

A Dallas Suburb Fights to Keep Out Blacks

THE NEXT RACHOFSKY

His Vision for Dallas' Art Scene

A large, bold, white capital letter 'D' is centered on a solid red background. The letter is a simple, sans-serif font with a thick stroke. The red background has a fine, vertical ribbed texture.

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MARCH 2012



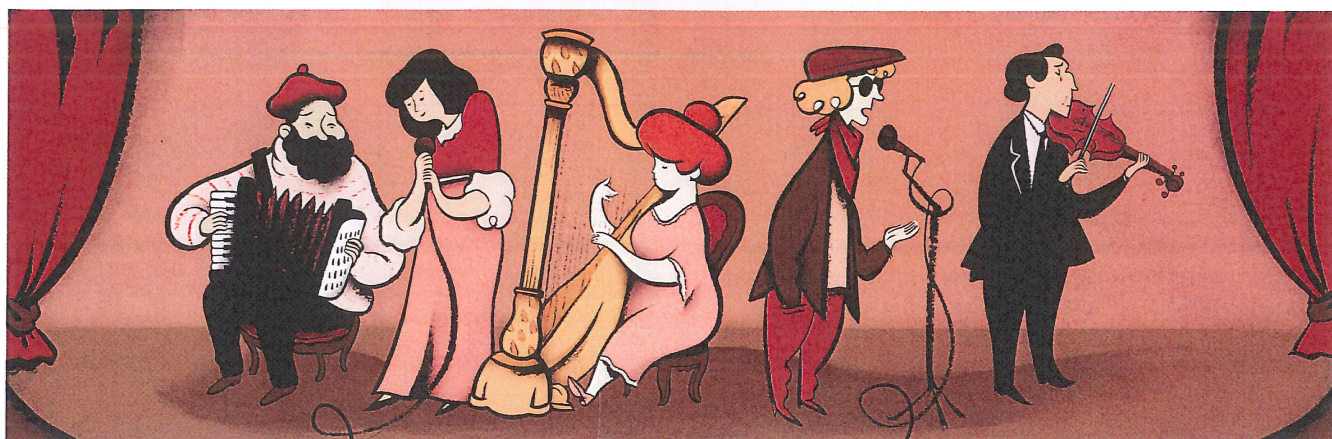
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Nasher Sculpture Center

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[THEATER]

THE SOUND OF SALIENCE

Thanks to a quiet couple from North Dallas, the Nasher hosts the most important musical programming in the city.

By Willard Spiegelman

HERE ARE TWO THINGS HARD TO come by in Dallas: an evening of serious (what used to be wrongly called “classical”) music that stunningly combines the old and the new, the conservative and the avant-garde; and a pair of arts patrons who keep themselves well away from the social circuit and the society pages.

Now in its second season, Soundings: New Music at the Nasher has produced this city’s most exciting and intelligent musical programming in the 40 years I have lived here. It’s the collaborative artistic brainchild of several people. The musical godfather is Seth Knopp, a member of the Peabody Trio and director of the Vermont-based Yellow Barn Music School and Festival. Its other parents are Jessie and Charles Price, local philanthropists. You probably have never heard of them. All of them give additional credit to Jeremy Strick, the Nasher’s director, who has his own commitment to innovative programming.

The inaugural season featured events that mixed Beethoven and Bartók with a Texas Panhandle auctioneer, that united counterpoint and marimbas, dissonant moderns and Bach’s *Art of the Fugue*. September 2011’s evening alternated slam poetry with Gustav Mahler. Soundings is all about connections, continuities as well as differences, between and

among things. In November we had Gypsy, Jewish, and Bosnian music, for violin, clarinet, accordion, and human voice. Some will like everything in these evenings. Everyone will like something. It’s not a hodgepodge but an amazing bag of unpredictable matings.

Two more events are forthcoming. On March 9, there’s a trio of musicians—flute, viola, harp—playing works by the known and the contemporary unknown: “Tradition and Invention Traced by the Voices of Three Centuries.” On April 20, we get violinist Anthony Marwood and pianist Alexander Madzar in “A Dialogue of Caprice and Masterpiece.” The duo will mix Schubert, Bartók, and Debussy (the standards), with Berio, Sciarrino, and Widmann. Don’t worry if you haven’t heard of the last three. You won’t be scared off.

All of this is exciting stuff, and it’s the result of Knopp’s friendship with the Prices. Charles, the more public of the private couple, is the eldest of six children. The family lived in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. In 1952, Charles’ grandfather, Harold Price, commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to build a skyscraper, which still commands the plains. Wright also did a house for Charles’ father. For architecture buffs, Bartlesville has been on the map for more than a half century.

Charles Price is not a cornpone boy from the Dust Bowl. Not too many people anywhere can say they grew up in a Frank Lloyd Wright house. And his upbringing affected

**SOUNDINGS:
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APRIL 20, VIOLINIST ANTHONY MARWOOD AND
PIANIST ALEXANDER MADZAR
NASHER SCULPTURE CENTER
2001 FLORA ST.
214-242-5181

Events

Price's adult life. As a young man, he developed a penchant for the unpredictable and the new. Charles and Jessie met in law school at Boulder in 1977. They moved to Dallas 30 years ago. They have kept under the radar since then.

When it came time to build a house for themselves here in the late '80s, the Prices worked with an avant-garde American architect who made for them a home suitable for an art collection, on a hidden property in North Dallas that contains a stream and a trio of small ponds that produce a delicious, continuously flowing sound. The gentle murmur offered inspiration to architect and clients. The Price house must be the only one ever built with a musical analogy in mind: Béla Bartók's 1936 "Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta."

I asked Charles how he came by his interest in music. He said he has always played the flute for pleasure, and also, less intensely, the piano. When he was a kid, he listened to old RCA Victor Red Seal records in his parents' house. His father, an engineer, liked the up-to-date hi-fi equipment; Charles discovered that he liked the music as well. "You grow up listening to stuff and then you want to play it," he says, sweetly assuming that every sensible person who plays records also plays instruments.

Soundings, he says, goes back to a conversation with Strick, and even earlier to similar conversations with Strick's predecessor, Steve Nash. Because he knew Seth Knopp from The Yellow Barn organization, and because he also realized that he would have to bring someone with musical experience onto the scene, Price got the musician involved. The whole thing developed as a serendipitous meeting among people with an interest in something international and innovative.

Anyone who has attended the Soundings concerts will have noticed—as I have—the relative absence of furs and jewels in the audience. People want to listen to the music, not be seen. Even better, you don't see people rushing to the doors as soon as the last note has sounded, as you do at the Meyerson or the Winspear. Can this continue? The Prices are committed to backing the series at least through next season. Afterward, "as long as the constellation holds" (meaning Knopp and Strick and public support), Charles Price says the prospects are good for their continued support. All three men give credit to one another. Best of all, the Prices, unlike many philanthropists, wish to remain quiet, although anonymity is not now possible.

Knopp praises the Prices for "never telling me to do things." He has, he says, carte blanche. In the old days, patrons would listen to artists they liked, hear their plans and visions, and then support them. Now they tend not to. The Golden Rule prevails: He Who Has the Gold Makes the Rules. This is true not only in Dallas but virtually everywhere, especially where new money is trying to squeeze into society.

The Prices represent an older paradigm for artistic sponsorship. They offer help and then step out of the way to allow the artists to work their magic. Price gives all credit to Knopp, about whom he says: "Seth's mind and ear for programming have been the keys to the program's success, along with the support of the musicians who seem available at Seth's call, like the Juilliard Quartet. There is a kind of genius in what he does." **D**

Write to wspiegel@mail.smu.edu.

1 MUSIC

Earth, Wind & Fire

According to the soulful rock band itself, Earth, Wind & Fire experienced something of a career resurgence after President Obama drew attention to his long-standing love for their music. He even had the band perform at the Governors' Ball shortly after his election, which was widely considered a smartly cool move. As for the group, they went from playing small venues to enjoying much grander surroundings. Listen for timeless hits such as "September" and "Boogie Wonderland." Mar 6 & 7. Meyerson Symphony Center, 2301 Flora St. 214-692-0203. dallasymphony.com.



nent, some pop up) open for the occasion. Don't miss the Relatives, West Dallas' own musical legends, live on the World Music Stage on Saturday. Mar 2-4. Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge. 214-946-9270. bridge-o-rama.com.

GREAT DATES 3/2012

2 HAPPENINGS

Bridge-o-Rama

West Dallas is going hog wild with the opening of Large Marge (er, the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge). We're all for community spirit, so we'll forgive the cheeseball name and instead focus on all the different things to do. Stop by the Bridge-o-Rama Pavilion first, where you can get details on activities as well as snag a wristband that translates to discounts at various West Dallas restaurants and shops for the entire month. Dining options include more than 20 restaurants (some perma-

3 THEATER

Tigers Be Still

Yes, there's a wild jungle cat loose on the streets of normal suburban

America. But the ferocious animal is the least of Sherry's worries—she's recently graduated from college, anxious and depressed about her future. Her older sister, freshly dumped, has turned to Jack Daniel's, repeated viewings of *Top Gun*, and Entenmann's coffee cake. Their mother is so paralyzed with sadness that she refuses to get out of bed. She communicates with her daughters via telephone. Finally, though, just as the play begins, Sherry gets her first job, an event that propels her off the couch and into a life with a little more hope. Mar 2–May 13. Wyly Theatre, 2100 Ross Ave., Ste. 650. 214-880-0202. dallastheatercenter.org.

FESTIVALS

St. Patrick's Day Parade

What's mostly green and almost entirely debauched?

The city of Dallas on St. Patrick's Day. We must all have the luck of the Irish, since we can have the big annual parade on the actual factual Saturday. Stake out your spot along Greenville Avenue early, and ready yourself for some serious day drinking. Just also go prepared with water, so you don't get dehydrated roaming the streets. Mar 17, 11 AM. Greenville Ave., from Blackwell St. greenvilleave.org.



For more events in North Texas, go to dmagazine.com/events.

Events

Photographs Do Not Bend Gallery, 1202 Dragon St., Ste. 103. 214-969-1852. pdnbgallery.com.

Elliott Hundley: the Bacchae. *The Bacchae*, an ancient Greek tragedy written by Euripides, recounts the story of King Pentheus of Thebes who courts the wrath of the young god Dionysus by refusing to worship him. Los Angeles-based artist Elliott Hundley looked back nearly 2,400 years to find this inspiration for his latest installation of 11 medium- to large-scale mixed-media works. Through Apr 22. Nasher Sculpture Center, 2001 Flora St. 214-242-5100. nashersculpture-center.org.

Joe Mancuso: New Works. Artist Joe Mancuso sure likes his flowers. Incorporating floral forms such as carnation, rose, and tulip petals into his paintings, Mancuso experiments with the meaning of sculpture and painting when he uses both to create 3-D works that stretch whole walls. Through Mar 24. Conduit Gallery, 1626 Hi Line Dr., Ste. C. 214-939-0064. conduitgallery.com.

Ludwig Schwarz: Paintings. If you thought basketball players were tall, perhaps take another look. Ludwig Schwarz exhibits a series of 6-foot-square oil-on-canvas paintings that put at least a couple of those NBA guys to shame. After two decades of living and working in Dallas, Schwarz has become known for his clever and often satirical mixed-media work. Through Mar 24. Conduit Gallery, 1626 Hi Line Dr., Ste. C. 214-939-0064. conduitgallery.com.

Mark Manders: Parallel Occurrences/Documented Assignments. Dutch artist Mark Manders gets his biggest North American exhibit to date, celebrating his "Self-Portrait as a Building" project that has absorbed him since 1986. Visit the Hoffman Galleries to view 15 new sculptures created just for the installation using his usual method of turning everyday objects, such as pencils, tea bags, and sugar, into fine art. Through Apr 15. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 N. Harwood St. 214-922-1200. dallasmuseumofart.org.

Optic Nerve. Texas artist Bill Haveron, who describes himself as a "Hillbilly Hamlet," continues his dedication to narrative storytelling with a new series of large-scale pieces on paper. Through Mar 24. Kirk Hopper Fine Art, 3008 Commerce St. 214-760-9230. kirkhopperfineart.com.

Project Room: Erin Curtis. After Erin Curtis graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, she accepted a 2009 Fulbright Scholarship to study women's material art and culture in India. The beauty of those tapestries is translated into Curtis' series of paintings on unstretched canvas, evoking the ornate and colorful textiles that she witnessed during her time abroad. Through Mar 24. Conduit Gallery, 1626 Hi Line Dr., Ste. C. 214-939-0064. conduitgallery.com.

Romance Maker: the Watercolors of Charles M. Russell. Watercolor is the only medium in which we've ever been proficient. And by proficient, we mean "able to paint almost-recognizable foliage." The infinitely more talented Charles M. Russell paints beautifully romanticized scenes of the Old West. No squinting necessary. Through May 13. Amon Carter Museum, 3501 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth. 817-738-1933. cartermuseum.org.

Youth and Beauty: Art of the American Twenties. There's a good reason the 1920s are referred

to as "roaring." Urban centers were expanding, industrialization was spreading. The rising luminaries of the American art world—such as Man Ray, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Edward Hopper—tried to capture some semblance of order from the chaos. This exhibit, organized by the Brooklyn Museum in New York, features more than 130 paintings, sculptures, and photographs by the more than 65 artists who exemplified this new kind of American realism. Mar 4–May 27. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 N. Harwood St. 214-922-1200. dallasmuseumofart.org.

Wayne White. Fresh from his documentary's world premiere at the South by Southwest Film Conference and Festival, the artist Wayne White debuts a new collection of works. White's signature style is a repurposed painting spiced up with a snarky word or phrase, such as "Schadenfreude" or "Failed Abstract Paintings of the Seventies." Mar 31–May 5. Marty Walker Gallery, 2135 Farrington St. 214-749-0066. martywalkergallery.com.

Winter Rusiloski, Carmen Menza, Cathy Drennan. These three gallery artists have been holed up in their studios, hard at work. The result is a collection of abstract paintings full of color and texture that capture life's fleeting moments with fantastic symbolism. All three artists have created completely new series. Through Mar 24. Cohn Drennan Contemporary, 1107 Dragon St. 214-708-8051. cohndrennancontemporary.com.

| MUSIC |

Boyz II Men. As far as surprise karaoke songs go, "I'll Make Love to You" by Boyz II Men is always a solid choice. The unsuspecting soul you've chosen to sing this delightfully cheesy number to will either wither with embarrassment or steal the show. The group had our '90s hearts on lock, churning out ballad after ballad until everyone got sick of far-fetched promises and sad-sack crooning. Well, maybe not, but the group did take a little hiatus from the limelight. Lately, though, they've been palling around with Justin Bieber. We foresee big bucks in their future. Mar 11, 8 PM. House of Blues, 2200 N. Lamar St. 214-978-2583. livenation.com.

A Celtic Celebration. We once had an English teacher who really, really loved Mel Gibson. Judging from the posters all over her classroom, she especially loved Mel Gibson in *Braveheart*, striding through the flames of battle like the noble hero he, uh, only turned out to be in movies. Anyway, St. Patty's Day weekend offers you the chance to relive the music that helped make the story epic. There will also be performances by Irish step dancers and vocalists, plus songs from *Brigadoon*, *Finian's Rainbow*, and more. Mar 16–18. Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. 817-212-4280. basshall.com.

Doc Severinsen. Reminisce about the golden years of late-night television with the former band leader of *The Tonight Show With Johnny Carson*. With Doc Severinsen on the trumpet, it's an evening of updated jazz standards just like the tunes he played night after night on NBC. Mar 5, 8 PM. Meyerson Symphony Center, 2301 Flora St. 214-692-0203. dallasymphony.com.

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