2012-2013 Season Brochure

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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From opening night on September 29 to the final curtain call on May 11, artists in the 2012/13 Peak Performances season prove that exceptions rule at Montclair State University.

Opera premieres by composer David T. Little and director Robert Wilson set new standards for a familiar art form. Even more boldly, an American stage premiere from Romeo Castellucci highlights the innate capacity of live performance to illuminate the human condition by exposing its frailties.

Dance uncoils diverse worlds of expression with premieres by three distinctly different choreographers: Benjamin Millepied, Richard Alston, and Jasmin Vardimon. And without fail, the captivating performers of Via Katlehong return with the premiere of a uniquely South African cabaret.

Music crosses boundaries with traveling tales from ARTEK and Lionheart Vocal Ensemble, connects east to west with the Shanghai Quartet, and sustains new versions of classic works with pianists Sarah Rothenberg and Marilyn Nonken.

The season ends with original innovators changing the rules, namely the first-time collaboration between new-music standard bearers Laurie Anderson and the Kronos Quartet.

Creativity is celebrated all season. Whether an emerging visionary or a world class luminary, each artist appearing in the Alexander Kasser Theater will be heard in full voice – no compromise.

I look forward to greeting you at the Kasser.

— Jedediah Wheeler
Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming
THE 2012/13 SEASON AT-A-GLANCE

Get ready for a season full of exciting premiere events. This guide presents the season month to month, or you can read this brochure by genre. However you like to explore the arts, every seat at Peak Performances is always $15.

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College of the Arts - Daniel Gurskis, Dean
In addition to the professional programs and artists featured in this book, Montclair State’s College of the Arts presents a full season of dance, theater, and music events that are open to the public. Tickets and information can be found online at peakperfs.org.

BROCHURE BY GENRE

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What does it mean to follow your instincts? Featuring world class vocal talent, Dog Days is a darkly comedic new opera brought to life through David T. Little’s inventive combination of classical and contemporary music elements. Based on the short story by Judy Budnitz, this world premiere investigates what happens when a working-class American family – and the “dog” appearing at their front door – is pitted against an apocalyptic scenario in the not-too-distant future. Featuring musical direction from Alan Pierson (artistic director for Alarm Will Sound and the Brooklyn Philharmonic), Dog Days was created in collaboration with librettist Royce Vavrek, and is directed by master auteur Robert Woodruff.

Featuring John Kelly and vocalists James Bobick, Marnie Breckenridge, Cherry Duke, Michael Marcotte, Peter Tantsits, and Lauren Worsham

With chamber ensemble Newspeak and special guests.

Please be advised: Production contains adult themes and content.

Dog Days was produced by Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ) in association with Beth Morrison Projects.

Dog Days was commissioned by Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ). Selections from Dog Days were commissioned and presented by Carnegie Hall for the Weill Music Institute. Scenes from Dog Days were presented as part of New York City Opera’s VOX Contemporary American Opera Lab.

Supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

973-655-5112 | www.peakperfs.org | Every Seat $15
WORLD PREMIERE – A PEAK PRODUCTION

ROBERT WILSON
BERNICE JOHNSON REAGON
TOSHI REAGON
JACQUELINE WOODSON

ZINNIAS:
THE LIFE OF CLEMENTINE HUNTER

A new chamber opera based on the life of renowned African-American artist Clementine Hunter, *Zinnias* is an intimate exploration of one of America’s greatest natural talents. Born on a plantation in Natchitoches, Louisiana, Hunter’s experiences revealed an innate talent for depicting life in the early 20th century through her paintings. Now, using her artwork and stories, Clementine Hunter’s touching and unique journey is brought to the stage through the collaboration of Robert Wilson, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Toshi Reagon and Jacqueline Woodson.

*Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter*
Concept, Direction and Design by Robert Wilson
Libretto and Music Composition by Bernice Johnson Reagon and Toshi Reagon
Story and Book by Jacqueline Woodson

World premiere of *Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter* produced by Peak Performances at Montclair State University in January 2013. *Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter* is made possible in part by a grant from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Creative Campus Innovations Grant Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

973-655-5112 | www.peakperfs.org | Every Seat $15
Don't miss the American premiere of one of the most controversial theater pieces to emerge from Europe in the past few years. A starkly wondrous invention of stagecraft, *On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God* questions the meaning of life through a realistic prism of faith and love. As an adult son copes with caring for his aging father, this ode to compassion implores the audience to experience the sacred nature of dignity gained through suffering. In a work both tender and provocative, Romeo Castellucci pushes the limits of stage expression, drawing parallels between the spiritual and the physical worlds.

*Please be advised: Production contains adult themes and content.*

Produced by Societas Raffaello Sanzio. Co-produced by Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ), Theater der Welt 2010 (Essen); deSingel International Arts Campus (Antwerp); Théâtre National de Bretagne (Rennes); The National Theatre (Oslo); Barbican London and SPILL Festival of Performance; Châlon International Theatre Festival (Mâcon); Holon Festival (Amsterdam); Alfort Festival; GREEK Festival de Barcelona; Festival d’Agnon; International Theatre Festival DIALOG Wroclaw; Belgrade International Theatre Festival; Spazioell Europa (Berlin); Festival de la Ville (Paris); RomaEuropa Festival; Theatre Festival SPIELART München; Le-Mémon (Strasbourg); Sténes Européennes; and Théâtre Auditorium de Poitiers. Produced in collaboration with Centrale Fies/Dro. Production photo: Ronald Lefebvre.
Through his work with the New York City Ballet and on the film Black Swan, choreographer Benjamin Millepied is redefining dance for the 21st century. This program will feature a new work by Millepied, with a score by composer Nico Muhly and visual design by noted New York painter Christopher Wool. The company will also revive Merce Cunningham’s controversial 1964 Winterbranch, a movement exploration of falling bodies set to a two-note score by La Monte Young, and William Forsythe’s Quintett, a 1993 study in loss and hope to avant-garde composer Gavin Bryar’s looping composition “Jesus’ Blood Never Failed Me Yet.”
Described as one of Britain’s most musical choreographers, Alston has used works by a diverse range of composers to explore how choreography can animate the spirit of music. Featured in this program will be the American premiere of Alston’s most recent work, *A Ceremony of Carols*, choreographed to Benjamin Britten’s masterpiece for voice and harp. The music will be performed live by an all-female choir conducted by Montclair State’s Heather J. Buchanan, accompanied by harpist André Tarantiles. Also included will be Alston’s *Roughcut* and *Unfinished Business*, set to the music of Steve Reich and Mozart, respectively.

**Richard Alston, Artistic Director**

American Premiere of *A Ceremony of Carols*, with *Roughcut* and *Unfinished Business*
Originally formed through an outreach program for youth during the Apartheid era, Via Katlehong's high-energy style is an energetic brew of “Pantsula” (street dance) and “Gumboot” (rhythmic physical percussion). Through constantly searching for new performance horizons, they have become a major player on the international stage. For their triumphant return to Peak Performances, this inventive American premiere is cabaret like you’ve never experienced before. By combining the group’s powerhouse style with dynamite vocal performances of traditional folk music, a fresh and inventive look at modern South Africa is born.

Via Katlehong Dance Company
Katlehong Cabaret
Siphiwe Nkosi, Director
Hlengiwe Lushaba, Concept
Vusi Mdoyi, Choreographer

Performed by
Steven Faleni,
Mandlenkosi Fanie,
Vuyani Feni, Hlengiwe Lushaba,
Vusi Mdoyi, Buru Mohlabane,
Tshepo Nhlabeng,
Siphiwe Nkosi,
and Xolani Gwabe

Produced by Damien Valette Productions. Co-produced by Via Katlehong Dance, Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ), Théâtre national de Chaillot, and Scéne nationale d’Orléans. Supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

973-655-5112 | www.peakperfs.org | Every Seat $15
In such previous mind-benders as *Yesterday*, *Justitia*, and *7734*, Jasmin Vardimon has gained a well-deserved reputation in Britain for uniquely theatrical choreography that combines physical theater, innovative technologies, text, and dance with acute observations of human behavior. *Freedom*, a new full-length dance theater piece, explores notions of what keeps our imaginations free. For the company’s first visit to the East Coast (and second to the U.S.), *Freedom* promises Vardimon’s trademark physicality and brutally visceral characterizations.

Please be advised: Production contains adult themes and content.

973-655-5112 | www.peakperfs.org | Every Seat $15
Six singers and five instrumentalists tell the story of a group of Italian refugees in a series of vignettes expressing the comedy of love and the despair of betrayal. The musicians of ARTEK have built a reputation for the vitality of their spirited performances of baroque music. In I’ll Never See the Stars Again, the lush music of Claudio Monteverdi and his contemporaries is re-imagined as a theater piece staged by Martin Platt, founding artistic director of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. In an extremely entertaining fashion, ARTEK proves the journey is just as important as the destination.

ARTEK

Gwendolyn Toth, Artistic Director
I’ll Never See the Stars Again


SHANGHAI QUARTET

October 21 featuring Jan Vogler (cello)
April 12 featuring Ying Huang (soprano)

Through two dynamic programs, the Shanghai Quartet celebrates their 30th anniversary by demonstrating the amazing breadth of repertoire that has become the group’s hallmark. In the fall, the group collaborates with cellist Jan Vogler to perform Franz Schubert’s breathtaking String Quartet in C Major. In the spring, internationally renowned soprano Ying Huang joins the Quartet in performing Chinasong, a spectacular mix of traditional and popular Chinese folk music written and arranged by Shanghai Quartet violinist Yi-Wen Jiang. Together, both programs represent the special east-meets-west style that has become the touchstone of the Shanghai Quartet’s illustrious career.
Lionheart expertly joins classics from the Medieval and Renaissance vocal repertoire with new work by the most innovative composers of contemporary vocal music. In Wayfaring Stranger, the group joins forces with four members of the American Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME) for the East Coast premiere of composer Ingram Marshall’s Psalmbook. Accompanying Marshall’s meditation on early American psalmody is an eclectic mix of music spanning more than 800 years ranging from sacred chant to Appalachian folk melodies. Works by Phil Kline and Laura Nyro are also highlighted in this ode to restless wanderlust.

Psalmbook was commissioned through Meet The Composer’s Commissioning Music/USA program, which is made possible by generous support from the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Helen F. Whitaker Fund.

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In 1913, the audience at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées erupted in one of the most infamous riots of the 20th century. The cause? A revolution in music, namely the premiere of Igor Stravinsky’s primal Le sacre du printemps, or The Rite of Spring. For the piece’s centennial, virtuosi pianists Sarah Rothenberg and Marilyn Nonken have created The Grand Gesture, a stark deconstruction of Stravinsky’s masterpiece. Add to the mix Olivier Messiaen’s equally uproarious Visions de l’Amen (1946) and you have an evening of experimental classics defying convention.
Through genre-defying careers with similar philosophies on the invention of new music, it’s shocking that Laurie Anderson and Kronos Quartet have never collaborated before. All that will change in an electrifying season finale as artist/composer Laurie Anderson and the visionary Kronos Quartet perform a new evening-length piece in their very first collaboration. Composed by Anderson and arranged by Kronos Quartet, the piece will include written text and a dozen new songs that herald a new synthesis of sonic invention.

A New Work
Currently Untitled
Laurie Anderson, violin
Kronos Quartet
David Harrington, violin
John Sherba, violin
Hank Dutt, viola
Jeffrey Zeigler, cello

Commissioned by Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ); Adelaide Festival of the Arts, Australia; The Barbican Centre, London; Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, University of Maryland, College Park; Perth International Arts Festival, Crawley, Australia; Stanford Lively Arts, Stanford University, Palo Alto; University Of Texas Performing Arts Center, Austin. This tour of Kronos Quartet is made possible by a grant from Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation with support from the National Endowment of the Arts.

973-655-5112 | www.peakperfs.org | Every Seat $15
Engage!

Enhance your visit to the Alexander Kasser Theater with our series of post-performance Community Conversations, pre-show Shop Talks, and lobby receptions with the artists. Ask a question, get an insider’s view, learn the story behind the story. All engagement events are free and open to the public. Visit www.peakperfs.org for updates.

Insite

Part curated blog, part online magazine, and part dialogue, Insite is an interactive online space where artists share their perspectives, cultural commentators explore the issues, and audiences voice their opinions. Deepen your Peak Performances experience at insite: www.peakperfs.org/insite.

Creative Thinking Project

A partnership between Montclair State’s Office of Arts and Cultural Programming and the Research Academy for University Learning, the Creative Thinking Project draws on Peak Performances artists as catalysts for exploring how creativity can be integrated into the curriculum to ignite innovation and critical thinking across disciplines. Visit www.peakperfs.org/creativethinking.

The Creative Thinking Project was made possible in part by a grant from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Creative Campus Innovations Grant Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Photo: Montclair State University/Mike Peters.

An Evening with
TRACY K. SMITH
2012 Pulitzer Prize winner for poetry

Join us for this sixth installment in a series of public forums on the state of the arts as viewed by prominent contemporary artists and thinkers. Tracy K. Smith is an American poet whose most recent collection, Life on Mars, won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize. The collection draws on sources as disparate as Arthur C. Clarke and David Bowie, and is a tribute to her late father, an engineer who worked on the Hubble Telescope.

At times political, whimsical, and always meditative, Smith’s poems speak largely to the role of art and to the concepts of what it means to be American, dealing with the “evolution and decline of the culture we belong to.” For Smith, in her own words, poetry is a way of “stepping into the mess of experience.”

In the tradition of past speakers such as Bill T. Jones, Karen Finley, Laurie Anderson, Robert Brustein, and Christopher Janney, Tracy K. Smith brings a captivatingly lyrical view of the arts to Montclair State University.

Tickets required for admission (no charge).

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Alexander Kasser Theater
One Normal Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey, 07043

973-655-5112 | www.peakperfs.org
THE ART OF CLEMENTINE HUNTER

In conjunction with the 2013 world premiere of Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter, Peak Performances is proud to present a new exhibition highlighting the career of Clementine Hunter. Curated in collaboration with Art Shiver and Tom Whitehead, co-authors of Clementine Hunter: Her Life and Art (Louisiana State University Press, 2012), this exhibit celebrates this treasured American original.

Born on a plantation in Louisiana, Clementine could neither read nor write, but her imagination was limitless, creating dolls for children, fringe for drapery, and quilts. Although Hunter didn’t pick up a paint brush until after her 50th birthday, she is estimated to have created as many as five thousand works. Her paintings of plantation life, originally sold by Hunter for 25 or 50 cents, are now considered priceless. By the time of her death in 1988 at the age of 101, Clementine Hunter had become celebrated the world over for her works of art that capture everyday moments of a now-vanished way of life.

973-655-5112 | www.peakperfs.org
How To Order Tickets

ONLINE:  www.peakperfs.org  |  PHONE:  973-655-5112

IN PERSON:
Box Office
Alexander Kasser Theater
Montclair State University
One Normal Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07043

BOX OFFICE HOURS
Monday through Friday: noon-6:00 p.m.
On Performance Dates: 10:00 a.m. until curtain

AUDIENCE SERVICES:
boxoffice@mail.montclair.edu

TICKET POLICIES
• All performances are subject to change.
• There is a $3 handling fee per ticket for telephone or online orders.
• There is a flat $10 handling fee per telephone order of ten (10) tickets or more.
• Tickets and all processing/handling fees are nonrefundable, except in the event of show cancellation.
• Subject to availability, tickets may be exchanged at the box office up to 24 hours prior to the originally purchased performance, with a $5 per ticket exchange fee.
• Latecomers will be seated solely at the discretion of the Alexander Kasser Theater management.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS at Montclair State receive one ticket at no additional charge to every Peak Performances event, through the Performing Arts Fee, with their valid student IDs. Tickets must be picked up at the box office.

SPECIAL SERVICES
• Special Seating: ADA accessible seating is available for all performances and events.
• Listening Assistive Devices: Wireless hearing enhancement systems are available free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis for all performances.
• Programs in large type are available free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis for all performances. Forty-eight hours’ notice is required.
• Other special requests will be accommodated whenever possible. Direct inquiries to Audience Services at 973-655-4010.

GETTING HERE
There are many convenient ways to get to the Alexander Kasser Theater, including direct weekday NJ Transit train service and weekend charter bus service from Manhattan. Visit peakperfs.org for more information, including details on directions and convenient parking.

Peak Performances is on a mission to bring artists of uncommon imagination together with audiences of adventurous spirits.

The exceptions rule at Montclair, but there is one absolute rule:
Every performance, every seat: $15
No exceptions.