

FRIDAY - SUNDAY, JUNE 5 - 7, 2009

# WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE



## A book lover's summer

Our guide to some of the season's best literary escapes

In Venice, the art world's Olympics | A full calendar of music festivals

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# A book lover's summer

Our guide to some of the season's best literary escapes



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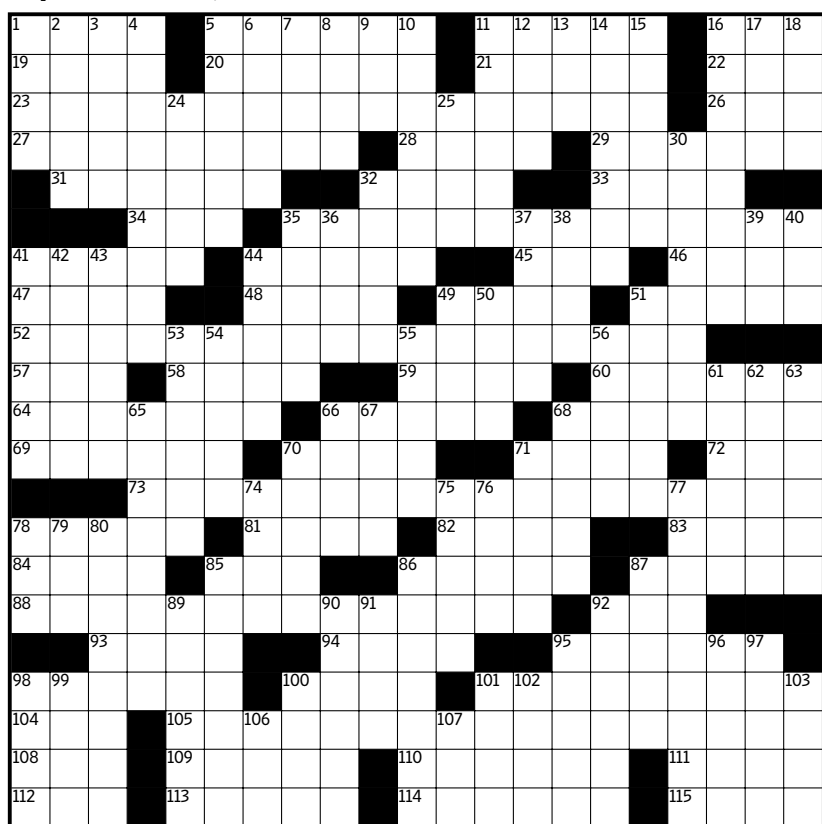
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# A drama about identity

By ISIS ALMEIDA

Special to *The Wall Street Journal*

**A**T A TIME OF INTENSE public debate over the war on terrorism, civil liberties and the economic impact of immigration, a new film from Brazilian director Henrique Goldman is likely to stir controversy as it addresses an incident at the intersection of all three issues.

In "Brazuca" (a word commonly used by Brazilians to describe their countrymen living abroad), the 47-year-old Mr. Goldman tells the story of Jean Charles de Menezes, the Brazilian electrician shot and killed by London police in the aftermath of the July 2005 London bombings. (The film may be released as "Jean Charles" in Britain, the director says.)

Metropolitan Police officers had mistaken Mr. de Menezes for a suicide bomber as he boarded a train in the Stockwell underground station on July 22, 2005—just a day after four failed bomb attacks in the city's transport network and two weeks after several other bombs killed 56 people.

But Mr. Goldman is aiming for more than just a story about a controversial shooting. Instead, he uses the incident to address larger cultural issues. "It's a film about the Brazilian community in London," says Mr. Goldman, who also wrote the film, "their dreams and their love for the city."

Told from the perspective of Mr. de Menezes' cousin Vivian, who lived with him in the Stockwell area and worked as a cleaner, the production brings together some of Brazil's best-known actors with real-life figures from the Brazilian community in London. Brazilian film and TV star Selton Mello plays Mr. de Menezes and soap opera star Vanessa Giacomo plays Vivian; Patricia Armani da Silva and Leide Menezes Figueiredo, both cousins of Mr. de Menezes, play themselves.

Mr. Goldman has until now been known mainly for small, alternative films, such as his 2003 autobiographical documentary "All the Girls I've Loved Before," for which the director interviewed his former girlfriends, and 2001's "Princesa," about a transvestite. "Brazuca" opens in Brazil on June 15 and in the U.K. later this fall.

We spoke to Mr. Goldman in a café in Soho, a traditional hangout area for Brazucas.

**Q: It's now four years since the shooting. Do you think the film will still have any impact?**

That's what I hope, as my intention was not to make a film just about the death of Jean Charles de Menezes. "Brazuca" goes beyond that. It's a docudrama that encompasses all the issues we are faced with in modern society: globalization, immigration, corruption, terrorism, religious fundamentalism, conflict between the developed and the developing worlds.

**Q: Why did you decide to make a movie specifically about Mr. de Menezes?**

Brazil is a country that has received immigrants throughout its history. Germans and Italians in the south, Japanese in Sao Paulo, Dutch in the northeast, to name but a few. But the trend has shifted in the last 10, 20 years. Very little is known about the Brazilian communities abroad and I think the story of Mr.

de Menezes will open a window both to Brazilians and to foreigners to find out more about it.

**Q: You used ordinary people, instead of actors, to play some characters. How was that experience?**

It was very difficult but most of the time very rewarding. Some of the scenes came out incredibly real. It was especially hard on Patricia and Leide, two of Mr. de Menezes' cousins who agreed to play themselves. The best surprise I had was Marcelo Madureiro Soares, a butcher in London, who turned out to be an excellent actor—praised not only by the crew but also by Mr. Mello himself.

**Q: You say you identify yourself with Mr. de Menezes. Why?**

I left Brazil more than 20 years

ago in search of adventure. I lived in the U.S. and in Italy before coming to the U.K. We are both "outsiders." Although we come from different backgrounds, I can identify with many of the difficulties and issues Mr. de Menezes faced as an immigrant, as well as with that general feeling of being an "outsider" immersed in a different culture.

**Q: How did you do the scene of the shooting?**

It wasn't easy. We based the scene on reports from the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), as crucial parts of the CCTV footage are unavailable. But our film is a fiction based on a true story, not a documentary, so we took liberties. We filmed on a platform in disuse at the Charing Cross tube station.



Henrique Goldman, director of the coming docudrama 'Brazuca.'



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# In Venice, the art world's Olympics

BY KELLY CROW

**T**HE VENICE Biennale, which opens to the public Sunday, arrives during a turbulent moment in the contemporary art world.

The shaky global economy helped sink prices for new art last fall and exacerbated a world-wide pullback in arts sponsorship. The result is a biennial that is quieter than two years ago, although the competition for attention is still intense. Early last fall, biennial organizers said 92 countries were expressing interest in joining the biennial but the number eventually whittled to 77, still a record. Among the absent: India, which is instead championing four Indian artists who are already exhibiting in other group shows. France is hosting an opening-night cocktail reception instead of a lavish dinner, and Spain says it "knew better than to ask for more" than its €800,000 budget allotted for the prior biennial, according to commissioner Enrique Juncosa. (It got €1.3 million in 2005.) Russia, meanwhile, says it still needs help meeting its €700,000 pavilion budget. It is €50,000 shy. Over at the Palazzo Michiel dal Brusa, Iceland and Singapore are asking their artists' mothers to cook Friday night's shared party meal—Icelandic fish soup and wonton soup, respectively.

The Biennale is the Olympics of the contemporary art world, a century-old tradition in which countries send their best artists to exhibit in pavilions and palazzos across the city.

Instead of medals, artists vie for recognition on the global art field. The stakes here are high—Olafur Eliasson and Ernesto Neto are among the breakout biennial artists who went on to global fame. And the field is wide open—a little-known artist from a small country such as the Netherlands or Chile can walk away with as much praise as an art-world heavyweight from the U.S., a competition of discovery that ap-



Above, Tobias Rehberger's bar-cafeteria in the Palazzo delle Esposizioni; right, Nikhil Chopra performs his 'Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory Drawing II.'

peals to collectors and curators seeking the Next Big Thing.

The event is a proven hit with the public, and nearly 400,000 people are expected to visit the biennial before it closes Nov. 22. Roughly the same number of people attended two years ago.

Paolo Baratta, president of the biennial, says he began preparing for a financial slowdown last year by asking major artists in the biennial's group show, "Making Worlds," to help pay their own shipping and installation costs. Mr. Baratta also raised ticket prices to €18 from €15. Such moves allowed him to use more of his €7.5 million budget to defray costs for younger artists.



Participating nations say they would rather scale back sharply than bow out, and a visit to the biennial's two primary venues helps explain why. Around 30 small buildings in a variety pack of architectural styles stand closely together

within the Giardini, a Napoleonic park on the city's eastern edge. Nations who already have their own buildings are loathe to turn them over to any other country.

Beginning in 1895, during the heyday of world's fairs, Venice in-

vited powerful nations to erect art exhibition buildings here, and those who did tried to evoke their favored aesthetics: The U.S. pavilion is neo-classical, the Russian pavilion is peach-colored Baroque, the Nordic pavilion is sleekly modern. Nearly a dozen additional countries like China have since been assigned space in the nearby Arsenale, a cavernous storage area; the rest must rent palazzos elsewhere.

The informal competition for best pavilion can be fierce. The United Arab Emirates, a first-timer to the biennial, is lending visitors audio guides that make wry references to Bob Dylan and pop performer Lady Gaga in addition to talking about Dubai photographer Lamya Gargash. The Russian pavilion added a kiosk so that visitors can read Pavel Pepperstein's wry titles for his fantasy cityscapes in four different languages.

"Basically, it's this artificial village where everyone wants to grow the biggest pumpkin," says artist and curator Michael Elmgreen, who lives in London. Mr. Elmgreen and his collaborating partner Ingar Dragset, from Berlin, have threaded a single exhibit, "The Collectors," through two adjacent pavilions for Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden. The curators' winning proposal involved transforming the two pavilions into "homes" for imaginary art collectors, complete with faux doorbells, mailboxes and actors hired to play real-estate agents.

Many of the artists this year tried to tackle the biennial's theme, "Making Worlds," by addressing issues of globalization, the economy and cultural memory. Fang Lijun set a row of 40, pinky-sized gilded men beneath the oil drums that dominate the Chinese pavilion. Like ore in a mineshaft, the artist's hardy depiction of humanity is glowing but poignant.

Besides showing off artworks, the biennial also doubles as an unlikely showcase for government officials and arts councils who typically select their nations' artistic representatives. During the opening ceremonies over the weekend, expect everyone from Queen Sonja of Norway, to ambassadors and cultural ministers from Hong Kong to Australia to stop by. The U.S. pavilion, which is exhibiting conceptual sculptor Bruce Nauman, invited the Clintons and the Obamas but is still awaiting a reply, says commissioner Carlos Basualdo.

At least 44 other art foundations and private collectors are exhibiting work during the biennial as well, led by François Pinault's newly opened art space Punta della Dogana, which juts out into the Grand Canal opposite St. Mark's Square. The collection includes pieces by Jake and Dinon Chapman, Paul McCarthy and newcomer Matthew Day Jackson. At the water's edge, enjoying pride of place, is a sculpture by Charles Ray depicting a Huck Finn-like boy grasping a frog. Curator Francesco Bonami says Mr. Pinault, who owns Christie's, didn't hold a herculean-sized competition for that commission: "He asked."

## Meanwhile, in Basel, contemporary works you can buy

**H**UNDREDS OF galleries gather in the Swiss city of Basel next week for the international contemporary art market's biggest commercial event of the season.

Art Basel and its many satellite fairs will offer a boggling ar-

### Collecting MARGARET STUDER

ray of 20th-21st century art. The fair, which runs from June 10-14, includes works in a variety of media from modern great names to today's emerging artists.

Running parallel to Art Basel, more than 100 galleries will exhibit at Volta, showing under the high cupola of the city's Markthalle what the fair's executive director Amanda Coulson describes as artists "who are just about to really take off." Another 100-plus galleries will show cutting-edge art at Scope



'Bulls and Bed,' from 1986, by John Wesley (price: around \$300,000).

in a pavilion built specially for the fair. This year Scope will also showcase Art Asia, an event with 15 galleries concentrated on the Asian region. Liste—the Young Art Fair, set in an old

brewery, focuses on galleries that are not more than five years old and artists under 40.

Art Basel serves as a barometer of the broad gallery-based global art market. "After Basel, we will know where we stand. Will collectors go for young artists or only seek out established names?" says Zurich dealer Bob van Orsouw, who will bring to the fair such young artists as Swiss duo Andres Lutz and Anders Guggisberg with "Ngodobongo" (2009), a colorful canvas filled with voodoo drums, balloons and haunting masks (price: \$25,000).

Art Basel will feature many artists who are also showing in the Venice Biennale, which also starts this weekend. Mai 36 will have American John Baldessari, who has been awarded the Biennale's coveted Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement. In Basel, Mr. Baldessari's acrylic print "Raised Eyebrows/Furrowed Foreheads: (with Apple)," from

2009, will be offered at Mai 36 for \$250,000.

London's Waddington Galleries will bring to Art Basel works by American artist John Wesley (born 1928), an individualist who falls between the categories of pop, minimalism and fantasy. From June 6-Oct. 4, a retrospective of Mr. Wesley's works will be shown in Venice at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini. Among the works Waddington will offer in Basel is the 1986 canvas "Bulls and Bed" (1986), priced at around \$300,000.

Video artist Fiona Tan, who is representing the Netherlands in Venice, will be present in Basel at London's Frith Street Gallery. Video works by Ms. Tan range from €20,000-€120,000.

Zurich's Mark Müller gallery will show works from abstract painter Judy Millar, New Zealand's representative in Venice. Her works sell between €2,000 and €80,000 for an installation.

WSJ.com

The big show

See an interactive map of the Venice Biennale and a slideshow of artworks from it at [WSJ.com/Lifestyle](http://WSJ.com/Lifestyle)

# Rising to Biennale's curatorial challenge

BY CATHRYN DRAKE

*Special to The Wall Street Journal*  
**T**HE CURATORSHIP of the Venice Biennale—the premier international contemporary art exhibition, which opens this weekend—is the holy grail of the profession. But it's also a high-profile acid test, sure to provoke criticism and head-scratching from its notoriously tough-to-impress audience.

Daniel Birnbaum, the 46-year-old Swedish art critic and scholar who is in charge of this year's event, has a sanguine attitude about the gargantuan task. "I don't feel one has to reinvent it; you just have to make very interesting art projects visible," he says. "I think if the curator is successful, he becomes invisible in a way."

Mr. Birnbaum's challenge is to orchestrate a cohesive, digestible exhibition in the cavernous and meandering spaces of the Arsenale, the former warehouses of the Venetian navy, as a counterpoint to the presentations of the various national pavilions in the Giardini. With the title "Making Worlds," Mr. Birnbaum—joint director of the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste, an academy of fine arts, and Portikus, an exhibition space, both in Frankfurt—intends to highlight the process of artistic creation. The show interweaves work by artists of previous generations with that of younger practitioners whom they have influenced.

We met Mr. Birnbaum for a walk through the Arsenale and a visit to the Garden of the Virgins, which will host installations in its wild, overgrown environs for the first time.

**Q: How do you bring something new to such an established, highly visible and complex event?**

In the end it's just about making possible certain things for artists. We have tons of very interesting new artists and projects. I don't think that one has to reinvent the theater stage every time, or the film format, or the novel as a genre. When it comes to exhibitions, of course they are a little bit more changeable: An exhibition can be pushed in the more classical museum-style show or it can be pushed fairly far in some other direction. I don't think we want to turn the Venice Biennale into a poetry slam or a performance festival, but we do have a lot of things that will happen outside of the normal situation: a big parade by Arto Lindsay; a huge number of readings by the Moscow Poetry Club; and two or three evenings with Cerith Wyn Evans in a theater. So there are lots of things that are not installed on a wall or in a space.

**Q: How do you curate such an enormous exhibition with so many international participants?**

It is an eclectic kind of show, because the individual pavilions are curated by the nations. And just the exhibition at the center, where you can put 100 or 200 artists, is as big as Documenta. What I do with the central international exhibition is up to me, but I could not have done it with three artists. You could do it with 20 artists, but that would be like some sort of global top 20 list, which is also a bit boring. So it's not about the number, it's more about projects and spaces and artistic possibilities. It would be silly to pretend that it's an objective report. In the end it's a selection, just one perspective

about things—my perspective.

**Q: What is the title, "Making Worlds," intended to provoke?**

One could say that "Making Worlds" is very generic. But what I am interested in is that the sound of it, the ring of it, is very different in different languages. "Making Worlds" is very much about the making of things, related to craftsmanship; whereas "Construire des Mondes" is much more technical and architectural sounding. In German, "Weltenmachen" is more theological, an almost divine creating of worlds. That ambiguity is something I am quite interested in.

**Q: What do you think is the role of the Venice Biennale?**

I think a curiosity about who we are and where we are is what a show like this should answer to. It does not have to be a big answer, like we are going in this or that direction. But if it were not about our moment now, it would be a strange show. It should not be a show about the 1920s, for example. So we have lots of very young artists. But I think art is different than say pop music or fashion or sports, where every five years there's a totally new generation. Art has a different temporality.

There are several generations in the show. It's a dialogue between generations, so we have several installations from older artists from the '60s and '70s. The main idea is to make visible the moment we are in now, but one needs a little genealogy to understand the present.

**Q: As the model for the proliferating international exhibitions, do you think Venice is still the most important?**

With all the biennales out there now, there is often the discussion that Venice, with the national pavilions, will be an obsolete model. But the world does indeed consist of national states and of globalizing forces, and some things are the same all over the world. It's a leveling society that we live in, with the same pop music and the same shoes and everything, but there are also differences. And a show like this should try to make visible, not in a reactionary way but in an interesting way, the kind of differences that exist in cultural expressions and views on the world.

**Q: What is new at the Biennale this year?**

The idea of the Biennale is to go permanent somehow. It is a unique multidisciplinary academy, if you will—with film, dance, architecture, art—and one could have a center where you could do things throughout the year.

The idea is to change its nature, and this can only happen step by step. There is a very interesting archive, for example, which has never been visible, so that will be displayed this year. This central pavilion will become a kind of academic institution: There will be an archive open for scholars, a bookstore by Rirkrit Tiravanija, a cafeteria by Tobias Rehberger and an educational space for children by Massimo Bartolini. Their pieces will be installations, but they will have to work as functioning spaces, introducing gatherings and eating together into the museum. It is like the reality game is now the real thing—a real challenge for those artists.



Biennale curator Daniel Birnbaum.

Cathryn Drake for The Wall Street Journal



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*As always.*

# 'Hell' is horror-flick heaven

**O**, JOY, A HORROR flick that's smart and funny, as well as cringeworthy for all the right reasons. And up to speed on the mortgage crisis too. "Drag Me to Hell" was directed by Sam Raimi, who has revisited his horror roots after devoting more than half of the current decade to directing the adventures of Spider-Man. (He wrote the script with his brother, Ivan Raimi.) The heroine, played to sly perfection by Alison Lohman, is Christine Brown, an ambitious

## Film

JOE MORGENSTERN

young loan officer bucking for a promotion to assistant branch manager. When an elderly, impoverished and majestically repulsive customer named Mrs. Ganush comes in to beg for yet another extension on her home loan, Christine hesitates only briefly before turning her down. Given what we now know about the perils of permissive lending practices, that decision should have sealed the deal for managerial status. Instead, Mrs. Ganush retaliates with an ancient gypsy curse, and Christine spends the rest of the movie trying to avoid eternal damnation.

I could, and will, go on about the nature of the curser and the agonies of the cursee. First, though, a few words of appreciation about craftsmanship. Whatever the genre, it's always a pleasure to watch good work. This film is cunningly crafted in every detail—direction, script, performances, comic timing, special effects—from thunderous start to delicious finish. (The production designer was Steve Saklad, and the cinematographer was Peter Deming, who shot David Lynch's "Mulholland Dr." and "Lost Highway.")

The villainess, bless her vileness, is played by Lorna Raver, whose head shot on the Internet Movie Database shows an attractive woman with a quizzical expression. As Mrs. Ganush, she's totally transformed into a werewolfish Transylvanian



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**Opening this week in Europe**

- **Coraline** Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France
- **Drag Me to Hell** Estonia, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden
- **Ghosts of Girlfriends Past** Greece, Iceland, Romania
- **Hannah Montana: The Movie** Bulgaria, Estonia
- **Observe and Report** Bulgaria, Czech Republic
- **Sunshine Cleaning** France
- **Up** Romania

Source: IMDB  
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who gloms onto Christine with her one good eye and copes with a dental impairment—no teeth and bad dentures—by gumming her victim's chin at every opportunity. Ms. Lohman's portrayal of the heroine starts with innocence. A wide-eyed farm girl with a sweet smile, Christine

would seem to be the genre's standard babe in jeopardy. Yet she's glad to compromise her principles if that will buy her relief from all the creepy, slimy and/or gooey terrors that beset her. In depicting one of them—a fly that strolls into Christine's left nostril, then promptly emerges from the right one—the movie sets a high standard for computer-generated minimalism. (One hopes, for the actor's sake, that the insect was digital.)

Justin Long is Christine's boyfriend, Clay Dalton, a psychology professor who nicely fills the need for designated skeptic. (He's such a rationalist that he drives a Prius.) David Paymer is her anxious boss at the bank branch. Reggie Lee plays her smarmy rival for a better job. Adriana Barraza—she played the Mexican nanny in "Babel"—is a spirit medium who presides over a séance that involves a talking nanny goat. Dileep Rao is a fortune-teller with a Jungian bent and a genuine gift for predicting the future. I can do that too. I predict that "Drag Me

To Hell" will delight large audiences in the here and now and have a long and profitable afterlife.

## 'Departures'

Most of the events in Yojiro Takita's "Departures" flow from a comical misunderstanding. After a Tokyo orchestra is disbanded, an earnest young cellist, Daigo, seeks a new line of work in the provinces, spots a help-wanted ad for a company that deals in departures and assumes it to be some sort of travel agency. In fact, the company is a one-man operation that deals in encoffination—the ceremonial preparation of corpses for cremation—and the owner wants to hire an assistant. Still, Daigo's assumption isn't completely off the mark. The job takes him and his wife, Mika (Ryoko Hirose) on a guided tour to the far country of death and dying, with frequent stops for beguiling comedy along the road.

Here's to humor in all its manifestations, whether as the glint in the jaundiced eye of a horror flick or as



Left, Lorna Raver as Mrs. Ganush in Sam Raimi's 'Drag Me to Hell'; above, Masahiro Motoki as Daigo Kobayashi in 'Departures.'

the indispensable leavening of this gorgeous drama, which won an Oscar earlier this year as the best foreign language film of 2008. Daigo is, at the outset, a chronic screw-up who can't bring himself to tell his wife what he does in his new position, can't even get a grip on a cake of soap in a public bath. (He's there to expunge the chemical smell of his trade.) Slowly, though, in a film that's mostly slow-paced, the self-doubting boy comes into manhood under the tutelage of his boss, a consummate professional who can advertise his services with a huckster's flair, yet consider them with a philosopher's gravity. (He's played by the wonderfully taciturn Tsutomu Yamazaki, who was the trucker, Goro, in "Tampopo.")

Occasionally the story turns manipulative, or self-conscious: I could have done without the hero playing his cello in picturesque fields near snow-capped mountains, though his musical yearnings perfectly complement the movie's main theme of spiritual growth. But the rituals that Daigo learns to perform are literally spellbinding. While the family and friends of the deceased watch silently, the encoffiner uses elaborate gestures that might be those of a magician or a sommelier to wash and dress the body, yet does it all with exquisite tenderness. In one of the movie's most beautiful moments, Mika comes to understand Daigo's quiet professionalism, and to love the soulful man her young husband has become. But beautiful moments abound. In "Departures," the contemplation of death prepares the way for an appreciation of life.

# David Bowie's filmmaker son launches a low-budget space oddity

BY MICHELLE KUNG

**W**ITH ITS EMPHASIS on sometimes costly special effects, sci-fi isn't an obvious genre for an independent filmmaker to tackle. But with "Moon," which opens in limited release June 12, British filmmaker Duncan Jones hopes to successfully break into the field.

Starring actor Sam Rockwell ("Frost/Nixon") as Sam Bell, a lonely astronaut preparing to return to his family on earth after a three-year job aboard a lunar mining station, "Moon" offsets its modest budget by amping up the story's emotional core and inviting debate about cloning and other controversial issues.

"What I wanted to do was establish a more retro feel and focus more on the human element," says Mr. Jones, who shot his feature debut last winter in 33 days for \$5 million.

Mr. Jones first conceived of the



'Moon' director Duncan Jones.

independent film after reading astronautical engineer Robert Zubrin's "Entering Space," a scientific and fiscal study that advocates the human colonization of the solar system. As the son of pio-

neering rocker David Bowie, Mr. Jones says any similarities between Mr. Rockwell's character and Major Tom, the depressed spaceman at the heart of his father's 1969 song "Space Oddity," were unintentional.

"Sci-fi was always around and I can't help but have been affected by all the things I grew up with, so I have an affection and taste for it," he says.

Pre-production began in earnest after Mr. Rockwell—intrigued by the challenge of playing both Sam Bell and the mysterious clone of himself he later encounters—signed on. After some initial hesitation, Kevin Spacey later agreed to supply the voice of Sam's computer companion Gerty after seeing a rough cut of the film.

"Like others, he was really concerned we wouldn't be able to do the film at \$5 million without looking hokey," says Mr. Jones.

To enhance the realism of "Moon," Mr. Jones relied on his background as a director of commercials and music videos.

"A lot of my advertising work in Britain has been special effects heavy, specifically with jobs that happen to blend live action with CG effects," he says. "So I know I have a good approach to getting the most textured and impressive-looking shots while still being cost-effective."

Mr. Jones also drew upon the combined experience of his expert crew, many of whom had worked on the sci-fi classics he revered as a child. Fortuitously, many became available to work on "Moon" after the 2007-08 writers strike scuttled most of the studio projects also scheduled to shoot at Shepperton Studios.

Among others, Bill Pearson, who supervised the miniature models on "Alien," and Peter Tal-

bot, a James Bond veteran, came aboard as prop makers. Simon Stanley-Clamp, of the visual effects house Cinesite and a veteran of the blockbuster hit "Gladiator," oversaw all CGI effects.

But for all the film's visual tricks and shortcuts, Mr. Jones is most proud of his leading man's nuanced performance as two genetically identical, but psychologically different, copies of the same man.

Knowing that because of budget and time constraints he would only have a limited number of takes per scene, Mr. Rockwell rehearsed his blocking prior to shooting, and instead of watching dailies would watch playbacks of his earlier scenes on an iPod as he was getting makeup changes.

"Everything came down to the timing, but after you nail that, you're able to get loose and creative, which is the whole point," says Mr. Rockwell.

# Tales from the technological edge

AS AN EXPERIMENT, I played a round of golf last week with old-fashioned wooden woods and a sleeve of virgin balata balls. The combination didn't help my score (I shot a little worse than normal) and the three balata balls are now history. Two were lost and the other has a smiley gash in its cover. But I did learn something: Golf was not all that different in the days before mammoth-headed metal drivers and souped-up balls. Mostly it was just shorter.

## Golf Journal

JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

The woods, a beautiful set of black-laminated maple Ping Eye and Ping Eye 2s, belonged to my late father-in-law. They are not museum pieces. They were his working set until his death in 2000, frequently regripped and lovingly maintained. Each has a red face with yellow trim, a brass plate fixed to the bottom with four screws and tightly-wound nylon thread binding the head to the shaft. These details were not remarkable in the early 1980s, when the woods were built, largely by hand, at the Ping plant in Phoenix. Everyone used similar clubs back then. But to me, who never owned a wooden club, they are exotic. When I dallied with golf as a kid, I used my dad's 1940s-era wooden woods, but the first driver I bought for myself as an adult was an early TaylorMade metal wood.

I discovered the balata balls last year in my basement, miraculously preserved in their unopened package from the mid-1990s. Balatas in that era were the ball of choice for Tour pros, but not for many others. They consisted of a core wound round with rubber bands and encased in a rubber-like shell (the balata), which provided great feel around the greens but cut and scuffed easily. They also did not fly as far as the solid-core balls covered in synthetic materials like surlyn that most recreational players used, a sacrifice the pros were willing to make in exchange for more green-holding spin. Modern premium



Sergio Garcia, at the Masters, swings TaylorMade's r9, right; far right, Nike's SQ Dymo STR8-FIT.

Getty Images

balls, typified by Titleist Pro V1s, have nearly the feel and short-game control of balata balls, plus distance and durability.

By far the biggest adjustment I had to make in playing with wood and balata involved sound. The dull thud, compared with the thwack made by metal alloy drivers striking harder balls, invariably made me think I had missed the shot on the toe or heel of the clubface. When I looked up and saw the ball flying more or less as usual, I was always surprised. I also felt a bit cheated, after smacking a good one, at the mea-

sly auditory response.

The other major difference, which came as no surprise, was the small-headed wooden driver's lack of forgiveness on off-center hits. In addition, since balata balls spin more than modern balls, they slice and hook more, too. After a few holes I quit swinging as hard at the ball as I normally do, which is probably smart in any circumstance, and managed to get the ball around the course fairly well.

The best drives I hit traveled 230 yards, maybe 235 yards, compared with the best drives I hit with mod-



ern equipment of 270 yards or so. That's a distance gain of 40 yards, or 17%, with modern clubs and balls—a huge advantage. On a few holes, I followed my wood-and-balata efforts with titanium-and-surlyn ones, which made me feel like a god. The second drives easily cleared the first drives on the fly.

But here's the thing: Two of those big drives landed in the fairway but bounded on into the rough, one of them into an untenable position behind a tree. Had those same shots been hit with the wooden driver, both might have remained in the fairway, and neither would have reached the tree line. It's a matter of geometry: A drive that travels 40 yards shorter on a given flawed vector is less likely to find trouble. The longer shots were closer to the hole, of course, and for the ball that was only in the rough, that was fine. I'll take a nine-iron shot into a green from manageable rough over a six-iron shot from the fairway every time. But not a ball behind a tree.

One reason I was curious to play with the wooden clubs was because I have been testing two marvels of driver technology, the Nike SQ Dymo STR8-FIT and the TaylorMade r9. Both take advantage of a recent rule modification that allows adjustable clubs (so long as adjustments aren't made during a round). The drivers differ, but both come with a wrench that lets the owner easily dial in different set-up posi-

tions for the clubhead, to promote different ball flights, such as fades and draws or higher and lower shots. The TaylorMade driver has interchangeable weights in the back of the head to allow further fiddling. Both cost about \$400 in their base versions and work as advertised. Neither will perform miracles on an inconsistent swing, but compared with my father-in-law's Ping Eye driver both are in themselves miracles of design and manufacturing.

But how much have we really gained? This is a philosophical question with no definitive answer, but you can't say my father-in-law didn't have fun with his wooden clubs. I'm not sure I'd mind going back to wooden clubs and less modern balls, provided everyone else did the same. (You can keep balata, which cuts too easily.) In terms of challenge, based on my experience, there really isn't that much difference between the old and the new. Trying to keep a short, spinny ball in play with a wooden driver is not easy, but it's no more formidable a task than trying to keep a longer ball in play with a metal driver. I gradually began to understand that my father-in-law's driver hit shots about the same as my current three-wood, which is not a bad option when it's the longest club in your bag—or in anyone else's bag. Much of the straightness advantage of modern equipment is nullified by the problems created by added length—including, not inconsequentially, the big problem of having to expand golf courses to contain that length, which we golfers ultimately pay for in extra real-estate and course-maintenance costs.

Reverting to wooden clubs will never happen, of course. Once we've tasted mega-drives, there's no going back. But who knows? The Chinese use chopsticks, as Jerry Seinfeld has pointed out, even though they've seen the fork.

Istanbul Park.  
The counterclockwise challenge.

Its unusual anticlockwise layout, fast straights and narrow corners, such as turn 8, where drivers have to fight up to 4.5 G, make this track a clear favourite within the racing fraternity. Experience a virtual 3-D driver's perspective at [www.allianz.com/f1](http://www.allianz.com/f1)

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Dan Page (Illustration); Getty Images; AFP; iStockphoto

## Our guide to some of the season's best literary escapes

BY CYNTHIA CROSSEN AND HELEN ROGAN

**I**F EVER WE'VE needed a healthy dose of escapism, this summer is it. We're stressed about losing our jobs, paying our mortgages, selling our homes.

Was anyone ever more anxious than we are today?

Actually, yes. The citizens of post-Stalinist Russia as depicted in Tom Rob Smith's new novel, "The Secret Speech," lived in a world of far greater uncertainty and paranoia. The visitors to Henders Island in Warren Fahy's forthcoming novel, "Fragment," had to stay one step ahead of spiders—part spiders, part tigers. And even the family that won a lottery jackpot in George Dawes Green's new novel "Ravens" find themselves staring down the barrel of a .22 pistol.

Booksellers, too, have been feeling the stress of the current recession, with Barnes & Noble and Borders Group in the U.S. recently reporting quarterly losses due to a drop in sales.

"The days of moving best sellers by the case are gone," says Shilough Hopwood, buyer for the Doylestown Bookshop in Doylestown, Pa. "The casual reader has dried up. We're back to our bread and butter, which is the devoted reader." But Mr. Hopwood believes business is starting to pick up. "Mother's Day was good, and we're optimistic about this summer."

Kathryn Fabiani, general manager of RJ Julia, an independent bookstore in Madison, Conn., agrees. "Customers are feeling a little more secure, and there's a good crop of books this summer," she says.

Fans of popular authors such as Michael Connelly, James Patterson, Dean Koontz, Lee Child and Janet Evanovich can look forward to new installments in the coming weeks. Eric Van Lustbader is bringing out another in the late Robert Ludlum's Bourne series, "The Bourne Deception" (hint: Jason Bourne gets yet another new identity). The bumbling crook John Dortmunder takes his final bow in "Get Real" by Donald Westlake, who died last year. And prolific best-selling

chick-lit author Jane Green returns with another beach read, "Dune Road."

There are equally enticing options for nonfiction readers. Among the new biographies: Thurman Munson, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Satchel Paige and the Supremes. Historian Simon Schama divines America's destiny by analyzing its past in his new book, "The American Future: A History." And marking the 40th anniversary of Woodstock, both Michael Lang, one of the festival's producers, and Pete Fornatale, a long-time disc jockey and rock commentator, have written nostalgic evocations of the event.

We asked publishers, booksellers, agents and readers what they were looking forward to taking on vacation (or selling to vacationers). After reading the books they recommended, we chose several novels and nonfiction books we liked for the lazy days ahead. And as Don Hailman, manager of Anderson's Bookshop in Downers Grove, Ill., says, "Books are a pretty good escape for your dollar."

Read excerpts from some of these books, and descriptions of more summer books at [WSJ.com/Lifestyle](http://WSJ.com/Lifestyle)

## Fiction

### The Secret Speech

Tom Rob Smith

Out now



Leo Demidov, the good guy-bad guy hero of Mr. Smith's first novel, "Child 44," has left his job as an agent for Stalin's state security service to set up a homicide department in Moscow, where homicides are routinely hushed up because they're bad for morale. As readers of "Child 44" know,

Demidov did some unsavory things as an MGB agent, and some of his victims are not only alive but sworn to revenge. When Leo begins investigating a string of murders, he realizes that the murderer will eventually come gunning for him. "Child 44" was long-listed for the Booker Prize, and Ridley Scott ("Gladiator"; "Blade Runner") bought the movie rights. "The Secret Speech" continues the headlong pace.

### The Angel's Game

Carlos Ruiz Zafón

Out now



Mr. Zafón's 2001 novel, "The Shadow of the Wind," was a global sensation, first in Mr. Zafón's native Spain, where it was a best seller for more than a year, then in the rest of Europe and the U.S. "The Angel's Game," a prequel set in Barcelona in the 1920s, has already sold more copies than its predecessor in Spain.

Gothic, fantastical and lushly atmospheric, "The Angel's Game" is the story of a writer, David Martin, who is offered a fortune to write a book for which people will live and die. Mr. Zafón has described his books as "a sort of narrative kaleidoscope of Victorian sagas, intrigue, romance, comedy and mystery." That doesn't include the magic and the supernatural.

### The Girl Who Played with Fire

Stieg Larsson

Out now



The Swedish pixie-outlaw Lisbeth Salander returns in the second of a trilogy of thrillers (after "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo") to smite her enemies with electronic wizardry and marmoreal eyes. In this high-velocity episode, Salander finds herself accused of murdering

two journalists and on the lam from government and free-lance thugs. Meanwhile, Salander's old frenemy, the magazine editor Mikael Blomkvist, is back to using his investigative reporting tricks. Mr. Larsson died in 2004, before the publication of the first installment, which sold more than 12 million copies. "The Girl Who Played with Fire" has been equally popular in Europe.

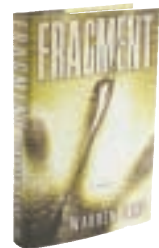




## Fragment

Warren Fahy

Out June 6



Hang on to your hats! Mr. Fahy takes readers on a wild ride through a parallel universe where evolution has run amok—think “Jurassic Park” but scarier. Mr. Fahy, a self-taught biologist who started collecting fossils at the age of nine, imagines a remote island whose flora and fauna evolved

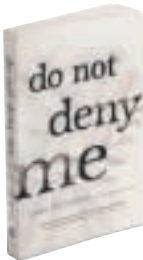
to do two things very efficiently: prey and kill. Drop a bunch of characters from an American reality show onto the island, and things get bloody very fast. Mr. Fahy often puts the action on hold to digress on various aspects of biology, but then he returns to the land of rats with knife-edged arms and omnivorous ants.



## Do Not Deny Me

Jean Thompson

Out June 9



Ms. Thompson has been called America’s Alice Munro, and in this collection of delicate tales of modern life, she earns the comparison. Her characters are ordinary people who are in a constant state of discovery about themselves and the people they think they know. In “Liberty Tax,” a man living

beyond his means loses his job and finds a new career in theft. In the title story, “Do Not Deny Me,” a woman whose young boyfriend died unexpectedly toys with the idea of becoming a psychic so she can contact him. Ms. Thompson’s puckish spirit comes through in every story, but each one is completely original.

## My Father’s Tears

John Updike

Out July 2



This collection of Mr. Updike’s short stories is precious because he will write no more but also because they’re diamonds—polished, multifaceted, timeless. The prolific Mr. Updike wrote more than 50 books before his death in January, and two of his Rabbit novels won Pulitzer

Prizes. But his short stories show what a great writer can do with a few thousand words. Many of these stories were written since Mr. Updike’s last collection was published nine years ago, and they reflect the wisdom, charity and melancholy of a man looking ahead to his own demise. In the title story, the hero is in Europe when he learns his father has died. “Cry,” his wife tells him. “Though I saw the opportunity, and the rightness of seizing it, I don’t believe I did. My father’s tears had used up mine.”

## A Happy Marriage

Rafael Yglesias

Out July 7



It was a happy marriage, and it was also an unhappy one, like all long marriages. In Mr. Yglesias’s ninth novel, the narrator, Enrique Sabas, at various moments cherishes his wife and desperately wants to divorce her. But even he admits he’s not the easiest guy to live with—like Mr.

Yglesias himself, Enrique dropped out of high school to publish his first novel and made the mistake of thinking he could earn a decent living writing fiction. Maybe marriage is the oldest story in the world, but in Mr. Yglesias’s tender, funny, rueful telling, the lifelong relationship is the story of life itself.

## Ravens

George Dawes Green

Out July 31



Mr. Green has quite a track record. His first novel, “The Caveman’s Valentine,” won an Edgar Award and was made into a movie. His second, “The Juror,” was a big best seller and a hit movie. Now, 14 years later, there’s “Ravens,” a psychological thriller so

smoothly suspenseful—and so interesting—that you can’t help playing casting director. Two creepily charming drifters (James Franco/Javier Bardem) are wandering in Georgia when they develop a scheme to ambush a family that’s won \$318 million in the lottery. By terrorizing these hapless people (a slew of meaty character roles), they’ll force the family to hand over half the money. There are big parts, too, for a washed-up cop (Nick Nolte) and a terrified, stubborn teen (paging the young Jodie Foster). Fortunately, you don’t have to wait for the movie to know how it all plays out.



## South of Broad

Pat Conroy

Out Aug. 11



Fans of Mr. Conroy’s fiction have waited 14 years for this novel, and they won’t be disappointed: “South of Broad” is another of his trademark sagas of love and loss, with the city of Charleston, S.C., playing a starring role. The narrator, Leopold Bloom King (his mother is a Joyce scholar), is

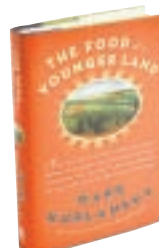
the second son of a family in emotional turmoil: His beloved older brother committed suicide at the age of 13. The lonely Leo eventually finds support and security in a circle of offbeat friends, who share their passions—love, hate and everything else—as they grow up. Booksellers predict this will be a certain best seller.

# Nonfiction

## The Food of a Younger Land

Mark Kurlansky

Out now



Those were the good old days—breakfast was mush, lunch was chitterling strut and dinner was fried beaver tail. In the 1930s, the Federal Writers Project sent writers across America to record its eating habits for a book that was never written.

Mr. Kurlansky, author of the best-selling “Cod,” sifted through the reports and has produced a charming compendium of essays, menus, photos and recipes. Younger America ate more locally produced fresh food, but it had vices, too—hot-buttered rum, banana splits and sweet pumpkin pickle.



## American Heroes

Edmund S. Morgan

Out June 9



We think we know what makes a hero—courage, leadership, sacrifice—but Mr. Morgan, a Pulitzer-Prize-winning historian, argues that the ability to resist social or political dogma is at least as important. American Indians, for example, showed

“an extraordinary refusal to accept the manners and methods of a people who were obviously more powerful than they,” and Mr. Morgan makes a persuasive case for admiring their intransigence. In another essay, he calls Giles Cory “perhaps as brave a man as any in American history.” He was accused of witchcraft in 17th-century Salem and went to his death rather than confess and implicate others. Mr. Morgan, author of the best-selling biography “Benjamin Franklin,” is a gifted essayist, and his fresh perspective on the nature of heroism is inspiring.

## The Snakehead

Patrick Radden Keefe

Out July 21



“The Third World has packed its bag, and it’s moving,” a harried INS official says in “The Snakehead,” a timely and compelling narrative about illegal immigration into the United States. Mr. Keefe’s lens is the story of the Golden Venture, a ship that ran aground off New York City in 1993, delivering 300 desperate

and emaciated Chinese into the hands of the authorities. An accomplished investigative journalist, Mr. Keefe delineates a world of raids, bribes, global conspiracies and daylight gun battles; he introduces us to gangsters, hit men, FBI agents and the notorious, elusive Sister Ping. He places it all squarely in the context of the world’s growing immigration crisis.



## Young Woman and the Sea

Glenn Stout

Out July 28



Trudy Ederle was the first woman to swim the English Channel, a prodigious achievement at any time, but a stupendous feat in 1926, when there were few coaches or swimming facilities for women. In this fascinating biography, Mr.

Stout recounts not only Ms. Ederle’s triumph but also the remarkably colorful history of swimming itself. Until the early 20th century, females were discouraged from learning to swim because the costumes were deemed immodest.

But Ms. Ederle felt more comfortable swimming than walking, and she and a few others insisted women be given the chance to compete in the water. By 1926, five men had swum across the channel; Ms. Ederle beat the fastest man by almost two hours.



## The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe

J. Randy Taraborrelli

Out Aug. 25



You’d think there was nothing left to discover about Marilyn Monroe, but Mr. Taraborrelli has found it. The best-selling author of books on such tabloid favorites as Cher and Diana Ross, he’s dug around in newly released FBI files, interviewed previously untapped sources

and delivers fresh and deeply poignant truths. Struggling out of a forlorn, often terrifying childhood, Marilyn created, and tenaciously hung onto, the dazzling persona that the world fell in love with. Yet she remained so beset by her inner demons that she willingly fell into the hands of the husbands, lovers, psychiatrists and assorted Svengalis who ended up shredding her fragile psyche. A tragic tale, but irresistible, still the stuff of glamour and legend.

# The best of Europe's festival circuit

BY PAUL LEVY

Special to *The Wall Street Journal*  
**S**UMMER HAS ARRIVED, and with it music festivals all across Europe.

From Bayreuth, which started in 1876, to the newest kid on the block, the Manchester International Festival's USP, here's a look at some of the season's top summer music festivals.

## Aix-en-Provence

July 3-31

The theme, Opera and Myth, features Offenbach's "Orpheus in the Underworld," and Mozart's "Idomeneo" and "Magic Flute," in addition to Aix's new "Götterdämmerung," which completes its Ring cycle, with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Sir Simon Rattle and direction and sets by Stéphane Braunschweig.

☎ 33-4-3408-0217  
[www.festival-aix.com](http://www.festival-aix.com)

## Bayreuth

July 25-Aug. 28

At last the succession to Richard Wagner's grandson, Wolfgang, has been settled, putting the general management in the hands of two of his daughters, Eva Wagner-Pasquier and Katharina Wagner. Wisely, perhaps, there are no new productions in 2009, but there will be recent versions of "Parsifal," "Tristan and Isolde," "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg" and Tankred Dorst's "Ring."

☎ 49-921-7878-0  
[www.bayreuther-festspiele.de](http://www.bayreuther-festspiele.de)

## Edinburgh International Festival

Aug. 14-Sept. 6

The 2009 festival theme derives from the Scottish Enlightenment of the 18th century. Director Jonathan Mills sees it as an appreciation of Scottish culture's contribution to the world, reflected in the poetic fantasy of J.M. Barrie's "Peter and Wendy" by avant-garde theater company Mabou Mines; Rona Munro's new play about the last woman in Scotland to be burnt as a witch; new work by the iconoclastic Scots-born dancer Michael Clark; performances by the Scottish ballet; and a series of projects called "The Enlightenment" at the Dean Gallery, curated by Juliana Engberg. The Queen's Hall recital series has a great lineup, including pianist Elisabeth Leonskaja. The city also hosts the separate Edinburgh Fringe Festival ([www.edfringe.com](http://www.edfringe.com)) from Aug. 7-31.

☎ 44-131-4732-000  
[www.eif.co.uk](http://www.eif.co.uk)

## Garsington Opera

June 3-July 5

The penultimate season in the Bloomsbury Group's Oxfordshire setting of Garsington Manor, before the company has to find a new home, comprises an ambitious new production of Beethoven's opera "Fidelio," directed by John Cox. Extremely exciting for opera buffs is the U.K. premiere of Bohuslav Martinů's "Mirandolina," directed by Martin Duncan. The third new production is of Rossini's popular opera "La Cenerentola," directed by Daniel Slater.

☎ 44-1865-361-636  
[www.garsingtonopera.org](http://www.garsingtonopera.org)

## Glyndebourne Festival Opera

Until Aug. 28

Hot tickets for 2009 include a



Clockwise from left: a scene from 'Giulio Cesare' at Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Garsington Manor; the Scottish Ballet at the Edinburgh International Festival.

new production of Giuseppe Verdi's "Falstaff," directed by Richard Jones and starring Christopher Purves; Handel's "Giulio Cesare," a revival of the 2005 festival production, directed by David McVicar with the sensational Danielle de Niese and Sarah Connolly; a new production of Henry Purcell's "The Fairy Queen," with conductor William Christie (with Laurence Cummings taking five performances in late July and August) and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and Jonathan Kent directing a cast including Carolyn Sampson and Lucy Crowe.

A new production of Antonin Dvorák's "Rusalka" is conducted by Jiri Belohlávek, and British director Melly Still makes her Glyndebourne debut. Gaetano Donizetti's frivolous "L'elisir d'amore" is revived from the 2007 Glyndebourne on Tour production; and "Tristan und Isolde" from 2003 with conductor Vladimir Jurowski, and Torsten Kerl and Anja Kampe in the title roles.

☎ 44-1273-8138-13  
[www.glyndebourne.com](http://www.glyndebourne.com)

## Grange Park Opera

Until July 6

The enterprising Wasfi Kani's Grange Park Opera each summer stages three operas in its theater,

hidden in a Greek Revival temple in Hampshire. Martin Constantine directs and Stephen Barlow conducts Bellini's "Norma," starring Claire Rutter and Sara Fulgoni. Francesco Cavalli's rare "Eliogabalo," recounting the doings of that notorious Roman emperor, is directed and designed by David Fielding and conducted by Christian Curnyn. David



A 2005 performance of Mozart's 'Magic Flute' in a production that will be featured at this year's Aix festival.

Alden directs Ailish Tynan in the title role of Leos Janáček's "The Cunning Little Vixen," conducted by André de Ridder.

☎ 44-1962-7373-66  
[www.grangeparkopera.co.uk](http://www.grangeparkopera.co.uk)

## Korn/Ferry Opera Holland Park

Until Aug. 7

This opera event in a well-equipped temporary theater in west London's beautiful Holland Park offers a rare chance to see "Roberto Devereux" by Gaetano Donizetti, conducted by Richard Bonyngne, directed by Lindsay Posner and choreographed by Adam Cooper. The Can-Can is the famous number in Offenbach's "Orpheus in the Underworld"; here it's choreographed by Jenny Weston, with Hector Crémieux and Ludovic Halévy's libretto translated by Jeremy Sams. Janáček's "Kát'a Kabanová" is conducted by Stuart Stratford and directed by Olivia Fuchs.

☎ 44-845-2309-769  
[www.ohp.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.ohp.rbkc.gov.uk)

## Manchester International Festival

July 2-19

The world's first international festival consisting entirely of new, specially commissioned work boasts the queen of masochistic performance art, Marina Abramovicz, while architect Zaha Hadid combines with J.S. Bach in an installation piece. Antony and the Johnsons

perform, as do Kraftwerk, Carlos Acosta, Lou Reed and Laurie Anderson. Other hot tickets are a theatrical collaboration between Adam Curtis, Punchdrunk and Damon Albarn, and Rufus Wainwright's opera "Prima Donna."

☎ 44-844-8154-960  
[www.mif.co.uk](http://www.mif.co.uk)

## Ruhrtriennale

Aug. 15-Oct. 11

Artistic director Willy Decker presides over the third cycle of this event that spreads its program over three years, using as performance spaces mostly former industrial premises. The title is "Awakening," dealing with the theme of religion, and specifically Judaism, this year. There are artists of the first rank, from Marianne Faithfull and Marc Ribot to Anna Netrebko. The most exciting event is Mr. Decker's own production of Arnold Schönberg's masterwork, "Moses und Aron," in the vast Jahrhunderthalle in Bochum.

☎ 49-700-2002-3456  
[www.ruhrtriennale.de](http://www.ruhrtriennale.de)

## Salzburg

July 25-Aug. 30

The theme of this year's Salzburg Festival is "The Game of the Mighty," and its new opera productions are Handel's "Theodora," Luigi Nono's "Al gran sole carico d'amore," Rossini's "Moses in Egypt" and Mozart's "Cosi fan tutte." There are concerts by the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics and Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, while drama includes an evening of Samuel Beckett pieces.

☎ 43-662-8045-500  
[www.salzburgerfestspiele.at](http://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at)

## Savonlinna

July 3-Aug. 1

The hot ticket at the Finnish operal festival is Puccini's "Madama Butterfly." Savonlinna's other own productions are Arrigo Boito's "Mefistofele," their spectacular staging of Puccini's "Turandot" and Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor," with soprano Eglise Gutiérrez in the title role.

☎ 358-15-4767-50  
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# Top acts rock Istanbul's summer

BY MICHAEL KUSER

*Special to The Wall Street Journal*  
**T**HIS SUMMER, ISTANBUL is for music lovers. This vibrant city at the crossroads of Europe and Asia is hosting an eclectic series of performances, with musical delights ranging from the Vienna State Opera Ballet performing parts of Stravinsky's Firebird Suite in June, to modern jazz from Stanley Clarke's bass trio in July to Leonard Cohen's poetic folk in August.

Part of the attraction is the city's variety of unusual and historic venues. Visitors can listen to pianist André Previn, violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter and violoncello player Lynne Harrell perform together in a 1,600-year-old church, or sit where the sultans strolled, in the courtyard of Topkapi Palace, and hear a guitarist play Tchaikovsky, Schubert and other composers. They can take the Jazz Boat up the Bosphorus, first slapping the Asian shore with funk before lulling the European side with rhythm and blues on the way back downstream.

The perfect combination of rich music, exquisite historic venues and warm summer nights has made Istanbul's festivals especially popular in recent years. The city's main arts organization hosts a series of events, starting every spring with a film festival, a theater festival every two years, and annual music and jazz festivals in June and July. Yesim Gurer Oymak, director of the music festival, says ticket sales so far are up 15% compared to last year despite the difficult economic times.

The 37th Istanbul International Music Festival runs from June 5-30, the Jazz Festival from July 2-27, and the freestanding Cohen concerts are on Aug. 5 and 6. Those who prefer their art in three dimensions are in luck this year, for the 11th International Istanbul Biennial—taking its



Clockwise from top left: SMV, an all-bass trio featuring (from left) Victor Wooten, Stanley Clarke and Marcus Miller; cellist Han-Na Chang; the Hagia Irene concert hall; the Jazz Boat on the Bosphorus.

theme "What Keeps Mankind Alive?" from a song in Bertolt Brecht's Threepenny Opera—is slated to begin in September.

The music festival kicks off on June 5 with Sascha Goetzl conducting the house orchestra, the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic, in Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's Midsummer Night's Dream, plus a sampling of Stravinsky's Firebird Suite. Enter the Viennese dancers onstage at Hagia Irene, the former Byzantine church turned concert hall.

This is the same ancient building which will host Mr. Previn, who with his fellow artists will perform works by Mozart and Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, as well as the Turkish premiere of Mr. Previn's own composition, Piano Trio. Hagia Irene has wonderful acoustics, which should serve Mexican tenor Juan Diego Florez well when he sings on June 18.

Turkish artists perform in both

the classical and jazz festivals. On June 15, conductor Cem Mansur will lead the Akbank Chamber Orchestra in "Reflections on Bach," including compositions by Bach as well as ones he inspired by Beethoven, Graeme Koehne, Arvo Part and Villa-Lobos. Younger artists include Han-Na Chang on violoncello, who will perform works by Elgar and Mahler. Both Mr. Mansur and Ms. Chang will meet with critics and music lovers before their concerts as part of an educational initiative. The stage conversations are open to any ticket holder.

The Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Art, organizer of all the events, is this year's classical program in recognizing Daniel Barenboim for Lifetime Achievement. The conductor and pianist will accept the award on June 30, just before he conducts, and plays with, the La Scala Philharmonic Orchestra in a

festival finale performance of Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique.

Headliners at the 16th Istanbul International Jazz Festival perform at the city's unusually intimate outdoor amphitheater, the Cemil Topuzlu Open Air Theater, located about 1.5 kilometers from central Taksim Square. The amphitheater seats nearly 4,000, but is steep and tightly curved, giving a good view to every seat. SMV, the all-bass trio of Stanley Clarke, Marcus Miller and Victor Wooten bring three generations of low-register expertise to the stage on July 8.

Another hot ticket will be Joe Sample playing piano to Randy Crawford's singing. The two performers have collaborated off and on since 1976 and in March they released their latest album, "No Regrets." Ms. Crawford said she listened to Edith Piaf and understood right away that the French diva had been a big fan of Billie Holiday. On the album, Ms. Crawford and Mr. Sample also do a slew of R&B songs from the likes of Aretha Franklin, Bobby Blue Bland and Randy Newman, which they likely will be performing at the festival.

On July 27 George Benson will perform his "Unforgettable Tribute to Nat King Cole."

One of the most widely anticipated performances at the amphitheater this summer, however, will take place after the Jazz Festival has already ended. Leonard Cohen will be coming to Istanbul for the first time as part of a Europe-wide tour.

Tickets for the jazz festival range from 30 to 100 Turkish lira (€15 to €50), while tickets for the symphony orchestras are priced from 30 to 300 Turkish lira (€15 to €145). Leonard Cohen tickets are priced from 90 to 250 lira (€45 to €120).

For more information on all events: [www.iksv.org](http://www.iksv.org)

## Turkish delights

### Where to stay

The historic peninsula of old Istanbul is where the Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans ruled their empires, and where much of the music festival takes place.

The Four Seasons, housed in a century-old neoclassical building that used to be a prison, is the queen of the quarter, with standard rates starting at €400 (☎ 90-212-4023-000; [www.fourseasons.com/istanbul](http://www.fourseasons.com/istanbul)).

You can also stay in a former pasha's mansion, The Yesil Ev (double rooms from €250; ☎ 90-212-5176-785; [www.istanbulyesilev.com](http://www.istanbulyesilev.com)), a creaky wooden house with period charm, or at the Kybele Hotel (double rooms from €110; ☎ 90-212-5117-766; [www.kybelehotel.com](http://www.kybelehotel.com)), which is more basic but nice.

### Where to eat

The former port of Kumkapi is famous for its fish restaurants, such as Balikli Sabahattin (☎ 90-212-4581-824; [www.baliklisabahattin.com](http://www.baliklisabahattin.com)). One kebab house that offers stunning views of the Golden Horn and Galata Tower is Hamdi, located next to the Spice Bazaar on the waterfront in Eminönü (☎ 90-212-5280-390; [www.hamdirestorant.com.tr](http://www.hamdirestorant.com.tr)).

It's also easy to cross continents on a ferry from Eminönü to Kadıköy, where some concerts will be staged at the Süreyya Opera House. If going, grab a meal at Çiya Sofrası, a restaurant that offers delicious and unusual Turkish foods such as loquat kebab (☎ 90-216-3303-190; [www.ciya.com.tr](http://www.ciya.com.tr)).

# The latest reincarnation of Elvis

BY JOHN JURGENSEN

ON HIS COUNTRIFIED new album, "Secret, Profane & Sugarcane," Elvis Costello sings in the guise of P.T. Barnum, a honky-tonk drunkard and a sleazy politician barnstorming from Albany to Ypsilanti. One character missing from this tableau of Americana: the so-called angry young man of British music that many listeners still identify with the bespectacled 54-year-old singer. In an unpredictable career spanning three decades, Mr. Costello has collaborated with everyone from symphony orchestras to young pop acts such as Fall Out Boy. To feed his live act, the rock hall-of-famer has recorded recent albums at the pace of a garage band, an approach that's seen him through the recording industry's recent implosion.

And now—intentionally or not—he is solidifying a role as a journeyman of American music and one of its most high-profile curators. That came into focus recently with his television show "Spectacle," in which he interviewed and performed with influential musicians such as Herbie Hancock, Tony Bennett and Smokey Robinson.

Mr. Costello, who was raised in West London, married a Canadian (jazz singer Diana Krall), and has two-year-old twin sons who are American citizens, dismisses the idea that his art has a national identity. "In my mind the most important thing is the truthfulness of the emotion rather than where it appears to come from geographically," says Mr. Costello, who lives primarily in Vancouver.

But some people close to Mr. Costello say he's evolving into something of an American institution. "He's the closest thing in our culture to a George Gershwin character, not just in his sophistication but in how he moves comfortably from one genre to another," says Bill Flanagan, editorial director of MTV Networks and a friend of Mr. Costello.

Spiky anthems like 1978's "Pump It Up" represent Mr. Costello's most familiar hits, but his legacy may be leaning more toward the sound of his new album, which features mandolin, fiddle and a country ballad co-written with Loretta Lynn. "An awful lot of his greatest work has been in this American-roots music vein," says Mr. Flanagan.

Mr. Costello, whose father was a band-leader and whose mother ran a record shop, has always borrowed from the pop, soul and folk of the U.S. But his collegial standing among earthy American artists, from George Jones to Solomon Burke, has been decades in the making and is unique among British acts of the punk generation. The relationship hasn't always been smooth: He didn't tour the U.S. for two years after a scandal erupted in 1979 over insulting remarks he made about black American singers including Ray Charles. (He immediately repudiated the drunken comments and continued to atone for them over the years, including in his 2003 liner notes for an album reissued from that era.)

The twangy sound of "Secret, Profane & Sugarcane" may be just a stopover for an artist moving through middle age, but the way it was created could signal where Mr. Costello is headed. He cut the album in three days and before he knew which record company would put it out. Album producer T-Bone Burnett says that approach "sends a powerful statement" about how a veteran act can operate in unsteady times.

The narrative of "Secret, Profane & Sugarcane" is set in the American heartland, but the project started with the story of a Dane and his love for a Swede. In 2005, the Royal Danish Opera commissioned Mr. Costello to write an opera about Hans Christian Andersen. "Rather than set 'The Ugly Duckling' to music," Mr. Costello says, he found inspiration in Andersen's unrequited obsession with the Swedish songbird Jenny Lind.

"So many people feel themselves unfit and unsuitable for love, and Andersen, in this romantic era with a capital 'R,' had this



James O'Mara

tortuous relationship with love," Mr. Costello says.

As a vehicle for this story and other historical threads, including slavery, Mr. Costello incorporated the true story of Lind's turbulent concert tour of the U.S. in 1850, which was organized by P.T. Barnum.

Mr. Costello performed 10 songs from the opera commission—its only staging so far—in Copenhagen in fall 2005. Later, he considered using some of the songs for a solo acoustic album, but as he discussed them with Mr. Burnett, the singer decided they called out for additional instrumentation and "colors."

A year ago the men convened at the Sound Emporium, a Nashville studio built by the musician and producer Cowboy Jack Clement. ("The best sounding room for acoustic music in the world," Mr. Burnett calls it.)

They sat in a semicircle with the country string band they'd assembled and laid down three or four songs a day. With Mr. Costello setting the pace—"He just goes in and pulls the trigger," says Mr. Burnett—there was little risk of overthinking the arrangements.

As he provided harmony vocals, Grammy-winning singer Jim Lauderdale "had to trail Elvis like a bloodhound because nothing was rehearsed," Mr. Burnett says.

In lieu of drums, mandolin player Mike Compton and double bassist Dennis Crouch supplied a driving beat to songs such as "Hidden Shame," about an accidental killer. "My All Time Doll," a brooding blues about an out-of-reach lover, is flavored by Jeff Taylor's accordion.

Dubbed the Sugarcanes, a version of this band will tour with Mr. Costello, starting this month. His long-term focus on his live act has helped insulate him from the industry-wide plunge in sales of recorded music,

including his own. Released in 1998, Mr. Costello's collaboration album with Burt Bacharach, "Painted From Memory," sold more than 300,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

By comparison, his album "Momofuku," which he recorded in a week last year and did little to promote, sold about 48,000 copies. "Any number they sell above zero is good," he says.

His current disregard for the machinery of the music industry—"A lot of these people aren't that smart"—caps a career of defying commercial expectations. When Columbia Records hungered for new-wave hits in the vein of "Radio, Radio," he delivered a country record, 1981's "Almost Blue." He continued to zig-zag, jumping from the solo folk of "King of America" (his first album with Mr. Burnett) to the pop punch of "Spike" in 1989.

"What seemed like career-wise counterproductive now seems pretty smart, because he has a tremendous live audience who never know what they're going to see," says Mr. Flanagan. "That actually turned out to be a good strategy for the post-record company world that we're entering."

After a decade under the Universal Music umbrella, Mr. Costello is releasing "Secret, Profane & Sugarcane" on Hear Music, a joint venture between the Concord Music Group and Starbucks Coffee, which will carry the CD in its cafés.

The album's credits reflect Mr. Costello's ties to a group of distinctly American musicians. Johnny Cash recorded the song "Hidden Shame," which Mr. Costello wrote for him. In the kitchen of Mr. Cash's cabin in Tennessee, Mr. Costello sat down to write "I Felt the Chill" with Ms. Lynn. And on the song "Crooked Line," about the challenges of fidelity, Mr. Costello harmonizes with Em-

mylou Harris, who he first toured with 20 years ago.

Popping up in cameos and collaborations with Zelig-like frequency, Mr. Costello is as much a music geek as a pop institution.

Two weeks ago he appeared at New York's 92nd Street Y for a concert celebrating Mr. Bacharach. Sitting alone in row X at the rear of the theater, Mr. Costello balanced his purple fedora on his knee so he could clap loudly and hoot for Dionne Warwick and Sarah Dash, a founding member of the R&B group Labelle. Later, he crept out of his seat to take the stage and croon Mr. Bacharach's "I Just Don't Know What to Do With Myself" to orchestral accompaniment. He remarked, "I put that in my set in 1977 when people were expecting daggers and razor blades."

The night after the Bacharach gala, Mr. Costello sat in at a jazz club with New Orleans piano player Allen Toussaint, who he made an album with in 2006, "The River In Reverse." Last week he helped sing the Spinal Tap song "Gimme Some Money" at a concert by members of that satirical band.

All this came on the heels of a guest appearance on the NBC sitcom "30 Rock," in which Mr. Costello took heat about his given name (Declan McManus) and sang a satiric "We Are the World"-style anthem with the likes of Sheryl Crow, Mary J. Blige and the Beastie Boys.

Mr. Costello's overlapping roles as performer, collaborator and music buff formed the basis for his TV show, "Spectacle." The series appeared in the U.K. on Channel 4 and in the U.S. on the Sundance Channel. Sundance recently announced that "Spectacle" had been picked up for a second season and discussions are under way with other broadcasters to fully complete financing for the new episodes.

Though "Spectacle" welcomed a few acts who originated outside the U.S.—including Elton John (who, along with his partner David Furnish, produced the show) and the Police—the roster was dominated by Americans. They ranged from the young indie rocker Jenny Lewis to Herbie Hancock and other artists who influenced the young musician who became Elvis Costello.

"To sing with Smokey Robinson at the Apollo and have him say you take lead and I'll sing harmony, I couldn't believe that was happening," Mr. Costello recalls. "The show is not about the host's personality. It's not about me, it's about them."

## Arbitrage



## The price of reading glasses

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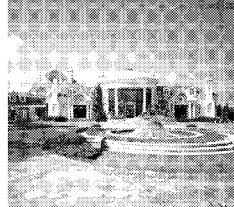
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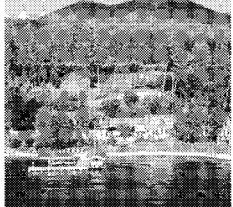
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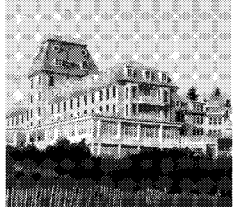
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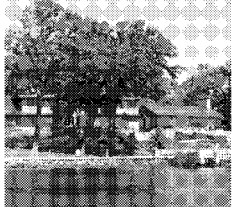
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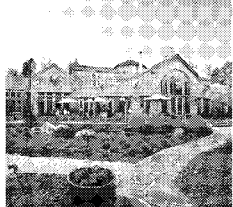
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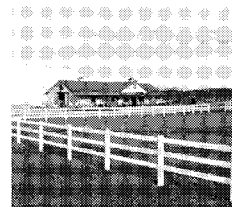
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**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

# The madness behind the method



Above, 'Day 579' (2006), by Bobby Baker, and (right) a chair designed for 'Mechanotherapy' (circa 1901-05), both on show in London.



**LONDON:** Two exhibitions at the Wellcome Collection address mental illness and its effect on art. The first, "Madness & Modernity: Mental illness and the visual arts in Vienna 1900" (until June 28), encompasses both some horrible photographs of patients whose physical deformities were thought somehow to correspond to mental derangement, and a part of Sigmund Freud's personal art collection and a replica of his couch. This ingenious exhibition strikingly shows the influence of psychiatry on early modernism in the visual arts. But then it does something more remarkable, and shows the influence of modernism on the lives and the images of the mentally ill.

Part of this is in the realms of design and architecture, where, as architectural models and a splendid selection of furniture show, great architects and designers of the caliber of Josef Hoffman and Otto Wagner

tried to create new modernist environments where the mentally ill could be cared for, treated and, if necessary, confined.

Even better, I think, is the companion exhibition, "Bobby Baker's Diary Drawings: Mental illness and me, 1997-2008" (until Aug. 2). This is a very large selection of carefully photographed drawings (placed on her own kitchen table, and photographed by her husband, Andrew Whittuck). The drawings were made when Ms. Baker was suffering what one psychiatrist called "a borderline personality disorder." Ms. Baker, an art school graduate, is a celebrated performance artist, whose wryly funny work mostly involves food and cooking, exploring the nurturing role of women and feminist issues.

I have seen several of her performances, and count myself a fan. But I was at first shocked, then moved, and then riveted by these extremely fine drawings. They depict her proceeding from self-harming behavior to becoming interested again in the world around her, relapsing, ballooning in size as a side-effect of medication, and finally being able once again to enjoy food, family and friends.

At times Ms. Baker seems almost oblivious to the considerable success of her performance career, but at the end she emerges, from the 17 different stages of her illness in which she groups her drawings, as an integrated personality and a great—and always interesting—talent.

—Paul Levy  
[www.wellcomecollection.org](http://www.wellcomecollection.org)



Portrait of a young woman (circa 1440-45), by Rogier van der Weyden.

## Those mysterious Netherlandish masterpieces

**BERLIN:** "The Master of Flémalle and Rogier van der Weyden," at the Gemäldegalerie, brings together priceless works of early Netherlandish painting attributed to two great Flemish artists or to their workshops. It asks many questions and answers almost none. Flanders in the 15th century was Europe's richest province and a hothouse of art production; in the 16th century it became a political and religious maelstrom. Paintings were destroyed, and records were lost, and nearly every major decision about the attribution of works from the period came down to the intuition of 19th- and 20th-century art historians.

The exhibition cannot solve the riddle of which paintings were created by Rogier (1399/1400-1464), whose lone signed work was destroyed. And it cannot end the controversy surrounding the entire biography of the Master of Flémalle (c. 1375-1444), who is now often accepted as the artist Robert Campin, the Tournai painter who probably employed Rogier in his workshop. But it does show some 50 works of astonishing clarity and beauty. There is a diptych from the Hermitage, with a richly colored panel depicting the Throne of Mercy, or the Holy Trinity, along with the great grisaille panel from Frankfurt's Städel Museum, depicting the Throne of Mercy as unpainted sculpture. Both panels are generally attributed to someone called the Master of Flémalle. Did the same man paint both pictures? The exhibition asks and won't answer.

—J.S. Marcus  
Until June 21  
[www.smb.spk-berlin.de](http://www.smb.spk-berlin.de)

## Wallace Shawn's 'Grasses' mixes sex, lies and food

**LONDON:** Wallace Shawn's "Grasses of a Thousand Colours," at the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs, is a play about man's "two basic needs—the need for food and the need for sex." Mr. Shawn, as the central character Ben, a retired food scientist whose memoirs provide the starting point of the drama, says this explicitly in one of his many fiendishly long monologues. He goes on: "And I remember thinking... Well—yes—but right now the world isn't running out of sex, it's running out of food."

Some will see a play exclu-

sively about sex—indeed the theater's atmosphere turns blue with descriptions of it in both Anglo-Saxon and Latin vernacular. But this is emphatically also a play dealing with the hot issue of "food security," how to ensure a continued food supply in a world of hunger and economic uncertainties.

Mr. Shawn remembers that mad-cow disease was traced back to cattle feed that contained cattle remains. Early on Ben shows a picture of a strange-looking dog, saying, "This was one of our earliest successes, because my good friend Rufus here was the very first large mammal ever to be raised entirely on the meat of members of his own species."

Ben's wife, Cerise, is played in spectacularly feline fashion by

Miranda Richardson. In her own monologue (most of the play consists of long speeches), Cerise shows us the worst of this foodie dystopia. It was easier living before her husband's discoveries, she says, "because you didn't then need to worry about what you ate. You could eat whatever you liked...People ate and digested the same foods for their whole lives. They ate shrimp when they were children, and when they were old they were still eating shrimp."

Ben explains the parallel changes in sexual behavior: "The way things are now still seems astonishing—I mean, the fact that people talk now about their penises and vaginas in public, at dinner parties...I can't get over it."

—Paul Levy  
Until June 27  
[www.royalcourttheatre.com](http://www.royalcourttheatre.com)



Miranda Richardson as Cerise in 'Grasses of a Thousand Colours.'

## At a converted chocolate factory, dinner theater with a twist

**LONDON:** Want to know how to spend a perfect evening in London? Have a civilized early dinner at the gastronomically ambitious but not ruinously expensive Menier Chocolate Factory, where head chef Anthony Falla dishes up eclectic modern British cuisine. Then ease yourself into the converted Southwark chocolate factory's 150-seat theater, where you can see a spiffing revival of the best-known of Ben Travers's Aldwych farces, the 1926 "Rookery Nook." Travers's comedies are close theatrical relatives of the stories of P.G. Wodehouse: Foreigners are funnier than everybody

except cleaning ladies; mothers-in-law are threatening, but sisters-in-law are even scarier; young men are dim but lecherous; and retired admirals are both crazy and lecherous.

"Rookery Nook" has more than its share of these stock characters. The brutish German stepfather is called Putz (Nick Brimble, as a giant German, looks startlingly like John Cleese in "Fawlty Towers"). The stepdaughter he throws out of his house wearing only her frilly pyjamas, Rhoda Marley, is a perfectly innocent flapper. The control-freak sister-in-law, Gertrude Twine, insists Rhoda is really Putz's mistress;

her near-imbecile husband, Harold, fears Gertrude more than death and nervously nibbles his straw hat.

The temporary tenant of the seaside cottage called Rookery Nook, who blamelessly shelters Rhoda for the night, is the newly married upper-class twit, Gerald Popkiss. He has a rivalrous relationship with his cousin Clive, a genuine bouncer, played show-stealingly by Edward Baker-Duly, who can move independently each of the expressive dimples in his roguish cheeks.

—Paul Levy  
Until June 20  
[www.menierchocolatefactory.com](http://www.menierchocolatefactory.com)



From left, Neil Stuke, Mark Hadfield and Edward Baker-Duly in 'Rookery Nook.'

## We Are Blind to Mona Lisa's Charms

The response of most tourists, on first seeing the Mona Lisa in person, is one of vague disappointment. Eavesdrop on the multitudes and, before long, someone will dare to ask the question on everyone's mind: What's the big deal?

Why has this one painting (probably depicting Lisa Gherardini, the wife of Francesco del Giocondo, a wealthy Florentine silk merchant) come to assume a unique and paramount stature in human culture? A number of factors have supplied it with the necessary mythic updraft. If the Mona Lisa were hanging in the Prado in Madrid or the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, it would never have achieved the cosmic ranking that it now enjoys. Surely its qualities would be devoutly appreciated, but after the fashion and to the same degree as, say, Leonardo's "Lady With an Ermine" in the Czartoryski Museum in Krakow.

The Mona Lisa, however, sits enthroned in the center of the Louvre, which lies in the center of Paris, which, for more than 100 years, was the unchallenged center of Western art. Indeed, the painting, begun in 1503, seemed—and still seems—somehow French, having entered the national patrimony around 1516, when Francis I invited Leonardo to his palace at Amboise.

Her familiarity makes it hard to see why she's so mysterious—and shocking.

But, of course, the influence of Paris—and its art critics—was only one factor. It was also crucial that Leonardo was a man unlike any other in the history of art. A myriad-minded polymath and inventor, he acquired, even in his own lifetime, the aura of a magus. His entire oeuvre took on a shimmer of holiness that would have made little sense in connection to the mere excellence of, say, Titian or Raphael.

And then there is, obviously, the fact that the Mona Lisa is, technically speaking, a very great work of art. But is that really obvious? Well, it would be if we could still see the thing. Unfortunately, it has assumed a pall of such impenetrable familiarity that we no longer see it at all.

But if ever you succeed in seeing the painting as people saw it in centuries past, you will discover something astounding: The Mona Lisa looks entirely different from what we have been led to believe. To many observers, this is the one supreme masterpiece, the unarguable bedrock of our visual culture. In fact, it is anything but that. It is a mysterious, shifting, elusive thing, and it was that very ambiguity that so confounded and compelled the attention of all who saw it in the past.

Most portraits, by design, convey one fairly simple idea: They preserve the particulars of their sitters while bringing them into conformity with a general type, whether of beauty, rank or piety. What distinguishes the Mona Lisa is that no fewer than three portraits coexist within it simultaneously.

The first of these, the most common sort of female portrait in the Renaissance, presents the sitter as a beautiful and desirable woman who, true to type, smiles at the viewer. But if we look more closely, her expression becomes one of sadness, even pain, which is almost unheard of in a portrait of this time. And no sooner have we grasped that impression than another follows fast upon it: a sense of nightmarish menace that caused Walter Pater, the great 19th-century essayist, to declare in a famous passage that "she is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and

learned the secrets of the grave." So it was not only her beauty, but also her sadness and then those intimations of savagery, that so transfixed the critics of the 19th century. That was why Jules Michelet could write that "this canvas attracts me, entices me, invades me and absorbs me. And I go to her in spite of myself, as the bird to the snake." Those qualities are still there, visible only to those who can tear away the carapace of convention that encrusts the Mona Lisa. But the reward for doing so is that, finally, you can see the manifold excellence of the work. Perhaps most striking of all its qualities is its potent originality. No other portrait of its time, and only one or two other paintings by Leonardo, seek or attain such an air of suffocating, feverish intensity. We can only wonder what might have induced the artist to place this young woman against a back-

drop of subaquatic menace, of ancient meandering rivers and treacherous precipices.

Like most of the portraits of this period, and like most of Leonardo's portraits, the Mona Lisa is a half-length of a seated woman (it is just possible to make out the arm of the chair in which she sits.) The face is an odd compromise between the general and the particular. Representing Leonardo's preoccupation with anatomy, the face expresses unparalleled naturalism, yet it remains largely an androgynous type, one that recurs in Leonardo's "Virgin of the Rock" and in his depiction of St. John.

After the eye has accounted for such generalizing impulses, suddenly it is drawn to the incongruous perspectival and anatomical perfection of the hands and midriff, which are angled away from the picture plane. Those hands embody the scientific naturalism that began among the Lombard Herbalists of the late 14th century and would be revived, a century after Leonardo, in Caravaggio and his followers.

If, for the generation after Leonardo, perspective became an intuition, for the generation before him, it had been a mathematical science. That was how the aged Leonardo saw it as well: and in those hands, the science of Florentine perspective achieves its final and noblest flowering.

Mr. Gardner is a critic based in New York.



Reunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY

## In Defense of Affluence

By Todd G. Buchholz

I have no sympathy for Mr. and Mrs. "I Deserve Four Bedrooms and a Jacuzzi," the couple who saved no money, put no money down, and worked with a crooked mortgage broker to move into a McMansion—from which they are now sneaking out. And yet I have grown weary of all the scolds who are treating Americans like naughty dogs, rolling up newspapers and smacking them on the snouts, shouting: "Bad American! Bad consumer! Stop spending! Get yourself a small car, a small house, or—even better—a pup tent in a national park!"

Maybe amid the financial wreckage we feel a natural yearning to go back to simpler times. But some of our commentators have taken this urge a little far. In April, the Chronicle of Higher Education carried an article subtitled "The Gift of Financial Insecurity," noting that, as a result of the crisis, "perhaps Americans can now begin to temper their ingrained optimism with a more elegiac sensibility." In a sweeping Time cover story, Kurt Andersen told readers that "it's time to ratchet back our wild and crazy grasshopper side and get in touch with our inner ant." Baron Layard, a British economist and the author of "Happiness: Lessons From a New Science," seems to think that we would be better off psychologically if we erased a few more zeroes from our bank accounts. After all, he says, "extra income has done so little to produce a happier

society, there must be something quite wasteful about much of it."

None of this is new, of course. "Small Is Beautiful" by E.F. Schumacher was a book that millions of undergraduates had to read in the 1970s, until roughly the time Jimmy Carter gave his fireside "malaise" speech in a cardigan sweater and looked so sad that the fire went out. Mr. Schumacher, the world's first German-born, Buddhist-British economist, and the chief economist for the British Coal Board, argued for "enoughness," a Buddhist view that we should get by with far less. For Mr. Schumacher, modern society "requires so much and accomplishes so little." True, until you consider that in 1900 life expectancy was just 47 years.

In fact, small is not necessarily better, and there is a difference between a simpler life and the life of a simpleton. At what point in time should we declare: "Stop. Enough progress. Let's keep things simple"? Would 1 B.C. have been a good time to hit "pause"? Or July 3, 1776? Or on the eve of the 1964 Civil Rights vote? It's a good thing Teddy Roosevelt did not lock us into the standard of living of 1904 or we would never fly on airplanes, get a polio vaccination or expect to live past the age of 50. With all due respect to medicine men, who did sometimes come across valuable herbal tonics, it was daring sci-

ence, not the jungle, that produced Jonas Salk. Grants from the Mellon Foundation helped, too.

Without the progress of the 20th century, Milton Berle said, we'd all be watching television by candlelight. We cannot know what we could be missing by halting our climb to toward affluence and



greater possibility, any more than Emperor Joseph II could help Mozart by declaring that his opera had "too many notes."

And there is something unfair about decrying consumption at this stage in the game. Even if we simplify our lives and forswear "extra income," we will still benefit from centuries of innovation and wealth-creation that others have yet to enjoy. Make no mistake: To embrace the small-is-beautiful ethos is to crank up the drawbridge and leave a crocodile-infested moat between elites who already own Viking ranges and the

world's unwashed masses yearning to gain access to indoor plumbing. Never mind that in the past 20 years, thanks in part to the explosion of American consumption, hundreds of millions of people around the world, now with jobs to meet U.S. import demands, have eaten three meals in one day—for the very first time in their lives. This is a War on Poverty that we are winning! Snobs would rather downsize and turn victory into defeat.

As for the simple life, its charms wear off fast. Many tourists have tramped around Walden Pond snapping photos, but few would take seriously what Thoreau would probably advise today: to throw away our BlackBerrys and start growing real berries.

And yet there are plenty of books on happiness urging us to do something like that: to surrender our raw capitalistic drives and to leave the rat-race before the entire world turns into a Habitrail. I would argue that it is the excitement of competition—sloppy, risky and tense—that brings us happiness. It is the pursuit of knowledge, money and status that releases dopamine and ignites our passion. Neuroscientists report that when a person begins to take a risk, whether gambling on roulette or ginning up the nerve to ask a pretty girl to the prom, his left prefrontal cortex

lights up, signaling a natural "high." Alpha waves and oxygenated blood rush to the brain. Sitting alone in a pup tent does not yield the same effects.

Humans have competed ever since Cain picked up a rock and knocked Abel on the head. And, from a historical point of view, the idea of competition has not imprisoned us but liberated us, psychologically and materially. I write this at St. John's College, Cambridge, in a charming old office just a few blocks from the pub where Watson and Crick interrupted lunch to announce they had found "the secret of life" (the DNA double helix). They were driven by beer, moxie, ego and competitiveness.

As Albert O. Hirschman noted in his book "The Passion and the Interests," traditional societies believed that the noble classes living in the castles were composed of fundamentally different kinds of humans from the rest of us. Kings and queens, it was thought, should pursue their passions, whereas the rest of us should just tend our sheep, drink ale and forget about the mannered and manored life. But all that changed with the rise of democracy and industrial society—and the arrival of a broad "affluence." Now is no time to send ourselves back to a life of simple serfdom.

Mr. Buchholz, a visiting fellow at Cambridge University, is working on a book called "RUSH: Competition and the Human Race for Happiness."

# time off



Left, 'Study for Improvisation 8' (1910), by Wassily Kandinsky, in Bonn; above, cosmetic powder boxes from 1925 (left) and 1930 (right), in Berlin.

## Athens

**art**  
"Athens Fringe Festival 2009" presents pieces by young European artists working in various art forms, including dance, theater, music, fine arts, film, architecture, graffiti and photography.  
Athens Fringe Festival  
June 15-21  
☎ 30-210-3600-410  
www.sinthesis.gr

## Barcelona

**architecture**  
"Villa Nurbs—Architecture and Ceramics" showcases Villa Nurbs, a home designed by the Spanish architect Enric Ruiz-Geli (born 1968) with artist Frederic Amat (born 1952) and ceramist Toni Cumella (born 1951).  
Museu de Ceràmica  
Until Aug. 30  
☎ 34-93-2563-465  
www.museuceramica.bcn.cat

## Basel

**art**  
"Giacometti" shows works by Swiss Modernist sculptor, painter and draftsman Alberto Giacometti (1901-66).  
Fondation Beyeler  
Until Oct. 11  
☎ 41-61-6459-700  
www.beyeler.com

## Berlin

**fashion**  
"Sequins-Poses-Powder Boxes: Fashion Drawings and Objects from the Twenties" features fashion drawings and cosmetic accessories from 1920s Berlin, Paris and Vienna.  
Kulturforum Potsdamer Platz, Kunstbibliothek  
Until Aug. 9  
☎ 49-30-266-2951  
www.smb.museum

## Bonn

**art**  
"Encounters with Modern Art: The Kunstmuseum Winterthur—The Great Collections" exhibits paintings and sculptures by leading modernist artists.  
Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
Until Aug. 23  
☎ 49-228-9171-0  
www.kah-bonn.de

## Brussels

**art**  
"Atomium 58: 14 Visions" and "In Search of the Atom Style" are two cartoon exhibitions presenting works by 14 European comic strip artists featuring the Atomium.  
Atomium  
Until Sept. 20  
☎ 32-2-4754-777  
www.atomium.be

## Dresden

**art**  
"Gods Transformed—Ancient sculptures of the Museo del Prado" shows classical sculptures produced during the Roman Imperial Period (late 1st century B.C. to 4th century A.D.).  
Japanisches Palais-Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden  
Until Sept. 27  
☎ 49-351-4914-2000  
www.sk-dresden.de

## Dublin

**art**  
"From Raphael to Rossetti: Drawings from the Collection" displays 40 draw-



ings by celebrated draftsmen from the 15th to the 19th century.  
National Gallery of Ireland  
Until Aug. 23  
☎ 353-1-6615-133  
www.nationalgallery.ie

## Düsseldorf

**art**  
"On Paper: Our Finest Hand Drawings from Raphael to Beuys, from Rembrandt to Trockel" presents drawings by more than 300 artists from the 15th to the 20th century.  
Museum Kunst-Palast  
Until Aug. 2  
☎ 49-211-8990-200  
www.museum-kunst-palast.de

## Frankfurt

**art**  
"Sevrugian—Images of the Orient in Photography and Painting, 1880 to 1980" showcases works by the Armenian artists Antoine-Khan Sevruquin (1840-1933) and André "Darvish"

Sevrugian (1894-1996), part of a family of diplomats in Tehran.  
Museum der Weltkulturen  
Until July 12  
☎ 49-69-2123-6337  
www.mdw-frankfurt.de

## The Hague

**art**  
"Günter Brus—Midnight Red" exhibits drawings and image-poems by Austrian painter, performance artist and writer Günter Brus (born 1938).  
Haags Gemeentemuseum  
Until Sept. 20  
☎ 31-70-3381-111  
www.gemeentemuseum.nl

## Helsinki

**textiles**  
"Textile Art Now!" shows works by 29 contemporary textile artists exploring various trends and techniques.  
Helsinki Design Museum  
Until Aug. 30

☎ 358-9-6220-540  
www.designmuseum.fi

## London

**theater**  
"The Bridge Project: The Winter's Tale & The Cherry Orchard" presents the play by Shakespeare and Tom Stoppard's version of Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard," both directed by Sam Mendes.  
The Old Vic  
Until Aug. 15  
☎ 44-870-0606-628  
www.oldvictheatre.com

## Madrid

**art**  
"Juan Muñoz" is a retrospective of Spanish sculptor Juan Muñoz (1953-2001), including sculptures, drawings, writings and sound-based installations.  
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía  
Until Aug. 31

## art

"Peter Fischli/David Weiss—Are Animals People?" shows a selection of pieces by Swiss artists Peter Fischli (born 1952) and David Weiss (born 1946).  
Palacio de Cristal  
Until Aug. 31  
☎ 39-1-7741-000  
www.museoreinasofia.es

## Paris

**architecture**  
"Gustave Eiffel 'Genius of Iron'" pays tribute to the French engineer Gustave Eiffel (1832-1923) creator of the Eiffel Tower, currently celebrating its 120th birthday.  
Hôtel de Ville  
Until Aug. 29  
☎ 33-1-4276-4040  
www.paris.fr

## art

"In the Eye of the Critic—Bernard Lamarche-Vadel and the Artists" displays 200 works by 60 artists, discovered and critiqued by Bernard Lamarche-Vadel (1949-2000).  
Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris  
Until Sept. 6  
☎ 33-1-5367-4000  
www.mam.paris.fr

## Rotterdam

**history**  
"Brazil Contemporary" explores Brazilian culture through the work of the Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica (1937-1980).  
Museum Boijmans van Beuningen  
Until Aug. 23  
☎ 31-10-4419-400  
www.boijmans.nl

## Vienna

**design**  
"Furniture as Trophy" showcases so-called antler furniture, made from hunted animals, a style that was widespread in the hunting lodges of the Alpine region around the middle of the 19th century.  
MAK  
Until Nov. 1  
☎ 43-1-7113-6298  
www.mak.at

## Zurich

**art**  
"Gianni Colombo 'Ambienti'" shows work by the Italian optical and kinetic artist Gianni Colombo (1937-93), brother of the famous designer Joe Cesare Colombo.  
Haus Konstruktiv  
Until Aug. 2  
☎ 41-44-2177-080  
www.hauskonstruktiv.ch

## art

"Performing Masks" presents ritual masks from southern India and carnival masks from Switzerland.  
Museum Rietberg-Novartis Gallery  
Until Oct. 18  
☎ 41-1-2063-131  
www.stadt-zuerich.ch

Source: ArtBase Global Arts News Service, WSJE research.