

HORIZONS

THE BRIDGE'S GUIDE TO ARTS AND EVENTS IN CENTRAL VERMONT

The Figure and Beyond



Works by Bill Brauer
& His Students at the
TW Wood Gallery
story on H.3

AUGUST 20, 2009

46 Barre Street Is Alive with the Sound of Music

Monteverdi and Summit Music Schools Announce Fall Registrations

Two of central Vermont's most prominent supplemental musical education institutions will begin their fall programs the day after the Labor Day holiday. Taken together, the schools offer programs in a wide range of musical styles and disciplines, from traditional classical to traditional folk, from music theory and history to songwriting and exploration of music from other cultures.

Below are invitations from both schools to join their many and varied programs for the fall 2009 semester. Both schools are offering expanded programs this season, which will surely enrich the cultural life of students of all interests, ages, and abilities—thereby enriching the greater central Vermont community as well.

—Tim Tavar

Welcome to Monteverdi Music School!

submitted by Eliza Thomas

The 2009 fall semester begins on September 8 and runs for 16 weeks. Our program includes individual lessons in piano, voice, strings, wind and brass instruments, percussion, guitar and voice, ensemble opportunities for singers and instrumentalists, and music theory classes. We will also provide experienced biweekly coaching for chamber music groups, so please call us if you are interested in ensemble playing. All ages and levels are welcome.

We are delighted to announce that we recently received a generous grant from the Vermont Arts Council and the National Endowment of the Arts to start up a weekend workshop and ensemble program this fall. Monteverdi faculty members will present one-day workshops on a wide range of topics and musical styles. We are also inviting a number of composers, conductors, and performing artists from the central Vermont area to share their talent and expertise. We'll publicize a schedule of these workshops soon.

We continue to share our space at 46 Barre Street, Montpelier, with the Summit School of Traditional Music and Culture. Beginning this fall, the renowned vocal ensemble Counterpoint will be based at the Monteverdi School for rehearsals and outreach programs; we are developing active partnerships with many other local musicians and music and arts organizations, including the T.W. Wood Gallery and Arts Center, Lost Nation Theater, the Capital Orchestra, the Vermont Opera Theater, and WordStage Vermont, providing much-needed rehearsal space and an opportunity for collaboration in performances, educational programs, and special events. We are proud to be a vital and collaborative element of this wonderful arts community.

For more information about our programs, please call us at 229-9000, and thank you!



Fall Courses at Summit School

submitted by R.D. Eno

Celebrating its third year of operation, Montpelier's Summit School of Traditional Music and Culture, now sharing quarters with the Monteverdi Music School at 46 Barre Street, announces an expanded selection of folk music and dance courses for the fall semester.

The course roster includes an extension program of classes outside the Montpelier area and a new children's program. In all, 14 courses will be available, including classes in improvisation, old-time fiddle, folk guitar, songwriting, and dance.

The public can meet members of the Summit School faculty at a gala showcase concert at the Langdon Street Café in Montpelier on Wednesday, August 26, from 8 to 11 p.m.

On the new kids' menu, Summit School director Katie Trautz (whose popular American harmony dinging is offered on both Sundays and Wednesdays) will teach Folk Songs for Kids and Adults in Richmond, while Heidi Wilson will preside over Folk Songs for Kids (and associated persons) and Jordan Menash will lead West African drumming for kids, both in Montpelier. Trautz, nationally known as a

musician with several old-timey ensembles, will also teach Beyond Beginner Old-Time Fiddle in Montpelier and Intermediate Old-Time Appalachian Fiddle in Hardwick.

Returning to the Summit School faculty are folklorist and musician Mark Greenberg (guitar), Ted Ingham (banjo), Kathleen Moore (clogging), Jordan Menash (drums), redoubtable singer-songwriter Colin McCaffrey (songwriting), and Dan Haley (improvisation for all instruments). New faculty members include Josh Gould (guitar) and Heidi Wilson. The great piper-and-harpist duo, Benedict Koehler and Hilari Farrington, will again preside over an Irish session repertoire class designed to teach new tunes to everyone on their melody instrument of choice.

Classes begin on September 8, following the Labor Day holiday, and run for eight weeks at a fee of \$180 per course. Complete information about courses, days, times, and locations, as well as audio clips of Summit School instructors, can be found at www.summit-school.org, where you can also register and pay securely. Or download the registration form and mail it with your check to Summit School, PO Box 646, Montpelier, VT 05601, or contact: Katie Trautz, director, at (802-917-1186) if you have questions. Enrollment will be limited, so early registration is advised.



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The Figure and Beyond

A Show of Work by Bill Brauer and His Students of the Past 40 Years

by Tim Tavcar

From Tuesday, August 25 until Sunday, October 25, the T.W. Wood Gallery and Arts Center hosts what Joy Spontak, one of the exhibiting artists, describes as "...the most exciting show in Vermont this year!" The works of Billy Brauer and 45 students, who participated in or are currently active in his 40-year-long series of classes, will be showing over 150 of their works based around their Thursday evening life drawing classes. Some of the work was created in class, some in their own studios, but all bear the fruits of the type of collaborative artistic environment that flourished throughout the Renaissance—that of a group of individuals guided in their individual and collective efforts by the hand of a benevolent but exacting master.

A thumbnail biography found online from one of the many high-profile galleries from Boston to Seattle that represent Billy Brauer's work offers this basic background of the man and his art:

Mr. Brauer has studied and utilized the concepts and techniques of Renaissance masters while adding a distinctly modern edge to each painting. His work is more about shape and placement than storytelling. A single light source allows him to plan and control light and dark patterns in each piece. His female figures are provocatively situated into these design elements becoming the narrators of each piece. Based on mythological themes, dancing and beauty, Brauer paints as if hypnotized or haunted by his own muse. Painted in warm earthy colors that cast a glow over each woman, they appear sensual and inviting to the viewer. Brauer feels the art of sensuality is falling by the wayside. He does not necessarily want his subjects to be sexy, but instead sees them as just "natural, beautiful women" but with an air of mystery. Born in New York, artist Bill Brauer started his career as an illustrator and printmaker. Upon moving to Northern Vermont over thirty years ago, Brauer found that printmaking limited the size and color of his work so he began to work with oil paints. He has taught at several colleges and schools throughout Vermont and has been a driving force in advocating for artists in the area.

Billy Brauer is a state treasure. As a master teacher for over 40 years, Billy's generosity of spirit has inspired a staggering outpouring of creativity in his students. His contribution to a higher aesthetic in the Vermont artist community is currently honored in this impressive exhibit. —Joy Spontak

When asked to describe the evolution of this every-Thursday-night exercise in creativity, Billy is characteristically concise and, to many, much too modest. He offers the following portrait:

"The present class started in the late 60s, early 70s as a life drawing/anatomy course offered through the Community College of Vermont. It was originally modeled after the foundation class I had at the School of visual Arts in New

York City but has had many incarnations over the years. It rapidly grew in size and scope, and it wasn't long before it evolved into a multimedia class.

I am extremely grateful and impressed that Billy has been giving artists and students the opportunity to draw from a model at an affordable price for so many years. As an artist, I have long viewed life drawing much like a dancer views taking class or working at the barre. Practicing my drawing skills on a regular schedule is one of the ways I prepare myself to create my work. —Joan Feierabend

"The class is open to all artists—from high-school students to professional painters and sculptors. Regardless of the level or experience of the students, the concepts we deal with are on a very high level. Over the years, I have been able to help students pinpoint and enhance their individual strong points, whether it is drawing, color, design, etc., and sometimes there are people who just do amazingly different work, and we strive to nurture and encourage that unique perspective.

"I have no idea how many students there have been since I started the class, as people come and go, but there is a core group that has been with me since the beginning, and thanks to those dedicated artists, the class pretty much runs itself at this point. Students learn from one another, and I learn from them because I am forced to articulate what I know and what I can instinctively do. When I am painting in my studio, I often say to myself 'You wouldn't let one of your students do that!'—so the educational process really never ends."

Billy taught me more about painting in a six-month period than I ever learned in four years of art school. I sincerely mean that—his tips were always accurate and, more importantly for me, concise, which you need in a two-hour class! —Jennifer O'Brien

As an homage to Brauer and his class, current members Jeanne Cariati and Frank Woods began to think of how a showcase for their fellow artists (which would, by extension, be a tribute to Brauer's pedagogical expertise) could be created and mounted. Cariati had participated in a group sculpture show back in her home state of California and was very excited about the creative energy and excitement it generated among the students and the general public. She and Woods brought the idea to a Thursday class and everyone there enthusiastically embraced the idea. They approached Joyce Mandeville, executive director of the Wood Gallery, who was intrigued, and after consulting with members of the Wood's board of directors, put this extraordinary event on their exhibition schedule. It is among the most diverse collection of artists and their respective media in the state to be shown under one roof.

And from the load-in of the 150-plus pieces of art in

Most of what I know about painting I learned from Billy. —Helen Rabin

many different media—including painting, drawing, and sculpture in granite, metal, alabaster, and papier maché, to the curating and hanging of the work—the entire process has taken on a convivial, collegial party atmosphere: artists bubbling with excitement and admiration over the pieces of their peers, the cooperative efforts of Brauer, Mandeville, Cariati, Woods, and several class members during the curatorial process, the formidable task of placing and hanging the art, and at the end, all basking in the pervasive warm glow that comes with a celebration of creativity.

Over all this riot of activity, Brauer beams like a proud parent. He insists that this is all about *them*—meaning his students—and seems truly amazed and undeniably delighted at the wonderful work that covers the Wood's walls. His philosophy of deriving inspiration from the historical antecedents of the Renaissance, and other major artistic movements—discovering where they come from, where they went, and where an individual artist can take them—is

Billy encourages us to push the envelope—to go beyond what we already know we do well. —Jeanne Cariati

brought to life in every piece of art he sees around him. "I never go to any gallery without larceny in my heart," he says. "You can learn so much from the work of the masters—and even, and most especially, from lesser- or little-known artists working in a particular period. The beauty of working with a single light source, the beauty of the shadows that are created, the *color* of the shadows, forcing your colors onto your canvas, not just showing them. There are so many things to learn by just looking!"

And thanks to Billy Brauer and his 40-plus years of students, Montpelier residents and visitors alike will have much to see, appreciate, and revel in.

This class continues to be one of the most pleasurable and painting allows me to feel like a 4-year-old—innocent and curious—or like a 9-year-old—full of intention and wonder, pure—or like a teenager—full of daring and discovery. —Cora V. Brooks

The Figure and Beyond, a show of work by Billy Brauer and his students of the past 40 years, will be on exhibit at the T.W. Wood Gallery and Arts Center, College Hall, Vermont College of Fine Arts, 36 College Street in Montpelier from Tuesday, August 25, through Sunday, October 25. There will be an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on Friday, August 28. Regular gallery hours at 12 noon to 4 p.m., Tuesdays through Sundays. For more information, contact the gallery at 828-8743 or visit their website at www.twwoodgallery.org.

VCFA's Hunger Mountain Launches Online Arts Magazine

submitted by Stacey Theberge

Hunger Mountain, the national arts periodical published at Montpelier's Vermont College of Fine Arts, will now reach a global audience thanks to the launch of its online incarnation, which debuted on July 31: www.hungermtn.org.

In true Vermont tradition, *Hunger Mountain* has always been eager to create community and now that community extends to a global audience. The new online version of *Hunger Mountain* has received visitors from 45 countries in the week since its launch.

Another distinguishing feature of the new online journal is its wide array of artistic expression. "*Hunger Mountain* might be the only arts periodical with a rich section devoted to the field of writing for children and young adults, in addition to the more traditional fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction,

and visual art," says *Hunger Mountain* managing editor Miciah Bay Gault. Gault notes that the children's literature portion of the magazine is meant for writers of children's literature, not children themselves.

Hunger Mountain online has launched with a sizeable splash, reprinting the first story published by George Saunders, popular fiction writer for *The New Yorker* and author of *Civil War*, *Land in Bad Decline*, *Pastoralia*, and several other books. "A Lack of Order in the Floating Object Room," first published in 1986 and never collected, has fans of Saunders buzzing about *Hunger Mountain*. "We're thrilled to reprint a George Saunders story," says Gault. "But what's really exciting is the sense of literary lineage in this issue." The journal published an introduction to the George Saunders story by Tobias Woolf, who was Saunders's graduate creative writing teacher. *Hunger Mountain* also pub-

lished work by a student of Saunders's, emerging fiction writer Aimee Pokwatka.

The idea of literary lineage is elsewhere on the website as well. Popular new poet Matthew Dickman's poems "Fountain" and "Magic Eightball" appear alongside two poems by Dorianne Laux, Dickman's teacher and mentor. "Showing literary and artistic lineage is a way of celebrating our creative inheritance while encouraging evolving innovation," says *Hunger Mountain* fiction editor Anne de Marcken.

"Part of our mission is to foster conversation about the arts," says Gault. The website is free, and every published piece includes a forum where readers can comment, share insights, and ask questions. *Hunger Mountain* has already generated lively conversation in the week since its launch. In response to the Saunders story, poet David Cooke writes, "I am telling you, he is this century's Tolstoy." On an essay by New-

bery Award-winner Katherine Paterson, a reader comments, "Beautiful and touching. This reaffirms what I hope to achieve in my own writing."

Vermont College of Fine Arts, which houses the editorial offices for *Hunger Mountain*, is the first college devoted entirely to low-residency, graduate fine arts programs, offering MFA's in Writing, Writing for Children and Young Adults, and Visual Art. *Hunger Mountain* was founded in 2002 as a print journal and will now publish three online issues and one print issue yearly.

Visit *Hunger Mountain* at www.hungermtn.org and Vermont College of Fine Arts at www.vermontcollege.edu. For more information, contact: Miciah Bay Gault at 828-8517 or e-mail Miciah.Gault@vermontcollege.edu.

REVIEW

Reflections on the Final Performance of the 2009 Circus Smirkus Big Top Tour

by Nat Frothingham

At a splashy, fun-filled, sold-out final show on Sunday evening (August 16), this summer's 2009 Circus Smirkus Big Top Tour came back home. Home for Circus Smirkus is the 200-year-old farmhouse in Greensboro, where the youth international circus project was founded 22 years ago.

This summer's tour opened in Greensboro on June 28. Over the next seven weeks, the tour rolled through New England and the Northeast and performed 70 shows through rain and mud, sun and heat, in 14 towns in places as widely scattered as Saratoga Springs, New York; Freeport, Maine; Wilton, New Hampshire; and Sandwich, Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Here's how Circus Smirkus founder and Montpelier resident Rob Mermin sums up the traveling international youth circus on his website: "Since its founding, Smirkus has brought together youth from 28 countries, with a touring company of 80 people—tent crew, coaches, performers, musicians, cooks, staff technicians, 25 trucks and caravans . . . in a 750-seat European big top." A small sampling of job titles out of this year's tour makes the point that running away to join the circus is as much about mud and muscles as it is about stardust and magic.

Here are a few of the circus jobs that keep the show on the road: tent boss, seat boss, head rigger, rigging consultant, lighting designer, costume designer, swing technician, head concessionaire, head cook, and circus band.

This year's final show took place on a hot summer evening under the blaze of stage lights with a big tent filled to overflowing, pulsating with applause that hardly ever stopped. The show opened when ringmaster and artistic director Troy Wunderle stomped onto the stage with a larger-than-life fairy-tale book. The show was a succession of fairy-tale icons: Goldilocks and the Three Bears, a witch with a pointed hat, a wolf with sharp teeth and claws, the slow, slow turtle and quicker-than-quick hare. The packed house never quit clapping as it hooted at the bad guys and warmed to the good guys who always, it seemed, arrived just in time to turn things around at the last possible second.

Interspersed between these well-known children's fairy tales, indeed morality plays, were the stunning physical displays of boys and girls swinging from ropes, juggling balls and clubs, balancing on human pyramids, turning impossible somersaults, and flying through the air into the safety of each other's arms. The circus tent was everywhere alive with joy, from the bows and smiles of the performers after a successful act to the spellbound fascination of children at the edge of the circus stage or held in the arms of a parent watching from the darkness of a seat under the circus tent.

Almost all of us are born with a capacity to wonder. Is there any child who hasn't once upon a time wanted to run away and join the circus? But often life intervenes to tell us sternly, "Get in line and be practical." And that's the paradox: because you can run away and join the circus, but you

can't succeed in the circus, you can't take your bow under the lights and hear the applause without turning up on time, learning

and perfecting your skills, and dealing with the hardness of life on the road.

First Night Montpelier: Call to Artists 2009 Application

Please complete the information below and mail by August 28, 2009 to:

First Night Montpelier c/o Montpelier Allive!
39 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Program decisions will be made by October 1, 2009.

Artist/group name: _____

Contact person: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Website: _____

Tell us about your performance (use additional if necessary):

Type of program (i.e. classical, folk, jazz, dance, theater, storytelling, etc.):

Program description:

Number of performers in group:

Technical needs (i.e. microphones, piano, stage size, wood floor, etc.):

Other needs (preferred time or location of performance):

Fee requested: \$ _____ for single performance
\$ _____ for # _____ performances

Questions? Contact Diane Scolaro at 828-5423 or via e-mail at dscolaro@vermontartscouncil.org.

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