Autumn 2006 Winner

Jessica Galant

Instructor’s Foreword

As readers, we often perceive what we read to be inevitable, effortless, and complete. As writers we have a very different sort of relationship to what we write, a relationship that is usually full of difficult choices and hard work. As a teacher, one has the pleasure of being a reader, while also having a window onto the process of writing and research, a process that is otherwise largely invisible. From this vantage point, I’d like to offer three observations about the process of research and writing that culminated in the essay you are about to read.

Jessica began with a topic that she had a personal connection to and that interested her deeply. This personal connection galvanized her research and even helped her secure some sources, but in no way did it close her mind to what she would find and ultimately argue.

At first, Jessica searched only for sources on her narrow topic—tableaux vivants. Later, she began to understand her topic more broadly, as a particular way to think through larger concerns, such as practices of realism, illusionism, absorption, and spectacle. This enabled Jessica to draw connections to P.T. Barnum’s hoaxes and The Matrix (1999).

Finally, from reading this essay, it will be clear that Jessica approached her research with energy and persistence. What may not be clear is that much of the strength of this essay is due to that which has been left out. Jessica produced a very thorough and long rough draft in which her own arguments were not particularly clear or prominent. I encouraged her to foreground her own argument and to think about what ideas, sentences, and even paragraphs she might be able to cut loose, despite the initial reluctance we all have as writers to cast aside our own prose. Jessica saw this process through admirably, and the result is a stronger, leaner essay that reads not as a chronicle of research findings, but as a sustained and focused exploration of her topic.

Mark Feldman
Keeping Tableaux Vivants Alive

Jessica Galant

... 2... 1... The lights come up and the famous marble masterpiece of Italian sculptor Nicolò Salvi, Fontana di Trevi (the Trevi Fountain), comes to “life” on stage. With statues representing Abundance and Salubrity at his sides and tritons guiding his chariot below him, Neptune, the Greek god of the sea, tames the waters in a stunning recreation that looks almost indistinguishable from the real statue in Rome. The seemingly flawless reconstruction of the magnificence and intricacy of Salvi’s architecture is just one part of an even more tantalizing and captivating display; the nude sculptures are actually real, living people, painted and posed, frozen in their positions. Many audience members lean forward, engaged and mesmerized by the illusion, others shift uncomfortably in their seats wondering about the hidden mechanics that enable the living to appear dead and lifeless, and still others imagine themselves in Italy, throwing a penny into or drinking water from the fountain, which, according to myth, will guarantee them a safe return to Rome. The Trevi Fountain is one example of a tableau vivant, literally a “living picture,” in which live, motionless people recreate paintings, sculptures, and scenes from history and literature.

Since late medieval and early Renaissance Europe, tableaux vivants have served a number of different purposes and have catered to a variety of audiences, from honoring kings in royal pageantry to teaching biblical stories to the illiterate. Although tableaux vivants have evolved in form and function, they have fascinated audiences by paradoxically making them interact with and feel connected to the living and breathing art, but simultaneously evoking feelings of uneasiness. This uneasiness, caused by an illusion that makes living people appear dead and motionless, is turned into wonder and amazement when the secret behind the “magic trick” is revealed, a change that leads to a greater appreciation for and understanding of the artwork and the display itself.

Although the appeal of tableaux vivants has declined since the 1920s in the wake of more contemporary forms of entertainment such as theater and motion pictures, one tableaux vivants showcase remains. The world–renowned Pageant of the Masters in Laguna Beach, California is an annual, nightly summer show in which about forty tableaux vivants are displayed in succession. The tableaux include art from many different time periods, cultures, and styles from the masterpieces of Rodin and Da Vinci to ancient
sculptures of Indian and Greek deities to “pop art” from Warhol to magazine covers. Each year, 155,000 patrons spend up to seventy-five dollars to witness what has been described as breathtaking and magical. The detailed sets, painted and assembled by the Pageant’s own crew and 300-member, all-volunteer cast, elaborate costumes and make-up that incorporate the shadows and colors of the art, and carefully placed lighting, cause the cast members to look exactly as if they are carved in bronze, etched in glass, or painted in oils, and the artwork to appear indistinguishable from its original when viewed from a distance. The Pageant is shown in an outdoor theater called the Irvine Bowl, which, as its name suggests, is a round theater with eight viewing platforms so that the audience is literally surrounded by art. The models, ordinary Southern Californians and often small children who represent adults in the tableaux, are helped into their positions by a team of artistic directors. Music starts, the lights go up, and for ninety seconds the audience gazes at and experiences a particular piece of art until the lights go down and another piece of art is displayed. One wonders why, even after the mechanics behind the trompe l’œil (fooling of the eye) have been explained, the patrons come back year after year and why the Pageant of the Masters has been so successful in keeping tableaux vivants alive?

The Pageant of the Masters has modernized the display of tableaux vivants and, in doing so, has created a multisensory experience that makes the seemingly dead and motionless art “come to life.” The Pageant audience, composed of people of all ages and backgrounds, not only marvels at the technical brilliance that makes the visual illusion possible, but also embarks on a sensory and emotional journey that “transgresses the lines separating art from reality” (Stafford 1). Changes such as the addition of live narration, musical accompaniment, and a unifying theme, as well as the incorporation of movement to provide a sense of relief to contrast the stillness of the display, transport the spectator into the world of the art, making it as real to him as if he were actually immersed in the scene. In addition, the Pageant provides an outlet for people to escape the fast-paced technological society and a means to study, appreciate, and simply enjoy the arts.

**The Rise and Fall of Tableaux Vivants**

Tableaux vivants have evolved in form and function over time, but retain their essential conceptual appeal. The art form has changed from an aristocratic form of entertainment to displays that are open to and intended for the masses; it has its roots in the royal pageantry of late medieval and early Renaissance Europe; it evolved into parlor tableaux in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century America; and it exists today in rare art shows for the general public. Also, the intent of tableaux vivants has changed from telling stories or conveying messages, having no connection to a particular painting or sculpture, to reproducing specific works of art.

Tableaux vivants began as ceremonial spectacles to welcome and honor royalty, providing interactive experiences that would come to characterize the art form. Bamber Gascoigne describes tableaux vivants in early-fourteenth-century France that “became familiar feature[s] of a king’s entry into a city” and were often “political hints to the ruler” (90). For example, in 1582, the city of Antwerp presented a series of tableaux vivants to Francis, the future king and brother of the king of France, to celebrate Antwerp’s independence from Spain and new allegiance to France. Francis is represented in the tableaux by a live model of the biblical character David, who is depicted in scenes, such as his slaying of Goliath, that anticipate Francis’ upcoming ascension to the throne and highlight his future responsibilities as king. At the end of the procession, Francis is
directed on a stage to represent himself in a tableau depicting criminals with outstretched arms, begging for mercy. Here, tableaux vivants enabled history to come alive in a real and relatable situation. Thus, from its origins, the use of live models in display has created an interactive experience that has enabled spectators to project themselves into and therefore more fully understand and appreciate presented artwork.

At the same time that the viewing of tableaux vivants began to open up to more of the population, the focus of the tableaux changed from communicating political messages to preaching morals, values, and ideal realities. When church fathers used biblical and historical tableaux to educate the illiterate, wealthy citizens of mid-eighteenth-century Naples built elaborate Neapolitan cribs, which became the feature attraction of Christmas celebrations. These cribs reproduced episodes from daily life and scenes from the Gospels with as much realism as possible to “convey the message of the Gospel in modern terms, to make the spectators participate in the events portrayed” (Holmstrom 213). Spectators walked along the stage, viewing chronologically the procession of the Wise Men followed by the birth of Jesus as well as live, recreated events from everyday life such as scenes in shops and homes. The viewers experienced the tableaux from a physical, but not emotional distance; the interspersing of relatable common occurrences with biblical presentations facilitated the application of the Gospels to the spectator’s everyday lives. Despite this, Kirsten Gram Holmstrom argues that it was “by no means a true picture of reality” (214) because the cribs represented the ideal instead of the real, as they depicted society in its preferred and imagined form. Nevertheless, they still captivated spectators by allowing them to project themselves into the images, and thereby connect with the tableaux. In addition, the live people in the display intensified the idea that this reality was attainable, inviting spectators to imagine themselves in similar scenes at some time in the future.

By the late-eighteenth century, tableaux vivants had evolved to represent particular pieces of art, and improved artistic technology enabled the living bodies in the displays to appear even more dead and lifeless. This evolution was accompanied by a change in the art form’s effect on spectators; simultaneous feelings of wonder and uneasiness were evoked by displays in which living models appeared almost inhuman in their immobility. The idea of using tableaux vivants for the purpose of simulating well-known artworks is generally attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and his novel, Elective Affinities (Holmstrom 216). The main character Luciana performs in tableaux vivants of famous paintings in order to satisfy her desire for attention, thus indicating her shallow personality. When describing Luciana’s first performance, which occurs in a tableau of Van Dyck’s Belisarius, Goethe comments on the combined sense of wonder and anxiety that the display evokes: “the figures were so perfect, the colors so successfully distributed, the lighting so ingenious, all that seemed transported into another world, except that realism instead of illusion produced a kind of uneasiness” (186). It can be argued that the illusion created by making a nonliving entity seem alive (i.e. wax museum statues) is nonthreatening because the spectator understands that the display cannot move, he cannot interact with it, and there cannot be any surprises. On the other hand, the illusion created by making a living person seem dead makes the spectator much more uncomfortable because realism, the possibility of movement by the live model, is a source of anxiety for the viewer of a still display. The common spectator will search for movement such as breathing, twitching, or blinking, to eliminate the prospect of surprise and quell his anxiety, reassuring himself that the models are actually living. It is this uneasiness that makes the viewing of tableaux vivants such a captivating and exciting experience. Holmstrom argues similarly to Goethe
that “there lies an unconscious, piquantly disturbing feeling of uncertainty in the face of this play with illusion and reality” (216). Thus, Holmstrom seems to suggest that the spectator feels an uncontrollable and innate apprehension when looking at live people who appear dead, who are out of their natural state of being, which is active and mobile. Despite the uneasiness that Holmstrom and Goethe describe, lighting and costuming make the recreations appear so intensely real and alive, that the spectator experiences the art as if he were actually in the scene. The realization of this technical masterpiece is what turns uneasiness into wonder and amazement.

The simultaneous excitement and anxiety of the displays enabled tableaux vivants to develop into addictive popular amusements. Tableaux vivants arrived in the United States in the mid–1800s and instantly became a popular form of entertainment, particularly in New York City. McCullough notes that tableaux vivants “found their way into the most respected theatres as well as the lowliest concert saloons and music halls, and were even presented as ‘society fundraisers’” (143).\footnote{McCullough discusses the political and moral debate that arose in 1870s New York due to the display of naked women in tableaux vivants in his book, Living Pictures on the New York Stage.} In 1858, George Arnold published America’s first tableau vivant manual: The Sociable. Deviating from Goethe’s influence, rather than particular paintings or pieces of art, Arnold describes tableaux that are static representations of real life experiences and for each he describes the lighting and costuming necessary to evoke the most profound effect. For example, in Arnold’s highly specific direction for the parlor tableau entitled Love and Jealousy, he describes that “to the right centre of stage, a cavalier, dressed in a slashed doublet and jacket, trunk hose, low shoes, with large pink rosettes, and a velvet cap and feather. At his side hangs a rapier. A guitar, upon which he is playing, is suspended from his neck with a blue ribbon” (168). The precise detail limits a director’s creativity, but ensures that the final, intended look is achieved. This, combined with the universality of the theme, enables the spectator to form a deep, emotional connection with the models on the stage and the art as a whole.

I would suggest that the experience of an intense connection with art is what separates tableaux vivants from art displays in galleries. When one approaches a piece of art in a gallery, the art is physically and emotionally distant and untouchable. Instead of imagining himself in the display or experiencing the emotions of the characters in the painting, the spectator stands in awe of the artist’s individual brushstrokes and carvings, labors that culminated to produce the final masterpiece. The viewer is amazed at the magnificence of the work and its historical significance, but does not directly relate on a personal level as he would when viewing tableaux vivants. While the success of the illusion in tableaux vivants also depends on distance, the live models help create an emotional and engaging experience, causing the spectator to be connected to the art, rather than detached from it. Also, while there may be illusions within the paintings or sculptures displayed in art galleries, the artworks themselves are not illusions. There is no sense of uneasiness because the art is unquestionably unchanging and constant; the combined excitement and anxiety of viewing live models is nonexistent. In addition, although the figures in paintings are static and motionless like the models in tableaux vivants, the awareness of the realism of the live models is enough to awaken the senses and elevate the excitement of the experience.

Despite the wonder of tableaux vivants, their appeal significantly declined in the twentieth century. Several critics have provided convincing arguments as to the reason for this decline. McCullough, with whom I agree, argues that the art form was “taken over
by the budding motion picture industry, by the leg show, and the striptease burlesque, and by the theatrical spectacle of musical revue and operetta” (143). In the increasingly fast–paced society of the mid–1900s that was using new technology to create new modes of entertainment, people had little patience to sit and stare at art that lacked an element of motion, no matter how beautiful or grand. Chapman takes a different perspective, arguing that tableaux vivants mainly served to objectify women. She argues that tableaux vivants became an “erotic spectacle of the silent woman,” and that tableaux vivants of famous female figures from history and literature such as Ophelia and Niobe “exemplify the virtues of the cult of true womanhood: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity” (5). While Chapman never explicitly discusses the effect of this offensive display on society, as she traces the use of women in tableaux in literature specifically, she seems to imply that the immorality of displaying nude women on stage helped catalyze the nineteenth– and twentieth–century feminist movement. As a result, the art form declined in popularity because the number of women willing to perform in them decreased. On the other hand, Holmstrom argues “the genre in itself, as a form, had nothing to give” because “the essence of all theatre is movement; the ‘living’ pictures were not living, but petrified, immobile” (217). In other words, she means that uneasiness overcomes any possible feelings of wonder. The tableau may seem to “come to life,” but she argues that motionless models in the display do nothing more than increase the sense of lifelessness and death, making the spectator more uncomfortable and causing him to seek out other forms of flashy and glamorous entertainment.

The Magic of the Pageant

As the popularity of tableaux vivants declined, it became increasingly difficult to simultaneously preserve the magic of the art form and cater to the tastes of the public. The Pageant of the Masters is one of the world’s lasting tableaux vivants showcases because it has modernized the display of the art form by including periods of theatrical performance in between the still tableaux, providing a sense of relief for the spectator. Ironically, this reflects the techniques employed in the first recorded theatrical tableaux, a 1751 display of a replica of Jean Baptiste Greuze’s painting, L’Accordee de Village (The Village Bride) which had been a popular favorite at the Louvre, in a show of the Comedie Italienne’s production of Les Noces d’Arlequin (The Marriages of the Harlequin) in Paris. Holmstrom notes that the protagonist in the play took his position replacing one of the characters in the painting, but broke the illusion by wearing his own costume (218). This hint of realism is a sense of relief for the spectator who would otherwise be overwhelmed by and uncomfortable with the seamlessness of the illusion. However, this also ironically punctures the realism of the illusion, a sacrifice that became increasingly necessary to ensure that crowds could sit through and enjoy many successive tableaux. Like the Harlequin, reality provides a sense of relief; in the Pageant, it breaks the uneasiness and prepares the spectator to be both shocked and engaged by each subsequent
tableau. In doing so, the Pageant has preserved the art form by catering to an audience that has a desire for movement.

For the past eleven years, Pageant director Diane Challis Davy has introduced these “contemporary touches” to cater to the tastes of the modern public and make the show more fun and enjoyable. For example, during some of the scene changes the lights are dimmed rather than completely turned off. The cast members in the paintings are allowed to move and shift their positions, their performance being complete, while another background is brought upstage and more cast members get ready to pose. This introduction of movement serves to convince the audience of the illusion it is witnessing, showing it that the people are real and alive, despite the stillness they adopt during the tableau. Whether it is the bending of a model taking his position in the tableau or the inertial nodding of the head of another model who is attached to a moving set piece, the motion provides a sense of relief for the uneasy audience member because it reassures him that the live models are actually living. In addition, Davy has added moving theatrical displays such as “marching carnivals, falling snow, and live ice skaters” to make the Pageant grander and more theater-like (Chang 1). For example, the 2005 show, entitled “On the Road,” featured a live vocal performance of the song “Route 66” in which the performer drove through the bowl in an antique car. In 2006, which had an entire section devoted to different posters of wine, a green, devilish creature that personified the addictiveness of alcohol danced on stage and a giant wine bottle released bubbles all over the audience to signal intermission. These displays counter the motionless people in the tableaux and provide spectacles that make the audience have fun and appreciate the art at the same time. However, during the more famous pieces of art, this tactic is not employed. The less realism the audience sees, the more he is overcome with uneasiness and is shocked and awed by the tableau.

The need to contrast illusion with reality to alleviate feelings of uneasiness can be understood more clearly when the Pageant is discussed in terms of what it is in its essence: a series of grand magic tricks. In *Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum*, Neil Harris discusses the appeal of Barnum’s hoaxes in terms of a phenomenon called the “operational aesthetic”: the combination of the delight in observing a hoax or illusion, while seeking the truth. In the case of the Pageant of the Masters, patrons enjoy both observing the magnificent and beautiful artistry of the tableaux and trying to discover the hidden mechanisms behind the display. Harris argues that “perfection and absolute conviction in exhibits made them less valuable. Spectators require some hint of a problem, some suggestion of difficulty” (82). This idea is reflected in the ways in which the patrons try to search for the truth, the secret behind the magic trick. They look for any subtle movements of the posed cast members including breathing, blinking, and twitching. The tableau is made valuable because the audience perceives a difficulty in a person remaining still and lifeless. Recognizing the human instinctive pleasure in the uncovering process, Davy selects a painting in the first few tableaux and takes the audience “backstage.” From positioning the foreground to securing the cast members in their proper places, the narrator describes the steps that the cast and crew take during each tableau to complete the final recreation, uncovering the secret for the audience. However, even after the mechanics of the display are detailed, the audience is still amazed and awed by the final product. Harris explains that “delight in learning explains why the experience of deceit was enjoyable even after the hoax had been penetrated, or at least during the period of doubt and suspicion” (77). Armed with knowledge about the process, the audience can fight off the feelings of uneasiness and enjoy the illusions.
Another modernization of the display of tableaux vivants in the Pageant of the Masters involves Davy’s reintroduction of a theme to the show, a unifying concept that connects the seemingly disjointed artworks from a variety of cultures and time periods. This enables the Pageant’s artistic directors to refine their search for artworks and it ensures that the audience sees a different show each year. For example, the 2006 show, entitled “Passions of Art,” depicted love–themed art, such as The Stolen Kiss by Fragonard and Porcelain Lovers by J. Kaendler and P. Reinicke. The upcoming 2007 show, “Young at Heart,” will feature art depicting elements of youth from “the carefree games and richly illustrated fantasies of childhood, to the wistful nostalgia of middle age and the imaginative reinventions of our ‘golden years’” (http://www.foapom.com/site/overview_pom.asp:1). The universality of such themes engages people of all ages and backgrounds, thus departing from the aristocratic, European, and biblical focuses of the art form’s origins. The theme increases the ability of the patron to relate to and experience the art in a uniquely personal way. It addition, it enables historical artistic masterpieces to have a connection to and a value in today’s world, joining the past and the present. Also, in a world where cultural divisions and tensions have led to misunderstandings, generalizations, and the formation of stereotypes, a thematic connection invites spectators to realize the common emotional threads that bind all of humanity together.

Live narration is the means through which the thematic connections between the tableaux are explained. Pageant scriptwriter Dan Duling describes the effect of Davy’s addition of an overall theme: “Narratively, it’s been a blessing. Discovering linkages between vastly different artworks from different cultures and time periods encourages a sense of connection. And connection is something I’m always thinking about: how art connects us; how it has something to offer, no matter how different our ages or backgrounds; how art can inform our humanity and help us believe in community as well as individuality” (http://www.foapom.com/news/viewarticle.asp?ID=120:1). Duling’s script communicates the value that art can have for finding connections between individuals and cultures, breaking fears and misconceptions, and uniting diverse people under common emotional experiences. In addition to perpetuating the general link between the diverse art, the narration serves a practical and educational purpose; it provides the transition between each scene as well as presenting information about the artist, the work, and its cultural significance. This enables the audience to more
fully appreciate the display, increases its meaning by putting it in a historical and cultural context, and allows the audience to personally connect with the message or meaning of the art. For example, in the display of the *The World of the Geisha* in the 2006 show, the following narration provides a glimpse of ancient Japanese culture:

Inside the geisha houses of 18th century Japan, ritual and art inspired the pursuit of transitory pleasures. Three pairs of woodblock prints by *ukiyo-e* master Torii Kiyonaga idealize a time when courtesans and geisha reigned as mistresses of desire. On the left, a patron’s every whim is indulged in a private chamber overlooking Edo Bay. In the center, preparations for an evening’s entertainment take place in a moonlit restaurant. And on the right, privacy screens are required following a musical prelude. In Edo, as Tokyo was then known, life’s impermanence took on special meaning for patrons who found fantasy for sale within “the floating world.” (Duling 14)

Because of the narration, the viewer can understand the art’s significance on a deeper cultural and historical level.

In addition to serving as a means for cultural education, the narration enables the audience to feel connected to the art by linking it to modern society. For instance, after the presentation of *Marriage of Convenience* by Scottish Victorian painter William Orchardson, which depicts a man and a woman who did not marry for love, having difficulties just seven months into their marriage, narrator Skip Conover comments, “I wonder if Match–dot–com or Dr. Phil could have saved that marriage… I can’t help imagining the butler leaning over and whispering to the lord of the manor, ‘Sir… she’s just not that into you…’” (Duling 8). While this obviously provides an element of humor, it connects ideas of modern society and everyday life to the paintings, making them more easily understandable and relatable.

Duling also states that the harmony of music and narration can “enhance a ‘living picture’ with a full range of emotional values” (http://www.foapom.com/news/viewarticle.asp?ID=120:1). Composed and conducted by Richard Henn and performed by a live orchestra each night, musical accompaniment transports the spectator into the different worlds of the art and evokes emotions that add another piece of liveliness to the static art. For instance, Latin music with hand–clapping and tantalizing guitar engages the audience during the display of John Singer Sargent’s *El Jaleo (The Bolt)*, in which a gypsy dancer attracts the attention of male visitors in a Spanish café. Although the model posing as the gypsy dancer is not actually moving, the music causes the audience to imagine that the dancer is actually twirling and stomping to the beat. To produce a different effect, the beauty and emotion of Massenet’s famous “Meditations” from the opera *Thais*, an enchanting violin solo with orchestral accompaniment, captures the mysticism and sacredness of the Pageant’s traditional finale: Leonardo Da Vinci’s *The Last Supper*.

Barbara Stafford presents a different reason for people’s continued fascination with the Pageant of the Masters. She argues
that the Pageant transports the spectator into the world of the art, an imaginary world that is unique to the mind of each viewer. She states that, “viewers become participants in the art, viscerally transfixed, and spiritually transported” (Stafford 4). Viewers “participate” by transcending the Irvine Bowl and using the tableaux vivant as an entry point into the world their imagination generates. The viewers envision the world of the artwork and position themselves inside of it. Stafford also argues that the audience is, in some sense, able to emotionally communicate with the dead, with the seemingly lifeless people in the display and the artwork itself. She comments that, “a new type of necromancy unfurls a cascade of unified visions, even as the ominous and floating realm that is conjured up remains elusive and unverifiable by touch” (Stafford 6). Again, Stafford reinforces the idea that the spectator enters an intangible world, one that he can ironically see himself interacting with through the displayed artwork.

Stafford also argues that the Pageant of the Masters acts as an escape from the modern, fast–paced technological society and the preoccupations of life in general: “viewers become buoyant, anesthetized to life’s usual anxieties” (Stafford 6). Because the spectator is transported into a different world by the living pictures, he forgets about midterms, business meetings, politics, and the stressful and depressing news that floods modern society. In addition, it has been argued that the Pageant is a “welcome palliative to the freneticism of modern day entertainment” (Chang 2). Although the special effects of science fiction blockbusters and the inanity of “reality” television shows cause the public to crave the meaningful and educational to excite them and satisfy their thirst for knowledge, the appeal of modern forms of entertainment is not so different from that of the Pageant of the Masters and tableaux vivants in general. For example, *The Matrix* (1999) is captivating and thought–provoking because it creates a similar feeling of uneasiness as it highlights the conflict between the real and unreal.

The Pageant display enables masterpieces to break through the display cases and picture frames that made them distant and untouchable; the spectator can connect to them through his emotions and imagination. From my own experiences as an usher, it is not only hard to describe the look of amazement and astonishment on the audience’s faces, but also the mesmerizing and captivating effect that the show has on me. Each time I see the show, I catch a new subtlety in a painting or sculpture or listen more closely to the narration. It is fascinating that the magnificence and grandeur of the professional artistry combined with emotional music often has the power to bring members of the audience to tears. I have come to appreciate the Pageant so much more because I have seen the dedication, passion, and hard work that the make–up artists, orchestra, lighting crew, cast, and directors put into each and every production. The Pageant offers a forum for people of all ages and backgrounds to come together to view and appreciate art. By modernizing tableaux vivants, the Pageant has successfully kept the art form alive and will continue to do so in the future. Although no words can adequately describe the experience one has at the Pageant of the Masters, the narration can offer a clearer idea of what the show is all about: “There are things the mind can never truly grasp, that art can only suggest, and that even the heart cannot know for certain… [art] inspires us to look into our own hearts for the courage and faith needed to believe in a better, more perfect world, if not here, then perhaps hereafter…” (Duling 17). By harnessing the illusionism of tableaux vivants to interesting patrons in art, the Pageant of the Masters has built an emotional community that has an increased understanding of and appreciation for art of the past, present, and future.
Works Cited


“Dan Duling Offers Some FAQ’s About His 25 Years as Scriptwriter for the Pageant of the Masters.” Festival of the Arts and Pageant of the Masters. 28 July 2005. Festival of the Arts. 12 Nov. 2006  


<http://www.foapom.com/site/history.asp>.


<http://www.foapom.com/site/overview_pom.asp>.

