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Setting arts in motion UNCW begins cultural outreach to area schools

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What are fifth-graders doing on a university campus?

UNCW is targeting a younger-than-usual audience this year, paving the way for area schoolchildren to see plays and hear classical music. And student teachers have started adding cultural arts education to their lesson plans.

The program organizers hope to send workshops – maybe performances – to area school classrooms, too, and are looking for sponsors to support the project.

A Valentine's Day production of *A Year with Frog and Toad* included two matinees for schoolchildren. The production of the Tony-nominated musical was produced through a collaboration between the theater and music departments and cost kids and teachers \$3 per ticket.

Next semester, the theater program wants to offer workshops to area schools. Workshop topics and activities include mask-making, movement, theater games and beginning to learn to build a character. For this summer, the department has a Children's Theater Camp in the works.

"Outreach is our mission," says Cathy Barlow, dean of the Watson School of Education, which has a formal partnership with the public schools. As tight budgets tend to squeeze arts programs out of schools,



UNCW PHOTO | JAMIE MONCRIEF

The Carolina Piano Trio, pianist Barbara McKenzie, cellist Elizabeth Anderson and Jacqui Carrasco, perform in the last concert of the UNCW ARTSfest at Kenan Auditorium in July 2005.

she said, higher education can help meet the need.

Chamber music is the next outreach step. Norman L. Bemelmans, UNCW's cultural arts director, and Barbara McKenzie, director of the Chamber Music Society of Wilmington, presented some ideas for a classical music outreach project to Barlow.

The first result was a music appreciation workshop for student teachers to provide training they could take back to their K-5 students. For the

workshop, the Carolina Piano Trio gave a lecture-recital, performing Mozart's playful Trio in C Major.

The musicians showed teaching interns how to listen actively, addressed musical form, pitch, rhythm, dynamics and even touched on concert etiquette.

The teachers in training, a group of 130 working in 11 regional counties, then developed lesson plans using what they had learned.

For the next activity, children will go to a concert where they can apply

their new listening skills.

On March 2, fifth-graders went with their teaching interns to Kenan Auditorium for *ENDANGERED: The Voice of the Humpback Whale*. The performance includes a piece by classical American composer George Crumb that mimics the song of the great sea mammals. The UNCW Center for Marine Science created a video on turtles for the event, too, to be shown along with the work of another American composer, Steve Heitzeg.

Time Warner Cable of Southeastern North Carolina sponsored the March concert at Kenan. But more support is needed.

Bemelmans hopes to secure sponsorships that will enable UNCW to expand and enhance its outreach efforts.

He and other program organizers want to send more performers and workshops out to the schools themselves. And they want to add to the variety, such as including dramatic presentations addressing history and literature – Shakespeare, for instance.

Barlow looks forward to offering cultural education on a more permanent basis to area schools, "something they can count on" as part of their annual programs.

Teachers can ask for a workshop to come to their school by contacting Theater Program Director Paul Castagno at 962-3446.