

COMPASS

Your Guide to Tri-State Events

June 15, 2023



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Art in A World on Fire

As I created this Compass, wildfires burned across Canada with little sign of abating, resulting in smog thickening the air in The Berkshire Hills and Upstate New York, the sky tinged in a tangerine glow. These are the orange days of June. Climate in crisis, people in crisis, but art carries on. At The Moviehouse's Italian Auteur series, you'll find avant-garde political statements, while Great Barrington Public Theater brings provocative new work to the stage and Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center rebirths a lost female voice from history. June is also the month of cultural celebration and liberation, noting the distinct artistic paths that LGBTQ and Black Americans continue to blaze, and always have, no matter the state of the world around them. Take pride.

*Your Compass editor,
Alexander Wilburn*



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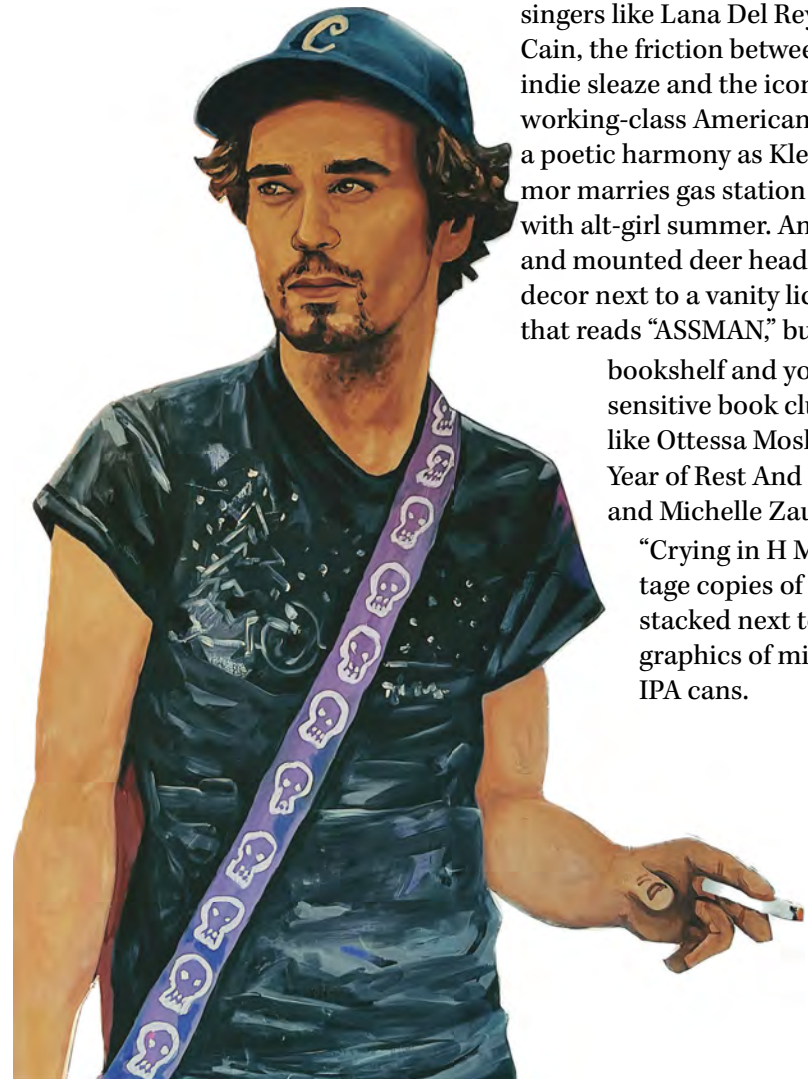
ART: ALEXANDER WILBURN

A Party In The Woods ... At The Top of A Mill


Go to the hamlet of Wassaic, N.Y., climb to the top of the Maxon Mills, the home of year-round artist colony The Wassaic Project, up seven flights of stairs showcasing the summer exhibition titled “Counting the Seconds Between Lightning and Thunder” and you will be thoroughly rewarded. Danielle Klebes, a young painter from North Adams, Mass., who also works as The Wassaic Project’s programming coordinator, has created something exceptional for the area in her fully

immersive installation piece, aptly titled, “Seventh Floor Walk-Up.” In an artist statement, Klebes describes her inspiration coming from a weekend rental at a “colorful man-cave.” “I felt an inexplicable sense of ownership and pride for that apartment. There was something so funny to me about a queer female and her queer friends existing in that stereotypically masculine space.” On view through Sept. 16, Klebes recreates the convivial scene of lounging twenty-somethings in a three-dimensional optical illusion, with painted wooden cut-outs that imbue the room with a frenzied, live-in sense of clutter. Following the path of pop singers like Lana Del Rey or Ethel Cain, the friction between east coast indie sleaze and the iconography of working-class Americana melds into a poetic harmony as Klebes’ wry humor marries gas station Coors Light with alt-girl summer. Animal skulls and mounted deer heads hang as wall decor next to a vanity license plate that reads “ASSMAN,” but look to the


bookshelf and you’ll find more sensitive book club reading, like Ottessa Moshfegh’s “My Year of Rest And Relaxation” and Michelle Zauner’s memoir “Crying in H Mart.” Vintage copies of Playboy are stacked next to the dizzying graphics of microbrewery IPA cans.



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PHOTOS BY ALEXANDER WILBURN

In her soft yet saturated palette, Klebes tenderly depicts her gang of bright-eyed individuals, tattoos across their warm skin, dark thrifted clothing wrinkled and paint-splattered. In her inviting world is the spirit of play and curiosity, as well as

surprising pangs of emotional storytelling — the connection of friendship, and the way the strangest of trips, in the unlikeliest spots, takes on a real-time daydream nostalgia when you're sparking up with your buds over a beer.



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PHOTOS COURTESY THE ARTIST



ART: ALEXANDER WILBURN

Sedgwick Family Photos

Nikko Sedgwick is blowing up his family — well, blowing up the scale of his family portraits, that is. In the downstairs gallery of The Re Institute, curated by sculptor Henry Klimowicz in Miller-ton, N.Y., Sedgwick’s “Family Snapshots” are super-sized, chemically altered, and flattened over a thick base of glitter, coming out looking like they survived a space voyage with David Bowie and saw the other side of Mars. Sedgwick is part of the old Brahmin dynasty that sprung out of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and has been the face of every American art form — his sister is film and television actress Kyra Sedgwick, his cousin was Edie Sedgwick, the Youthquake It Girl filmed and photographed by Andy Warhol, and his great-grandmother was Edith Minturn Stokes, painted by famed Edwardian portraitist John Singer Sargent.

Sedgwick, who has relocated with

his family from New York City to Litchfield County, Conn., full-time, described the distortion of his family photos as “exhuming something that’s been entombed in the skin of these photographs. Layers of skin, layers of self, layers of generational time. It’s a metaphor for what we obscure...”

His inspiration to use craft glitter as a dominant material sprung from its reflective properties. “The glitter exudes its own light and becomes like working with stained glass. I had been using metallic spray paints, silvers and golds, and then I was going through my basement and found a silver glitter wrapping paper.” That became the eureka moment that changed the trajectory of his large-scale work. “I just love this s—! Although it does infiltrate every corner of my life...”

Sedgwick will further discuss his work at The Re Institute’s artist talk on Saturday, June 17, at 3:30 p.m.

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FILM: ALEXANDER WILBURN

Handsome Devil

Could there be any bigger publicity buzz than being denounced by The Pope? At The 1968 Venice Film Festival, “Teorama,” written and directed by Italian provocateur the late Pier Paolo Pasolini, with a score by the incomparable Ennio Morricone, was surprisingly, and erroneously, awarded by The Roman Catholic Church’s film-reviewing body, The Office Catholique International du Cinema. By March 1969, The New York Times was reporting The Vatican was rescinding its prize, citing it did not “respect the sensibility of Christian people.”

From the director of “Salò” and “The Decameron,” “Teorema,” which will play at The Moviehouse in Miller-ton, N.Y., as part of the arthouse the-

ater’s “Great Italian Auteurs” series on Wednesday, June 28, and Sunday, July 2, is a strange reckoning with God — or maybe The Devil. An alluring blue-eyed man (Terence Stamp) in a white summer sweater strolls up to the Milanese estate of an industrialist family and proceeds to seduce them all, bedding husband and wife, their teenage son, and even the maid. Touched by the divine, their psyches individually begin to unravel in the aftermath. An openly gay, left-wing political thinker, Pasolini channeled the full extent of his disregard for the consumerist conformity of the petite bourgeoisie social class into “Teorema,” a Marxist fable where sex with a beautiful intellectual plummets the 1% into existential despair.

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LIVE: ALEXANDER WILBURN

The Berkshires Queen Reigns For A Night

In reality, it may be contested who the most famous woman in The Berkshires is, but on reality TV — and according to the millions of reality TV viewers — there is no contest. You say “The Berkshires,” and most of America will say, “Where Dorinda lives.”

When Dorinda Medley joined the cast of Bravo’s “The Real Housewives of New York City,” a glossy, fizzy, and often out-of-control peak into the expensive lives of the city’s charity circuit Champagne-drinkers, the Berkshires native brought the countryside to the masses. Blue Stone Manor, her abode in Great Barrington, Mass., became the weekend trip setting for some of the show’s most disas-

trous dinner parties and clamorous, Cabernet-fueled confrontations — in other words, television gold.

Medley, a fan-favorite known for her wit and one-liners turned internet catchphrases — including replying to “Sex and The City” author Candace Bushnell’s banal greeting by saying she was doing “Not well, bitch!” — is taking the stage at Tanglewood, in Lenox, Mass., on Thursday, June 22. She’ll join host Peter Sagal and scorekeeper Bill Kurtis for in NPR’s humorous and educational quiz show “Wait Wait...Don’t Tell Me!” for a live tapping in The Koussevitzky Music Shed. “Wait Wait” has always been a popular event in The Berkshires, so where else would Dorinda be?

A season of surprises...

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Photographer Unknown, Tony Sarg's Sky Elephant Balloon, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, 1928. Photograph, Collection of the Nantucket Historical Association.

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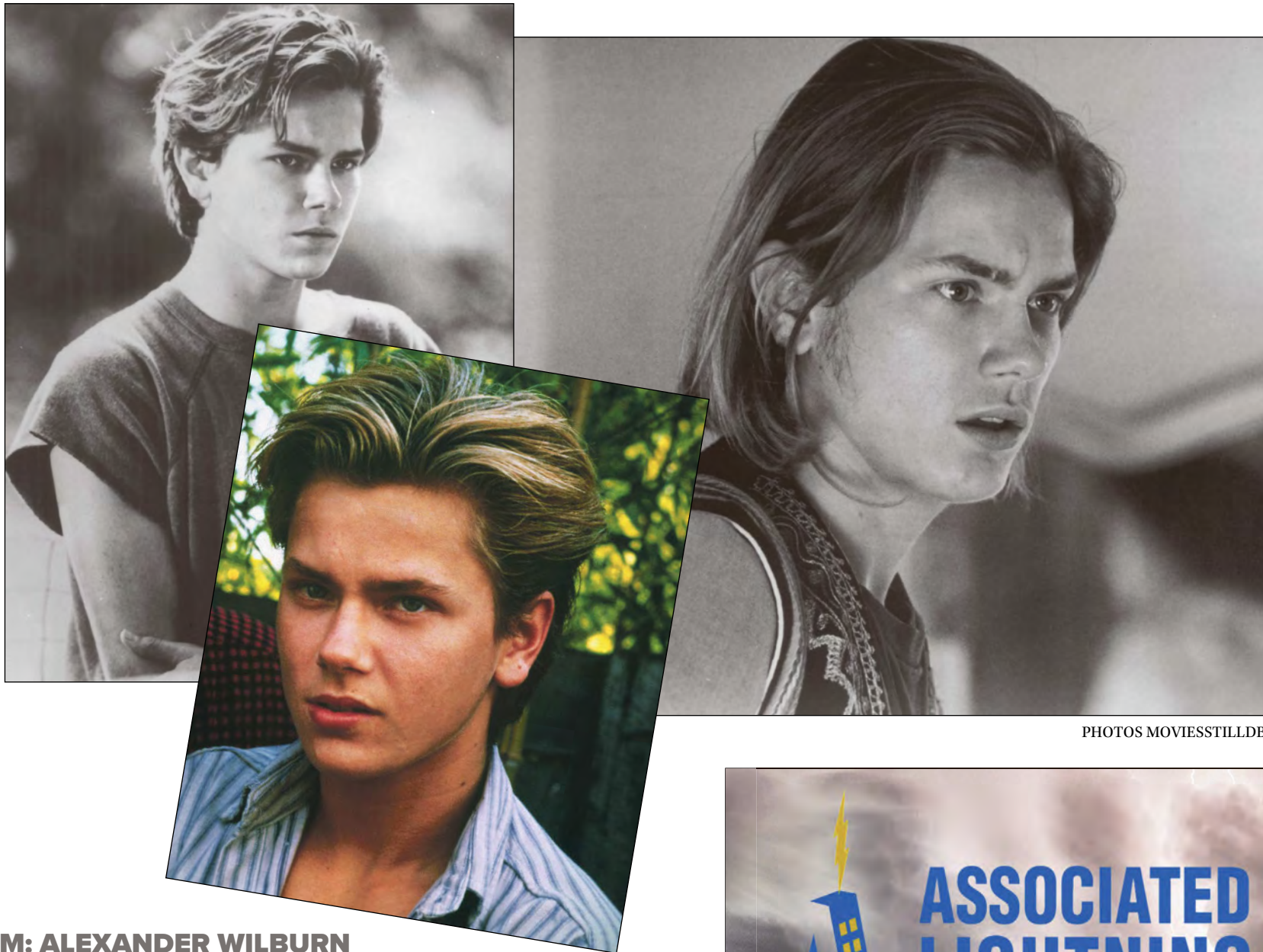
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FILM: ALEXANDER WILBURN

Love, River

Before Timothée Chalamet was born, or Leonardo DiCaprio set sail on *The Titanic*, there was the original serious-actor-heartthrob, the first of the "young Oscar-nominated actor with amazing hair" archetypes who seemed destined to take over Hollywood — River Phoenix.

On Saturday, June 17, at 7:30 p.m. at Gedney Farm in New Marlborough, Mass., Bookdocks Film Society, founded by Jeff Palfini and Cindy Heslino of Cornwall, Conn., will screen "I Love You To Death," one of the few comedies Phoenix starred in, along with Kevin Kline and Keanu Reeves. Filmed shortly after his

Academy Award nomination for his turn in "Running on Empty," Phoenix reteamed with Reeves a year later for "My Own Private Idaho," a landmark of The New Queer Wave cinema movement. The role earned him the 1992 Independent Spirit Award for Best Male Lead, but his in-depth study in playing a street hustler led him to a drug addiction that ended his life at 23. In a 2021 *Esquire* profile, Reeves described Phoenix as "A really special person, so original, unique, smart, talented, fiercely creative. Thoughtful. Brave. And funny. And dark. And light. It was great to have known him."

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THEATER: ALEXANDER WILBURN

A Game of Roses

It is great sin to swear unto a sin, but greater sin to keep a sinful oath," so tells Richard Neville, The Earl of Salisbury, to Queen Margaret in the second part of William Shakespeare's "Henry VI" trilogy of historical plays. "A subtle traitor," she replies, "needs no sophister."

Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Mass., will present "The Contention (Henry VI, Part II)" in The Tina Packer Playhouse starting Saturday, June 17. Expect brides, bloodshed, and beheading — this political thriller (with a few ghosts thrown in for good measure) is set against the civil

conflict between The House of York and The House of Lancaster in what would later be mythologized as "The War of The Roses," named for the York family's heraldic badge of the white rose symbolizing The Virgin Mary, and the potentially fictionalized red Gallic rose emblem associated with The Lancasters. In the middle of it all is teenage Margaret of Anjou, who marries the King of England as instability threatens the throne, but her scheming nature soon becomes more dominant as she pulls the strings in a game of feuding families, treachery, and a race to take the kingdom.



PHOTO BY WIL STEWART/ THE SIGNAL HOUSE

THEATER: ALEXANDER WILBURN

Stone's Throw From Sane

Like many of us with a crippling addiction to our phones, Nick awakens to the pinging sound of a new notification. “The message arrived, unknown number. ‘It’s been too long, I hope you can make it.’” A stranger? A flirtation? An ex-boyfriend? Nick’s response to this seemingly cordial invitation from is anything but elation.

“A twenty-year-old terror slipped up through the soles of my feet and shook me awake: He’s found out.”

So begins the eerie slow-burn of “The Stones,” which will have its United States premiere at Great Barrington Public Theater on the campus of Bard College at Simon’s Rock in Great Barrington Mass., starting Thursday, June 15. Directed by Michelle Joyner with a one-man performance by Ryan Winkles, “The Stones” is by young London-based Australian playwright Kit Brookman. The show first premiered in 2019 at King’s Head Theatre in London and

was later remounted in Scotland for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2022.

In an interview with The Signal House, a publisher of emerging theatrical work that Brookman co-founded, he described the play thematically as being “About the things that we choose not to see and the consequences of not seeing those things, fixating on things that happened in the past or that we have no control over. And all the while things that we should be seeing are kind of creeping up over our shoulder.”

Nick’s rendezvous following this mysterious conversation leads him to taking job as a tutor to two young children, and if shades of Henry James’ “Turn of The Screw” shadow across your mind, the intention seems purposeful.

As Brookman told Signal House, “Gothic stories can activate a moral dilemma and create a very striking sense of metaphor that is very easy to engage with.”

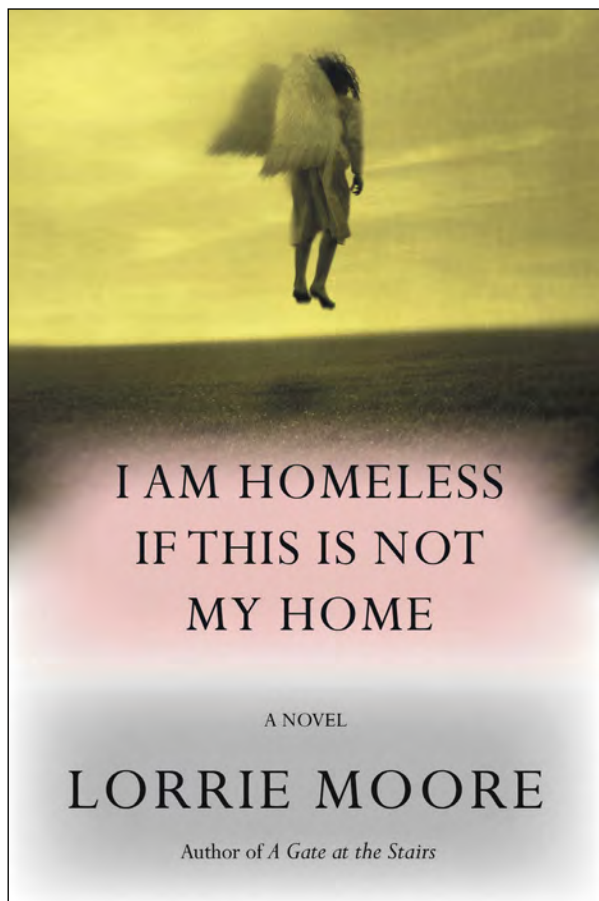
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BOOKS: ALEXANDER WILBURN

Lorrie Moore's Power

I Am Homeless If This Is Not My Home” marks Lorrie Moore’s return to the novel in over a decade, when “A Gate at the Stairs,” a family drama that combined post 9/11 anxiety with questions on race, religion, and identity, was a finalist for the Orange Prize for Fiction and the PEN/Faulkner Award in 2009. Moore will discuss her new novel with her Alfred A. Knopf editor, Victoria Wilson, at Morton Memorial Library in Rhinecliff, N.Y., on Saturday, June 24, presented through Oblong Books. “I Am Homeless” starts as a New York story and turns into a cross-country trek as a man carries out the final wish of his recently deceased ex-girlfriend.

Best known for her short stories,

Moore’s fiction has frequently appeared in the pages of The New Yorker, including her 1998 O. Henry Award winner “People Like That Are The Only People Here,” and more recently in 2020, “Facetime” a matter of fact and shiveringly realistic depiction of a woman communicating with her dying father in the ICU over a video call. Moore’s career took off in 1986 with her short story collection “Self Help,” also edited by Wilson. Like confessions from another world, pulled from the secret lives of women in a downward spiral dance with love (or sometimes just the idea of love), the fiction in “Self Help” is stark yet lyrically honest and inventive. She writes as if she knows you.

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Handel also wrote "Orlando" and "Ariodante" based on the poem, but back in 1625, Italian composer Francesca Caccini had already staged the material in her comic piece "The Liberation of Ruggiero from The Island of Alcina" — the first opera written by a woman. In Caccini's tale of romantic rivals and gender-bending, wandering knight Ruggiero (the one who rides the hippogriff) falls under the love spell of the wicked witch Alcina, and must be saved by the good witch Melissa, disguised as a man. "Alcina" (Francesca's Version) will be at Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington, Mass., on Friday, June 23, and Saturday, June 24, as part of the Boston Early Music Festival.



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The Hunt Library in Falls Village, Conn., kicked off Pride with “Queer Voices,” an intimate evening with three Hotchkiss School teachers — choreographer MK Lawson, and poets Janan Alexandra and Emma Wynn. Wynn’s first collection of poems, “The World Is Our Anchor” is out now from FutureCycle Press.



PHOTO BY ALEXANDER WILBURN

CELEBRATE AT MASS MOCA

MASS MoCA in North Adams, Mass., is celebrating in June. On Saturday, June 17, at 7 p.m., The Berkshire Black Economic Council invites you to enjoy your Juneteenth weekend with performances by singer-songwriter Raiche and Jasmine Janai. Earlier in the day, join The BBEC at the I Am Afro Street Fair from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., featuring dance, music, visual arts, theatre performances, and spoken word by talented local Black residents. On Friday, June 23, from 5 to 9:30 p.m., join in at the third annual North Adams Pride in Courtyard A. The evening kicks off with pop-up drag performances, talks by local LGBTQ leaders, visual projections, and ends with a dance party. For more go to www.massmoca.org

DAIRY DRAG AT CHASEHOLM FARM

Chaseholm Farm in Pine Plains, N.Y., is hosting an evening of their popular Dairy Drag on the family-run farm on Saturday, June 17 at 6 p.m., with pizza from Half Moon and burger by Rosey’s. Guests are encouraged to bring beverages as well as tips for performers. For more go to www.chaseholmfarm.com

JUNETEENTH AT SIMSBURY MEADOWS

Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center in Simsbury, Conn., will celebrate Juneteenth on Saturday, June 17, starting at noon with performances by Nekita Waller, West African dance group FriendZWorldMusic, and Damian Curtis African Cuban Jazz Project. New to this year’s celebration are two Black-owned food trucks. Bloomfield, Conn., based Deep Roots Cuisine will offer a southern fare, while cool treats will be from Ice Cream Dream Truck. For more go to www.simsburymeadows.org

JACOB’S PILLOW PRIDE PARTY

Jacob’s Pillow Dance in Becket, Mass., will hold their annual LGBTQ celebration dance party with a performance from dancers The Dragon Sisters from Brooklyn, N.Y., on Saturday, July 8, at 9:30 p.m., following the evening performances of the Dutch National Ballet in the Ted Shawn Theatre at 8 p.m. This free event is touted as Jacob Pillow’s dance party of the summer, and will include surprise performances and a special tour honoring Pillow founder Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers. For more go to www.jacobspillow.org



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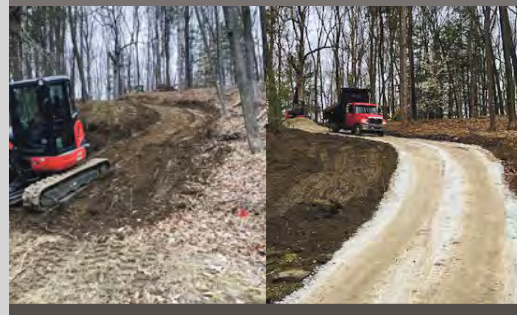
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