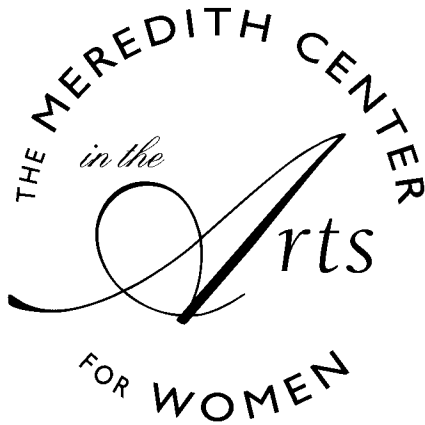


COMMITTED TO THE ARTS

Dance, Art, Music and Theatre come together to offer cohesive support to arts education.



Founded in November of 1996, the Meredith Center for Women in the Arts unites faculty and students, campus and community for learning, teaching, research, creation and performance of the arts. Long recognized for its excellence in the performing and visual arts, Meredith has renewed its commitment to significant investment in arts support and funding with the creation of the Center. Serving as a steering committee for the Center and its projects are Rebecca Bailey, head of the Department of Art; Alyson Colwell-Waber, director of dance; Jean Jackson, vice president for student development; David Lynch, head of the Department of Music, Speech and Theatre; and Cathy Rodgers, '76, director of theatre.

With the participation and the support of faculty and students across the traditional boundaries of discipline, the Center brings together art, dance, music and theatre for planning, production, performance, proposal writing and pro-

motion. According to Jean Jackson, the Center provides a "structure which enables faculty across the arts to work together."

Making Meredith a center for the arts had been a goal for some faculty and students for more than ten years. During the fall semester of 1996, Initiative 2000 endorsed a STAMATS recommendation that Meredith develop centers for excellence in a number of areas of study. Jackson was named to oversee the creation of the centers. Meredith's strong reputation in the arts made them a logical beginning for work that will evolve over the next several years.

... Meredith has renewed its commitment to significant investment in arts support and funding with the creation of the Center.

Since its inception, the Center has provided the Meredith community with a cross-disciplinary schedule of arts events and is accumulating the accoutrements of a real organization: stationery, buttons, a phone number, and banners on every building on campus that features some arts education or display.

But the Center is more than just an organizing committee — it is

about women having access to the arts. As Jackson says, "The arts are imbedded deeply in our culture — a means of preserving and celebrating our civilization."

The Center is committed to exposing women to art. "At a time when the arts are under such scrutiny," says Jackson, "it is vital to ensure access to all the arts."

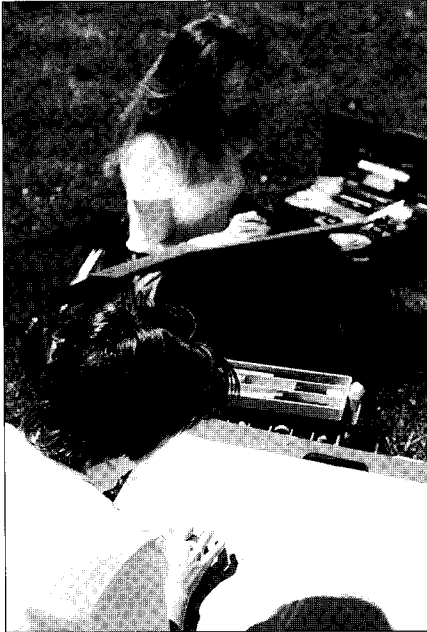
... the next five years will be an important time of growth as Meredith continues to develop its vision for the future of the arts.

The commitment Meredith College has made to the arts is evident not only in the support of the Center, but also in the physical changes being made on campus. The Margaret Weatherspoon Parker addition to Weatherspoon Physical Education and Dance Building was completed in

1995. Renovations to provide choral rehearsal space and music education classrooms are nearly complete in Jones Hall. All of the work has involved the faculty



In April, the Meredith Center for Women in the Arts sponsored a kick-off celebration showcasing student talent in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.



Students exhibited their drawing and painting talents during the Center's kick-off celebration.

and other experts in arts spaces; acoustical engineers have fine-tuned the choral space, and Weatherspoon features a spacious dance studio with a sprung floor and natural lighting.

What's next for the Meredith Center for Women in the Arts? Jackson says the next five years will be an important time of growth as Meredith continues to develop its vision for the future of the arts.

Rodgers is excited to see the commitment Meredith has made. The College is one of few schools in the state to offer teaching licensure in all areas of the arts, and according to Rodgers, opening the Center confirms the idea that "teaching the arts has a significant effect on all learning."

Colwell-Waber agrees. "For an educational institution such as Meredith College to embrace the importance of artistic exploration and creation and to recognize the unique value of arts education shows leadership and vision," she says. ☺

Kimberley Debus, '98, 23⁺ student, contributed to this story.

The Meredith Center for Women in the Arts:

ARTISTICALLY SPEAKING

A MONUMENTAL MEREDITH ANGEL

Robert Mihaly, artist-in-residence this fall, is creating an angel—a very large angel. Commissioned by a Raleigh family and sculpted from twelve tons of marble, the graceful angel has a temporary home beside the Gaddy-Hamrick Art Center as



Mihaly completes his creation. The sculptor began the piece during his tenure at the National Cathedral in Washington DC, and then transported his work-in-progress to Raleigh when the art faculty invited him to lecture on sculpting. The angel statue affirms for the students that "one can actually make money in art," says Mihaly.

GIRLS SING IN HARMONY

For the past decade, the Meredith Girls' Chorus and Chorale have made a difference in the lives of girls ages 8 to 16. Director of music education Fran Page says, "the last fifteen years has seen a real push towards girls' choirs."



The training is rigorous, and the demanding performance schedules have included appearances at Meredith and at the White House, as well as with the National Opera Company. "But," says Page, "these girls come out with an appreciation of music that will last the rest of their lives."

A STAR ON BROADWAY

Meredith alumnae like to brag about Beth Leavel, '77. After all, Leavel has made it big on Broadway, performing in hits such as *Crazy for You* and *Showboat*. Recently, the star returned to the Meredith campus as guest choreographer for Meredith Performs production of *Irene*.

Former classmate and Meredith theatre professor Catherine Rodgers, '76, has kept in touch with Leavel over the years. "It's been seventeen years since we last worked together," says



Rodgers, "and I'm excited that she'll be here." In addition to her work with *Irene*, Leavel will teach several musical theatre workshops.

THE LANGUAGE OF DANCE

The conference was called Talking Bodies. And participant Sherry Shapiro, Meredith dance professor, recently spent four months in Beit Beryl College near Tel Aviv, Israel, talking



about dance as a way to study culture and the way in which we perceive ourselves. A pioneer in the field of choreography as critical pedagogy, Shapiro says

she brought back from the experience a fresh perspective on dance as a universal language. "We're being challenged to reflect on our own cultural values," she adds.