



University of Kentucky Opera Theatre presents *Hansel and Gretel* at the Lexington Opera House.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TIM COLLINS

# Feast of Art

The visual and performing arts satisfy eager appetites.

by Alice H. Davis

Lexington, says James M. Clark, is a “town of artistic surprises.” Whether it is the breadth of its musical offerings, from Metropolitan Opera-bound singers to indigenous bluegrass music, or the depth of its visual art talents, the city has something to offer any art lover.

“It is a town for art lovers who want to be engaged in making work as well as in ferreting out what’s going on,” says Clark, who’s president and executive officer of LexArts, the community’s chief development, advocacy



A bronze bust by French sculptor Carpeux at the University of Kentucky Art Museum.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY ART MUSEUM

and fundraising organization for the arts. Experiencing the arts in Lexington can be an adventure, he adds, with many formal and informal opportunities available.

Lexington supports a major opera organization in the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, which hosts yearly auditions for the Metropolitan Opera and has seen several alumni go on to national careers, and the Lexington Philharmonic, which this year performed its 46th season with over 150 concerts and educational programs. The Central Kentucky Youth Orchestras, with 310 students participating, is one of the largest such programs in the country.

On the other side of the musical spectrum, Lexington hosts two radio programs of acoustic and grassroots music: the WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour, an internationally syndicated program, and Red Barn Radio, which features bluegrass performers from Kentucky and around the world.

The underground music scene in Lexington, whether in clubs and bars, or in private homes, is very much alive and well, Clark says.

“Music is taking place all around us,” he says, stemming from the area’s strong tradition in music.

Theatre and other performing arts area also a large part of the Lexington scene. The Lexington Children’s Theatre, founded in 1938, is one of the oldest continuously operating theatres in the country creating live performances for young people. The University of Kentucky’s

Singleton Center for the Arts is the site of music and dance performances by world-famous artists through its Signature Series. At the Norton Center for the Arts at Centre College, the Newlin Hall series brings an eclectic mix of performers.

The home of collections in photography and art ranging from Old Masters to abstract expressionists,



Yo-Yo Ma at the Norton Center

PHOTO BY KIRK SCHLEA

the University of Kentucky Art Museum also hosts exhibitions from around the world and through the ages of art. Located six miles from downtown on LaBelle Farm, the Headley-Whitney Museum houses the private collection of jewelry designer George W. Headley and has hosted special exhibitions ranging from gemstone animals to Gothic furniture. The Ann Tower Gallery downtown is the showplace for many Kentucky-based contemporary and folk artists.

There is so much new art being produced in and around Lexington, Clark says, that “we don’t have enough galleries to show them,” giving rise to small galleries and artist enclaves in surrounding communities.

“I think this is an artist-led town,” Clark says. “Artists like being here ...working here. And we have resources, the luxury of space and time, that larger cities don’t have. That’s something for us to build on.”

## THIS MONTH

**Together Again for the First Time: New Paintings by Robert Tharsing and Patrick Adams,** Ann Tower Gallery, through June 8

**Breaking Tradition, Forging Ahead: WPA Prints from the Collection,** UK Art Museum, through August 15

**Andy Warhol: Fame and Photography,** UK Art Museum, through August 24  
**As It Is In Heaven,** UK Theatre, June 1, 6-8

**Girls Night: The Musical,** Norton Center, June 5-6

**It’s a Grand Night for Singing,** UK Opera Theatre, June 6-8, 13-15

Ideal Location

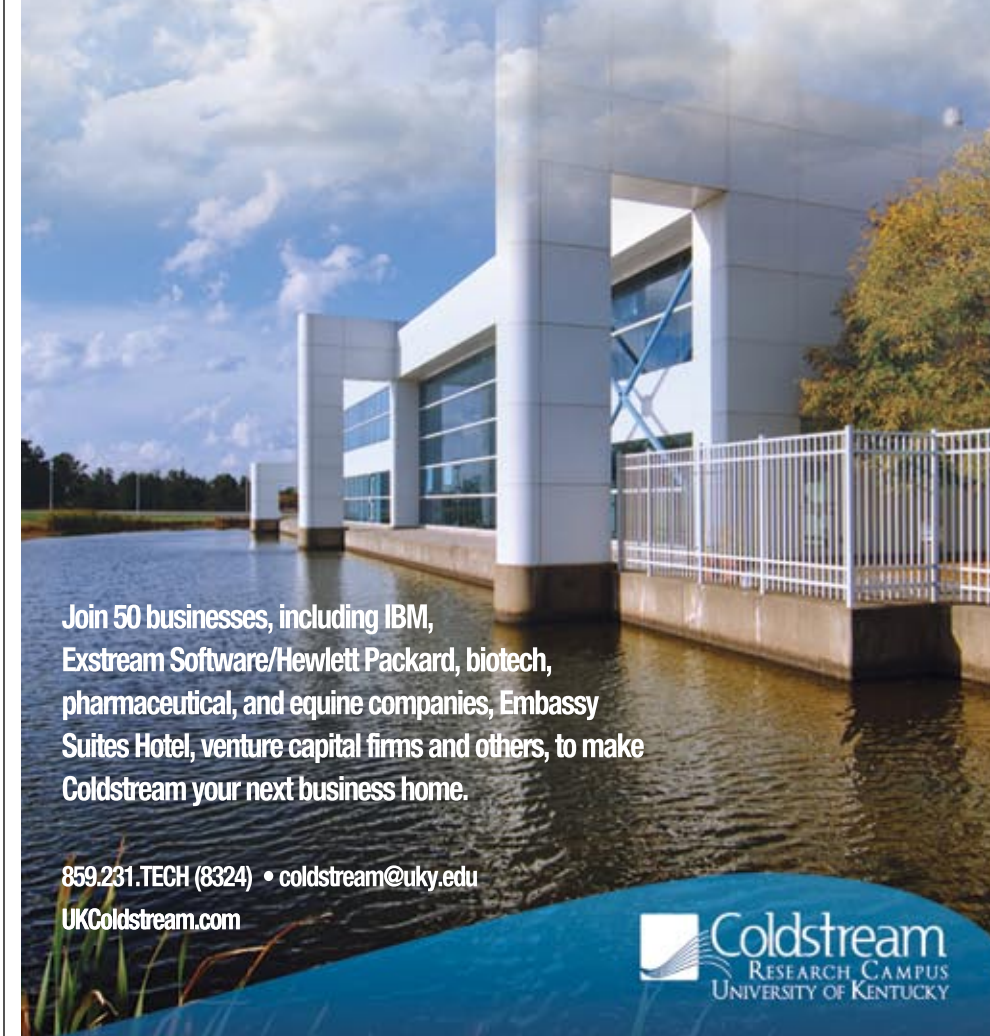
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