cultivate that garden as deeply and as thoroughly as you possibly can. But very often you don’t look over the wall. An intellectual looks over the wall.”

“That’s what Henry was really talking about,” he continues. “It’s applied knowledge in the living life of a community, and what it takes to create a community.”

Cultivating a sense of community, both at Emory and in Atlanta, was another “secret reason” Flannery was driven to make Celtic Roots a reality. He felt that Emory, as a uniquely positioned southern institution, bears a certain responsibility for passing on the wisdom of the folklore of the South. After all, the borrowing of ideas and blending of traditions to create a “musical tapestry,” as Perlman terms it, was pervasive not only in 19th-century Scotland but in the American South as well.

“This is a vast area, and you wouldn’t really know how Irish it was and is until you begin to explore it—and particularly the Scots-Irish,” Flannery says. “They made a vast contribution to the South, and indeed to the entire country. But unlike Irish-Americans, they know comparatively little about themselves, and very little is known about them.” He approached the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) with his vision for the conference as a response to this need; NEH offered a $10,000 We the People grant, the catalyst that enabled the event to coalesce.

These efforts soon will create ripples beyond the Southeast. The team behind the Atlanta conference is now busy planning a follow-up symposium in Dublin, where Flannery is a visiting professor at University College. The Celtic Roots experience has been an invigorating one, and he is committed—perhaps now more than ever—to strengthening and preserving “the fragile quality that cultures like this represent. I’ve seen it disappear in the very place where my mother grew up in a little valley they’d lived in for 600 years.”

But back in the fiddle workshop in Cannon Chapel, traditional music appears to be alive and well. After one last demonstration of the intricacies of different enunciations and styles according to regional differences in Scotland, Laval looks back up. “Any more questions?”

A brief pause.

“Play us out!”

—E.M.C.
traditional shamans are juxtaposed with ancient works of art, on the assumption that visionary experience shows strong similarities from culture to culture, shaman to shaman, and century to century.

I discovered the repetitive nature of trance consciousness by studying numerous ethnographic reports from all over the Americas and other parts of the world, and was amazed at how consistent the experiences seemed to be. Both modern shamans and those mentioned in 16th-century Spanish chronicles describe a series of common basic perceptual occurrences: geometric patterns, bright lights, snakes and other ferocious but wise beasts, telepathic communication with spirits, a feeling of flying, and having profound realizations (such as life does not end with corporeal death). In the Americas, in particular, shamans say they routinely become powerful wild animals such as jaguars, crocodiles, and owls.

The art in the first gallery of the exhibition features many examples of part-human, part-animal beings, from felines to deer and even whale sharks. Shamans identify completely with these “animal selves”—hence the reference to a Brazilian shaman’s claim, “call upon me for I am the black jaguar.” The second gallery features objects conveying other common visionary experiences, such as shamans flying, turning upside down, simultaneously dead and alive, and disembodied into heads or eyes. The final gallery illustrates the many ways to achieve visions also celebrated in ancient American art, from meditation, dancing, and playing music to ingesting sacred plants. The exhibition features new insights into these “plant teachers,” as modern shamans call them, from Lophophora williamsii and Anadenanthera colubrina to Guarana. ‘For I am the Black Jaguar’ introduces these challenging and striking works for Emory and the community to enjoy.

—Rebecca R. Stone

Chinese Culture Exploratorium opens

The Chinese Culture Exploratorium (CCE) opened in Emory’s Robert W. Woodruff Library this spring. Funded by a grant from the Confucius Institute in Atlanta, the exhibit uses multimedia to enhance learning and promote understanding of Chinese culture. Four stations with 10 interactive modules provide information on traditional Chinese art forms, cuisine, and language. Visitors can also take a virtual tour of various provinces in China. “The CCE has expanded the student learning experience beyond the traditional classroom,” says Rong Cai, director of the Confucius Institute. “It provides an opportunity for students interested in exploring China to acquire knowledge of Chinese language, culture, and society through an innovative new platform.”

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