



# LET THE MAGIC BEGIN. CENTERPIECES

The Carrollwood Cultural Center

Volume 1 Number 3

Serving all of Hillsborough County

*Center's Concert Band and Adult Chorus*

## Many Voices, One Room



**T**he room is full of random sound and movement. On the right, the chorus twitters and shifts restlessly, moving about and settling down again into their voice groups like giant birds. To the left, band members toot their shiny proboscis-like instruments, poised and ready to go. People wander in and out. A man with an eye patch lifts his tuba. A man wearing a Harley shirt sits down in the bass section.

Standing in front, Mary Ann Scialdo, leader of the chorus, waves her arms. Helen Michaelson, band leader, serenely measures out the tempo. The chorus watches Mary Ann. The band watches Helen. Mary Ann and Helen watch their performers and each other.

The music begins. A singer rises and starts to glide between the chorus and band — she is laughing with joy.

Welcome to a joint rehearsal of the Carrollwood Culture Center's Concert Band and Adult Chorus. The two groups, which started in September and have learned to perform separately, are learning to perform together. The goal? From many voices, human and instrumental, will emerge one voice.

### Music Puts You in the Moment

"This is a mixed group of amateur musicians who love to get together," says Mary Ann, the Center's Artistic Director. "For one hour, the group enjoys life completely. They forget everything else; they are in the moment." The band has 25 members; about 40 people are in the chorus.

Choruses and bands are becoming more popular today as a community activity and as a source of low-cost entertainment. "They are a way for people to make themselves happy," notes Mary Ann. It is often hard to make the groups coalesce, especially in public performances, but the Center's groups are doing exceptionally well. "The odds were 99 to 1 against our pulling this off," says Mary Ann. She and Helen work together "like clockwork" to make the

groups cohesive. "We give them no less than we would give professional performers, and they have responded."

The group performance makes for a special experience, Mary Ann observes. "The unity between the two groups extends the musical communication. It's a richer tapestry. It's a new experience for a lot of people."

### Banding Together

Ages in the Concert Band range from the youngest member at 14 to the oldest at 92. "To have such an age range is amazing," comments Helen, the Center's Educational Outreach Director. "The level of musicianship was higher than I expected, especially for such a wonderful, diverse group."

*Article continues on back page.*

*From left to right: Bob McDonald, Carol Shepard, Bernard Mackey and Judy Reese*



## Children's Theatre Begins

On a beautiful September afternoon, very nervous children and parents entered the lobby of the Carrollwood Cultural Center, signed their names on a sheet and took a number. They waited. Eventually, a volunteer took each child, in succession and alone, into the auditorium.

Auditions for the new Children's Theatre were about to begin. Every parent was consumed with anxiety: what was happening behind those doors?

Each child saw a bare stage with two rows of chairs in front. In the chairs sat Mary Ann Scialdo, Artistic Director; Vicki Cuccia, Business Director; Paul Berg, Executive Director; and five other judges. Mary Ann, co-Director of the new theatre, warmly greeted each aspiring young actor.

The audition was the start of each child's commitment. "The intention is that this theatre company will become a very professional class which will hold everyone for life," said Mary Ann.

As the afternoon progressed, Mary Ann explained the basics of what the children will learn. They must understand the significance of detail. It matters how they enter a room and how they hold their body. It matters how they deliver their speeches and how courteously they speak to others. Mary Ann teaches deportment and the art of conversation, which has been almost lost today; both are intimately connected with the art of acting.

"Quality, professionalism, dedication, beauty, and attention to detail are all of the utmost importance," she noted. "I want to be here and feel like I'm at the Merkin Theatre in New York."

Mary Ann made her debut at the Merkin Theatre, presenting the New York premiere of *Giannini's Variations on a Cantus Firmus*. She hopes that this program will be as fruitful for these children as the Merkin was for her.

As she put the children through their paces, Mary Ann gave each one her undivided attention. Each was asked to deliver a song and a short speech. Mary Ann then



*Mary Ann exercising with class.*

asked for a different voice range or changed the scenario. When she comes to know each child's strengths and weaknesses, she will be able to help them grow as performers.

The children were ecstatic. Rachel, 13, looked up with a big smile after her director showed her how to change her position on stage. Royal, 7, known as "Lady Bug," thrilled the judges with her rendition of "I Want to Go to Heaven." Sade, 12, whispered to her mother, "Mommy, WOW! Now I really believe I can be an actress. Ms. Mary Ann is so good. Oh my goodness!"

There is more to acting than simply knowing where "stage left" is. Acting develops children's self-confidence, leadership, communication and presentation skills. It expands their creativity and energy. For younger or shy children, acting gives them the beautiful and unique opportunity to open up.

Officially formed in October, the theatre company has accepted 18 children aged 8 to 15. The troupe meets at the Center on Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to noon. They are currently working on body language, singing and scenes from *Peter Pan*. No performance dates have been set.

*Selma Santos*



If you are interested in having your child participate, please contact Mary Ann or co-Director Vicki at (813) 269-1310.

# CONVERSATIONS

WITH MARY ANN SCIALDO  
Artistic Director



## Babes in Musicland

Making Music with little ones, the Center's two music classes for the very young, have been a resounding success. One class is for ages 12-23 months, the other for ages 2-4. Led by Christina Inke, the children sing, rhyme, dance, move rhythmically and explore various musical instruments. The toddlers learn some music basics. The classes help develop rhythm and coordination, as well as children's imagination, language and social skills.



*Mary Ann Scialdo, the Center's Artistic Director, is an internationally recognized Steinway Artist who has performed concerts all over the world. She holds degrees from The Juilliard School, Seton Hill University, The Manhattan School of Music, Fordham University, and the Pius XII Graduate School of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy. Now living in Northdale, Mary Ann is the dynamo behind the Center's eclectic mix of music, theatre, art and dance.*

### How did you – a world class music artist – come to be Artistic Director here?

Well, I moved from New York because I wanted to buy a house. I bought a house in Northdale and invited Vicki [Ed.: Vicki Cuccia, the Center's Business Director] to come down. I was asked to be on the Board. At some point, they talked to me about being Artistic Director. But we had to hire a Director first, and it would be up to him or her. We were so lucky to find Paul [Berg]. We knew he was perfect — young, dynamic, full of ideas and energy. We hired Paul. Then Paul decided to hire me.

### So it was a series of happy coincidences . . . it was *kismet*.

Yes, it was *kismet*. Jackie Ripley of the *St. Petersburg Times* said that I "operate without a net." I've always trusted that things will work out for the best. I was born in an elevator and adopted when I was 6 months old. My mother was a pianist who gave me the best music and arts education in the world. Things have always worked out before — why not now?

### As Artistic Director, what is your role?

My prime responsibility is to create programming for the Center. But we're a team here; I work with my colleagues. We all have good ideas.

### What's your biggest challenge so far?

We're not there with finances yet. Perhaps in the future we will be able to afford more.

We also have some limits on what our lighting and sound systems can do, so we're not yet ready to support complete professional-level performances. We can stage parts: we can have opera selections or scenes from a musical. But we are working on this.

### How do you find performers?

I work with colleagues and friends, who may know someone else. It really has been *kismet*. For example, we're blessed with Jim Burge, who has created a jazz series, *Jazz with Jim*, on the weekends. Jim has been extremely generous with us as a performer and conductor of the University of Tampa Jazz Band and Fanfare Concert Winds.

We're now at the point where people are calling me, because the Center is becoming a place where people want to perform. Recently, we discovered a group of bagpipe players. We'll have them around St. Patrick's Day, with Scottish dancers. There are all kinds of wonderful performers in this area who want to be here.

*Conversations continue on next page.*

**Conversations** *continued from page 3*

### How does the Kawai Shigeru piano fit into your planning?

We have a world class piano. The piano lets us support world class performers. Carrollwood should be very proud of the piano.

I think of this place as a child. You want your child to have the best. The piano was a gift. You have to still believe in Santa Claus. Who would have thought that we'd wind up with a handmade \$80,000 piano? It's another example of how we've been blessed here.

The piano is a selling point for the Center. This isn't my piano; any performer who treats the piano with respect can play it. It attracts artists who want to play and perform with this piano.

Here's another *kismet* story. When Kawai sent Mr. Takanori "Terry" Otake to regulate the piano, we knew he didn't speak much English, and I needed to make certain that Steve Geoghan, who is the piano technician, understood the qualities of this piano. So I asked my friend Al Pierce, who speaks Japanese, to come and translate. All that morning, Al spoke Japanese to Mr. Otake and translated for Steve. It was slow, but it worked. But Al couldn't stay in the afternoon. He had to leave. Then, at lunchtime, Steve happened to speak some Italian (his mother is Italian). And Mr. Otake responded in Italian! They both speak Italian! And so do I. So all afternoon, we spoke Italian to each other and had a great time.

### How do you see the Center's relationship to the community?

I think of the Center as a daisy. The public is a petal. The members are a petal. The performers are a petal. I'm a petal. You're a petal. All the members are petals. The Center itself is the center of the daisy.

So many people are helping out, donating, supporting, becoming part of the daisy. They are all petals. We are all part of it.

### You're directing the children's theatre and chorus as well as music programs. How can you know so much about all the arts?

It's being ferreted out of me. If I don't use 1/8 of what I was taught, I don't deserve to be here. I was trained in all of it, and I was trained by the best. If you understand music, you understand the basics of theater and all the arts.

All the arts have the same foundation — human expression. The arts transfix the ordinary into the sublime. I've been blessed to live a life where I'm exposed to so much of this.

It's a matter of perspective, too. Have you seen the sandhill cranes we have around the Center? Some days I see their poop, and some days I just see the sublime beauty of their spread wings.

### What do you like most about your role here?

Everything. I love every moment. Right now, what I like most is talking with you. When I was a child, I loved to fingerpaint. I wouldn't do patterns — I would go all the way down the wall and then I would go all over the wall in big circles. I always wanted to cover it all. I feel like a kid in a candy store here.



## Melitta Me

A coffee bar hosted by Melitta Coffee is now open at the Center. The lobby area has been furnished with café style chairs and tables. Drop by and enjoy a cup of coffee before a show or class. Donations are accepted.

## Books! Glorious Books!

*"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read."*

Groucho Marx

Thanks to the generosity of local merchant Cynthia Floyd, owner of The BookSwap, in November the Carrollwood Cultural Center was given hundreds of books on topics related to art, drama, theater, literature, dance, cooking and culture in general. "We are pleased to share our books with the Center," says Cynthia.

The store recently moved to a new location at The Village Center, 13144 North Dale Mabry, after 20 years at the same intersection on a different corner. Now just a few doors from Publix, the store is open daily to trade and sell new and used books, including paperbacks, children's literature and required school reading.

"The contribution from The BookSwap immediately endowed a broad-based cultural reference library at the Center for the benefit of the entire community," says Paul Berg, Executive Director. "We are most grateful to receive this collection, valued at more than \$1,000."

To browse the Center's library, visit Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.



# The Center . . . *after hours*

## Can You Dig It?

The Center held the highly popular “A 60’s Experience” fundraiser on November 8. Music was by funk powerhouse Blue Dice; entertainment was provided by the numerous attendees, dressed in everything from miniskirts to maxi wigs.

*In honor of the occasion, Centerpieces here presents a brief and highly personal 60’s trivia quiz (the questions spill over into the 70’s a bit). Can you dig it?*

- 1.** When Jane Fonda and French director Roger Vadim were married, what was the movie for which she became famous?
- 2.** When Jane Fonda and political activist Tom Hayden were married, what was Jane’s nickname?



*Mindy Ambler with Franklin Shrikission*



*Laure and Mark Pericot*

- 9.** What is the name of the song with the line, “Freedom’s just another name for nothing left to lose.”?
- 10.** Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters’ psychedelic bus trip across the country was memorialized in which book?
- 11.** Stephan Gaskin founded a hippie, utopian, back-to-the-earth community in Tennessee. Unbelievably, it’s still around. What is its name?
- 12.** He wrote *Soul on Ice* in prison and ran for President as candidate of the Peace and Freedom Party. In the early 70’s, he designed men’s pants that resurrected the cod-piece. (They were laughed out of the market.) His name is:

**Answers:** 1) Barbarella. 2) Hanoi Jane. 3) “I have one word for you. Plastics. There’s a great future in plastics.” 4) 1961. 5) 1968. 6) The date was Nov. 22, 1963, in case you are too junior or having a Senior Moment. 7) Jayne Mansfield. 8) Nancy Sinatra. 9) Me and Bobby McGee. 10) Tom Wolfe’s *The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test*. 11) The Farm. 12) Eldridge Cleaver; the pants were called “cleavers.”

- 3.** What advice did Mr. McGuire give Benjamin Braddock in “The Graduate”?
- 4.** What year was the Berlin Wall built?
- 5.** Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were assassinated only two months apart in which year?
- 6.** Where were you when John F. Kennedy was shot? (If you were not yet born, skip this one.)
- 7.** Which famous blonde actress died in a car wreck in 1967?
- 8.** Who sang “These Boots Are Made for Walking”?



*The “Blue Dice” horn section*

# Divine Language of Dance

Shreya Narayanan is a 17-year-old Hillsborough High School senior who wants to go to NYU next year to study Broadcasting. But recently at the Carrollwood Cultural Center, she was the incarnation of Shiva – the Lord Nataraja, the Hindu God of Dance. From the moment she walks on stage, she commands our attention.



She wears a traditional Indian embroidered overskirt and pants. While her back is ramrod straight, her arms and legs extend in arcs, touching the invisible circle of the cosmos. Each movement of the fingers, palms, wrists, arms, legs, feet, neck and eyes is stylized. She looks directly at her audience during the entire dance. Her smile dazzles.

These poses look oddly familiar. We've seen them before, on Hindu temple carvings. Shreya is using a very old language of dance to tell us a story about Krishna this afternoon.

The star dancer in "Dances of India," Shreya is the daughter of Indian classical dance teacher Sheila Narayanan. Sheila's dance studio, which is named Shreyas, performed a series of classical Indian dances at the Center on November 2. The 14 dancers who performed ranged in age from 6 to 17.

Sheila says that the similarity in names between her daughter and her dance studio reflects their connection. *Shreya* means auspicious, prosperous. *Shreyas* is the Sanskrit word for excellence. Sheila started her dance troupe when Shreya was 10, and her daughter has turned out to be one of her most gifted pupils.

## Roots in religion

"Indian dance is more than 4,000 years old," says Sheila. "Dance is the Fifth Veda, which advocates dance performance as a way to make religious teachings more understandable to the average person."

Like religious paintings in Medieval Europe, dance in India served an important function in religious education. Dances were originally performed only in temples. The movements form a highly structured language of gestures, resembling sign language in that both a gesture and its associated movement convey meaning.

The stories come from ancient and modern sources: the Puranas, the Bible, songs, myths and popular culture. The dance is the means by which stories are told. While the audience may not know the meaning of every gesture, skilled dancers can convey the events and emotional essence of any story.

"Dancers are actors," says Sheila. "Everything contributes — the costumes, colors, rhythms, music and makeup. The whole idea is to tell a story."

## The dancer is the dance

Performed solo on a bare stage, each classical Indian dance is unique to a dancer. No two dancers will "tell" a story the same way, just as no two writers will write a story the same way.

Sheila choreographs the dances for her students. "I start with the music, which may be contemporary or traditional," says Sheila. "Each dance is different. It depends on the teacher and student. Every dance is choreographed for an individual student. I may know that one student can perform many more poses and make transitions more gracefully — I can incorporate that into the dance."

In addition, the teacher must challenge the student's abilities. "When I was 7, my mother asked me to dance a story of a woman with a baby," Shreya remembers. "It was hard for me because I couldn't relate to the mother's feelings; I was too young to understand why you should be upset." She now loves this dance, which was included in her November performance.

Dance styles vary in different areas of India, and this can also be a challenge. Dancers must learn the variations and then switch styles quickly. As an example, Shreya taps her bare foot on the floor. "Most dances slap the feet on the floor to make a rhythmic sound," she says. "But some dances require you to dance silently. It can be hard to go from one to the other."



Photo courtesy of *The Tampa Tribune*

## Dance as meditation

The poses in Indian dance are similar to yoga. As part of its religious function, classical dance was itself considered to be meditation. Dancers must focus completely on gestures and movement; at the same time, they must channel the energy of the story outward to their audience.

“When you finish a dance, you feel fantastic,” says Sheila. “There is an aura around you.” She notes that Indian dance is increasingly being recognized as a healing technique. “After a performance, you feel phenomenal. It is an indescribable warmth.”

## Teachers for life

Learning Indian dance takes a lifetime. Indian dancers typically stay with the same teacher for their entire lives.

Sheila’s teacher was Padmini, a legendary Indian actress and dancer who opened a studio in New Jersey. Sheila started dancing with her at age 5. By age 13, she was teaching other students.

Shreya has continued this tradition. She has been dancing under her mother’s tutelage since age 5. To prepare for teaching, at age 12 Shreya undertook an arduous dance performance called the *Arangetram*. The dancer must practice for three hours a day for one year, then perform a three-hour solo program with a live orchestra in front of an audience of peers. While it was a challenge, Shreya notes that it was all part of her development as a dancer. “No matter what else I do, dance will always be part of my life.” Shreya now also choreographs.

Most of Sheila’s other students have been with her for years. “In some cases, I’ve had these students from before they were born,” laughs Sheila. “Some mothers have one child in the class and when they’re pregnant, they tell me they’ll bring in the new baby too.” Sheila currently has about 50 students, aged 5 to 40.

Shreyas — an Expression of Dance hopes to perform a full-scale dance production at the Carrollwood Cultural Center early next year.

*Evelyn Bless*

## Coming Events

### WINTER CONCERT

*The inaugural concert of the Carrollwood Cultural Center Band and Chorus. The two groups will play two pieces of Holiday Music such as Let it Snow, Sleigh Ride, Broadway Christmas Tunes and a holiday sing along.*

Saturday, December 20 at 4pm

### CHORUS ANGELORUM, A CAPPELLA CHOIR in concert

Sunday, December 21 at 7pm

### JAZZ WITH JIM

Hosted by Jim Burge and featuring the “Dave Lynch Trio”

Friday, January 16 at 7:30pm

### JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

*Enjoy this classic tale about a boy named Jack who trades his cow Betsy for magic beans.*

Sunday, February 8 at 3pm

### SWEET DREAMS

*Celebrate the music of the three greatest crooners of all time. Frank Sinatra, Bobby Darin, and Dean Martin will keep your toes tappin’ all night long as they fly you to the moon and beyond the sea.*

Friday, February 20 at 8pm and

Saturday, February 21 at 3pm and 8pm

## Holiday Greetings

***A very happy holiday and New Year to you from the Carrollwood Cultural Center. Thank you for all your support in the past year!***

### Centerpieces

Newsletter of the Carrollwood Cultural Center

Vol. 1, Issue 3

*Centerpieces* reports on activities, people, and issues associated with the Carrollwood Cultural Center. *Centerpieces* is published quarterly.

Letters to the editor and reader submissions are welcome. Please mail submissions to *Centerpieces*, Carrollwood Cultural Center, 4537 Lowell Road, Tampa, FL 33618. Include your name, address, evening phone number, and the date. *Centerpieces* may edit your submission or withhold publication.

*Centerpieces* is produced by volunteers of the Carrollwood Cultural Center. New staff members are welcome.

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### Centerpieces Staff

Editor: Evelyn Bless

Proofreader: Barbara Kime

Photographer: Bob Kerns

Writers: John Byrnes, Selma Santos

Copyeditor: Phil Cutajar

### Carrollwood Cultural Center Staff

Executive Director: Paul Berg

Artistic Director: Mary Ann Scialdo

Business Manager: Vicki Cuccia

Education Outreach Director: Helen Michaelson

Events/Rentals Manager: Rob Curry

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# CARROLLWOOD CULTURAL CENTER

4537 Lowell Road, Tampa, FL 33618 (813) 269-1310



Business Facilities



Classes



Concerts



Arts

## 2009 CLASSES

**Session 1:**  
January 12-February 20  
Registration starts December 22.

**Session 2:**  
February 23-April 3

### Did you know?

Corporate memberships are available at the Carrollwood Cultural Center. Contact Dawn Hudson, Development Director, for details.

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### Many Voices, One Room *continued from page 1*

In addition, the mix of instruments was better balanced than she had expected. "We wound up with the absolutely perfect mix for a concert band. It was a miracle." Band members play percussion instruments and a variety of wind and low brass instruments, including saxophones, flutes, clarinets, oboes, trumpets, trombones, tuba, bassoons, euphoniums and French horns.

Interestingly, while all band members know how to read music, some have not played in a long time. Trumpeter Jason Quintero is enjoying the experience after not having played seriously for 12 years. "Mentally you know what to do, but physically getting your chops and hands back takes time," he comments.

Helen believes that the biggest challenge for the band has been adjusting to the chorus. "When the two perform together, the band's role changes. The band becomes the accompaniment and in order not to overwhelm the singers, the band has to play more softly. Playing soft is actually much harder than playing loud."

She smiles broadly. "We're getting there."

### Chorus Around

As chorus member Terry LaRosa observes, part of the fun of being in the chorus is watching Mary Ann conduct. She jumps up and down, gestures with her arms and emotes like a silent movie star. Mary Ann acknowledges that she's

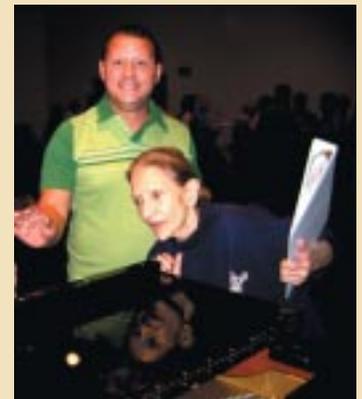
very physical. "Singing is acting," she maintains, and she uses her body language to help the singers stay focused.

Not everyone in the chorus can read music. Some members haven't sung since high school. The more experienced singers, including Milan-trained tenor Yhosvany Marrero, act as mentors to the others. "Everyone wants to help out," says Mary Ann. "The chorus is big, fun, and enthusiastic. They are all having a great time."

Kim Rostas, another chorus member, agrees. She says that the group provides "a great outlet for anyone who likes to sing, as well as the opportunity to sing year-round, to sing different types of music, and to perform in different venues."

The groups will give a holiday concert at the Center on December 20. Song selections will range from "Christmas on Broadway" and the "Sabbath Prayer" from *Fiddler on the Roof* to the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah*.

*John Byrnes, Evelyn Bless*



*Yhosvany Marrero and Mary Ann Scialdo*