

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

SEX IN THE CITY



It seems impossibly distant, but there was a time, however brief, when a Madonna movie was something to be savored, rather than a cause for alarm. Before the *Material Girl* set up her grim production line of personalities, she found one basic look—the bubblegum tramp in the black bra, half-slouching, half-strutting in her jewelled boots—that was a perfect fit, and “Desperately Seeking Susan” (1985) caught her in the reckless pomp of it. The plot is deliberate fluff, all dumb coincidence and stolen earrings, but it suits the mood of frustration that binds the characters; everyone here seems dopey and dislocated, trying to jerk themselves awake with a hit of romance or danger. No romantic comedy of the period has better female credentials: Madonna is joined by Rosanna Arquette, with her naturally drunken smile, and a nail-sharp Laurie Metcalf. The script is by Leora Barish, the director is Susan Seidman, and both of them will be present for the screening at the Film Society of Lincoln Center on Sept. 23, to talk about the movie as it turns twenty-five. Bring Cheez Doodles.

—Anthony Lane

edged for satire. “Holy Now!” plays with the correspondence between a choreographer and a cult leader. (St. Mark’s In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 866-811-4111. Sept. 23-25 at 8.)

DOUG VARONE / “STRIPPED”

The veteran downtown choreographer Doug Varone will return to the 92nd Street Y for another season of stripped-down dance happenings, focussed on an evolving work, “Carrugi,” inspired by the rocky lanes of Liguria. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-279-3344. Sept. 24 at 8.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA

At last, it begins—“Das Rheingold,” the first installment of the Met’s new “Ring” cycle, created by Robert Lepage, comes to the stage with a cast headed by Bryn Terfel, Stephanie Blythe, and Eric Owens; James Levine conducts. (Sept. 27 at 6:45.) ♦ The ebullient Bartlett Sher production of “Les Contes d’Hoffmann” returns, with Giuseppe Filianoti in the title role, Kate Lindsey singing the role of Nicklausse, and Ildar Abdrazakov taking on the four villains; Patrick Fournillier, in his debut, conducts. (Sept. 28 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

BAM: LAURIE ANDERSON’S “DELUSION”

The 2010 Next Wave Festival opens with the New York premiere of a major piece by Anderson, which was performed for the first time at this year’s Vancouver Olympics. Assisting her are the cinematographers Maryse Alberti and Toshiaki Ozawa, along with the video designer Amy Khoshbin and two musicians. (BAM Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Sept. 22-25 and Sept. 28 at 7:30 and Sept. 26 at 3. Through Oct. 3.)

DICAPÒ OPERA THEATRE: “THE SEAGULL”

Before Thomas Pasatieri went to Hollywood to do orchestration work, in 1984, he had substantial success as a composer of verismo-style opera. Active in the field once more, he has prepared a revised, three-act version of his most admired opera, based on the Chekhov play. Mária Harangi directs Dicapò’s production, which features Beverly O’Regan Thiele in the role of Inna and Jonathan Flare as Trigorin; Pacien Mazzagati conducts. (184 E. 76th St. 212-868-4444. Sept. 23 at 7:30, Sept. 24-25 at 8, and Sept. 26 at 4.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

Alan Gilbert is continuing his tradition of presenting a new work on opening night. Last year, it was a piece by the Philharmonic’s composer-in-residence, Magnus Lindberg; this time, Gilbert turns to another Lincoln Center boldface name, Wynton Marsalis, who (with his Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, of course) will take part in the U.S. premiere of his Symphony No. 3 (“Swing Symphony”). Music by Strauss (“Don Juan”) and Hindemith (“Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber,” once a repertory staple) rounds out the program. (Sept. 22 at 7:30. Note: The orchestra will hold an open dress rehearsal on the day of the concert at 9:45 A.M. Free tickets will be available at the hall starting at 8 A.M.) ♦ After the glamour of the opening-night gala has subsided, the Phil begins its subscription schedule with a four-concert set, a program that repeats the Strauss and Hindemith works and adds two new pieces, Henri Dutilleux’s “Métaboles,” a modern classic, and Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto (with the refulgent Itzhak Perlman). (Sept. 23 and Sept. 28 at 7:30, Sept. 24 at 11 A.M., and Sept. 25 at 8.)

RECITALS

BERGEMUSIC

Sept. 23 and Sept. 25 at 8: The barge’s director, Mark Peskanov, and one of its most perceptive musicians, Steven Beck, collaborate in a program offer-

ing two Sonatas for Violin and Piano by Bach, heard through the ears of two great Romantics—in A Major, arranged by Reger, and in G Minor, arranged by Schumann. Reger’s Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Bach closes the concerts. ♦ Sept. 24 at 8: David Del Tredici, the flamboyantly virtuosic neo-Romantic composer-pianist, joins the soprano Courtenay Budd in a concert offering two of his song cycles: the expansive “On Wings of Song” (settings of poems by David Brunetti and Edna St. Vincent Millay, among others) and the irreverent “Miz Inez Sez” (with poems by Colette Inez). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083. For full schedule, see bargemusic.org.)

“THE GEMS PROJECT” 2010

Is early music in New York finally getting on track? Gotham Early Music Scene is certainly giving it a big push, organizing its fourth annual festival of home-grown ensembles. The first of three concerts is held at St. Ignatius of Antioch Church; it features Renaissance and Baroque music (by Telemann and Francoeur) performed by the viol consort Parthenia, the vocal group Tenet, and the Four Nations Ensemble. Further concerts (on Sept. 24 and Sept. 26) will be held at the Abigail Adams Smith Auditorium and at WNYC’s Jerome Greene Performance Space. (West End Ave. at 87th St. Sept. 23 at 8. 212-866-0468. For full schedule, see gemsny.org.)

COUNTERINDUCTION:

“DRAMA—MUSIC AND ITS DOUBLE”

Drama, defined rather broadly, is the theme of the excellent young ensemble’s first concert of the season. Schnittke’s Piano Quartet re-creates the persona of Mahler, transforming the material of that giant’s only chamber work; Saariaho’s “I Feel a Second Heart” (for viola, cello, and piano) is a plea to an imaginary being. Music by Aperghis, Globokar, and Kyle Bartlett will also be performed. (Tenri Cultural Institute, 43A W. 13th St. Sept. 24 at 8. A donation is suggested.)

“THE PHOENIX CONCERTS”:

VOXARE STRING QUARTET

The thriving series, held at the Church of St. Matthew and St. Timothy, presents the acclaimed quartet, formed at Juilliard in 2007, in a concert featuring new and recent music by Juhani Bansal, Daron Hagen (“Alive in a Moment,” with the tenor Robert Frankenberry), and Gilda Lyons, capped by Ned Rorem’s Quartet No. 4 (1994), one of his most powerful chamber works. (26 W. 84th St. Sept. 24 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

NEW JUILLIARD ENSEMBLE

American premières are a regular occurrence in Joel Sachs’s concerts with his fine student ensemble. This one features first outings of works by Salvatore Scarrino (“L’Archeologia del Telefono”), Philip Cashian, and Poul Ruders, offered alongside pieces by Elliott Schwartz and Harold Meltzer (“Virginal”). (Peter Jay Sharp Theatre, 155 W. 6th St. Sept. 25 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 212-769-7406.)

“RESONATING LIGHT” SERIES:

BENJAMIN VERDERY

In “Tradition Transformed,” the prominent New York guitarist continues the Rubin Museum of Art’s new concert series, playing music by Bach (the Cello Suite No. 6) and Mozart in his own arrangements as well as works by Martin Bresnick (“Joaquin Is Dreaming”) and by himself. (150 W. 17th St. 212-620-5000. Sept. 26 at 6.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS

The Jens Nygaard tribute ensemble, devoted to works just off the beaten path, brings in three esteemed soloists—the harpsichordist Gerald Ranck, the violinist Misha Vitenson, and the bassoonist Frank Morelli—to perform a program abundant in concertos and other works by Vivaldi, Telemann, Zelenka, and Bach (the Keyboard Concerto in G Minor, BWV 1058). (Good Shepherd Church, 152 W. 66th St. 212-799-1259. Sept. 27 at 2 and 7:30.)

OUT OF TOWN

TANNERY POND

For Hudson Valley diehards, a few summery concerts still beckon as the leaves begin to turn. Alan Goldstein, an exciting young Israeli pianist, closes