It’s Time!

by Mary Martha Lappe

Excellence in the arts has established Houston as an international artistic center. Houston’s High School for the Performing and Visual Arts has supported that reputation for almost four decades. It’s time that we once more turn the spotlight on HSPVA’s critical facility needs by committing the resources necessary to ensure its future excellence.

Since its inception in an old converted synagogue in 1971, HSPVA has been a shining star in the crown of the Houston Independent School District. Its track record of achievements in the arts and academics made it a model for subsequent magnet and charter schools nation-wide. After moving to another site in 1982, HSPVA has persevered in spite of a facility that is now woefully out-dated. Classrooms are severely over-crowded. Performance venues for all the arts are completely inadequate. Programs in creative writing, musical theatre, along with technology advances in the arts, have been virtually ignored due to the lack of space, staffing, and equipment.

With new arts schools being built in recent years in Dallas, Detroit, Denver, and Los Angles, Houston’s proponents of excellence in public education and the arts are left wondering when those whose mandate it is to provide school facilities will finally address this issue. Without a facility that is commensurate to the needs of its students and its programs, the school’s future is in jeopardy. It’s time to recognize that excellence in education is not synonymous to elitism. Just as low performing schools deserve attention by those in charge, recognizing Houston’s highly respected art school’s well-documented need for a new facility also deserves support! It’s time!
The Piano Project

When HSPVA officials discovered late in October 2009 that the company that had generously provided pianos for the Music Department would no longer be able to do so and that, in fact, most would be reclaimed at the end of December, a state of emergency arose. After all, how can a department that relies on pianos in all vocal and instrumental rehearsal and practice rooms function without them? Music Department Chair Pat Bonner confesses that when she got the news, “I went into total shock. We have to deal on a daily basis with the lack of practice and performance space for our students, but much of our program would be completely handicapped without pianos.”

Not to worry. When word of the crisis got out, a variety of forces converged to save the day. After the Music Department instructors determined that they would need 12 pianos, former HSPVA graduates Agelia Perez Marquez (Dance) and Nancy Rose (Visual Art) alerted other alumni who generously contributed to the cause, while HSPVA Friends contacted private donors who also stepped up to the plate. The Music Department used funds that the HSPVA school store, headed by Terri Brown, donates to every art and academic department annually. Finally, after a story on the piano crisis was aired on the local ABC affiliate KTRK, a number of private citizens offered to donate pianos from their homes.

Therefore, a couple of weeks after the spring semester began, there was once again a full complement of pianos for use by those instrumental and vocal students that so depend on them. Ms. Bonner expressed the department’s gratitude. She says “We were overwhelmed by the generosity of the community, the HSPVA Friends, the alumni, and the school store. They truly saved the day for us.”

Piano Project Contributors (Names included are those received by HSPVA Friends by March 1 printing deadline)

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Cover Artist

Landscape, backdrop, setting, and place define life in ways beyond people, things, even ideas do. Environments enjoy a tangled mess of intricate influence over our day-to-day, season-to-season, generation-to-generation. Geography, architecture, atmosphere, and history all change a place from person-to-person. I am one person, both the culmination of many places and the definer of future spaces.
Warning Bells

Dark turbulent waters,
deep misty air,
sea spray upon my face,
the chill in the air.

Can you hear it,
the music in the wind?
So empty, so clear,
The tune whispers something...

A Warning!

Evil’s theme song,
the mournful melody.
Tragedy, harmony, little faeries dancing.
The sea knows,
It hisses warnings,
Evil unrestrained
its great might at dusk.

Dark turbulent waters,
deep misty air,
sea spray upon my face,
the chill in my heart.

-Marisa Doherty, 9th grade, Visual Arts

HSPVA Receives the Ann Holmes Dance Library

The HSPVA Dance Department has received the extensive dance library of Ann Holmes, the long time Fine Arts Critic/Editor of the Houston Chronicle and nurturer of the Houston cultural scene. Ms Holmes died last year. DJ Hobdy, trustee of the estate of Ms Holmes, notified HSPVA Friends of the donation last fall.

Ann Holmes was born April 25, 1922 to Fred Holmes, a newsman with Scripps Howard newspapers, and Joy C. Holmes, a self-taught artist. She attended schools in El Paso and Birmingham, Alabama, and went to Whitworth College in Brookhaven, Miss. on an acting scholarship. She joined the staff of the Houston Chronicle in 1942, at the age of twenty, as copy messenger where she served as military editor, social services writer and court reporter before joining the arts staff. She became arts editor and chief critic in 1948. After retiring, she authored several books and worked part time as critic at large until 1999.

Ms. Holmes covered the Alley Theatre, the Houston Ballet and the Houston Grand Opera from their inception to their rise to national prominence. She was considered a fair and honest critic, but she was an avid fan as well.

During her career Ann Holmes covered the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and the openings of New York’s Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

She had a strong interest in architecture and watched with pride the construction of Houston’s major arts facilities such as Jones Hall, The Alley Theatre and the Wortham Theatre Center. Her columns were crucial in first declaring the need for those venues, then influencing plans for their design and function.

LuAnne Carter, the coordinator of the HSPVA Dance Department, says the school is proud and gratified to receive the dance collection of the late, great arts critic, and that students are already benefiting from their use of the books.
Dancer Named a Finalist in Prestigious National Competition

HSPVA Dance Department senior Robbie Moore has been named a finalist in the 2009 YoungArts Competition. YoungArts is considered a core program of the National Foundation for the Advancement in the Arts, which has as its mission nurturing and supporting young artists as they pursue their dreams. Being chosen after a year-long nationwide competition means that Robbie is one of only 8 dancers and only 150 finalists in all art areas to be named finalists in a competition that begins with the registration of 6,000 – 7,000 students each year. Of this year’s finalists, 20 will be named Presidential Scholars in the Arts and will be honored at a reception in Washington, D.C.

Robbie’s success in the prestigious NFAA/YoungArts competition is not surprising when one considers the intensity of his involvement in dance. A scholarship recipient with the Children’s Foundation for the Arts since 2004 and a Texas Commission on the Arts Young Masters’ Award recipient since 2008, he has been a member of HSPVA’s Concert Dancers since his sophomore year at the school. His summer studies include the Juilliard Summer Intensive and the EDGE Performing Arts Center.

As a result of his involvement in the YoungArts competition, Robbie has been invited to be one of the featured performers at the National Foundation for the Advancement in the Arts/YoungArts Baryshnikov Center Performance in New York the week of April 19.

LuAnne Carter, Chair of the HSPVA Dance Department, notes that “Robbie is a passionate dancer with amazing self-discipline, drive, and commitment to his art form. He has been featured by several guest and faculty choreographers during his tenure at HSPVA. We are so very proud of Robbie and his accomplishments.”
Today Monica Chau is a nationally acclaimed photographer. She was a 1977 dance graduate and began studying photography in an HSPVA dance photography class. From HSPVA she furthered her education at the University of Houston and holds an M.F.A. in photography from California Institute of the Arts. She was a Helena Rubinstein Fellow in the Whitney Museum of American Art’s Independent Study Program and a Fellow in the American Photography Institute’s National Graduate Seminar. She has taught at many distinguished institutions such as the University of California Irvine, American Film Institute, University of Houston, and New York University / Tisch School of the Arts. Currently, she is a Web Designer for the University of Southern Maine, a Principal at digjam studio and a faculty member at the International Center for Photography, New York. She lives with her husband on the coast of Maine and has had several exhibitions at the Portland Museum of Art. “The total art experience at HSPVA was instrumental in nurturing the artist voice within me.”

Monica Chau
World Class Photographer

“The total art experience at HSPVA was instrumental in nurturing the artist voice within me.”
Alumni in the News

Bianna Golodriga, HSPVA Theatre graduate from 1996 and the daughter of Russian immigrants, is now an acclaimed business and economic news anchor with ABC often appearing on Good Morning America. From HSPVA, Bianna studied at the University of Texas at Austin where she majored in Russian/East European and Eurasian Studies with a minor in economics. After working as a financial advisor for a short time and missing the experience of performing in front of an audience, she began doing financial news for CNBC television in 2001 as a producer from the New York Stock Exchange. After 9/11 she interviewed many top business leaders, traveled extensively covering international financial meetings, and in 2004 she was named one of the top journalists under the age of 30.

Chris Lane, HSPVA Theatre graduate from 2000, is now Acquisition Manager for MGM Technical Services. After a one-year search, he recently found an original copy of the American classic film, West Side Story. The film had been lost for almost 40 years. He restored the original 4-track and also a 6-track of its music and effects tape so that it could be dubbed into French and German. MGM will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the great film in 2011.

Skyler Nowinski, HSPVA 2005 Theatre graduate, recently earned his BFA from the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theatre Actor Training Program. He was recently featured in a professional production of “Mojo” presented by Walking Shadow Theatre of Minneapolis and shortly thereafter in the play “Music Lovers” produced by Workhaus Collective. He recently completed a tour of the Midwest starring in “Theory of Mind,” by Ken LaZebnik (Prairie Home Companion) for Mixed Blood Theatre. He continues to write and record music as well as producing.
On February 4, three hundred fifty Houstonians celebrated Arts Day in Houston at the 4th Annual Encore for Excellence Luncheon at River Oaks Country Club. This event is sponsored by HSPVA Friends, and it benefits programs and student needs at Houston’s widely respected High School for the Performing And Visual Arts. The luncheon honored prominent community leaders, Robert and Janice McNair, for their long-time contributions to the arts and education. Joanie Haley, Executive Director of the Robert and Janice McNair Foundation, accepted an award for the foundation and introduced representatives from Houston arts organizations. Also honored was the 2010 Distinguished Alumna, Camille Zamora, the internationally renowned soprano known for both her artistry and her humanitarian work. Ms. Zamora shared the stage with the HSPVA Chorale in a performance of a medley of George Gershwin’s, Porgy and Bess.

Speaking for Central Houston and the Houston corporate community was El Paso Corporation’s CEO and President, Doug Foshee, who reminded the audience that it is the time to build a much-needed new facility for Houston’s remarkable arts school. He suggested that the Downtown Houston arts corridor would be a logical site for the project, and encouraged those responsible for the facility needs of the school to take action. HSPVA’s principal, Dr. R. Scott Allen, was at the podium to express his appreciation to HSPVA Friends for the organization’s impressive thirty-year track record of support of HSPVA and to introduce representatives from the Houston Independent School District.

The program for the luncheon included performances by the HSPVA Jazz Quintet, the HSPVA String Quartet, and the HSPVA Chorale, along with dance students who circulated through the crowd selling raffle tickets for donated prizes. According to HSPVA Friends Executive Director, Mary Martha Lappe, the successful event raised over $100,000 in support for student needs at HSPVA and had over 20 Houston arts groups and organizations in attendance.
11. Bob Yekovich, Becky and Ralph O’Connor, and Elizabeth Gillis  
12. LuAnne Carter, Bob and Cheryl Boblitt, and Janie Carothers  
13. Lois Alba and Camille Zamora  
14. Richard Everett with Barbara and Jonathan Day  
15. Norman and Sally Reynolds with Betty Sheppard  
16. HSPVA Principal, Dr. Scott Allen, with Emcee Linda Lorelle  
17. David Calkins, Steve McNamara, and David Elder  
18. HISD Trustees Harvin Moore, Paula Harris, Greg Meyers, and Manuel Rodriguez  
19. Cindy Garbs, Neal Wiley, and Joanie Haley
In March, former HSPVA Principal Norma Lowder, sponsored an evening seminar on jazz for residents of University Place Retirement Community. Mrs. Lowder was principal at HSPVA from 1977 until 1988. She invited three of Houston’s best jazz experts for a seminar/performance designed to provide an understanding of jazz history and improvisation. The jazz trio included Dr. Bob Morgan, former Director of Jazz at HSPVA; Warren Sneed, Current Director of Jazz and an HSPVA alumnus; and Dr. Joshua Breier, Neuropsychologist and Professor at University of Texas Health Science Center. Dr. Breier is a freelance jazz guitarist and former HSPVA music faculty member. About a hundred residents of University Place Retirement Community attended the seminar.
HSPVA Friends Fund for the Future
2009-2010

HSPVA FRIENDS supports a wide array of needs at HSPVA. Over the past ten years, HSPVA FRIENDS and the HSPVA Office of Development have generated almost 6 million dollars to assist the school with a variety of projects including:

- Electronic marquee for front of school
- Theatre sound and lighting equipment
- Computers, art equipment, and vision testers for clinic
- Support for school radio station equipment
- Alumni Art Exhibits and alumni relations
- Support for tours to Toronto, Boston, New York, and China
- Art publications, newsletters, and event mail-outs
- Summer arts workshops for underclassmen
- Annual college scholarships
- Master classes by professional artists
- Support for musical theatre productions
- The Office of Development to raise and coordinate private support
- Support for school and faculty participation in national programs
- Faculty seminar on art facility design and construction

Our sincere thanks to the following individuals, corporations, and foundations that have provided support for the unique needs of Houston’s internationally renowned High School For The Performing And Visual Arts from August 1, 2009 to our publication deadline, March 1, 2010.

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For summer arts workshops and college scholarships
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Trust for Dance
In honor of Mary Martha Lappe
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In memory of Mozart Hammond

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Over the past ten years, the HSPVA Friends Fund for the Future has made possible by Mr. Rudy Jenkins, Ms. Mitzi Ruff, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bleyzer, Mr. & Mrs. Lev Bleyzer, Arlene Sachs Goodson Honda North Roland G. Harper, Jr. Jason J. Moran, Class of 1993, Jazz Laurie and Jeffrey Pollicoff Juyne Sauer Bob Singleton For the Bob Singleton Theatre Education Scholarship Lugene and Nick Vincent Charles Yanofsky In memory of Manny Murgola The Samuels Foundation Steve Zannoni

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Class of 1981, Media Arts
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In honor of Allen Gilbert, Class of 1977
William H. Gilbert

Continued on page 14
In 1979 a Houston philanthropic organization called Musicfest began holding a yearly gala to raise scholarship money for outstanding students in each of HSPVA’s art areas. That started a long lasting and vigorous relationship benefiting the gifted seniors of Houston’s respected arts school. To date, over one million dollars in scholarships have been awarded to deserving students.

In 1997, Musicfest morphed into what is now today HSPVA Friends, a nonprofit organization whose mission has expanded well beyond the initial once-yearly support of scholarships for graduating seniors. In recent years HSPVA Friends has raised almost $6 million to support a wide variety of programs and projects that serve all HSPVA students from the Greater Houston area. However, a broad range and growing list of scholarships and memorial funds still remain at the core of its support. Donations toward specific endowed scholarships, memorial funds, and art disciplines are most welcome and may be sent to HSPVA Friends.

Among the scholarships given this year are:

Jack Bowen Visual Arts Scholarships (two at $2000 each)
Dawley College Scholarship ($4000)
Dawley Summer Arts Scholarships in Music, Dance, Theatre, and Visual Arts (five at $1000 each)
DiSuvero Sculpture Scholarship ($1000)
Danny Frank Music Fund (on-going support of guest artists and master classes)
Andrea Guenther Piano Studies Scholarship ($2000)
Mozart Hammond Scholarships in Piano and Voice ($1000)
Mary Martha Lappe Dance Scholarship ($1000)
Amanda May Musical Theatre Scholarship ($1000)
Jason Moran Jazz Scholarships ($1000 and $500)
Bob Ostrum Jazz Scholarship ($1000)
Sermooujoy Theatre Scholarships (two at $2000 - renewable for four years)
Bob Singleton Theatre Education Scholarship ($1000 for graduate students)
Rachel Speight Vocal Music Scholarship ($2000)
**HSPVA Friends** is a private, non-profit organization comprised of prominent Houstonians whose aim is to encourage, inspire, support, and celebrate excellence in the arts and in education. The organization has supported a myriad of projects which address the needs of young artists, not only for the 650 students at Houston’s famous HSPVA, but also for elementary school, middle school and high school students from up to ten counties in the Gulf Coast Area. In recent years, HSPVA FRIENDS has raised almost six million dollars in private funds for art supplies and equipment, musical instruments, college art scholarships, master classes and lectures by professional guest artists, art exhibits, ballet shoes, summer arts workshops, private music lessons, and art publications.

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Daniel Witschey, Jr.  
Carol Young  
Ed Young  
Frank Young  
Dr. Lois Zamora  
Stephen Zamora
“Church” by Catarina Williams, 12th grade, Visual Arts

“Untitled 10” by Ariel Weaver, 12th grade, Visual Arts