The beach is aglow with public art

Glow returns to Santa Monica
page 3
This past June, the Colburn School of Performing Arts (CSPA) honored KUSC at its Honors Recital. The Colburn School, just across the street from Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown Los Angeles, is an open-enrollment school that serves students of all ages with classes in music, drama, and early childhood arts education.

At the beginning of the recital, President and CEO Sel Kardan presented me with a beautiful plaque recognizing KUSC for “inspiring audiences and furthering classical music in Southern California and across the nation.” I responded that the Colburn School is doing incredibly important work helping young people in elementary school, junior high, and high school make the most of their artistic talent.

When young people find an activity that they love and at which they excel, they learn discipline, teamwork, leadership, and the rewards that come from hard work and diligent effort. I saw that in practice when I sat down to enjoy the program.

Young people from Agoura Hills, Glendale, Rowland Heights, San Gabriel, Irvine, Pasadena, and Los Angeles performed and rewarded the efforts of the parents who go to great lengths to get them to and from the Colburn School on a regular basis. These students made their parents and teachers proud with their technique and artistry, and we featured the concert as a podcast on our website to give others the opportunity to hear these talented young musicians.

Many of these young people will go on to some of this country’s greatest music schools, such as the USC Thornton School of Music. Some of them will undoubtedly end up playing in symphony orchestras that we feature on KUSC, and some may even be concert artists performing around the world.

But no matter what paths they take in the future, the hard work they are doing now to excel in music will serve them well, as it has for many of the members of the KUSC staff, including me. I am very grateful to the Colburn School for honoring KUSC at such an inspiring event, and I look forward to following the careers of the impressive musicians featured in the recital.

Brenda Barnes
Like the iconic Southern California grunion, Glow comes to the shores of Santa Monica Beach for but a brief moment—one night, to be exact—this year on September 28. An all-night festival of the arts, Glow invites the public to experience that revered stretch of beach through the collective lens of 15 original installations and performances.

Inspired by the famous Nuit Blanche (“White Night”—or “Sleepless Night”) fest in Paris, and produced by the City of Santa Monica, Glow was the first “nuit blanche” event in the U.S. to present all specifically commissioned artworks. Moreover, these works are shown against the natural splendor of Santa Monica Beach—and the Pacific Ocean beyond—thus embodying one of the most treasured benefits of living in Los Angeles: easy access to world-class culture in an exquisite natural setting.

The first Glow (July 2008) was wildly successful, attracting approximately 250,000 people and making it one of the best-attended one-day art events in California history. The second Glow (September 2010) employed a more arts-specific marketing approach that resulted in a smaller audience—a more manageable 150,000—that still represented a huge number for such a limited time period and certainly a larger attendance than many multi-month museum and gallery exhibitions.

One of Glow’s most notable aspects is its focus on site-specific works, a genre that has developed in the visual arts over the past 50 years. Prominent practitioners have ranged from Robert Irwin and James Turrell and their ephemeral light pieces to Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer (and Turrell as well) with their monumental earth works. The mural tradition in Los Angeles is another example of
above the beach. The sand below the sculpture will be shaped into a complementary form—negative to the nets’ positive, and scooped out by earth-moving equipment. Dramatic lighting will accentuate the sculpture as it shifts and re-forms itself in response to the wind. Natural sounds captured from the adjacent ocean will further enhance the experience of a transparent enclosure.

Paris-based artist Mathieu Briand’s installation will take place on a large expanse of beach north of the pier. Here, visitors will enter a tunnel in the sand where they will come upon a “chamber of discovery.” A ring of fire will burn above the sunken space, serving as a sort of sentinel, an elemental nod to the power of the natural setting on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. Named for the exact time the sun sets on that day, the work will also serve as the space for two performances by the CalArts Javanese Gamelan ensemble under the direction of Djoko Walujo. The performances have been brought to Glow by one of its network partners, Cal Arts Community Arts Program (CAPS).

Glow will turn both the historic Santa Monica Carousel and the Pacific Wheel (the artists creating work outside the studio; in and for specific public spaces.

Glow asks artists to make art that takes advantage of the opportunities offered by its setting—the sand and the ocean, and the enormous audience in attendance. Many Glow artworks involve advanced technology and invite the audience to participate in one form or another.

Past Glows have produced some extraordinary large-scale works. In 2008 British architect-artist Usman Haque realized Primal Source, for which a forty-foot high water-wall was created on the beach (requiring a 200-foot-long temporary reservoir of fresh water). A similarly ambitious—and participatory—project was Sandbox, created by Mexican-Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer for Glow 2010. Sandbox invited the audience into the artwork, and projected images of visitors from one area to another, creating miniature and giant scaled figures with which the “live” audience engaged directly on the beach.

Glow 2013 features one project each by 15 artists, spread along a three-quarter-mile stretch of beach adjacent to the historic Santa Monica Pier—from Crescent Bay Park on the south to just beyond the parking lot north of the Pier. One piece will be sited in Palisades Park near the Pier entrance, two on the Pier itself, one in Crescent Bay Park, and all others on the beach. Each of the two Glows thus far has featured one major commission, and this year it is by Janet Echelman, whose enormous suspended transparent sculptures have been exhibited internationally to great acclaim. Echelman’s project, which is located near the terminus of Bay Street, involves several custom-made nets, each approximately 100 feet in diameter, that will be configured together in a geometric/biomorphic form suspended above the beach. The sand below the sculpture will be shaped into a complementary form—negative to the nets’ positive, and scooped out by earth-moving equipment. Dramatic lighting will accentuate the sculpture as it shifts and re-forms itself in response to the wind. Natural sounds captured from the adjacent ocean will further enhance the experience of a transparent enclosure.

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world’s largest solar-powered Ferris wheel) into works of art. The Rest Is Noise: A Carousel Ride Through the 20th Century—which was conceived by Patrick Scott and produced by Glow’s network partner Jacaranda, Music at the Edge—invites audience participants to ride the carousel while surrounded by 24 speakers, each of which will broadcast a major piece of 20th-century music, from Mahler to Adams. Riders will hear 12-second clips of musical selections as they revolve, with the experience of movement intensified by 100 years of music condensed into five minutes.

Victoria Vesna’s project, Octopus Mandala Glow (OMG!), will invite riders in the Pacific Wheel’s 20 gondolas to chant (or scream, or sing) along with a lead voice who will be positioned under the giant octopus sign that marks the entrance to the Pier’s fun zone. Wireless communication between the lead chanter and each of the gondolas will prompt riders, and their response will be translated into visual imagery on the 85-foot wide LED light system on the Ferris wheel, visible for miles along the beach.

Before visiting Glow, visitors should visit www.glowsantamonica.org. In addition to a map of the 15 works—as well as information on dining, parking, transportation, bike valet locations, and other visitor amenities—there are downloadable apps custom-made by several Glow artists as integral parts of their projects. Also available for download is an audio guide to Glow produced by KCRW that includes interviews with every artist along with a short musical selection.

Remember—when museums and galleries sleep, Glow happens. To read more about the events on September 28th, visit glowsantamonica.org.

Marc Pally is an artist and curator/administrator specializing in public art. He is the artistic director of Glow.
WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS AUGUST 2013

ARTS ALIVE
Saturdays | 8 am
KUSC’s arts-and-music magazine, hosted by Brian Lauritzen.

THE OPERA SHOW WITH DUFF MURPHY
Saturdays | 9 am–noon
The world of opera comes alive with classic and newly released recordings.

MODERN TIMES WITH ALAN CHAPMAN
Saturdays | 10 pm–midnight
Classical music of the last 100 years up to the present day.

SOUL MUSIC WITH BRIAN LAURITZEN
Sundays | 6 am–9 am
Serene choral and instrumental works spanning a millennium, from Gregorian chant through music of today.

A MUSICAL OFFERING: MUSIC OF THE BAROQUE WITH ALAN CHAPMAN
Sundays | 9 am–11 am
From the brilliance of Monteverdi to the mastery of J.S. Bach, for an easy Sunday morning.

FROM THE TOP WITH CHRISTOPHER O’RILEY
Sundays | 6 pm
Amazing performances and captivating stories from today’s extraordinary young classical musicians.

LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC BROADCASTS (FROM THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL)
Sundays | 7–9 pm

Sunday August 4 | 7–9 pm
Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor
Kiera Duffy, soprano
Sasha Cooke, mezzo-soprano
Los Angeles Master Chorale;
Grant Gershon, music director
Mahler: Symphony no. 2

Sunday August 11 | 7–9 pm
Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor
Gil Shaham, violin
Rimsky-Korsakov: Dubinushka
Sibelius: Violin Concerto
Tchaikovsky: Symphony no. 4

Sunday August 18 | 7–9 pm
Bramwell Tovey, conductor
Johannes Moser, cello
Britten: An American Overture
Elgar: Cello Concerto
Sibelius: Symphony no. 5

Sunday August 25 | 7–9 pm
Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, conductor
Augustin Hadelich, violin
Stravinsky: Fireworks
Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto
Stravinsky: Rite of Spring
THE RECORD SHELF WITH JIM SVEJDA

Sunday August 4 | 10 pm
Not the Girl Next Door. A conversation with the glamorous Romanian soprano Angela Gheorghiu.

Sunday August 11 | 10 pm
The Best of the Record Shelf. A study of the career of the doyen of English oboists, Léon Goossens.

Sunday August 18 | 10 pm
Party Records: the Collector’s Edition. In the first of two programs, great opera stars of the past (and present) in a program of popular songs.

Sunday August 25 | 10 pm

CALIFORNIA CLASSICAL ALL-NIGHT
Daily | Midnight–6 am
Music selections especially appropriate to the wee hours, with calendars of events up and down the state. Hosted by Blake Lawrence and Robin Pressman.

The RAF in Lavender?!


BY JIM SVEJDA

While it can’t have been easy going through life sharing one of the great names of English music—he is the great-nephew of the legendary pianist Dame Myra Hess—composer Nigel Hess has enjoyed a distinguished career in television, theater, and film. While best known in this country for his film score for the 2004 Judi Dench/Maggie Smith charmer Ladies in Lavender, his music for the concert hall is no less appealing, as this second volume of a Chandos series triumphantly proves.

If most people will be drawn to the album thanks to its enchanting version of the Ladies in Lavender theme, then the other items on offer will more than reward the investment, beginning with that stirring work cast on the same huge scale as John Ireland’s Epic March. Hess’s Monck’s March—which recounts General Monck’s famously arduous march with seven thousand men from Goldstream in Scotland to London during the bitter winter of 1660—is played with maximum relish by the Central Band of the Royal Air Force, who are no less compelling in the more thematically up-to-date things.

The vivid Shakespeare Pictures is drawn from several of the composer’s theatrical scores and The Lochnager Suite from a charming ballet based on the book by HRH The Prince of Wales, while New London Pictures casts a wryly enthusiastic eye on the Millennium Bridge, London Eye, and the controversial Congestion Charge, a fee slapped on London motorists in 2003.

The performances of this delightful music sound absolutely definitive in Chandos’ state-of-the-art sound. If you have a lease to break, then try the New London Pictures’ shattering opening.
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