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Messages & Writings : December 2007

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Messages & Writings

12.05.07

Experiencing the Power of the Arts at Northeastern

Art at Northeastern is the meaningful collaboration between creative expression and the real world. Its power to reveal the unknown lies at the heart of Northeastern's endeavor to inspire and celebrate creativity in all that we do.

Last week, I had the opportunity to experience the power of music to bridge cultures at the Melody for Peace concert at Lincoln Center in New York City, the second half of a bi-continental event that began in Paris a week earlier. This major international arts event, cosponsored by Northeastern and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), featured an original composition by music department chair Tony De Ritis entitled *Melody for Peace*. It was performed by musicians from around the world, and with each note played, everyone in the hall could sense cultural divides eroding. This event was a superb example of art embracing diverse traditions in ways that enable us to see the power of one global community, working towards a common good.

Art also has the power to illuminate new opportunities. The Choral Society concert celebrating the opening of the Fenway Center last week is such an example. The capacity audience enjoyed a moving performance of music by Beethoven and Hummel performed by students, faculty, and a professional orchestra. Such an artistic collaboration reminds us of the importance of shared learning. I look forward to the Fenway Center becoming a vibrant and important cultural hub for the campus and the community.

As we head towards the conclusion of the fall semester, I urge all of you going forward to join in our renewed focus on the arts. Whether it's through the words of the U.S. poet laureate Charles Simic, who recently spoke in the Curry Center ballroom, or in the graphics produced by Artists for Humanity that grace the banners along Columbus Avenue, or among the innovative works in the visual art + design faculty's "Back to Work" exhibit, or through the upcoming performance of Langston Hughes' song-play *Black Nativity*, it is my sincere wish that the art that surrounds us here at Northeastern helps us see the world in new, surprising, and provocative ways.