



THE ASSOCIATES

Salon@Six

“Music is the Mediator between the Spiritual and Sensual Life”

--Ludwig van Beethoven

The pathway leading up to the porch of Alex Helsabeck’s home was filled with such beauty that guests slowed down in the pouring rain to look at it. A carefully designed garden filled with flowers demanded attention. The Solomon’s seal (no false Solomon’s seal here!) bowed gracefully to each guest, its white flowers nodding just off the path. Its purity and clarity helped set the evening’s mood.

The Associates’ last Salon@Six of the season took place Sunday evening, the Ides of April. Its setting seemed from a different age: slower, sensuous, a little exotic—making one write something like “the Ides of April” instead of April 15th!

Guests came into an entrance hall filled with pictures of Alex Helsabeck’s family. “That is my mother; that is my grandmother,” Alex’s sister pointed them out as she talked about how important Alex’s collection of portraits and photographs is to her family.

Associate Pam Short was there to give the guests their name tags that had been prepared carefully by Sue Ellen McNeil in the Advancement Office.

The parlor of the century-old house was filled with chairs for over forty guests. On the cross beam that once might have separated the parlor from the dining room, the words from Beethoven at the top of this article were displayed. Religious icons adorned the walls in every room.

The kitchen was resplendent with an array of food provided by the host.

The scene had been carefully set.

Carolyn Bailey introduced and thanked Alex for hosting the evening. A classically trained musician, Alex has retired here. He greeted us warmly. One of his five dogs played a brief tune on his squeaky toy to accompany his welcoming.

Carolyn then introduced School of Music Dean Brian Cole. He said that they work with the students “to push them as far as their dreams will let them go.” He introduced Professor Marilyn Taylor who had brought three of UNCSCA’s fourth year voice students.

She introduced the students and talked a little about each one of them, but she asked that they talk to introduce their music. The consummate teacher, she was letting them practice their fluency in talking about their art and practicing for the day they will be interviewed during intermission at The Metropolitan Opera!

The music for the evening ranged in time and mood. A dark Italian Baroque (Vivaldi) piece, “Orribile lo Scempio” that was sung menacingly (appropriately) by Bass-baritone Eric Powell followed Soprano Anyee Farrar declaring emphatically, “I Hate Music” by Leonard Bernstein. She told us that Bernstein had written it because his partner would call out those words when Bernstein had musicians practice in their home. Tenor John Ebrahim brought us “The New York Lights” from William Bolcom’s *A View from the Bridge*, a rather plaintive tribute to the city. Other pieces sung by each of the students filled out the evening’s entertainment.

The students shifted their emotional mien to fit the music. Their audience understood even the music in a foreign language because of the students’ introductions and expressive singing. *If you missed Salon@Six, you can hear these students at NextNow.*

Each of them showed the range of their abilities, switching from English to Italian to French effortlessly. Dean Cole told us they study those languages *and* German to graduate in the program.

The warm home, the garden setting, and the music made what might have been merely a dark and stormy night memorable. Our spirits and our senses were filled; Beethoven’s words had meaning.

Our gratitude goes to Alex, Dean Cole, Dr. Taylor, the students, the Salon@Six committee. Other key players were Savannah Stanbery from the Advancement Office who helped with logistics and Judy Watson who took reservations. Generous people. Thank you.

Howard Skillington Reporting on

Behind the Scenes

A Behind the Scenes Look at The Next Everything of Technology

Approximately sixty people braved inclement weather to attend a UNCSA School of Filmmaking *Behind the Scenes* event on March 19th. Hardy Associates lined the route to the school's Digital Media Building, to guide guests to this unaccustomed venue.

Mary Allen Martin and Anne Sessions welcomed us and introduced Dean Susan Ruskin, who expressed her appreciation for the Associates' invaluable support of the program.

She announced that the school, which is UNCSA's largest, is committed to being a center for new and emerging technologies, with a goal of incubating new businesses. At present seventeen partner institutions are engaged in this undertaking, and increasing numbers of students are taking notice – under twenty per cent of applicants are now accepted.

Susan then introduced Ryan Schmaltz, who has recently “left Silicon Valley” to join the film school. Ryan made the point that in about 1990 email began to change our lives in ways that we could not have then imagined. The advent of the iPhone was a similar revolution in 2008. He predicts that Virtual Reality will have a similar transformative effect upon our lives within the next ten years, revolutionizing our experience of education and entertainment, as well as empathy for other people and cultures.

He announced that the Film School's initiative in the field of VR will focus on Incubation, Community Engagement, and Economic Development.

Fourth year cinematography student Trent Spiver declared that VR will be “the next everything of technology.” His team's Immersive Theatre Piece, which was previewed later in the evening, is to be featured in April's *Next/Now* event.

Attendees were then encouraged to visit the various spaces in the highly-wired Digital Media Building, in several of which highly-focused film students were hard at work on current projects. In one studio, a lone midnight oil-burner was at her digital tablet manipulating a disembodied virtual hand – literally, performing the

five-finger exercises that must first be mastered if one hopes someday to create concertos.

Upstairs Iris Lee Fagundo (wife of Music Dean Brian Cole) presented *Unseen*, a work in progress, consisting of a video game in which the player is given the first-hand experience of being a fugitive from human trafficking. In addition to offering insight on this important issue, Fagundo suggested that *Unseen* could be of use to professionals in Planned Parenthood, law enforcement, and medical fields.

In another space, attendees got a preview of *Crisis of the Song*, a three-year cooperative project involving students at UNCSCA and Wake Forest University, employing the medium of stop-motion animation. (think of the original *King Kong*, *Wallace & Gromit*, or the more recent films from the Laika studio) A clay model of the work's central character was displayed, along with a view of the designed environment in which the action will take place. Several team members were on hand for Q&A for this project, which is scheduled to be screened in May of 2020.

While UNCSCA film students live on the cutting edge of technology, some of us vintage attendees appeared puzzled by this talk of “VR.” But is the impulse to create another world to explore really something new?

The first virtual reality medium may have been paleolithic cave paintings, designed to transport initiates into a realm of abundant game and cosmological wonder.

In 1888 Louis Aimé Augustin Le Prince demonstrated that pulling a film strip of photographs at the rate of twenty frames per second past an illuminated lens could create the illusion of a moving picture. But “movies” could still only show the reality of whatever had been situated in front of the camera.

In 1940 Walt Disney's *Fantasia* portrayed a virtual reality in which an animated mouse could shake hands with Leopold Stokowski at the maestro's podium. A little over a half century later, moviegoers had their first experience of an entirely virtual reality in which everything on screen was created digitally: *Toy Story*.

But even the wonders of Pixar are a fixed universe. Their created worlds can only be seen from the virtual camera's perspective, and the story is the same each time it is viewed. Today's nascent VR will enable each of us to enter and explore that world, participate in it from our own perspective, and even help shape the story. The experience can be revelatory, and even disturbing.

Film, computer generated animation, virtual reality, or whatever comes after that - the UNCSCA School of Filmmaking plans to be there.

Back downstairs we were given a panoramic view of the setting of *Big Rock Candy Mountain*, a VR experience set in the gentle, charming world described in the old children's song by that name.

Q&A for this presentation touched upon the ethical issues raised by the prospect of Virtual Reality, which may, for the viewer, become indistinguishable from the corporeal world. In this age of fake news and identity theft, VR brings the very real capability of a nefarious party to create a person's avatar and set it in action in any scenario, from a Nobel Prize award ceremony to a bank robbery. Susan Ruskin acknowledged these issues and expressed the hope that the VR community will undertake the construction of an ethical framework for the medium's use.

With that food for thought attendees enjoyed delicious refreshments provided by the Associates before reentering the real world of March weather in North Carolina.

April Board Meeting

Your Associates Board met in a closed meeting on April 3rd to decide on this year's look ahead to the coming year and to review the activities of the last month. There was also a discussion of the distribution of Associates' gifts to the school. You will find more about that in your May newsletter.

The nominating committee presented a slate of officers for the 2018-2020 term. Members will have received the slate by now, and it will be voted on at the May 1st meeting. That slate will be an addendum at the end of this newsletter for your review.

In other business, Mary Allen Martin reported that eighty people had attended Behind the Scenes in the New Digital Media Building. Howard Skillington, who will be your newsletter writer in the fall, wrote about the evening. He generously contributed the previous article. The capacity crowd enjoyed the refreshments provided by Janet Bealer Rodie, Jane Towns, and twelve other volunteers.

Carolyn Bailey reported that the next Salon@Six would be Sunday, April 15th, at the home of Alex Helsabeck. About 40 Associates and their guests were expected.

Bob McNair reported that Helpmates had volunteered 241 hours in March; Board Members, 212. Karen Robertson reported that we have 310 members.

Savannah Stanbery announced the Day of Giving that would occur April 5th, and she talked about the plans for Next Now.

Joe Mills, Award-winning Poet and Professor, will speak at the May Meeting of The Associates.

As a general rule, our speakers at the Board meetings have been administrators who have told us about their programs. Our final meeting this academic year brings us an entirely different experience. Joe Mills is the 2017 winner of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors Award for Teaching Excellence. He is also the 2017 winner of the Rose Post Creative Nonfiction Competition sponsored by the North Carolina Writers. He won the Roanoke-Chowan Award for Poetry for his collection, "This Miraculous Turning," in 2015.

Associates have worked hard to help the school for the last year. Hearing Joe Mills speak and read some of his poetry is a fitting reward at our last meeting.

Be sure to let Susan Melville know that you will be at the meeting on May 1st so that there will be enough chairs. <sumelville@yahoo.com>

**Proposed slate of Officers
The Associates Board**

2018-2020

President	Linda Bettis
Vice President	Shelley Holden
Secretary	Susan Melville
Treasurer	Calvin Jones
Behind the Scenes	Anne Sessions, Nola Miller
Film Liaison	Howard Skillington
Helpmates	Dave Valentino, Judy Watson
Hospitality	Janet Rodie, Sarah Rubio, Inez Davis
Host Families	Anna Goodman, Amy Hubbard

Membership Relations
Members@Large

Karen Robertson, Amy Orser
Diane Nations, gift baskets
Mary Allen Martin, tour guides
Nancy Gwyn

Newsletter
Salon@Six

Howard Skillington
Carolyn Bailey, Sandy Romanac Broadway,
Becky Brown

Social Media

TBA

Non-board position

Nutcracker Feed

Bob McNair

Calendar

Saturday, April 28

NextNow. “Fantastic Finale” will feature the seniors in the School of Music. 7:30, Stevens Center. The concert will be followed by further celebration at Benton Convention Center.

Tuesday, May 1

Associates Board Meeting. Fourth Floor Conference Room, Library. Professor and Poet Joe Mills, speaker.

Monday, May 21

Wine(d) Up Party. 5:30-7:00.
New Digital Media Building

General Information—Important Links

The Associates Website: <http://www.uncsa.edu/Associates> At our website, you will find the Board members listed, the calendar of Associates events and Associates-sponsored events, and other general information. You will also find the form to renew your membership

Email Address: uncsaassociates@gmail.com

The Performance Calendar Website:
<http://www.uncsa.edu/performances/>

Our Facebook page:
<http://www.facebook.com/uncsaassociates>

Newsletter: uncsaassociates-news@gmail.com