FRIDAY - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 - 28, 2008

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

Antwerp's new style

Avant-garde fashion designers get serious about business

Spanish culinary revolution | Creativity in computer code

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On cover, a model wears a design from Maison Martin Margiela's fall/winter 2008-2009 collection (photo: Catwalking/Getty Images); above, Dries Van Noten's boutique in Paris.

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WEEKEND JOURNAL
EUROPE

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Kathleen Van Den Broeck — ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR
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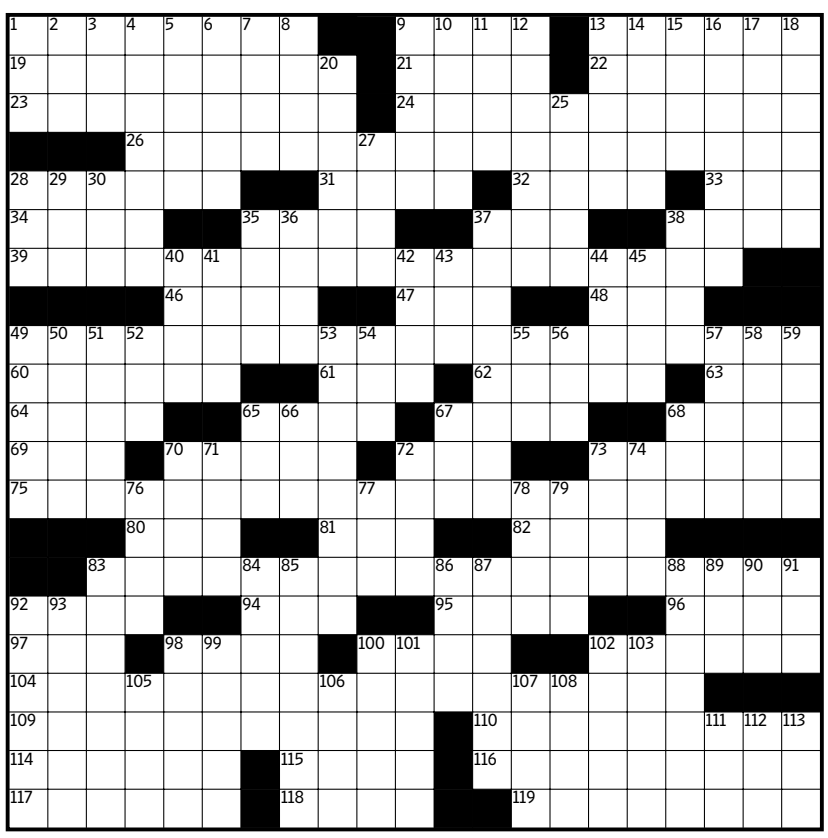
Questions or comments? Write to wsje.weekend@wsj.com. Please include your full name and address.

THE JOURNAL CROSSWORD / Edited by Mike Shenk

Opus Interruptus / by Elizabeth C. Gorski



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50 "___ Dancing Mood" (1936 song)
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55 Half of hex-
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58 Surrounded by
59 Blows a gasket
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70 Method: Abbr.
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102 Portfolio portion
103 Little wise guy?
105 Extremely worrisome
106 Designer Wang
107 Official emblem
108 Nickelodeon explorer
111 Model Carangi
112 Boasts
113 Sugar meas.

WSJ.com

Crossword online
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WSJ.com/WeekendJournal

Last week's solution

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Milan courts the frugal rich

THE CONSCIOUSNESS of frugal times is palpable at the fashion shows in Milan this week. How do you sell expensive spring clothes and handbags during a financial crisis?

Designers, who were late to recognize the symptoms of economic slowdown, are now well aware that last year's "flaunt it" mentality is, well, over. Even people who haven't been directly affected by the bank-

On Style
CHRISTINA BINKLEY

ing meltdown are changing their buying habits.

"There will always be rich people, but it's the mindset" that drives their spending, said François-Henri Pinault, chairman and chief executive of luxury giant PPR, chatting before the Bottega Veneta show here in Milan. PPR owns Bottega, as well as brands such as Gucci, Stella McCartney and Balenciaga. Mr. Pinault has his eye on Asia, wondering how luxury consumers there will respond to the financial turmoil, and he's looking at ways to cut costs by applying mass-retailing methods such as more-precise inventory management.

PPR's stock is now roughly half what it was a year ago, even though the company's sales were actually up 17% in the first half of 2008. No one expects a pretty retail season, no matter how successful the designs. With financial markets tumbling in Asia and Russia—places where luxury was expecting substantial growth—high-end brands are struggling to figure out where to turn.

"Everyone's freaking out. Everyone," said shoe designer Brian Atwood at his presentation for the Swiss luxury brand Bally.

Here in Italy, there is a collective sense that luxury consumers will seek "investment" wardrobes next spring—clothing that will survive trends and frequent dry cleaning to remain wearable in several years. European brands that once marketed themselves with a message of "cost is no barrier" are now focusing on the longevity of their clothes and touting moderate prices.

"It's not cool anymore to spend $6,000 on a Chanel jacket," asserts Enrico Morra, CEO of Piazza Sempione, an Italian maker of tailored clothes. He suggests that Piazza's jackets are much more reasonably priced at less than $2,000.

These messages weren't the focus at New York's fashion week, where many designers were more intent on offering trendy designs to capture buyers' imaginations. Across the Atlantic, though, designer Graeme Black says he has cut the size of his collection by nearly one-third and sliced profit margins on his designs, which include delicate cardigans of leather strips, sewn like fishing nets, and trim dresses at an entry-level price of $1,890. At his Milan showroom on Tuesday, Jonathan Reed, Mr. Black's business partner, told a client, "We've reduced our prices 20%."

Designs with a classic air included a luxurious **Missoni** outfit; **Brunello Cucinelli's** versatile pieces (below); and a **Bottega Veneta** suit (left).

Photos: Getty Images (2); Brunello Cucinelli

Mr. Black is trying to cater to customers' more-frugal sensibility. "This is something that will still work in five years," he said, holding up the leather cardigan, whose soft lines looked classic, despite the innovative use of the material.

Tyler Thoreson, executive editor of the fashion Web site Men.Style.com, said a "new conservatism" is showing up in menswear as well. He noted that some trendy looks could be risky for workers in an economic downturn. "The most casual guy in the room may just be the first one to get laid off," said Mr. Thoreson.

In Milan, that thinking is translating into styles that are a bit on the somber, classic side. I nearly mistook Burberry Prorsum's runway of khaki and earth-toned trench coats for a fall collection, though I guess it was for a drizzly spring day.

Yet those classic looks are perfect for those of us who seek fashions with longevity. Missoni's wide-legged pants were seasonless and ageless yet had the look of luxury. Bottega Veneta's Tomas Maier showed several stunning versions of double-breasted tailoring in a copper-colored suit and a similar dress. They could be worn by any top executive for years ahead.

At Jil Sander, amid the long fringe sheaths over body suits were classic blazers that offered the kind of off-kilter design details that command a high price: inverted buttons or planes of fabric tucked into a half-belt. Brunello Cucinelli showed clothes and soft leather accessories that could be worn from the corner office to a catered picnic.

Even Miuccia Prada, whose show is one of the highlights of Milan for its theatricality and design influence, seemed to be stepping more carefully, with less technically elaborate textiles than she has used recently. Her collection of pencil skirts of a fabric like crinkly paper was typically avant-garde but also fit the times: seasonless, wearable and, yes, investment-grade.

Email Christina.Binkley@wsj.com

For a look at Antwerp's rebel fashion designers, **please turn to page W8.** Plus, join a discussion on clothes-buying habits in the current economy, at **WSJ.com/Style**

Gucci from head to toe

GUCCI DESIGNER Frida Giannini's admirers and detractors agree on one thing: She's a master merchandiser. Her abilities were on display in Milan at Gucci's runway show Wednesday, which featured hats, handbags, backpacks, belts, necklaces, bracelets, shoes and sunglasses. Oh yeah, and some clothes.

Not every designer puts such an array of products on the catwalk, even though they will appear in stores. Prada didn't show any trousers at its fashion show on Tuesday. Balenciaga sends just clothes down its catwalk to keep the focus on its core product—no bags, even though these sell well.

But Gucci lays it all out on the runway, sometimes thrown together in the same look. The first model to strut out on Wednesday wore a pantsuit with a printed silk shirt and a perky fedora—as well as a necklace and high-heeled sandals. She also carried a large shoulder bag.

Yet although Gucci strikes a chord with fashion buyers, who see in Gucci lots of looks that they can sell, it often falls flat with trend-setters. Many of the suits in the show—skinny pants cropped above the ankle with well-tailored jackets in vibrant greens and blues—could easily hit the shelves of Zara and H&M months before they get to Gucci's boutiques.

Associated Press

An accessorized look from **Gucci's** spring 2009 collection.

At first glance, there was nothing much about either the fabrics or silhouettes of the clothes that would make them stand out from fast-fashion imitators. *—Christina Passariello*

Barbara Hranilovich

A rustic and earthy red

Gigondas tastes of minerals and grapes; consistently pleasing

EVER SO SUBTLY, the leaves have been changing outside our country cabin. What was once bright green is now less vibrant. Our single grapevine is turning brown at the edges. But, for us, the biggest sign of fall this year is obvious and dramatic: Our children are gone. Gone. Media

Tastings
DOROTHY J. GAITER AND JOHN BRECHER

started college last year. This month, Zoë started college, too, and moved away after insisting that we buy a Mac like hers so that she can do live video chats—with Tiger, our dog. When Media left, the college president offered two final words of advice to parents: "Go home." At Zoë's school, a dean told parents: "This is the moment when you renegotiate your relationship with your child." How is this possible? They were just born. What happened?

Fall, for better or worse—and the kids going to college seems like both—means change. There is something quite elemental about it. Maybe that's why the red wines of the Rhône Valley are the perfect wines for the season. It's not just that they warm us as the days grow colder. It's that they have an earthy authenticity that seems so appropriate to the sights, the foods and the sense of the season. The best ones are like a warm embrace just when you need it, because of a sudden chill or because, say, after 18 years your kids aren't in their beds anymore.

"Rhône reds" is a huge category, however, and it takes in some rare, expensive and ageable wines; quite a few affordable, drink-now, pizza wines; and pretty much everything in-between. In blind tastings, we have found generic Côtes du Rhône reds too variable in quality. Instead, for good value, our advice is to look for wines from specific, lesser-known regions. We've had good luck over the years, for instance, with Vacqueyras and St. Joseph, which tend to offer some serious bang for the buck. This year, we decided to see what would happen if we focused all of our energies on one of those lesser-known names, Gigondas. We wanted to see if the wines, in a broad blind tasting, could clear our simple bar: Are they consistently tasty wines at a reasonable price?

Gigondas is located in the southern part of the Rhône Valley, which has had a string of good vintages starting in 2003. It's made from several different grapes, including Syrah and Mourvèdre, but the primary grape is Grenache. Grenache is one of the world's most widely planted grapes and has been a workhorse for centuries, but it has become somewhat fashionable recently because some vintners are doing extraordinary things with it, notably in Spain, where it's known as Garnacha. In the U.S., we recently wrote about a Grenache we loved from a winery called Marilyn Remark that was so intense we wanted to paint our tongues with it.

We bought a large selection of recent-vintage Gigondas from several stores. We did not set a price limit, but most cost between $20 and $35. We tasted the wines in blind flights over several nights.

Here's our advice, and we'll keep it simple: Buy one this weekend.

We have rarely had such a successful tasting. It's not that the wines were simply fabulous; in fact, none rated higher than Very Good. But the overall quality was consistently good. We were happy with more than 90% of the wines and would have felt good about buying them, and that is a very high percentage. When you compare this to our recent tasting of another cool-weather wine, Australia's Shiraz, the results couldn't be more different.

What we found with Gigondas, again and again, is that these are no-nonsense wines. They simply taste like wine—good grapes, nice earth, hints of minerals, some pepper and a dry finish. We're so tired of wines packed with incompatible components that bounce around in our mouths. These were seamlessly simple, slightly rustic wines that offered a relaxed charm despite their brawn. Although they were not low in alcohol—mostly around 14.5%—the alcohol was integrated into the taste and didn't present that hot, head-hurting alcohol taste of so many wines today. They define, in their own way, what terroir is—truly, a sense that you can taste the hot sun, the stony soil, the entire environment that surrounds the grapes. Beware: If you like your wines smooth, these are not for you. Keep in mind what Dottie said about one of them, Pierre Amadieu: "This is not a flirty wine." They have a certain bite, rusticity and muscularity about them that translates ultimately into one word: real.

Gigondas is sometimes considered a kind of junior Châteauneuf-du-Pape, but, at this moment, we'd recommend Gigondas instead. Châteauneuf-du-Pape has become such a famous name now that too many have become overly "made," with self-conscious tastes of oak and vanilla, while the prices have risen far too high. In comparison, Gigondas remains authentic and a relative bargain. And here's the most important part: It's very, very easy to drink. For a wine of some heft and real earthiness, these are surprisingly easy to sip and enjoy, especially with food. We didn't just enjoy tasting them for their interesting and complex tastes; we enjoyed drinking them because they tasted good and real and relaxed. These are wines to drink while you talk about the leaves. They're content to be the background music.

Email us at wine@wsj.com.

The Gigondas index

Cephas

In a broad blind tasting of Gigondas, from the Rhône Valley of France, these were our favorites. These are better closer to cellar temperature than room temperature. The best will age well for at least a few years. Gigondas goes beautifully with earthy food like liver, meatloaf, eggplant and squash, and has enough acidity to also pair well with heavier fish dishes. If you are planning to fire up the barbecue one last time this weekend, Gigondas would be perfect.

VINEYARD	PRICE	RATING	COMMENTS
Domaine de Piaugier (Marc Autran & Fils) 2005	$30*	Very Good	**Best of tasting.** Black wine. Tight and serious, with spice, minerals, lemony acidity and great fruit. The amazing thing is that it's so easy to drink despite its rough-hewn character.
Pierre Amadieu 'Romane Machotte' 2004	$24.99	Good/ Very Good	**Best value.** Tight, with earthy, blackberry fruit. Plenty of highly personal character. More austere than many.
Domaine La Bouissiere 'La Font de Tonin' 2005	$32.97	Very Good	Just flat-out, straightforward, good wine. It tells you on the nose what it is: a tight, earthy red with some serious underpinning. Confident, and a joy to drink.
Domaine Santa Duc 2005	$38*	Very Good	Clean and sleeker than most, with deep, rich fruit. Fairly intense. Lacks the rustic charm of many—it's more of an "international" style—but mighty tasty.
Château de Saint Cosme 'Valbelle' (Louis Barruol) 2006	$59.99	Good/ Very Good	Hefty, hearty wine, with fruit that's ripe and true. A reliable name.
Louis Bernard 2004	$22.99	Good/ Very Good	Very easy to drink, with friendly, earthy tastes. Not as intense as some, but charming.

Note: Wines are rated on a scale that ranges: Yech, OK, Good, Very Good, Delicious and Delicious! These are the prices we paid at wine stores in California and New York. *We paid $32.97 for Domaine de Piaugier and $34.99 for Santa Duc, but these prices appear to be more representative. Prices vary widely.

A Jack Rose by any other name


Lynton Gardiner

How's Your Drink?
ERIC FELTEN

NEW YORK POLICE Lt. Charles Becker was the stuff of a James Ellroy novel. Head of the "Strong Arm Squad," Becker was tasked with busting up the city's manifold illegal gambling dens. And he was very good at smashing up illicit casinos—at least, that is, the ones that failed to pay him handsome tribute. His head bagman (the "best little poker player in New York," according to the New York Times) was a lanky fellow distinguished by his total lack of hair, having lost all his follicles to a childhood bout of typhoid. In 1911 and 1912, Jacob Rosenzweig—affectionately known as Bald Jack Rose—was collecting $10,000 a month for Becker, or better than $2 million a year in today's dollars. It was a racket valuable enough to protect with murder—and resulted in a sensational killing that would bring infamy to one of the great drinks in the cocktail canon.

Outside of the big-city boutique bars devoted to classic cocktails, these days you'd be hard pressed to find a mixer who knows how to make a Jack Rose. But in the first half of the last century, the drink of applejack (apple brandy), lemon or lime juice, and grenadine was part of the bartender's basic repertoire. In Crosby Gaige's 1941 "Cocktail Guide and Ladies' Companion," there is a cartoon depicting the marble busts in a cocktail Hall of Fame, and the Jack Rose is prominent among the statuary. The drink could be had all over the world—Jake Barnes quaffs them in a Parisian hotel bar in Ernest Hemingway's 1926 novel, "The Sun Also Rises."

In his 1931 book, "Old Waldorf Bar Days," Albert Stevens Crockett lamented that the drink had come to have a dubious association: "Lots of readers about racketeers, and such as read only that sort of news in the papers, have believed for years that this cocktail was named after a character who turned state's evidence in the famous Becker case," which all got started when a bookie named Herman Rosenthal couldn't, or wouldn't, keep up with Lt. Becker's escalating assessments.

After taking a warning beating from Becker's thugs, an angry Rosenthal made what in hindsight was a rather bad career move—he went to the New York World newspaper offices and gave editor Herbert Bayard Swope a detailed accounting of the police lieutenant's shakedown scams. Late that night, Rosenthal was enjoying a nice cold Horse's Neck (ginger ale with a spiral of lemon peel) and a big steak at a place off Times Square called the Hotel Metropole. The street outside became strangely deserted just before a gray 1909 Packard pulled up to the curb. Out of the car climbed a rogue's gallery of insensitively nicknamed hoods—Gyp the Blood, Lefty Louis, Whitey Lewis and "Dago Frank" Cirofici. Each of them put a bullet in poor, dumb Herman.

And that might have been the abrupt end of the affair if it hadn't been for a stray witness who memorized the license number of the departing Packard. The police, tellingly, weren't interested in what the man had seen, but the ambitious D.A. was, tracing the plate to a car service that had rented the Packard to Bald Jack Rose.

Jack was anything but a dull boy. He cut a sweet deal with prosecutors and was soon on the witness stand, where his testimony sent Gyp, Lefty, Whitey and Frank—and eventually Lt. Becker himself—to the chair at Sing Sing.

Jack Rose was all over the newspapers in those days, and it has long been assumed that the name for the cocktail was inspired by his notoriety. It's not a crazy idea: The case did inspire at least one effort at a new drink—bartender John O'Connell introduced a Gyp the Blood cocktail at the Van Cortlandt Park hotel. It failed to find favor. But what about the Jack Rose? Albert Stevens Crockett didn't buy the Bald Jack connection. He was convinced that the drink was named after a popular turn-of-the-century flower, the Jacquemot, or "Jack" rose. The cocktail, Crockett wrote, is "the exact shade of a Jacquemot rose, when properly concocted."

And that makes sense, because once they became associated with the gangster (and, even worse, stoolie), the bloom was off both the flower and the drink. "The murder of Herman Rosenthal has seriously affected the business of florists in Brooklyn," reported the Waterloo (Iowa) Evening Courier in January 1913. "The Jack rose, a pretty popular blossom, has often been left on the hands of the Brooklyn florists, just because it bears the same name as the informant in the famous trials." The flowers were soon renamed Richmond roses to escape the gangster taint. The newspaper also reported that the trials had caused "a serious slump in cocktails which were known as Jack Roses." Bartenders added some gin to the drink and rechristened it the Royal Smile.

The origins of the Jack Rose cocktail may be far more refined than its sometime association with a gangster would suggest. Indeed, it may have had pride of place in one of the most prideful places ever known to America, the Astor ballroom.

In the Gilded Age, Gotham society revolved around parties at Mrs. William Astor's Fifth Avenue brownstone. At the start of each soiree, "a butler appeared with a tray, and cocktails were served," recounts historian Stephen Birmingham in his book "The Grandes Dames." Mrs. Astor wasn't exactly democratic in her hospitality: "Mrs. Astor preferred something called a Jack Rose," so that's what was always on the tray.

How is it that Mrs. Astor came to serve Jack Rose cocktails? Perhaps she chose the drink because she liked it—or because of her affinity for roses. Nicknamed the "Mystic Rose," the hostess, at her most haute, would decorate her house with thousands of pink roses.

As Gertrude Stein would write, "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose." But not so the Jack Rose cocktail, which will vary dramatically based on how it is constructed. Real grenadine is key—please spare the Jack Rose the indignity of Rose's pseudo-grenadine. And then there is the question of citrus: There is no consensus on whether to make the drink with lemon juice or lime. I prefer lemon. And last of all is the issue of the brandy. The drink is traditionally and correctly made with New Jersey applejack. But I like it better with the more elegant French apple brandy, calvados, which makes for a drink we might properly call a Jacque Rose. Not only does it taste better, but we get to slip the squealer's mantle.

Email eric.felten@wsj.com.

Jack Rose

60 ml apple brandy
15 ml fresh lemon (or lime) juice
7 ml to 15 ml grenadine (to taste)

Shake with ice and strain into a stemmed cocktail glass. Lemon twist.

Arbitrage

The price of an Asus Eee PC

City	Local currency	€
Paris	€315	€315
Tokyo	¥49,800	€320
New York	$487	€330
London	£268	€337
Rome	€349	€349
Brussels	€350	€350
Hong Kong	HK$3,999	€350
Frankfurt	€399	€399

Note: Model 900X 8.9-inch subnotebook. Prices, including taxes, as provided by retailers in each city, averaged and converted into euros.

Paramount

Téa Leoni and **Ricky Gervais** in 'Ghost Town.'

Gervais enlivens 'Ghost Town'

IF YOU'VE WATCHED the trailer for "Ghost Town," or simply noticed the marketing campaign's clever tag line—"He sees dead people...and they annoy him"—you already know too much to be surprised by the premise. So, yes, this smallish fantasy is a comic riff on

Film
JOE MORGENSTERN

"The Sixth Sense," which has gone from thriller to cliché in nine years. And, yes, the new film, which David Koepp directed from a script he wrote with John Kamps, is inevitably deadened by contrivance. But it's enlivened by the performance of Ricky Gervais as Bertram Pincus, a latter-day Scrooge for whom the living are no less annoying than the dead.

At first Mr. Gervais's performance is a model of unyielding, almost plaintive misanthropy in the face of Mr. Koepp's otherwise broad comic style. A Manhattan dentist who uses the appliances of his trade to silence garrulous patients, Pincus genuinely dislikes people, and Mr. Gervais only intensifies his character's acidity when the dentist finds himself bedeviled by a group of needy, nudgy ghosts.

Chief among the spectral nuisances is Greg Kinnear's Frank Herlihy, a dead man walking the sidewalks of New York in the dinner jacket he was wearing when he died. He wants Pincus to break up the impending re-marriage of his widow, Gwen, an archaeologist played by Téa Leoni. As the fable wears on, Frank's beseechments get to be repetitive, and Pincus's flintiness runs low on verve. For all the brilliance of his success in TV, Mr. Gervais doesn't have extensive experience as an actor in feature films, and Mr. Koepp isn't the director to help him.

His performance grows more appealing—the genuine animus gives way to some sweetness—once the relationship between Pincus and Gwen moves beyond some elaborately unfunny antics involving a mummy, and the script starts to give its Scrooge a new appreciation of life. (I'd almost forgotten what a fine comedienne Ms. Leoni can be until a scene with her entering an elevator.) Eventually, though, "Ghost Town" buckles beneath the weight of contrivance—so many ghosts to dispel, so many lessons to learn. And the film's physical aspects raise questions about population density. For a while we seem to be watching a for-ghosts-only version of Manhattan, where the sidewalks are uncrowded and traffic moves freely in the streets. But no, this is not the case. The living live there too, though in such small numbers as to enjoy plenty of lebensraum. That's the ultimate fantasy.

'The Duchess'

During one moment of excitement in "The Duchess," an 18th-century costume drama starring Keira Knightley as the Duchess of Devonshire, Georgiana Spencer, the unhappy heroine gets tipsy at a big party and has a frightening encounter with a candelabra's flames. "Please put out her grace's hair," her dour husband commands, and the deed is done in the nick of time. The production is lavish, the star is lovely and her character occupies a special place in English history as a great beauty, a great wit, a great model of proto-feminism and the great-great-great-great-aunt of Princess Diana. What's missing is dramatic fire.

You might not know that if you watched with the sound turned off. All the pieces of a powerful drama look to be in place—a passionate young woman who, for all her celebrity and star power, might just just as well be the late princess; Georgiana's implacably dispassionate husband William, the 5th Duke of Devonshire (Ralph Fiennes); Georgiana's best friend, Bess (Hayley Atwell), who turns their marriage into a ménage à trois; and a backdrop of reform politics in a time of tumultuous change.

With the sound turned on, the campaign oratory could pass for proto-McCain/Obama, but that's a minor distraction, or amusement. The major deficits lie in the script, which was adapted from the scintillating biography by Amanda Foreman, and in what the director, Saul Dibb, has made of it. Instead of scintillation, the movie gives us a succession of discrete set pieces, as if the action takes place in rooms but not in the halls connecting them; dialogue that plays on the surface of Georgiana's brilliance without getting under her skin, let alone into her soul, and a resolutely glum portrayal by Mr. Fiennes that may be true to William's character but leaves us yearning for less. Princess Di deserves livelier revisionism.

'Appaloosa'

As for the woman in "Appaloosa," a Western directed and cowritten by Ed Harris, no one can accuse her of being a proto-feminist. Allison French, a young widow played by Renée Zellweger, wants nothing more, or less, than to get her hooks into the top hand in town, whoever he may be.

Mr. Harris plays Appaloosa's city marshal, Virgil Cole, a rigid moralist who falls for Allie as he has never fallen before. Viggo Mortensen—the two men appeared together in "A History of Violence"—is Virgil's deputy and steadfast friend Everett Hitch, and Jeremy Irons is the badguy rancher, Randall Bragg, who runs the town until the two lawmen challenge his ruthless reign. Given Allie's obviously unpleasant proclivities, it's hard to understand why Virgil loves her so ardently. But it's equally hard to understand why Allie doesn't see that Virgil's moral code masks a violent psychopathic streak, or why that streak comes and goes without anyone ever discussing it. Or why, for that matter, "Appaloosa" is so mannered, episodic and slow, though it can be a danger sign when a movie is directed by one of its stars and carries credits for eight producers.

WSJ.com

Opening this week in Europe

- **Appaloosa** France, Norway
- **Brideshead Revisited** U.K.
- **Burn After Reading** Austria, Germany
- **Ghost Town** Spain
- **Lakeview Terrace** France
- **Mamma Mia!** Italy
- **Star Wars: The Clone Wars** Estonia, Slovakia
- **Step Brothers** Belgium, France, Sweden
- **The Love Guru** Austria, Germany
- **The Other Boleyn Girl** Sweden
- **Then She Found Me** France
- **Wall·E** Switzerland
- **You Don't Mess with the Zohan** Italy

Source: IMDB

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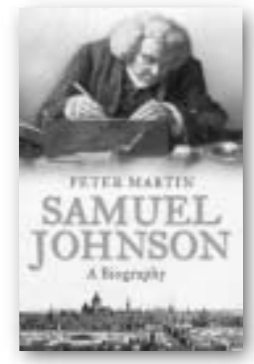
Dr. Johnson, reconsidered

BY ROBIN MORONEY

SAMUEL JOHNSON'S monumental body of work is easy to admire from 200 years away, but slightly more difficult to read.

To get an idea of what the writer and lexicographer represented to 18th-century Britain, you have to start with his early years as an enormously productive journalist—the H.L. Mencken of his time. Then imagine that H.L. Mencken also wrote T.S. Eliot's poems, George Orwell's novels, parts of Margaret Thatcher's best-known speeches, and helped Orson Welles on some screenplays.

Johnson also almost single-handedly produced an edition of the complete works of Shakespeare, with commentary, and a dictionary, the first one to match what the academies in Europe had done for French and Spanish. The time from his birth in 1709 to death in 1784 is often referred to as the Age of Johnson, perhaps because he didn't leave much for anyone else to do.



Johnson also was the champion of his age when it came to authoritative sentences with heavy rhythms, Latinate words and elaborate sub-clauses. The effort to read him is still worth it, but the effort is definitely there. His reputation survives thanks to Boswell's "Life of Johnson" as something of a wit-and-wisdom machine, and while Johnson's prose may be ornate, the talk Boswell recorded was direct, funny and wide-ranging. "A woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs," Boswell's Johnson says, in a comment whose structure launched a thousand newspaper columns. "It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

Even though Peter Martin's new "Samuel Johnson: A Biography" is done well, one is still surprised to find it done at all (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £25). It doesn't supplant Boswell's and can't avoid treading much of the same ground. But it successfully shifts Boswell's emphases, highlighting enough material Boswell missed or lied about to re-establish Johnson's giant stature for modern readers.

Mr. Martin's concept of what makes Johnson modern, however, is strangely thin. He's keen to show Johnson as an ahead-of-his-time liberal and also the kind of memoirist of mental illness who ends up on Oprah.

Johnson was indeed progressive when it came to individuals. His house rivaled Warhol's Factory as a hostel for the exotic; his semi-permanent tenants ranged from a freed slave to a prostitute he found lying on the street and brought home on his back. But when it came to groups—Americans, women, mobs—he was deeply reactionary. He had a lot of time for intelligent women, but not enough to think equality between the sexes to be worthwhile. Similarly, he might have included "barbarous" lower-class words in his dictionary—but he still called them barbarous.

Mr. Martin's other great theme is the depression that devoured years of Johnson's writing life, paralyzing him to the point that, in the morning, the only thing he could read was Robert Burton's encyclopedic "Anatomy of Melancholy." In the evening, he would walk the dangerous streets of London rather than confront the solitude of bed.

Even during the years when depression froze Johnson emotionally, his mind was humming. He'd emerge from his depressions to write in sudden, incredible bursts. His novel "Rasselas"—written in a week—is the mirror image of a self-help book, an exploration of all the ways that you can't expect happiness. And it's there that Johnson is at his most modern, as a Beckett-like figure battling against futility, a visionary of ugliness, muck and fact.

Newscom

British lexicographer and writer **Samuel Johnson** (right).

Spain's cutting-edge culinary revolution

By Raymond Sokolov

Denia, Spain

YACHTS BOB IN THE sparkling Mediterranean marina. The rugged crag of El Montgó pops up just behind this teeming resort. Half of northern Europe seems to have come to vacation along Spain's eastern coast, Levante, land of the rising sun.

But there is more to do here than swim or sail in the local waters. The superhighway that runs past here, linking it to the regional capital of Valencia to the north and the provincial center of Alicante to the south, is a beehive of world-class activity in which aquatic recreation plays no part. This is Spain's latest center of cutting-edge food. Restaurants such as funky Ca' Sento in Valencia, Casa Pepa in Ondara and most of all, El Poblet just north of Denia's center, are the newest hot addresses for gastronomes looking to taste the best of the next.

Spain's role as planetary leader of Food-Forwardism came as a jolt to the foodie universe. Before you could cancel your reservations at France's three-star Michelin temples, inspectors for the same restaurant guide had crossed the Pyrenees and scattered their highest ratings all over the Basque country, south of Bordeaux, and Catalonia, southwest of Provence. Currently, Spain has six restaurants holding three Michelin stars, the guide's highest ranking. One of the six, Ferran Adrià's El Bulli north of Barcelona, is without much debate the most celebrated dining room in the world.

How hard is it to get into El Bulli? Estimates on the Web range from the merely hyperbolic to the astronomical. Whether it is true that only 1% of those who apply for reservations in mid-October actually succeed in edging out the alleged 400,000 or half a million other gourmet emailers competing with them, there is no doubt that the Catalonian restaurant is full up for the year in the first day it accepts bookings—almost nine months before it opens for a half-year in June. The ever-evolving menu is famous for the strange (pulverized popcorn in a paper cone), the scientific (an artificial olive concocted from gel and real olive that releases hyperolivaceous flavor when you pop it in your mouth) and the truly remarkable, such as the mirror of yellow tomato consommé topped with a mosaic of square raviolis filled with unsmoked Spanish bacon and topped with a layer of green pesto.

Despite its reputation for fanciful flights of molecular gastronomy and showy foams, El Bulli is rooted in local products and Spanish food traditions. This is also the rock on which the post-Adrià chefs of the region have built their culinary shrines. In a way, Spain's ascendancy in the epicurean cosmos looms larger because it has evolved in the most conservative and insular of Europe's major cultures. Cut off from most currents of modern life until the end of the Franco dictatorship in 1975, Spain emerged from its 40-year snooze a society little changed since the 1930s and raring to make up for lost time. You can still eat a totally unrevolutionary Spanish meal anywhere in Spain today—saffron rice, eggplant, Iberian ham and lots of grilled fish—but at the high end, chefs keep on reinventing the dishes they grew up with.

Chef **Pepa Romans** of **Casa Pepa**; right, grilled octopus with virgin olive oil.

This is the creative stage we encountered at Ca' Sento and Casa Pepa, run by gifted chefs with their toes still planted in the terroir they inhabit. Not that either Adrià disciple Raúl Aleixandre or Pepa Romans and her daughters are earthbound cooks. You know that something special awaits you after a cab led by GPS arrives at Mr. Aleixandre's surreal white building way out of Valencia's historic center or when you finally pull up in the middle of a hidden-away orange grove at Casa Pepa.

Mr. Aleixandre shows his Young Turk side with a highly strained purée of foie gras with applesauce and whole pieces of skin-on mackerel sashimi with soy and ginger. But he flies the local colors with an emphasis on seafood and rice, albeit highly evolved renditions—cuttlefish-ink noodles with a highly reduced ink sauce, crayfish baked in black salt, and lots more seafood.

At Casa Pepa, with less fanfare, a tasting menu provided even more daring departures from inherited cuisine. The almond cream with tuna tartar garnish advanced way beyond the ubiquitous garlic-almond soup called ajo blanco, in concept and refinement of flavor. The octopus here is almost microscopic but macroscopically tender and juicy. From this kitchen, crunchy mackerel emerges with a green cloak of pistachio cream and capers. From the shrubs at the edge of the terrace, the kitchen makes lemony verbena sorbet to go with baked figs.

Photos: Ana Tovar for The Wall Street Journal

Chef **Raúl Aleixandre** of **Ca' Sento;** left, red prawns.

Chef **Quique Dacosta** of **El Poblet;** left, the restaurant's Haze dish of 'white truffle.'

Although any of these dishes would galvanize the most sophisticated diner, we didn't enter the stratosphere of contemporary inventive dining until we got to El Poblet, where Quique Dacosta takes food to a new level of pictorial theatricality. I am not speaking metaphorically. Although his menu incorporates Valencian rice cookery at its best, his most ambitious dishes take food into the realm of painting and the stage. They have visually evocative titles like The Haze and Iceberg, and each of these dishes is a little universe that takes ingredients that even advanced chefs still treat as ingredients and transforms them into tableaux.

So the meal begins with something identified as white truffle from Montgó, which looks exactly like a giant white truffle from Italy but is in fact a completely artificial concoction of items foraged from the nearby mountain, which nevertheless taste and smell like a true white truffle. The haze of cold mornings is produced by dry ice rising through aromatic herbs. "Wood" is foie gras cooked and presented with actual wood, a sylvan fantasy on a plate. In the final dish, red mullet "Mark Rothko" with saffron, an actual painting by the American abstract expressionist is reproduced.

I was reminded of similar moments of highflying gastrotheatre at Chicago's Alinea and of a seafood dish prepared by Heston Blumenthal of the U.K.'s Fat Duck, in which the seacoast was evoked by a plate divided between shore and seafood-infested sea, as well as by sounds of waves heard through earphones attached to an iPod Shuffle tucked away in the plate. It was a sign of the global nature of this newest wrinkle in cooking that the maître d' at El Poblet, a Frenchman named Didier Fertilati, recently came there from the Fat Duck.

In an age of lightning transmissions of information, food news travels fast. Don't be surprised when food pictures like these begin showing up at your local casual-dining joint.

Email eatingout@wsj.com.

Antwerp's fashion rebels get serio

By Christina Passariello

FOR TWO DECADES, Belgian designers have been the fashion industry anti-conformists.

Now, they're emerging as business forces as well, trying to balance their dissident identities with the increasingly commercial needs of the fashion world.

Maison Martin Margiela, Ann Demeulemeester and Dries Van Noten are opening stores and entering into licensing agreements in order to boost their sales.

But in an effort to differentiate themselves from ubiquitous marketing powerhouse labels such as Gucci, Prada or Louis Vuitton, these Belgian brands are still trying to preserve their niche value. They're opening stores off of main shopping streets, avoiding flashy logos and not using advertising. More significantly, their businesses are still focused on clothes rather than accessories, which are generally considered the more commercial, and profitable, end of the fashion industry.

"We can do all the things other brands do, but in a different way," says Giovanni Pungetti, chief executive of Maison Martin Margiela, the largest of Belgium's fashion houses, whose sales have multiplied five-fold over the past six years. "There are more intellectual consumers than we imagine, and they can understand an avant-garde product."

The Belgian houses are capturing the consumer zeitgeist. Around the world, the highest-spending fashion buyers are tiring of flashy logos and omnipresent names. As the economy worsens, wealthy consumers are still spending—but moving towards less-ostentatious fashion, according to designers.

Starting on Sunday on Paris' catwalk, where Belgian designers show their collections, fashion watchers expect clothes that capture the current conservative mood of consumers.

"They're tough, edgy, austere, and the consumer really wants to go in that direction today. It's the right kind of aesthetic for this time," says Robert Burke, a luxury-goods consultant and former fashion director for Bergdorf Goodman, where he sold many of the Belgian brands.

One thing Belgian brands still need to work out is how to adjust their production and logistics to sustain growing sales. Retailers also say these houses haven't been as dependable in terms of products.

"They need to work on the fit," says Sheikh Majed al-Sabah, the founder of Villa Moda, the Middle Eastern luxury retailer. "Sometimes their products are not as comfortable as a Prada shoe."

The roots of Belgian fashion lie in common schooling. Many designers studied at the Antwerp Royal Academy of Fine Arts, a breeding ground for conceptual fashion.

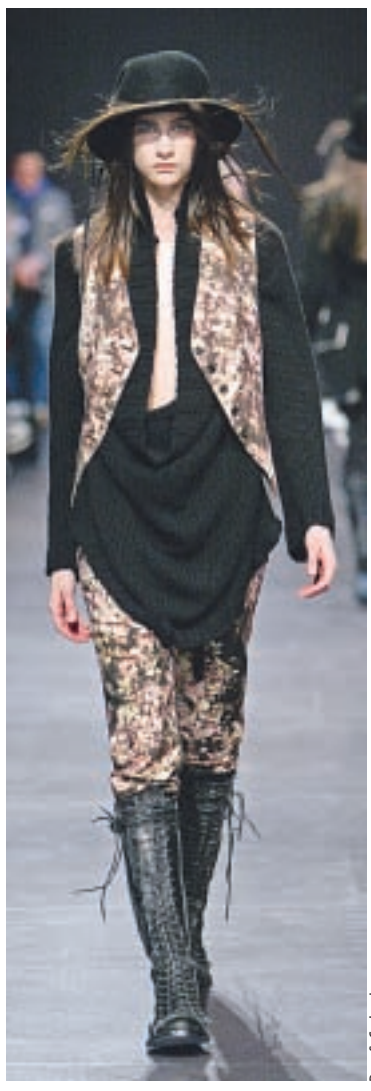
"It's about being as creative as possible, pushing your limits and finding yourself," says Kaat Debo, the curator of Antwerp's Mode Museum, which is hosting a retrospective of Martin Margiela that runs until Feb. 8. "They have in common an approach to fashion that is not about performance, access or advertising."

For years, designers such as Mr. Margiela and Ms. Demeulemeester squeaked by, barely growing as they poured their energy into design. Mr. Margiela, who owned his brand along with Japanese and French investors, owned only three stores and designed for French luxury-goods house Hermès on the side to help make some cash. Ms. Demeulemeester for years only designed womens' clothes because she couldn't afford to make anything more.

Mr. Margiela was the first to break out. In 2002, he sold his namesake business to Italian denim magnate Renzo Rosso, the owner of Diesel. At the time, the Margiela brand was stagnant and unprofitable, recalls Mr. Pungetti, who says he ordered a round of layoffs and moved production from France to Italy. Mr. Margiela doesn't give press interviews.

The move was controversial. Fans worried that Mr. Rosso would turn Martin Margiela into a

Willy Vanderperre



Dan & Corina Lecca

The **Ann Demeulemeester** boutique in **Seoul;** left, the designer; below left, one of the creations in her fall/winter 2008 collection.

AFP

Right, a **Maison Martin Margiela** creation from the autumn/winter 2008-2009 collection; above, the exterior of the Margiela store in **Los Angeles**; left, the interior of the Margiela boutique in **Milan.**

Once low-key, avant-garde designers start to think globally

ous about business

Stephen Van Fleteren

Above, designer **Dries Van Noten;** left and right, creations from his autumn/winter 2008-2009 collection; top, his boutique in **Paris.**

Catwalking/Getty Images

AFP

Above, designs by **Maison Martin Margiela** from the fall/winter 2008-2009 (left) and spring/summer 2008 (right) collections.

jeans brand. Mr. Pungetti poured money into opening new boutiques in London, New York and Milan, and worked with partners in Asia and the Middle East to open stores there.

"We tried to put in their head...a respect for the market and the client," says Mr. Pungetti. "Passing from art to commerce isn't always easy."

Mr. Pungetti expects Martin Margiela to ring in €70 million to €72 million in sales this year at the fashion house, which he says is profitable.

Ms. Demeulemeester perked up her namesake brand in 2004, when the label's chief executive, Anne Chapelle, and two other partners bought a majority stake in the house. The brand launched a line of menswear, which now makes up 20% of sales. Ms. Chapelle also pursued more wholesale clients, and dedicated a staff of four people to work with department stores to explain the product. The brand has also opened franchise stores in Tokyo, Hong Kong and Seoul.

Sales have doubled to €23 million in the past four years. Ms. Chapelle, meanwhile, has also invested in other young Belgium-based designers, including Haider Ackermann. Ms. Chapelle says she gives each new company she invests in five seasons to break even.

Despite their new attention to growth, Belgian designers are still resisting the more commercial aspects of the business—including logos and look-alike stores around the world.

Martin Margiela loosely attaches its label onto clothes using four simple white stitches that can easily be removed. Yet the four points have now become a status symbol for fashion insiders. Any dry cleaner who unknowingly cuts the tag out is likely to suffer the client's wrath. "It was an unintended side effect," says Mr. Pungetti.

Dries Van Noten, who owns his own label, tries to differentiate his namesake brand by making every store different. The designer stocked his one-year-old Paris boutique, located among the city's antique dealers, with knick-knacks he picked up at flea markets. The brand's stores in the Middle East, opened in partnership with Villa Moda, hold a similar potpourri of flea market trinkets.

"People get tired of seeing the same store, the same product" across the globe, says Sheikh Majed. "This is the power of the Belgians. The stores look like theaters, they sell dreams for customers."

Now, Martin Margiela is tiptoeing into a new field that was once off-limits from niche brands: licensing. Earlier this year, the house signed a deal with cosmetics giant L'Oreal SA to create a perfume, to be released next fall. It won't be an easy task for L'Oreal: how do you bottle the identity of a high-end fashion brand that has no real label or logo and whose predominant color is white?

Dancers **Kevin O'Connor** and **Gary Lai** rehearse 'Rapture' at Bard College.

Mary Grusak

An architectural 'Rapture'

By John Jurgensen

Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.

ON A PERCH nine stories above the ground, Chelsea O'Brian spread her arms and leaned out like the figurehead on a ship's prow. A harness and rope kept the dancer from falling off an unconventional stage: the swooping steel hull of a building designed by architect Frank Gehry.

Ms. O'Brian, a 25-year-old graduate of a Canadian circus school, was rehearsing recently with five other dancers and a team of riggers at the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College. Marked by scalloped layers of steel, the Fisher Center will be the first site in a long-term series of performances targeting nine Gehry-designed buildings in the U.S., Canada, Spain and Germany.

The choreographer behind this ambitious suite is 34-year-old Noémie Lafrance. Her attempt to take on Mr. Gehry's buildings, with the architect's blessing, and create a "physical expression of their curves," was set to begin Thursday at the Fisher Center with the debut of a piece called "Rapture."

Raised in Quebec, Ms. Lafrance trained at Montreal's Ladmmi school and the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance. In an effort to take dance out of what she called the "abstract" setting of traditional theaters, Ms. Lafrance has specialized in site-specific works that unfold in public spaces. In New York City, she has staged pieces in a spiral stairwell, a parking garage and an abandoned community swimming pool. Last year, she choreographed a Grammy-nominated music video for indie rocker Feist.

Relying on acrobatic dancers, high-tech apparatus and gravity-defying moves, "Rapture" shares some elements with an emerging style known as aerial dance. In recent years, troupes have rappelled down skyscrapers and tumbled in space above city streets, drawing in diverse audiences. However, while Ms. Lafrance recruited a technical team that specializes in getting dancers airborne safely, she says ropes are just a means to an end in "Rapture." Instead, the piece fits into her broader mission to mingle art with everyday environments.

With Mr. Gehry's buildings, she's targeting major tourist magnets. One of the few contemporary architects with a household name, Mr. Gehry's sculptural designs include the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in his home base of Los Angeles, both of which Ms. Lafrance hopes to perform on. "All of the Gehry buildings are an event on their own," she says. Adding choreography to the architectural spectacle, she hopes, may help entice people who don't typically turn out for dance performances.

After he met Ms. Lafrance earlier this year at his L.A. office, Mr. Gehry wrote a letter of recommendation to the property owners of nine buildings that he designed. "Ms. Lafrance's integration of architecture in choreography is fascinating and groundbreaking," he wrote.

At the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, a soon-to-open Gehry building with a façade that looks like a harp, talks are under way to host Ms. Lafrance in 2010. Chris Lorway, vice president of programming at Toronto's Luminato Festival, a partner in commissioning the mix of modern dance and architecture, says, "The idea of having all those elements come together would be hard for anyone to turn down."

There will be eight once-nightly performances of "Rapture," a roughly 40-minute piece that begins at twilight. Audience members can roam the lawn of the Fisher Center to get different views of the spotlighted cast. A handful of string musicians will supply live accompaniment to a prerecorded score.

As a thunderhead rolled over Bard, Ms. Lafrance rushed her team into place to squeeze in some roof time. Because of searing midday temperatures on the steel, they were restricted to morning and evening rehearsals. With three weeks before the premiere of "Rapture," the dancers had recently arrived on campus. They were still getting their footing on the slippery roof and feeling out their systems of ropes and pulleys. One mechanism locks like a seatbelt when a dancer throws her weight against her rope. Another performer relies on hidden rigging assistants who hoist ropes that help him traverse steep pitches.

Looking on as the dancers clipped in, rigging designer Sean Riley said, "It's a very challenging building to work on. It's curvilinear, it's got strange shapes, and it's also extremely priceless." His team had bolted trusses to the building's skeletal structure to prevent damage to its shiny skin.

The choreography of "Rapture" embodies the visual energy of Mr. Gehry's undulating design, Ms. Lafrance says. "I talk to the dancers about this idea of transforming into different states, like how a metal liquefies." As the dancers bend at the waist and rake their arms in a circle, or dash down a slope with their torsos snapping, their movements reflect the topography of the silver roofline, which Ms. Lafrance describes as "a landscape in the sky."

"Rapture" was commissioned by Bard and the Fisher Center, which last year invited Ms. Lafrance to integrate the building into a dance piece. The choreographer recalls, "I said, 'Well, you're going to have to consider that I'm going to want to dance on the building. I'm not going to do something in the lobby.' "

WSJ.com

High-stepping
Watch a video about Noémie Lafrance's choreography for the Frank Gehry-designed Fisher Center, at **WSJ.com/Lifestyle**

London's autumn fairs

OCTOBER IS A MONTH of art fairs in London, with everything from fine jewelry and old masters to street art and contemporary installations on offer at several major events.

First on the agenda is the Goldsmiths' Fair (www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk). which started Sept. 22 and runs until Oct. 5 (closed on Sept. 29). Now in its 26th year, the fair is the U.K.'s leading showcase for works in precious metals by contemporary designers specializing in silver objects and jewelry. The fair requires exhibiting designers to be on hand to advise on their pieces, giving a very personal touch. The fair takes place in the grandeur of the Goldsmiths' Hall, considered one of London's architectural treasures. Pieces on sale this year include Wayne Meeten's "Embrace Within" (2007), a silver orb-shaped jewelry box (price: £8,000) and Grant McCaig's "Harbour" (2008) a silver sugar and cream set on an oak tray that resembles a boat sailing into port (price: £2,200).

Collecting
MARGARET STUDER

Art London (www.artlondon.net), now in its 10th year, takes place from Oct. 2-6 in a tent on the grounds of The Royal Hospital, Chelsea. Around 75 galleries will offer art, photography, ceramics and glass, with prices ranging from £500 to more than £500,000. The fair has a broad range with pieces dating from 1850 up to contemporary street art. The French Art Studio will bring the graffiti portraits of France's Jef Aerosol, whose stencil on canvas of a young Mick Jagger with the text "Time is on my side" (2008) is priced at £3,200.

Frieze Art Fair (www.friezeartfair), one of the world's leading contemporary art fairs (Oct. 16-19), presents a who's who of international galleries. Works by more than 1,000 artists will be offered by 150 exhibitors. Alongside the traditional heavyweights from the U.S. and Europe, the fair this year will give more space to artists from the rapidly expanding markets of Brazil, China, India and Russia.

Exhibitors at Frieze are also coming up with imaginative ways to present their art. London's Timothy Taylor Gallery commissioned designer Ron Arad to create its booth. Rethinking the idea of a conventional rectangular-shaped stand with solid exterior walls, Mr. Arad has designed waving panels that connect the interior and exterior of the booth, allowing more viewpoints for visitors.

The French Art Studio

'Mick,' from 2008, by Jef Aerosol (price: £3,200).

Frieze's Sculpture Park, situated outside the marquee in the English Gardens of Regent's Park, is always an attention-getter. This year, the fair has nearly doubled the number of sculptures in the garden (to 16). Works chosen for this year's Sculpture Park reflect the contemporary art world's span: from a Zen-inspired installation composed mainly of pebbles by China's Qiu Zhijie, to Brazilian Ernesto Neto's laser-cut steel sculpture of organic, connecting parts, to American artist Dan Graham's reflective mirror structures.

A number of other fairs take place alongside Frieze. The Zoo Art Fair (www.zooartfair.com) at the Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington Gardens, showcases some 57 contemporary art institutions. Scottish artist Karla Black was a prize-winning artist at Zoo in 2007, and this year the fair will have a special exhibition of her work.

Glasgow's Mary Mary gallery (so named after Mary Shelley, the creator of Frankenstein, and her mother, the famed feminist Mary Wollstonecraft) will also show at Frieze one of Ms. Black's installations, which are usually made from such materials as cellophane, lipgloss and hairspray (prices range from £2,000-£10,000).

The Affordable Art Fair (www.affordableartfair.com), at Battersea Park from Oct. 23-26, sets a price ceiling of £3,000 for the works it offers. Examples this year include hand-colored prints by U.K. painter Howard Hodgkin at The Fine Art Partnership (£2,999) and "The Lantern," a delicate painting of a girl holding a light by Vietnam's Nguyen Thanh Binh at Durlacher Fine Art (£1,800).

Says Affordable Art Fair founder Will Ramsay, "While record-breaking sales at the high end of the market grab headlines, the more affordable sector is quietly becoming a force to be reckoned with." The last London Affordable Art Fair in spring of this year attracted 22,500 visitors and chalked up sales of £5 million.

'Harbour' sugar and creamer set, from 2008, by Grant McCaig (price: £2,200).

The Goldsmiths' company

Finding creativity in computer models

By J.S. Marcus
Special to The Wall Street Journal

COMPUTERS ARE KEY tools for most designers these days, but the Kram/Weisshaar studio, with offices in Munich and Stockholm, takes computer use a step further by also creating the software used to design objects.

Clemens Weisshaar, 31 years old, a native Bavarian who grew up outside Munich, and his American design partner, Reed Kram, 36, who has a background in computer science and mathematics as well as design, founded the firm in 2002. By extending the design process to the software level, Messrs. Weisshaar and Kram are able to control every aspect of the process, allowing them greater freedom in expressing their creativity. They also find it more fun.

Their signature project, Breeding Tables (which they launched in 2003) uses their custom-made computer program to produce countless variations on the size, color and overall effect of a glass-topped, steel-legged table. The goal is to create a unique design every time by varying the table's intricate, ribbon-like legs.

This summer, Mr. Weisshaar, who has a background in metal design, and Mr. Kram were named Designers of the Future at Design Miami/Basel, where they launched the Vendôme series: 99 variations on a table or stool made of colored-concrete pieces, also created using their own software.

My Private Sky, their project for Munich's Nymphenburg Porcelain Manufactory, uses software to customize a set of handmade, hand-painted plates, which collectively display a stylized map of the sky on a date chosen by the buyer. Coming projects include versions of Breeding Tables for the Prada Congo Club, an art installation and nightclub in London by German artist Carsten Höller and the Fondazione Prada, the Milan-based art foundation associated with the Prada fashion house, opening this fall.

Mr. Weisshaar, who began his career in the studio of Munich designer Konstantin Grcic, first met Mr. Kram in 2000, when they collaborated with Rem Koolhaas's Rotterdam firm, OMA, on the multimedia interior of Prada's New York flagship store. Their work has been acquired by leading design collections, including the Vitra Design Museum and New York's Museum of Modern Art. "Clemens and his partner can apply both the classic approach to design, [which entails] giving an object form, with more conceptual or theoretical approaches," says Mr. Grcic. "Something we will see more of in the future."

Mr. Kram now lives in Stockholm, and the designers carry on a long-distance collaboration. Mr. Weisshaar spoke to us by telephone last month from Sicily, where he was on vacation.


Matthias Ziegler


Matthias Edwal


Frank Stolle, Kram/Weisshaar (2)

Top, **Clemens Weisshaar** and above, **Reed Kram**, who use computer software to generate design variations. Right, from top: **Breeding Table**; **My Private Sky** porcelain; and below, **Vendôme** table.

Q: You and your partner design objects and also the software to design those objects. How did you get interested in this method?

We wanted to go beyond the limits of commercially available software, which in many cases puts its own print on the objects. With a lot of pieces you can immediately tell [the designers] got inspired by this or that function of a specific software package. The computer is a fantastic tool to organize processes—you are able to draw faster, record your drawings better—but it doesn't actually add ideas. It adds efficiency and nothing else. We're interested in taking software and computing further and deeper into the design process.

Q: In Breeding Tables, specially created software can provide a theoretically infinite number of design variations on a single idea for a table. How much do individual designs vary from each other?

They vary greatly, because otherwise we would simply get bored. The project is ongoing, which means that we are always adding to the software. Altering is quite common in design and architecture—while you design something, you go for a lot of variation, a lot of options, until you reach a result. We're interested in these intermediate steps. Breeding Tables is very much about that. Every now and again, we reach a certain status that we think is interesting enough to press the button, and then we materialize it.

Q: Vendôme, a more recent design project involving concrete stools, pedestals and tables, also uses computer software to generate a series of related designs. You have chosen to stop at 99. Why?

We wanted to make 99 one-off pieces—each will only exist once. We went through this broad range of stools, pedestals, tables, side tables—a very interesting family of objects. In Paris, when you walk through these little streets with all these antique shops, you find a huge variety of tables. There are at least 10 different typologies—coffee tables, tea tables, all kinds of differently designed, differently shaped tables. Vendôme studies these different typologies.

Q: You have a background in industrial design, and your partner has a background in computer technology. What have you learned about each other's specialties?

A lot. We employ architects, designers, computer scientists and programmers, and we are forced to become experts in the other discipline in order to communicate with our team and with each other. The designers and the programmers work together, and you have to understand each other's language.

Q: How often do you and your partner actually meet in person?

We meet almost every week somewhere, somehow. We travel excessively and meet in every sort of place, like client meetings and presentations, [but] we meet maybe once a month in the office.

Q: Does sketching by hand still have a place in your studio?

Oh yeah, absolutely. It's really critical, even for the programmers—especially for the programmers. It's the perfect way to communicate. For me, drawing is really just a method of thinking. It forces me to consider things: You've seen what you've drawn, new things that don't exist yet. In general, our process is very physical. It always goes from sketch to computer, computer to model, model back to computer. It's an infinite loop, from the physical to the virtual and back.

Q: What did you learn about design from working with Konstantin Grcic?

A lot. I learned how to moderate the ingredients in designs—the poetry, the logic and the understanding of the culture of the company [you're working for]; how that all has to tie together into a design that has integrity. For Konstantin, design is always a statement, it's not a service. It was very nice to learn design from the roots up in an environment like that, where someone takes it so seriously.

Q: Your project for the Nymphenburg Porcelain Manufactory calls for the combination of computer technology and old-fashioned craftsmanship. How did you design the software to accommodate the skills of the painters?

The painters of course don't use computers, so what we have to give them is a blueprint. In this specific case, we need to give them a one-to-one vellum sketch, which they transfer onto the plates with graphite. We make that sketch with the computer. We put in the specific date, like a birthday or a wedding—in one case, the Russian Revolution. Then the computer calculates the constellations and puts out a very specific drawing, which is given to the painters.

Q: Munich has become a design capital in the last few years. What are the advantages of working there?

It's a very beautiful place to live, with a backyard of manufacturing facilities that stretches from northern Italy, across the Alps to Austria, Switzerland and southern Germany. We very much use that infrastructure—little, superspecialized, high-tech factories. Many of us use the same workshops. Konstantin [Grcic's] metal furniture, or [Munich-based lighting designer] Ingo Maurer's metal pieces, or our Breeding Tables—they all happen in the same shop.

Harmonies stage a comeback

By Jim Fusilli

LONG A STAPLE of rock and pop, but sorely missed in recent years, soaring, shimmering vocal harmonies are staging a strong comeback this year. Among the terrific releases so far: "Clouded Staircase" by Starling Electric (Bar-None); "Fleet Foxes," a quintet's self-titled debut (Sub Pop); and "For Emma, Forever Ago" by Bon Iver (Jagjaguwar).

Caleb Dillon of Starling Electric and Robin Pecknold of Fleet Foxes said they were inspired by the work of Brian Wilson, whose new album, "That Lucky Old Sun" (Capitol), was released earlier this month. When I called Mr. Dillon in Ann Arbor, Mich., he told me that 10 years ago, when he was 17 years old, he first heard a bootleg version of Mr. Wilson's "Smile" album, which he studied for its complex vocal harmonies and shadings. (Recorded in 1966 and 1967 by the Beach Boys, which featured Mr. Wilson and his brothers Carl and Dennis, that "Smile" was never officially released, but Brian Wilson recorded a new version that was issued in 2004.) With a four-track tape recorder, the teenager made his own version of Mr. Wilson's composition "Child Is Father of the Man," building vocal harmonies by singing the four parts himself.

On "Clouded Staircase," some songs have 10 vocal parts, most sung by Mr. Dillon, that form a tight, textured and often captivating whole. Rich but uncluttered orchestral pop with reoccurring themes and a few tracks that are crafted of separate but complementary parts, the CD shows the influence of "Smile," especially on the Dillon composition "CampFire" as voices dart and build over organ, chimes, bass and banjo. But the album's "Death to Bad Dreams/Black Parade" invokes the Beatles' harmonies, and "She Goes Through Phases" recalls Pink Floyd's. The sway of the '70s band 10cc jumps from several tracks. "I just got into them four or five years ago," Mr. Dillon said of 10cc. "I'm constantly, constantly, constantly listening to music."

Fleet Foxes' Mr. Pecknold, whom I called at a band mate's home in Seattle, said, "I used to sit down with Beach Boys records and try to figure out what every voice was doing." On its debut recording, Fleet Foxes decided to avoid Mr. Wilson's jazz-inspired harmonies. "We weren't coming at it from a jazz point of view," said Mr. Pecknold, 22. "We wanted something simple, like old folk music." Strict, structured harmonies "can sound too lush, too '70s, too 'Hall & Oatesy,'" he added. "It's better when you experiment and find different notes to sing."

While the quintet was recording "Fleet Foxes," the gorgeous harmonies that characterize the album became an important part of the group's contemporary sound. All its members can sing, said Mr. Pecknold, whose voice brings to mind My Morning Jacket's Jim James. "We tried working out different harmonies, filling out the songs gradually. It began kind of intuitively—we knew what we were going for, fumbling toward what we wanted."

For Justin Vernon, who records as Bon Iver, his influences are harder to detect, even for himself.

Bar-None

Sarah Cass

Above, **Starling Electric;** left, **Bon Iver;** below, **Brian Wilson.**

"There are hundreds and hundreds of singers I could name," the 28-year-old told me when I reached him on the road to Portland, Ore., where he was scheduled to perform. "I could say D'Angelo, Mahalia Jackson and John Prine, but they are just the ones who come to mind now." When I brought up Brian Wilson, he misheard and said, "Van Morrison. Yes, he's in there." As for Mr. Wilson, Mr. Vernon's high-school band teacher had his students study "Pet Sounds."

On the gorgeous, brooding "For Emma, Forever Ago," Mr. Vernon did almost every vocal part, creating harmonies that included high falsetto and resonating bass. I asked him if he was a natural tenor. "I don't know. I've never been diagnosed," he replied. His voice is so rich that on "Lump Sum" it sounds like a church choir over churning keyboards and a strummed folk guitar. On the chilling ballad "The Wolves (Pt. 1 & 2)," he's a one-man gospel group.

Some of the songs on the album have 15 or 20 vocal parts, he said. "With a minimum of six. I'd create a three-part harmony, then double it to get a 'chorusy' effect." As for the falsetto, "I did listen to a lot of female vocalists, and Michael Jackson, when I was really, really little," he said. The bottom part may bear the influence of Tom Waits and Greg Brown, he added.

Minchin III

As for Mr. Wilson, I met with him in June at his home in Beverly Hills, Calif., to discuss "That Lucky Old Sun," but it was a fruitless endeavor. His responses seemed overly programmed, and we never achieved a conversation. (The closest we came was when he suddenly said I reminded him of Burt Bacharach.) Too bad, for the brief recording is his best new material since his self-titled release in 1988, and I wanted to know how it came about.

No one arranges voices like the 66-year-old Mr. Wilson, and the backing vocals on "That Lucky Old Sun" are a delight. A little five-minute suite near the album's end showcases his gift: "Been Too Long" is reminiscent of the vocal arrangement on the Beach Boys' somber "'Til I Die," then gives way to "Midnight's Another Day," wherein the choir reaches a stirring, layered peak. The a cappella introduction to the title track is a thrill. Held together by narratives written by Van Dyke Parks and recited by Mr. Wilson, the album's overarching concept is an overview of life in California. But very near the surface are allusions, in song lyrics, to Mr. Wilson's descent into, and recovery from, debilitating mental illness. "At 25, I turned out the lights 'cause I couldn't handle the glare in my tired eyes/But now I'm back drawing shades of kind blue sky," he sings in the rocker "Goin' Home." "Took the dive but couldn't swim, a flag without the wind....All these people make me feel so alone" is how he puts it in "Midnight's Another Day." Mr. Wilson told me that he wrote the original lyrics, and that Scott Bennett, a member of his band, polished them.

In the beautiful ballad "Southern California," Mr. Wilson sings: "I had this dream/Singing with my brothers/In harmony, supporting each other." Mr. Wilson's brothers died much too young, and "That Lucky Old Sun" can't compare artistically with the efforts of Starling Electric, Fleet Foxes and Bon Iver. But the album's 35 minutes of music include some lovely moments, especially when the voices ring in harmony.

Email Jim Fusilli at jfusilli@wsj.com.

Down and dirty Hamlet

Berlin ■ theater

Germans are obsessed with Shakespeare, but not with a Shakespeare that any native English speaker would recognize.

Without the magnificent shackles of Shakespeare's language, German directors are left to consider—and reconsider, and consider again—the implications of the plays, which are open to radical re-inventions and rewrites. The result is you often recognize nothing beyond the play's name, and end up, instead, with something closer to performance art.

In his engrossing new production of "Hamlet" at Berlin's Schaubühne theater, Thomas Ostermeier has condensed five acts and an actual plot into a solid 2 1/2-hour cascade of images. Mocking our sense of anticipation, he opens with Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy (from the original's Act III). Then, in what amounts to the opposite of a séance, he stages the funeral of Hamlet's father, which takes place before Shakespeare's play begins, creating a play haunted not by Hamlet's father's ghost, but by a freshly dug grave.

On a stage entirely covered with dirt, the action turns into a multimedia installation on the theme of Hamlet's state of mind, as Lars Eidinger, in the title role, and five other actors, doubling up on the other roles, bring certain lines and scenes to life.

The production relies on a huge range of audio and visual effects, including a shimmering chain-link curtain, onto which a video camera transfers a distorted version of the action in real time.

Mr. Eidinger's Hamlet is a self-indulgent jerk on the brink. He prances around in a fat-man's suit, or strips down to panties and nylons; he suffers from Tourette's Syndrome, breakdances, conducts a revival meeting and—on at least five separate occasions—gets real dirt in his mouth.

It is a performance of a lifetime, or at least of the season, and it overshadows everything else, which is perhaps as it should be. Mr. Ostermeier's "Hamlet" is about a narcissist with too much time on his hands, a spoiled brat and would-be do-gooder, who, in the production's powerful conclusion, seems to think of his own death as little more than the loss of a captive audience. —J.S. Marcus

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www.schaubuehne.de

Arno Declair

Lars Eidinger in the title role in 'Hamlet,' in Berlin.

London ■ opera

Once in a while an opera production makes you think, "Yes, this is exactly right for the work." Director David Alden's "La Calisto," from the Bayerische Staatsoper and now at the Royal Opera House, is one of them. Radical as it is, it completely captures the Baroque exuberance of Francesco Cavalli's rarely seen work, taken from Ovid, about how the nymph, Calisto, literally became a big star (Ursa Major, to be precise). The staging is lewd, rude, hilarious and entirely intelligent, involving a good deal of cross-dressing and (usually) unwitting same-sex coupling.

Jove, sung, danced and acted leeringly and beautifully by Umberto Chiummo, as a cross between a sex addict and a matinee idol, is determined to have Calisto. She, however, is virginally devoted to Jove's daughter, Diana, goddess of chastity. So Jove, egged on by his pimping son, Mercury, disguises himself as Diana, whose lesbian advances Calisto finds herself unable to resist.

If it were not for the fact that everyone in the cast performs so well, I'd be tempted to say Sally Matthews, as the nymph-turned-nympho, steals the show; her voice deals easily with the highly ornamented soprano vocal line without ever losing its luscious quality, and she moves like a real dancer. There is superlative singing and acting, too, in the minor roles: countertenors Dominique Visse, as an alarmingly funny satyr, and Lawrence Zazzo, who brings sheer vocal beauty to the part of the shepherd; and tenor Guy de Mey, in the drag role of the horny virgin, Linfea.

The real heroine of the evening, though, is the costume designer, Buki Shiff. Paul Steinberg's eye-popping stage sets are populated with extravagantly clad supernumeraries: green lizards bearing cocktails, a troupe of Diana's archers that are a cross between zoo animals and fashion models, Juno's pair of extravagantly leggy peacocks. —Paul Levy

Until Oct. 10
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London ■ art

"Drift 08," which bills itself as "London's first annual art exhibition on the River Thames," opened this week. It's slightly mad and very ambitious.

Walk over the Millennium Bridge connecting the Tate Modern with St. Paul's, for example, and you will be surprised to hear the sounds of a British seaside holiday, a cacophony of seagulls and the shrill murmur of children demanding ice creams from harassed parents. This disorienting experience is German artist Mariele Neudecker's "Much was decided before you were born (2)," a sound installation provided by speakers hidden in the bridge.

Just opposite Tate Modern, in the river itself, is Margaret Evangeline's "Saved from Drowning," six mirror-finish panels weighing almost a ton each. The "steel painting" moves with the tide, reflecting the river, the buildings and the people staring at it.

If you position yourself near Blackfriars Bridge after dark, you'll see Keith Bowler's "Ghost Bridge," the old Blackfriars Railway Bridge spookily created atop the present one, with the help of laser technology.

The most ambitious exhibit in this show of seven contemporary artists is Julien Berthier's sculpture, "Love-Love" at Canary Wharf: a motorized sailboat that, though it appears to be capsizing, is still sailing. —Paul Levy

Until Oct. 19
☎ 44-20-7357-9003
www.drift.org.uk

Stockhausen Takes Flight at Tempelhof

By A.J. Goldmann

BERLIN—Sunday's concert by the Berlin Philharmonic of Karlheinz Stockhausen's Gruppen für drei Orchester at Berlin's Tempelhof Airport was more than just another concert. It felt like a requiem for Tempelhof, which will close at the end of October.

Tempelhof Airport opened in 1923 in the center of Berlin but was expanded drastically during the Third Reich. Today the main building is one of the most monumental examples of surviving fascist architecture, along with the old Reich Air Ministry building. The Soviets took Tempelhof during the Battle of Berlin. Three years later, in 1948, it was used as the airbase of the U.S.-led Berlin Airlift during the blockade of West Berlin. Nowadays, only a handful of small private and commercial planes (mostly regional) use it daily. Amid financial burdens and plans to expand one of the city's international airports, the city voted to pull the plug on Tempelhof.

> Gruppen may be as important to the second part of the 20th century as 'The Rite of Spring' was to the first.

On Sunday evening, well-dressed couples walked past the imposing limestone façade—with its neon sign, massive windows and stern eagles—to a hangar that had been converted into a concert hall for the evening's performance.

Stockhausen, who died last year at the age of 79, wrote Gruppen between 1955 and 1957. The work is scored for 109 musicians divided into three groups, which surround the audience in a horseshoe formation. It runs about 25 minutes. The premiere of Gruppen, exactly 50 years ago, was held in Cologne. Conducting the performance then was the 29-year-old Stockhausen along with fellow composers Pierre Boulez and Bruno Maderna. Each ensemble plays at a different tempo. Given the demands the work places on musicians and conductors and the difficulty of finding a suitable venue, it is rarely performed. The last major performance of Gruppen in the U.S. was held 15 years ago at Tanglewood.

"It's a Mount Everest piece," says Richard Toop, a Stockhausen expert, in a telephone interview. "It's a festival piece. You need rehearsal time and you need conductors who know what they're doing and how to work together. The different tempi and speeds need to be synchronized. It's a shock to the system."

Music scholars use words like "revolutionary" to describe Gruppen. It has been claimed that the work is as important to the second part of the 20th century as Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring" was to the first. In fact, Stravinsky was among the piece's early admirers. "Stravinsky admired two things about Gruppen," Mr. Toop clarifies: "First was the sound of the orchestra, because it sounds like no piece before it. Secondly, Stravinsky was fascinated by its sheer complexity of rhythmic structures."

Both the composer's youth and the work's elaborate scale, uncommon among the avant-garde compositions of the time, magnified Gruppen's impact. Part of what still makes Gruppen exciting is how unpredictable it is. "The three groups combine to produce an extraordinary, entropic mass of sound," Mr. Toop explains. He contends that one need not understand Gruppen's complex structure to appreciate it: "It's almost better if one doesn't attempt to listen in a particular way. It's a 'go with the flow' piece."

A.J. Goldman

Showtime: The inside of Berlin's **Tempelhof Airport**, set up for a concert.

The sold-out concerts on Saturday and Sunday were not the first appearances by Sir Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmonic in the 15,000-square-foot Hangar 2. The orchestra briefly relocated to the hangar last season after a fire at the Philharmonie, the orchestra's home.

On the program, the Stockhausen was performed twice. Audiences had the opportunity to switch seats between performances. For a work as multidimensional as this, your perception changes drastically depending on where you are placed. Not only is Gruppen THX surround sound *avant la lettre*, but it makes music into an interactive experience.

An earlier performance by the Ensemble Intercontemporain was interrupted by the intermittent din of helicopters and jet engines. Luckily the runways were clear in time for Gruppen, either by fortune or design.

Daniel Harding and Michael Boder joined Sir Simon at the podiums. They faced the audience as the musicians played with their backs to the crowd, which added a dramatic visual component to the performance. The coordination and rhythmic precision was laudable, but perhaps most striking was how accessible the piece sounded. The opening string passages seemed more lyrical than anxious. Throughout, the constantly shifting balance of sound and textures was fluid and organic. The famous moment where a single chord is ricocheted from orchestra to orchestra, creating the illusion of sound bending across the hall, was dizzying and forceful.

Though the threat of chaos hovered in the air, the musicians reined in the cacophony, diffusing it with control and even humor. Hints of mambo and rock 'n' roll came from the extensive percussion, and jazz riffs bubbled up in the horns. Gruppen is a challenging work, no doubt, but one sign of the Philharmonic's success was how few empty seats there were during the encore performance.

There are many suggestions for the future uses of Tempelhof and its massive airfield—ranging from luxury condos to an ice-skating ring—but so far no concrete plans. For Berlin's sake, let's hope for something as original and unpredictable as the work performed over the weekend. Gruppen's message of radical originality is left to inspire us. As Mr. Toop explains, "If Stockhausen knew that something had been done by somebody else, he didn't want to do it."

Mr. Goldmann writes on culture from Berlin and New York.

Houses of Worship / *By Jordana Horn*

If These Scrolls Could Talk

It is often said by religious Jews that the Temple's destruction by the Romans in the year 70 was a divine punishment, triggered by *sinat chinam*, or causeless hatred, between various Jewish sects of the time. Groups such as the Saducees, Pharisees, Essenes and Samaritans all took different stances on worship and religion. With the emergence of Christianity, and extensive debates on the proper ways to worship within the context of Judaism itself, this part of the religious world was in a state of upheaval.

The Dead Sea Scrolls collectively constitute the most extensive account of religious life in this era. Some scrolls, like the Book of Jeremiah, are the earliest parts of the Hebrew Bible in existence; others range in subject from examples of prayers to descriptions of the regulations for joining a religious sect. The earliest were discovered by the Rev. Roland de Vaux, a French biblical scholar, archaeologist and monk in the early 1950s. Six of the 900-odd scrolls are on exhibit at the Jewish Museum in New York through Jan. 4. Three of these—including one of the earliest surviving copies of Jewish prayers from the Second Temple Period—are on display for the first time ever. Accompanied by artifacts from the area near the caves in which they were found (in the region of Qumran, just northwest of the Dead Sea), the exhibit is designed to give new insights into the development of modern religious practice in both Judaism and Christianity.

But the question of how to interpret the scrolls has roiled scholars for decades. There are two prevalent theories as to who used them. The first is that the scrolls belonged to a single religious sect, most likely the Essenes, that probably lived at Qumran. The second theory is that the scrolls are a random collection of texts reflecting the beliefs of many Jewish groups of the period; the caves, under this theory, might be a repository for sacred texts from various Jewish communities fleeing the Romans during the Jewish revolt of A.D. 68.

> A debate over the ancient religious texts rages on.

The issue is whether these fragments of parchment tell the story of the religious activity of a particular, arguably proto-Christian, denomination or a wider swath of the Jewish people. In other words, are the scrolls a lens affording an unparalleled view of Jews at a crucial, pre-Diasporan moment, or rather an in-depth account of a single sect's intellectual development?

Susan Braunstein, the museum's curator of archaeology and Judaica, is reluctant to express support for either school of thought. And the exhibit cites scholars on both sides. On one wall there is a quote from Israeli Qumran archaeologists Yitzhak Magan and Yuval Peleg, stating that the scrolls belonged to refugees who fled during the Jewish revolt. Just a few feet away are words from E.P. Sanders, historian of early Judaism and Christianity, stating that many of the scrolls are from the monastic celibate Essene community of Qumran.

In an interview, Norman Golb, a professor of Jewish history and civilization at the University of Chicago and a leading proponent of the theory that the scrolls are, specifically, of Jerusalem origin, expressed deep concerns about the nature of previous Dead Sea Scrolls exhibitions in America. "I think all of them have been in the nature of efforts to brainwash the public about the significance of the scrolls," Mr. Golb said. While he noted the Jewish Museum's attempts at even-handedness, he was concerned that the lectures running in tandem with the exhibit are being given only by scholars who subscribe to variants of the single-sect theory.

This theory—that the scrolls represented an intellectual precursor to Christianity—actually came first, and was even propounded by de Vaux himself. After reading the scrolls, he announced with pride that they had been authored by an Essene sect, and asserted that the sect was the forebear of his own Dominican movement.

Early scholars "wanted the scrolls to be sectarian," says Philip Davies, a University of Sheffield emeritus professor and Dead Sea Scrolls scholar. "Christians saw in them the forerunner of Christianity." He explains that "now that the scrolls are in Israeli hands, they are being interpreted as more mainstream, even proto-rabbinic [precursors to the time when the Jewish oral tradition was transformed into an edited, written text], by Jewish scholars, and in fact by many Christian scholars too."

Much is at stake in the debate. "So many scholars thought Jews had stopped being creative," Mr. Golb noted. "More than that, historically speaking, the scrolls give us a picture of the Jews of Jerusalem at the moment of their anguish, when the Romans had surrounded the city and they must have known the city would be taken and the temple would be destroyed."

Mr. Davies concurs that the scrolls were almost certainly placed near the old settlement of Qumran just prior to the fall of Jerusalem. He agrees also that "most of these scrolls were not written at Qumran and probably not kept there, but brought from elsewhere." Yet he also argues that "the scrolls do reflect a restricted range of interests and make more sense as a partisan collection."

Even if the scrolls represented a departure from the beliefs of other Jewish sects at the time, that doesn't necessarily mean the ideas they expressed were precursors to Christianity. Ms. Braunstein notes that Judaism then—much like today—was far from monolithic. There was no precise letter text of the biblical books of Judaism at the time of the scrolls' authorship, which left interpretation a wide-open field. The scrolls on display exemplify this intellectual dissonance. The exhibit's Community Rule scroll condemns the religious laxity of members of other sects. The Words of the Luminaries scroll is a fiery rejection of the way animal sacrifices were conducted in the Temple; its writer insists that God should be worshiped solely with prayer until the End of Days.

"It seems to me," Mr. Davies said, "that these texts cannot be claimed as either Christian or Jewish, because they predate the distinction. But what they do is show . . . the mix of religious ideas that gave birth to two religious systems that, over time, grew more apart."

Ms. Horn is a lawyer and a writer at work on her first novel.

Pepper . . . and Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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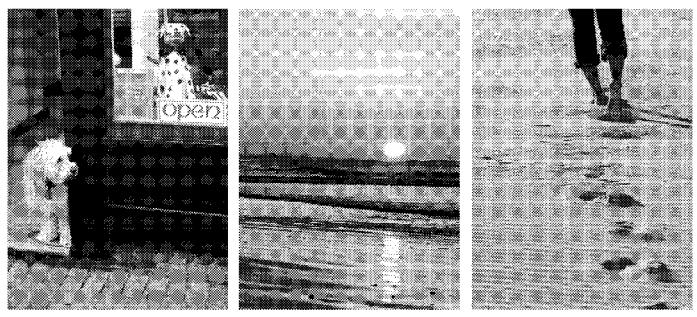

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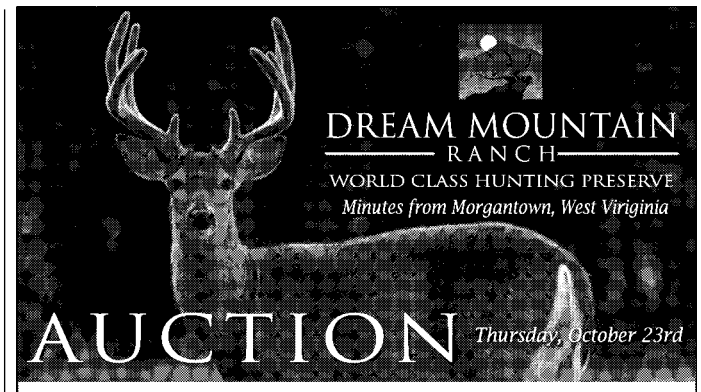

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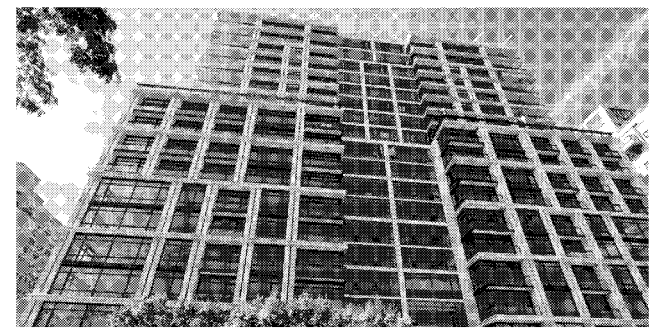

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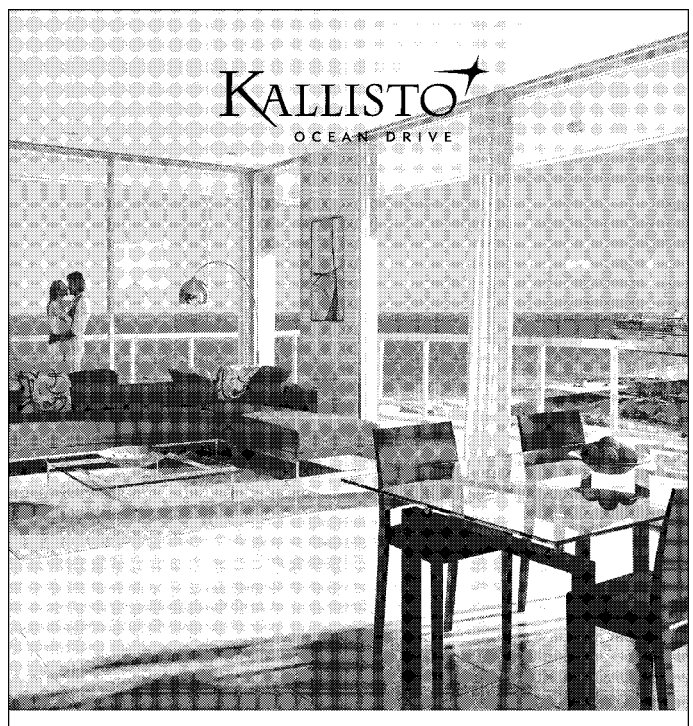

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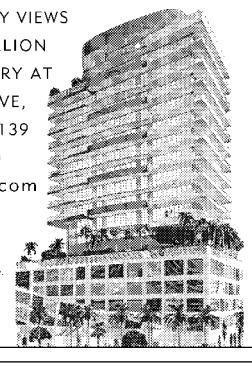

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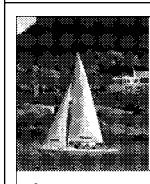

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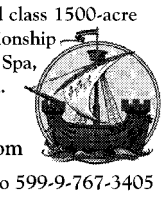

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Sara Gelbard 212.242.9941
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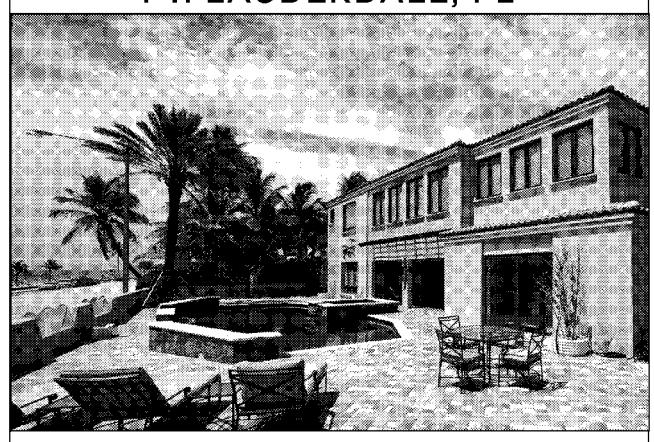

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time off

'Garden Egg Chair,' 1967-68, designed by Peter Ghyczy, on show in London.

V&A Images

Amsterdam

art

"125 Favourites" shows 125 works of art acquired by the Rembrandt Association over the past 125 years.

Van Gogh Museum
Oct. 3-Jan. 18
☎ 31-20-5705-200
www.vangoghmuseum.nl

Berlin

art

"Hercules or Pugilist" shows antique objects related to boxing, including a newly acquired marble head thought to depict either Hercules or a fighter posing as him.

Altes Museum
Until Mar. 15
☎ 49-30-2090-5577
www.smb.spk-berlin.de

Bonn

photography

"Child Soldiers—Forced to be Cruel!" exhibits 80 photographs of child soldiers in Sudan, Colombia, Congo, Liberia, Burma, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
Until Nov. 2
☎ 49-228-9171-0
www.kah-bonn.de

Budapest

art

"Keith Haring" presents 11 paintings and more than 80 graphic works by the artist (1958-1990).

Ludwig Múzeum—Museum of Contemporary Art
Until Nov 16
☎ 36-1-5553-444
www.ludwigmuseum.hu

Frankfurt

art

"Murakami" is a retrospective of Japanese artist Takashi Murakami (born 1962).

MMK—Museum für Moderne Kunst
Sept. 27-Jan. 4
☎ 49-69-2123-0447
www.mmk-frankfurt.de

Ghent

art

"Piranesi" presents a collection of prints by Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778).

Museum voor Schone Kunsten
Until Jan. 18
☎ 32-9-2400-700
www.mskgent.be

Hamburg

art

"Max Ernst: A Week of Kindness" exhibits the 184 original collages of "A Week of Kindness," a surreal cut-and-paste visual novel published 1934 by German artist Max Ernst (1891-1976).

Hamburger Kunsthalle
Until Jan. 11
☎ 49-40-4281-3120-0
www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de

Helsinki

art

"Hokusai & Hiroshige: On a Journey to Edo" shows colored woodcut prints by Hokusai (1760-1849) and Hiroshige (1797-1858). The exhibition explores landscapes along the roads from Kyoto to Edo (present-day Tokyo).

Ateneum, Museum of Finnish Art
Until Dec. 7
☎ 358-9-1733-61
www.ateneum.fi

Max Ernst, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

'Napoleon in the Wilderness,' 1941, by Max Ernst, in Stockholm.

London

art

"Cut & Paste: European Photomontage 1920-1945" shows works incorporating photographic images in bold graphic designs.

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art
Until Dec. 21
☎ 44-20-7704-9522
www.estorickcollection.com

art

"Gerhard Richter 4900 Colours: Version II" is a new work by German artist Gerhard Richter (born 1932) designed especially for this exhibition: 49 paintings—each of 100 bright monochrome squares—that can be randomly arranged in a grid formation, creating sheets of kaleidoscopic color.

Serpentine Gallery
Until Nov. 16
☎ 44-20-7402-6075
www.serpentinegallery.org

design

"Cold War Modern Design 1945-1970" examines art, architecture, design and film from both the Soviet Union and the U.S. during the period 1945-70.

Victoria and Albert Museum
Until Jan. 11
☎ 44-20-7942-2000
www.vam.ac.uk

photography

"Disposable People" shows images of slavery and servitude around the globe.

Southbank Centre
Sept. 27-Nov. 9
☎ 44-871-6632-501
www.southbankcentre.co.uk

Magdeburg, Germany

art

"Spectacle of Power: Rituals in Old Europe 800-1800" shows authentic paintings, prints and artifacts illustrating coronations, processions, consecrations and appointments to powerful political positions.

Kulturhistorisches Museum
Until Jan. 4
☎ 49-391-5403-501
www.spektakeldermacht.de

WSJ.com

What's on
WSJ.com subscribers can see an expanded version of the European arts-and-culture calendar at
WSJ.com/Europe

Marseille

art

"Van Gogh and Monticelli" exhibits works by Vincent van Gogh with paintings by Impressionist Adolphe Monticelli (1824-1886), who influenced him.

Centre de la Vieille Charité
Until Jan. 11
☎ 33-4-9114-0727
www.rmn.fr

Milan

art

"Antonio Ligabue: The Difficult Art of a Painter Without Rules" presents works by the Swiss artist Antonio Ligabue (1899-1965).

Palazzo Reale
Until Oct. 26
☎ 39-02-8756-72
www.comune.milano.it

Paris

art

"Bruegel, Rubens and Their Contemporaries" is a selection of 80 drawings by Dutch and Flemish artists from the 16th and 17th centuries, such as Lucas van Leyde, Pieter Bruegel, Jan Gossaert, Stradanus, Goltzius and Rubens.

Institut Néerlandais
Oct. 2-Nov. 30
☎ 33-1-5359-1240
www.institutneerlandais.com

art

"Mantegna (1431-1506)" is a retrospective of Italian Renaissance artist Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), showing 190 works including paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculptures and prints.

Musée du Louvre
Until Jan. 5
☎ 33-1-4020-5317
www.louvre.fr

Rome

festival

"Romaeuropa Festival 2008" presents dance, theater and music performances, including a dance performance by actress Juliette Binoche in a collaboration with choreographer/dancer Akram Khan and artist Anish Kapoor; and music by Brian Eno and the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

Romaeuropa Festival
Sept. 27-Dec. 10
☎ 39-06-4555-3055
www.romaeuropa.net

Stockholm

art

"Max Ernst—Dream and Revolution" shows some 175 works, including paintings, collages, works on paper and sculptures by the German artist.

Museum of Modern Art
Until Jan. 11
☎ 46-8-5195-5289
www.modernamuseet.se

Turin

fashion

"Robes of the Royal Court" shows about 20 items of ceremonial clothing worn by the queens of Italy.

Castello di Venaria Reale
Until Nov. 3
☎ 39-011-499-2333
www.lavenaria.it

Venice

architecture

"Biennial of Architecture 2008" is an international architectural festival. This year's theme, "Out There: Architecture Beyond Building," showcases installations and experimental work by international firms.

International Architecture Exhibition
Until Nov. 23
☎ 39-041-5218-711
www.labiennale.org

Zurich

art

"Rivoluzione! Italian Modernism from Segantini to Balla" shows art by Italian Modernist artists of the early 20th century.

Kunsthaus Zürich
Until Jan. 11
☎ 41-44-2538-484
www.kunsthaus.ch

Source: ArtBase Global Arts News Service, WSJE research.