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The Role of the Arts in a Post-Pandemic World | Christina Soriano & David Hagy

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The Veritas Forum

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Transcript

Welcome to the Veritas Forum. This is the Veritas Forum Podcast. A place where ideas and beliefs converge.

What I'm really going to be watching is which one has the resources in their worldview to be tolerant, respectful, and humble toward the people they disagree with. How do we know whether the lives that we're living are meaningful? If energy, light, gravity, and consciousness are in history, don't be surprised if you're going to get an element of this in God. In today's episode, we hear from Christina Soriano, Associate Provost for the Arts and Interdisciplinary Initiatives, as well as an associate professor of dance at Wake Forest University.

We also hear from David Hagy, Orchestra Director at Wake Forest University, and Music Director of the Salisbury Symphony. A discussion moderated by the Dean of Wake Forest University, Jonathan Lee Walton, titled "The Role of the Arts in a Post-Pandemic World" hosted by the Veritas Forum at Wake Forest University. I want to offer our first question for consideration.

Let's just kind of start big. Thinking about how the arts have played a role in finding meaning and perspective during this absurd time in our nation and our world over the last 14 months. Professor Soriano, how about we begin with you? Thank you.

Thank you for that introduction. Thank you Veritaas Forum for this opportunity and for the students who organized this event. I'm always so impressed by our students at Wake Forest University, their vision, their focus even during a pandemic.

I feel like I have to start this question by giving everyone a little bit of some background about the impact that the pandemic has had on the arts and the creative industry. So if I may, I may just start there, again sort of zooming out and then zooming back in. And I'll just speak sort of regionally about arts impacts.

I gathered some data from the Americans for the Arts and some of this content also comes from the Brookings Institute. But the economic impact of the arts and cultural sector to our region has been so significant as it has been across the world. Prior to the shutdown, a little over a year ago, though, the arts and cultural sector impacted our community in myriad ways, including just imagine pre-pandemic, if you will, 800,000 art experiences annually just in Winston-Salem.

Arts enrichment in our public schools in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, 31,000 students reached. Financially, a 156, almost 157 million dollar impact in Forsyth County, which includes almost 5600 equivalent full-time jobs. So that's pre-pandemic.

And then if you look at losses that have happened, again, these are estimates but are staggering if you hear these numbers, 300 million in lost sales since our shuttered arts nonprofits have been unable to work. One billion in total economic impact from these shuttered nonprofits and then three and a half billion in lost revenue in North Carolina's creative economy. So those numbers aren't just for this sort of small select group of people who like to call themselves artists.

This is our entire region. This is all of us. A lot of times when we think about what it means to thrive in a society, I don't know a world that thrives without art in it.

And so I, more than anything, I think this perspective of where we go from here is critical and how we put the arts in their due place of prominence has to be how we move towards thriving from this point forward. I'll have some more things to say but I'll stop there for now. Professor Hagee.

Well, certainly during this crisis of the pandemic, we, I think the thing we've lost the most and this is not just arts. This is the world, has lost personal connections. I think those, the ability to touch someone, the ability to get together and have meaningful discussion, the ability to simply even see others from time to time has been a huge loss.

It's driven many of us into depressions, I would think. But the art are what have helped many of us during this time, thankfully. Sadly, they weren't live arts which are far more impactful to all of us but recorded versions, videos, the music that we have, the performances that have been able to be produced online, all of these, all of the various

ways in which we can access art have helped us overcome this lack of personal connection.

I'd love to be able to play my first example at this point because I think this is an example of something that it's a very short example from a work by Haydn. Haydn is a composer of the 18th century, 1732 to 1809 and he wrote this work late in his life, The Creation, and this is his depiction of creation of the first sunrise.

[Music]

[Music]

[Music] Perfect, perfect.

It leads then to a recitative about in shining splendor the sun is created. I can't not have hope when I hear that and it's music like that and of course the music speaks to us all differently. Hopefully that spoke of a very exciting growth of something but I just can't not have the broadest of smiles in hearing that.

So it's the way in which we have used music to bring life back into us the life that we have missed from not being able to converse and to get together with others. I might just add, oh sorry. No, I was actually going to ask, I mean, thank you for that example of Haydn, Professor Haydn and also thank you for recognizing just the kind of extraordinary economic impact.

We know the astounding numbers as it relates to human life and this loss of personal connection but I've also heard that and I know through history has taught us that creativity flourishes during times of despair and art often gives voice to suffering and so I was wondering Professor Soriano in terms of this thinking about finding meaning and perspective during this time of pandemic. Some of the kind of creative flourishings that you've witnessed and seen and/or pulled from. Yeah, thank you.

I just have to acknowledge I was so deeply listening to the Haydn and then I looked over and David it filled your body, right? I mean you are a conductor, right? I cannot not do that. It's the same way I would conduct it. Well and that's sort I mean this is I think what we all need to acknowledge is that art is something that we experience physically together and so I just the idea of returning to a crowded theater someday soon and being next to someone on both sides and that collective moment when the lights go out right before the performance begins is a moment of grace.

I mean it is a moment of awe, it is a moment of possibility, it's a moment of wonder and mystery and a moment we've all been unable to experience, right? And so we find to the spirit of the idea of the spirit of the human condition, right? Like we we persevere. Yes, my colleagues, my colleagues in the music department have made their performances online, my colleagues in theater and dance have turned and made plays, radio plays and

have you know had events on Davis Field and distanced with met you know we've done the best we can and yet when we can all be back in the theater I feel as though and in crowded art galleries again and museum spaces again. I feel as though the barometer that sort of recalibrating will recenter itself for so many of us and so it starts with one a deep belief and trust in science so that we can have those moments, right? We can have those moments and experiences together.

I'll say one short quote which has been my mantra throughout the pandemic which at the beginning of the pandemic my children and I would watch Mo Willems who is a children's book author and the Kennedy Center artist in residence for the Department of Education there and he held these lunch drawing sessions with children and he would teach us how to draw his beloved book characters like Pigeon and Gerald the Elephant and we we would do this together online and at the end of one session I remember him distinctly saying science is going to get us over this the arts are going to get us through it and so back to my moments before where I gave some of those grim numbers it's on all of us to move through to move over things with science and then to move to acknowledge the way the arts moved us through it and not forget about those organizations when we return and not forget all the things that they had to endure in order to sustain in order to just survive so with that I will now shift to an example and I want to thank you know we're here David and I are here as artists like the art is always going to say better what we say as individuals right and so I have two short solos which I don't know if the choreographers were aware of each other's works when they made these two pieces but I want to I'll start with a short and excerpt of a work that I studied throughout undergrad and grad school it is a seminal work in sort of Western dance modern dance history canon both of these works are I'm going to start with a work by the choreographer Tali Beatty called mourners bench and I think I'll just show the short excerpt and then give everyone a little bit of context there's a photo of Beatty at Jacob's pillow when he premiered the work in 1948 originally it's from 1947 and then I'm also going to share some insight from my friend and colleague Dwayne Cyrus who performed this work and also met Beatty and I interviewed him to sort of get some perspective from him about his experiences dancing the work when he was a member of several different companies in New York but let's watch this short video excerpt and then I'll give a little more context about the work historically thank you

[Music]

[Music]

[Music] beautiful so brief context sorry I as a remember we're professors so we talk a lot about this piece is significant for so many reasons but I think the other thing is let's think about being a blackmail choreographer in the 1940s and what that experience was and Beatty's family lived in Louisiana and his father relocated the family to Chicago after there had been a fight around the sale of land that did not work in the family's favor and

so Beatty is now in Chicago as a young boy and he's interested in dance and he has to be in a segregated studio he cannot be with the other dance students he is in a separate place trying to learn material and and study his craft from this adjacent space right so fortunately this talented important person in our in our history went on to dance with Catherine Dunham so his his legacy moves from Catherine Dunham who is someone who you should learn about if you don't know about Catherine Dunham's work and when he toured with Catherine Dunham's company in the 40s commonly the company would not be able to stay in hotel right so they would be housed with members of the community who could who could house them and other times if they were housed in hotels it was like subhuman like accommodations and and so is it a wonder that a choreographer like Beatty is going to make a work like this this is from a suite of dances five parts called southern landscape which Beatty made in response to a novel by Howard Fast called southern landscape and it's a reconstruction or a book that really talks about these delineated historical contexts and the chain of events that led to an experience not that on similar from Beatty's growing up there was a cooperative community in South Carolina of farmers that the Ku Klux Klan essentially in this novel was um they were men on this on this farm were wrongly accused and the result is that that black farmers their farms were burned and many of them were slain and so Beatty makes this dance mourners bench and we know this spiritual this African-American spiritual arm and gillia to make the wounded whole there's power enough in heaven to cure a sin sick soul and he he uses this song and the movement of this restricted space this bench that he is it is his grief it is it is his anchor of his reality and my my friend Dwayne who's here in this photo i i really wanted to get a first account of his experience dancing this work and he did this as his jury for dancing for his degree at Juilliard all right and so Dwayne talks very vividly about the memory of having to negotiate that bench and what that difficulty was right emotionally physically spiritually and and he remembered that as a young like 21 year old he said to me you know i would have thought grief is this wild slashing experience where the just mournful wailing he says but i learned and he he also studied again with with Beatty but he learned this dance from one of his mentors named Alfred Gollman but he said you know Beatty was so so powerfully reminding us about the entrapment of grief that to move wildly is not my privilege or my opportunity but it is a trap it is one that is slow and sustained and one that is um that is i am gripped to this bench Dwayne remembers the experiences he had the bruises he had right you saw the way the stancer is moving rolling around the bench later in the solo he has to stand on it with one leg in this very difficult position he has to promenade on one leg around the bench and at the end mournfully um shaking off the bench on the floor um he described it morningly frightening and technically negotiating that was always the balance of this entrapment that he had um so i just finished with this idea too of who gets to rest who gets to grieve who gets to um who gets to acknowledge this pain and and how this tradition of using an african-american spiritual like bombing gilead juxtapose with this how there is still yet somehow miraculously hope possibility you see that in the gesturing upwards um in this in this heavenly way so this this piece is just one that um i find

profoundly moving and incredibly important for dance history students to study and to know about i'll pause there while tied to the bench he seems to find our freedom in the course of it it was really remarkable i mean professor yal let me just say i'm just i mean i'm just sitting here so moved uh by the dance and by the image and the fact that you uh reference uh that you decided to give us this particular example of the mourners bench i mean when we think about what the mourners bench meant in evangelical culture i mean it was where one went to pray to lament yet to wait on god right toward the end of redemption and the fact that he's at this mourners bench actively lamenting whaling right this is the point for god to show up while we're hearing this negro spiritual there's a bombing gilead we know the spirituals giving voice right to the pain to the horror of those living on the underside of the american experiment and so it's the blues the spirituals the negro spirituals i want her went marcellus actually uh associated with our conversation i actually heard went marcellus once described the spirituals and the blues like a vaccine it's giving a controlled dose of suffering and embracing that toward being able to inoculate oneself from nihilism and giving way to grief well put this kind of that was the imagery that was coming to me as you were as you showed that video and as you were describing it and so that actually leads to another question that i have in terms of uh because this is just such a great example of what art can teach us right about things such as grief lament but also we've heard for example uh uh professor hagi you talked about hope right happiness joy was wondering if you could help us think a little bit about art's role in teaching us how to both express and deal with the range of emotions in life do you want me to address that please please um i think the majority of people tend to use the arts for the hope side for the positive side for the uh the very visceral uh giving me energy giving me um hope giving me excitement giving all sorts of the positive emotions uh and this is always a difficult issue for a for example with me and solesbury uh i uh what do i present on a concert do i uh make them all feel very happy throughout the whole concert or do i help them uh share a depth of lower emotion and help them bring it through which is very much like i love that winton marsala's quote of a vaccine because it gives you a little bit of the pain of a situation so that you might possibly deal with the exterior grander pain and keep it out of you that's really beautiful um so i walk a balance as i try to present programming um i can remember a time when we uh presented a country western star with the orchestra and that was all going to be very fun but on the program which was for uh children i also presented the lucas foss piece about and frank and here we had people who were there to hooten holler and celebrate country music and they sat through an eight minute work on the difficulty of an frank and you know i got many comments from them about that program wow that's not a piece that i would have listened to but boy that made a difference we have to have the uh the braveness to really seek the lower seek out the artwork that exposes our pain and in the long run it helps us through it uh but it's not easy necessarily it's much easier to go see the pieces that we know we're going to come out of the theater whistling and being happy with and the artwork and the dance and any of that that we know uh helps us feel good about ourselves so it's the arts can do all of this that's what's so amazing

the arts can take us through uh the depth of despair through the height of hope uh and through actually mundane life uh through all sorts of different emotions and just to help us maybe experience them with greater depth that's what i love first let me just say i appreciate the the image of the audience being arrested by the end frank priests and being forced to deal because so often there is a kind of inclination to just want to use art to just to feel good right to be sued comforted right but there's actually a comforting that actually can be found in the pain and the tragedy of life but often from varying privileged perspectives we don't embrace that the author the great man of letters james baldwin he actually said that's why the privileged class often doesn't understand gospel music because they think happy songs are supposed to be sung happy and sad songs are supposed to be sung sad rather than gospel music is actually inverse it's actually singing a song with the grief and and lamenting the voice and therefore one sings oneself happy in the process well and it comes from the fact that the people who created it had to find some happiness somewhere and so they made it for themselves from that music and it's just amazing i hate that the gospel truth sorry i know yeah i you know i'm realizing um as a choreographer right my my job is to arrange bodies in space and to make sense of what that can tell what that story or what that experiences and i'm realizing that these examples that i have put together all carry together this idea of a bench and the relationship that we have to what in in religious spaces and spiritual places what we have to that bench and and really it the the summative concept is contemplation is um is reflection it is um prayer right there are many ways that we can come to this arrival of the bench and its role um and i so appreciate what you said but but really it's about being together with people too right seated in that space together um so i'd love to just show this quick short excerpt of another purse another artist martha gramm's representation of this concept of of grief right and so this work lamentation from 1930 again i don't know if if if gramm and beati new one another or new of each other's work but this work lamentation from 1930 gramm called the personification of grief itself it's not about a specific person or a time or place but of this universal idea of grief itself and um you'll notice the dancer is wearing this long tube which obsesses the body um and the dancer again like beat like beati's mourners bench the the dancer is unable to stretch inside it so the grief is really sort of all encompassing um it's set to a score by um cody from 1910 a piano piece opus three number two um this is a short short excerpt of of lamentation thinking about the bench again and and then i'm excited to move to i do have some happier thoughts that aren't just around grief but i do i do want to live in that for just a moment longer because i think it's important to acknowledge that we've all been grieving a lot in the last 14 months so

[Music] thank you that ending moment two where she just sort of comes in on herself is such a powerful sort of subsuming of it um confinement refinement yeah i think i think you're i think you're spot on with that i will say too though that um what the body endures is pretty powerful what the body is capable of doing um so i want to celebrate i want to celebrate the body and i want to celebrate that um the performativity of the

body and the way we've seen bodies in the world the way we've seen um black bodies at the hands of police in the last several months well and decades and centuries before that but i i don't watch dances anymore without thinking about the last year and a half it's really it's become something i think that is critical to to just say out loud for all of us to um to acknowledge that it's with dancers we our bodies are everything and so when we witness bodies and and the pain that they have endured the killing that they have endured it is really hard to also not look to art to help us make sense of it all so but i i um i do want to also go back to your question because i feel like i strayed a little there but i i do want to address well you're referring to suffering i mean you're referring to grief morning suffering the articulation and expression of violence which particularly in the christian tradition is encoded in all of the varying pre-bearing rituals of the church particularly as we whether it's the lord's supper for example acknowledging the crucifixion state-sanctioned murder violence destruction of a body that we partake of the body and the blood as in remembrance of that price that was paid yeah this is what i love about conversations with colleagues you learn so much about one another through the things you've studied and the the the lenses through which you make sense of the world so thank you for for doing that with music david and through the lens of of a divinity professor's perspective and um we all we all come to it and arrive i think at a very similar place but from very different perspectives my mother would uh i would often say to my mother when some television show was on oh listen to that can you hear what that how it uh emotional that is and she go what she didn't ever hear it and she'd say to me oh look at that that's incredibly beautiful do you see how that's i go what because i hear it i experience the world through my ears more than my eyes and my mother experienced it much more through her eyes than her ears so i know we all come to the arts with different backgrounds and even different bodies and perceptions from our own bodies but still i think there are these artworks share something that reaches they reach me with a uh a different aesthetic without a god they reach you with an aesthetic with a god they all speak to us perhaps with a different leaning but they still help help us experience our lives well as we think about this experience and we think about loss as well as hope i'm interested to know in terms of your view on the arts moving forward as we think about uh return to normalcy what do you imagine the arts will look like in our new normal post pandemic me please all right um i expect first that they're going to try to seek what was there before i think we're going to want to see getting together in large groups experiencing large things i think there's going to be over the next year a desire to do the grandest of artworks simply because finally we can which is unbelievable um but the one change that this world has created i mean we are exemplifying that change uh before february i wonder how many people knew the word zoom i don't think very many people knew it at this point it is now a verb in our society uh have you zoomed yet lately with that on that topic or uh the arts have attacked online some were there before the pandemic but they were forced there by the pandemic and i think that at least an availability to them online is going to remain whether or not orchestra performances theater performances dance performances will all be available online stream at some

point i i doubt that they all will but a significantly larger portion than before the pandemic will be available to a wider disbursement of population uh both to the uh country and to the world for that matter i'm always amazed by the thought of we just put the orchestra's march concert online this week it's on there until sunday and someone could in uh southern china go listen to that performance and uh perhaps hear one of their children because we have chinese students in the orchestra uh hear the performance that never could have possibly heard that performance before so that's one change it's going to expand i think uh the reach that arts have they speak to you you're right zoom is uh i heard somewhere zoom is like faith it's a noun it's a verb it's a adjective it's ubiquitous omnipresent initiate it's all encompassing exact professor soryana well i want to think about some of those places where we can come together that's what i want to i want to look forward to and i will say there is a space that i am dying to visit i have never been but it is um in houston texas it is the rafko chapel which um i think i have a few a couple of quick slides to to share um no video this time just images um but i i'm drawn to this space because of of it's well it's design and its mission and purpose um so the rafko chapel was built between 1964 and 1971 it is its 50th anniversary right now and what i just to quote some some language from from the website and also um some text about the rafko chapel is a place where art is visible of individual virtual reactions in the people who encounter it over a hundred thousand people have visited it regularly pre-pandemic and it was constructed by the vision of incredible art philanthropists and really city leaders in houston john and dominique demonel and they work cooperatively with rafko and the architect philip johnson to create a space that would express the profound and miraculous regard and sanctity for the human spirit um the idea that um it is also a space with an unwavering commitment to social justice there isn't um this this work here the the um the sculpture to the right at the top is a barnet new men's broken obelisk which was dedicated to the reverend dr martin luther king um this was in 1969 i believe or maybe it was 1970 of course king died in 68 um and and so having this image there as you approach this chapel and this at the bottom is a little bit about what it looks like right this um space with these very rafko rafko-like paintings there are 14 in there they are different shades of black and what these the sanctuary for the seeker is is a place you sit at these pew's that are movable there are many different spiritual tradition traditions and their texts there or you are there in solitude and you just experience the wash of these rafko 14 like either triptychs or individual pieces while you have this light streaming into from from above it just sounds like a place i need to visit um a worship memorial um to a great leader to dr king um a place where spiritual life and action can come together right how we contemplate what we then go out and do in the world um wholeness one-ness these we need these we need these ideas these ideals these actions these practices um super fast i'll just go quickly to about next slide please so this is these are some more of rafko works um perhaps um this work by um rafko that light over red black um is familiar i remember visiting the Tate and sitting as a 20-year-old looking at rafko pieces and just becoming overwhelmed it was like this mirror and yet also this depth where i just sort of

dove in and thought about my life and as a 20-year-old to sit and look at a painting for more than 30 seconds is not something that i had experienced and so sitting for a profound amount of time and having art have that impact on me rafko remains um one of the most important artists i think in the second half of the 20th century in our art history canon um and then i'll just say you know a place that was so dedicated to programs like this this these are events that are taking place in the chapel um i want to be there i want to be a part of where these kinds of practices and um and also acceptance and celebration of many faith traditions or no faith traditions happening in a space dedicated to art feels right to me feels right in our reset thank you so much professor soriana professor hey gi professor soriana we would like to now turn to a few questions from our audience these are questions that are coming in through slido i'm going to check into the chat box to uh capture a couple and we actually have the first one is for you dr hickey uh the questioner says that you mentioned the and frank piece with the audience how do we expose different forms of art to people from different backgrounds well that particular concert was one way in which i did it uh that concert uh featured uh a well i don't want to give the name but a well-known race car driver who narrated and sang and uh on our concert uh we had very purposefully tried to establish a male uh athlete in which i think race car drivers are athletes um that we wanted to have as a guest on our family concert to try to bring uh younger males who might think that uh classical music is not uh very male and not the best of things so we did that very purposefully and we got a much larger audience his uh uh a large number of his following uh race car following came to the concert and they heard that and frank piece that's how you do it you pair in meaningful ways uh the concert was all about heroes and heroines and the songs and the narration that uh the race car driver gave were about more well-known heroes and heroines but this then provided a picture of a heroine that uh and a somewhat bleak one that we allowed a high school young lady to narrate because that that presented the view of and frank literally a more identifiable view you have to combine uh make programs of positive works and let them be the end and let them leave or uh rarely do a whole program that really you leave kind of confounded and dumbfounded by the the depth i do occasionally do those but it's it's difficult thank you professor soryano in your role as associate provost over the arts this is something that seems that you have to do that is to say exposing different forms of art to different backgrounds if you could discuss some of your approaches or strategies in your role at wake forest well i will say that our idea that wake forest is a place where the arts belong to everybody has to be how we live our truth so the the notion of pro-humanitate through every facet of a wake forest experience absolutely lives in scales fine art center but it can't only live there the arts really can be a part of every student experience whether they are student in the divinity school or an undergraduate who's a music major who's been in the orchestra all four years with dr haji um a dancer in our dance program um a school a student in the business school i think my my idea that it's not even my idea it's just a human idea that we can all have meaningful no even better transformative experiences in the arts during our time at wake forest should be

everyone's experience and so how do how does that happen it's aligning and finding partners who want to support that and and and it's a lot of listening to other people and their vision for that so i often actually think about your wisdom um dean waltin when you talk about how someone encounters the space and if they feel as though they belong there or not has to do with perhaps what's on the walls and so the ways that we create it the way that art can be a tool your term i love this notion of ambient belonging right that i walk in if i am a person of a certain faith and i walk into a space that doesn't have images that represent me or my experiences how do i know that this space or place is for me so um that's one example it's finding ways that there are people who there are colleagues there are students who who agree and want to work towards finding those transformational experiences and knowing that they might not just be on a stage right but that they might be on the pew of a church or they might be um in the middle of um a public space that is shared by many right a shared um space on campus somewhere or outdoors so i i think that it is a lifelong pursuit and um i've really enjoyed i've really enjoyed the way this position gives me an opportunity to meet people who who might not otherwise be someone i would regularly encounter i'd like to address that a little bit before we leave the subject because i think that uh the arts are something that can be off-putting uh it and not seen as inclusive when they're not meant that way i think uh for example classical music i hear more people say oh well i don't know very much about classical music fine come here something and see if it addresses you you don't have to know anything uh i don't uh i don't know enough about art to appreciate fine art uh you don't have to know anything about art maybe an an educated view might experience more depth to an artwork but that's not to say that an uneducated view won't experience depth at all and all these will um oh i'm not good enough to play in that orchestra who cares how good you are if you come with an open thought about yes we want to make you better we want to hope that you can contribute to our performance but so many people are afraid in this day and age to even try to be an artist and being an artist can be whistling or singing in the shower uh can be any way of of being involved in making music making visual representations making moving through your space daily as john kate said everything you do is music and uh everywhere you sit is the best seat that's it you know but it takes courage it does it takes to courage students on this call like those of you that have had the courage to study art at wake forest thank you like risk taking is what is what we do right we're taking risks we're showing up on the line vulnerably putting ourselves out there in our art making and in this and also in our critical review of art right those of us that are scholars that is a we that risk that we take is so important and so i think that's the other thing that i've been really excited to talk about more in terms of why the arts matter and why they matter at you at wake forest during your experience they matter because it's a moment to put yourself on the line and take a risk and and and fail fail beautifully you know fail powerfully and then the resilience of getting back up and trying it again um you know art is also daily right it's another thing i think often i was thinking a lot about there's so many ways to come into this topic about the arts right the dailyness when we think about spiritual practice that

the artistic practice the dailyness of it right i um i think about that a lot too so thank you for for taking the risk you know to hear you talk about the dailyness of it right or how art shows up in so many spaces um and and you're really talking about as professor hague was pointing to it kind of democratization of the art right of art and so far as we're disrupting uh the the hierarchies that become exclusive when we think about high culture and low culture right and the ways that we kind of categorize in exclusive ways and so we think about uh pacificity maybe different ways and we think about contemporary gospel music that's selling in many of our churches and we think about shopon differently than we think about the genius of brilliance of and the rico franklin or phantasia right and so what you're describing now is this kind of democratization that culture can take so many different forms art takes so many different forms and with that in mind we actually have a question it's about how can we continue or even do a better job of offering accessibility to the arts as it relates to equitably providing experiences to those who might not be able to afford them and or to dr hague's point may feel uh that they don't belong well first it's being brave as uh christina says to have the courage to feel uh i do belong just say i do belong and expect but i can feel i can feel like that belong and i can know i belong and i can still feel unwanted yes that's sadly the case in certain situations i mean i think that's important to acknowledge oh absolutely and i think we have to acknowledge that we constantly certainly in the symphonic world acknowledge how are we being um closed-minded how are we uh saying no that's not appropriate how are we putting off potential audience members uh it's a it's a difficult situation because a lot of music a lot of sound that we want to experience and that has a a subtlety to it requires a respect for silence in a way and in our modern day uh most popular musical experiences that silence is not called for in our biggest art rock music doesn't require silence uh to be heard and to be experienced over uh and in fact uh they probably those rock musicians perhaps would prefer to have a an audience uh yelling and pushing them forward but some orchestral pieces couldn't can't happen with that kind of sound we have to be prepared to experience art in the way that the creator of it uh might have had in mind and that's difficult for some people uh but then different arts tend to impact different people we would like to think that all art can impact all of us and i think that's true but it takes uh a person whose background is in classical music a boldness to go hear some rock music some gospel music some country western music all of this is your various styles and it takes just as it takes the courage from those people whose background is much more in the popular vein to come come to a concert do i have to dress up oh my there's so many things that can be barriers no you don't have to dress up uh we just we fight these barriers all the time thank you thank you professor sariano well gosh there's so many ways to answer this i mean i'll start with historically when you look at students studying dance in higher ed at a place like wake forest at a place that maybe has also a bfa program so we're schools that are training dancers to move on into professions in the arts and dance well you use the word access and so i i start by saying there is such rigor and beauty and power in the performance of training in a dance studio and that was my training and i would never trade any of that for you

know i wouldn't change anything um that said the when i meet students who uh and this happened to me i remember being at an open house for accepted students and meeting a student who came up to me and said i just wanted to say hi i was really looking forward to taking your class but my parents won't let me take dance at wake forest because it's too expensive to go to school here and i can't they they can't justify that however many credits of this experience financially are worth that time in the studio we get that in music too well and of course my first reaction is where is your mother or father who i need to speak to right now exactly um that wasn't and that wasn't possible instead i said thank you for saying hello if i can help you or anyone in your family like change your mind i'm here i'm here for you right to talk about this but i think the other thing is why we study art the outcome is not necessarily going to be about access to this position in a dance company that those touring companies i can count on one hand now there isn't there is not the same resource so it is up to us as arts educators to help our students understand that this training is not relegated only to one thing but it can be that thing however there are so many paths that this training can provide for you in your professional lives in your professional experience and the worthiness and the the um the beauty of studying this thing that you are passionate about is just as important should you be studying the humanity a social science um or or stem related field so i think a lot about like the narrative around the arts being this fluffy thing that is just is not necessary but it's nice like there's got to be a way we do a better job about no no no this is necessary and it's necessary for all facets of your professional personal emotional spiritual life moving forward financial right all of the things that that matter um let me let me actually keep pushing you if i can push you in that direction because one of the questions that came in was what are the tangible ways that college students can use the arts for pro-humanitizing right and so i want to keep pushing you in that direction to specifically answer that question because i see where you were headed yeah well i want to acknowledge too i think about some of the work that have happened in the arts at Wake Forest this year during a pandemic in the spirit of pro-humanitata and i think of our colleagues in music and their students who have been offering instruction to Winston-Salem Forsyth County school students with musical instruments because there's musical empowerment it's called yeah the musical empowerment program so i think about that i think about my students this semester who've had a residency virtually with six graders at Wiley Middle School where we've been using dance to help sixth graders learn science curriculum and science topics i think about the way our students have had virtual online art exhibitions available and open to students i think about the the webinars i think about the way students tomorrow night are going to be revealing works that they have purchased from the student union art acquisition fund to join the university art collection sharing the voices and the artworks of nine artists all of whom are underrepresented artists in the art markets in the art world so the ways that these experiences are um are lived and have been happening at Wake Forest i am so proud of these of these moments um that that and that enliven pro-humanitata but it doesn't just start and stop with these sort of community facing things it has to also be embedded in i think a lifelong pursuit of

um what makes you happy what brings you joy where do you find your passion how do you identify who you are and what you care about how can the arts be a vehicle for helping understand it's the big questions it's it's it's no different than the faith-based questions right how it is a part of the human condition um that's that's what we teach that's what we're that's what we're instructing professor as your cat i saw in the corner yes was agreeing with his or her tail yes the tail is here um i'm not sure how they can uh necessarily jump in and help the arts be for humanity um i think that arts serve the people who try to carry them out as much as the people for whom they are carried out so the performer benefits as much as the audience member um be an audience member that's using the arts that's helping the performer understand their art form or if you really want to help then volunteer for a group and there are all these things that artists need done inevitably um i think simply seeking out art any art any one art that particularly might intrigue you and trying to see what it has to offer you is a step pro-humanity if you like this and you want to hear more like share review and subscribe to this podcast and from all of us here at the Veritas Forum thank you you you

(gentle music)