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# Nashv Arts

March 2012

MAGAZINE



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by Beth English McMillian

**H**arpeth Hall has developed one of the most impressive Fine Arts programs for young girls in Middle Tennessee. Starting in fifth grade their girls are groomed in art, music, theatre, and dance, and they learn to create, value, and support the arts for a lifetime. At Harpeth Hall, the fine arts are a vital, integral component of a complete education.

Most importantly, Harpeth Hall allows the girls to discover their passions and emotions and explore new ideas, subject matter, and cultures while creating their own artistic voices, developing them into extraordinary individuals. Three senior girls in particular have excelled in these programs: Ragan Wilson (Visual Arts), Allison Richter (Visual Arts), and Natalie May (Performing Arts).



Natalie May

PHOTO: LAWRENCE BOOTHBY



Natalie May

**Natalie May** is a triple threat. She can sing, she can dance, and she can act. During the photo shoot she comfortably entertained the crew with songs from *Phantom of the Opera* and "Don't Cry for Me Argentina." Her passion for performance is definitely an early sign of a true star in the making. Throughout her life, May has always loved being on stage. She started as a young ballerina and then performed in musicals during middle school. When the time came to choose a program in high school, she knew that Performing Arts would be perfect.

I love music, I love dance, and I love theatre—and I'm able to pursue each one, which is great! Honestly I'm just so grateful to Harpeth Hall for all that I've been able to pursue academically as well as the arts.

May has certainly taken advantage of the multiple opportunities available in the Performing Arts program. She has fulfilled roles as Dance Captain and President of Chamberlain Choir, and she performs in the school's theatrical shows. She even works behind the scenes as head of costumes and box office. With an abundance of talent and possibilities in the future, May clearly sees two paths ahead. So when she attends college in the fall she will double major in Music Performance and International Relations. On the one hand she could see herself on Broadway, but on the other she would also love to work for the United Nations.

**Ragan Wilson** has evolved into an artist who knows exactly what she wants. She's strong-willed and determined to take the tools she's learned at Harpeth Hall and excel with them in college. She plans to attend art school in the fall and is excited to finally be in an environment where it's all about art, all of the time, no matter what.

With graduation quickly approaching in a few months, Wilson has her eyes set on the future. She has dreams of one day illustrating graphics for video games and movies and seeing her work up on the big screen. She currently has a painting, *The Mortician's Daughter*, hanging in Cheekwood Botanical Gardens & Museum of Art as a Gold Key Award winner and is a Silver Key Award winner for her art portfolio in the Middle Tennessee Scholastic Art Competition.



Ragan Wilson

PHOTO: LAWRENCE BOOTHBY

**Allison Richter** begins to talk about her senior year in the Visual Arts program, and her face instantly lights up with a grin. She truly loves art, and it shows in her spirit. When Richter was a child, her mother enrolled her in summer art camps at Watkins College of Art. So in sixth grade when she enrolled at Harpeth Hall she already knew what she wanted—more art classes.

I started taking art and learning the fundamentals. Choosing art in high school is a big commitment, and in the beginning there is a lot of guidance, but now there is freedom to create whatever I want. It's really nice to have that freedom. I've earned it!

Last summer Richter traveled to Italy to study Renaissance art in Rome. There she fell in love with Italian artist Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, famous for his dramatic use of lighting. That love influenced her painting, *Father*, which is currently hanging in Cheekwood Botanical Gardens & Museum of Art, making her an American Vision Nominee in the Middle Tennessee Scholastic Art Competition. ✓

[www.harpethhall.org](http://www.harpethhall.org)

The school's art program is both really structured and flexible, willing to let go. I like painting realistically, but I love to add that one little twist where people ask, 'Why is that here?'



Ragan Wilson



Allison Richter



Allison Richter

PHOTO: LAWRENCE BOOTHBY