

# A New Yawk Carol

## Updating the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' To Reflect Life on the Isle of Manhattan

I've been humming the "12 Days of Christmas" for about a week now. The "12 Days" technically begin on Dec. 25, but I thought that this issue, printed a dozen days before the holiday, would leave you plenty of time to ponder a carol attributed to 18th-century England.

We've come a long way from giving gifts of drumming drummers and maids a milking. It's high time we update the song for busy New Yorkers and the news of the day. (Apologies to my former choir teacher.)

On the First Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: A red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. That tribe is newly homeless from 927 Fifth Ave. We may as well open our homes to some urban nature.

On the Second Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. Mary-Kate and Ash are two elves welcome at any holiday soirée.

On the Third Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Three French pens, two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. What's better than one Mont Blanc? Three.

On the Fourth Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Four calling



Sidewalk Santas: A city tradition

cards, three French pens, two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. With everyone ditching landlines for cell phones, how else are we supposed to call the family overseas?

On the Fifth Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Five platinum blings, four calling cards, three French pens, two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. Urban chic takes a nod from ghetto fabulous.

On the Sixth Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Six beats a-playing, five platinum blings, four calling cards, three French pens, two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. This season I'm thankful for buskers. The morning commute isn't the same without them.



On the Seventh Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Seven "Swans" a-trimming, six beats a-playing, five platinum blings, four calling cards, three French pens, two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. Am I the only one (sadly) addicted to this bizarro beauty pageant?

On the Eighth Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Eight stars a-mating, seven "Swans" a-trimming, six beats a-playing, five platinum blings, four calling cards, three French pens, two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. I'll never date Brad Pitt, but maybe my child can date Mr. or Ms. Aniston-Pitt.

On the Ninth Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Nine taxis waiting, eight stars a-mating, seven "Swans" a-trimming, six beats a-playing, five platinum blings, four calling cards, three French pens, two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. I'll save that one for a rainy day.

On the 10th Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Ten Boards a-saving, nine taxis waiting, eight stars a-mating, seven "Swans" a-trimming, six beats a-playing, five platinum blings, four calling cards, three French pens, two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. Come on Board of Ed, fix the system already.

On the 11th Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Eleven subways chugging, 10 Boards a-saving, nine taxis waiting, eight stars a-mating, seven "Swans" a-trimming, six beats a-playing, five platinum blings, four calling cards, three French pens, two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East. Don't you love it when the train pulls up just as you hit the platform?

On the 12th Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: Twelve Santas ringing, 11 subways chugging, 10 Boards a-saving, nine taxis waiting, eight stars a-mating, seven "Swans" a-trimming, six beats a-playing, five platinum blings, four calling cards, three French pens, two Olsen twins and a red-tailed hawk on Central Park East.

Ding dong, ding dong, that is the song. On second thought, maybe we should stick to tradition. ■

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# Anybody Out There?

Editor Ponders: If No One Reads a Column And It Implodes, Does It Make a Sound?

I'm starting to think none of you really exists. This isn't some literary exercise in solipsism. I'm beginning to believe that no one really reads this paper. Sure, they say we have a circulation of more than 100,000 living, breathing human beings, but I certainly haven't heard from any of you.

There are a couple of ways this could be explained. Possibility One: I'm not really working at a newspaper.

Ever see that movie "The Truman Show" with Jim Carrey? It was loosely based on a Philip K. Dick novel in which a man living in what seems a typical, boring suburban existence actually turns out to be a man in a glass cage. His wife and friends are all actors, his home and town a mere stage set. The daily newspaper puzzle he's been working at for kicks is actually the *raison d'être* for the whole charade — somehow the government's military arm uses his uncannily intuitive answers to predict where on Earth a renegade Moon colony is going to send its next round of missiles.

Now, this isn't likely. And Elaine Paoloni and Sara Bonisteel don't strike me as the secret-agent types, regardless of their respective East German



**Walters:** Not the answer to media problem

and Manchurian accents. Sheldon Landwehr's columns, well, they're a little fishy when you look at them through conspiracy glasses — I mean, just look at the guy — but maybe he's the exception that proves the rule. And unless reality shows have a hit yet another all-time low, I can't imagine what I'm doing here that's saving the Earth from utter destruction. Keeping Duane Reade's canned-nuts division in business, yes, but even Duane Reade couldn't pull off something this sinister.

Possibility Two: We've failed you. The newspaper isn't doing its job of informing, entertaining and exciting the public.

Frankly, I discard this notion out of



hand. Look at all the fun, intriguing stuff in your very hands — and it's free! On page 23, you can ogle a woman in tights. Maybe clowns turn you on (page 64). Pretend you understand jazz on page 31. On page 8, a columnist may be having a Howard Beale moment. If you're itching for a little sumpin'-sumpin', there's something sultry for you on page 69.

Possibility Three: Newspaper readers don't really care. Of all three possibilities that ought to be considered, this is probably the scariest.

Polls on trustworthiness often find that the American public puts newspaper journalists in the same league with politicians and lawyers. Now that's bad. One recent survey ranked newspaper journalists as less reliable than television reporters. Now let me assure you that that's *really* bad (I used to be a reporter for Fox).

Here's something you won't see too often — a columnist who won't insult your intelligence by pretending to be a man of the people. I'm talking to you like one of the media elite — because that's what we are here at our Frank Gehry-designed offices — and this is what I'm telling you, the newspaper-reading public: Stop bitching about the media. Better yet, start bitching — to us.

Yes, newspapers have a lot of problems and might not make it into the next century. Journalists have a lot of problems, too, and need to work out what their role in a capitalistic society is. But the public's response, to complain to poll takers and then tune into a teen soap opera, isn't helping. And making news more like entertainment isn't the answer: That's what gave us Barbara Walters, "Extra!" and everything for sale next to the Tic Tacs.

So here's my offer: To the first six people who respond to this column, I will give something from my ivory-encrusted desk. I won't say what, but it'll be ... from my desk. And the rest of you can feel free to offer suggestions, complaints, tips, anything to remind us media elite that all newspapers ought to be community newspapers. Because if mediocrity is all you demand, mediocrity is all you're going to get.

Go ahead. Prove to me that Bonisteel isn't a robot. ■

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# Library and a Latte

## Despite Offerings, NYPL Needs an Image Update That Cup of Coffee Could Provide

When one thinks of the library, it's hard not to imagine a little old lady standing behind a checkout counter with a rubber stamp in her wrinkled, bony hand. Of course, upon closer visualization, it's hard to determine the woman's age, as the hair on her head, so tightly pulled back into a bun, affords her an immediate face-lift.

Like the deceiving persona of the librarian, the New York Public Library is hard to figure out. Is it a stodgy old institution filled with esoteric volumes or an up-to-the-minute resource with a range of fascinating offerings? The answer is it's somewhere in between.

My memories of the library are positive. Growing up in the suburbs, our local branch acted as my after-school baby sitter. When the final classroom



**ELAINE PAOLONI**

I don't think that's the case. Just walk into any Barnes & Noble or Borders on a Saturday afternoon — or really anytime. You'll see people of all ages poring over books in their areas of interest and the periodical stand packed with information seekers. So it's not that people don't like to read. I think the missing ingredient is coffee.

When the Starbucks freelancer came into existence back in the '90s, he/she discovered the rich opportunity to mix business with pleasure. The thought of having a double soy latte while cranking out that overdue article made the deadline so much sweeter. This phenomenon transferred to bookstores, but it has yet to reach libraries.

Let's face it — libraries in general have an image problem. And if anyone is apt to set a new standard, it's the NYPL. The organization needs to draw in customers and show them that the library can be fun. Following the NYPL's recent announcement

that it will extend operating hours at many branches, the next step should be to install coffee bars.

Now, bibliophiles, don't get nervous — I realize that some reference materials are delicate items that cannot be exposed to food or drink. But would a little coffee in the non-precious sections hurt? The bookstores allow it, and they're letting people sip cappuccinos over salable copies.

Admit it — this idea has potential. Not only would it create jobs and bring in more money than the 20-cent overdue book fines, but the public would (re)discover all that the library has to offer. Once the NYPL can turn branches into meeting spots and centers where the community can congregate (provided it rezones some spaces as designated "discussion" areas where people can talk), there could be a literary renaissance. Look what it's done for bookstores.

So, despite the uninspiring imagery our thoughts of libraries may recall, remember that there is still a beautiful, modern entity just waiting to be discovered. ■

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**NYPL Reading Room:** Coffee bar could draw a crowd

bell rang at 2:30 p.m., my older sister and I would walk over to the set-back brick building just a few blocks away, where we'd wait until our mother, who got off of work at 3 p.m., would pick us up. While my sister opted for the Nancy Drew books, I headed to the filmstrip department, watching countless hours of Curious George and honing my projector skills. There was something for everyone. And that was just a dinky little library.

Back in the big city, the more-than-100-year-old New York Public Library offers an amazing array of products and services. Among the more than 40 branch libraries and five central libraries throughout Manhattan, New Yorkers have access to full-scale exhibitions, lectures, computer workshops, literacy programs, online homework help and a job search center. The NYPL even offers free wireless Internet access.

So why is it that although the system boasts more than 1.86 million cardholders, I don't know anyone who actually frequents the library for anything other than professional use? Is the thought of wall-to-wall books so boring that only bookworms can get excited over it?

# IN THE CITY

## This Week

Edited by Michael Y. Park

### CITY BUYS UP AD SPACE TO ENSURE OLYMPIC CHANCES

The city's Olympic organizers have reserved 600,000 billboards, subway signs and other advertising space in preparation for a potential 2012 Summer Games as part of a huge marketing plan.

NYC2012, which is coordinating New York's bid for the games, made deals with nine billboard companies and several city agencies and public authorities, which altogether control 95 percent of outdoor advertising venues, according to reports. The agreements, made last month, came soon after Mayor Michael Bloomberg created a special board to stifle marketing from advertisers who are not official sponsors of the Olympics.

"We're not just talking about protecting the interests of the sponsors, but ensuring that the people of New York can even get the Olympics," says Gretchen Dykstra, the city's commissioner of consumer affairs. The IOC requires all candidate cities to provide guarantees that advertising space will be available for Olympic sponsors.

### LACK OF ASSESSORS MAY BE COSTING CITY BILLIONS

A real-estate expert is sounding an alarm that the city and its income-producing properties are losing billions of dollars because there aren't enough assessors to make sure the properties are tagged at their proper price levels. The administration, however, blasts the report as misleading and biased.



New York Real Estate: What a steal!

Baruch College professor Joshua Kahn looked at 13,000 properties in Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens that sold in 2003 and found that they were, on average, being assessed at 25 percent of their market value. Egregious examples included

### FLOUNDERING FERRIES SENDING OUT AN SOS

Manhattan's various ferry services are just about to sink, in terms of serving New York City's water-going commuters, according to city councilmembers at a Dec. 9 hearing at City Hall.



Ferries: A sinking proposition?

"We should be expanding out mass-transit options, not eliminating them, at a time when we're still recovering from the last recession," Councilman and Transportation Committee Chairman John Liu says in a press release. "From the birth of this city, it was always the waterways that guaranteed our prosperity."

the General Motors Building at 761 Fifth Ave., which sold for \$1.4 billion but was assessed for only \$284 million, and the Colgate-Palmolive Building at 300 Park Ave., which sold for \$374 million but was assessed for \$74 million.

The Department of Finance's target ratio of assessing the types of properties under question is 45 percent of their market value. The city bases its property-tax revenues on the assessments.

Kahn also found that, among the four boroughs looked at, Manhattan had properties that were remarkably undervalued — an average of 19 percent of their market value, as opposed to 33 percent in the Bronx and 20 percent in Brooklyn. Queens' properties were assessed at an average of 16 percent of their market value.

"We need to hire more assessors, and we need to do it right now," says District Council 37 Executive Director Lillian Roberts. "These experienced city workers are needed more than ever to see that every DoF penny of tax revenue due to the city is identified."

But Department of Finance spokeswoman Joanna Perlman says the report is way off the mark. "This report compares apples to oranges," Perlman

says. Some 40,000 people who live or work in New York take the ferries every day, down from the peak of 65,000 passengers who took the services daily in 2003. Federal subsidies ended earlier this year, however, and private carriers have taken a hit, according to Liu and councilmembers Vincent Gentile and David Yassku, who chairs the Waterfronts Committee. New York Waterways, the city's largest ferry service, has claimed it won't be able to stay afloat for more than two months unless it receives financial aid.

"It is very disconcerting that in one day an entire ferry transport system could be eliminated, and there are no plans, to the best of our knowledge, for continued service," says Susan Alexander, co-founder of ferry-passenger group Ferry Friends. "Our government is not looking at the big picture; this should be a necessary form of mass transit and a viable means of emergency evacuation."

Liu and the others suggested ways to support the services, including forgiving the ferry operators their docking fees, offering subsidies and reducing fares to increase ridership.

says. "[The Department of] Finance doesn't value commercial property by sales data, so the outcome of this report is not constructive or reflective of the work we do. Also, it's against the law for [the Department of] Finance to value commercial property this way."

She notes that others in the real-estate industry have questioned the study's methods and conclusions. They say the discrepancy in the valuation of the properties can be blamed on investors' sudden increased interest in New York real estate, relatively low interest rates and an inevitable lag in appraisals.

Kahn's study was commissioned by Local 1757 New York City Assessors, Appraisers and Mortgage Analysts, which protested the layoffs of several of the assessors.

"In 2000, we had 185 assessors at the Department of Finance," says David Moog, president of Local 1757. "Today, we have 140. I believe we need a minimum of 195 to do the job right."

### PATAKI CLAIMS ADS AIM TO DRAW DOWNTOWN VISITORS

State officials have begun a \$4.9 million national TV advertising campaign

featuring Gov. George Pataki that aides say is aimed at promoting business development in Lower Manhattan. Critics, however, think it may have more to do with promoting Pataki and his possible national political ambitions.

"The governor says there is a \$6 billion [state budget] deficit, yet he is spending taxpayer dollars to promote himself to a national audience," says Herman Farrell, the state's democratic chairman.

One of the new ads in the campaign opens with a shot of the 20-ton granite cornerstone of the Freedom Tower being built at ground zero. "We've stared down the worst that could happen. We've seen the best of ourselves," Pataki intones. "We've recovered, rebuilt and restored. We've reaffirmed our faith in ourselves, each other and our nation."

There are subsequent shots of a giant American flag hanging from a Wall Street building and of construction workers high above Manhattan.

Pataki aides say two versions of the ad will run through Dec. 19 and that a



Pataki: Hopes friends will join him downtown

second three-week run will begin Jan. 3.

While the campaign places Pataki front and center in the rebuilding effort, spokesman Kevin Quinn says the spots are not aimed at promoting the governor. "They are meant to highlight the tremendous progress we have made in revitalizing and rebuilding Lower Manhattan," he says.

"Certainly it could help [Pataki], but more important is, can it help us?" says Madelyn Wils, the head of Community Board 1 in Lower Manhattan. "We're happy he did this commercial. We feel somewhat neglected at times down here." —Marc Humbert ■

With reporting from the Associated Press. Please send responses to New York Resident editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at [elainep@resident.com](mailto:elainep@resident.com).

Edited by Michael Y. Park

## LOTTERY WINNER'S WIFE CASHES OUT OF WEDLOCK

Money — even \$149 million — can't buy you love.

Juan Rodriguez, who collected the huge windfall in the Mega Millions lottery last month, is now on the outs with his wife, according to reports. Iris Rodriguez wants a divorce from her husband of 17 years, and she filed the paperwork just 10 days after Juan bought the winning ticket on Nov. 19.

Iris Rodriguez is seeking a portion of her husband's huge lottery check, reports say. Rodriguez, 49, opted to take his winnings in a single lump-sum payment of \$88.5 million before taxes.

Although the couple appeared together at a news conference after Rodriguez matched the winning numbers, his wife had previously given him the boot over his financial difficulties. Rodriguez had filed for bankruptcy a month before his lottery win, and court papers showed that he had just 78 cents in a savings account and owed \$44,000 to creditors.

The Colombian immigrant bought the winning ticket at a store near the Midtown parking lot where he worked double shifts as an attendant, earning about \$28,000 a year.

## SIERRA CLUB TALKS TRASH AT UPCOMING SYMPOSIUM

The New York City Group of the Sierra Club and the New York City Zero Waste Campaign are asking how much waste is enough for New Yorkers to plan to cut down on the tons they produce every day. The club takes a critical look specifically at the New York City Department of Sanitation's draft 20-year solid-waste management plan, which calls for a 70 percent diversion of New York's waste by 2015.

A meeting on Dec. 15 will cover ways in which New Yorkers can reduce their waste to zero by 2024 through prevention, reuse, recycling and composting. The event will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Council Senior Center (241 W. 72nd St., second floor, 917-499-3307). Speakers will include Marjorie Clark of the New York City Waste Prevention Coalition and Christine Datz-Romero of the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

## HAIR LOSS FOR CAUSE IS REAL 'GIFT OF THE MAGI'

Locks of Love, a nonprofit organization that provides hairpieces to children who have lost their own, will be holding a benefit that will collect money — and hair — on Dec. 16 from 7 to 9 p.m.

Guests are welcome to join the men

and women who will be donating at least 10 inches of their own hair, which will go to make custom, vacuum-fitted wigs for children who suffer from alopecia, severe burns, the side effects of radiation treatment or other ailments that cause hair loss. A raffle of items donated by Upper East Side retailers, yoga demonstrations and light refreshments are also part of the evening.



Locks of Love: It's for a good cause

The benefit will take place at the American Youth Dance Theater (434 E. 75th St., suite 1C, between York and First avenues, [www.locksoflove.org](http://www.locksoflove.org)).

## DOCTORS GET PAY RAISES IN AGREEMENT WITH CITY

Some 1,250 doctors employed in city agencies and by the Health and

Hospitals Corporation will receive raises in an agreement ironed out between the city and the doctor's union.

In the agreement, which covers July 1, 2002 to July 30, 2005, doctors will get a \$1,000 lump-sum payment and varying wage increases. HHC members will receive an additional 5.79 percent, city-agency workers an additional 6.2 percent. The latter two raises will be

funded by adding two-and-a-half hours to doctors' work weeks. The agreement was made public on Dec. 9.

"We are pleased to have achieved a settlement that will provide substantial increases to the doctors ... who, by agreeing to work the additional productive time, have shown their desire to generate savings that may be used to fund their contract," Mayor Michael Bloomberg says.

Dr. Barry Liebowitz, president of the Doctors Council, says his union and the city were happy to reach a solution that allows the city to offer heftier paychecks without having to hire fewer people or make other unwanted compromises. ■

*With reporting from the Associated Press. Please send responses to New York Resident editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at [elainep@resident.com](mailto:elainep@resident.com).*

# Disappearing Center

## Middle-Class Citizens May Be in Denial, But They're Becoming a Vanishing Breed

By Michael Y. Park

New York's middle class is being squeezed out of existence, according to a Manhattan think tank and a New York University professor, who have separately been sounding the alarm about what they call America's newest endangered species.

"Economic mobility is, at best, partly mythical," says Andrea Batista-Schlesinger, executive director of the Drum Major Institute. "It's becoming harder to move up."

"You're more likely to experience bankruptcy in your family than divorce," says DMI President and former Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer. "Considering the rate of divorce, that's pretty bad."

Batista-Schlesinger cites statistics from a September 2003 DMI poll that paint a picture of New Yorkers living paycheck to paycheck, suffering unnecessarily because they don't have health insurance and slowly losing the livable wage that they took for granted 10 or 15 years ago. The era of the 1950s and 1960s, when people believed being middle class meant you held one or maybe two jobs for a lifetime, sent your kids to college and retired comfortably, is over.

"Ninety percent of American bankruptcies last year were from the middle class," she says. "We polled New Yorkers who were high-school graduates or had college degrees — one in two didn't save. The whole idea of being middle class was being able to save and send your kids to college."

The DMI, founded by real-estate lobbyist William Wachtel as a progressive counterweight to conservative think tanks like the Manhattan Institute and the Heritage Foundation, has been

focusing on what it says are the dwindling prospects of those who have to work for a living but are above the government poverty line. It's these folks who are suffering the most, thanks to years of bad policy, growing anti-tax and anti-government sentiments and an ailing economy, yet it's their woes being glossed over by the media and politicians on both the left and the right, the DMI says.

"The so-called liberals and progressives write off middle-class concerns and conceded them to the conservatives," Ferrer says. "Yet the shrinking

of the middle class isn't only a problem for the middle class."

New Yorkers are especially vulnerable, according to Micki McGee, a sociologist and NYU professor. Her book, "Self-Help, Inc.: Makeover Culture in American Life" (Oxford University Press), coming out in September 2005, discusses how middle-class families began a slide in the period from 1972 to 1993, with economic security replaced by a self-help culture that emphasizes self-involvement and self-promotion at the expense of social reform.

"For those of us in New York City, our housing costs have increased so dramatically," McGee says. "Our cost of education has vastly outpaced inflation; the cost of health care, that speaks for itself — look at all the people who don't have health insurance."

Harkening to the theme of her book, she points to the perpetual popularity of books like the "What Color Is Your Parachute?" series and television shows that reward marketing oneself as a product, like "The Apprentice," as evidence that middle-class people are hurting economically yet responding in a peculiarly American way.

"People think they can bootstrap their way out of social problems," she says, even though figures show the possibility of climbing to the top rung of the socioeconomic ladder is slimmer than ever — partly because of reluctance by



Great Divide: Wealthy and middle class grow apart

middle-class Americans to associate themselves with anything that smacks of "the working class."

"One of the great challenges is to understand that the middle class is really a working people," McGee says.

There's still hope for the middle class, she and the DMI say, but it will take a change in perceptions.

"Economic fairness is itself a moral value," Batista-Schlesinger says. "We have to make that connection." ■

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# Party Trouble

## Demographic Change and a Thin Bench Put New York State Republicans at Risk

There is a lot of evidence from this November's election that the Republican Party is in trouble in New York state. Republicans have less than a handful of seats in the City Council. They lost seats in the state Assembly and Senate and also in the Congressional delegation. President George W. Bush received only 40.5 percent of the vote statewide, a mere 24.5 percent in the city and a paltry 16.7 percent in Manhattan. New York, especially the city, has a habit of moving in the opposite direction the nation does.

In presidential years, there is normally a surge in registration and, in this age of partisanship, in party enrollment. While Democratic enrollment increased by 5.5 percent statewide since 2000, Republican enrollment only increased by 1.2 percent, even though the governor is Republican. The Conservative Party, which has been an asset for Republicans statewide, experienced a 7.8-percent decline in the same period.

In New York City, Republicans gained only 11,605 party members, while the Democrats gained 133,574 members. The Conservative Party lost 4,584 members during the same period. Interestingly, in the last four mayoral exit polls, there have been significantly fewer self-described conservatives, mirroring the decline in outer-borough non-Hispanic white Catholic and Jewish voters.

The latest statewide Quinnipiac poll shows how deep a problem the GOP has locally. Gov. George Pataki's job-approval rating has declined 11 points since the Q-poll conducted just after the Republican National Convention. In a matchup against state Attorney General Eliot Spitzer for re-election, the governor is a startling 12 points down, and Spitzer is already at the 50-percent mark. Spitzer even beats the governor by 6 points in rural upstate New York.

If Pataki decided to run instead for U.S. Senate against Hillary Clinton, he would not only find the race more costly, he also would lose by a bigger margin if the election were held today. Among black voters, Hillary would get 93 percent of the vote; among women she would have a 33-point margin; and among men she'd be up by 10 points. She would carry the suburbs by 4 points, upstate by 10 points and New York City by 48 points — fully 70 percent to 22 percent.

The black vote is so solidly Democratic, and Clinton so popular among black voters, that she would still receive 76 percent of the black vote if the Republicans ran a substantial African-American candidate — Colin Powell.

Mayor-of-the-world Rudy Giuliani would give Hillary a world-class fight,



but despite the fact that he was a two-term mayor of New York City, he would receive less than a third of the city vote — only 29 percent. He could feel good only in that he does 7 points better in the city than Pataki in the poll and 4 points better than Bush did in this year's election.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has to be nervous about how the tide is moving against Republicans. Only a quarter of the general-election vote is dependable. He won one of the closest modern mayoral elections because of the margin he received on the Independence Party line. If Hispanic and black turnout had been normal, or elevated because a Hispanic or black candidate had been in the race, the Independence Party would not have had the same affect.

In the two elections with an African-American candidate in a contested general election, the total vote was more than 1.8 million, but in the Bloomberg-Green race only 1.4 million voters showed up. With two Jewish candidates running for mayor, Jewish turnout in the exit poll moved up to 19 percent from 17 percent in recent elections. Black turnout was down to only 23 percent of the electorate, and Hispanic turnout was 18 percent.

There are more black and Hispanic voters in the electorate today than when David Dinkins ran for mayor. Back then, his favorite-son campaign generated a large black turnout that made up fully 29 percent of the electorate. Some say there was also a backlash increase in white turnout. White voters, however, are more liberal and pluralistic, and there are also fewer white voters today.

No matter how you analyze the election results or the demographics, the Republican Party is in trouble. Worse still is the fact that it has a very thin bench. When you look at the field of elected officials or civic and business leaders, the Grand Old Party simply cannot easily pull a candidate out of the hat to challenge — even in open seats.

Will the Republican Party continue to decline in New York? Can Bloomberg survive the trend against him? More later. ■

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# Lost in Translation

Politicians Must Stop Pandering to Voters by Implementing Programs Doomed to Failure

The language of politics at every level is fast becoming an instrument of fantasy. Twenty years after George Orwell's 1984, we see words used in ways quite unrelated to their conventional meaning.

Public officials, elected and appointed, make statements that are simply untrue or misleading; announce plans or programs that will be impossible to implement; and make promises that cannot be fulfilled, even if the speaker intended to perform his obligations. As a result, the currency of political speech has become debased. The statements of public officials have little credibility and, consequently, little impact.

We rightly recoil from the mud-slinging, the denunciation of opposing candidates and their families, and the distortion of legislative voting records. Yet the campaign consultants tell us that "going negative" is effective. The challenge is to make charges strong enough to be remembered and with just enough truth in them to avoid libel suits or counteradvertising showing the falsity of the attack ad.

Our concern, however, is not based on rhetorical flourishes or hyperbole. We fault the announcement of plans for building subways where there is no capital funding on hand to construct them nor a revenue stream to support their operation. We are troubled by a judicial order that may lead to the spending of billions of dollars on education where there is already a \$6 billion state deficit. We resent politicians promising to introduce legislation to sweeten pensions when it is unlikely to be enacted.

It is even worse, however, when the politician keeps his promise and an irresponsible pension increase is enacted. In cases like this, it is the state that passes the bill, but it is the city that pays the bill.

The state has a growing reputation for fiscal irresponsibility. Once No. 1 in debt, we were only overtaken last year by California, where Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's \$27 billion bond issue was approved by the voters. But in New York, huge bond issues are no longer sent to the voters for approval but done off budget through agencies like the State Dormitory Authority. That skirts the state constitutional requirement for voter approval to incur public debt.

With regard to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, it combines extensive borrowing with profligacy, waste and denial of reality. It has a five-year capital program, with \$27 billion in capital projects in varying stages of development. Some projects are necessary, others are of minimal utility, and a few could be built at less expense.



A substantial and steadily increasing portion of the MTA's operating budget is spent on debt service, because the agency borrows not only for new construction but for maintenance of a state of good repair of existing facilities. Since its appeal to Albany for new taxes was just rejected, the MTA should try to come to terms with reality in what it plans to do. It would not cure the agency's deficit, but it would be a showing of good faith for the MTA to reduce its administrative budget by 10 percent.

By comparison, the city is doing somewhat better. Its impending deficit for fiscal 2006, which begins July 1, is only \$3 billion, a bagatelle in the world of shortfalls. Late next month, the mayor must submit a preliminary budget and gap-closing plan. We eagerly await the plan.

The new airport agreement with the Port Authority, extending its lease of LaGuardia and Kennedy airports to 2050, is intended to help plug the gap with a one-time payment of about \$800 million. But a one-shot deal is not a remedy for a structural deficit, especially when so-called mandatory costs like pensions, interest and Medicaid are rising sharply.

The statements made by public officials with regard to the 2003 Court of Appeals decision requiring substantial additional expenditures for education simply do not comport with reality. They may make people believe that something is being done, but there is little hope for the early implementation of the multibillion-dollar plan.

As to the argument over whether city or state taxes should pay the new costs, who do you think it is that pays the major portion of state taxes? It is the residents and businesses in the five counties of New York City, vassals of the Empire State.

A resurgence of truth telling will not solve our financial or structural problems, but it will at least make it easier for us to consider them without having to slog through the linguistic camouflage in which they are currently cleverly concealed. ■

*Henry Stern is president of NYCivic.org, which frames and brings attention to important issues. To receive his newsletter, e-mail list@nycivic.org. Please send responses to New York Resident editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at elainep@resident.com.*

# Growing With Kids

## Former Parents Editor Offers Tips on Raising Kids From Pregnancy Through High School

By **Samantha Critchell**

Tasks don't seem so insurmountable when there is an end in sight, and raising children is no exception.

Parenting writer and editor Anne Pleshette Murphy breaks up what might feel like 18 very long years in "The 7 Stages of Motherhood: Making the Most of Your Life as a Mom" (Knopf, \$22.95, 288 pages).

Murphy, the former editor in chief of Parents magazine and a regular contributor to ABC's "Good Morning America," has gone through each one personally — her daughter is an 18-year-old college freshman and her son is a 14-year-old high-school freshman.

The stages, she explains, are relative to where children are in their development, but they also help define the evolution of a mother's role.

### Stage 1: Altered States

This is the shortest stage in terms of time — from the moment a woman finds out she's pregnant to the "fourth trimester," Pleshette's term for the three months after the baby comes home — but it's probably the biggest adjustment.

"Pre-pregnancy and moms-to-be assume that after a few months, they'll be back on their pre-baby paths, but there is no going back. You must accept that," Murphy says. "Then give yourself time to reflect on what kind of mom you see yourself being and what kind of dad you see your husband being."

Murphy urges women to do this sort of soul-searching early on so there is time to think about how you get from Point A, maybe a busy social life that's organized by a Blackberry, to Point B, feeling like you've had a

successful day because you showered before dinnertime.

"You won't know day from night, but you'll also feel the bliss of lying next to your little miracle," Murphy adds, and that's what will keep you going.

### Stage 2: Finding Your Footing, Finding Yourself

Most new mothers can find their footing from the time their children hit the 4-month mark until the kids can walk. Families settle into a somewhat predictable routine, which, although it is a different life from what mothers had before, it's a life they can live with, Murphy says.

This also is the stage during which many women go back to work after their maternity leave. Murphy's advice: Get used to the feeling of being torn between work and family. It's something you're going to have to deal with at every stage.

### Stage 3: Letting Go

The toddler years are "fraught with guilt, anxiety and occasionally anguish," according to Murphy. "Toddlers are challenging, loving, wonderful and passionate but also highly unpredictable. And they have so much energy. Just looking at them is tiring," she says.

If moms don't make some time for themselves during this stage — even if it's just being alone while they change out of work clothes into play clothes — the whole family will suffer, Murphy says.

At the same time, 1- and 2-year-olds need a little time and space of their own as they begin to play with the building blocks that will eventually lead to their independence.

### Stage 4: Trying to Do It All

The preschool and early elementary years can be even harder than the

toddler years because parents' expectations of their children don't always match reality. Just because the kids were able to sit through a nice dinner once doesn't mean they'll be able to do it every night.

"[Preschoolers] are still really needy," Murphy warns. So, while it's tempting at this stage for mothers to begin taking on new projects of their own — volunteering for charity or filling up their social calendar — they should resist doing too much, she says.



**Personal Time:** Parents should give kids their own space

"You think you can be perfect at everything. A lot of moms are feeling 'there's something wrong with me' if they can't do everything. But those are unrealistic expectations," Murphy says.

### Stage 5: Reading the Compass to God Knows Where

Ages 6-10 are supposed to be the easy years between toddlers and teenagers, but because it seems like kids are growing up faster these days, mothers can't let this stage slide by, Murphy says.

They should, however, let their children experience success and failure facilitated by their own hands.

"Moms need help understanding how to let their kids fall on their faces

occasionally and to realize that their kids might not be the smartest or nicest in the class. Those are not the worst things. ... But mothers have a real tendency at this point to see their kids as an extension of themselves, and they don't want to be seen that way."

Mothers also might find themselves less involved in their children's lives, and, says Murphy, that's completely normal as children's own friends become more important to them.

But instead of pouncing on kids when they do open up, Murphy urges mothers to proceed with caution: "Ask yourself, 'What are the battles worth going to the mat for?'"

### Stage 6: Living in the Gray Zone

Preteens might see everything in black and white, Murphy says, but their world is gray.

First, things change fast. "What was right yesterday isn't right today," Murphy says.

Second, mothers will find themselves shifting between roles of parent and pal.

"It takes an ego of steel to navigate the preteen years, because one day your kid is going to wake up uncomfortable in their own body. And when she stands with one foot in childhood, the other in early adulthood and struggles to maintain her balance, the person she will grab onto with a desperate, clawing intensity is you," she writes.

### Stage 7: It Gets Easier, And Then They Leave

During the teenage years, mothers and their almost-grown-up children relive every other stage as they struggle through dependence and independence in their developed bodies and minds, Murphy says, but it's not as bad as it sounds.

"[Teens'] brain development is such that they can be highly argumentative but, on the other hand, they might have a really good argument." ■

*Samantha Critchell is a writer for the Associated Press. Please send responses to New York Resident editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at elainep@resident.com.*

# Holiday Kickoff

## Finding a Career on the Radio City Kick Line, Rockette Cheryl Cutlip Carries on the Tradition

By Ian Spelling

Cheryl Cutlip isn't a rock star, a movie star or a TV star. But you wouldn't know it from the attention accorded her along Sixth Avenue. Jaded New Yorkers can't help but smile, while out-of-towners excitedly ask Cutlip if she'll pose for a picture with their children.

So who exactly is Cutlip? She's a vision in red and white, with legs that stretch from here to Brooklyn. To be more specific, she's a Radio City Rockette in full "Christmas Spectacular" regalia, and, as the holiday spirit envelops New York City, she's truly as big a celebrity as Julia Roberts — she's even got a bodyguard.

After our Sixth Avenue photo shoot, Cutlip heads back into Radio City Music Hall, finally settling into a chair for an interview.



Fan-tastic: Street crowds create impromptu photo shoot

"I've been with the Rockettes for more than a decade," says Cutlip, who grew up in a small town in North Carolina and now lives in New York City with her husband. "It was the spring of 1993, and I was auditioning for everything from Broadway plays to theme-park shows to Tokyo Disneyland. I'd auditioned for the Rockettes, but didn't actually hear anything from them and

went on to do a European tour of '42nd Street.'"

Just when least expected, Cutlip got the call. "I was sitting alone in a hotel room in Belgium when I got a phone call from Radio City," she says. "This was probably three or four months after my audition, and they told me I'd become a Rockette. That was so exciting to hear. It's a dream to get this job. I thought I'd done well at the audition, so it was hard not to hear anything back. That was disappointing. So it was doubly exciting to get that phone call."

Over time, Cutlip climbed the Rockette ladder. She's now a dance captain, an assistant choreographer for the "Christmas Spectacular," co-choreographer of the official Rockette Workout ("Kick Into Fitness"), frequently serves as a Rockette spokeswoman, and both choreographs and dances the routines that audiences see on NBC's "Today," and during the Tony Awards and Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

"It's been a really natural progression," Cutlip says. "I was one of four brand-new girls when I started, and I was scared to death. But I started dancing on the line and did that for years. I've always enjoyed precision dancing, and I've always liked to do more, whether it was publicity or the parade or helping out with different choreography ideas. I think management saw those leadership skills and gave me a chance, a shot to be a captain."

But her talent and contribution didn't stop there. "I progressed to become one of the actual choreographers," she says. "This is my third year helping to set the show."

The current edition of the "Christmas Spectacular" kicked off last month and runs through Jan. 2 (212-307-7171,

### SHHH ... IT'S A SECRET

Magic moments abound in Radio City's "Christmas Spectacular." The orchestra floats across the stage and then glides down beneath it. Sheep, donkeys and a camel appear during the pivotal "Living Nativity" sequence at the end. And the Rockettes all appear to be the same precise height. Kids — and a few curious adults — wonder how it all works.

Cutlip's favorite bit of trickery is when Jennifer Bayer-Rand and Jeb Rand ice skate. She shares the secret behind the scene:

"The ice skating rink is actually Plexiglas," Cutlip says. "You couldn't ice the rink for six shows a day and keep it iced."

www.radiocity.com). Asked what makes this year's "Spectacular" more spectacular than usual, Cutlip replies, "The show is always evolving. We have our audience that comes every year, and we always have new people that come and see the show," she says. "This year, for me, I think the Rockettes are absolutely at their best. There are two amazing lines of Rockettes, and we split the show schedule, and both the Blue company and the Red company are incredible. So the dancing is over and beyond amazing."

Back outside, lines snake around Radio City for the 11 a.m. show. Many in the throng are among those who caught a glimpse of Cutlip outside and more than a few of them are among those who asked to pose with her for a photo. The dancer, who also is the founder of an arts and education organization called Project Dance and oversees the Project Dance Studio in Times Square, appreciates the attention.

"The recognition is neat," she says. "I can really understand what children see and what they're excited about. I know what it was like, as a little girl, to meet a Rockette or a dancer from a Broadway show. We want to be role models for these kids and embrace them and encourage them."

Still, there are moments when Cutlip is the one doing the ogling. "We were doing a production here and [Sting] was a part of it. I was so enamored with

[him]," she says. "I was like, 'Oh, my goodness.' I love his music. The Rockettes were dancing, and Liza Minnelli was a part of it, too. And Sting was just so overwhelmed with us. He wanted his picture taken with us. And we felt the same way toward him. We both had this affection for one another, and that was exciting."

Cutlip says she wouldn't change her career for the world. "This is a great job," she says. "It's really a year-round job, because we start thinking about Christmas in April or May. When I first became a Rockette, I didn't, to be honest, know much about the history of the Rockettes. For me, at that time, it was just a job, and I thought I'd move on to the next one, because that's how my career had been. But as I grew with the company, as I was a part of it year after year, I learned the traditions."

The Rockettes began as the Missouri Rockets, a dance company formed in 1925. When they moved to New York in 1932, they were rechristened the Rockettes. On a 2000 trip to



Cutlip: Found a home at Radio City

Missouri, Cutlip met some of the first high steppers.

"They were in their 90s, and it was amazing to meet these women. That helped me want to continue that legacy and tradition. For women, this is an incredible job and an incredible opportunity," she says. "I've been here long enough to really value and appreciate that, and as a captain and an assistant choreographer, I try to pass that on." ■

Ian Spelling is a contributing writer to *New York Resident*. Please send responses to editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at [elaine@resident.com](mailto:elaine@resident.com).

# Reruns Abound

## Crop of Recycled Theater Revivals Makes This Season's Credo 'Waste Not, Want Not'

By Barry Bassis

Recycle and revive seem to be the catchwords on Broadway this winter. Take "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels," for example. A new musical version of the big-screen comedy is coming to the Imperial Theatre (249 W. 45th St., between Broadway and 8th Avenue, 212-239-6200), starting Jan. 31. Of course, the 1988 film of the same name, starring

Broadway, between 45th and 46th streets, 212-239-6200). Originally an enormously popular French film, it was later remade into the film "The Birdcage," starring Robin Williams and Nathan Lane. In between, it was adapted into a hit stage musical with the original title.

The plot is timelier than ever with the current controversy over gay marriage, since it involves a club owner



The Chorus Line: Les cagelles perform in 'La Cage aux Folles'

Steve Martin and Michael Caine, was itself a remake of the 1974 film "Bedtime Story," starring Marlon Brando and David Niven.

The show, which reunites "The Full Monty" songwriter David Yazbek, director Jack O'Brien and choreographer Jerry Mitchell, stars John Lithgow, Joanna Gleason and the couple from "The Last Five Years," Sherie Rene Scott and Norbert Leo Butz. The plot involves two con men: an older and smoother Englishman, who fleeces naïve rich American women, and a brash young American. The two have a contest to see which one can win over a wealthy woman.

Another work that has been reinvented is "La Cages aux Folles," now playing at the Marquis Theater (1535

and his drag-queen boyfriend. The farce takes off when the former's son is about to marry the daughter of a conservative politician.

"I Am What I Am" has become a gay anthem and brings the house down when sung by Gary Beach, who won a Tony for another cross-dressing role, Roger DeBris in "The Producers." Daniel Davis of TV's "The Nanny" plays the club owner. Jerry Zaks directs, and the busy Jerry Mitchell choreographs. The score is by Jerry Herman, and the book is by Harvey Fierstein (who will soon be moving into the role of Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof").

Visitors from the red states may be more interested in the new musical version of Louisa May Alcott's "Little Women" about four sisters at the time

of the Civil War. Though they reside in New England, none seems destined for a same-sex marriage.

Sutton Foster (the star of "Thoroughly Modern Millie") stars as Jo, and Maureen McGovern (singer of "The Morning After" in "The Poseidon Adventure") plays Marmee. The show, which is currently in previews, opens at the Virginia Theatre (245 W. 52nd St., between Broadway and Eighth Avenue) on Jan. 23.

How many comedies have added a term to the English language? The novel "Catch 22" is one. Another is Richard Brinsley Sheridan's "The Rivals." The character is Mrs. Malaprop, who misuses language. The play is about a young man who woos his beloved under an assumed identity, only to find himself his own rival for her hand.

Lincoln Center Theater (www.lct.org) presents a revival of the play at the Vivian Beaumont Theater (150 W. 65th St., between Broadway and Amsterdam



Oy Gay: Fierstein steps into Tevye's boots

Avenue, 212-239-6200); an opening is scheduled for Dec. 16, and the limited engagement is set to close on Jan. 23. Under the direction of Mark Lamos, the all-star cast is headed by Dana Ivey as Mrs. Malaprop, Richard Easton as Sir Anthony Absolute and Brian Murray as Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

"After the Ball" is Noel Coward's musical adaptation of Oscar Wilde's 1892 play "Lady Windermere's Fan." The work was not well received when it opened in London in 1954. Now, the Irish Repertory Theatre (132 W. 22nd St., between Sixth and Seventh avenues, 212-727-2737, www.irishrepertory-theatre.com) presents a new version by Barry Day.

The story deals with a wife who discovers that her husband has been seeing a mysterious woman, who turns out to be her mother. Coward himself noted in his diary that "After the Ball" contains "some of the best lyrics I have ever written."

The production is directed by Tony Walton, who also designed the sets and costumes. Currently in previews, it is scheduled to open on Dec. 16.

The Broadway-bound "Monty Python's Spamalot" is based on the movie "Monty Python and the Holy Grail." Former Python member Eric Idle wrote the book and collaborated on the songs with John Du Prez, and Mike Nichols will direct.

Loosely based on King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, the show features "a chorus line of dancing divas and knights, flatulent Frenchmen, killer rabbits and one legless knight who create unforgettable musical production numbers that Eric Idle promises will be as good or quite likely better than any other show with killer rabbits and a legless knight opening on Broadway or in Chicago this season." At least according to the early press release.

Let's hope he's right. The cast is promising: Tim Curry as King Arthur; David Hyde-Pierce as Sir Robin; Hank Azaria as Sir Lancelot; and Douglas Sills as Sir Galahad. Previews begin on Feb. 14 at the Shubert Theatre (225 W. 44th St., between Seventh and Eighth avenues, 212-239-6200), and the show opens on March 17. ■

Barry Bassis is a contributing writer to New York Resident. Please send responses to editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at elainep@resident.com.

# Hot Nights

## Cabaret Keeps New Yorkers Warm With Famous Faces Stepping In Front of the Mike

By Leslie (Hoban) Blake

When winter rolls in on Dec. 21, there will be lots of great cabaret around town to keep you warm, starting downtown at Joe's Pub (425 Lafayette St., between Astor Place and 4th Street, 212-539-8500, [www.joespub.com](http://www.joespub.com)). "Together Again for the First Time," Jackie Hoffman and Kristine Zbornik's wacky



'Together Again': Hoffman and Zbornik

holiday celebration, joins these two entertainers in comedy and song.

Hoffman, an original "Hairspray" cast member for two-and-a-half years (she just left the show), holds the distinction of having the longest-running show in Joe's Pub history. "The Kvetching Continues," her record-setting solo show, chronicles her three minutes a night in the Broadway musical. Zbornik, a veteran of "Forbidden Broadway," has been performing in cabaret for years. Together they're a hoot.

"Christine and I were in several of the TWEED [theater and film] parodies, and we've known each other for years," Hoffman says. "One day she asked, 'You wanna do a show together?'" That's how the Christian Zbornik and the Jewish Hoffman (who's done such previous solo and variety holiday shows as "A Kosher Kristmas"), came together.

"Think Carol and Julie in Carnegie Hall at Christmas, without Carol and Julie, Carnegie Hall or Christ," Hoffman cracks.

Only four "Together Again" shows remain, Dec. 20, 26 and two on Dec. 27, before Hoffman takes "Kvetching" on the road.

Following the duo's departure, Joe's Pub will highlight Jim Steinman (Jan. 30), John Tartaglia of 'Avenue Q' (Jan. 3 and 24) and Tony winner André de Shields' new show, "Black by Popular Demand" (Feb. 7 and 14).

Uptown cabaret also promises winter warmth. At Feinstein's at the Regency (540 Park Ave., at 61st Street, 212-339-4095, [www.feinsteinsattheregency.com](http://www.feinsteinsattheregency.com)), the eponymous Michael plays and sings "Holiday Heart Songs" through New Year's Eve, when Ann Hampton Callaway joins him for a gala evening.

From Feb. 1 to 19, the venue ushers in the cabaret debut of multiple Tony winner Brian Stokes Mitchell, followed by cabaret veterans Chita Rivera (Feb. 22 to March 12) and Tony Danza (March 15-26). From February to April, Feinstein's plans a One Night Only show from a variety of Broadway stars to be announced.

Catch "Christmas in New York," Tony DeSare's "Swinging Holiday Standards," at Café Carlyle (35 E. 76th St. at Madison Avenue, 212-744-1600, [www.thecarlyle.com](http://www.thecarlyle.com)), two shows nightly through Dec. 27, featuring Bucky Pizzarelli on guitar. The glamorous vamp Ute Lemper brings her dramatic stylings to the Carlyle in "Blood and Feathers" from Jan. 14 to Feb. 26.

Veteran jazzster Shirley Horn opens at Le Jazz Au Bar (41 E. 58th St., between Park and Madison avenues, 212-308-9455, [www.aubarnewyork.com](http://www.aubarnewyork.com)) on Dec. 30, with two New Year's Eve shows — accompanying herself on piano — then plays Jan. 1, 2 and 6-9. During the second week, she'll record her 13th consecutive Verve album, "Live at Le Jazz au Bar."

Wesla Whitfield celebrates both the opening night of her two-week run and the release of her new "In My Life" album on Jan. 10. She's followed in turn by Marlena Shaw (Jan. 24-30) and a full month of the ever fabulous Ruth Brown (Feb. 1-27).

Come help Barbara Carroll, the first lady of jazz piano, celebrate her latest, "Barbara at Birdland," at Sunday brunch or dinner through Dec. 26 at the Algonquin's plush Oak Room (59 W. 44th St., between Madison and Fifth avenues, 212-419-9331, [www.algonquinhotel.com](http://www.algonquinhotel.com)).

Additional Oak Room performers include Andrea Marcovicci ("Andrea Sings Astaire") through Dec. 30; Jessica Molaskey's "Make Believe" (Jan. 18-29); and duo KT Sullivan and Mark Nadler saluting Jule Styne's centenary in "Everything's Coming Up Roses" (Feb. 1-26).

Finally, two of our favorite chanteuses dominate Danny's Skylight Room Cabaret (346 W. 46th St., between Eighth and Ninth avenues, 212-265-8133, [www.dannysgrandseapalace.com](http://www.dannysgrandseapalace.com)) this winter. Blossom Dearie, the perennially young pop/jazz minimalist, moves from Sundays in December to weekends in January and February. Tuesdays through January (and perhaps beyond) belong to Maude Maggart, the elegant new chanteuse in town, with her show "The Talk of the Town: Music of 1933." ■

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# Season of Superstars

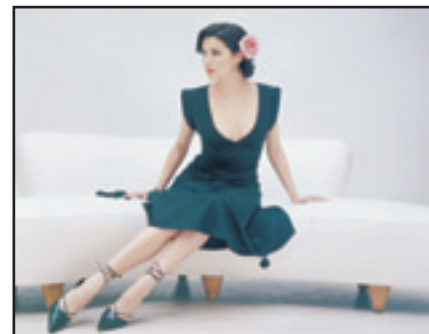
## Winter Sparkles With Musical Heavyweights Playing Masterworks From Carnegie to Frick

By Kevin Filipksi

If you want musical superstars this winter, you're in the right town.

The lineup at Carnegie Hall (Seventh Avenue at 57th Street, 212-247-7800, [www.carnegiehall.org](http://www.carnegiehall.org)) is staggering, even by its usual standards. Cellist Stephen Isserlis and "friends," like violinist Joshua Bell, play Dvorák chamber music on Dec. 16. On Jan. 9, James Levine leads Gil Shaham and the Met Orchestra for Brahms' Violin Concerto and pieces by Weber, Varese and Gershwin.

The Philadelphia Orchestra performs Mahler on Jan. 11 and Wagner on Jan. 18, while Pierre Boulez and the London Symphony play the venue on



Intrepid Ingénue: Netrebko on DVD

Jan. 27 and 29. The Cleveland Orchestra accompanies Radu Lupu on all five Beethoven piano concertos Feb. 1-5.

Not to be outdone, the New York Philharmonic ([www.newyorkphilharmonic.org](http://www.newyorkphilharmonic.org)) has its own starry roster at Avery Fisher Hall (Broadway and 65th Street, 212-875-5030): Mezzo Lorraine Hunt Lieberson sings Mozart alongside Britten's cantata "Phaedra" Dec. 16-18; pianist Olli Mustonen plays Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto Dec. 28-30; pianist Yefim Bronfman performs Bartók's Second Piano Concerto Jan. 6-8; and the orchestra's concertmaster Glenn Dicterow is soloist for Aaron Jay Kernis' Holocaust-themed "Lament and Prayer" Jan. 20-22.

At Alice Tully Hall (Broadway and 65th Street, 212-875-5050), mezzo Stephanie Blythe sings Rossini, Respighi and Frank Bridge on Jan. 16; soprano Christine Schäfer performs on Feb. 4; and Jose van Dam sings French melodies on Feb. 13 and German lieder on Feb. 16. At Avery Fisher Hall, Bell performs on Feb. 9, and cellist Yo-Yo Ma and Shaham are soloists with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra on March 2.

You want up-and-coming stars? At Carnegie Hall, pianist Jonathan Biss performs Mendelssohn's Second Piano Concerto with Orpheus ([www.orpheus-nyc.org](http://www.orpheus-nyc.org)) on Feb. 8. On Feb. 10, violinist Kyoko Takezawa performs Ralph

Vaughan Williams' luscious "The Lark Ascending" and Beethoven's second Romance with the Orchestra of St. Luke's ([www.orchestraofstlukes.org](http://www.orchestraofstlukes.org)).

The Frick Collection (1 E. 70th St., at Fifth Avenue, [www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)) continues its chamber-concert season with the Aston Magna quartet performing Weber and Mozart on Jan. 9 and pianist Jean-Claude Penner performing Ravel, Faure and Debussy on Jan. 23.

### New Recordings

Russian soprano Anna Netrebko is becoming opera's biggest star — she even appeared in "The Princess Diaries 2." Deutsche Grammophon's DVD "The Woman, The Voice" presents Netrebko in various guises: as video artist (goofy clips of her ravishingly singing arias), opera singer and actress (clips of her onstage performing in "La Traviata" and Glinka's "Ruslan and Lyudmila") and herself (lengthy interview). Through it all, Netrebko is poised, talented and camera ready.

Other superstar recordings include violinist Anne Sophie-Mutter dispatching Tchaikovsky's and Korngold's concertos with aplomb, under husband Andre Previn's baton (Deutsche Grammophon); and Valery Gergiev and his Kirov Orchestra continuing their Shostakovich symphony cycle with a riveting account of the thorny No. 4 (Philips).

Other labels concentrate more on music than stars and achieve admirable results. On Hyperion, Gustav Mahler song-cycles are sung with muscle by Stephan Genz, skillfully accompanied by pianist Roger Vignoles. On CPO, a program of symphonic works by American George Antheil — including his best symphony, the "American" — is played with verve by the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra. Orchestral works by master contemporary German composer Hans Werner Henze — including intermezzi from his early opera "Boulevard Solitude" — are marvelously played by NDR Symphony Orchestra on Wergo.

British label Chandos continues its ear-opening exploration of English composers with the second volume of Vaughan Williams' splendidly atmospheric film music; underrated piano works by Sir Lennox Berkeley; and overdue re-issues of orchestral music by Sir Arthur Bliss (including the masterly "Colour Symphony") and Sir Arnold Bax — two discs' worth, including the towering tone poem "Winter Legends." ■

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# Celebratory Sounds

## Diane Charlotte Lampert Collaborates With Wynton Marsalis on 'Suite for Human Nature'

By Barry Bassis

"Classical music has 'The Nutcracker,' but there was no family holiday piece like that for jazz ... until now," says Diane Charlotte Lampert, referring to "Suite for Human Nature," for which she wrote the lyrics and libretto to Wynton Marsalis' score. The large-scale 90-minute work, which will feature the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and the Boys Choir of Harlem, is the highlight of the winter season.

Lampert, who had written a satirical fable in narrative form about the Four



**Dynamic Duo:** Marsalis serenades Lampert

Winds coming to the rescue when Mother Nature and Father Time create the world, decided Marsalis would be an ideal collaborator after attending one of his children's shows in 1992. She points out that Marsalis usually writes his own words and won a Pulitzer Prize for "Blood in the Fields."

Lampert previously wrote lyrics for hit songs by Brenda Lee ("Break It to Me Gently") and others, and there is even a live recording of the Beatles performing one of her numbers, "Ain't Nothin' Shakin.'" In addition to working in country, pop, film and theater, she collaborated on "Big Man — The Legend of John Henry" with jazz greats Cannonball and Nat Adderley and "The King of Schnorrers" with Bernard Herrmann.

For inspiration for her latest project, Lampert went to a number of the orchestra's concerts and came up with "Deep Down Longing" as a duet between a singer (Milt Grayson) and bass fiddle after hearing the instrumentalist Reginald Veal. She wanted to "capture everything of Wynton," she says. Marsalis composed different themes for each season, with opportunities for solos by himself and other members of the orchestra.

She speaks highly of jazz singer Jennifer Sanon, who performs "Whose

Heart Shall I Break Today" and "The Cuckoo's Lullaby" with the Boys Choir. Narrator Nancy Giles is a former member of the comedy troupe, Second City.

Twelve years in gestation, "Suite for Human Nature" will have its first New York performances Dec. 16-19 at Rose Theater — one of the three main performance spaces in Jazz at Lincoln Center's new home, Frederick P. Rose Hall (Broadway at 60th Street, 212-721-6500, [www.jalc.org](http://www.jalc.org)), which Lampert considers the ideal venue.

All across the city, jazz clubs are preparing to welcome 2005 in their own way. At the Blue Note (131 W. Third St., between MacDougal Street and Sixth Avenue, 212-475-8592, [www.bluenotejazz.net](http://www.bluenotejazz.net)), the dark-voiced and bluesy Cassandra Wilson appears from Dec. 28 to Jan. 2.

On New Year's Eve, Cephas & Wiggins will be the opening act. They are the leading exponents of the Piedmont style, the successors of Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee, the most famous harmonica/acoustic-guitar team. This is the Richmond to Atlanta regional guitar style, where two fingers play the melody on the top strings while the thumb keeps the rhythm on the lower strings. The New Year's Eve shows start at 7 and 10 p.m.

Meanwhile, the Village Vanguard (178 Seventh Ave. South, at 11th Street, 212-255-4037, [www.villagevanguard.com](http://www.villagevanguard.com)) continues its 13-year tradition of presenting Dr. Michael White and the Original Liberty Jazz Band of New Orleans to usher in the New Year. Clarinetist-composer White has a winning album, "Dancing in the Sky" (Basin Street Records), which features 11 compositions by White and a guest appearance by trumpeter Nicholas Payton.

White and his group, which includes trumpeter-vocalist Greg Stafford and trombonist Fred Lonzo, appear from Dec. 28 to Jan. 2. On New Year's Eve, the first set is at 10 p.m. and the second set begins after midnight.

For home listening, the popular Yellowjackets (keyboardist Russell Ferrante, saxophonist Bob Mintzer, bassist Jimmy Haslip and drummer Marcus Baylor) just issued its first Christmas album, "Peace Round" (Heads Up). The title track is an old English canon, but the rest of the material is familiar (such as "Little Drummer Boy," "Silent Night" and "The First Noel," featuring a vocal by Jean Baylor). The arrangements provide some unexpected twists and add freshness to holiday music. ■

Barry Bassis is a contributing writer to *New York Resident*. Please send responses to editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at [elainep@resident.com](mailto:elainep@resident.com).

# Merry Notes

From Haunting Strains of Roseanne Cash  
To Energy of Scissor Sisters, Pop Powers On

By Jeff Breithaupt

This winter's pop scene is heavy on the vocals, with appearances by the Scissor Sisters, Rosanne Cash and Wilco, among others.

**Jane Siberry, Joe's Pub (425 Lafayette St., between 4th Street and Astor Place, 212-239-6200, [www.joespub.com](http://www.joespub.com)), Dec. 15-17**

Thirteen albums in, the art-pop transcendence of Siberry's excellent musical adventure finally finds a home. Joe's Pub is a vibey, intimate house with great sight lines, wonderful sound and just-right martinis. Siberry will sing about hockey and cover Handel, and she'll raise the hairs on the back of your neck.

**Joseph Arthur, Bowery Ballroom (6 Delancey St., between Bowery and Chrystie Street, 212-533-2111, [www.boweryballroom.com](http://www.boweryballroom.com)), Dec. 16**

Until his recently released "Our Shadows Will Remain," Arthur's muse had led him down plenty of blind alleys. On the new record, Arthur is in full control of his craft (and his muse), and the newly focused results are revelatory.



**Local Stars:** Scissor Sisters to rock New York

**Scissor Sisters, Hammerstein Ballroom (311 W. 34th St., between Eighth and Ninth avenues, 212-564-4882), Dec. 19**

All that stuff about them seamlessly integrating early '70s Elton John and late '70s disco? It's all true.

**Rebecca Martin, Borders (461 Park Ave., at 57th Street, 212-980-6785), Dec. 16-17**

The year's most startling release belongs to Martin, whose "People Behave Like Ballads" is a gorgeous, elegiac meditation on love, longing and loss.

**BETTY: Snowbiz, Joe's Pub, Dec. 17-19**

The three chicks who make up this funny, provocative trio have been doing it for themselves for almost two decades. These annual Christmas shows, laced with snarky-yet-genuine affection and lotsa guest stars, never fail to bring the house down.

**Jill Sobule/Lloyd Cole, Joe's Pub, Dec. 28-30**

Three double-show evenings featuring quirky, smart, "I Kissed A Girl" singer-songwriter Sobule and pop classicist Cole are being sold singly or as a double bill.

**Patti Smith, Bowery Ballroom, Dec. 29-31**

Don't miss this rocking new-year affirmation from a living legend who has been there (done that) and back.

**Wilco, Flaming Lips and Sleater-Kinney, Madison Square Garden (Seventh Avenue at 32nd Street, 212-465-6741, [www.msg.com](http://www.msg.com)), Dec. 31**

These three bands have each earned art-rock survivor status, although in Wilco's case, their post-Warner comeback will be in jeopardy if their next record wanders any further from songs and into extended fuzz-guitar murk.

**Steve Forbert, Joe's Pub, Jan. 1-2**

A former "new Springsteen," Forbert has had the Boss comparison permanently grafted to his career. And he's never stopped deserving it. **B.B. King, B.B. King's Blues Club & Grill, (237 W. 42nd St., between Seventh and Eighth avenues, 212-997-4144, [www.bbkingblues.com](http://www.bbkingblues.com)), Jan. 11**

The legend plays his living room. Who wouldn't want to see that?

**The Tubes (featuring Fee Waybill), B.B. King's Blues Club & Grill, Jan. 20**

Back in the '70s, the Tubes' outrageous circus-like shows flaunted sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, while ringmaster Waybill's tongue stayed firmly planted in cheek (not his own).

**Jesse Harris, Joe's Pub, Jan. 21**

Harris is sounding more and more like Paul Simon circa 1973. Still, the ex-Norah Jones songwriter is at his most convincing when writing for other artists. Here's hoping he continues to multitask.

**Keane, Hammerstein Ballroom, Feb. 2**

The "new Coldplay" are much better than the old Coldplay, more melodically charged and wa-a-ay less mannered.

**Joe Cocker, Beacon Theater (2124 Broadway, between 74th and 75th streets, 212-496-7070), Feb. 8**

It's high time you went to a Cocker show.

**Rosanne Cash, Allen Room in the Time Warner Center (Broadway at 60th Street, fifth floor, 212-258-9800, [www.lincolncenter.org](http://www.lincolncenter.org)), Feb. 10**

Cash's recent "acoustic Cash" shows at Chelsea's Rubin Museum of Art were a little like campfire sessions, with Cash and special guests presiding over postelection healing sessions for Bushed, mystified New Yorkers. The new venue should accommodate a similar feel. ■

Jeff Breithaupt is a contributing writer to New York Resident. Please send responses to editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at [elainep@resident.com](mailto:elainep@resident.com).

# Orange You Glad

Christo and Jeanne-Claude's Saffron Flags Usher in Colorful Winter of Classic, Modern Art

By Sara Bonisteel

After a busy autumn art season that saw the return of the Museum of Modern Art to its vastly expanded Midtown home, winter would seemingly be a time to pause and reflect. Not a chance. The season will be much more colorful than winters past, thanks to the biggest art event to hit Central Park in years.

After 25 years of planning, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's "Gates" will be unveiled in Central Park on Feb. 12 for just over a two-week run. These saffron-colored flags placed along the walkways will tint the city's biggest park a shade of orange-yellow.

One of the best views of the 7,500 gates will be from the rooftop garden of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd Street, 212-535-7710, [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)), open in winter for the first time ever to let visitors take in the saffron expanse.

Inside the museum on Jan. 15, the Met opens a survey exhibition of drawings by Peter Paul Rubens, the Flemish

[www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org)). Over the last half-century, Twombly has used everything from chalk to crayon to further his vision.

Cory Arcangel's artwork consists of computer programming. His medium of choice is Nintendo video games, which he reprograms. In his "Super Mario Clouds," Arcangel retools a game to play a continuous loop of the background clouds. He'll showcase his latest work along with the programming collective Beige at the Team Gallery (527 W. 26th St., between Tenth and Eleventh avenues, 212-279-9219, [www.teamgallery.com](http://www.teamgallery.com)) from Jan. 13 to Feb. 12.

At the George Gustav Heye Center in the U.S. Customs House (1 Bowling Green, 212-514-3700, [www.nmai.si.edu](http://www.nmai.si.edu)), the city's Native American artists will be the focus of "New Tribe: New York." Yaqui painter Mario Martinez will be the first artist featured in this inaugural series. On view from Jan. 29 to April 9, "New Tribe: New York" will have a score of works by the artist along with Yaqui objects of Martinez's choosing.

New York's Puerto Rican community will be celebrated in "El Barrio," opening on Jan. 21 at the Museum of the City of New York (1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd Street, 212-534-1672, [www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org)), while African-American quilts from the collection of the Folk Art Museum (45 W. 53rd St., between Fifth and Sixth avenues, 212-265-1040, [www.folkartmuseum.org](http://www.folkartmuseum.org)) go on view Feb. 15.

Ending the season will be the world's first nomadic museum, making a stop on

the city's West Side on March 5. Designed by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, this museum is made of shipping containers and cardboard tubes assembled at Pier 54 in Hudson River Park (between 12th and 13th streets). Inside the 672-foot-long museum will be the exhibition titled "Ashes and Snow" ([www.ashesandsnow.org](http://www.ashesandsnow.org)), a series of large photographs taken by Canadian Gregory Colbert. His lens captures the interaction between man and animal, with women snuggling up with elephants, men swimming with whales and girls dancing with hawks. ■



'The Gates': One of Christo's preparatory drawings for art event

artist known for his voluptuous angels. Some 115 drawings will be on view through April 3, including portraits of the artist's friends and family loaned from a Viennese collection.

A much younger European artist gets a look at the Museum of Modern Art (11 W. 53rd St., between Fifth and Sixth avenues, 212-708-9400, [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)) on March 4, as the museum's photography department explores the work of Thomas Demand. This German artist takes large-scale photos of small models — which are based on actual locations — that he builds in his studio.

Cy Twombly will get a retrospective beginning Jan. 27 at the Whitney Museum of American Art (945 Madison Ave., at 75th Street, 800-944-8639,

Sara Bonisteel is the features editor of *New York Resident*. Please send responses to her at [sarab@resident.com](mailto:sarab@resident.com).

# ON THE TOWN

## This Week

### NEW YORK RESIDENT GUIDE TO ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Edited by Sara Bonisteel

#### 'BROOKLYN' FAR FROM HEIGHTS IN FAIRY TALE

"Brooklyn," the new musical at the Plymouth Theatre (236 W. 45th St., between Broadway and Eighth Avenue, 212-239-6200) has such a look of urban decay (including characters clothed in garbage bags) that it makes "Rent" look like "High Society."

This urban fairy tale, with a cast listed as "Street Weeds" has a plot that would have seemed old-fashioned before talkies came in. An American in Paris (no, not Gene Kelly) impregnates a French dancer named Faith and leaves her without hope or charity. After she commits suicide some years later, her daughter grows up and travels to Brooklyn, the place after which she is named, to find her father.

Soon, Brooklyn becomes a singing sensation but comes up against a sassy older star, who challenges her to a singing contest. This is based on the irrational assumptions that the United States does not have room for more than one musical icon and that a vocal duel can resolve anything.

Meanwhile, Brooklyn discovers that her father, Taylor, a Vietnam veteran, is now a drug addict. (When he shot up, a little girl in the audience became upset and her mother assured her, "It's just a fairy tale.")

Mark Schoenfeld (a former street musician) and Barri McPherson (a cabaret singer) wrote the book, lyrics and music, and it is in the latter categories that they shine with the help of a vocally well-endowed cast.

In the title role, Eden Espinosa is a powerhouse singer. Ramona Keller is her match as the bitchy Paradise (named for a "pair of dice"). Cleavant Derricks brings a gospel charm to the role of Streetsinger (sort of a fairy godfather in the traditional sense). Karen Olivo is Brooklyn's mother, Faith, and Kevin Anderson (a fine actor who deserves a more prominent and challenging part) is the deadbeat dad. It is their no-holds-barred renditions of the songs that bring the audience to its feet.

Jeff Calhoun, who was responsible for last season's delightful revival of "Big River," is less successful here. The audience seems happy with the show in its current state, but we would call in a script doctor and hire a choreographer. —Barry Bassis

#### MUSICIANS MAKE JOYFUL NOISES OF THE SEASON

The New York Philharmonic ([www.newyorkphilharmonic.org](http://www.newyorkphilharmonic.org)) has a new holiday tradition: Handel's



King's College Choir: Sings at Lincoln Center

"Messiah" at Riverside Church (Dec. 15-18). This year's "Messiah" is sung by Celena Shafer, Nancy Maultsby, Kurt Streit, Jonathan Lemalu and the Westminster Symphonic Choir with Alan Gilbert conducting.

On New Year's Eve, Kurt Masur returns to Avery Fisher Hall ([www.lincolncenter.org](http://www.lincolncenter.org)) to conduct Beethoven's glorious Ninth Symphony with the orchestra and singers Adrienne Pieczonka, Marietta Simpson, Thomas Studebaker, Albert Dohmen and the New York Choral Artists.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's

Christmas concerts ([www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)) include the Boys Choir of Harlem singing gospel music and Christmas carols in Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium (Dec. 15) and the New York Philharmonic Brass Quintet performing in front of the museum's baroque tree and Neapolitan crèche (Dec. 20).

Lincoln Center's Great Performers holiday concerts include mezzo Anne Sofie von Otter performing traditional and Nordic carols in a "Home for the Holidays" program at Alice Tully Hall (Dec. 18) and the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, performing holiday music by Poulenc, Britten and Vaughan Williams at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola (Dec. 15).

The King's College Choir also has released a double-CD compilation of holiday music — nearly two-and-a-half hours' worth of carols, Bach chorales and other holiday tunes sung with passion and warmth.

If your holiday music needs visuals, you couldn't improve upon "Sounds Like Christmas" (Euroarts DVD), 80 sublime minutes of mezzo Angelika Kirschlager and the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra performing Handel, Vivaldi, Bach and traditional tunes inside the picturesque 12th-century Cistercian monastery in Germany.

—Kevin Filipksi

#### MOMA'S GOT PORTUGUESE DIRECTOR MONTEIRO'S 'GO'

Portuguese director João César Monteiro, who died last year of cancer a day after his 69th birthday, was either a great artist or a prankster ... or both.

His last film, 2003's "Come and Go," being shown on Dec. 18 as part of the "Premieres" series at the Museum of Modern Art (11 W. 53rd St., between Fifth and Sixth avenues, 212-708-9400, [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)), is typical of his work: a deliberately paced, three-hour meditation on all things secular and profane.

In "Come and Go," Monteiro — who starred in most of his films, including his masterpiece "God's Comedy" — is a widowed Lisboner obsessed with hedonistic pleasures, which are brought to the screen in Monteiro's characteristically long takes that go on and on until you are squirming in your seat,

which the wryly playful director obviously wants.

You either "get" Monteiro or you don't. Clearly, Americans never have, since the only film of his ever shown in the states was 1989's "Recollections of the



Monteiro: MoMA salutes late film prankster

Yellow House." "God's Comedy" is on DVD from Image, but you'll have to look to Europe for an entire boxed set of his films (with English subtitles, happily).

Maybe MoMA, Film Forum or the Film Society of Lincoln Center will be

brave enough to mount a full-scale Monteiro retrospective. Until then, thank MoMA for belatedly premiering the last will and testament of this cinematic personality. —Kevin Filipksi

#### PHOTO A-LISTER DELVES INTO LATIN-AMERICAN ART

Mario Testino is widely known as one of fashion photography's A-listers, and through Jan. 15 at Andrea Rosen Gallery (525 W. 24th St., between Tenth and Eleventh avenues, 212-627-6000, [www.andrearosengallery.com](http://www.andrearosengallery.com)), New York has the opportunity to see him in the role of curator. Peruvian-born Testino has selected works by nine emerging Latin-American artists to populate "Instinctive," a show centering on transformation, both of materials and identity.

This is not Testino's first foray into the world of contemporary art, which is increasingly converging with that of fashion. In 2002, he toured an exhibition of photographs selected from his oeuvre with a stop at the National Portrait Gallery, and he has long been a supporter and frequent contributor to the art and fashion publication *Visionaire*, which has functioned as the bellwether of this trend for the past decade.

In this show, the work Testino has selected is engaging and remarkable. Recalling Latin America's violent colonial past, Juan Manuel Echavarría's sequence of 10 photographs titled "Bandeja de Bolívar" (1999) pictures a commemorative plate on a black ground, first in its entirety, then splintered into more and more fragments up to the final panel where it has been reduced to a small pile of dust.

Artist Grillo Demo masterfully assembles textile and painting elements in several extraordinary collages that are seductive and far greater than the sum of their parts.

The centerpiece of the show, a giant wall hanging portrait made of braided strips of plastic political posters titled "Politico Grande" (2004) by Jarbas Lopes, is rife with content and dominates the gallery with its size and technical mastery.

Overall, the work in this show is far more engaging than Testino's own omnipresent ultra-glam shots of über-celebrities, and it should not be missed by anyone with an interest in contemporary Latin-American art.

—Jude Valentin ■

# Staged Herstories

The Great White Way Gleams This Season With a Trio of Comedic One-Woman Shows

By Barry Bassis

Evie Ensler achieved fame with her one-woman show "The Vagina Monologues" and is still talking about female anatomy in "The Good Body" at the Booth Theatre (222 W. 45th St., between Broadway and Eighth Avenue, 212-239-6200).

The author-actress confesses that, despite being a radical feminist, she has spent many years obsessed with her stomach. She lowers her pants to expose a slight pudge, revealing that her concern is aesthetic rather than health-related.

The 90-minute monologue recounts her travels around the world, interviewing women about their attitudes toward their body images. Some are famous (Helen Gurley Brown and Isabella Rossellini), but the most interesting are the ones she comes across in gyms and at Weight Watchers' meetings.

Ensler exhibits her skill at accents, making each woman special. Oddly, she does not mention the dangers of obesity, and, occasionally, she loses focus and wanders back to the genitals.

While her journey may be less than revelatory, Ensler delivers her message with wit and panache. Peter Askin's direction no doubt assists.

There are even more graphic details about female anatomy in "Whoopi: The 20th Anniversary Show" at the Lyceum Theatre (149 W. 45th St., between Sixth and Seventh avenues, 212-239-6200). But this is — excuse the expression — less shapely entertainment.

When Mike Nichols first presented Goldberg two decades ago, she was unknown. Here, the now well-known actress recreates the characters from her original show with updated monologues and R-rated language.

Fontaine, the drug-abusing philosophy professor and still the best mouthpiece for Goldberg's views, spends about 30 minutes making acerbic comments about the failed war on terrorism. Such new material feels more dated than the 20-year-old routines because we've heard it from Michael Moore and others. Yet, Fontaine's impressions of his visit to the Anne Frank House are still striking.

The raunchiest segment involves Lurlene, who is enduring menopause. She provides a graphic history of feminine hygiene products as well as a description of her own body changes.

More effective, and affecting, is a disabled woman's account of her romance with a young man, who, to her surprise, perceives her inner beauty and ultimately marries her.

Goldberg is less successful with the Valley Girl, who undergoes a

coat-hanger abortion. The skit begins amusingly (and the vocal inflections are still perfect), but the segue into tragedy is not convincing.

Goldberg has lost none of her acting talent and can still come up with novel situations and lines, but she needs a director or consultant who can separate the wheat from the chaff.

Unlike Ensler and Goldberg, Dame Edna returns to Broadway wearing a dress and decked out in rhinestones and sequins. She descends to the stage on a giant pair of women's eyeglasses in



Gigastar Returns: Edna with backup

"Dame Edna: Back With a Vengeance" at the Music Box Theater (239 W. 45th St., between Broadway and Eighth Avenue, 212-239-6200). Another difference is that this self-proclaimed "gigastar" (who was just a megastar on her last visit) is a man, Barry Humphries.

Warning: Do not sit in the front row unless you are willing to chance being questioned about your home and personal life, being brought onstage for marital counseling with a phone call to your family and donning a weird outfit to perform a role in a one-act play about Edna's early life as a housewife.

The show is rather elaborate, with a fancy set (a penthouse given to Edna by Donald Trump), a pianist (Wayne Barker) and two pairs of dancers: the Gorgeous Ednaettes (former Rockettes Teri DiGianfelice and Michelle Pam-pena) and the Equally Gorgeous Test-Ednarones (Randy Aaron and Gerrard Carter).

In between Dame Edna's skewering of latecomers, members of the current administration and a range of celebrities, the troupe performs musical numbers including the disco title tune.

At the end, the company flings glad-ioli to the audience, with Edna's exhortation to "grab life by the stalk." Many audience members seem eager to rise to the challenge. ■

Barry Bassis is a contributing writer to *New York Resident*. Please send responses to editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at [elainep@resident.com](mailto:elainep@resident.com).

# Spot of Brilliance

In the Shadow of the Renovated MoMA, Il Gattopardo Redefines Its Kitchen, Image

Il Gattopardo has improved steadily since opening in September 2001. After some inconsistencies, the kitchen finally has gotten its act together.

The restaurant's modern-minimalist interior accommodating 64 guests hasn't changed much. Pristine white- and natural-brick walls and dark-wood floors frame roomy white-clothed tables with glowing votive candles, bent-cane chairs and large, tilted mirrors. In the



center of the dining room stands a conspicuous spray of greenery, a bar that is usually busy and an inviting 20-seat, enclosed rear garden.

Generally, Il Gattopardo — meaning the “leopard” in Italian — draws crowds of movers and shakers late in the evening, and when the place fills, it tends to become noisy.

The restaurant continues to offer signature specialties such as Neapolitan meatloaf, packed with imported ham, egg and cheese, simmered in garlicky tomato sauce; pasta with Genovese sauce; baby-artichoke parmigiana with smoked mozzarella; traditional Neapolitan cheesecake; and fresh baskets of rolls, including a crusty raisin variety.

An exclusive appetizer of lengthy strips of braised escarole is done with praiseworthy black olives, capers and pine nuts. Try the popular beef-and-veal meatballs wrapped in zesty cabbage leaves napped in thyme sauce and tended on a raft of crispy salad. And speaking of salad, adept chef Vito Gnazzo's chopped version is remarkable. Another favorite, when available, is smoked mozzarella drizzled with a spicy buoyant tomato sauce.

The pastas, which have greatly improved, are cooked al dente and the portions are more than ample. Linguini tossed with veal ragu and porcini mushrooms or the fresh, made-to-order vegetable risotto (request it light on salt) both rouse the appetite. Spaghetti bathed in three sauces (beef, veal and pork) with porcini mushrooms is likewise worth ordering, if available.

Skillful handling and high-quality raw ingredients assure the excellence of seafood and meat. Fish-and-shellfish stew, brimming with shrimp, clams, mussels, scallops and whitefish in an

**Il Gattopardo**  
33 W. 54th St.  
between Fifth and Sixth avenues

**212-246-3332**

**Dinner entrées: \$18 to \$34**

★★ 1/2 (out of four)

airy tomato broth with floating garlic croutons, couldn't taste better. The agilely grilled swordfish special is almost too much of a good thing: The thinly sliced fish (we prefer a thicker cut) is moist, flaky, aromatic and sensibly seasoned.

For a premium feast, bite into the herb-crusting rack of lamb. The thickly cut, fork-tender, juicy chops are served with potato croquettes and sautéed spinach under a weightless fruit-mustard sauce. There are rotating daily specials; suckling-pig aficionados should book Wednesdays.

The entire table can share side dishes, such as broccoli rabe sautéed with crushed red peppers, roasted potatoes and spinach sautéed in oil and garlic.

Desserts include refreshing seasonal fruit platters, as well as warm, soft



Leopard's New Spots: Il Gattopardo revamps

chocolate cake à la mode, lip-puckering lemon and limoncello semifreddo, ice cream and sorbet. All equal the cuisine in taste, texture and goodness.

The service is exceptional. The wine list features more than 120 labels, specializing in southern Italy. And prices are not bad for such a fancy restaurant. Il Gattopardo is understandably popular. ■

*Sheldon Landwehr is the senior dining critic of New York Resident. Please send responses to editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at elainep@resident.com.*

# It's in the Stars

Horoscopes by Miss Anna

## ARIES (March 21 - April 20)



This will be a creative week for you, even though your energies will be subdued. Your personality will blossom under any pressures, and you get the feeling that any problems you have will be over soon. Recklessness may mean overspending your budget.

## TAURUS (April 21 - May 21)



Your week's plans may need alterations because of a financial development or perhaps a misunderstanding somewhere along the line. Your workday routine may be aggravated and could be a continuance from a former problem that still exists. Put everything in perspective.

## GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)



Don't rely on too much cooperation this week from those around you; they're probably just as stressed out as you are. Stimulating ideas just might arise from quiet and seemingly boring times. Your finances are definitely on an upswing, but don't overspend.

## CANCER (June 22 - July 23)



This is not the week for taking risks or speculating. If a long-term debt is inevitable, be sure to check out all the facts before signing anything. A friendship or romance may be somewhat rocky right now. Try not to force issues, and avoid being outspoken to others.

## LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)



Optimism abounds during the week, but don't allow this high feeling to prompt extravagance or carelessness, especially where your responsibilities are concerned. You may be caught in the middle of a job dispute. Find out which priority dominates your actions.

## VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)



Verbalizing your feelings to someone close could be the best way to clear the air, provided tact is used. Creativity flourishes this week, but make sure to be practical in all financial dealings. Take a good and honest look at a love relationship — is it real?

## LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)



Opt for a low-key approach toward just about everything this week. Those surrounding you will tend to be both uncooperative and unpredictable, so it may be difficult to stay calm and in control. Your good spirits and self-assurance are quite contagious.

## SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)



You and someone close to you may be very much at odds during the week. Be patient and work things out. Whether on the job or in your social life, the pace quickens and you're apt to be incredibly busy. Your home life also is picking up momentum, so plan your time.

## SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)



Counterproductive influences are at work, so you will need to get down to business concerning your immediate career plans and ultimate goals. It's time to lie low and recharge your energies. A delightful romantic interlude will influence your outlook.

## CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)



An insecure person in your inner circle can benefit from your support this week. While you are giving him or her good advice,

you may realize that what you say is very much applicable to one of your own problems. With conflict at home, work out a solution to please everyone.

## AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)



Whether or not you are enjoying a change of scene this week, a romantic encounter will set your spirits soaring. Pleasant times will be spent at home and with family. There is a definite possibility of overindulging in the evenings.

## PISCES (Feb. 20 - March 20)



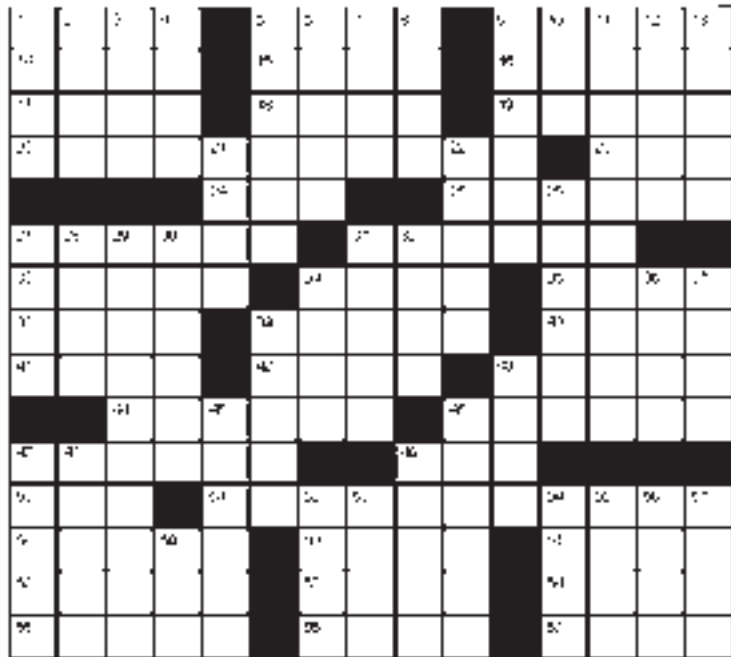
Don't be surprised if you have second thoughts about something you thought was already settled. After reviewing it, you may find room for improvement. Be flexible concerning social plans, as scheduled events might have to be postponed. Alternate plans could be more enjoyable.

## IF THIS WEEK IS YOUR BIRTHDAY

You and a lover may share a meeting of the minds, and all those deep discussions will bring you closer together. Now you can connect with a soul mate whose values will reflect yours on all levels. New influences will have a liberating effect on you. ■

Miss Anna is a writer for the Associated Press. Please send responses to New York Resident editor in chief Elaine Paoloni at [elainep@resident.com](mailto:elainep@resident.com).

## "OUT STANDING IN THEIR FIELD?" by Sefton Boyars



### ACROSS

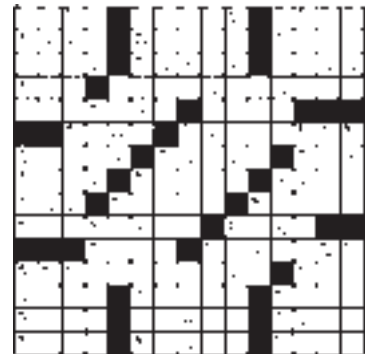
- 1 Clip chaser
- 5 Corset part
- 9 Pizza feature
- 14 All-night party
- 15 Glazier's item
- 16 It exists among thieves
- 17 Astronaut Shepard
- 18 Notice in passing?
- 19 Confuse
- 20 Rancher's most expensive bar?
- 23 Singer Little \_\_\_\_
- 24 Wear and tear
- 25 Changed direction
- 27 Vampire's enlarged feature
- 31 What a dentist does, sometimes
- 33 "Sing \_\_\_\_ With Mitch"
- 34 Bearing
- 35 45th of 50
- 38 Word with forward or backward
- 39 Start the point
- 40 Sub assembler
- 41 Unescorted
- 42 Turkey day choices
- 43 Pet problem?
- 44 Minister
- 46 Light, patterned cloth
- 47 Night disturbances
- 49 Fictional Archer?
- 50 Breadbasket
- 51 Rancher's essayist?
- 58 "Beauty is only skin deep," e.g.

### DOWN

- 60 News source, sometimes
- 61 Stephen King topic
- 62 Warning wailer
- 63 Seger's "Still The \_\_\_\_"
- 64 Charity distribution
- 65 Common contraction
- 66 A Bradley
- 67 Turn over \_\_\_\_ leaf
- 1 Mountain climber's obstacle
- 2 "Symphonie Espagnole" composer
- 3 Like a famous office
- 4 Hang in the balance
- 5 Helpmeet
- 6 Word with tennis or manners
- 7 Dye-producing shrub
- 8 Himalayan humanoid
- 9 Coco of fashion
- 10 Staff without personnel?
- 11 Rancher's driving problem?
- 12 Clear up
- 13 Sole part
- 21 Cask's stopper
- 22 Just like ewe?
- 26 Slipped through one's hands
- 27 Mama with a good voice
- 28 Voice in the chorus
- 29 Rancher's playwright?
- 30 Move like a rushing wind
- 31 Gloomy tune
- 32 Increases motor speed
- 34 Be introduced to
- 36 It came between Thomas and Edison

- 37 Goes quickly
- 39 Partner of burn
- 43 Swap reversal?
- 45 Not long past
- 46 More submissive
- 47 Destroy, as a pumpkin
- 48 High-scoring gymnast
- 49 Camel's cousin
- 52 Too
- 53 Stationer's order
- 54 "\_\_\_\_ and the Swan" (Yeats)
- 55 Cosmetics name
- 56 Race length, perhaps
- 57 What the wind did
- 59 Robt. E. Lee, for example

### PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER



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