.)

Taking the Initiative to Advance the Arts

Funding, arts advocacy, and organizational development for arts groups are obvious missions of MAC. However, the organization has engaged in a wide variety of ventures and enlisted arts groups in unselfish collaborations, by virtue of its larger perspective.

Ongoing community services include ArtTalk, a MAC phone line, which gives current updates on arts events. Phone numbers for the recorded messages are advertised daily in *The Birmingham News*. To keep the arts message in front of the business community, MAC provides an op-ed piece monthly to

the *Birmingham Business Journal*. The organization's mission includes arts advocacy to the public and government decision makers at all levels.

MAC took a leadership role in arts education with The Bravo Bus. It was a "fast-paced, self-contained, touring production" that took an arts awareness and education message to schools around the state, primarily in rural areas, by bus. The 50-minute, live musical production was a scripted program with seven performers and two crew members.



Pianist Stewart Goodyear's concert is an option of the MAC Season Sampler Subscription

The program ran for two years and was presented in more than 75 schools, initially through a grant from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. Gilmore has hopes of revising the production and making it available for others to use.

The Bravo Bus received BRAVO Film Network's "Arts for Change" award which recognizes outstanding arts programs that make a difference in the community. Out of more than 400 applicants competing for the award, the Bravo Bus was among only 12 programs selected as having a significant impact on today's youth. It also won the AmSouth Bank Award for Educational Excellence in 1995 and 1996. The original script was written by Birmingham Children's Theater playwrights Jean Pierce and Betty Pewitt.

It took a huge, united local effort to raise the \$2.5 million to bring America's Smithsonian Exhibition, the Smithsonian Institution's 150th anniversary exhibition, to Birmingham in 1997. Birmingham was the only southern city to host the more than 300 artifacts which included Kermit the Frog, Edison's light bulb, Abe Lincoln's hat, George

Washington's sword, Dorothy's ruby slippers from the "Wizard of Oz", Lewis and Clark's compass, Amelia Earhart's flight suit and the Wright brothers' 1911 airplane, the Vin Fiz. Curators picked some of their "finest, most precious and fascinating pieces," James R. Nelson wrote in his review of the show in the June 29, 1997 *Birmingham News*. Each of the Smithsonian's 16 museums and galleries was represented in the exhibition.

America's Smithsonian drew 250,000 visitors to the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex. "Something like this puts Birmingham out front nationally," said Copeland, "and the benefits are great."

Performance Counts

The arts are booming in Birmingham. The city has shifted into artistic hyperdrive with fullscale performance seasons by the newly reconstituted Alabama Symphony Orchestra; as well as the Birmingham Broadway Series, Birmingham Music Club series, the Alabama Ballet with Artistic Director Wes Chapman, and the brand new Alys Stephens Center.

As a close and interested observer of the local arts scene, Gilmore is thrilled and concerned. "Each performing arts series is distinct and has its own audience, but with so many arts activities available, season ticket sales could be affected."

More promotion and more audience will assure the future health of Birmingham's art scene, and MAC is assisting with both through the "Season Sampler" subscription. "This is a tool to increase audience diversity and build attendance and loyalty," said Gilmore.

The 1998-99 performing arts season is the first in which MAC has offered a "Season Sampler" subscription which includes theater, opera, dance, music and visual arts. A "Sampler" subscription runs \$125 for one or \$225 for two people. Subscribers receive invitations to two opening receptions and choose four cultural art offerings from the

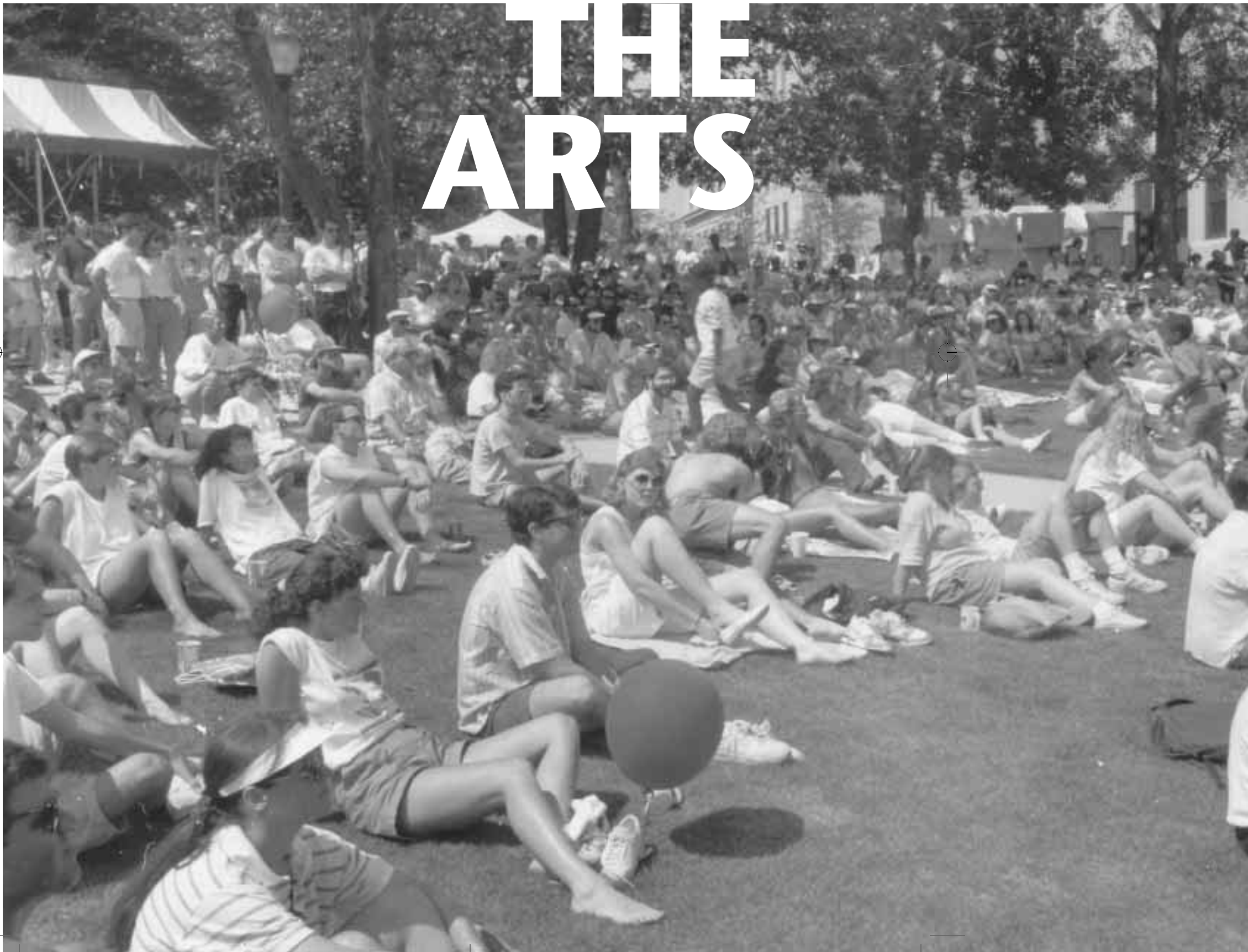


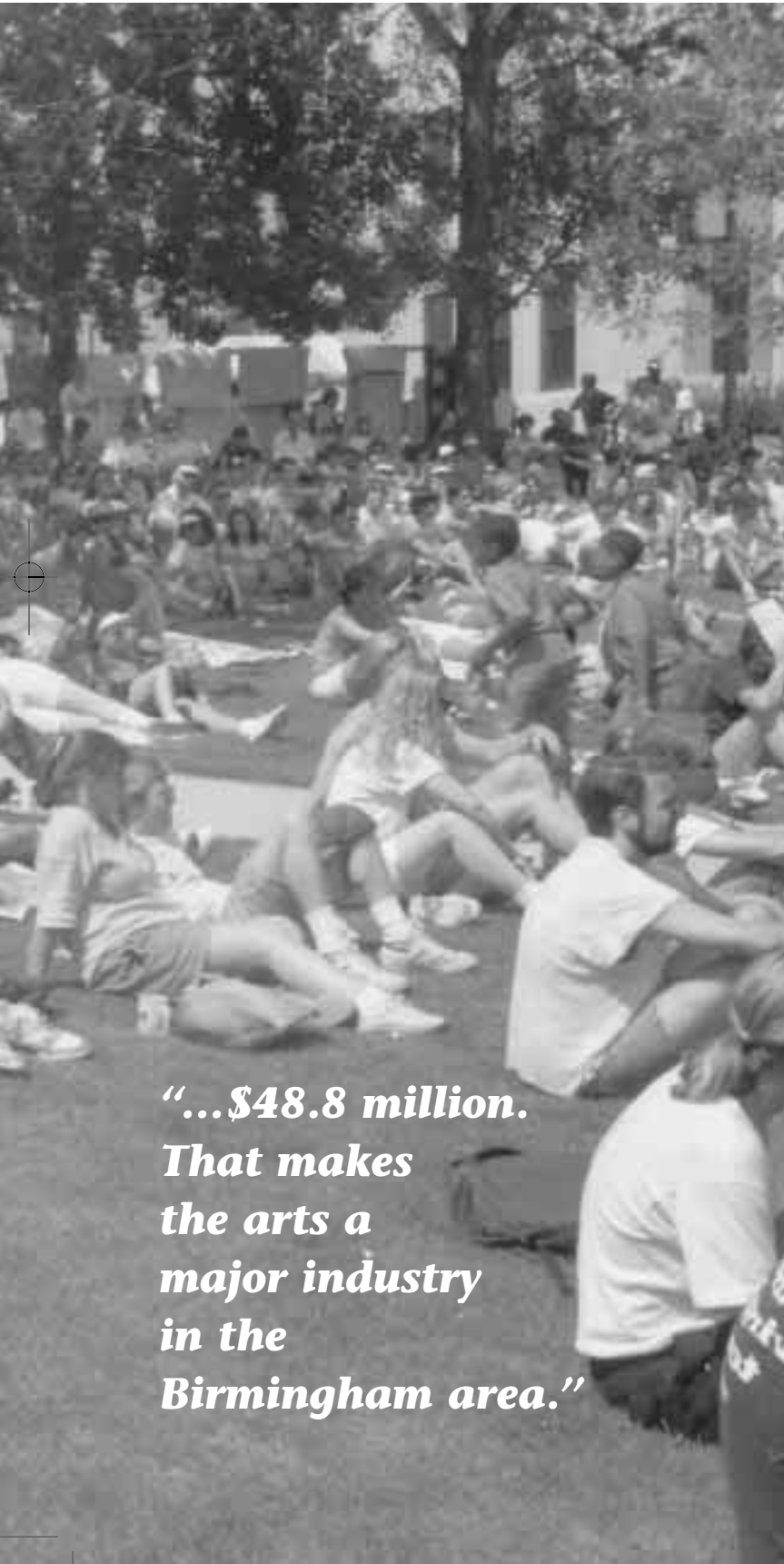
Birmingham Children's Theatre is Alabama's oldest and the nation's largest professional adult theatre performing specifically for young audiences.

following: St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra; Canadian pianist Stewart Goodyear, the London City Opera performance of "Die Fledermaus" (Birmingham Music Club); *Stomp*, (Birmingham Broadway Series), The Gospel Christmas and Masterworks VIII (Alabama Symphony Orchestra), "Coppelia," (Alabama Ballet), "Cyrano de Bergerac," (ACT3, the young adult division of Birmingham Children's Theatre), Duke Ellington Songbook starring Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis, Jr. (Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center), also family membership in the Birmingham Museum of Art, or dance classes for children or adults at Children's Dance Foundation.

Birmingham *Counts On*

THE ARTS





***"...\$48.8 million.
That makes
the arts a
major industry
in the
Birmingham area."***

Photo: Joey Brackner

“We think this is very conservative, but it is what we can document,” said Larry Johnson, vice president of program development for the Birmingham Area Chamber of Commerce. As an aside, as he thumbed through the pages of a printed report entitled “Economic Impact of the Arts, 1997,” he commented with a smile, “We could spend a lot of money to make this more scientific, but we’d much rather spend it on supporting the arts.” He located the dollar figure representing the total annual budgets of arts groups surveyed and read it aloud. “Thirty-two point two million,” he said. “Add that to the other cultural outreach programs and it totals \$48.8 million. That makes the arts a major industry in the Birmingham area.”



**The Seasoned Performers' production of
*Fine Feathered Friends and the Rara Avis***

Thirty-five arts organizations, five universities and ten other "community resources" including the botanical gardens, zoo, Civic Center, Sloss Furnaces and Boutwell Auditorium contributed to the 1997 tabulations. The organizations surveyed are extremely varied. Some have large facilities and paid staff, while others are small, volunteer-run non-profits. Together they employ 665 persons full time and 609 part time.

The Cultural Affairs Committee of the Birmingham Area Chamber of Commerce first published a study of the economic impact of the arts on the Birmingham region in 1982. They used the model of a study published by the National Endowment for the Arts in January 1981 called Economic Impact of Arts and Cultural Institutions. Repeating the exercise ten years later with the help of the Chamber's Business Services Division, the committee surveyed 34 organizations, up from 21 used in the previous study. Budget totals had more than dou-

bled, from \$9.2 million to \$20.2 million. The \$32.2 million 1997 budget figure Johnson cited marks a 63 percent increase in the past five years. "Without adjusting for inflation to make the studies statistically comparable, we nevertheless can see tremendous growth," he said.

"It's very important to bring this information before the public," said Johnson. "As a society, we want to have refinement, entertainment and culture, but we have a tendency to think of the costs of arts activities and overlook their economic contributions." The results of the study were presented at a special "State of the Arts" luncheon, a fitting celebration which featured entertainment by Birmingham-area performers on the street and in the meeting room at the Harbert Center.

"While the quality of life contributions made by the arts are really immeasurable, we do recognize that the arts have an impact on the area's economy," wrote Birmingham Area Chamber of Commerce chairman William E. Jordan and John J. Coleman, Jr., chairman of the Chamber's cultural affairs committee in a May 1997 memo. The two men were asking "selected cultural organizations" to complete a questionnaire about their income and expenditures so that the Chamber could assess the dollars and cents importance of the local arts scene.



Late Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame director J.L. Lowe in the exhibit hall.



Birmingham's Sloss Furnaces hosted a cast iron arts conference in April 1998.

TABLE ONE

Comparison of 1982, 1992 and 1997 Birmingham Impact of the arts studies (not adjusted for inflation)

	1982	1992	1997
Participating organizations	21	34	35
Participating colleges	4	4	5
Total Annual budgets	\$9.2M	\$20.2M	\$32.2M
Percentage budget spent locally	93%	83%	88%
Turnover economic impact	\$29.4M	\$54.9M	\$90.8M
Full-time employees	255	379	411
Part-time employees	370	410	427
Equivalent full-time employment	378	515	552
Annual audience	734,947	2,961,993	3,227,417
Potential audience spending	\$2,957,881	\$34,558,620	\$46,700,682



Quilting at the Birmingham Folklife Festival

TABLE TWO

Spending by cultural organizations in dollars and percent of total (not including colleges and universities)

1. Salaries & wages	\$13.3 M (49%)
2. Local goods & services	\$9.7 M (36%)
3. Non-local purchases	\$1.9 M (7%)
4. Guest artist fees	\$2.2 M (8%)
Total Budgets	\$27.1 M (100%)

TABLE THREE

Sources of income for cultural organizations, as a percentage of total budget

1. Private contributions	41%
2. Ticket sales	24%
3. Local government	21%
4. State government	7%
5. Metropolitan Arts Council	6%
6. United States Government	1%

TABLE FOUR

Totals for all organizations mentioned in this report

Participating organizations	50
Total budgets	\$48,828,017
Full-time employees	665
Part-time employees	609
Equivalent full-time employment	866
	\$105,822,885

"We could spend a lot of money to make this more scientific, but we'd much rather spend it on supporting the arts."



Birmingham Children's Theatre—
Theatre in Motion presents *Young King Arthur*
by Michael Price Nelson.

Cultural Organizations Participating In the Study

Alabama Ballet
Alabama Designer Craftsmen
Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame
Alabama School of Fine Arts
Alabama Symphonic Association
Alabama Theatre
Alys Robinson Stephens
Performing Arts Center
Arlington Historic House
Birmingham Art Association
Birmingham Boys Choir
Birmingham Chamber Music Society
Birmingham Children's Theatre
Birmingham Community Schools
Birmingham Broadway Series
Birmingham Festival of Arts
Birmingham Festival Theatre
Birmingham Music Club
Birmingham Public Library
Children's Dance Foundation
City Stages
Civil Rights Institute
Greater Bessemer Art Association
Lakeview Festival Association
Magic City Art Connection
Metropolitan Arts Council
Opera Birmingham
The Seasoned Performers
Southern Danceworks
Space One Eleven
Summerfest
The Library Theatre
UAB Town & Gown Theatre
Walker County Arts Council
WBHM-FM (90.3) Public Radio

Colleges and Universities
Birmingham Southern College
Jefferson State Community College
Samford University
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Montevallo

Other Community Resources
Alabama Sports Hall of Fame
Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum
Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center
Birmingham Zoo
Boutwell Auditorium
McWane Center (Discovery 2000, Inc.)
Sloss Furnaces
Southern Museum of Flight
Vulcan Park

History, Culture & Commerce



Photo: Van Blankenship



Photo: Don Perry

Above: The Ritz is located on the square in Talladega. At left: Billboards advertise downtown attractions.

Some naysayers scoffed at the notion that Talladega could actually pull this impressive act

off, but it's not only happening, it's coming

soon to a theater near you.

"Opinion" Column,
The Daily Home
January 20, 1998

Cafe Royale was humming at lunch time, and the talk was all about a theater performance that all but one of the 15 or so diners had attended. "It was great to watch, but I had a little trouble understanding it at first," the banker admitted. The insurance salesman agreed, "I kept watching the ones that were talking and that threw me off..."

"That's right!" the antiques store owner interjected. "You had to watch the actors that were signing. It was like trying to read subtitles and keep up with the action." The

performance being discussed was *Peer Gynt*, a new translation and adaptation of a Henrik Ibsen play, presented in American Sign Language and spoken words by the National Theater of the Deaf. ("You'll see and hear every word!" the promotional material said.) The previous night's performance at the Ritz Theater was the troupe's only appearance in Alabama during their 63-city, thirtieth anniversary tour.

Though *Peer Gynt* was challenging, difficult and somewhat uncomfortable, the diners decided not a

one would have missed it. "It gave me a different perspective on what it means to be deaf," the contractor asserted.

The talk turned to earlier shows. The National Symphony Orchestra's String Quintet was "awesome." "I had goosebumps," the banker said quietly, shaking his head. But by far the acknowledged favorite was Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC). Modern dance, notoriously a hard sell even to a sophisticated urban audience, had taken Talladega by storm. "Man, they could dance," said the contractor. "Fantastic," the restaurant's owner crowed as she poured another round of iced tea.

Puttin' On The Ritz

"Talladega has a clear winner in its smartly renovated Ritz Theater," wrote Nancy Raabe in a review of the season opener, the NSO chamber music. At the close of the evening the musicians called the Ritz "among the finest acoustic performance halls in America." Their reaction was totally unexpected and more than a little ironic to George Culver, executive director of Antique Talladega. "We have an amazing, state-of-the-art sound system—the Alabama Shakespeare Festival tech people helped us with it—but we had no idea that the house was an ideal venue for chamber music, too."

The Ritz Theater has several distinctions. Built in 1936 at a cost of \$4,500, the Ritz is now widely



Both speaking and signing actors appeared in *Peer Gynt* by the National Theater of the Deaf.

acknowledged as one of the best surviving examples of America's main street, Art Deco movie palaces of the 1930s. The facade is covered with shiny mint green and black vitrolite glass tiles in tall geometric motifs; the stepped roof line completes the "skyscraper" look.

But movie palace days are long gone and the Ritz did not age well or adapt easily to a less glamorous role. Six years ago it was a drab setting for church services; the stage was partitioned for small Sunday School rooms. The Ritz had fallen on hard times.

Then the city invested in the derelict downtown building. "It was politically risky for us to buy the theater when we did," said city council president Horace Patterson. "We took some heat for spending that \$103,000." It is hard, he said, to get people to look far enough down the road to make sense of

that sort of vision. He added, "But when people truly share ideas, when they have the courage to speak about their dreams and to debate freely, great things can happen." And so they have. Patterson says buying the Ritz was "one of the best investments we've made as a city." It has generated an enormous sense of community, as well as the belief that together we can accomplish things, he said.

Antique Talladega, whose mission is renewal of the downtown Courthouse Square Historic District, spearheaded the drive to renovate the Ritz with an ambitious two-phase plan. Phase I included purchasing and structurally securing the building and renovation of the first floor. Construction entailed a new roof, reclamation of the original "variety stage," a new proscenium, an enlarged thrust stage, and various upgrades to comply with safety and handicapped codes, structurally affixed lighting catwalks, new electrical infrastructure, an expanded lobby, renovation of the 430-seat auditorium and implementation of an Art Deco interior design. Phase I was completed in 1996 with \$500,000 through a \$238,000 ISTEA grant with matching funds from the City of Talladega. Phase II included lighting and sound systems, fly loft and curtains, facade restoration and purchase of the Otts Building next door for additional space.

Support came from companies and individuals. April in Talladega,



The performance of Dayton Contemporary Dance Company was an audience favorite of the inaugural season of the Ritz.

the annual historic pilgrimage, turned over its \$10,000 profit to the Ritz. Pilgrimage attendees helped swell the crowd for the performance of *Heartaches: The Unauthorized Biography of Patsy Cline*.

After the fully-funded \$800,000 renovation, the Ritz re-opened as a regional performing arts center. A sellout crowd for the NSO season premiere brought in unexpected funds that paid for rough finishing of the balcony. "It's a good thing, too," said Culver. "We've needed those seats for every show since."

The Art of Recruiting Business

"This is a community in transition," said Chamber exec Frank Feild. "For one thing, people who would have been content to sit back and hold onto their moldy money are putting it on the table to invest in their community." Individuals want to have a part in the Ritz. Now that it's the centerpiece of downtown, business people want to locate nearby and capture the downtown audience.

Across the street from the Ritz is a well-trimmed, shady square with a bustling courthouse, "the oldest in continuous use in the state," the locals say. Antiques shops and restaurants are flourishing. The

Ritz renovation was great for historic preservation and cultural tourism, but its primary goals were economic development and the revitalization of the downtown business district. Busy antiques shops and restaurants are triumphs of the program; buildings are being bought and shop spaces renovated.

The Ritz renovation and Antique Talladega's success at recruiting downtown businesses witness to the fact that the arts, business and government are a powerful combination. "We've always had groups working to advance the community, but working in isolation, with some duplication or conflict," Feild said. "The Ritz gives us a focus, something we can all rally behind."

Years ago Grant Lynch—president of the Talladega Superspeedway, Antique Talladega board member, \$50,000 "Founder" of the Ritz and Talladega County Economic Development Chairman—almost turned down the opportunity to move to Talladega because his family was very hesitant to move where there was "nothing to do." Quality of life is a vital issue to him still. Lynch agrees that the Ritz's renovation and its exciting performance season make a huge contribution to

the local quality of life and enhance Talladega's ability to attract new industry.

With the Ritz as a gathering place for a broad audience, the distinct characteristics of some of the city's most important institutions have become better appreciated, Culver said. He cited an example: "DCDC conducted a community workshop at Talladega College for two days before their public performance at the Ritz. Coming together to enjoy black contemporary dance gave us all pride in our traditionally black college. And because of the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, the community was able to experience the marvelous National Theatre of the Deaf."

A New Season

The inaugural season behind him, George Culver is as excited as ever about new acts coming to the Ritz. "Our 'First Fall Season of Special Events Events' includes two performances of *Pinocchio*, the culmination of a five-day residency in which local children will audition and rehearse to be part of the show. Following that we showcase the country's top thumb-style picking guitarist," he said. Common Ground, world class Irish step-dancers and the Off-Broadway hit, *Pump Boys and Dinettes* are also appearing this fall.

The 1999 Encore "Professional Artists Series" is a strong followup to last year's season. Said George, "We open with the Fats Waller hit

Broadway review, *Ain't Misbehavin'* on February 22. Next is the Jose Greco II Flamingo Dance Company on March 2. (By the way, in the middle of the 'national retro phenom', Jose is the hottest thing happening in dance.) The wonderful Atlanta Symphony Brass Quintet will be with us on March 22. Then

we close with the national tour of the new hit musical about Elvis Presley from the respected Arkansas Rep—*Idols of the King*.” This will be the Ritz’s special offering during the 1999 pilgrimage tour.

George Culver is equally at home in the boardroom and on the boards, having earned an MBA at

the Wharton School and worked in marketing, planning and financial management for both public and private sector entities. He was executive producer for a successful off-Broadway play and handled PR, planning and resource development for The Actors Studio for legendary artistic director Lee Strasberg.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF?

Alabama Chautauqua Association organized in 1894. “They raised a large tent at Shelby Springs, employed the best talent available in the United States, and ran excursion trains from various points for the convenience of patrons. The adventure proved quite successful, but Shelby Springs was situated on one railroad only, and there were not sufficient boarding facilities for the crowd. There was so much complaint about this inconvenience, that it was deemed advisable to change the location.



“Talladega citizens”... “organized a local association of 65 men, for the purpose of bidding for the location. The bid was readily accepted, and Alabama Chautauqua was moved to Talladega permanently and erected an unpainted frame building to seat 2,000.” They brought in all types of entertainment: bell ringers, a marimba band, orators, humorists and magicians. The annual high point was the College Oratorical Contest in which prize orators from Auburn, Tuscaloosa, Howard and Southern Universities vied for top honors.



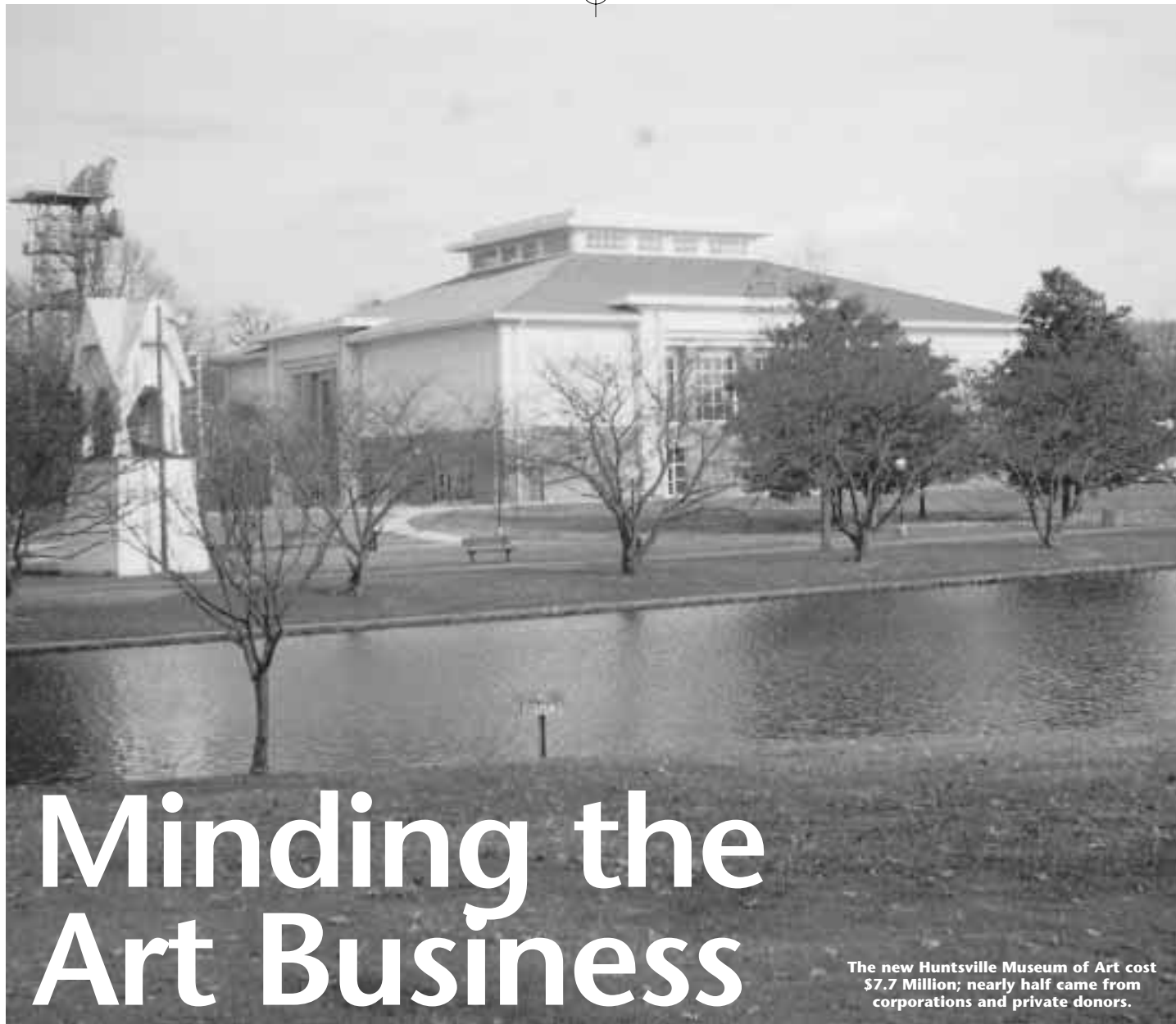
“Summer excursion rates were established from Maine to California, and Talladega became the cultural center of the South; nationally classified as a resort town. School buildings were opened for boarders, and every provision was made to take care of the flow of people who came to Chatauqua.”



—Excerpts from *Historic Tales of Talladega*
by Grace Jemison (Paragon Press, 1959)

The luxury of Chatauqua proved too expensive. Talladega’s taste was for the best only and the best was more than was financially profitable. “Chatauqua sessions were closed after ten years of luxurious cultural enjoyment,” said George Culver.

It appears that Talladega is well on its way to recreating the Chatauqua era. But this time, the city already has a fine building—the Ritz—and the promise of a strong financial base for the arts, because of the large group of citizens devoted to economic development.



Minding the Art Business

The new Huntsville Museum of Art cost \$7.7 Million; nearly half came from corporations and private donors.

An article in the August 2, 1998 *New York Times* quoted Mimi Gaudieri, executive director of the Association of American Museums, as saying, “The vacancy rate (for museum directors) is the highest it has been in 15 years.”

Author Deborah Solomon suggested: “To run a cultural institution is, in some ways to be a cloven creature—half head in the clouds, half bottom-line bookkeeper—and it might seem logical to split the job in two.”

That is what the Huntsville Museum of Art has done.

At his first board meeting at the helm of the Huntsville Museum of Art, Rick Loring unveiled what his amazed board chairman considered to be “a beautiful work of art,” a spreadsheet. Close attention to finances and marketing marked Loring’s two-and-a-half year tenure with the museum. His leadership helped boost business interest and participation in a major civic project: the construction of a new museum building on a controversial downtown site.

A look at HMA’s spreadsheet today shows an impressive picture. Museum memberships have more than doubled and annual attendance is up from about 37,000 four years ago to near 100,000. (Loring says he sees it moving toward 150,000.) Businesses donated \$1.8 million toward the building campaign; all together there was \$3.7 million raised in private support to match the city’s \$4 million. “The museum is growing and serving more people. If we were looking at this growth on the stock market, it would look very good,” said Loring.

Loring was not a trained art historian with multiple degrees or a specialist in French Impressionism. He fit in the category of “most people” who, he says “may think they are not a ‘museum person.’ but really enjoy the art museum, especially for an educational experience or a once in a lifetime show.”

Loring brought the freshness of an amateur to the job, said Curator Peter Baldaia. “A museum is a closed world and it can get stale. It’s nice to have fresh vision and a different perspective. Rick was almost like that ‘average’ person you want to attract,” he said.

D. Scott McLain, chairman of the museum board, saw untapped talent in Loring and decided within thirty seconds of meeting him that Loring could be a strong asset for the museum. Trained as an attorney, McLain makes his living as a contractor. He saw no problem with hiring a small town newspaper publisher as president (not director) of the Huntsville Museum of Art. HMA had a traditional museum director until the past two years, in fact the museum operated for 20 years or more that way. “We started looking for a new museum director about three years ago, but the search committee did not find a director that fit the bill,” said McLain. The board decided that an art expert was not what the museum needed, but rather a business manager. “We needed someone who had an affinity for business to carry us forward,” said McLain,



Photo: Bob Gathany

placing emphasis on the word forward. The board decided to name a president instead of a museum director and to leave artistic matters to the curatorial staff.

The package McLain and the city council-appointed board used to entice Loring was the opportunity to take a key, highly visible position in a larger town. His peers would be Huntsville’s corporate presidents and he would relate to them as a business person. “It was a good entree to the city,” he acknowledged. Said McLain, “We made a business deal with Rick that he would move to Huntsville and take this leadership position to help us redefine the museum to the community. With him in place, it went from a dog to the community darling.”

The Public as “Customers”

“We’ve taken a business approach to management, but we had no intention of abandoning the role of an art museum, which is to educate, preserve and display fine art,” said McLain. Loring believed there might be concern from people in the public sector or museum

Alabama quilter Yvonne Wells leads a tour of an exhibition of her cloth creations.

work that putting a business person in charge would ‘dumb down’ museum programs and exhibitions or sidetrack the museum from its mission. “Actually, business management does not have to do with what’s on exhibit, or the mix of exhibits,” he said.

“Rick changed the culture; the museum is a different work place now,” said McLain. According to McLain, Loring started with a good team, added responsibilities and goals for productivity and encouraged cooperation. “You could see the difference just walking down the hall,” McLain said.

In the Museum presidency, Loring spent a great deal of time promoting the “product,” art exhibitions, for their cultural and educational value, and promoting the facility as a “nice place to be.” “The Museum is now customer-driven,” Loring said. Everyone is welcomed and the art is presented in ways it can be understood and appreciated. “We want visitors to feel comfortable and to be confident that whenever they visit, they’ll see something they like a lot,” he added.

“There was a definite understanding when the board decided to change to a president that they wanted high visibility and strong relationships with businesses,” said Baldaia. Huntsville is a white collar community and the museum had not made strong connections with the high tech companies. “Our new president (Loring) had an instant

rapport with business leaders. They could communicate and they felt a kinship. He was able to get underwriting and support," he said. Boeing and McDonnell Douglas are major donors; the Pinnacle Group, a software consulting firm in Athens is another. The museum's main gallery is named in honor of Mrs. Pei-Ling Chan and was funded by a donation from Dr. C.H. "Tony" Chan and his wife Kathy L. Chan.

"There are advantages to having a non-art person running HMA as a business. He can keep things running smoothly and help us to avoid deficits," Baldaia said. Loring and Jack Charlton, the interim president who succeeded him, showed great respect for the museum's curatorial and education departments. Baldaia didn't have to worry about the business side overpowering art and education.

"There is a lot of training and experience required for what we do," said Baldaia. He has been in the field for 15 years and worked for two other museums before coming to Huntsville. "Traditionally, a director has contacts and clout that a museum needs, and if you don't have that sort of person in the top slot, it better be covered by the curator," he said.

Like other arts institutions, museums have had to find new and different ways to make money and creative ways to reach the public.



Photo: Bob Gathany

The 46,000 square foot Museum is located in Big Spring International Park.

Taking advantage of the location in Big Spring International Park, the museum board hopes to attract shoppers to the museum store and open a franchise restaurant to serve the downtown lunch crowd.

Longtime board member Joyce Griffin told *The Huntsville Times* before the opening of the attractive, new museum store, "It can be a profit center if it's done the right way." Griffin made a donation to the museum that was used to create the store. Merchandise ranges from inexpensive cards to art works that sell for several hundred dollars. Every item relates to art or a specific exhibit. Many of the items are designs from Museum of Modern Art or the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. In addition to reproductions and adaptations, there are original works by a number of the artists who are represented in the



Artists demonstrated their work during the grand opening celebration.

museum's permanent collection.

The Huntsville Museum of Art Foundation Great Hall on the building's

third floor is a 2,700 square foot room with 27-foot ceiling, five chandeliers and clerestory windows. A beautiful, elegant space, it is perfect for wedding receptions, parties, meetings and lectures. Other spaces are available on that floor: the Barber Parlor, BellSouth Board Room, and the Women's Guild Warming Kitchen. Windows overlook the museum galleries and guests can tour during events. On the main floor there are the Beck Meeting Room and the Richard and Roper Orientation Room, available for lectures and small receptions. Rental of meeting space is not only a source of museum income, it is a community service and exposes more people to the museum's exhibits.

"I am very excited about the potential for the Huntsville Museum of Art," said Loring. Having stayed through the opening as he had promised, Loring was at home, taking stock of where he's come in the past few years and looking toward his next move. "The key to success is in providing tangible, quantitative value. This isn't rocket science, it applies to all of business and making a living. It makes just as much sense in the private sector; you'll be out of business if you don't give value and service."

Bring on the Blockbuster

When he first came on board, Loring spent weeks examining the museum's programs and comparing them to what other institutions were doing. "He came to me and said 'what we do is excellent, but there's one thing missing,'" Baldaia recalled. Loring had discovered the blockbuster museum shows—the kind some museums put on every year or two. "He studied Jackson, Mississippi, and Memphis as examples of cities whose art museums had put them on the map," said Baldaia, "and he wanted to know why we couldn't do that here."

With Loring's blessing, Baldaia went looking for a big exhibition, something he could hardly have imagined before. A show of Italian Renaissance paintings from Burghley House, an English manor home, fit the bill perfectly. It was serious, big, beautiful and a thrill for Baldaia to work on. The marketing thrust was throughout the Southeast and gave the museum an opportunity to reposition itself as a regional arts center. Closer to home, it was a great incentive for membership: members were entitled to unlimited free admission.

A Taste for Splendor: Russian Imperial and European Treasures from the Hillwood Museum will be exhibited November 21, 1998 - February 7, 1999. Baldaia expects to put on such a major show once a year. "It is a very successful part of our formula. It brings in revenue



Grand opening events brought large numbers to the new museum.

and gets lots of attention. All the hoopla that preceded it was all right with me," he said. "I'm excited about this model for museum development. We're on the cutting edge of where museums are going and we're trying new things," said Baldaia.

The search is on for a new president for the Huntsville Museum of Art. Of the 50-plus resumes that have been received, most are from people with an arts background. The board has decided to again hire a person with a strong business background. "My sense is that we are finding people who are seeking a change and seeking an opportunity to make a difference. Some would take a pay cut to take the job," McLain said. But it may be difficult to keep a business person for long. "They don't know what they're getting into, and this kind of job is not on their career track," said Baldaia.

Jack Charlton, retired engineer and former interim executive at the

Chamber of Commerce, has agreed to hold the president's position for a year and a half and do it "as if he were going to be here 100 years," McLain said. "He (Charlton) came to me last week, and said we must invest in a water softener for the museum," said McLain. "That's the engineer talking. He said the city's hard water will ruin the system way before its time, so we're going to listen to him."

The creation of the new Huntsville Museum of Art took a long time and survived the breakup of its architectural firm, budget problems and a fight against it taking up space in the downtown park. "Lots of museums are in parks," Loring said. Though he doesn't come from the museum world, it's obvious he does the research and knows the facts. "It's important to take a mainstream approach and be accessible," he said. "It's good for the museum business."

David Rockefeller Inaugural Lecture

The New York Historical Society, New York, NY

On the Occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Business Committee for the Arts, Inc. (BCA)

Reflections and Visions: Business-Arts Alliances

October 14, 1997

PRESENTED BY
DAVID ROCKEFELLER, JR.



David Rockefeller, Jr.

I am very pleased to be standing here 30 years after the conception of the Business Committee for the Arts (BCA), and to be publicly acknowledging that the paternity of this entity is in fact the responsibility of my father. How eerie to think that he was a younger man than I am now when he proposed the formation of BCA.

So many of you are role models—for your children, for your colleagues, for your peers in business and the arts. We all need role models, mentors, beacons of inspiration in our lives. I was lucky to have one who lived right at home—my father.

As many of you know, my father is a man of his word, and he organizes his deeds to match his words. Thus, not only did he do, as a business leader, what BCA encourages others to do, but in his role as a private citizen he has been an active collector of art for more than 60 years. He and my mother have been creators, as well, of beautiful domestic shel-

ters in the Caribbean, Maine and upstate New York. And, he is an active appreciator of the art and culture of very different peoples, from Native Americans to Saharan and sub-Saharan Africans. He is also a vigorous and committed trustee of cultural institutions, most notably The Museum of Modern Art and the Americas Society.

I have tried in my own life to emulate my father's word/deed symmetry, and, of course, that is a challenging assignment for me as chair of Rockefeller & Co., Inc. On this occasion, I hold most in mind my father as an example of a corporate leader who not only preaches the external benefits of corporate giving to the arts, but also promotes internal enjoyment of those benefits by encouraging employees to thrive in an elegant workplace and by offering them the opportunity to gather for beautiful lunchtime concerts.

So, I salute my father tonight, and I salute BCA which has grown into a mature and effective 30-year-old adult.

Because I have worked personally with large arts organizations such as The Museum of



Edward Hopper, *New York Office*, 1962.
Collection of the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. The Blount Collection.

Modern Art and the Boston Symphony, as well as small ones—the Boston Camerata and Boston’s Cantata Singers—I am especially grateful that businesses large and small support arts entities both large and small. Just as in the business world, I believe it is the entrepreneurial and experimental arts organizations that both challenge and fuel the large and established ones. I also salute BCA’s growing list of Affiliates in this country that foster much of the growth of small and midsize business alliances with the arts—and BCA replicators abroad.

I recently became aware of the growth, especially in Asia, of business patronage of the arts. One of the most outstanding examples is the Praemium Imperiale, established by and maintained with funding from the Fujisankei Communications Group, a major Japanese media and communications company. The Praemium Imperiale was founded to draw widespread public attention to the special contributions that the arts, in general, and individual artists in particular, make to the health and vitality of society as a whole. Five prizes of \$150,000 are given

annually by the Japan Art Association to individuals chosen for exceptional achievements in fields not covered by the Nobel prizes—architecture, music, painting, sculpture and theater/film. A few years ago, I was privileged to succeed my father as one of the international advisors to this program. As the prize enters its tenth year, I am pleased to report that there have been 46 winners since 1989. Five luminaries joined their ranks this year. The 1997 recipients are: Richard Meier for architecture; Ravi Shankar for music; Gerhard Richter for painting; George Segal for sculpture; and Peter Brook for theatre/film.

What are BCA’s challenges in the next 30 years? Let me suggest that there are three quite different spheres of business-arts support which ought to be examined.

First, and most obvious, is the sphere of the arts themselves. As we may learn from the just-completed National Endowment for the Arts study, “American

Canvas,” there are some issues of great strategic importance which may be particularly susceptible to assistance from the business sector; namely, has there been unsustainable proliferation of arts institutions in recent decades, and has the market for the arts been defined too narrowly? I would urge, therefore, in these turn-of-the-century years, that members of BCA pay special attention to the strategic issues confronting the arts nationwide and that these issues be resolved in collaboration with arts leaders who are not in corporate isolation. Concepts such as “consolidation” or “market segmentation” are, in my view, studied too rarely by arts groups themselves. It may take some nudging from business to put these concepts directly on the arts table.

The second sphere worth examining is “the business community,” a concept which is now less clear in its definition than it was 30 years ago, but nonetheless



Founding member Winton M. Blount and Judy A. Jedlicka, president of the national BCA.

*On the occasion of giving the Blount Collection to the
Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts*

The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts and its activities offer a tangible beauty and cultural spirit that are essential to our city, in both an economic and a human sense.

Art is nourishment, and necessary nourishment at that. How necessary can be seen in the fact that so many Americans today decide where they wish to live and work in some measure on the basis of the cultural environment which will surround them. Not only is this so, but it is so much so that people count their cultural environment a value no less than money or their benefits and perquisites which used to be the principal considerations in deciding where to take work, or where to take one's family. It may be difficult to define the exact role of the arts in our community life, although we are increasingly aware of their importance. Obviously the arts have much to do with the quality of life. Art was always at its best when it belonged to the people; when it was in the street, when it was in those great amphitheaters and other public places, and not merely behind closed doors. It seems to me a work of some worth to ensure that in our land, in our own time, at least, art remains the public possession of our people.

Winton M. Blount
*Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Blount, Inc.*



The \$21.5 million Carolyn Blount Theatre in Montgomery, home of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, was Winton Blount's gift to the people of Alabama in 1985. At the time it was the largest single gift in the history of American philanthropy.

is vital to define anew. The Internet has fulfilled the prophecy of a global village. I do not believe that big corporations can finesse their responsibility to define and support the particular communities in which they operate most actively. Some essential questions must be explored. Will the geography of customers or employees be what defines their community? How will national or global companies balance their impulse toward focused giving against their impulse to be more political and diffuse in support of the arts? I see these as principal turn-of-the-century challenges within this sphere.

The third sphere of consideration is companies themselves. What will our 21st-century working

environment be like? Will our already reduced leisure time continue to erode? Will the culture of aerobics or the culture of “couch potatoes” prevail? And what will the role of the corporation be in shaping the answer to these questions? You might say that these are not strictly arts questions, but they certainly bear on our future capacity to appreciate and participate in the arts. Just as issues of transportation and family policies impinge upon business decision-making, so too, I believe, do issues of aesthetics in the working environment and employer encouragement of active leisure-time pursuits, including the enjoyment of sports, nature and the arts.

One of our most articulate champions of the importance of even closer connections between business and the arts has observed: “Mainly through the impetus provided by our businesses, we have achieved in the United States a material abundance...unprecedented in history. Corporations...must [now] face up to the task of bringing our cultural achievements into balance with our material well-being through more intimate corporate involvement with the arts.”

As you may know—or may have guessed—those comments were made by my father. In fact, they were in the founding address of the Business Committee for the Arts which he delivered here in New York more than 30 years ago. Because my father is so far-sighted (and still doesn’t wear glasses!) those remarks are as valid today as when they were first spoken in 1966.

Even more urgently today, I believe our business leaders—all of our leaders, in fact—must be as attuned to the importance of the nation’s spiritual and cultural well-being as they are to our material well-being. Or, to put it in another way, our corporate captains should have as keen an eye for the moral compass as they have for the bottom line.

I know that those of us here tonight are not the real audience for these remarks, because you have already demonstrated your own broad commitment to the concept of partnerships between business and the arts. But for our business colleagues who may be more skeptical, let me put forth a thought about why the arts need business support even more today than they did 30 years ago.

My thought is simply that we are living at the edge of a world in which our societies have never been more vulnerable to the social tension created by our cultural differences and, at the same time, a world in which technology can homogenize the news, the commercial images and the very definition of a “good life” can reach all five billion of us at the same instant.

In this context, I would suggest it is the arts which—because they simultaneously embrace the particular and the universal—can best help us to grasp this world full of tension and technology. The arts, after all, are conveyors of what is most individual about the artist; most local, regional or traditional about each of us; most idiosyncratic about every separate cultural microcosm.

And, at the same time, the arts stand for what is most universal and transcendent—the non-literary arts take us beyond language and communicate to us across great barriers of culture, geography and point of view. All the arts speak about what is noblest and highest in mankind—and, yes, what is basest and darkest. The arts call upon the trinity of mind, body and spirit. They join us together in song. They transfix us in space. They transport us from our immediate time and location.

In other words, the arts have the capacity to do what is perhaps most needed in the world today; they honor what is valuable and distinct in each human being, while they force us to acknowledge our shared condition.

This, then, seems reason enough for the business sector and the Business Committee for the Arts to keep at their good work, and, in these turn-of-the-century years, to concentrate efforts on the three spheres I reference:

- the health of the arts themselves, with an emphasis on strategy and planning;
- the well-being of each business community, newly defined for our technological times; and
- the working conditions of employees.

There is still a lot to be done, isn’t there? But, however large the future task, tonight is a moment to celebrate what the Business Committee for the Arts and its members have accomplished—led by you, and inspired by my father. Hats off!

Thanks for the chance to celebrate with you.



Paul Robertson Photography

It's Everybody's Business to Support the Arts

by
ELMORE DeMOTT

Elmore DeMott, executive director of the Montgomery Area Business Committee for the Arts, is a former banker and a former Montgomery County Junior Miss and Alabama Junior Miss finalist (she sang in the talent competition). She majored in math and fine arts.

Above: C'est Jazz, a performing group of the Booker T. Washington Magnet School in Montgomery entertained at the 1997 Business in the Arts Luncheon.

"It's a win-win situation when businesses and arts groups become partners," said Elmore DeMott. "A business may gain as much as the artists-and the community gains, too." As executive director of the Montgomery Area Business Committee for the Arts (MABCA), Demott encourages businesses, arts groups and governmental agencies to communicate and cooperate. In the following article she outlines the background of the MABCA and highlights some of its most successful programs.

Where businesses, individuals and government agencies support the arts there is potential for a rich cultural life. In turn, that high quality of life is part of the package that attracts new businesses to fuel economic growth. To keep businesses and attract new ones to a community, you have to create a place where people like to live and work and raise a family.

Montgomery Mayor Emory Folmar learned a hard lesson long ago about the value of the arts in community life. He tells the story that after making an outstanding pitch to a company that was looking to relocate in Montgomery, he and his Chamber of Commerce colleagues suffered a stinging blow: their bid was rejected because family members of the corporate decision-makers were not impressed with the entertainment and recreation the city had to offer.

Folmar doesn't like to lose, nor does he tolerate the same comeuppance twice. "Quality of life" became the civic mantra, and arts support a priority. Last year Folmar received the first ever Winton M. Blount Arts Leadership Award from the Montgomery Area Business Committee for the Arts (MABCA) for his "exceptional, long-term commitment to encouraging and developing the arts."

The Montgomery Area Business Committee for the Arts (MABCA) functions as a connector between businesses and arts groups so that they can cooperate successfully. Founded in 1980, MABCA is the oldest regional affiliate of the national Business Committee for the Arts. David Rockefeller and a core of America's top business leaders, including Winton M. Blount, started the national organization in 1967. Its purpose was to increase awareness among businesses of the importance and value of supporting the arts, and to assist businesses in providing that support.

Blount's unequalled support of the arts is exemplified by the Winton M. Blount Cultural Park, home of Blount's multi-million dollar gift, the Carolyn Blount Theatre, home of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts which houses the Blount Collection of American art.



Paul Robertson Photography

The Montgomery Independent, represented by Bob Martin (left), Blount-Strange Automotive Group, represented by Lucy Blount and The Colonial Company, represented by Jimmy Lowder (right) received 1997 Business in the Arts awards.

Arts Stimulate Local Economy

Arts in the Montgomery metropolitan area have an economic impact exceeding \$50 million annually and are among the top five percent of employers in Montgomery, Elmore and Autauga counties, according to a study released on October 1, 1998. The report revealed that a full-time equivalent of more than 250 jobs are in the local arts industry while additional benefits resulting from audience and art organization spending fund more than 830 jobs elsewhere in the community. This equals a total of 1,083 full-time positions.

Results of the study, which was commissioned by the Montgomery Area Business Committee for the Arts, also showed that 40 percent of the industry's 617,655 admissions are free. This largely stems from the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, which does not charge visitors, but also includes about 80,000 free admissions given to the community by arts organizations.

Dr. M. Keivan Deravi, who interpreted the data at Auburn University at Montgomery's Center for Government and Public Affairs, said there is no way to put a dollar amount on free visits because one cannot scientifically gauge how large those audiences would be if a charge was involved. Similarly, he said, the \$50 million impact total does not include arts patronage by area residents because there is no way to know how many of them would have sought entertainment elsewhere if they did not have access to tri-county arts events.

Emphasizing the importance of business sponsorship of arts events are survey results showing that more than 125,000 children are served by educational art programs, more than 50,000 volunteer hours are donated to the arts each year and admissions valued at \$250,000 annually are made available to the public for free.



David Marshall

Ray Petty (left), president of SouthTrust Bank of Montgomery, winner of the 1997 Frank Plummer Memorial Arts Award for long-term support of the arts with Carl Barker, chairman of the 1997 Business in the Arts Awards.

Giving Thanks Where It's Due

Today, the MABCA has nearly 100 member companies. Its programs and services provide education, motivation and recognition for businesses which support and participate in the arts. The MABCA strives to improve the quality of life in the Montgomery area and increase economic development.

"Montgomery has always had its strong patrons of the arts. The Weils and Aronovs, who give quietly and generously, are examples. And the revitalized BCA has done a lot to make arts patronage a club other companies want to join," said Helen Steineker, administrative manager of the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra.

The annual Business in the Arts Awards event each fall is generally considered to be the most successful program of the MABCA. As hundreds of guests arrived and mingled in the vast Embassy Suites ballroom for the 1997 luncheon, a 12-member jazz vocal ensemble backed by piano, drums and upright bass performed sophisticated arrangements of jazz standards. The group is C'est Jazz and is made up of students from the Booker T. Washington Magnet High School. Their teacher and director, Philip Sprayberry, jumped at the chance to schedule this performance. "This audience is one that needs to know about our program," he said. After all, it takes money as well as "practice, practice, practice" to get to Carnegie Hall, as C'est Jazz did in early 1998.

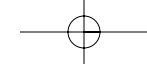
The purpose of the awards luncheon is to recognize businesses of all sizes for creating outstanding initiatives with the arts. Two hundred and fifty attended the 1997 luncheon and watched a big-screen audio visual presentation about the award-winning companies and their

arts-support projects. Commented Johnny Oakes, owner of a small printing company, LongRun Press, "The prestige and exposure we got from being a finalist was something money can't buy." Oakes's in-kind donation of printing helped the Montgomery Symphony League raise more than \$10,000 to fund the Montgomery Youth Orchestra.

Each luncheon guest received a pointillist-style painting of trees made by an elementary school student. The art work had special significance for MABCA members who had been involved in a special project to raise \$30,000 to send teams of teachers to the Alabama Institute for Education in the Arts last summer and assist them with the purchase of materials to incorporate discipline-based arts education in their classrooms at Chisholm, Dozier and Paterson Elementary Schools.

Paul McNeeley of the Davis Theatre for the Performing Arts and Richard A. Smith, director of the Montgomery Chorale, emceed the awards presentation at the luncheon. Each winner received an original work of art created for the event by a local artist. The 1997 awards were pen and ink drawings by Melissa Tubbs. Drawings in this series featured architectural details from the Montgomery area. Tubbs's art was also used for the award luncheon invitation, the MABCA annual report and notecards available at the luncheon.

Blount-Strange Automotive Group, Colonial Company, The Montgomery Independent and SouthTrust Bank of Montgomery received the 1997 awards.



SouthTrust Bank was recognized for long-term support of the arts with the 1997 Frank Plummer Memorial Arts Award. Ray Petty, president, is extremely proud of his bank's sponsorship of an annual outdoor pops concert by the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra. "Broadway Under the Stars is our way of saying 'thank you' to the community that has made us prosper," he said.

Addressing the crowd of business men and women, the Montgomery Chorale's Ric Smith expressed his thanks by saying: "You use your positions as leaders in the business community to provide what is essential to us all. It is for your sensitive, strongly beating hearts that we, the musicians and poets and painters, and actors and sculptors and writers of Montgomery are most thankful. We need you most of all, not because you pay for what we do, but because you admit publicly that you need us. Thank you for your healthy artistic appetites."



Pam Wallize, manager of ASF's costume shop talks about the costuming process with business leaders Young Boozer of Colonial Bank and Donna Cooper of Compass Bank.

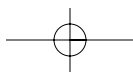
Doing Well & Doing Good

The MABCA maintains information for businesses on Partnership Possibilities with arts organizations and consults with business members interested in incorporating the arts into specific projects and business areas. The organization also consults with arts groups to help them package new programs to attract sponsors, work up partnership proposals, and approach companies for support. A monthly newsletter featured in *The Montgomery Independent* highlights the arts-related activities of MABCA member companies and acquaints the public with MABCA programs.

Sneak Peeks are special events that give business leaders a behind-the-scenes glimpse of local arts organizations. MABCA members have toured the art storage vault at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, taken part in a presentation to explain set and costume design for a production of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, attended a rehearsal of the Alabama Dance Theatre and "sat-in" with the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra to see what it was like to be conducted by Maestro Thomas Hinds.



Sneak Peek in the art storage vault at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts.



INTRODUCTION

Continued from page 1

However, back to business ... arts organizations range from mom and pop operations to multi-million dollar conglomerates, with a healthy number of entrepreneurial free-lancers, too. Like businesses, they have budgets. They pay postage, power bills and salaries. They add up the box office and subtract the rent. They program "pops" (sure-fire crowd pleasers) to pay for commissions to riskier contemporary artists. They draft mission statements, prepare grant proposals and prospectuses in hopes of attracting venture capital.

"The arts are no longer a luxury," Barry Copeland recently commented. As a Birmingham business person and civic leader, he's right.

Where the arts flourish, the quality of life attracts new business and promotes economic growth. Copeland is the chairman of the Birmingham Metropolitan Arts Council and he's in a good position to understand the costs and benefits of business involvement in the arts. (See story on page 4.)

One of the reasons Copeland can adamantly state the importance of the arts is that he has evidence. Birmingham measures the economic impact of its arts activity. As

you'll see in our related story, the report reads almost like a financial statement, with totals on audiences, salaries and local expenditures. That's another way to put a value on the arts.

Seventy-five board members and guests tore through a box lunch and a packed agenda at the first board meeting of the new season of the Montgomery Symphony Association. Ticket sales were ahead of this time last year, the League's pops picnic fund raiser put several thousand dollars into the youth orchestra scholarship fund, long-term prospects of the endowment fund were good and the 1999 budget was examined and approved. New board member George Hall, president of Compass Bank in Montgomery, was introduced and said how glad he was to join the board. Then someone asked, "Have you heard from Denitza?" Rustling papers stopped and everyone turned to hear his reply. George's family had served as community hosts for the orchestra's violin fellow and concert master, Denitza Kostova. The charmingly spirited and somewhat ungainly 25-year-old Bulgarian with spiky blond hair had captivated audiences with her passionate playing. "She's fine, getting settled and ready to work,"

he answered. Denitza had left the fellowship a year early to study at the Cleveland Institute of Music with a violin teacher she had long idolized.

While the room was quiet, he added: "Once when she came to our home for dinner, Denitza brought her violin. She played a few notes for the children, 'angry notes,' and a few 'happy notes.' Then she played a piece and asked them what they heard." George himself began to get an inkling of what this previously impenetrable (to him) music meant to one player, and how it could be enjoyed on a human level without having to study and understand it. "It was a very special evening," he added simply.

The Hall family's relationship with Kostova is one of many unusual partnerships arranged by the Montgomery Business Committee for the Arts. On page 24, Elmore Demott, executive director, describes programs that sometimes transform dutiful corporate donors to arts enthusiasts.

Where business and the arts meet with real appreciation and enjoyment, there's talent, creativity and dedication on both sides of the equation. Read about it in this issue of *Alabama Arts*.

Opinions expressed in Alabama Arts do not necessarily reflect those of the Alabama State Council on the Arts or the State of Alabama.

