

Watts Lights Up Philharmonic Opener in American Music

BY CHARLES SINCLAIR

Long before Gershwin was an American in Paris, there was another musical American in the French capital, absorbing musical styles at the Paris conservatory and later at Joachim Raff's conservatory in Frankfurt. His name, Edward Alexander MacDowell.

Today, MacDowell (1861-1908) is remembered mostly by piano students for his wispy, sentimental "To A Wild Rose." A pity. Edward MacDowell is clearly the Big Mac of serious American music in the late years of the 19th Century, and the recent kickoff of the Brooklyn Philharmonic's 1988 concerts at BAM proved the point beyond doubt.

Not that pianist/composer MacDowell's music is "American." Far from it. As a teenage piano prodigy, MacDowell followed the familiar path of many American musicians, opera singers and ballet dancers of the 1880s by studying, and working, in Europe to build his reputation.

Young MacDowell absorbed the musical styles of "Mitteleuropa" so well you could hardly tell his work from that of his European teachers and mentors, which is just how MacDowell wanted it.

His two piano concertos — both of which had their premieres in America almost exactly a century ago — are virtually a Sears, Roebuck catalogue of European romantic piano schticks of the late years of the last century. All the good tricks are represented: the hushed chorale opening, in the strings (a favorite device of Adolf von Henselt, who taught Anton Arensky who taught theory to Rachmaninoff and Scriabin); the swirling arpeggios around a central theme with lots of pedal (Sigismond Thalberg, now forgotten, but a piano power in Paris in the 1870s); the long melodic piano line floating over strings (Chopin, Rubinstein, Liszt, Grieg, et al.); the piano storming in after slow orchestral passages (practically all of the Russian romantics, including Rachmaninoff) and bravura piano cadenzas (practically everybody).

Credit, then, Lukas Foss with selecting the second of the MacDowell concertos as the guest-artist showpiece for a three-concert weekend earlier this month at

BAM. Composed in the none-too-easy key of D Minor (all the great romantic piano concertos, incidentally, are in minor keys), the MacDowell 2nd is a helluva piece, and does not deserve its long neglect, apart from a scattering of recordings. Yes, the long first movement, larghetto calmo, has an eerie resemblance to Richard Addinsell's "Warsaw Concerto," and why not? Addinsell's enduring pastiche, composed for a movie in the 1940s, was a deliberate assimilation of romantic 19th-Century piano-concerto styles, and MacDowell — not Tchaikovsky — may have been a prime starting point.

Credit director/conductor Foss, also, with his selection of guest artist for the BAM event. Andre Watts, now celebrating his 25th year as a piano superstar (and his first as a Yamaha Artist, rather than Steinway, Baldwin, Knabe or other homegrown name brand; a sign of the times in itself) was the ideal choice.

Watts, who can soar gloriously through Liszt's Sonata in B Minor (an ultra-romantic work which Watts himself has described as "a real bitch") was likely, just on form, to make MacDowell's pianistic

romanticism glow with a new, high-voltage radiance.

And, that's just what Watts did in BAM's elegant Opera House, giving new life to a neglected work that now may have been catapulted out of its undeserved obscurity by Watt's effortless brilliance.

The Brooklyn Philharmonic's entire program, actually, reflected Lukas Foss' musical taste and audience sense.

For openers, there was a New York premiere of John Corigliano's "Promenade Overture on a Theme by Haydn." This sprightly, amusing work will probably become a staple of the orchestral pops repertoire, since it is theatrical as well as musical. The gimmick: in a switch on Papa Haydn's "Farewell Symphony," in which the musicians gradually exit during the piece, leaving only a couple of violins to finish it, Corigliano's new work begins with a bare stage and off-stage trumpets playing the last five measures of "Farewell Symphony" — backwards. Gradually, other BPSO members filter in and take their seats as the music develops. Last arrival: tuba player Andrew Seligson, who gives a

resounding, triumphant bass blast to finish it.

More homage to Haydn followed, in the form of Franz Joseph's Symphony #22 (known as "The Philosopher," for no particular reason). Foss gave it a thoughtful, well-paced reading, with particularly good work turned in by the BPSO brass section.

The other large-scale work on the program was another Foss musical revival (more or less): Sir Edward Elgar's "Enigma Variations." This multiple (14 no less) set of variations by England's first truly professional composer in 1899 proved, among other things, that Elgar could compose orchestral music outside of the oratorio/festival cantata/triumphant march/opera sphere in which other English musical talents were largely bound. The Foss/BPSO reading of the Elgar work was, in a word, excellent.

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC: Meet the Moderns Concert, Jan. 29, Cooper Union, Manhattan, "Orpheus in the 20th Century," 8pm, \$10. Next Major Series Concert, Feb. 19-21, All Mozart Program, Brooklyn Academy of Music. 636-4120.

A Local Composer Asks Watt's This All About

BY RICK RUSSO

For 15 years I have been composing and presenting experimental music and mixed media performance works involving indeterminacy and simultaneity, using diverse compositional methods concerned with dadaism. Aleatoric procedures in my music are extended to my work with other art forms, especially literary.

This "review" is composed of extracts from my own lectures and writings, audience comments, Program Notes, specific thoughts regarding the concert and from a 1982 newspaper review of a concert of my own music. The following text may be performed by realizing the "General Audience Sounds and Actions" when and where indicated. The juxtaposition of certain comments in the text allow for an obfuscatory set of circumstances. — R.R.

...

The Brooklyn Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra ... Musicians rehearse as au-

dience fills the Brooklyn Academy of Music Opera House ... Lukas Foss, Music Director ... Saturday, January 9, 8pm ... Many fur coats ... Musicians are still practicing their parts ... COUGH ... SNIFFLE ... Musicians chatting away ... Audience still filing in ... COUGH ... COUGH ... 34th Season!

CLEAR THROAT ... Most musicians have now left the stage ... Theatre ... SCRATCH AN ITCH ... New methods of composition, championed by graphic notation must be invented ... Andre Watts, Piano ... SNEEZE ... More fur coats!

Fanfare for Foss ... Is he conducting or dancing? ... Omnidirectional entrances for the Promenade Overture on a Theme by Haydn (New York Premiere) by John Corigliano ... SCRATCH AN ITCH ... COUGH ... Yet another fur coat ... Entertainment is used to satisfy the hunger of the escapist ... SNEEZE!

Symphony No. 22 in E-flat Major ("The

Philosopher") by Franz Joseph Haydn ... In his biography he refers to his work as "inconsistent to bourgeois logic" ... Adagio ... Orchestra becomes furniture ... Presto ... Music becomes wallpaper ... Minuetto ... Musicians become wind-up toys ... Finale-Presto ... What was Haydn thinking ... Overly dramatic violinist ... COUGH ... CLEAR THROAT ... SNIFFLE.

Grand piano is wheeled on stage by five men dressed in blue, prison-like uniforms ... Getting ready for Andre Watts and the Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor; Op. 23 by Edward MacDowell ... Shuffling of chairs ... Musicians freely converse as if at a cocktail party on stage ... SNEEZE ... Audience anticipation ... Watts finally makes his entrance amidst thundering applause ... Television has played a large part in Watts' career ... In an interview last week he revealed that he "almost fell

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SECTION 2

Watts it All About?

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into the trap of becoming a conventional musician," when he was given a clarinet to play in his junior high school band, but subsequently wound up on percussion.

Watts sits on the piano bench, gets comfortable, readying himself to perform ... The orchestra is cranked up, awaiting Foss' indication to begin ... Foss is peering over his shoulder at Watts, who is looking down into the piano's interior ... He realizes the keyboard is locked ... Watts graciously rises and announces to the audience: "Don't Go Away" - then exits the stage ... It is a perfect Victor Borge routine ... An official comes out into the audience and announces: "Will the Yamaha representative please come backstage" ... Watts appears on stage, playfully waving his finger at Foss, who has his back to Watts, trying to depress the keyboard ... Moments later a well-dressed Japanese man appears on stage, walks over to the piano, does something inside it ... It is a perfect Nam June Paik routine ... The man then turns to the audience in acknowledgement, as he receives applause and laughter!

The MacDowell finally begins ... CLEAR THROAT ... Larghetto calmo ... The piano sounds like it almost has a wrench in it ... Some orchestra members look puzzled while they play, glancing at each other ... Presto giocoso ... Watts plays with intense, snappy showmanship ... His lips are quivering ... He is dripping with perspiration and wipes his brow ... Largo-Molto allegro ... Speaker hiss and pops ... It

sounds like a lackadaisical version of "Over The Rainbow" ... SNIFFLE ... CLEAR THROAT ... The piece is over ... Watts and Foss receive great applause as does the orchestra, many members of which seem to be disregarding it, conversing and laughing with each other as they bow ... Music is the art of concentration, even after the piece ends ...

Intermission ... More fur coats ... Lobbying ... Art is to serve the function of aiding in the attainment of a fluent perception ... Next we will hear environmental sounds punctuated by Sir Edward Elgar's Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 36 ("Enigma") ... The score actually looks like a series of abstract connecting symbols ... Even with Hans Richter's suggestion it still sounds as if it has a beginning and an ending ... Because of some musical infractions which he perpetrated, the group had him conduct the music in concert while eating from a bag of corn chips!

Foss and friends displayed much artistry and emotion ... Play any classical music record at a barely audible level for the same effect ... All works indicated on the program have now been played ... PUT COAT ON ... The orchestra begins again ... As they play I feel as if I'm graduating ... The unstructured noise that blared through made the traffic whizzing by on busy Flatbush Avenue seem almost soothing in comparison ... CLEAR THROAT ... Watts it all about? ... Cassette players, radios, walkie-talkies, a mix of environmental sound effects, static and distortions of other recordings is another matter ... SIGH!

BACA Follows King's Dream

Continued from Page 9

lyrics lost out because Calalu, accustomed to outdoor concerts, did not adjust to its large volume for the small BACA theatre. Instruments with more delicate sounds — the piano and accordion, for instance — were rarely heard because of inadequate miking. Still, the performers' exuberance was undeniable and their good-natured eclecticism, infectious.

Hong Kong-born artist Kwok added a simultaneous slide show and environmental art piece to the mix. Kwok uses found objects — plastic bags, twine and colored paper; bits of fur, bamboo curtain and stretch fabric — and succeeds in making his audience see them in new ways. A bamboo curtain becomes a percussive instrument, twisted stretch fabric looks like an umbilical cord, and plastic bags become bright pillows of air and, when puffed up and tied together by audience members, are reminiscent of the snaking dragons, animated by dozens of people, in Chinese parades.

As the evening intensified, it had the air of Sixties happening, with free apples being distributed to the "people" just before the break.

What followed was a jam with some musicians from the audience joining the fray; the conclusion was a reggae tune with the line "seize the moment if you want to be free" providing the text for the evening's spontaneity and other lyrics such as "the Dream didn't die, it takes more than bullets to kill a dream" and "we neither bend nor bow, the time is now" reminding us of the interdependency of artistic and political freedom.

This music and art, with various eastern and western, African, Caribbean and Latin flavors, made for quite a tasty stew. Orchestra Calalu and Kwok warmed a cold, snowy night in downtown Brooklyn with the creativity and freedom of their artistry.

LATINS IN ENGLISH: Poetry and readings by contemporary Latin writers. Myrna Nieves-Colon and Sandra Barreras, Jan. 16, 3pm; Noel Jardines and Pan Canibal, Jan. 23, 3pm. Screening of "Iris' Pov," screen story on live video by Maritza Arrastia both days. Free. BACA Downtown, 111 Willoughby St., near Bridge. Tel. 596-2222.

Art Takes

PERFORM MOZART CLASSIC: Albert L. Fiorillo, Jr., after a career on Broadway and with national touring companies, returns to the classical music podium to conduct Mozart's "Don Giovanni" in three performances Jan. 22-24 with the Brooklyn Conservatory Opera. Performances are at 8pm on Friday and Saturday, and 3pm on Sunday at Grand Prospect Hall, Fifth Avenue and Prospect Expressway. Tickets are \$30, \$35 and \$40 and dinner and wine is included in the price, served one hour prior to each performance. For reservations, call Teletron, 212/947-5850.

COFFEE HOUSE BACK: The Good Coffee House program at the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture resumes its first and third Friday programs on Jan. 15 with Tir Na Nog, playing traditional Irish and Scottish tunes, dance music and songs. Jerry Donnelly of Kildare's Fancy leads the new band of music makers. Doors open at 53 Prospect Park West, at 1st St., at 8:15pm and the show starts at 9. Free coffee, tea and "goodies" are provided.

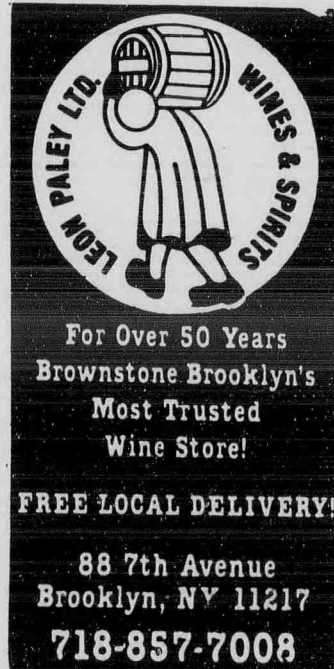
BUILDING SHOW: Minor Injury Gallery on Manhattan Avenue opens a new exhibi-

tion Jan. 15, "The Building Show," with work of 15 artists who all live in the same building in North Williamsburg. Organized by Paul Campbell and Mary Funnell, an artists' reception is set for Jan. 22, 6-8pm at the gallery, 173 Manhattan Ave. Regular gallery hours are Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 1-6pm. Exhibiting artists include: Lisa Alberts, Rene Pierre Allain, Marechal Brown, Anne Herlihy, Lisa Nanni, Debora Gilbert Ryan, Paul Campbell, Mary Borst Funnell, Gregg Handorff, Ellen Cantor and Catherine DeVouno. For information, call 389-7985.

OUTBACK DANCE: "The Outback Series #19" will be presented Jan. 22-23 by Spoke the Hub Dancing at the Gowanus Arts Exchange, 295 Douglass St. The program features new dance and performance work by Eva Dean Dance Company, Jessica Nicoli, Rae Ballard, Ann Sullivan and Barbara Ann Ryan. The series is a once-a-month cooperative showcase. Performance time is 8pm and admission is \$7 or TDF. For information, call 596-5250.



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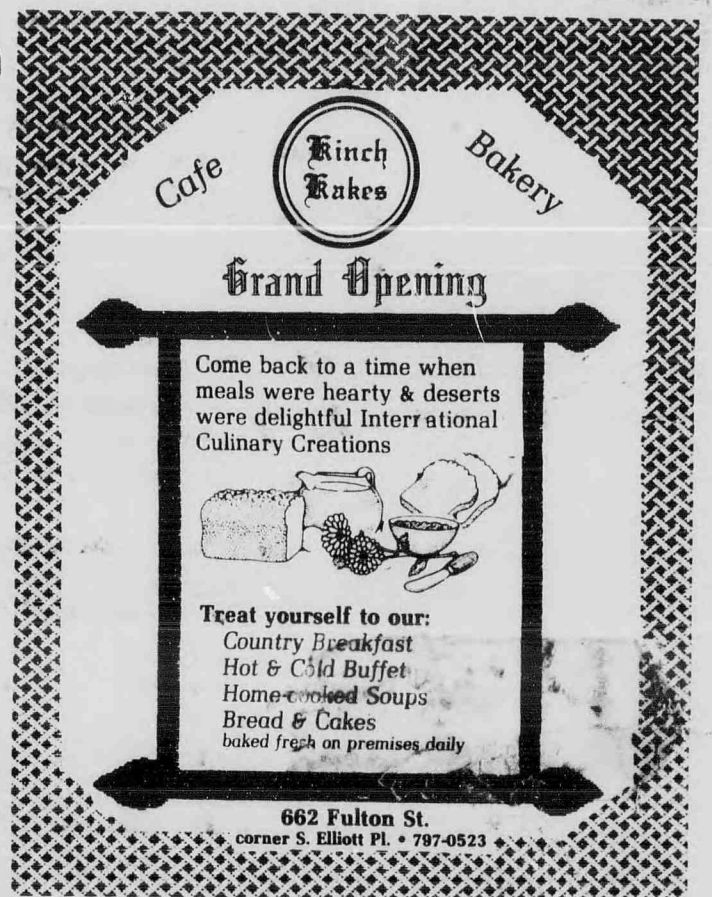


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BACA DOWNTOWN

The Phoenix Preview Tells You What's Next

Non-Stop Oldies Barrage Rocks the Ring at Gleason's New Arena on the Waterfront

BY RICK RUSSO
Will you still love me tomorrow?! He don't love you the way I love you! Come back home to me!! I ran all the way home (just to say I love you)!! Let it be me!! Didn't I do it baby?! In the still of the night!! Oh Maybelline...

Are You Ready To Rock & Roll?!? I said, Are You Ready To Rock & Roll?!?

It was an enthusiastic throng of concertgoers who attended a fantastic "Nite of Oldies Rock-N-Roll" last Friday at the sprawling Gleason's Arena, under the Brooklyn Bridge on Front Street. The four-hour-plus concert featured five spectacular acts with music from the Fifties and Sixties—Fred Paris & The Five Satins, The Mellow Kings, The Impalas, The Neighborhood, and Just Friends. The evening was a non-stop barrage of rock and roll history. And the crowd just loved every minute of the music marathon!

The audience for this event, the first at the Gleason's Space (which other times is the famed boxing facility), included all age groups, and, although it was a "sit-down" event, people spontaneously got up and broke into dancing. The spacious arena area accommodated the rock show well, resembling an enlarged "hallway." And if you grew up in Brooklyn, you'll remember the time when you came home and found guys like these in the hall doo-wopping the songs I heard Friday long into the night.

The opening act, Just Friends, got things rolling at Gleason's with a set that included such accapella tunes as "You Belong to Me" and "So Young." The singing quartet, with back-up band, also did a rendition of "Blue Moon" and, for a well-deserved encore, "When We Get Married."

Fred Paris & The Five Satins took over the stage next. Dressed in spanking red and white tuxedos, with bright red patent leather shoes, they zipped through such classics as "Wonderful Girl," "Remember Me," "Happy Anniversary" and a Motown medley which included "My Girl," "She's a Lady," and "We're Havin' a Party." Combining great theatrics and stage presence, the group was a tremendous crowd-pleaser. They concluded the set with their biggest hit, "In the Still of the Night," to a prolonged standing ovation.

Following FP & Co. was The Neighborhood, a personable bunch which had the playfulness of the original "hallway groups." Decked-out in double-breasted whites and blacks, the group (four singers and four back-up musicians, one of which doubled on voice) gave excellent renditions of such songs as "There's a Moon Out Tonight," "Runaround Sue," "The Wanderer," "My Prayer," "Chapel of Dreams," and "Sixteen Candles," among others, equally capturing the essence of the era.

The energetic Mellow Kings then peeled-off a very electric set of tunes with saxophone colorings and crisp guitar work. The audience was treated to superb versions of "My Girl," "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," "On The Outside Looking In," "Charlie Brown," "Poison Ivy," "Good Golly Miss Molly," "Twist & Shout," "Do You

Wanna Dance," and "Wooly-Bully," just to name a few. The tight combo used the entire stage with lots of movement and flashy showmanship.

By the time The Impalas took stage, I felt like my head was turning into fuzzy dice on a windy South Brooklyn street corner. This group originated in Brooklyn and was top-notch. Their playing was even and steady, with choreography unlike anything I've seen before. Sporting period hats and dressed in a blend of classic threads and art deco accoutrements, The Impalas dazzled everyone with more tunes from the hallways of the mind, including "Devil or Angel," "Shake-Rattle and Roll," "You Send Me," "Earth Angel," and "I Can't Get Next to You." For the finale, members of all five groups joined on stage in a mini-medley—a fitting climax to this surprisingly eclectic evening.

The rock and roll show was the first entertainment event at Gleason's, which is a magnificent space for this kind of activity. The management announced that there would be future rock and roll shows here, as well as other special events at Gleason's, which is situated under the Brooklyn Bridge, only steps away from The River Cafe and Bargemusic. The space is certainly a unique venue for entertainment events and we look forward to more.

By the way, will you still love me tomorrow?!? I ran all the way home. . .

For information about upcoming events at Gleason's Arena, 29 Front St., call 797-9570.


Patrons Group Formed

The Brooklyn Museum has formed a new patrons group called the Museum Council. It will hold its first major event on Feb. 27, a black tie benefit to support "Cleopatra's Egypt," a major Brooklyn Museum exhibit opening in October.

The purpose of the Council is to serve as a forum in which younger supporters of the Museum can have a more active involvement in the institution's collections and programs, says Robert T. Buck, Museum director. Among the opportunities available for council members will be special viewings of exhibitions, visits to private and corporate collections, trips to artists' studios and tours to galleries and other art centers.

"Traditionally, Museum patrons as a group are largely older and more established," he adds, "but with the influx of younger professionals to Brooklyn over the past few years, we have noticed within this group a growing number of individuals with common cultural interests who want to be more actively involved with the museum."

Officers for the new group are: Kevin Rush, president; Christopher Egan, vice president; Delrita Abercrombie, secretary; and David Heaphy, treasurer. Annual council dues have been set at \$65 for individual members and \$100 for dual membership. Museum membership is a prerequisite for joining the Council. For more information, call 638-5000, ext. 236.


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Strong Creative Energies at Flow Parks' Poetry Programs

BY RICK RUSSO

Every Saturday afternoon at the Brooklyn War Memorial Building in Cadman Plaza Park, Matthew Paris of the NYC Parks and Recreation Department presides over what appears to be the only poetry game in town — and with it, that most enjoyable literary experience, "The Open Mike" (even though there is no microphone).

Matthew Paris has never ceased to amaze me. He has been hosting shows since the early Seventies at Prospect and Central Park and has conducted some of the most lively and introspective interviews with America's foremost musical minds, including John Cage, Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Isaac Singer and Eubie Blake. Paris is the author of two published novels, has 21 off-off Broadway productions to his credit, writes a weekly cable television show, and edited The Brooklyn Literary Review. He is also an extremely inventive composer/instrumentalist, and, for almost a decade he has been organizing poetry and theatre programs for Parks and Recreation.

The poetry event this past Saturday took place in a schoolroom below the Rotunda Gallery. It was a children's classroom with great play-pen atmosphere — hula-hoops, toy cash registers and clocks, fairy tale books — plus many chairs in which were seated an eclectic convergence of individuals who had come to read their poetry and to listen to that of others. The group this day even included Norman Rosten, Brooklyn's Poet Laureate. This is truly a mixed group: all ages, all races, all different — all poets.

I had decided I would make my experience of this afternoon more complete by reading some of my own performance-poetry. Paris, as host, invited readers to the front of the room and introduced them with comments and whimsical musical interludes on electronic keyboard. Riveting works were presented by Tomasso, an elder statesman who recited by memory, deeply moving poems about a child dying in an emergency room, his brother's death and his own. His very unique style of delivery was exceptionally poignant, although such individualism was expressed

by all. Wonderful readings were given by Valerie Griggs, Louise Jaffe, Patricia D'Amico, Roslyn Rabin, Sheldene Millington and others. One reader Kam Holifield, later told me she too, like myself, works with Chinese fortune cookies to make poetry.

My own piece, a section of "March of the Wooden Shoulders", consisted of readings from Paris' novel "Mystery", readings of my own "Stanzas" as well as Chinese cookie-fortunes ("Combine Business With Pleasure"), all mixed together, with theatrical actions. There was a feeling in the air, an encouraging openness, that made it all seem possible — a creative atmosphere of positiveness.

"It's the Year of the Dragon and its time for change," said Paris. "Theatres have been closing right and left for the past five years due to wild rents and collapsing grants; I'm offering theatre space free to rehearse and produce serious Brooklyn theatre and other activities." He will be running a May festival of three or four companies including his own Parks and Recreation community theatre, "to

show how the government and creative people can collaborate in a new and meaningful way," he said. Paris also uses public access television as a central forum and selling market for the arts. "I want everybody to be on TV. I'm going to tape every event I run in Brooklyn Heights. I'm working out a proposal with Edward R. Murrow High School to do it. They've got the studios."

Paris continues to support scores of poets and performers and he and the Department of Parks and Recreation are doing important work that is to be commended. Drop in at the Brooklyn War Memorial any Saturday afternoon at 1pm whether your interest is poetry, music, theatre, television or other art form, you'll find a network of others with similar interests and strong creative energies.

OPEN READINGS: NYC Parks Dept. sponsors open readings every Saturday, Brooklyn War Memorial, Cadman Plaza West at Orange St., 1pm. Info, 258-5367.

Brooklyn Breaks Manhattan's Monopoly on Mozart

BY CHARLES R. SINCLAIR

Lincoln Center may well have the notion that the West Side performing arts complex should be officially designated Salzburg-on-Hudson because of its long-run "Mostly Mozart" summer concerts, and that Manhattan has some kind of musical monopoly on Mozart. Maybe. Maybe not.

Brooklyn's BAM, the Brooklyn Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under Music Director Lukas Foss, and a number of talented young performers handily proved last weekend that Brooklyn can be Salzburg East whenever it wants to be.

In a program entirely devoted to works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the most precocious — and possibly the most talented — composer of them all, Foss served up a well-selected sampler of the famed Salzburger's music. Foss' choices proved (if indeed it needs proving) that Mozart could be everything from playful to profound, and do it with grace and elegance.

Foss and the BPO were ably aided in such a project by a talented team of young soloists, and by the New York Choral Society, itself one of the city's cultural resources.

Many musicologists feel that Mozart's legacy of piano concertos are in the forefront of the composer's orchestral works, setting the stage for the piano works of Beethoven and lyrically foreshadowing the Romantics of the century that followed. The piano was literally "Mozart's instrument," both as composer and public performer.

Several of Mozart's piano concertos have central andante movements that are among the most seductive, languorous and dreamy music ever written by any composer at any time, anywhere.

It is to Foss' credit that he avoided a possible choice of the C Major Concerto, K.

467 to conclude the first half of BPO's All Mozart program and to herald the concert appearance of Anton Nel, the 25-year-old winner of the First Prize in the 1987 Naumburg International Piano Competition (it's the pianistic equivalent of a Gold Medal in the Olympics). The K.467 concerto is gorgeous, but (thanks to "Elvira Madigan") is overly-familiar.

Instead, the choice was the earlier G Major, K. 453 — the 17th of Mozart's unequalled string of 21 piano concertos — which ranks with the best. It is deceptively simple; in fact, in 1784 Mozart bought (for

34 kreuzer) a starling which, to Mozart's delight, learned to whistle the bird-like theme of the concerto's finale not long after Mozart composed it. The starling lasted three years; the concerto has lasted more than two centuries.

Mozart would probably have been even more pleased at Nel's lyrical reading of K. 453, composed at a time when Mozart's popularity in Vienna was at its height. Nel proved his pianistic talent by going far beyond the concerto's surface simplicity (it was written by Mozart for one of his favorite pupil's, Barbara Ployer) to ex-

plore the sensitivities and subtleties that make it a treasure trove. Nowhere was this less true than in the melodious andante second movement which, eventually, is going to be lifted as a romantic movie theme by somebody. This slow movement flowed as smoothly as clouds in a summer sky, shimmering softly in BAM's splendid Opera House.

The post-intermission biggie on the program was a Mozart mass, the C Minor, K. 427 penned as a musical vehicle for Mozart's wife, Constanze, in 1783. Among Mozart's less-delightful habits was the fact that he completed his religious compositions only under heavy pressure (as a Mason he was less than dedicated when it came to composing for the church), and he never, ever finished anything he was composing for his wife.

K. 427, thus, had two musical strikes going against it; yes, it joins the roster of great works (by Schubert, Puccini, et al) that were never completed by their composers. However, what remains is a vivid, original liturgical work that rises to dazzling heights.

And, dazzling it was on the BAM stage, employing a quartet of soloists from Il Piccolo Teatro Dell'Opera (the four-year-old regional opera company founded by Barbara Elliott and based at BAM) and the resources of the 180-member New York Choral Society, which has appeared with a number of major orchestras and which has its own subscription series.

The talented young soloists — sopranos Eva Zsella and Linda Zoghby, tenor Thomas Young (who has sung everything from Handel's "Imeneo" to the title role in The Wiz), and baritone William Sharp — were impressive in Mozart's solos, duets, and multi-part chorus.

'Trilogy' Now on View at Rotunda

"Trilogy," an exhibition with paintings by Leslie Alexander, photographs by Donna Francis and sculpture by Robin Hill, is now on view at the Rotunda Gallery in the Brooklyn War Memorial on Cadman Plaza West and Orange Street.

"The exhibition provides a sample of the outstanding work being done in Brooklyn," says gallery director Jackie Battenfield, who selected the artists from the gallery's extensive slide library which she has compiled during the last six years as she has visited hundreds of studios in Brooklyn.

In her paintings, Leslie Alexander contrasts formal architectural structures such as underpasses, bridges, and piers with fluid water and light to create harmonic order. Her work has appeared in group exhibitions at the Housatonic Museum of Art in Bridgeport as well as at Grace Borgenicht Gallery in New York City. Donna Francis presents the human figure as landscape in black and white photographs which use negative space and texture as primary elements. Her photographs were included in the recent exhibition "Poetic Injury" at the Alternative Museum. Robin Hill's formal, monochromatic sculptures,

approximately five feet high, convey an expressive gestural quality. The organic forms are enhanced by beeswax surfaces. Hill exhibits extensively in New York City and is represented by Lang & O'Hara Gallery.

The Rotunda Gallery is open noon to 5pm, Tuesday through Friday, and 11 to 4pm on Saturday. For information, call 875-4031.

Haydn-Mozart Plays

The Haydn-Mozart Chamber Orchestra will present the second concert of its 1987-88 season on March 4 at the Cathedral Pavilion, Jay and Tillary Sts., at 8pm. The program features pianist/composer Noel Lee as soloist in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 in c minor.

The orchestra's season-long tribute to Michael Haydn continues with the modern-day premiere of his Serenade, a 10-movement work which includes a concertino for french horn and trombone. The performance features two principal chair players of the New York Philharmonic, French hornist Jerome Ashby and trombonist, Joseph Alessi. Tickets are \$10.

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Three Celebrated Soloists Appear Together in Contemporary Works

BY RICK RUSSO

The "New/Chamber Music" Series presented by The Arts at Saint Ann's concluded this past Saturday with a program of performances by three celebrated, virtuoso musicians: Rolf Schulte, violinist, and the pianists, Aki Takahashi and Ursula Oppens. Each are widely recognized to be foremost among interpreters of modern music works. This special concert marked the occasion of their performing together for the first time.

All three appeared on the stark stage in the dimly-lit, long cathedral. The opening number is Stravinsky's "Duo Concertante" of 1932. Schulte and Takahashi perform, with Oppens turning pages for the pianist. Schulte is the Roy Orbison of the avant-garde violin. He played the Stravinsky as if he were carving turkey or sawing wood, strings hang off his bow. He's slender and dressed in black, his movements are mechanistic. The work is quick and intense—Takahashi in silvery white.

Next was the "Interludium A" (1982), composed especially for Ms. Takahashi by Isang Yun, which featured clustery, choppy notes in all registers of the instrument. She played with great emotion and large gestures—airy passages, coaxing keys in sweeping motions—the work faded away into the suspended atmosphere.

David Lang's "Illumination Rounds" (1982) for violin and piano followed. The composer joined Schulte and Oppens on stage. Receiving applause, he announced, "If you're still clapping in 10 minutes I'll be very happy. The work is frenetic, with

ascending and descending phrases as instruments trade off in trails to each other.

Lang, who turned pages for the violinist, says he was inspired by a special kind of Vietnam bullet that illuminated the jungles. There was a certain violence but, oddly enough, no strings broke.

During the intermission, I took the opportunity to enjoy the continuous concert which takes place in Saint Ann's: the rumbling of the subways running below the church, as well as Montague Street traffic in busy Brooklyn Heights. It was wonderful!

Oppens and Takahashi took the stage for the Messiaen "Visions de L'Amen." Oppens announced that the work was written in 1943, is in seven movements, and would be rather lengthy, about 60 minutes. Gymnastics for keyboards, kaleidoscopic patterns progressing through clocklike, irregular rhythmic colorings to up-tempo intensity, slow and dreamy, pianos caught-up in each other, trading phrases and quick exchanges, piano webbing, recurrent thematic phrases and lower crashing register bursts, solos and duets with and without more or less melodic syntax, and silence, suspended notes—a terrific tourdeforce that was strongly appreciated!

NEXT AT ST. ANN'S: The Arts at St. Ann's Cantata Series features the American premiere of John Cale's "Falklands Suite" for voice, piano and orchestra with the composer performing. Mar. 19, 8pm; Mar. 20, 4pm. 157 Montague St. 834-8794.

Art Takes

JAZZ BRUNCH: The Brooklyn YWCA will host a Jazz Brunch on March 20, 11:30am to 3pm, featuring jazz keyboardist and composer Adreinne Torf in honor of Women's History Month. Torf's original compositions have been performed by the Brooklyn Philharmonic, as well as in Off-Broadway productions, television and video soundtracks. The buffet-style brunch is \$20 in advance, and \$25 at the door. The concert will be held in the YWCA Memorial Hall, 30 3rd Ave. For information, call 875-1190.

FAMILY CONCERT: Upbeat Productions winter series of family concerts continues March 19, 2pm, when folk singer Tom Paxton appears at Packer Collegiate Institute, 160 Joralemon St. Paxton's career began in the 1960s with appearances in Village coffee houses, and led to worldwide tours by 1980. Admission is \$8. For information, call 522-5349.

SIMON COMEDY: The Gallery Players of Park Slope present Neil Simon's musical comedy, "They're Playing Our Song," March 18 through March 27 at the Community Center, 415 Seventh Street, between 6th and 7th Avenues. Bill Lockhart directs this satiric look at the erratic/erotic emotional life of a young songwriting couple, featuring Jim Freed and Maryrose Leggio in the leading roles. Tickets are \$8 (\$7 for students and seniors). Performances are March 18-19 and 25-26 at 8pm with Sunday matinees on March 20 and 27 at 3pm. For reservations, call 638-5725.

OUTDOOR ART: All Communities Arts, Inc. will hold its 23rd annual juried outdoor art show in May and interested artists are invited to exhibit their work. All work must be original, no imports accepted. Artists will be granted 10-12 feet of space and must provide their own stands which must be open from 12-8pm. For information, call 338-2043 or write to ACA at P.O. Box 126, Ryder Station, Brooklyn 11234. ACA meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at 8pm at the Advent Grave-send Church on Avenue P and E.

THEATRE AUDITIONS: The Brooklyn Theatre Ensemble will hold auditions for four original one-act plays: "The Profits," "Toilet Water," "Twinkles," and "Equals," on March 13 and 16 at 1pm at the Brooklyn War Memorial on Cadman Plaza West at

Orange St. The plays are directed by Matthew Paris of the Department of Parks and Recreation and written by Stuart Blume, Patricia Ryan, Kay Williams and Matthew Paris. Performances are scheduled for April 17 and 24 and on weekends in May and June. For information, call 258-5367.

KINGS OF FLATBUSH: An exhibition celebrating the Brooklyn Loew's Kings Theater, "The Kings Of Flatbush," will be on display through April 26 in Manhattan. The exhibit will include photographs, slides, drawings, and memorabilia recalling the theater's past glory as one of the last pre-Depression motion picture palaces in the city. It will be on display at the Municipal Art Society's Urban Center. The hours are Mon.-Sat. from 10am to 6pm and Sun. from 12 to 5pm. For information, call 469-8990.

GET GRANT: The Brooklyn Music School has received a \$10,000 grant from the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust to support its general operational expenses in 1987-88. BMS executive director Daniel Rostan says the school's trustees are "extremely pleased at this good news." He called the grant "an important development in the school's effort to attract contributions from other members of the organized philanthropic community."

DANCE TO RECORD: Brooklynites are invited to put on their dancing shoes and join the thousands of borough residents of every ethnic and religious denomination who are expected to come together on May 15 in a giant Hora Line in Prospect Park which will seek to set a record performance of the traditional Israeli folk dance. Dance is part of the programming during the "Salute to Israel" period marking that nation's 40th anniversary. The dance activity is being coordinated by a special committee coordinated by BACA/The Brooklyn Arts Council.

RAZZLE-DAZZLE EVENING: The Heights Players present an evening of cabaret, featuring "Razzle Dazzle and All That Jazz," directed by Thomas N. Tyler on March 26 at 8pm. The program takes place at 26 Willow Pl. Admission is \$5 and includes one drink and snacks. For information and reservations call 237-2752.

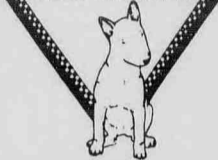
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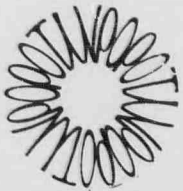
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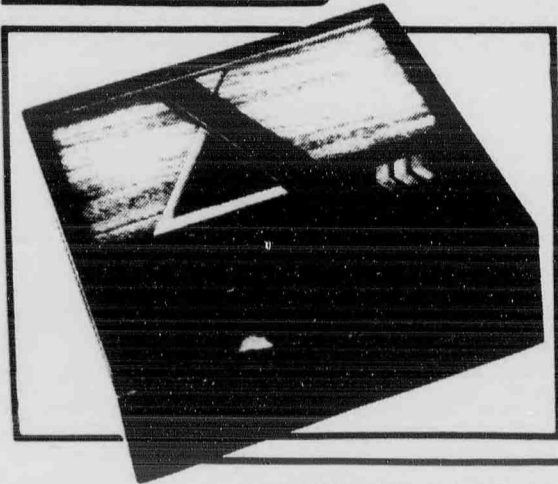


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SECTION 2

**An Upbeat 'Falklands Suite' Gets
Its U.S. Debut, Complete With
Composer Cale as a Performer**

BY RICK RUSSO

Eclectic composer John Cale made his American debut as a classical musician and composer with the presentation of his "Falklands Suite" at The Arts at Saint Ann's in Brooklyn Heights this past weekend. The landmark occasion, which had the composers of two of the three works on the program in the hall, was part of the "Bach Cantata Sundays" series at Saint Ann's, conducted by Fred Sherry, the internationally acclaimed conductor/musician, with The Orchestra of St. Luke's and The Saint Ann's School Chorus.

Saint Ann's was nearly filled to capacity, with a full balcony. It was a lively mixed crowd on the Sunday afternoon, and the magnificent stained glass inside the church glowed vividly as the bright sun streamed through. Musicians tuned up on stage in a collective stream of sound. The children's choir took the stage, lining up one by one, dressed in long bright red robes. The children were obviously pleased to be facing another live audience and they were all beaming.

Conductor Sherry took his place on the stage to strong applause. Sherry's musical career as a cellist has spanned four centuries of compositions and visits to concert halls on four continents and 49 of the 50 states.

With a stroke of his baton, the program began with Bach's Cantata No. 71, "Gott ist mein Koenig," a work written for the election of a council in the town of Muhlhausen, Germany. It is one of the few cantatas printed during Bach's lifetime, as it was the practice of the council to print the music performed at the election. The soloists in this performance were outstanding: Johanna Arnold, soprano; Mary Ann Hart, mezzo-soprano; Mark Bleeke, tenor; and Wilbur Pauley, bass. The 48-piece School Chorus from nearby St. Ann's School sang very beautifully and with great mastery. The music, intoning a hybrid of calliope and jazz, with quavering organ and violins, brass, oboes and other instrumentation interweaving, sounded like an interpretation of the stained glass, glowing behind the orchestra and chorus.

"Galliard" by Charles Wuorinen, one of today's most exciting and prolific modern composers, received its New York premiere here on this program. Wuorinen employs constant variation of melody and rhythm to propel listeners from the first note to the final chord. The 14-minute work was very rich in texture, and was reminiscent of the work of Edgard Varese. Continuing, unfolding exchanges between brass bursts and energetic strings. Brief statements, vivid and colorful. Searing violins, taut and intense, with brass and bowed basses thrust with powerful dynamics and bright orchestration.

Conductor Fred Sherry has had a long-time association with composer Wuorinen, in numerous recitals and recordings and under his baton, the work is sharp and lively. Wuorinen, present in the audience, received an excellent response and he personally went upstage to thank the orchestra and Sherry.

After the intermission came the moment everyone was waiting for: the U.S. premiere of John Cale's "The Falklands Suite," a new work for voice, piano, pedal steel guitar, accordion, chamber orchestra, and children's choir.

Cale is known world-wide as a founding member of The Velvet Underground, one of the first groups in the 60s to explore the possibilities of experimental music with rock, creating classic songs as well as a "new sound." The group also featured the cult-hero Lou Reed and was under the patronage of Pop artist Andy Warhol.

Cale's work has ranged from the raucous to the classical, the political to the romantic, the intellectual to the visceral, the avant-garde to the blues. He is one of rock music's most adventurous composers, and

is now pursuing a symphonic and orchestral career following his successful career in rock. His "Falklands Suite" received its premiere in November 1987 with the Metropole Orchestra in Amsterdam.

"Falklands Suite" was written in four movements, with three interludes after each of the first three movements. Cale, who performed at this debut event, says of the work that, "In 1982, I wanted to set Dylan Thomas and Ezra Pound to music, partly to find out what musical sounds worked with the internal rhythmic clatter

Cale is a visionary composer and musician whose influence has been felt strongly in rock and beyond. 'Falklands Suite' is an upbeat work which could easily be expanded.

of the words. Of ten poems scored for voice and piano, these four were chosen in combination and orchestrated. They were not chosen for any political content, and "Lie Still" is written in English Cathedral tradition in homage to those who did not return. The interludes are from Symphonic Sketches 1982-87."

Cale performed on piano and sang in each of the four sections of the work. His voice was strong and mellifluous as he sang, "There was a Saviour," "On a Wedding Anniversary," "Lie Still, Sleep Becalmed," and "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night." The music was simple and melodic, with lilting steel guitar and accordion, a country-like sound, both airy and celestial. The "Suite" is a mini Pop-Classical opera which merges various styles, so apparent in Cale's earlier work, although indicative of his recent involvement with orchestral music.

Cale is a visionary composer and musician and is an artist whose influence has been felt strongly in rock and beyond. His new explorations are refreshing and exciting, and we look forward to more in this genre from Cale. His instrumentation is rich and eclectic, and one particular passage used bows tapping violin strings, which was very effective and playful. Even the musicians smiled as they played in the orchestra during this performance. "The Falklands Suite" is an upbeat work which could easily be expanded in duration. At only 30 minutes, one would welcome more of this engaging work.

Cale, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and the Saint Ann's School Chorus received fantastic applause and encores, as did Conductor Fred Sherry, who masterfully presided over a very ambitious program.

A Bergman 'Hamlet'

Swedish director Ingmar Bergman will make his New York stage directorial debut in June at the Brooklyn Academy of Music when he will direct "Hamlet", to be performed in Swedish in the BAM Opera House by the Royal Dramatic Theater of Sweden.

Though most Americans are familiar with Bergman's career in film, he has had a parallel career in theater. He is the former artistic director and producer of the Royal Theater in Stockholm and most recently directed Strinberg's "Miss Julie" last year in Los Angeles, the only other stage work he's done in America.

The Bergman "Hamlet" is presented on a largely empty stage with a few black chairs and a white circle in the center defining the playing area. It is described as a radically post-modernist treatment of the classic play with overtly erotic and sensual references.



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Send to: April Preview, 395 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn 11217

Dance and Video Works Fire Up Thriving and Imaginative Programs At Spontaneous Combustion Space

BY RICK RUSSO

An imaginative arts venue, "Spontaneous Combustion," thrives in the heart of Downtown Brooklyn. Situated in an upstairs loft at 123 Smith Street, the performance/exhibition space provides a unique opportunity for the presentation of new work and is a welcome addition to the ever-expanding downtown arts scene.

The venue is the brainchild of Kathleen and William Laziza, two interdisciplinary artists who have been collaborating since 1977, the year they first met.

Kathleen Laziza has worked for many years as a performance artist, dancer, calligrapher, arts administrator, curator, designer and culinary artist. William Laziza is a multi-dimensional mixed media artist who works primarily as a video artist, lighting designer, photographer, sculptor, composer, video archivist and telecommunication engineer. They enthusiastically talk about how they are dedicated to creating a hybrid art form which is the result of their long-term collaboration.

The Spontaneous Combustion series was inspired by their interest in "contributing to the health and proliferation of art," William Laziza says. The series serves as an "occasional jamboree forum" for performers to document their work on video before an audience, and video artists participate by showing their tapes.

The program this past Sunday at Spontaneous Combustion featured an installation of interactive sculptures and paintings by William Laziza, which could be activated by audience members at will, and video, in addition to live action performance.

Video opened the afternoon event, with works by Lisa Berger, Ronnie Kienhuis with Juliet Du Mont, and William Laziza. "Maura Robinson: Where My Heart Is" by Lisa Berger was an 8-minute documentary of the subject, Robinson, who creates art with gold. "Cloud Escape" was a collaborative work by videographer Kienhuis with choreographer Du Mont, and was a surrealistic journey with unusual imagery and movement theater. William Laziza presented "Remerge" and "Back to Bernstein;" both works displayed his masterful work with experimental images. "Remerge" included an electronic score by Robert Fair, and the Bernstein was Leonard. The works were shown very effectively on three stacked monitors, each with a slightly different coloring and screen size. The video-graphers were present and briefly spoke prior to the showing of each of their tapes.

At the intermission, Kathleen Laziza an-

nounced that food and refreshments were available. One could choose from an interesting menu which featured Spanish Omelettes, four warmed corn tortillas with butter and salsa, apricot Newtons, Blue Plate Special (all of the above), herbal tea, coffee, Laziza Beer from Lebanon, red or white wine, and apple cider. The atmosphere was friendly with the artists mixing with the audience discussing the work. Ms. Laziza was a very cordial hostess, introducing the artists and encouraging interaction between audience and artists.

Dance performances then commenced in the long loft, with exposed white brick as a backdrop. Susan Koch with Joan Blair performed "English As A Second Language;" the energetic dance was punctuated by verbal exchanges ("I got one") describing the actions they were performing, with bumps and grinds, tumbles and falls, slipping and sliding. "Getting Over The Apprehension of Grazing in a Formal Setting" was a work by Chris Ferris and Warren Kloner, with text and movement; Ferris and Kloner interacted in various ways, with the latter performer sitting on a folding chair and reciting for most of the work.

The choreography of Amos Vitori was performed by Colin McDowell and Pamela Bowling: "The Cowboy and the Beauty" and "Gun Duel in the Sunset" were very theatrical works, with strong dancing by both performers. "Sunshine Superman" by The Middols, with dancing by McDowell and Bowling included a humorous tape collage of snippets from Superman movies, as well as rock music and narrative elements.

More video followed the performances, with works by Eric Bender, Ronnie Kienhuis and Kathleen and William Laziza. The Lazizas are producing a new series at Spontaneous Combustion on selected Monday nights that will highlight works created by the Laziza Videodance and Lumia Project. The first event in this series will occur on May 9 at 8:30pm. In addition, future Spontaneous Combustions are slated to take place; upcoming dates include May 22. Many of the events are free to the public, or have minimal admission prices.

Performers and videographers are encouraged to present their work at Spontaneous Combustion. More information on upcoming events and activities may be obtained by calling William Laziza at 797-3116.

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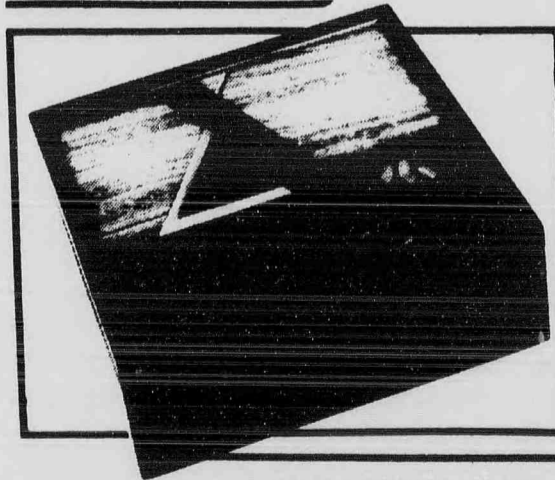
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Foolish Fun is Lost and Found in Williamsburg

BY RICK RUSSO

Your shoelace is untied . . . You just won a million dollars and a cruise around the world for two! . . . There's a spider on your shoulder! The old man down the block left you \$120,000 in his will! . . . The government just invented an over-the-counter eternal life pill so now you can live forever!!! Bulls-t! It's April Fools Day!

The Lost and Found performance space in the Northside section of Williamsburg celebrated this day with "Ship of Fools: An April Fools Day Spectacular" last Friday evening and the show was a dynamic comedy and variety showcase of what was billed, in truth as "the funny, the bizarre, the dangerous, and the simply inexplicable" by Maria Levitsky, its producer.

Tucked away in a red brick building at the corner of North 11th Street, the space is at the end of a climb to the fourth floor by way of a long, winding wooden staircase. This night, the sprawling loft space is packed with people and recorded reggae music bounces off the high ceilings as mixed groups of artists and patrons freely converse in a party atmosphere, seated on folding chairs, walking about and just simply lounging around in this informal setting.

Neatly arranged clip-on lights bathe the space in bright yellow and white, against backdrops of black and green cloth. Greeted by Levitsky, we received a door prize: an oblong rubber pencil eraser. All the audience received a token gift, and many could be seen playing with theirs. The festivities started when Levitsky took center stage to much applause. The Williamsburg space seems to have developed its own following, and the audience was attuned and attentive, with good energy flowing throughout the room. My eyes drifted to the small paintings on the wall and a cat traveled among the crowd, hopping from chair to chair. Dressed in a straw cowboy hat and Citibank vest, and speaking in a western drawl, Levitsky welcomed the audience and in the spirit of the day asked everybody to stand and sing the ABC's. All participated and applauded with laughter after the moment.

The first act is Jane Young. Dressed in a KISS t-shirt, she climbs atop a large ladder, sits on the top rung, lights a skeleton candle (as the lights fade), then recites a surrealistic monologue alluding to death, mystery and fear: a ghost story in a grave yard. The candle periodically goes out, and is relit, to the amusement of the audience as well as the performer. The delivery of the monologue is dark and deliberate, and the story aesthetically engaging.

Maria Levitsky herself performed a short solo work, dressed in a black fur cap, long shredded dress and rubber boots. With sweeping motions of the body, Levitsky held conversations with herself in a repetitive format with short phrases of text. It was skillfully performed and well "choreographed". Janice Bourdage performed a three-part skit which included characterizations as a Swaggert-type preacher, a cleaning lady, and a housewife doing a commercial for Twinkies. The pieces were strongly performed although the work was not very original, a la Saturday Night Live you-saw-it-all-before. The comedic scenarios were, however real crowd pleasers.

Jane Young appeared again, this time as a burnt-out drunk punk with beer in hand, and an accompanying Jimi Hendrix soundtrack. Young swaggered back and forth, flinging her long blonde hair wildly, as she proclaimed that Jim Morrison was not dead. The short work was an effective piece of theatre. Young crazily carried on: "You think Jim Morrison is dead! You're jealous, you're jealous, you're jealous. . . He's more alive now than you'll ever be!"

Marc Singer then presented his own brand of stand-up comedy, donning a moustache and handing out numbers to the audience so they could participate in the "Peek-A-Boo" game. He wore a banana on his head and used it to imitate Jimmy Durante, as well as a telephone operator, as it was held by a rubber band to the side of his face. His work was extremely silly, and the audience just loved it!

Melanie Levitsky, sister of Maria, told the story of a priest and a gold-digger. The scenes were acted well and the writing was strong. Melania Levitsky had an off-beat comedic style in her story, with its moral about greed, received an excellent audience reaction. At intermission everyone mixed about the space, and all were having a wonderful time enjoying an evening of zany entertainment, perfectly fitting for the theme of the show.

The events at Lost and Found are made possible with the assistance of the Association of Williamsburgh and Greenpoint Artists. The space is easily accessible by subway and the venue is an excellent outlet for variety performance artists, and audience looking for something different.

LOST AND FOUND: Performance series continues in May at Lost and Found Space, 119 North 11th St., in Williamsburg. For information about next event, call 388-5001.

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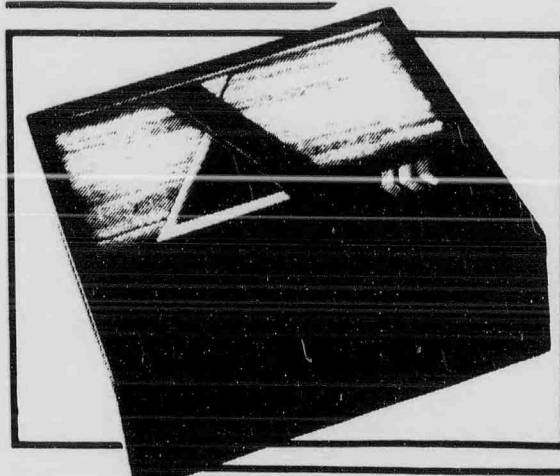
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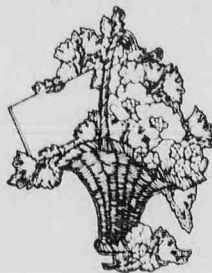
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SECTION 2

(Continued from the Preceding Page)

brilliance, more thundering applause.

Israeli performers, traditional and modern, were represented by two additional sets of guest artists: Kolan (a male quartet, with piano accompaniment) and the Rimón Vocal Ensemble (a seven-member vocal group that performs without accompaniment). Both were a great hit with the now-relaxed, appreciative audience.

Kolan members (all recent immigrants to Israel from Soviet Georgia) did a half-dozen traditional numbers in Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian that sounded like a junior edition of the Red Army Chorus. This was particularly true in their version of "Moscow Nights" which, literally, brought tears to the eyes of audience members from Brighton Beach.

The Rimón group, composed of talented young students from Israel's Rimón School of Jazz, were much more contemporary, offering a mix of American standards in English ("It Might As Well Be Spring" and "You Make Me Feel So Young"), plus Israeli and Russian pop songs in a finger-snapping, medium-bounce tempo. Even their stage costumes (from jumpsuits to a mini on a very leggy blond) by Orna Elammy of MODD were contemporary. The Rimón Vocal Ensemble is a bright, attractive group, and I hope they'll return.

To round things off, there was even a post-show anniversary reception for the audience and musicians in the BAM lobby: cookies and sliced cake loaf by Moishe's Homemade Second Avenue Koshere Bake Shop and wine by The Schapiro Wine Family.

'Very New Music' Space is Weekly Mecca for Musicians, Bar None

BY RICK RUSSO

In the back of Lauterbach's, the funky Slope drinking establishment, avant-garde music abounds. Bar None is the name of the new performance outlet which has become a mecca for composers and musicians each Wednesday evening, with its "very New Music" series. According to its founding directors, Detta and Dan Andreana, "Bar None is dedicated to presenting alternative performance in Brooklyn, helping to remove the barriers that have managed to separate Brooklyn from Manhattan." The Andreanas, themselves performers of new music with their "Dada Frolic," have organized an ambitious series of concerts.

Past the pool table, in the back room, the lights are dim. Tables and chairs are scattered throughout. A large sign which reads "Rock Lives," its letters outlined by Christmas lights, serves as a backdrop to the performing area. A small platform serves as the stage, with ample space to the front and side of it. An eclectic audience fills the room. Literature regarding experimental music is available, as well as records and tapes.

On April 13, the trio "Yellow Tang" took the stage, featuring Aigars Kildiss, keyboard, Ron Anderson, bass guitar, and Matt Donohue, centerpiece of the unit, on percussion. He sits behind a conventional trap set, complemented by an amazing assortment of percussives: hub caps, metal tubing, gongs and prepared cymbals, circular saw blades, bells, woodblocks and much more. I have known Donohue and his unique work with experimental percussion for at least a decade, as he performed in many of my earlier compositions. True to form this concert exemplified his exploratory nature.

What follows is a high energy set of five works which enveloped the listeners in a sea of sound. A constantly changing barrage of rhythmic patterns are whipped-off by Anderson's driving, picked bass; he pulsates with his instrument, with lightning-fast fingerwork. Kildiss, leaning over his keyboard, puts it through a variety of programs, with searing distortions and ear-splitting onslaughts. The trio is one excellent jazz-rock-noise fusion band. Anderson switches off to regular guitar and plays

with virtuosity equal to his work with the bass. Donohue plays with precision and force, displaying his remarkable skills as a percussionist. Kildiss is totally engrossed in his instrument, and pushes it to cosmic dimensions. The pieces range in time from 10 to 20 minutes or so, and each composition has a character of its own, employing rich textural layers of electric sound. "Yellow Tang" would do well to record an album and receive wider, deserving exposure. The crowd at Bar None totally flips over this group, and the applause is tremendous!

Bar None draws an audience of new music enthusiasts, and others involved in the performing arts scene, and the atmosphere is perfect for this social phenomenon. The line-up of performers through May includes a diverse assemblage of musical units and individuals: Demo Moe, with Alfredo Cabbalero, Andy Thurlow, and Mike Zwicky; Brian Charles and Friends; Fruit Bat Savvy, with Detta Andreana, Dan Andreana, Rich Clark, and Al Margolis; and Bob Goldberg and Ted Goldberg, of Brooklyn Academy of Noise fame; among others. In addition, Bar None will play host to such extrazaganzas as Irving Berlin's 100th Birthday Celebration, featuring "a cast of thousands."

All shows begin at 9pm and admission is a low three dollars. Detta and Dan Andreana are seeking out new musical acts to perform at Bar None, although they are booked through June. They encourage those interested in performing to visit any Wednesday evening to speak to them in person, and drop off tapes of their work. There's no doubt that Bar None will continue to grow and expand, and emerging performers, as well as established ones, have an opportunity to be heard by wide, appreciative audiences that congregate each week to check out the action.

BAR NONE: Next performance features music by Fred Lonberg-Holm, Keith Gardner and Paul Hoskin; Bob and Ted Goldberg and "Fruit Bat Savvy" with Dan and Detta Andreana, Rich Clark and Al Margolis, Apr. 20. Admission \$3. 335 Prospect Ave. 788-9410.

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The organizers of the 31st annual Brooklyn Museum ball have hitched their theme for the April 28 event to the future, labeling it "The Crystal Ball". The black-tie fundraising event, which honors Mrs. Vincent Astor, coincides with the museum's exhibition "A New Brooklyn Museum: The Master Plan Competition", and the organizers are shown here with the model of the winning design by Arata Isozaki and James Stewart Polshek. From left are: Mrs. James Marshall; Eben Pyne, general chairman and museum trustee; Mrs. Irving S. Behr; and Mrs. Charles McTiernan. (Gardiner Photo)

Composer David Amram Adds to Omni Ensemble's Unique Artistry

BY RICK RUSSO

The OMNI Ensemble presented the third concert of its fifth season at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music in Park Slope on Sunday afternoon, with acclaimed composer-instrumentalist David Amram as guest performer.

OMNI features its music director, David Wechsler, on flute, cellist Theodore Mook and John Cheek at the keyboards. This week it also invited James Pugliese as guest percussionist. The ensemble has gained considerable critical attention for its innovative programming and exciting performances. They have continually worked with prominent guest artists, presenting a wide array of premieres and commissions of modern composers, as well as performing works drawn from the standard chamber music repertoire.

Bright sunlight bathed the stage at the Brooklyn Conservatory as the OMNI Ensemble made its entrance. The first work as "Sonata" by Claude Debussy, a duet for cello and piano. The lyrical work was rich in texture and varying rhythmic changes. Mook caressed the cello, plucking and bending notes in long, lilting statements, as pianist Cheek presided commandingly over his instrument with superb, masterful playing of his part.

David Amram then took the stage, joining the ensemble along with James Pugliese. Considered the "Renaissance man of American Music," Amram has composed over 100 orchestra and chamber works, written operas and, early in his career, wrote many scores for theater and films. Brooklyn audiences are familiar with his work as a sometimes Conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonic. He is also one of the leading composers of his generation. Amram, who plays French horn, piano, guitar, flutes, whistles and a variety of folkloric instruments from 25 countries, played percussion with the ensemble on Sunday. Amram introduced his work, "Discussions," which is scored for flute, cello, piano and two percussionists. He spoke of the man to whom the work is dedicated, Oscar Pettiford, and explained that the piece had jazz, Latin and American Indian influences. "Discussions" received its world premiere in 1961 at Carnegie Recital Hall; Amram said that this was the Brooklyn premiere.

The new work was wonderful music, provoking modes of exotica and full, rich colors. Pugliese and Amram utilized a unique variety of percussion: cymbals, bongo, kettle-drums, xylophone and assorted bells. The work was vibrantly played, and Amram was obviously very pleased with its performance.

Also on the program was "Durations II" by the recently deceased Morton Feldman, a champion of graphic notation. A version for cello and piano was beautifully

performed by Mook and Cheek. I was truly delighted at the prospect of hearing Feldman played well, as these masterful musicians approached the work with the sensitivity it requires. There was a relaxed feeling of openness, and I was able to enjoy the sounds of the traffic and other environmental sounds in the Feldman. OMNI does not pay lip service to these composers, but rather explores them in their proper nature and respect.

During a short intermission David Amram spoke to audience members about his work and mingled among the members of the concert audience. I am always so pleased when I cross paths with Amram because it is always refreshing and delightful. We spoke of John Cage, Jackson MacLow and Betty Carter. After the break Amram joined the OMNI Ensemble on stage once again, with percussionist Pugliese, to perform "Truth Is A Question Of Memory" by David Wechsler. The composer introduced his own work and spoke of his interest in combining acoustic sounds with electronics. "Truth..." utilized varied folk melodies coupled with thick chamber jazz passages. The synthesizer was effectively played by John Cheek, as Amram rendered textured densities with the French horn.

The work was a beautifully layered, amplified garden of delights, sounding both oriental and egyptian simultaneously. Bright contrasts and pulsating solos between instruments were well orchestrated by Wechsler. I also enjoyed Wechsler's shorter work, "Peruvian Picnic," which featured Amram on Bolivian flute. We look forward to more compositions from OMNI's creative musical director.

James Pugliese presented his solo percussion work, "Industrial Grooves," which utilized a complex system of electronics in conjunction with 'found' percussives as well as the conventional. Pugliese proceeded to create a wall of dynamic and rhythmic sound with his percussion and electronic devices, including mixers and digital displays. Contact microphones transformed barely audible sounds into something unimagined. Pugliese is a skilled percussionist and his use of new electronics was tasteful and diverse.

The program wound-down with collective OMNI Ensemble improvisations, featuring all performers including David Amram. The players were so well attuned to one another, the improvisations sounded as if they had been rehearsed. The short pieces, titled "Pentagrids," displayed the artistry that is uniquely the OMNI Ensemble.

OMNI Ensemble: Sunday, May 22, 3pm, Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, 58 Seventh Avenue. Works by Ravel, Prokofieff, Rorem and Debussy. Tel. 622-3300.

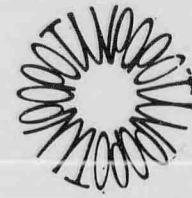
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ATLANTIC CITY

Midwestern Sensibilities With Urban Flavor, On the Air

BY MICHAEL HIRSCH

What's a Minnesota Lutheran storyteller doing in the heart of Brooklyn? He's doing the best radio show in America. Broadcasting live from the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Garrison Keillor's "American Radio Company of the Air" is the first live radio variety show broadcast from New York since Tallulah Bankhead's "The Big Show" on NBC in the early 1950's.

Raconteur, singer, songwriter, author and frequent contributor to the *New Yorker*, Keillor produced and hosted "A Prairie Home Companion," out of St. Paul, Minn. between 1974 and 1987. His refashioned "American Radio Company of the Air" has an urban flavor. It's the homespun Midwestern boy comfortable in New York and in love with the big city. Keillor captures the same feel for the life and culture of Brooklyn and New York that he used to express so well about the Midwest and his fictional Lake Wobegone, "where all the women are strong, the men are good looking, and the children are above average."

Loving the history and diversity of the city, he knocks small-mindedness. "Jesse Helms wants everybody to be a Baptist. In New York, the people aren't even Methodists. They're just people." He situates one selection by citing its peculiar local origins. The classic "Shall We Gather At the River" was written by a leading Brooklyn Heights minister during the twin calamities of a murderous civil war and a major outbreak of influenza. This is not just another hymn, but a song written right here when it seemed neither the war nor the epidemic would end. How many natives in the audience knew that? It took Garrison Keillor to recognize that and tell us. IT WAS A FABULOUS TRIP

Keillor first visited Brooklyn in 1963 with his father. "It was a fabulous trip," Keillor writes in the program notes, "the trip against which all subsequent trips have been measured... We sat in right field and watched the Dodgers and went to Coney Island and rode the Cyclone and the parachutes drop... One



The American Radio Company of the Air's Broadway Local Theater. (Walsh-Belville Photo)

hot night, on a walk, we saw a park full of people: men sitting on benches talking, cigarettes glowing, and on the grass, families sleeping, each family on a blanket, the kids snuggled close to their mother and father. They slept out because it was too hot to sleep indoors. I suppose people don't do that anymore, but that's how I think of Brooklyn anyway."

The "American Radio Company of the Air" is a first-cousin to "A Prairie Home Companion." Keillor still advertises Bertha's Kitty Boutique (for all your Cat's needs) and he's even garnered a few new sponsors, like Fisher's Coffee ("The coffee that kept fishermen awake for 50 years and took America through prohibition, especially in Irish Coffee.") Where can you get these products? Even Sahaadi's doesn't carry them!

The format is familiar — an unorthodox mix of music, songs, repartee, monologues, and a continuing soap-opera, "the Story of Gloria and Manhattan Single-Life," chronicling the travails of a young midwesterner in "The City Nobody Knows." (Says Gloria, "I'm subletting my apartment from a friend who's subletting it from his sister who's subletting it from an uncle who died in 1965.") Joined by radio veteran Bob Elliot and a

first-rate cast and orchestra, Keillor produces hours of top entertainment.

IT'S REALLY RADIO

And this is REALLY radio. Assisted by sound effects man Tom Keith, we see bells, horns, shoes, drums and a hundred other props marshalled to approximate city sounds. While the home audience heard birds, we saw... well, I'm still not sure how he did it.

If Keillor is urbanizing, the show hasn't lost any of its playfulness. At an earlier concert this year, Keillor observed that "It's a little odd to do a show in New York City. You walk all around the streets here, you see all the cars on the streets with the signs on the windows that say "No Radio." An opera diva, soprano Marilyn Horne, is asked one night to sing a Roy Orbison tune. At another, she does a credible job singing tenor selections from "Aida."

Keillor is a youthful 47 with an understated but powerful stage presence. At one performance, holding his microphone close to his chin, giving his face the look of a beard, sans mustache, he looked a reverend preaching to his flock. Really more Amish than Lutheran, from the cast of the shadow, and erring on the side of love and tolerance, with a feel for life's majesties and ironies, it was as close to

an old time religious experience as this agnostic native New Yorker may ever get. CRITICS HAVEN'T BEEN BORN

Talking about his grown son, who was a harsh judge of Keillor while growing up, he said "Children study us the way engineers study a collapsed water tower. Now my son is grown. I don't have to criticize him anymore because his true critics haven't been born yet."

Watching Keillor live over several performances is like seeing a community leader establish our common ground, accepting our basic humanity, offering kindness, grace and a heavy dose of humor. Don't miss "American Radio Company of the Air."

RADIO COMPANY OF THE AIR: Live from Brooklyn Academy of Music. Remaining shows on Saturday, May 19 and June 9. Audiences must be seated at 5:30 for a 6pm airtime. Tickets range from \$25 to \$12 and are available from the BAM box office 636-4126 or through Ticketmaster, 212/307-7171. BAM, 30 Lafayette Avenue. The shows broadcast live over WNYC-FM 92.3 on Saturday at 6pm and rebroadcast Sundays at 11am on WNYC-AM 820.

Swing Era Comes to BAM as 651 Opens Its Season

BY TOM WACHUNAS

I saw some great dancing at BAM on May 13, but it wasn't at a dance concert. Nevertheless, it was the kind of dancing that made you want to grab a partner, squeeze on to the floor, and boogie 'till you drop — the kind of dancing inspired and driven by the sweet strains of Swing.

With "The Savoy Ballroom," the new arts organization 651, aka the Kings Majestic Corporation, kicked off its second season at BAM's Opera House by mounting an electrifying concert of the sounds that made up one of America's most important musical periods.

Ralph Cooper hosted the afternoon, inviting audience members to dance on the apron of the stage, adjusted to floor level for the occasion. He fondly recalled an era that made Harlem a mecca for dancers and musicians, and the Savoy "The World's Most Glamorous Ballroom" — a veritable magnet for the best names in the music business. If you wanted to dance the night away, or simply gaze upon the attendant bevy of stars and celebrities, the Savoy was the place to be.

The Savoy shows established a tradition of staging two orchestras, alternating mini-sets in a "battle of the bands" type of setting, keeping the music and dancing continuous through the night.

It was in that spirit that the legendary drummer Panama Francis and his Savoy Sultans were joined across the BAM stage by the Count Basie Orchestra, led by saxophonist and writer/arranger Frank Foster. The original Sultans began as the Savoy's house band in 1937 with director Al Cooper. Francis re-established the band in 1979. Frank Foster

was featured soloist and arranger in the Count Basie Orchestra for 11 years. When Basie died in 1984, Foster took over as director.

If there was a battle here, it would be tough to name a winner. For obvious reasons, the nine-piece Savoy Sultans delivered a lighter, less layered sound than the 17-piece Basie ensemble, bolstered, to be sure, by its hot trombone section. Yet both bands were equally pure and energetic, and both wowed the packed house with dazzling arrangements and fine, crisp soloing. Particularly

'Anthing Goes' is Theme for Organizers as Boerum Hill-Based Performance Space Opens

BY RICK RUSSO

On the evening of May 9 at around 7pm, an eclectic group of some 40 people crowded into a small storefront on Nevins Street, between Atlantic and State. Passers-by on their way home from work stopped and joined the crowd; a couple of taxis pulled up, dropping off others. There was excitement in the air, with plenty of lively conversation and good feelings. This was the scene for the grand opening of The Storefront, a charming, new performing arts venue in Boerum Hill.

Mark Averitt, a playwright and theater director, is the artistic director of The Storefront. Working together with his co-director, Charlotte Meehan, a wide array of entertainment events have been scheduled for the coming weeks. Plays, performance art, poetry and much more will be presented. Whether you are an artist or arts enthusiast,

memorable was Panama Francis' drum solo at the end of his arrangement of Chick Webb's "Harlem Combo," concluding the sizzling first half of the afternoon.

It was the second half of the concert that marks the event as one of the most significant musical outings to grace a BAM stage in recent memory. What can you say about the incomparable singer Billy Eckstine, accompanied by the Count Basie Orchestra? After more than 40 years in the business, the man can still woo an audience with his trademark baritone and vibrato, tempered with an

astute sense of pace, humor and pathos.

Eckstine began his set with a moving reminiscence of the late Sarah Vaughan. He discovered her at an Apollo Theater amateur night when she was 18 years old, and she later became the featured female vocalist in his historic band of the 1940s. Speaking on her recent death he said, "I couldn't believe it. The only way I can figure it is, God must have needed a lead singer." The veteran jazzman then launched into a set that kept this Mothers Day crowd enraptured and howling for the next hour.

Eckstine is still the craftsman he always was, treating every word, every note, every pause as if discovering a treasure for the first time. What makes him even more special is his sheer generosity as a performer. Upon finding his musical treasures, he gives them away to his audience. He possesses a flawless understanding of the dynamics of singing in the big-band tradition, due in large part to his long-standing collaboration with pianist/arranger Bobby Tucker, who was leading the band for this set.

When I left the theater, couples were making their way to the stage, talkin' that talk and walkin' that walk. There's no doubt in my mind that they were savoring memories of an era that this concert not only recalled, but helped to continue.

NEXT IN THE 651 SERIES: "The Coltrane Legacy," featuring Reggie Workman, Andy White, Sonny Fortune, Billy Harper and others who performed with or were influenced by John Coltrane. May 19, 8pm. BAM Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. \$8-22. 643-4100.

Averitt explains that he wants to create a cabaret atmosphere "where anything goes." (Continued On Page Eleven)

COMING

\$5 or TDF. Free refreshments. On concert night, 768-2972.

SUNSET MUSIC: Sunset Park School of Music presents folk music of Latin America, lyrics in Spanish and Portuguese, with Suni Paz, Martha Siegel, Wendy Blackstone. May 19, 2pm. Trinity Lutheran Church, Fourth Ave., 46th St. \$4; \$3 seniors, students. 748-7860.

PARK MUSIC: Brooklyn Conservatory of Music Prospect Park concert for You Gotta Have Park weekend. May 19, 1:30pm, Children's Chorus, conducted by John Ellis, Children's Honors Ensembles. May 20, 1:30pm, jazz trumpeter Volny Souffrant with pianist Geong Gwan Kim. Boathouse, Prospect Park. 768-0227.

BROOKLYN JAZZWORKS: Trio performs for singles brunch, May 20, 12:30-3pm, Educational Alliance West. Featuring Dave Marck, piano, Don Moore, bass, Scott Napoli, drums. 129 Montague St. \$15. 522-0059.

JAZZ AT CONSERVATORY: Brooklyn Conservatory of Music series continues with vocalist Vanessa Rubin, May 25, 8pm. 58 Seventh Ave. \$8; \$6 seniors, students. 622-3300.

Films

GRAND ARMY PLAZA LIBRARY: Wednesday afternoon films at 2:30pm at the Central Library. May 23, "Lillies of the Field." Free. 780-7700.

CROSSOVER: Video programs by artists accomplished in other media, curated by Robert Thompson. Includes "Gathering of Silent Leaves" by photographer Larry Brown; "Ex-Slaves" by sculptor LaVerne Cody Gittens; "Art and Spirituality" by musician/artist Juma Santos. Rotunda Gallery, Brooklyn War Memorial. Through May 26. Cadman Plaza West at Orange St. 855-7882.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM: African American Video Visions, six week series of films and guest speakers Sundays, 2pm, in conjunction with new museum exhibition, "Facing History: The Black Image in American Art, 1710-1940." May 20, Africa and the Diaspora, guest speaker Ayoka Chenzira; screenings of her own works and those by Collis Davis, Albert Marshall. May 27, Philip Mallory hosts retrospective of his documentary and experimental work, including "Beyond the Mountain - More Mountains," "The Trouble I've Seen," "Soldiers of a Recent and Forgotten War," others. Free tickets available half hour before screening. Museum admission. 200 Eastern Parkway. 638-5000.

BROOKLYN CENTER CINEMA: "Pele the Conqueror." May 18, 8pm; May 19, 2pm; May 21, noon; May 28, 1pm. Whitman Theater, Brooklyn College campus, Flatbush, Nostrand junction. \$4. 780-5295.

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS LIBRARY: Sun. and Mon. at 2:30pm. May 20, "Le Pink Grapefruit," "Picasso at 90," Modern East African Wood Carver." May 21, "We Were So Beloved." 280 Cadman Plaza West. Free. 780-7789.

CINEMA 90 FILM SERIES: Tuesday, 7pm, films at Brooklyn War Memorial Building. May 22, "Wild Women Don't Have the Blues." May 29, "Amadeus." Cadman Plaza West at Orange St. Free. 965-6584.

SPIKE LEE'S PRODUCTION COMPANY: Long Island University's Media Arts Department hosts Forty Acres and A Mule Filmworks, Inc., headed by filmmaker Spike Lee, with series of seminars. May 19, Documentaries, St. Clair Bourne. June 2, Set Design, Wynn Thomas. Each 11am-2pm. \$25 each. LIU's Brooklyn Campus at University Plaza, Library Learning Center, Room 116. 624-3703.

Galleries

BROOKLYN MUSEUM: Opening May 18, "The Intimate Interiors of Edouard Vuillard," first major museum show since 1971 to focus on work of French artist, including more than 100 paintings and works on paper from 1890-1900; through July 30. Opening May 18, "In Pursuit of the Spiritual," selection of 50 pieces from collection of Oceanic art given by Mr. and Mrs. John A. Friede and Mrs. Melville W. Hall. "Rajasthani Painting II," second of two installations from museum's permanent collection of Indian paintings, through July 16. "Facing History: The Black Image in American Art," through June 25. "The Williamsburg Murals: A Rediscovery," installation of restored WPA art from NYC Housing project. "Tiffany Glass and Lamps at the Brooklyn Museum," an exhibition of seven lamps and 30 glass vases, through June 25. Grand Lobby installation, two interrelated multiple-panel works in mixed media by Russian born contemporary artists Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid. "American Artists of the Alfred Stieglitz Circle," through June 18. "The Blue of Jingtai: The Samuel P. Avery Collection of Chinese Cloisonne Vessels at

the Brooklyn Museum," through Aug. 6. Permanent installations: "Rodin: The Cantor Gift to the Brooklyn Museum" and recently opened "Himalayan and Southeast Asian Arts." Museum hours: daily except Tues., 10am-5pm. \$3, \$1.50 students, \$1 seniors. 638-5000.

BROOKLYN WATERFRONT ARTISTS COALITION: 11th annual spring exhibition. 68 Jay St. BWAC Group Show of work of over 100 artist members, Through May 27, weekends, 12-6pm. Poetry readings, 2pm, May 19. 57 Front St., BWAC Photography Show, through May 26. Mon.-Fri., 9-5pm; May 19 & 26, 1-5pm. Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park, East River at New Dock St., 8th annual Outdoor Sculpture Show. Open daily, 10am-6pm, through June 22. 330-0464.

BROWNSTONE GALLERY: "Eva," Park Slope artist Robert Salmieri's personal collection of watercolors and oils inspired by and dedicated to his late wife. Reception, May 20, 4-7pm. Through June 10. Gallery hours: Wed.-Sat., 10:30-6pm; Sun., noon-5pm. 76 Seventh Ave. 636-8736.

TRANSIT MUSEUM: Two exhibitions inspired by the NYC subway system. "The D-Train Project," installation of architectural sculpture, painting, sculpture, photographs, video and sound celebrating the heritage of New York City as depicted through the 41 stops on the D Line created by Tom Finkelpeter and Bolek Greczynski. Through Sept. 29. Gallery talk by artists May 19, 2pm. "The Subway and the City," prints, drawings, paintings, mixed media by Janet Lust. Through July 28. Gallery hours Mon.-Fri., 10am-4pm; Sat. 11am-4pm. \$1.15 or token admission; 55 cents children. Underground at Boerum Pl. and Schermerhorn St. 330-3060.

WILLIAMSBURG-GREENPOINT ARTISTS: First Amendment Festival and Exhibition, sponsored by Assn. of Williamsburgh-Greenpoint Artists and South Side Political Action Committee. Artists include Brian Austin, Chak, Howard Cruse, Douglas Keeve, Margaret Morton, Vincent Salas, Marsha Salo, Richard Taddei, Elizabeth Berdenn, Robert Coane, Toby Greenberg, Ona Lindquist, Frank Palazzolo, John Sapp, Elizabeth Smith, Tess Timoney. Opening May 19, 3-7pm; Tower of Babel/Soapbox Derby, 4pm. Video screenings 7pm, Sundays through June 17. 308 Bedford Ave. 384-6228.

THE PARLOUR: Art Celebration, watercolors by Sibylle Pfaffenbichler, mixed media works by Don Reid. May 19, 7-11pm. By appointment through June 3. 129 South Oxford St. 638-0497.

STUDIO GALLERY: Brooklyn Underground presents "Viajeros Voyagers," photographs, collages, paintings by Julia David-Gonzalez and Stephen Mahoney. Through May 20. 201 DeKalb Ave. 875-3178.

Opening a New Space

(Continued From Page Eight)

He says, "We want to do projects that are as varied as possible that express many different points of view — particularly ones that dare to say something unpopular, or to experiment." In addition, some poetry readings will include and open mike, so that audience members can read their own poems after the featured poets.

Averitt is particularly excited about "The Soap Opera," a long-running, audience participation show which will begin in June. He explains that the event will be "an audience participation soap opera which will run once a week on the same night all summer. Audience members will create their own characters... someone will write the script during the week, sometimes even an audience member, then we'll all show up, get the scripts, and do it." This experimental theatrical production could potentially include hundreds of characters.

As Averitt explains, if an actor or audience members can't make it one night, his character could be in the hospital, dead, suffering from amnesia, or be on a business trip to Cleveland.

The Storefront is currently accepting proposals for new projects for music, visual art exhibitions, performance pieces and more. "We want the audience to feel that The Storefront is their space," Averitt says.

THE STOREFRONT: May 20, poets Chris Mumford and Matthew Goldie, 4pm, \$2.50. May 24-26, An Evening of Jamaican-American Theater, 8pm; \$10 includes dinner. May 27, writer Paige Snell and the H.S.O.-4, 7pm, \$2.50. May 28, poets Peter Spiro and Paul Beatty, 7:30pm, \$2.50. May 29, Brooklyn College poets, 7:30pm, free. May 30-31, June 1-2, "Housebound," five short plays by Brett Busang, 8pm, \$5. 75 Nevins St. 596-0201.

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SECTION 2

Covering the Arts In and Around Brownstone Brooklyn

Hurr-ay! Step Right Up!

Sideshow, Surf and Concerts Make Coney Island, USA a Place to Be

BY RICK RUSSO

HURR-AY! HURR-AY! HURR-AY! SEE Screwy Louie... the Human Blockhead who hammers a 20-penny spike into the center of his head! **SEE** Madam Twisto... the woman who twists her head 360 degrees without breaking her neck! **SEE** the Human Volcano... the man who drinks burning gasoline the way you drink iced tea! **IT'S ALL LIVE, Ladies and Gentlemen!** People doing things for a living that you wouldn't do for all the money in the world! **STEP RIGHT UP!...**

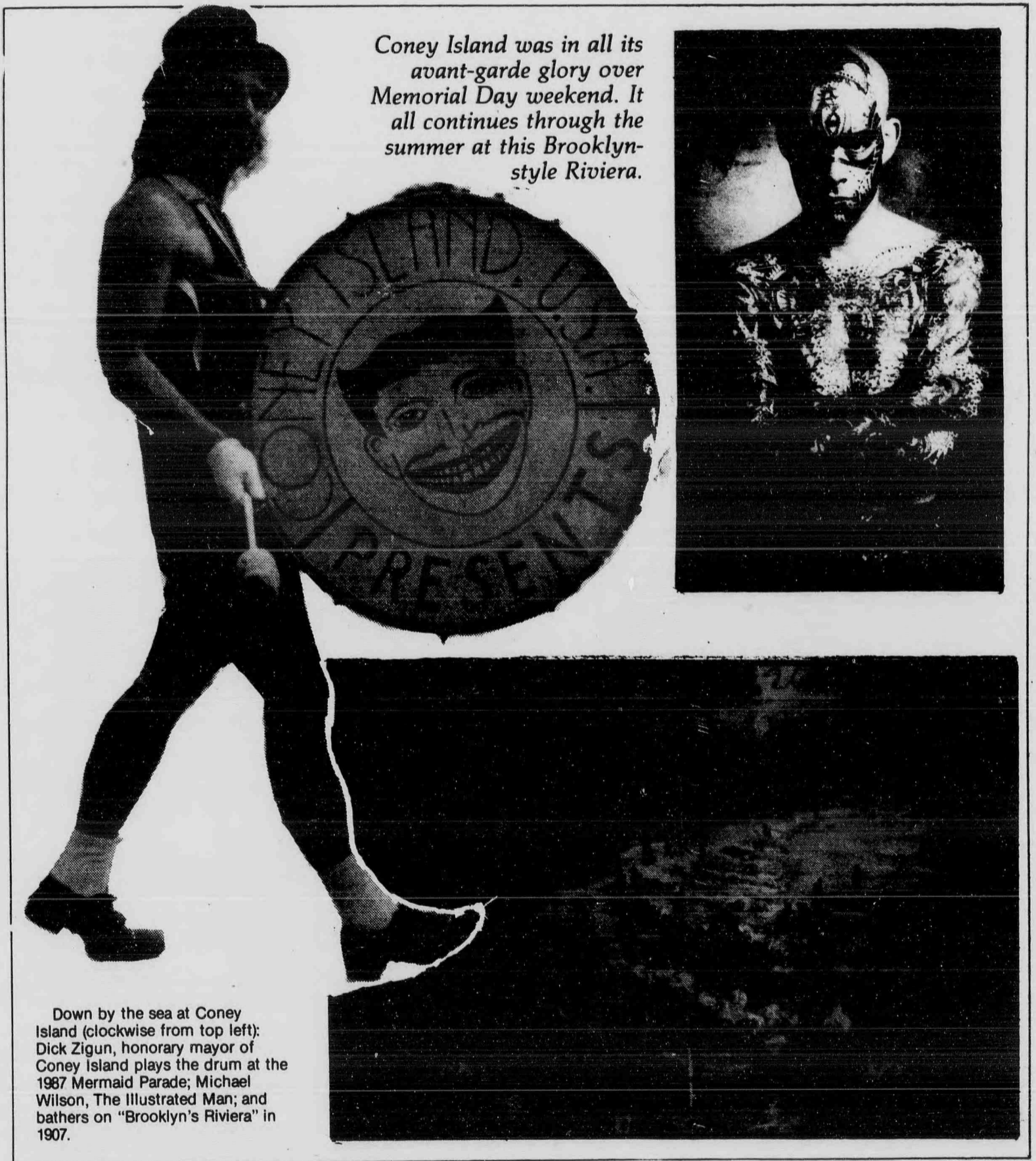
Coney Island was in all its avant-garde glory over Memorial Day weekend at Sideshow By The Seashore, the museum theatre run by the non-profit Coney Island, USA, Inc. and artistic director Dick D. Zigun. Located on the historic Boardwalk in the heart of the amusement district at West 12th Street, Coney Island, USA officially opened its 1988 season this weekend with the return of "Bradshaw's Circus of World Curiosities" and the Beach*Blanket*Bingo concert series. It all continues through the summer at this Brooklyn-style Riviera.

The Circus of World Curiosities may be America's last remaining, authentic 10-in-1 sideshow. The breath-taking performances, which run with continuous admission Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to sundown, have played to constant capacity crowds at Sideshow over the past two seasons. The expanded show for 1988 features an amazing cast, led by impresario John Bradshaw and including: Melvin Burkhardt, the veteran sideshow performer known for as the Anatomical Wonder, the Man Without a Stomach, and the Two-Faced Man; Michael Wilson, better known as The Illustrated Man; Ruby Rodriguez, the Brazilian Snake-Woman; Diane Falk, the sword-swallower; and Otis Jordan, the Human Cigarette Factory, who rolls and lights a cigarette using only his lips! This is all real, and in the best tradition of the sideshow, it must be seen to be believed!

Beach*Blanket*Bingo, an every-Friday concert night series through Labor Day, opened with a sand-shaking blast, an evening of vintage films, new performance and music. It was hosted by DJ Chris T., of WFMU Nightmare Lounge fame. The festivities began with rarely-seen Columbia Pictures shorts including chapter 1 of Batman, "The Electrical Brain (with J. Carroll Naish, 1940), "The Gay '90's Lives Again," and America Sings-Along with Kate Smith." Perched above the stage, Chris T., amidst stacks of records and two turntables, mixed-in "colorings" to the bizarre, campy flicks. The effect of the entire proceedings was quite marvelous!

Richard Eagan, of the Coney Island Hysterical Society, took center stage next with his "Midway Regurgitations," entertaining writings about his personal Coney Island experiences, from childhood to the present.

Dressed as the side-show barker he once was, in crisp, bright white shirt and trousers, replete with straw hat and red suspenders, Eagan told tales of



Coney Island was in all its avant-garde glory over Memorial Day weekend. It all continues through the summer at this Brooklyn-style Riviera.

Down by the sea at Coney Island (clockwise from top left): Dick Zigun, honorary mayor of Coney Island plays the drum at the 1987 Mermaid Parade; Michael Wilson, The Illustrated Man; and bathers on "Brooklyn's Riviera" in 1907.

Steeplechase Park, Schweikert's Walk, and The Spookhouse, accompanied by an occasional 'minimal' soundtrack of actual Coney Island sounds. The stories weave a labyrinth of past, present and future impressions of Coney, and Eagan's storytelling is quite engaging.

Metropolitan audiences may remember his work on the stage last season in the starring role of Abe Reles in the Coney Island, USA production of "Kid Twist," the story of Murder, Incorporated. We look forward to Eagan's weekly installment in his mini one-man show at Sideshow. As he himself proclaims; "Welcome To Coney Island!"; it's a fitting phrase to usher in the new season.

The band Frank's Museum, followed Eagan, playing an explosive, fun set of ass-kicking rock and roll, complete with two demanded encores. The tightly-knit, high energy band peeled-off snappy tunes interspersed by such zaniness as "Paperback Giveaway Night" (Dick Zigun himself won a book of southern Ghost Stories). The band romped through the evening and funky, spastic dancing prevailed throughout the theatre. The audience also had a ball.

Beach*Blanket*Bingo continues this Friday night, June 10, with Formaldehyde Blues Train, followed by Bob Holman and Pedro Juan Pietri on June 17. There will also be special events in the series like the

Psychedelic Festival (July 29), Wildgirl's Go-Go Rama (Sept. 2), and even an appearance by John Giorno, the famed performance poet (July 22). And each week's program also includes a series of different, obscure old-time films.


There's a special reason for making the trip to Coney Island later this month. It's Coney Island, USA's Sixth annual Mermaid Parade which will wind through the amusement district and Boardwalk area on Saturday, June 25th, expected to draw nearly a half-million spectators once again this year. Trophies will be awarded for Best Mermaid Costume, King Neptune Costume, best homemade float and other

Continued on Following Page

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SECTION 2

Coney Island, USA

Continued From Preceding Page
categories. The parade will include scores
of special attractions and marching units,
all led by Dick Zigun, the "Mayor" of
Coney Island, banging his famous Coney
Island drum.

If you can't make the parade, there's
still a chance to see some of the nostalgia.
Coney Island artifacts and memorabilia
such as postcards, sideshow banners,
rolling chairs and antique bathing suits are
on continuous display at Sideshows By The
Seashore, including a new exhibition this
year entitled "Natures Mistakes." Sideshows
itself is a renovated 1930's penny arcade
space, right on the Board-

walk, with a picture-postcard view of the
Atlantic Ocean.

BEACH*BLANKET*BINGO: SHOWS
Friday night at 8pm, \$5. June 10,
Formaldehyde Blues Train; June 17,
Bob Holman and Pedro Juan Pietri;
June 24, closed; July 1, Saving Grace;
July 8, Boring Sponge.

SIDESHOWS BY THE SEASHORE:
On the Boardwalk at West 12th Street.
Continuous shows Wed.-Sunday, noon to
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Island by car, Exit 6 off the Belt
Parkway; by train: take B, D, F, M, N,
Q lines to Stillwell Avenue. For informa-
tion, 372-5159.

Sister Rose Shines in DanceAfrica Festival at the Academy of Music

BY VICTOR VALENTINE

It is the first time in the 11-year history of
the DanceAfrica Festival at the Brooklyn
Academy of Music that a native African
dance company has appeared. And this
year's two-part program, June 4 and 5,
shone all the brighter for the inclusion of a
particular star from the Ivory Coast.

Rose Marie Guiraud, dubbed "Sister
Rose" by the festival's artistic director,
Chuck Davis, is the mentor of Les
Guirivoires, a wholesome group of talented
teenagers, many of whom were orphans
rescued by this mistress of the Dance. The
repertoire includes a spicy selection of
traditional storytelling pieces from
scattered African provinces, performed
with a joie de vivre that is exhilarating.

Sister Rose presides over the events in a
manner half authoritarian, half suckling-
nurse, barking directions at the company's
three drummers while playfully leading her
kids onstage a la Pied Piper. And for
someone who lives light years from New
York, Sister Rose sure knows how to work a
Brooklyn music hall. Talking directly to the
audience in English, or a slip of French,
and usually, leading off each number with a
shake of her own tailfeathers, she has a
penchant for changing costumes and
carrying a fan, making her seem a
shadow of Josephine Baker maniacally
impersonating Mick Jagger.

She's a delicious character, and a better
ambassador of good will one cannot
imagine. In fact, the entire festival
was successful in that vein due largely to
the loving guidance by director Chuck
Davis, somewhat a Cab Calloway himself
when the feet commence to go to town.

Davis wisely included the New York-
based Urban Bush Women in the program,
giving it a modern viewpoint with origins
transmuted by city-living in this century.
Really sophisticated and integrated pieces
of theater, both "Wild Women Don't Get the
Blues" and "Bitter Tongue," entertain
wholly with some great live drumming,
bluesy singing, and a shimmy contest to the
words: "Shake it to the East, Shake it to
the West, Shake it to the one that
I like best."

Sabar Ak Ru Afriq, also a New York
company, transports us in time and place



Sabar Ak Ru Afriq performs in
DanceAfrica at BAM.

with choreographic tests of endurance
wrapped in multi-colored shimmering silks.
At times, the human form is nearly
indistinguishable in the possessed and
frenetic flailings of these whirling dances.
Impressive solo work marks these pieces
inspired by the movement and rhythms of
the Woloff, Lebou and Serer people of
Senegal, West Africa.

In addition to the admirable, cross-
cultural contributions that DanceAfrica
makes, it also provides an opportunity to
examine what is essentially the basis of
several forms of American vernacular
dance: certain schools of jazz, tap, modern
and social dance evolved from African
influences, and you can recognize it here in
these works.

Another area performance of
DanceAfrica is scheduled for June 19 at the
Newark Symphony Hall. Sister Rose will
be waiting.

New BACA Series Emphasizes Risk

Mondays in June at BACA Downtown in
Downtown Brooklyn are the nights for the
New Works Project, a series of readings and
works-in-progress. The emphasis, says BACA
Downtown director Greta Gunderson, "is on
experimentation and risk-taking, rather than
presentation of the finished product as the
collaborative process between playwright,
director and actor unfolds."

The series continues June 13 with two
works by John Russell, "Lookout", directed
by Nina Mankin, and "Everyday", directed
by Maurya Wickstrom. Also on the bill is
"Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third
Kingdom" by Suzan-Lori Parks, directed by
Lois F. Alexander. June 20, the program in-
cludes Neena Berber's "We're Predicting
Rain", directed by Tri Garraty, and "John
Gibson Smith in Caribou" by Elana Green-
field, directed by Maurya Wickstrom. June 27
will be Greenfield's "Neutrino Blues" directed

by Joumana Rizk, and "Fragments" by Tony
Gerber, Parks, William Pope, Russell, Lynn
Wachman and Steve Wylie.

Show time at the theater, 111 Willoughby
St., is 8pm and suggested donation is \$4. For
information call 596-1111.

Six Get Federal Grants

Six Brooklyn arts organizations are among
120 presenting groups across the country
receiving portions of \$1.6 million in grants
from the National Endowment for the Arts
announced recently.

Recipients include: Brooklyn Academy of
Music, \$150,000; Fund for the Borough of
Brooklyn, \$5,000; Brooklyn College Commu-
nity Services, \$6,800; Brooklyn Arts and Culture
Association, \$5,000; St. Ann's Center for
Restoration and the Arts \$9,800; Thelma Hill
Performing Arts Center, \$5,000.

Get the Dope On What's New and What's Happening
In the Busy World of The Arts In Brooklyn, Every
Week in The Award-Winning Phoenix Newspaper.

You Don't Have to Know Swedish for Bergman's Hamlet, But it Helps

BY WILLIAM HOGELAND

Despite my ever-growing admiration for Ingmar Bergman, I had hoped to be able to exhibit here some rapier wit and ridicule the preposterousness of asking an audience to sit still for three and a half hours of Shakespeare in Swedish.

But in the opening moments of this production, which makes theatrical sense of "Hamlet" like no other in memory, the language barrier became sharply painful. A sudden, terrible excitement swept away the dry husks left by hundreds of readings and dull evenings past—and redeemed them, too. But Bergman is wrong to tell us language should be no problem: the interplay of words and acting, at once form and subject for Shakespeare, is perhaps nowhere more alive than in "Hamlet".

There is no help for it—supertitles would be an abomination—but as the old play leaps to life before us, we long to get close to the nuances of the action, and we can't. Thus any discussion (by a non-speaker of Swedish) of this maddeningly beautiful gift must be partial and impressionistic. Dominant impressions follow.

Bare, black, ritual stage, as reported, but colors set against it like jewels on velvet: Hamlet's and Horatio's grays and blacks; the King and his court in bright blood-red robes on dried-blood rust tunics; a sudden explosion of warm variety in the players' checked swallow-tail coats and green and blue hats—the players as little toy people more human than life.

The so-called "updating"—Hamlet in existentialist-student turtleneck and shades; Fortinbras's exhausted WWI soldiers (who later become a high-tech SWAT team); frock-coated, top-hatted mourners out of a grim Munch drizzle at Ophelia's funeral; Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as Edwardian fops in Tweedledee and Tweedledum caps—serves to make the play harshly medieval for the first time, a grab-bag stuffed with the whole tragic history of northern Europe into which the hot, icy fist

of the Dark Age is always reaching, squeezing our own century with its most appalling atrocities.

Thus, the play is also more truly Elizabethan and truly modern here than ruffs or t-shirts can ever make it; if post-modernism were always like this, it would be bracing and salutary instead of merely cute.

An athletic, skinny Hamlet (Peter Stomare) with an electrifying voice and face, whose depression is a spur; Lutheran schoolmaster Polonius (Ulf Johanson, doubling as the grave-digger!) whose vapidity is a self-serving evil; Claudius fleshy despair and taking his confession of

(Borje Ahlstedt) increasingly distracted by conscience to a drink-besotted Beckettian doll of a Court prostitute; a frail Ghost, fearful of light, pleading with Hamlet to follow him (a ghostly ghost at last); an Ophelia who is smart enough to talk back to her father but can get no comfort from him—and none, finally, from anyone else.

A few of many striking moments: Polonius, having been stabbed through the arras, runs out screaming, a hand to his bloody eye; Hamlet quite consciously finishes him off. "To be or not to be" is the climax of the advice to the players (and isn't it?) and also serves as Hamlet's only sincere confession of self; he leans for

support on the sweet, strong old player King (Per Myberg, who doubles as Hamlet's real father, the Ghost.) The guns, when drawn, seem ineffective—they force the graceful updating into too literal a mold—and the ending, which suggests that however bad we've found the "blod" of past centuries, the media-staged bloodlessness of the next will be more killing, seems suddenly moralistic, tagged on.

The maestro has waited all his life for "Hamlet." We will probably wait in vain for another as exciting, as thoughtful, as fine.

But think if one only knew Swedish!

Ad Astra Performance Collage is a Marriage of Arts

BY RICK RUSSO

Ad Astra productions, the new, Brooklyn-based multi-media arts company presented an abridged version of its "Wedding Ending" as part of a two-day benefit at the Laziza Performance Space on Smith Street. There was a capacity audience in the space on Sunday to see the performance of this work-in-progress created by the company's directors, Suzanne Odette Khuri and Lisa Parkins.

Khuri, an actress, director and writer, and Parkins, a dancer, choreographer and musician, have combined their talents in the production of what they describe as a "tragicomic spectacle about weddings." The work is explained as "an intricate performance collage which can be presented as an evening-long theatre work or in shorter, self-sufficient segments." This afternoon the latter was employed.

The performance, about 30 minutes in length, used tapes, slide projections, minimal props, basic bridal costumes and texts to create sound, motion and image collages. The work, skillfully executed by Khuri and Parkins, tells tales of imaginary weddings involving such items as silent brides and grooms who never appear, in addition to diatribes regarding sundry

objects of domestic life, such as blenders, eating utensils and such.

Ad Astra has been formed "to develop and present multi-media spectacles which explore a new style of performance and attempt to break down the usual divisions in the performing arts." The founders plan to develop and promote public awareness of the multi-media arts through performance and readings, lectures and workshops, which may combine the performing, visual or literary arts in a variety of forms and styles. In addition to the current work-in-progress, "Wedding Ending", Ad Astra is developing "Duse and Bernhardt", a theatrical concert exploring real and imagined meetings of two actresses whose lives were interwoven with their art and with each other. The directors explained that performances will be announced soon for spaces in and around Brooklyn and Manhattan.

The program notes for "Wedding Ending" included Inoesco's quote, "To be avant-garde is not to be far-out but to return to our sources, to reject traditionalism in order to find again a living tradition." In exploring their very personal viewpoints of weddings, these artists have succeeded in rejecting traditionalism, but

with regard as to what exactly is the avant garde, I prefer Varese's statement: "There is no avant garde; there are just some people who are a little late."

For more information on upcoming Ad Astra events, write or call: Ad Astra Performance Co., 335 Sackett Street, Brooklyn 11231; tel. 797-5483.

Jazz Coming to Slope

Continued from Page 12

fool you. Port Royal, despite the speakeasy type entrance, is a large well organized space with kind of an Afro-Caribbean feel. It's roomy, but intimate, and Randig says that in the future the wall space will be used to display the work of Brooklyn based painters.

For now the club will be featuring Friday night concerts; on June 25, July 9 and 16. Later music will be extended to other nights. The grand opening is this Friday, June 18, and will feature the music of the Eddie Henderson/Ralph Lalama Quintet with the stand-up comedy of Claudia Sherman and Bill McCarty, followed by a late night jam session.

Port Royal, 837 Union Street, near the corner of Seventh Avenue. 875-5171.

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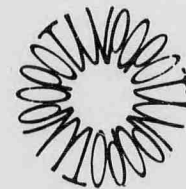
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American Music Worth Celebrating

BY TOM WACHUNAS

Celebrate Brooklyn is now in its 10th year at Prospect Park, and this past weekend's American Music Traditions series at the 9th Street Bandshell is indeed something to celebrate. I was fortunate to see the Saturday performances, and was impressed by the diversity of the program and the musical talent.

The Klezmatics, a New York-based sextet, opened the evening. They offered a studied and rich interpretation of Jewish popular music, ranging from Klezmer (traditional wedding dances from Eastern Europe), to music rooted in Yiddish radio and theater. Their repertoire includes ballads, laments and spirited dance tunes.

Sometimes called "Jewish Jazz" (an oversimplified definition at best), Klezmer music traditionally features small groups of brass, reed and stringed instruments, with rhythmic chordal support from piano and/or accordion. This group deftly employs that instrumentation to achieve a sweet, piercing sound; baleful and plaintive, and at times raucous.

There are some profoundly moving harmonic interactions between the muted trumpet, the violin and the clarinet, with the musicians delivering a superb array of solos. Endearing sighs of recognition rose from the audience as the band announced a song title, or a bit of historical background about a piece. I would like to have heard even more of that kind of information, considering America's infrequent exposure to Yiddish traditions.

The band's arrangements were often too

long, however, and the tempo of the set too even-paced, though I'm sure I wouldn't have noticed had I been dancing. But it's enough to savor the impeccable performances of the musicians, the joy on the faces of the crowd and be thankful that the Klezmatics are preserving and sharing a priceless cultural treasure.

As for wanting to dance to the music, after intermission, when Terrance Simien and the Mallet Playboys took the stage, the issue was settled. Within a few bars of the opening number, the audience was on its feet to stay. These guys were here to have a good time, and they let everybody know it.

Simien was exposed to zydeco at an early age, growing up in Louisiana. Zydeco is a folk-dance music introduced here by the French, and it flourished in bayou country. It features accordion and metal washboard ("frottoir") as the leading edge of its sound. Like the Klezmatics, this band demonstrates its roots with authority. Simien on accordion and vocals and the frenetic Earl Sally, looking oddly futuristic in his metal washboard vest, spearheaded this hot quintet into a party-harty set.

Simien, like a bayou shaman, worked the crowd into a pleasant frenzy with his rubbery cavorting and the ample help of the infectious, driving rhythm section. The set was peppered with tastes of southern rock, blues and reggae. All too short, though, as inclement weather forced a premature ending to the proceedings. I left the bandshell singin' in the rain.

Outrageous Groups Rock the Beach

BY RICK RUSSO

A capacity audience and two outrageous rock-and-roll acts — When People Were Shorter and Lived Near Water and Bongwater — joined forces for a blockbuster event to benefit Coney Island, USA Inc., the nonprofit arts organization which produces the annual Mermaid Parade and operates Sideshow by the Seashore, the multi-arts center located on the historic Boardwalk.

The Friday night concert was part of the Beach*Blanket*Bingo series of summer events at the center, produced by artistic director Dick Zigan.

Costa Mantis, the noted film director, got the evening underway by announcing the event from his seat in the audience, as he and WFMU-FM disc jockey Chris T., the series host, shouted jokes and created a zany introduction for the evening.

Chris T. then left the stage to spin 1960s beach party records while vintage surfing films were projected by Mantis on a large backdrop over the stage. The transformed club atmosphere at Sideshow was replete with mirrored ball lights, strobes beaming about the space and an interesting mix of audience members — an East Village-Park Slope hybrid as well as Coney Island locals.

At 9:30 the lights dimmed as Chris T. introduced two opening acts, Michele Madigan Somerville, a poet, and Richard Eagan, an actor.

CONEY ISLAND RANTING

Somerville recited a short work of "Coney Oracle Ranting" about a woman from Coney Island, performed as three separate voices. Richard Eagan then danced his way onto the stage to the Ghostbusters theme song. Eagan appears at each event in the concert series through the season, telling tales of Coney Island history.

This evening he read comical, actual telephone listings of Coney businesses which existed decades ago. He also related a very funny monologue on "How to Make Money at Coney Island." He was accompanied by carnival effects which underscored the storytelling.

Having now heard numerous skits in the series by Eagan, I look forward to seeing them strung together and conceptualized into a full length, one-man show. The material and Eagan's characterizations are more refined and as effective as ever.

Then came the moment everyone was waiting for: rock and roll with When Peo-

ple Were Shorter and Lived Near Water, and Bongwater, two fantastic, fast-rising rock groups.

When People Were Shorter took over the stage to tremendous audience reaction. Led by the ranting and raving of lead singer Kim Rancourt, the band has propelled itself into the forefront of the underground New York rock scene, regularly playing at CBGB, Siberia, Lauterbach's, Tramps, Sideshow and other art-club venues. The group tore the house down with sheer energy and dynamic musicianship, plus wild stage theatrics.

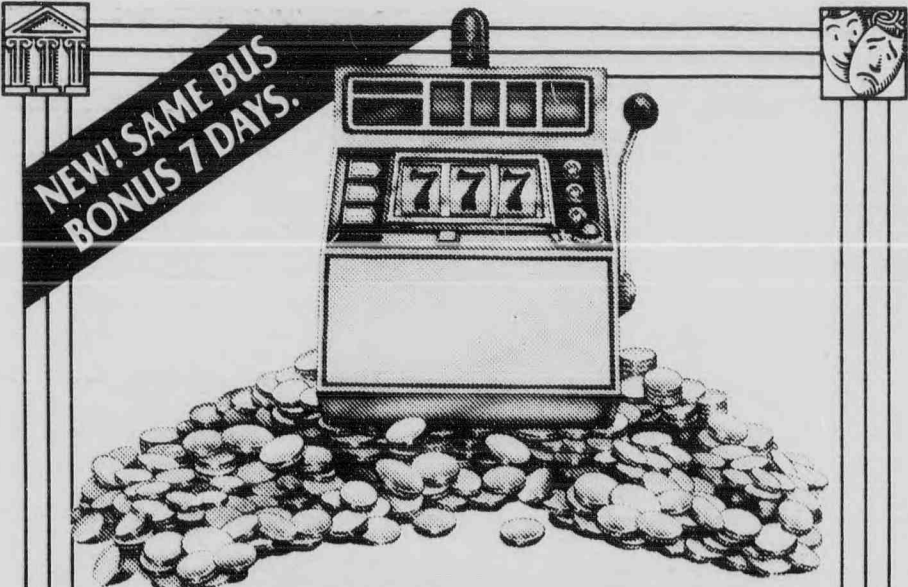
Rancourt and company brain-blasted through their unique brand of "Quease'n'Art" cover tunes (including bizarre Bobby Goldsboro renditions) with searing guitar work by Bob Meetsma, David Raymer and Mitch Strassberg. Joey DePhillips, Rancourt's vocal partner, and one of my favorite trombonists (I particularly enjoyed his art-solo which defied jazz!), was all over the stage cavorting with Rancourt and trading vocal blasts. **FEEDBACK AND 'BLENDER MUSIC'**

Both have great stage presence. David Licht (former Shockably member) presided wildly at the drums. Bob Meetsma's solo guitar-vocal was especially enjoyable, as was Rancourt's feedback and "blender music." When People Were Shorter and Lived Near Water are Trace Elemens recording artists with a single currently out, and with an LP and compact disc due soon in Holland (on Shadow Line Records). I strongly urge you to catch their sets around town to experience one of the unique art bands making it today.

Bongwater, Shimmy Disc recording artists, rounded out the evening with a set featuring Ann Magnuson on vocals, and Kramer, the group's bassist and producer.

The front of Sideshow by the Seashore was swarming with patrons leaving the theater and gathering on the boardwalk to take in the cool Atlantic Ocean breezes and amusement environment. Beach*Blanket*Bingo is the only series of its kind in Brooklyn. If you want something little different, and that you might even be able to dance to, check it out.

BEACH*BLANKET*BINGO: July 22: Krackhouse. July 29: Psychadelic Festival. Concerts through Sept. 9 at 8pm. Sideshow by the Seashore, Boardwalk at W. 12th St., Coney Island.



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SECTION 2

Covering the Arts In and Around Brownstone Brooklyn

A 'Kid' Filled With Satire Takes to the Summer Streets

Theater for the New City Brings Its New Outdoor Work to Brooklyn

BY RICK RUSSO

They call it "The Coney Island Kid", but the outrageous new theater piece by Theatre for the New City won't make it to Coney Island until Friday night, when the troupe hits the Boardwalk in front of Sideshows by the Seashore. The players come to Prospect Park Bandshell on Sunday.

The performances are part of the company's five borough, two-month tour of the production, which also marks the 18th season that Theatre for the New City has taken its adventurous inter-ethnic, interracial company to a multitude of New York City parks and assorted open-air sites.

The impressive 50-member company, under the artistic direction of Crystal Field and George Bartenieff, TNC founders, is comprised of stage professionals and emerging theatrical talents. The fantastic summer theatre production evolved from an intensive theatre workshop in June. The various artists combined their talents to teach acting, commedia dell'arte, circus arts, singing, dancing and more, to what Crystal and George call a "select group of street-wise city kids" and neighborhood adults. They then spend two months touring the streets with the professional cast.

WAS ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL

Last Sunday "Coney Island Kid" came alive in Herbert Von King Park in Bedford-Stuyvesant and watching the collective work of the troupe was absolutely wonderful, with the marvelous performances enlivened by wild costumes, masks and giant puppets.

The TNC company filed into the park at 12:30 with its caravan of cast and crew, unloading the oversized props from flatbed trucks. The site in Herbert Von King Park was a unique, square bandshell with concrete slab seating, directly exposed to the hot sun.

The bandshell, ironically enough, was connected to a frigid cold, air conditioned indoor theatre, with an anteroom which provided occasional respite for the cast and crew (and myself for that matter!). But this was street theatre, and the action was outside.

After a smooth set-up of extensive sound equipment, sets, costumes and props, it was announced by a cast member that it was time to "parade". The entire company immediately shifted gears and drummed-up an audience.

AN INSTANTANEOUS HAPPENING

Accompanied by a superb rock-jazz combo, under the musical direction of Christopher Cherney, the company created an instantaneous happening with clowning, juggling, stiltwalking, shouting, dancing and just plain zany frolics. Company members handed-out flyers throughout the park, and soon parents and their children started flocking around to see what all the excitement was about.

"Free show, free show!" was shouted by the company throughout the park, and, from the people marvelling about what was happening, it was apparent that this community was ready to welcome this live professional entertainment with open arms.

Von King is a pretty park (with working water fountains!), situated in a residential,



The flatbed trucks roll up to the site and everybody, both cast and crew, get to work setting up the site for a performance. Here, the Coney Island Kid, with gloves, squares off against the other characters in the street theater work. (Carol Halebian Photo)

brownstone neighborhood, bounded by Greene, Marcy and Lafayette Aves. Doves of youngsters flocked to the foot of the stage, rearranging loads of colorful milk crates like a giant kinetic building-block sculpture. This was not their usual Sunday summer afternoon in the sun, and with all the commotion, they were loving every minute of it.

ARRAY OF BIZARRE CHARACTERS

"The Coney Island Kid" is a rollicking, rip-roaring, action-packed musical vaudevillian operetta, the adventure of a homeless family who bed-down on a cold winter night in an abandoned fun house at Coney Island.

The work was excellently paced, in quick-moving skits featuring an array of bizarre characters. The colorful production includes some very funny scenes about condo conversions on Surf Avenue, with George Bartenieff as the real estate mogul, and then as Ronald Reagan, trying to hide behind everyone and everything, and again as the bumbling Mayor Koch proclaiming, "How am I doing?"

Crystal Field is superb as the neurotic astrologer to Nancy Reagan, and her lyrics to

After set-up, the entire company immediately shifted gears and moved through the park to drum up an audience, shouting "Free show! Free show!"

the many musical numbers are biting satirical social statements of the times. The book is chock-full of insightful references to Coney history, from the 1880's to the present, including scenes depicting the Dreamland fire, the era of Al Capone, boxing exhibitions, can-can girls, freak shows, the Polar Bear Club, the Wax Museum, the Hall of Mirrors and more.

HUGE, UGLY SEA CREATURE

The audience is treated to a world of fantastic caricatures of KGB agents, real estate developers, p.r. men, carnival barkers, dancing mermaids and bugs, and even

George Bush, depicted as a huge, ugly sea creature.

Paul Pride's costumes, from period to futuristic, were wonderful, as was Anthony Angel's lavish stage design, with its vivid Coney Island imagery. The sound design, by Paul Garrity was inventive, mixing manipulated stock sound effects and live electronic music. Daniel Wilkes Kelley as Tom Sharkey, the Coney Island Kid, gave a most enthusiastic performance, as did the others, a cast so large that I can't begin to name them all.

As the play progressed in Von King Park, the area filled with onlookers who, at the grand finale, ran to the stage, singing and dancing along with the cast to the tune of an upbeat rock song, chanting "We want more, we want more!" It was truly a celebration of life and people — street theatre at its best!

CONY ISLAND KID: Theater for the New City performs a new play by Crystal Fields and George Bartenieff. Coney Island Boardwalk, at Sideshows by the Seashore, Fri., Aug. 19, 8pm. Prospect Park Bandshell, Sun., Aug. 21, 2pm. 212/254-1109.

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Visit to a House of Ill Repute

BY RICK RUSSO

All is quiet as I stand in the middle of a quiet residential block on Saint Mark's Place, between Fourth and Fifth Avenues in Downtown Brooklyn. The sun is setting in a vivid purple sky and the sounds of children playing mingle with the visuals.

After extinguishing a cigaret, I turn around and approach the door unlike any other on this block: It has a poster tacked to it — an illustration of a house, underscored by crossbones. The three bells are unmarked. I make a choice and ring the top one. The door opens... I am entering the... "House of Ill Repute".

I am greeted by Carol Brys, of Chameleon Gallery fame. I have had the pleasure of knowing Carol and the important work that she has done for visual artists over the years. Like many others, I miss the funky Park Slope gallery space she ran, and am happy to see that she is our hostess in this most revolutionary gallery and performance space in Brooklyn. A hand-held, ornate fan for the anticipated heat is given to me. It is inscribed, in silver ink within its folds, "I'm an Ill Reputean".

The place is charming. An apartment house living-room, with wooden floor and large oriental rug, cats are roaming and perching on various furniture ledges and stereo speakers, which are emitting a mixed bag of avant garde musics. Improvised seating is a couch and a chair, along with boxes with wooden planks across them and foam cushions. The white walls are hung with surrealist paintings, lit by track lighting and clip-ons.

A few people are already there and the atmosphere is extremely relaxed and social. As I sit down and start taking notes, people start to arrive. And more people. And more people! It's literally a 'packed house' tonight.

Carol Brys makes the welcoming announcement for this "grand opening" event. The performers on this Tuesday evening are Paul MacMahon, Todd Alcott, and Richard Eagan. I am familiar with the work of both Eagan and MacMahon, but Alcott is new to me.

The evening gets underway as Richard Eagan takes stage: a small corner of the living room. Seating himself on a stool, he begins to deliver a monologue about one of his greatest loves — Coney Island. As many know, Eagan has been involved at Coney for many years, with his Coney Island Hysterical Society and as proprietor of the Coney Island Spookhouse, the infamous drive-in gallery of contemporary art and amusement devices.

Eagan's monologue is settled and very fluid, as he speaks of his trips to Coney Island as a youngster with his uncle, his 105 hour work-weeks as a barker, his exploits in and about Coney Island. His stories conjure-

up the sights, sounds and smells of Coney Island, with stark vivid imagery. He uses no script, but rather speaks from the heart about his Coney Island life, or, as he puts it, "the can of worms that was to stay with me a long time."

The crowd of listeners are amused and drawn into the fascinating tales. I have heard Eagan deliver similar monologues in recent times, accompanied by carnival music and other hoopla. Here he just speaks directly to his audience, sans anything but voice and character. But it makes no difference; we can feel and taste it all because he is an excellent performer and fine actor. Eagan ends his short set by passing around a roll of authentic tickets from the old Steeplechase Park, and each person in the audience is told to tear one off and keep it. It's a momento that is a reminder that Richard Eagan's ride is far from over.

Todd Alcott, next on the bill, took the floor to give treatment to monologues culled from his own plays. He explained that as a playwright he'd often be requested to write monologues for actors as audition pieces. His own reading of them is something new for him, he said, a departure from the writing, and very accessible in light of the difficulty of mounting productions of full-length plays.

The solo reading is very strong, and Alcott delivers them with great feeling. His short pieces talked of encounters with city burns on dark and deadly streets, loneliness and "life with the gods", mouse traps and how its victims suffer, and recent writing about the ozone layer, the ice age, the greenhouse effect and the killing of John Kennedy. The works are delivered with great conviction. We are tantalized into wanting to see an Alcott play, by hearing him present his work in this effective format.

After a short break, Paul MacMahon took stage with his acoustic guitar, singing original songs. MacMahon's music is lyrical and fun. Such tunes as "She's My Band-Aid" and "Anyway the Chips May Fall" are loved by the audience. They sing choruses with him through "Bang Your Head on the Window Pane". He's a real crowd pleaser and does two encores. MacMahon ends the evening on a positive note to excellent applause.

There is no schedule yet for upcoming events at the House of Ill Repute, but if this show is any sample of the offerings to come, don't be put off by the setting because the whole process is an adventure worth having for both performers and audience. Carol Brys and friends are to be congratulated for presenting new work in this special setting. As the first promotional flyer says, "A Performance Space Grows in Brooklyn."

HOUSE OF ILL REPUTE: 108 St. Mark's Place. Call 788-5894 for information on upcoming events.

Museum Launches a German Cinema Series

The Brooklyn Museum will present an eight-week double feature film series exploring the relationship between two of the most dynamic periods in German cinema. Entitled "German Cinema: Birth and Rebirth (1922-1964)", the series starts Sept. 11 and compares films produced before Hitler's rise to power in 1933 with the innovative work of the independent filmmakers who contributed to the birth of the New German Cinema in the 1960's.

The series has been programmed in conjunction with the Museum exhibition "Prints of the German Expressionists and their Circle: Collection of The Brooklyn Museum", which opens Sept. 15.

The film series begins with "The Blue Angel (1930) at 2pm and at 4pm "Straight Through the Heart" (1964). Each pair in the series will be accompanied by a guest speaker. Ingrid Scheib-Rothart of Goethe House will speak on Sept. 11. Other films to come include: the silent Expressionist masterpieces "Nosferatu" (1922), "Die Strasse" (1923), and "Warning Shadows" (1923). Brecht and Slatan Dudow's "Kuhle Wampe" (1932), Leontine Sagan's "Madchen in Uniform" (1931), and Leni Riefenstahl's "The Blue Light" (1932) are films from the early 1930s which express the various

political positions emerging in Germany at the time.

Juxtaposed with films from the 1920s and 1930s will be more recent works by Wim Wenders, Ranier Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, Doris Dorrie and Jutta Bruckner. Alexander Kluge, a founding father of the New German Cinema, will be represented with the rarely exhibited film "Yesterday's Girl" (1966).

Visitors interested in comparing the aesthetics of German film and German graphic and decorative arts may attend free gallery talks before the screenings. Docents will conduct tours in the German Expressionist print exhibit on Sept. 18 and 25, Oct. 2 and 23, and Nov. 6 and a special gallery talk on the Museum's German glass collection will be given Oct. 30. Talks begin at the Front Information Desk in the Grand Lobby on the first floor at noon.

Screenings are in the 3rd Floor Lecture Hall and is \$3 for nonmembers, \$2 for students and senior citizens, \$1 for children under 12, and free to members. Museum admission is not included (Suggested contribution: \$3 for adults, \$1.50 for students, \$1 for senior citizens, and free to members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult). For information call 638-5000.

SECTION 2

Spontaneous Combustion Concept is a Vital Activity for Area's Performing, Visual Artists

BY RICK RUSSO

On Sunday I experienced Spontaneous Combustion at the Laziza Performance and Gallery Space on Smith Street. Since my last visit to a Spontaneous Combustion program in March, it is quite evident that the concept continues to serve as a vital activity for emerging and established performing and visual artists.

William and Kathleen Laziza, founders of the space and sponsors of the program, say that Spontaneous Combustion is designed to be "a solution to some basic problems that many artists face. This program is a basic video recording and screening service in which choreographers have the opportunity to record their works in progress with high quality video equipment, and in which video and filmmakers of noncategorical nature are given air time to present their works."

In addition, Spontaneous Combustion is now used as a gallery space, expanding the possibilities of the space as well as the concept of the program.

The free event on Sept. 11 features performances of new works in progress, videotapes and an exhibition. The wall exhibit of Kathleen Troy's "Irksum Hours" is a series of 10 etchings inspired by, and which employ the text from Milton's Paradise Lost. The works line both sides of the space and Troy was at the opening, greeting viewers, children and adults. She has participated in several group shows including the Everson Museum and Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition; the showing at Laziza marks the occasion of her first one-person show.

The afternoon program began with videotapes, shown on three stacked monitors, each varying in size and colorization, adding another dimension to the adventuresome works. Debra Wanner's "Painted Past or The Falling Girl" incorporated multi-angular views of solo choreography coupled with moody, drone-like electronic sound by Anthony Rian Gerber. Following was "Circles to Infinity" by Kathleen Laziza, with a synthesizer score by William Laziza. The work was a video documentation of the performance work in progress. The piece was very effective in its use of two dancers swinging discs which were an extension of the backdrop of multicolored circles. It's spatial aspects were further heightened when shadows came into play, intermixing with William Laziza's diverse score. We look forward to the 'live' performance of this unique work.

Also presented was "Freedom Arcade" by Irene Magaras and Richard Rosch, a video work that included found footage of the 1964 World's Fair, coupled with new footage of the site as it currently exists. The imagery

of the World's Fairs' futuristic exhibitions and the inventive new music score worked extremely well together. Another video piece, by William Laziza, "Convergence", was presented. In both his works, I found Mr. Laziza's innovative use of new video technologies and the integrated score of electronics and percussives outstanding.

After a brief pause, at which time one could purchase a Brooklyn Beer or perhaps a Whole Wheat Crust Pizza at the "Occasional Art Cafe", performance commenced. "Sweet Savage Love" by Diane Domoracki, a solo dance by the creator with recorded music by the Honeydrippers, began with her reading a passionate passage from the romance novel of the same title, which lead into expansive, sweeping movements of equal passion and an accessible simplicity. The next work, choreographed by Emily Schottland, and performed by her with Jose Navas, was also excellent. The work, ran the gamut of the unspoken emotions between a man and a woman. The dancers preyed upon each other, displaying conflict, love, sex and desire, paced by a jazz-rock fusion soundtrack.

Joan Blair presented "Snow Along The Hudson", a new solo work which used video as an extension of the dance and vice-versa. The inventive piece, with sound mix of thunder by Alan Futterman, provoked mystery, with effective use of shifting spotlights and bizarre facial expressions. Blair's choreography is quite exploratory, the concept of this new work with live dance and video interaction was refreshing.

After the performances, the videos resumed, including a piece by mime Paul Rajeckas. The work, titled "Television", sounded familiar to me when I noticed it on the printed program, and I later realized why when I saw my own name on the video's credit as sound consultant. It was a pleasant surprise; I had forgotten about this much earlier work and, of course, enjoyed it — a wild insight into a man and his TV set.

William and Kathleen Laziza are to be commended for devising a forum for new work to occur. They "encourage communication through improvisation and development which perpetuated the common thread that we experience in our human gravity." They are currently seeking videotapes to be aired at future events.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT LAZIZA

SPACE: Oct. 16, Closing night reception for artist Kathleen Troy; Oct. 23, Open Studio Performance, 6:30pm; Nov. 13, Spontaneous Combustion, 3-6pm; Dec. 11, Open Studio Performance, 6:30pm. 123 Smith St. 797-3116.

Art Takes

OPEN AUDITIONS: An evening of one act plays with RSVP Repertory Theatre, located at 415 7th Street is now being casted. There are roles for men and women of all ages. Rehearsals will be in Oct. and Nov. for a Nov. production. Call Rick Tuman, 965-4748 for an audition appointment on Sept. 26 or 27.

ORCHESTRA OPENINGS: Brooklyn Heights Orchestra has a few openings for musicians interested in performing the symphonic repertoire. Rehearsals are Monday evenings at 7:30pm at St. Ann's Church, Clinton and Montague Streets. Interested players should call Hadassah Feit at 625-6531 or Steve Elmer, 855-3245.

TALENT SHOW: Auditions for the All Star Talent Show Brooklyn Semi-Finals, will be Sat., Oct. 1, 3pm at Club 907 (907 Fulton St.) and Saturday, Oct. 8, at noon at Herbert Von King Park, 670 Lafayette Ave. Performers will be chosen to participate in the All Star Talent Show Brooklyn Semi-Finals, coming Oct. 22 at Club 907. The show is being designed to feature the hottest young talent in Brooklyn, competing to represent the borough in the All Stars Talent Show National Finals, coming to Town Hall in Manhattan on November 18. For information call 956-550.

ANNIVERSARY SUPPER: The Brooklyn Heights Music Society is celebrating its 16th year and is presenting a supper party at The Barge at Fulton Ferry Landing to mark the event. It will be Tuesday, Oct. 4, starting at 7pm. Tax deductible contribution is \$25 per person, \$40 for two. To make a reservation, call Lila Smith, 624-3075.

CHILDREN: The Heights Players turn their attention to the younger set next month when they present "The Pied Piper", the timeless story of a piper whose magical, musical powers charm and enchant not only the mice, but an entire town. Directed by Robert F. Doxsey, performances will be Saturdays and Sundays at 2pm, starting Oct. 8 through Oct. 23. Tickets are \$4, or free with TDF voucher. For reservations, call 237-2752. The theater is at 26 Willow Place.

WORKSHOP FOR KIDS: RSVP Repertory Theatre's "Just For Kids" Theatre crafts workshop begins Oct. 1 with registration at the first class. The series will create and perform an original script based on "Alice in Wonderland" and meets at seven Saturday morning sessions. Fee is \$50. Limited enrollment for ages 6 to adult. For information call 768-1965. The Theater is at 415 7th Street.

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The 'Unreal' Bread and Puppet Theater

BY RICK RUSSO

A mosaic review in which (brackets contain titles of scenes), Peter Schumann, Bread & Puppet founder "speaks", and I get something to eat!

"We would like you to take your shoes off when you come to our puppet show or we would like to bless you with the fiddle bow."

(Dance of Animals who are Humans Ridden by Demons). Walking towards the Arts at St. Ann's after stepping out of the Thursday night subway, a fanfare is heard. At Clinton and Montague, stilt-walkers are dancing and a brass band is pounding away! Traffic slows at the intersection. Pedestrians are gathering around the spectacle. The crowd shifts into the Arts at St. Ann's as the band plays on with a bally of 'Hur-ry Hur-ry Hur-ry! Bread & Puppet Theatre! ICARUS!

"For a long time the theatre arts have been separated from the stomach." I visited the dentist today and haven't eaten a thing all day. It's 8:10 and the lights dim in St. Ann's, fading into total blackness, the oversized cartoon-like Bread & Puppet paintings hung from the balconies. The magnificent stained glass glows and illuminates some air of the cathedral. "Wings are the instruments of intelligence designed to flee the horror and absurdity of an unbearable human predicament which exists largely because of our acceptance of it... They melt and break because flight is an insufficient response to horror." Fairy tales?

I am struck by the extraordinary sights and sounds. (Intimacy and Upright Sleep accompanied by Chair Orchestra). The Bread & Puppet company consists of 27 mostly young, serious performers in crumpled white clothes. (3 Serious Men Pulled Away). The play is performed with the very surreal imagery of fascinating puppets and strange masks. I am also struck by the simplicity of the work and awed by the complexity of the production. In highly-rehearsed movements, the acts with the unusual, charming titles (Women Inside Women) move swiftly from one to the other. (Fishing). There is a transformation of objects and people, dancers and orchestra. Some puppets are five times the size of a normal person, sometimes 1/3 the size, as in the case of the serious men waiting: cardboard cut-outs of men in suits. (The White Ladies).

There is no denying the morality and the peaceful nature of the politics. Who can argue with the thought that we are all together in (the same boat) and must



A scene from "Icarus."

There is transformation of objects and people, dancers and orchestra. Some puppets are five times the size of a person, some a third the size. The stilt-walker was the tallest I've ever seen. He almost touched the ceiling.

somehow confront the situation? The analogy in Icarus: As Athens was held hostage by the Minotaur, causing Daedalus to construct wings to fly, further causing Daedalus' son Icarus to drown; so will be the loss of our own hope if we do not face the force of NORAD — the North American Air Defense Command Post, a military base in Cheyenne Mountain, above Colorado Springs, which contains all the triggers needed to blow-up the world.

St. Ann's is transformed by bizarre theatre magic. The biggest book I've ever seen! The tallest stilt walker! His head almost touches the ceiling of St. Ann's! We find out later that it's Peter Schumann, the German-born sculptor whose highly creative imagery is the foundation of Bread & Puppet. (Serious Man Successfully Attacks Forest). The rumblings below St. Ann's mix beautifully with the uncanny experimental music created by the company. (The Birch Forest). The sounds are extraordinary: orchestrated panting, players slap thighs and church pillars, scrape chairs, play demented violin and bugle tunes, and march, to create music in transition. (Demons Leave Forest as Newspapers are Harvested). Again the contradiction: simplistic sound producers, yet a complex creative process, as the execution is impeccable. (Chairs Destroyed).

"Entertainment was theatre. Entertainment was meant for the skin." The troupe crawls along the floor. (Flying Lesson with Behavioral Instructions and Defense Policy Statement). Mesmerizing, spooky images; eerie aura that can only be experienced. "Bread was meant for the stomach... the old rites of baking, eating and offering bread were forgotten." (Waiting. Sweeping the Forest. Military Blast!) "The bread decayed and became mush." Fadeout.

The performers are walking down the aisle, handing out homemade bread and I get two pieces! In a flash the aisle is transformed into a huge canvas boat containing the troupe. One member shouts: We are all in the same boat, and the boat is in the street! The performance continues out the door, down Clinton Street, towards Pierrepont, led by Mr. Schumann playing a very wicked horn. The audience follows into the chilly night. A passer-by stops and asks: What are they going to do? Sing carols?

P.S. "The bread shall remind you of the sacrament of eating."

ICARUS: Bread & Puppet Theater, The Arts at St. Ann's, 157 Montague St. December 15-18, 8pm. 834-8794.

This Concert Shows M-BASE is a New Jazz Language

BY TOM WACHUNAS

M-Base stands for "Macro Basic Array of Structured Extemporizations". No, this isn't a new self-help program. It's the name of one of the tastiest, most innovative jazz ensembles to grace a Brooklyn stage in a long while.

The 16-member band was formed with the intent of constructing a new jazz language based on the members' collective musical memories and experiences. When they took the stage last weekend at BAM's Next Wave Festival there was, from the opening notes, a palpable air of electrified connectedness on the stage. Their connection is to the variety of roots in their music, and to the democracy of the ideas that feed their overall sound. All the members of this ensemble have a say in their direction. The result is a sound that is street-wise and urgent. This is a new kind of fusion that is thoroughly unfettered by the music industry's dictates of slick commercialism. There are no pop dilettantes in this group — just serious, dedicated individuals driven by the need for musical communalism.

These kinds of collaborations are not new in jazz communities. Indeed, it's the very spirit of collaboration that has given us jazz's greatest innovation — Charlie Parker's be-bop of the 40's, Coltrane's "out" sound from the late 50's-early 60's, and Miles Davis ground-breaking experiments that gave us the (arguably) earliest forms of true fusion. Until recently, that spirit seem-

ed to have been on a kind of cultural sabbatical. M-Base has absorbed all this history and injected it into their present socio-cultural observations to deliver a musical translation that is, while respectful of the past, definitely forward-looking.

When composers/sax players Steve Coleman and Greg Osby opened the concert last weekend, you could hear their respect for be-bop. But they've infused it with a funky dance base and a fondness for clipped, sparse melodies. Mix this with a sizzling rhythm section, featuring drummers Marvin "Smitty" Smith and Tani Tabbal, along with electric bass player Kevin Bruce Harris, and you have the perfect recipe for hot music on a cold night. This feast of new jazz couldn't be complete without the spicy additions of the double acoustic bass team of Bob Hurst and Dave Holland. Holland's solos were dazzling and among the best I have ever heard on that instrument.

To continue with the analogy, throw in a dash of unforgettable percussive effects by Sadiq Bey, and a good brassy dose of Jimmy Cozier on baritone sax and flute, Robin Eubanks on trombone, and Graham Haynes on trumpet. Saute with the heated, liquid expertise of David Gilmore on guitar, and the meal gets better. Problems? Yes — and mostly with the main course.

Any of the founders of M-Base will tell you of the diversity of backgrounds and musical approaches of its members. Oddly enough,

though, that diversity was conspicuously lacking at this concert. Most of the pieces were similar in length, tempo, and even structure, despite the group's avowed commitment to improvisation. The improvisatory moments were sandwiched within predictable structures — open with a stated ensemble theme, break it up a little,

This is a new kind of fusion that is thoroughly unfettered by the music industry's dictates of slick commercialism. There are no pop dilettantes in this group. Just serious, dedicated individuals driven by the need for musical communism.

do a round of hot solos, and return to the initial theme.

The most notable exceptions were the compositions by pianist Geri Allen. Her "Dead Giveaway" tune of the first half of the concert is a triumph of intricate syncopation in tandem with driving, relentless rhythms. In the second half, her "Drummer's Song" was a sumptuous explosion of drums and percussion woven into an infectiously simple melodic theme. And even here, her keyboard prowess, so forcefully demonstrated in past recording sessions,

was distinctly laid back, though eminently tasteful. Both compositions were the real treats of this outing.

The paucity of material given to vocalist Cassandra Wilson was another disappointment. Throaty, sultry, with an awesome lyrical control and an impressive range, she is easily one of the finest young jazz vocalists working today. Her contributions to this concert, though regrettably few, were elegant, memorable, and beguiling in their promise of better things to come.

The nature of that promise is what makes M-Base so special. Perhaps they are experiencing growing pains. If so, it's all for the better, considering their goal of establishing a new synthesis of old and present forms. While that goal may seem lofty and even pretentious, it exhibits a necessary heroism if jazz is to maintain one of its greatest cultural contributions — a consistently inspired relevance to the social issues of its time. And, regardless of a few glitches in their recent concert, M-Base is a well-defined project that has established itself as a soaring, important voice on the frontier of new jazz.

COMING NEXT IN THE NEXT WAVE: DV 8 Physical Theater, through Dec. 17 in the Lepercq Space. David Gordon's "United States," through Dec. 17 in the Opera House. "Wayne Horwitz & The President," Carey Playhouse, Dec. 16-17.