

THE PORTAL

News from the Armstrong Browning Library

*"A wondrous
portal opened
wide..."*

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Browning Day to Feature Music and RB's Poetry

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*Browning! Since Chaucer
was alive and hale,
No man hath walked
along our roads with step,
So active, so inquiring
eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse.*

—Walter Savage Landor

Browning Day promises plenty of "varied discourse" this year. The annual event set for 2:30 p.m., Friday, May 6, marks the collective birthdays of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Dr. A.J. Armstrong, founder of the Armstrong Browning Library. This year's program will emphasize music in the poetry of Robert Browning and feature several original compositions based on Browning texts.

Soprano Kimberly Lynn Fuselier will perform, accompanied on the piano by Jeremy Wood. Fuselier and Wood, both Baylor graduates, are associate directors at St. Agnes Academy and Strake Jesuit College Preparatory School in Houston. Braeden Ayres, also the winner of the 2011 Browning Composition Contest sponsored by the ABL, will premiere his setting of EBB's Sonnet XXI for soprano, piano, and cello.

Afterwards, Dr. Herbert "Chip" Tucker, Professor of Nineteenth-Century British Literature, University of Virginia, will explore the relationship between Robert Browning and music in his lecture topic, "Unsettled Scores: Structure and Play in Robert Browning's Music Poems." Tucker humorously describes his topic as a "three-ring circus spotlighting 'A Toccata of Galuppi's,' 'Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha,' and 'Abt Vogler.'"

The energetic scholar has spent much of his career uncovering the influences behind 19th and 20th century literature. "I came to Browning scholarship initially via 20th-century interests in verse shaped by the likes of his [Browning's] disciples Ezra Pound and Robert Frost. I could see—no, hear—that RB had done things with everyday subjects, vernacular diction, and an orchestration of the speaking voice that had made a big difference in Modernism and its bequest to later generations of poets," Tucker said.

Tucker became convinced through his research that the pre-Raphaelite poets, especially the Rossettis, along with Swinburne and Morris, exerted much influence on the work of W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, and W.C. Williams. "All these intermediaries," says

Tucker, "were coterie admirers of RB at a time when hardly anybody else was. Their contributions drew heavily from the height of Browning's spring and the depth of his well. Tennyson, of course, was in everybody's mouth one way or another.... But Browning was down in the water table, an irrigator, a fertilizer who in that sense exerted a more stealthy or surprising influence even than Tennyson."

Tucker, associate editor of *New Literary History* and series editor of *Victorian Literature and Culture*, has multitudinous projects under way. While at the ABL, he hopes to explore Browning's lifelong fascination with the figure of the magician. "My long-term plan is to write a book on Modern Charm, which will be on correlations between the performance of magical spells and the social triviality involved when we call something or somebody charming."

A reception will follow the program. This event is free and open to the public.



Dr. Herbert "Chip" Tucker will lecture on Browning Day on the relationship between Robert Browning and music.

*Courtesy of Dan Addison University of Virginia
Public Affairs*

Director's Column | Three Outstanding Acquisitions

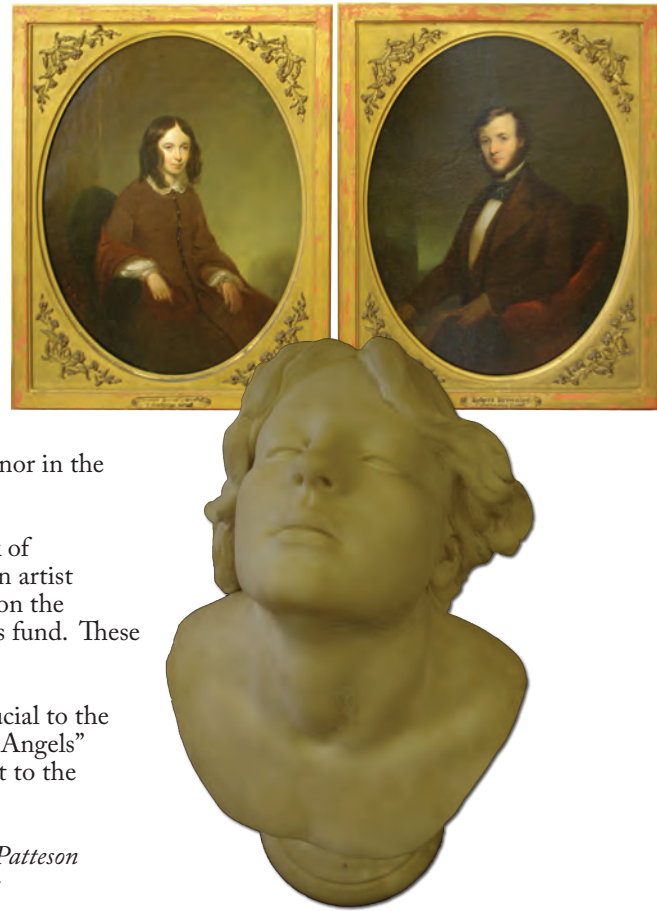
The Armstrong Browning Library has long possessed eight paintings from among the numerous canvases that were produced by the Brownings' son, Robert Wiedeman Barrett Browning, fondly known as Pen. It was the Pre-Raphaelite painter, John Everett Millais, who first suggested that Pen had a talent for painting and sculpture. The young Browning studied with Jean Arnould Heyermans in Antwerp, Belgium, between 1874 and 1877, and with Auguste Rodin in Paris in 1882.

I am proud to announce that a fine example of Pen's sculpture is now part of the Library's holdings. An allegorical marble bust of a young woman, "Hope," arrived in October 2010. Its inspiration comes from lines written by Robert Browning, "...Hope rose at once in all the blood, / A-tiptoe for the blessing of embrace...." ("Pictor Ignotus"). Although the existence of this piece was well documented, its location was unknown until Melvin Schuetz, Assistant to the Curators, spied a photograph of it in a 1995 issue of "Old House Interiors." Within a few months, "Hope" was on its way to Texas from a private collection in Savannah, Georgia. After a bit of restoration, the bust will have a place of honor in the Leddy-Jones Research Hall.

Just a few days later, another delight was the arrival from Christie's in New York of companion oil paintings of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning by American artist Thomas Buchanan Read. The likenesses, painted in Florence in 1853, were put on the market by the Philadelphia History Museum in order to benefit their collections fund. These paintings will soon hang in the Elizabeth Barrett Browning Salon.

Having the resources available for successful negotiations and auction bids is crucial to the growth of the Armstrong Browning Library. The kindness of all our "Guardian Angels" makes it possible to add outstanding original materials and amazing works of art to the collection. Thank you for your generosity and your support.

Rita S. Patteson
Director



Save the Dates

April 7: Baylor Early Music Ensemble Concert, 5:30 p.m. Dr. Jann Cosart will direct students performing music from the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque eras. Free and open to the public.

April 7-9: King James Exhibition, Thursday – Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. One hundred examples of rare and ancient Bibles from one of the world's largest collections of Bibles and related documents of the Judeo-Christian tradition will be on display to enhance the international conference, *The King James Bible and the World It Made, 1611-2011*. Free and open to the public.

April 8: King James Bible (KJV) Concert, 4 p.m. Carlos Colón, Resident Fellow from the Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion will officiate. The Midway High School Chamber Singers will perform directed by Jeff Rice. Dr. Josh King, Assistant Professor of English – Arts & Sciences, will open with a 10-minute introduction. Free and open to the public.

April 28: Baylor Chamber Singers Concert, 7:30 p.m. Dr. Alan Raines, Associate Professor of Ensembles – Music, will direct. For ticket information, contact the Baylor University School of Music box office at (254) 710-3571.

May 6: Browning Day, 2:30-5 p.m. A pre-lecture recital will feature music from ABL plus compositions by Helen A. Clarke, Emma Weller French, and Carlos Colón. Baylor music student, Braeden Ayres, and Soprano and Baylor alumna Kimberly Lynn Fuselier will perform followed by speaker Dr. Herbert Tucker. Reception following. Free and open to the public.

May 7: Fano Club Dinner, 6 p.m. For more information, members of the Fano Club may contact Christi Klempnauer at (254) 710-4968.

May 7: Southern Harmony Concert, 7:30 p.m. This event will feature Mia Orosco on the fiddle, conductor Carlos Colón, a chamber orchestra from the Baylor community, voices from Live Oak Classical School and Parkview Christian Academy choirs and the Heritage Square Quartet. There will also be a special tribute to Robert Browning's birthday. Tickets for the performance are \$10 per person. On-line or at the door (cash or check only).

June 11: Summer Quartet Festival Concert, 1 p.m., Dr. Gary Hardie, Professor of International Studies – Music, will showcase prospective students from high schools. Free and open to the public.

For more information and updates, please visit www.browninglibrary.org or contact Christi Klempnauer at (254) 710-4968.

Spotlight on Musical and Artistic Achievement

The ABL Gift Gallery now offers a musical CD of Robert Browning's popular poem, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." It is the first musical recording ever produced specifically for the Gift Gallery. In fact, it has a small story behind it.

Nearly three years ago Carlos Colón, Resident Fellow at Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion, organized and directed a musical tribute for Browning Day in honor of the ABL's outgoing director, Dr. Stephen Prickett. Colón's thirty-minute work for choir and chamber orchestra drew a record crowd to hear the highlight of the afternoon, which was the musical debut of his original composition, *Las lamentaciones de Rufina Amaya*, a tribute to a Salvadoran village massacred in 1981. (See *The Portal*, no. 52.)

Since then, Colón has directed musical performances at many of the Library's functions. Last spring The Waco Children's Choir, directed by Julie Bolin, performed his masterful vocal and instrumental version of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. A haunting flute melody opens the piece, which includes a spoken narrative that perfectly follows the poem.

Kathryn Brogdon, Public Relations and Facilities Supervisor at the ABL, was so captivated by the work that she declared it to be "on a par with *Peter and the Wolf*!" and told Colón that a CD would be ideal for the ABL Gift Gallery.

The issue of packaging the CD came up when Colón met master artist Melville Holmes of Spokane, Washington, who was visiting Baylor at the time. Prior to meeting Colón, Holmes had already become aware of Colón's composition and thoroughly approved of the piece. Holmes is well known in the Northwest for the aesthetic restoration of the historic Davenport Hotel, a regional landmark in Spokane. After learning that Colón still lacked a packaging design, Holmes offered to create a simple CD cover if Colón would arrange for its production. Colón agreed and Holmes designed the cover with a Kate Greenaway illustration of Browning's famous anti-hero piping to frolicking children.

The live CD recording is perfect for travelers, as it is lightweight, fits in a purse or suitcase, and can be mailed easily. Musical scores may be ordered by email at carloscolonmusic@aol.com.

ABL Gift Gallery Treasures

The Pied Piper of Hamelin

CD by Carlos Colón

Cost: \$15 each,

Plus shipping and handling

(Texas residents add 8.25% tax)

To order, please call Kathryn Brogdon
at (254) 710-4960 or email
Kathryn_Brogdon@baylor.edu.

You can also visit the ABL Gift Gallery:
Weekdays, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



"Pat Neff Hall"

Prints and original painting are by Melville Holmes and available through the Gift Gallery. Inquire for prices and availability.



Valentine's Day Extravaganza

Armstrong Browning Library's Valentine's Day Extravaganza was a great success! Plan to join us next year for Dave Tanner's fourth performance and reception from 4-6 p.m., February 11, 2012.

Sherill Duran, winner of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, poses with Assistant to the Curators Melvin Schuetz and Director Rita Patteson. This 1890 edition is the first time that the *Sonnets* appeared in a separate publication; it was the door prize for the occasion. Congratulations, Sherill!



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Support the Armstrong Browning Library

Home to the world's largest Browning collection, the Armstrong Browning Library of Baylor University is a world-class center for scholarship, learning, culture, and public programs. In order to maintain and extend these initiatives, we rely upon the support of Baylor University and the generosity of individuals, families, corporations, and foundations. Today, approximately 75 percent of our annual acquisitions budget is funded by revenue from designated endowments provided by friends of the Library.

You can choose to support one of these areas:

- Armstrong Browning Library Fund
- Armstrong Browning Library Guardian Angel Fund
- Jack and Daphne Herring Endowment Fund
- Armstrong Browning Endowed Lectureship Fund

Donations may be made on our Web site at www.browninglibrary.org by clicking on "Support ABL" in the menu at the left and following the instructions. If you prefer, you may also mail a check payable to Baylor University to: Armstrong Browning Library, One Bear Place #97152, Waco, TX 76798-7152.

If you would like more information about these funds or to learn more about establishing your own endowment, please contact Rita S. Patteson, Director of the Armstrong Browning Library, at (254) 710-4967.

