Young Harris College senior music major Christina Kelley of Auburn, Ga., and musical theatre majors Ryan Bender of Braselton, Michelle Honaker of Blairsville, Katie Marlowe of Clermont, Hannah Guest of Crawford, and Misty Barber of Nashville, Ga., are accustomed to being in the spotlight. During the last four years, these students acted, sang and danced their way into the hearts of fine arts patrons at YHC.

On May 7, these students again stepped into the limelight and were applauded for their talent when they walked across the stage in the YHC Recreation and Fitness Center as members of the College’s first class of graduating seniors in nearly a century.

After gaining experience by performing in the YHC Choir and a cappella ensembles and excelling both onstage and backstage during Theatre Young Harris productions, these students are ready to embark on paths that will allow them to shine in various facets of the fine arts.

“My time at YHC has given me a sense of professionalism and understanding of the business along with the opportunity to grow in a comfortable setting,” said Honaker, who will perform in the outdoor drama Unto These Hills in Cherokee, N.C., this summer. “This foundation of training and development will serve as the roots for my future career.”

Honaker and Barber plan to continue their acting careers onstage, while Guest will also seek out opportunities in the television industry. Bender plans to focus on film.

“I am also very interested in pursuing a career in directing and would love to attend graduate school for that and eventually open

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Dear Friends of the Arts,

It was said by some wise person that if you do what you love, you never have to work a day in your life. I’ve been very fortunate over the last 40-plus years to do what I love during a long and sometimes scary adventure as a music educator and arts administrator. Although I love the arts and especially my work as dean of the Division of Fine Arts at Young Harris College, it has been a lot of work—even though that work is a labor of love. Having said that, I know I’m blessed to have been able to make my living in this fascinating field.

As co-chair of the College’s Purple and White Club, I have had the opportunity to speak to my colleagues at various gatherings about giving back to YHC. I usually say that my gift is a tangible indication of those things that I value most. I know that we do good work here in the arts at YHC, and those efforts often result in truly great work.

As I’m sure you will agree, our student work is second to none in undergraduate higher education. I want to sincerely thank you for your support to make all of this possible. Your contribution to the Young Harris College Friends of the Arts is an indication of what you value, and you can be assured that your contributions directly assist our very deserving students in many ways. Thank you for your generosity and support!

There are many successes, honors and awards that I could bring to your attention, but you will surely hear about these accomplishments and read about them elsewhere. My intention in this letter is to say thank you for your help and your friendship during my time here at Young Harris College. This is truly a special place that is made even more special by you and your friends who support us through your gifts and your attendance at concerts, exhibitions and productions. Your encouragement of our faculty and students in all that they do is very much appreciated.

Although I retired this summer and returned to my home in Effingham County, I want all of you to know that I truly appreciate all that you have done for our fine arts programs at Young Harris College. I also want to encourage you to continue that support by giving to FOTA every year.

I look forward to seeing you on my visits to YHC, and thank you again, my friends, for giving to the Friends of the Arts at Young Harris College.

Benny P. Ferguson, Ph.D.

YHC Faculty and Administrators Lead Professional Organizations

Young Harris College was well represented during the 2010-2011 academic year in the leadership of three music-related professional organizations.

In November 2010, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs Keith DeFoor, Ph.D., took over the presidency of the Georgia Music Teachers Association (GMTA), the state affiliate of Music Teachers National Association (MTNA).

In June 2010, Dean of the Division of Fine Arts and Professor of Music Benny Ferguson, Ph.D., began his two-year term as president of the Southern Division of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC).

Senior Instructor of Music and Director of Bands Mary Land completed her term as president-elect and began her presidency of the Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA) in May 2011.

Fine Arts Seniors

Continued from page 1

my own theatre company as manager and director,” Bender said.

Kelley plans to attend graduate school to obtain a degree in church music, while Marlowe hopes to become certified to teach in the North Georgia area.

“I want my career to be focused around educating students in drama and music,” Marlowe said. “I want students to find their place in the arts programs and feel free to be as creative as they like.”

As the six seniors reflect on four years of auditions, rehearsals and curtain calls, the memories they shared at YHC—both onstage and off—remain paramount.

“I will never forget my classmates. Through every show and class, we could always find laughter in a moment. We have been through so much together and stuck by each other over the last four years,” Guest said.

“The most important thing I will take with me from YHC is the memories,” Kelley added. “YHC definitely became my second home and it’s sad to leave, but I know I will be welcomed back with open arms any time I visit.”

KATIE MARLOWE
Eleven Students Selected for Georgia All-College Band and Georgia All-College Chorus

Earlier this year, 11 Young Harris College students were selected to perform in the Georgia All-College Band and Georgia All-College Chorus, comprised of music majors from colleges and universities throughout the state. The students performed during the Georgia Music Educators Association’s (GMEA) Annual In Service Conference held in Savannah in late January.

“This is the first time Young Harris College had representation in this prestigious event,” Senior Instructor of Music and Director of Bands Mary Land said.

“Membership in these groups is a significant accomplishment in a college student’s musical career, and we are extremely proud of the students who were chosen.”

Students selected to perform in the All-College Band include senior Tara Shiver, clarinet, of Covington, junior Raquel Jasso, clarinet, of Gainesville, sophomore Jake Wentzek, saxophone, of Blairsville, sophomore Jeremiah Kersting, trumpet, of Sugar Hill, and sophomore Nic Gannon, percussion, of Blue Ridge.

Students selected to perform in the All-College Chorus include freshman Caitlin Davis of Baxley, sophomore JeRee Dukes of Agnes, sophomore Melissa Murphy of Blairsville, junior Genevieve Rodriguez of Calhoun, freshman Will Skelton of Hayesville, N.C., and freshman Brian Walker of Powder Springs.

Students were selected to participate in the All-College Band and All-College Chorus through director recommendation. All-College Band student nominees also underwent an on-site individual audition and were ranked according to their ability to play the full range of major and minor scales and arpeggios, along with public performance skills.

“It was an honor to be chosen for this because it will benefit me as a musician and, most importantly, it will benefit my future career,” Wentzek said. “I was able to meet many music teachers from all over the state of Georgia ranging from kindergarten teachers to college professors.”

“I was so excited to be chosen for the Georgia All-College Band,” Shiver added. “It provided a great opportunity for me as a performer to meet new people while connecting with individuals that will aid us in our future careers as performers.”
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Members listed above made a gift to Friends of the Arts.

July 1, 2010—June 30, 2011.