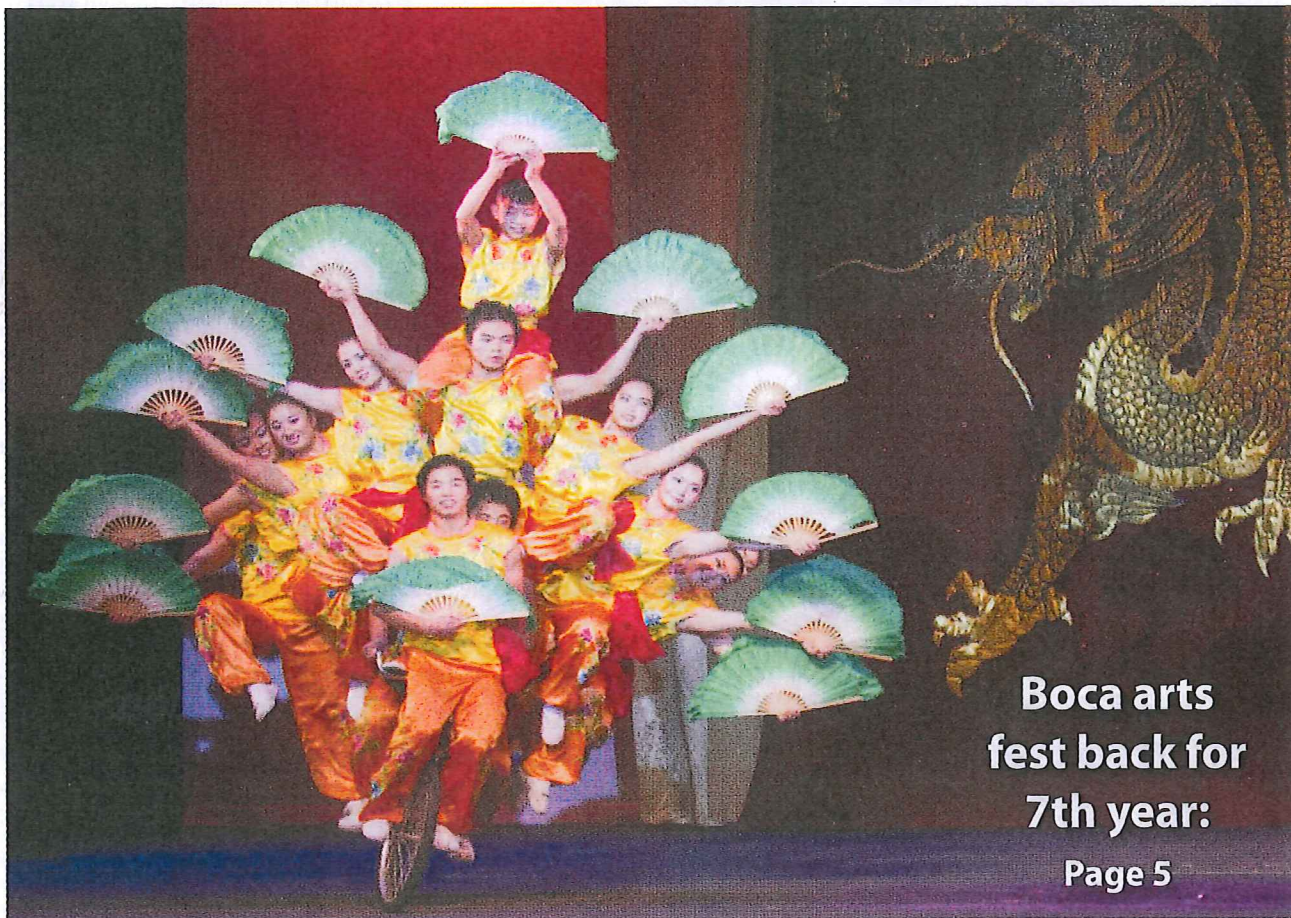


The Arts Paper

March 2013

Free



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Cover story

Seventh Boca arts fest reaches out to younger audiences

By Tom Tracy

An improved local business economy, a healthy uptick in advance ticket sales and some daring artistic additions to this year's programming means things are looking up for Boca Raton's arts and literary festival.

The Mizner Plaza-based Festival of the Arts Boca is poised to enter a new chapter in its relatively short history this March 7-16 with a performing arts lineup that organizers hope will be a more widely appealing to younger audiences.

A classical violin prodigy from the Juilliard School of Music who wears his hair up like a Hershey kiss and a young keyboard virtuoso who plays the electric organ wearing his own hand-made sparkly footwear are sure to shake things up a bit.

The festival even has a less traditional logo this year and is crediting social media for getting the word out, according to organizers.

Land-use attorney Charlie Siemon, co-founder of the event, and who lives and works in Mizner Park, originally modeled the multi-faced arts festival, with its musical and literary content, on a concept he found at a seasonal festival in Florence, Italy.

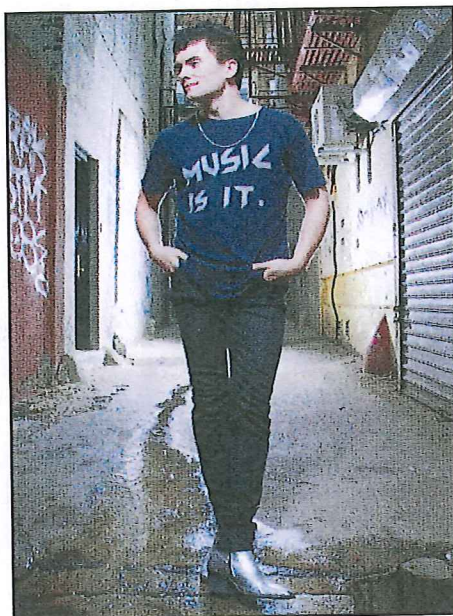
With ticket prices starting at only \$25, the event aims to attract a wider and perhaps not necessarily well-heeled arts audience to the \$6 million Count De Hoernle Amphitheatre.

"Our job now is to start growing the audience and to get more people who might not have an inclination to see the great artists — but doing so outdoors and in a festival instead of a concert hall allows us to price the tickets so the adults can bring two kids along," Siemon said.

The amphitheater is tented for the Festival of the Arts, and that cost is shared by the festival, the Boca Raton Historical Society for the Boca Bacchanal Grand Tasting on March 24, and the Boca Raton Art Museum.

"We see a definite increase in ticket sales thanks to improved marketing and it is somewhat a reflection that the economy is doing better," Siemon added. "This is such a

ON THE COVER: Peking Acrobats (top), Peter Oundjian (from left), Amadeus Leopold and Audra McDonald. (McDonald photo by Michael Wilson.



Organist Cameron Carpenter may be 'the next great organist of the world,' says Charlie Siemon, founder of the festival. Carpenter will play the Saint-Saens *Organ Symphony* on March 14.

Kitsopoulos, a four-year veteran of Festival of the Arts Boca, will conduct the Boca Raton Symphonica with two performances: one featuring soloist Amadeus Leopold, violin and the other with Cameron Carpenter, organist.

Both soloists are brilliant, young and eccentric examples of the new face of classical music today and could move festival's image somewhat away from past guests artists and pillars of the genre like Itzhak Perlman — although the South Korea-born Leopold is a student of the Perlman Music Program, a six-week summer residential course.

"We did find ourselves looking to the Far East: We originally signed this very exotic violinist Leopold, who is a child prodigy from Juilliard, and that sort of led to (Japanese taiko performing arts ensemble) Kodo, and that led to the Peking Acrobats," Siemon said.

He's also energized about the festival debut of Carpenter.

"I have always wanted to have an organ concert at the festival and we found someone who has the potential to become the next great organist of the world and who does some theatrical things in his performance," Siemon said. "I am a big fan of the organ. It's an underappreciated instrument."

Festival lineup:

Thursday, March 7: Preservation Hall Jazz Band, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, March 8: Kodo, Japanese taiko drum troupe, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 9: David Ignatius, 4 p.m. *Foreign Affairs: How to Fix the World* Amadeus Leopold, violin, with the Boca Raton Symphonica, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 10: Patricia Engel, novelist, 4 p.m. *A Writer's Life*

Monday, March 11: Thomas Keneally, novelist, 7 p.m. *The Case of Oskar Schindler*; Peking Acrobats, 7 p.m., Amphitheatre

Tuesday, March 12: Gen. George W. Casey, retired Army commander, 7 p.m. *A Soldier's View of International Security*

Wednesday, March 13: Michael Sandel, Harvard professor, 7 p.m. *What Do We Owe One Another as Citizens?*

Thursday, March 14: Cameron Carpenter, organist, with Boca Raton Symphonica, 7:30 p.m. Music by Saint-Saens, Barber and others

Friday, March 15: New World Symphony, with Peter Oundjian, conductor of the Toronto Symphony, and pianist Valentina Lisitsa; music by Barber, Rachmaninov and Vaughan Williams

Saturday, March 16: Audra McDonald, 7:30 p.m.

For his part, Kitsopoulos said he is looking forward to working with the musicians of the Boca Raton Symphonica, many of whom he has known over the years in their various commitments with other orchestras here. The March 9 program with violinist Leopold will spotlight the music of Tchaikovsky.

"Leopold plays beautifully and it will be my first time working with him in an all-Tchaikovsky program; Tchaikovsky happens to be one of my favorite composers; he is a deeply emotional composer who is not afraid to wear his heart on his sleeve and

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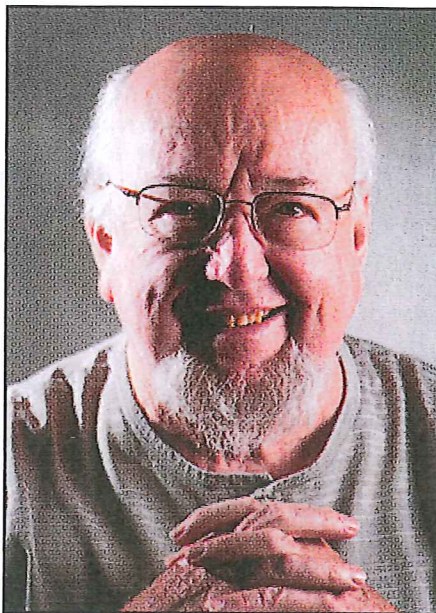
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he has created some of the most beautiful melodies," Kitsopoulos said.

Other musical performances include a closing concert with the award-winning soprano and actress Audra McDonald. The winner of five Tony Awards and a veteran of television as well (*Private Practice*), she studied voice at the Juilliard School and most recently sang Bess in the recent revival of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*.

But the festival isn't just for music and the performing arts. It's also a literary festival, whose guests in the past have included Doris Kearns Goodwin and Salman Rushdie. The scheduled literary figures this year are just as impressive, and focus on some of the larger humanistic questions.

This year, the lineup includes David Ignatius, a longtime *Washington Post* columnist and novelist who will discuss foreign policy issues, and Colombian-born novelist Patricia Engel, whose 2010 debut, *Vida*, was widely acclaimed. A teacher at the University of Miami, Engel's new book, *It's Not Love, It's Just Paris*, comes out in August.



The Australian writer Thomas Keneally is best-known for his 1982 book, *Schindler's Ark*, which was made into the film *Schindler's List*. He talks about Schindler on March 11.

One of the more widely anticipated appearances comes from the Australian writer

Thomas Keneally, whose book *Schindler's Ark* (1982) was the basis for Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*. Keneally's appearance March 11 will include a screening of the Oscar-winning film. Keneally will discuss the legacy of Oskar Schindler.

Retired Army Gen. George W. Casey, who headed the multinational force in Iraq for three years and was Army Chief of Staff under President George W. Bush, will discuss his efforts to modernize the Army following the Sept. 11 attacks.

Also appearing will be Harvard University professor and philosopher Michael Sandel, whose course in justice is one of the most popular in the history of the college. Well-known for his critique of John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, Sandel's latest book is *What Money Can't Buy*. He will host an interactive conversation with the audience about civic responsibility and ethics.

The festival will be held at the Schmidt Family Centre for the Arts at the Mizner Park Amphitheater and the Mizner Park Cultural Arts Center. Tickets are available at www.festivalofheartsboca.org or by calling (866) 571-ARTS (866-571-2787).

Norton Museum of Art

1451 S. OLIVE AVENUE, WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33401

THE RADICAL CAMERA NEW YORK'S PHOTO LEAGUE 1936-1951

MARCH 14 - JUNE 16, 2013

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