

CSI in the News



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Arts & Events

FOUNTAINS AND FIREWORKS

The New York Philharmonic's Concerts in the Parks

by David St.-Lascaux

The New York Philharmonic Orchestra's free Concerts in the Parks, a sometime summer feature of city life, has returned for its 47th season to appreciative applause and literal *éclat*. The first concert in the series, on Wednesday, July 11, was held at Prospect Park and reprised that Friday at Central Park's Great Lawn. A second program was performed at Cunningham Park in Queens, the Great Lawn again, and Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx; a third, indoor program was held at Staten Island's CUNY Center for the Arts.



Concerts in the Parks: The New York Philharmonic performing in Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Photo: Chris Lee.

While Philharmonic concerts are themselves a pleasure, it's the collective New York experience they publicly provide that makes them mandatory, even when it rains, as it did in Central Park on the night of the 13th. Our experience started well before arriving: Exiting the bus at 86th and Fifth, we joined the processional parade of fellow attendees passing the Metropolitan Museum's Egyptian Wing. New Yorkers, it would seem, are fairly orderly these days, and New York City parks employees highly

organized. A man offered trash bags in front of categorized trash receptacles; programs were distributed nearby.

A canvass of veterans produced the intelligence that one needed to arrive only four hours before the concert to get coveted spots on the nearest free grass 25 yards from the stage, behind and below the half-empty folding-chair “premium seating,” whereas in years past it was necessary to arrive by 2 p.m. However, because many eschew the softball field’s finely crumbled clay, excellent just-off-center plots thereon were to be had quite late. Concert real estate, of course, consisted of a few bedspread square feet; once one’s turf was claimed, it was time for the pre-concert picnic. Given the program’s thematic fare—*Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4*, Respighi’s dreamy *Fountains of Rome*, and *Roman Trilogy* companion *Pines of Rome*—Prosecco was the chosen beverage; the repast of this respondent and his epicurean companion consisted of greenmarket goat cheese on rye, Castelvetrano olives, chilled sea robin, bulgur tabouleh, and egg salad; and for dessert, wedges of Russian “vafelniy” honey cake topped with homemade whipped cream and blueberries.

It was also naturally desirable to sit next to Italian New Yorkers—although the concert brought out New York’s full demographic gamut, old-to-young, quintessentially diverse. One was from the Italian Cultural Institute, which is, along with the American Academy in Rome, a New York Italian cultural treasure: another NYU via Florence. We conversed about Venice and Central Park’s Conservatory Garden’s wisteria pergola-resplendent Italian Garden at 104th Street.

The concert itself was lovely, though the music itself was uneven. Led by conductor Alan Gilbert, the Philharmonic played a brass- and wind-heavy program. Tchaikovsky was an incoherent ramble dedicated to his enigmatic, truncate patroness Nadezhda von Meck. After intermission, at which point it started lightly raining, the concert concluded with Respighi. The audience took the rain in stride, this respondent with a shared umbrella and many others improvising, including those with oversized, impressive conic newsprint hats. Obliging, the rain stopped before the concert ended.

No matter the weather, the Philharmonic performed like a human music box—its conductor expressive, its musicians flawless, and the interpretations sweeping. Still, the venue had its limits. The Great Lawn isn’t Boston’s egalitarian Hatch Shell, and most of the audience couldn’t really see the orchestra. The placement of the names of the would-be latter-day corporate and individual Medicis directly above the stage was vulgar, the former trolling for customers, the latter genuflecting to a hedge fund Master of the Universe whose customers lost 34 percent on their investments in 2008. Call me an ingrate: It’s an insult to have to countenance such smarmy schlock during a classical music concert.

The performance was immediately followed by fireworks sited behind the audience, a slightly overlong, considerably muted display. If one had turned around during the concert, there was a fine night-skyline view downtown. This formed a tinsel-silhouetted backdrop for the fireworks, which included shaped displays—peonies, bombettes, bouquets, a heart, and other pyrotechnic mainstays. Exiting the park was orderly, if plodding; we finally broke free at Park Avenue and walked to Second to catch the M15.

Concerts in the Parks is a reminder of why we live in New York, and just how urbane New York has—for the most part—become for those with time and taste and even modest means. We can congratulate ourselves on our mostly mutual civility (inebriated trampers notwithstanding), although at the climax of the *Pines*, which I find pompous anyway, I was briefly insulted and lightly slapped by a roving mad person. Distraction timely; New York night out now complete.



Stuffing Staten Island's cultural ballot box

Monday, September 10, 2012, 10:00 AM



Michael J. Fressola
By



Advance File Photo

This fall: Language and cooking classes, an Italian car show, Festa Italiana and more at Casa Belvedere.

STATEN ISLAND, NY — Lets call it election-year bravado.

Museums, theaters, musical ensembles all have big plans for the remainder of the 2012 season (not to mention 2013's, which already under way at some jump-the-gun entities).

For example: Sea View Playwright's Theater will mount the most celebrated and technically challenging American play of the late 20th Century, Tony Kushner's political epic, "Angels in America." The Staten Island Philharmonic is presenting a

world premiere by a local composer. Plus, watch for longtime Stapleton pianist Joseph Kubera all over the city this fall in his role as definitive interpreter of the music of composer John Cage (1912-1992).

The following is a rapid-fire rundown of some of the diverse cultural offerings Staten Island has to offer in the coming months:

LIVE MUSIC

— In its ninth season, Musical Chairs Chamber Ensemble will play a four-hour, informal, admission free outdoor concert (noon to 4 p.m.) Sept. 15 during the Staten Island Museum's annual Fence Show (at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical garden).

Founding director/flutist Tamara Keshecki says that the long program will give the ensemble “the perfect chance to dust off and play” some of the new music it has commissioned in seasons past. The group’s regular seven-concert season will start later in the month.

— Good cause: Proceeds from homegrown indie singer-songwriter Ingrid Michaelson’s show Sept. 22 (8 p.m.) at the St. George Theatre will benefit the Staten Island Museum’s upcoming move into a new home on the Harbor grounds. Tickets are \$30 and \$40 (a premium VIP ticket includes pre-show cocktails and an after-party).

Visit Ticketmaster.com or call the box office at (718) 442-2900.

— Serenade, the fully underwritten small-ensemble series at Christ Episcopal Church in New Brighton regularly presents established artists like the trio Les Amies alongside newcomers of extraordinary promise.

The season begins Sept. 23 (3 p.m.) with baritone Christopher Herbert, accompanied by pianist Timothy Long, in a vocal recital (Schumann’s song cycle, “Dichterliebe,” and songs by Poulenc, Britten, Faure, Ives, Villa Lobos and Kurt Weill).

— Music at St. Alban’s is devoting the 2012-13 season to command performances, meaning return engagements. Bandoneonist J.P. Jofre and his chamber band will lead the calendar Sept. 16 (3:30p.m.) with a new piece, Concerto for Bandoneon, Piano and Strings.

— The Staten Island Philharmonic will open the season Oct. 14 (3 p.m.), with new music — a world premiere — by Michael Sirota, a longtime Stapleton resident. The concert will be given in the Center for the Arts at the [College of Staten Island](#)

In the same venue on Nov. 13, the [CSI](#) Chamber Music Collective will salute the 150th anniversary of Claude Debussy’s birthday with his Première Rhapsodie for Clarinet/Piano; Violin, and his Piano Sonata; Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp, plus “Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun” arranged for small ensemble, plus music by Falla and Stravinsky.



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COURTESY THE ARTIST

R&B veteran Roberta Flack is among the topnotch headliners coming to the St. George Theatre this fall season. Flack plays Nov. 3 at the historic venue. Visit StGeorgeTheatre.com for details.

STUFFING THE BALLOT BOX

ARTS' nominees for the most ambitious cultural projects of the 2012-2013 season

By MICHAEL MEDONKA

Let's call it election-year frenzy. Museums, theaters, musical ensembles, all having plans for the remainder of the season seem to be in a mad dash, which is already underway in some long-gestating projects.

For example, the New Playwrights Theater will stage the most advanced and technically challenging American play of the late 1960s, George Tabori's political epic, "Apple in America." The Staten Island Philharmonic is presenting a world premiere by a local composer. Plus, wants for forgotten forgotten plays at Joseph Kubera all over the city started in his role as artistic director of the Staten Island Chamber Orchestra (1999-2008). The following is a rough-cut roundup of some of the diverse cultural offerings Staten Island has to offer in the coming months.

LIVE MUSIC

At its monthly concert, **Manhattan Chamber Ensemble** will play a few hours, followed, at 8 p.m., by a concert by the Staten Island Philharmonic. The concert will feature the world premiere of a new work by local composer, **Joseph Kubera**. The work is a 10-minute piece, "Apple in America," which is a political epic. The work is a 10-minute piece, "Apple in America," which is a political epic.

THEATRE

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— The centennial of modern music titan John Cage (1912-1992) means many things to New York audiences, among them, a chance to revisit the innovator who insisted on classifying ambient sound as music. But for pianist Joseph Kubera, one of the composer's premier interpreters the centennial is all about work.

As one of composer's premier interpreters, Kubera is on the opening-night program Oct. 22 of the "Beyond Cage Festival: John Cage at 100/Music at 2012," a five-week project (10/22 to 11/7) of the S.E.M. Ensemble

He's on the opening-night bill Oct. 22 at Carnegie Hall, playing Cage's "Music of Changes," and on several others, including a panel discussion and concerts Nov. 4 at Roulette (Brooklyn) and Nov. 5 at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. Visit SEMEnsemble.org for details

More cutting-edge contemporary art

Miranda Brooks and Heidi Lee continue SHARP program's high standards through Sept. 30

By MICHAEL MEDONKA

Artists Miranda Brooks and Heidi Lee continue the SHARP program's high standards through Sept. 30. The artists are showcasing their work in a series of small-scale exhibitions.

THE ROOMS

The large man does not appear to be a very skilled dancer on the stage. He is, however, a very skilled dancer in the room. He is, however, a very skilled dancer in the room.

ADVANCE BUZZ Golden years, gold medals

Advance age doesn't mean to cross old age — go for the gold at the 2012 Annual Staten Island Senior Olympic's today through Sept. 14 at venues around the island. For details, visit StatenIslandSeniorOlympics.com.

[View full size](#) DESIGNED BY MARY GARRISON
Arts & Leisure in print ...

— Blondie reports to the St. George Theatre Oct. 4; David Sanborn and a host of local jazz giants follow at Oct. 13-14's Staten Jazzland Festival. R&B great Roberta Flack is booked Nov. 3. Check out the season at www.StGeorgeTheatre.com for showtime and ticket details.

— Lorenzo's Cabaret, the nightclub at the Hilton Garden Inn, is emphasizing variety; acclaimed Russian-American cellist Boris Strulev opened the season this past Friday; Dominick Chianese ("Boardwalk Empire") returns with Neapolitan songs (and a four-course "Night in Naples" menu with wine pairings) Sept. 14, followed by a Rod Stewart tribute act Sept. 28 and doo-wop's Duprees Oct. 12. Report to LorenzosDining.com for details.

AT THE BALLET

— Guest stars, new choreography and live music are the regular menu at the Staten Island Ballet's New York International Choreographer's Festival 2012 will be Sept. 29 at 3 and 7 p.m. in the **College of Staten Island's** Williamson Theater in Bldg. IP (Center for the Arts), 2800 Victory Blvd., Willowbrook. Admission is free.

SPOKEN WORD

— Halloween arrives early when Staten Island OutLOUD celebrates "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," the Wallace Stevens poem with a robed/masked stroll through Tompkins Park as dusk falls. The spoken-word activists will be chanting, singing, reciting and kicking back at ETG Book Cafe, 208 Bay Street, Tompkinsville.

Watch for OutLOUD's season of companionable presentations (saluting great writers/documents/legislation) through the remainder of the season.

PLAYS & MUSICALS

— No project, no matter how ambitious, daunts Sea View Playwright's Theater, a very small operation in a 75-seat former chapel, a highly appropriate setting for Tony Kushner "Angels in America."

SVPT is doing both parts ("Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika") in January and April.

Plus, the company's Arthur Miller series continues with "The Price" later this month, followed by "The Importance of Being Earnest" (Wilde) in November and Miller's "Death of a Salesman" in the spring. Squeezed in: "The Beggar's Opera" in early March.

— Staten Island Shakespearean Theater starts the new season Wednesday with a reading of author Jason Boies's "Strange Bedfellows" a historical script, at the Conference House in Tottenville. "Watson" by Jaime Robledo will play Nov. 9-18 at Historic Richmond Town, followed by "Jacob's Marley's Christmas Carol," Dec. 6-16 (Conference House) and Yasmine Reza's award-winning "God of Carnage" in March in Richmond Town).

— Wagner College will reopen its newly refurbished Main Stage Oct. 3 with Stephen Sondheim's "Putting It Together," followed by "Legally Blonde" opening Nov. 14, "Rent," starting Feb. 27, "Guys and Dolls," April 24. At Stage One: "Spring Awakening," (Oct. 9), "The School of Lies," Nov. 27 and "Five Women Wearing the Same Dress," March 5.

— Sundog Theatre is presenting an original one-man piece titled “The Millennium So Far” by Ritty Mahoney, in collaboration with Staten Island OutLOUD, Nov. 10. (Location to be determined) The following month, it’s “A Christmas Carol” Dec. 1 at 3 p.m. at [College of Staten Island](#) Williamson Theatre. Look for the company’s annual new-work showcase, “Scenes from the Staten Island Ferry 2013” in April.

— The Harbor Lights Theatre Company’s season opens Sept. 29 with a one-man celebrity benefit, with “Chazz Palminteri Tells a Bronx Tale,” starring the actor/writer/director, at 8 p.m. in the Music Hall, Snug Harbor, 1000 Richmond Terr., Livingston. Tickets (all proceeds benefit the theater) are \$49 to \$129 via 866-811-4111 or www.OvationTix.com.

VISUAL ART

— Painter Robert Bunkin (West Brighton) is showing new work this month at The Painting Center, 547 West 27th Street. Details are at www.ThePaintingCenter.org.

— A new two-person show, “The Threads That Bind: Exploring Sacred Traditions of Tibet and India” opens Friday at 5 p.m. in Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art, 338 Lighthouse. The exhibition presents “Mandala Dreams” by Margaret Chase and “Sacred Writings and Threads” by Jayanthi Moorthi side by side.

The show is part of “Locating the Sacred,” a citywide project of the Asian American Arts Alliance (www.AAArtsAlliance.org).

— Fall at the Art Lab, the school on the Snug Harbor grounds, is under way with a big show by the Staten Island Artists Association. A student show will run Oct. 6-28.

— The John A. Noble Maritime Collection’s annual Auction, a fund-raiser/dinner party that’s always SRO, will be Nov. 17. Keep apprised at NobleMaritime.org.

— Second Saturdays, the art walk/performance series in artists’ homes and workspaces, takes place monthly (on the second Saturday. Visit SecondSaturdayStatenIsland.org for details.

— Fall at Casa Belvedere is all about the important things: Talk, food, and, well, la strada (the road). The center is offering “Parliamo Italiano,” a 12-week Italian language course that has sections tailored for toddlers, teen-agers, children and adults, starting later this month In October, “In Cucina,” its Italian cooking classes, covering all the courses of a traditional dinner and holidays, will resume.

And on Sept. 22, the center will reprise Motori D’Italia, an outdoor (on the grounds) one-day exposition of what’s on the road these days — luxury cars and motorbikes that reflect Italian aesthetics and design savvy. Visit www.Casa-Belvedere.org for details about other CB events, including the upcoming Festa Italiana.



Staten Island Ballet hosts International Choreographers' Festival Saturday at CFA

Friday, September 28, 2012, 10:12 PM



Rob Bailey / Staten Island Advance
By

STATEN ISLAND, NY -- Having run a ballet -company for 20 years now, Ellen Rubich Tharp, founder of the Staten Island Ballet (SIB) knows when things are progressing nicely and when they aren't.

So, the founder of the Staten Island Ballet knew it was a good sign last fall when ex-New York City Ballet principal Charles Askegard stepped into her company's "Nutcracker." He's an international figure, after all.

Even better, he's returning to the SIB this weekend for the 12th Annual International Choreographers' Festival. He'll dance, present his own choreography and members of his own Ballet Next, founded two years ago with dancer Michelle Wiles.

"The fact of Charles confirms that we are moving in the right direction," says Tharp. "Charles came last year and he was pleased with the level of the company, he liked our dancers."

On Saturday, Askegard and Anna Liceica, a frequent guest in SIB programs, will dance "Tilted Dream," a piece performed to music by Donald Knaack.

Askegard's own new choreography, "Morseaux" (meaning: morsel or short work of music) will be performed by two members of Ballet Next: Kristie Latham and Lily Nicole Balogh.

Askegard, who retired from New York City Ballet after many years as one of its principal men, returned to the company last week for a brief appearance in opening night festivities at Lincoln Center.



[View full size](#)

COURTESY BALLETT NEXT

Former New York Ballet principal dancer Charles Askegard is among the guest performers at Saturday's 2012 International Choreographers' Festival.

The SIB program, a selection of new and newly revived ballets, will be presented at 3 and 7 p.m. in the Center for the Arts on the [College of Staten Island](#) campus at 2800 Victory Blvd, Willowbrook; 718-980-0500; CFAShows.com. Admission is free but reservations are recommended.

The International Choreographers' Fest is organized differently than other similar-sounding presentation. "I often accept things into the program sight unseen," Tharp says. Experience brings trustworthy instincts about such matters.

This year, dances have been developed by dancer/choreographers native to Brazil, Guadeloupe and Mongolia.

"Ride of the Mongolian Horseman" is a solo choreographed and composed by Altan Dugaraa, born in Khovd, Mongolia and a soloist with the Boston Ballet.

He will be accompanied by cellist Aaron Minsky, son of Island director and actress Pearl Minsky. The dancer and the Minskys have been friends for several years now.

"Tamoia" is choreographed by Brazilian dancemaker Humberto Teixeira of the New Jersey ballet to a score by Clemente Ferreira Jr. and Leonardo Venturieri.

Tharp's own piece, "Forbidden," is on the program — a reworking of an earlier item of the same title. It's a dance for couple (Ana Luizi Luiza and Junio Teixeira) performed to an excerpt from John Corigliano's score for the film "The Red Violin."

— Ballet Next, founded in 2010 by Askegard and Michelle Wiles, will dance a fall season at the Joyce Theater Oct. 23-28; visit [BalletNext.com](#) for details.

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