

A VIBRANT, ECLECTIC SCENE

BY CHRISTINE H. O'TOOLE

The makeover of a former red-light district into a thriving arts destination is a Pittsburgh success story. The downtown Cultural District now includes storefront galleries, restored theaters, public art, and pocket parks.

The neighborhood is anchored by one of the city's most enduring institutions — the famed Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, which makes its home at opulent Heinz Hall. Fresh from a European tour that garnered rave reviews, the orchestra mines the repertoires of three distinguished artistic leaders — Sir Andrew Davis, Yan Pascal Tortelier, and Marek Janowski. Principal Conductor Marvin Hamlisch brings his upbeat style to the downbeat of the Pittsburgh Pops series.

A block away on Penn Avenue, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust imports Broadway winners, such as this spring's tour of the Tony-award-winning *Doubt*, starring Cherry Jones, to the Benedum Center. Dance and opera buffs will find a full calendar of favorites at the Benedum, too.

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre premieres jazz vocals and dance in *Moments @ More* this month, while Pittsburgh Opera's *Billy Budd* takes the stage in May. A popular summer tenant is the Pittsburgh CLO — formerly the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera — a professional musical-theater company.

Revue and soloists command a smaller stage at the Cabaret at Theater Square from cocktail hour past midnight. The evening may start with a jazz trio, segue into a riotous breakneck performance of *Forbidden Broadway*, and end with a set by a local songwriter. On warm evenings the music spills out onto Katz Plaza, where the signature Louise Bourgeois sculpture towers over the trees. The next-door O'Reilly Theater, home to the Pittsburgh Public Theater in an elegant contemporary space

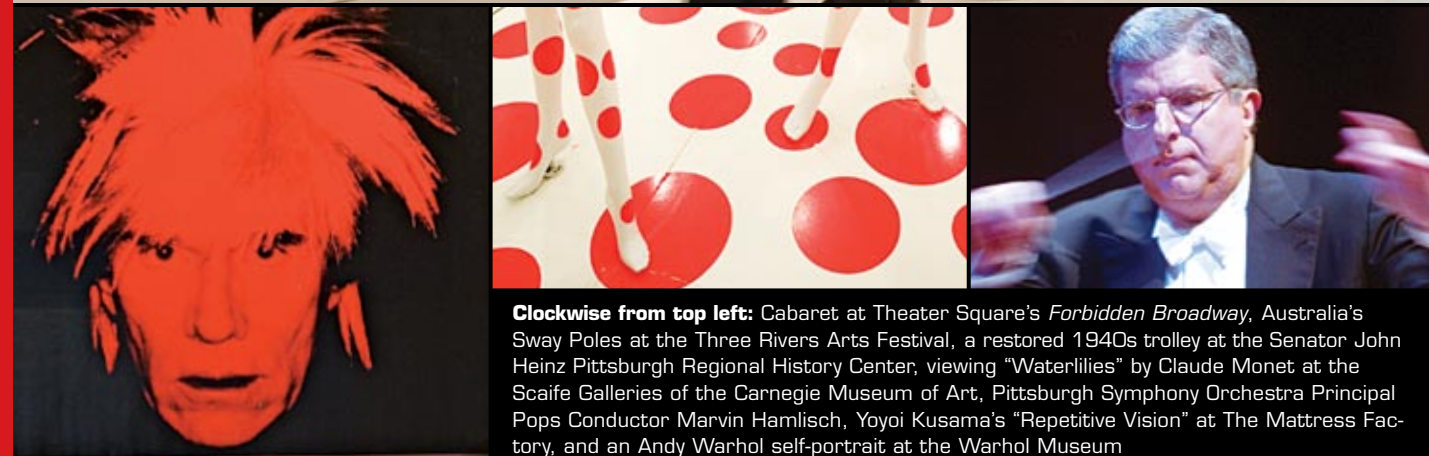
designed by Michael Graves, takes special pride in performing the works of legendary hometown artists, from George Kaufman to August Wilson to composer Stephen Flaherty (*Ragtime*), whose musical, *The Glorious Ones*, makes its world premiere April 19.

Alternative music gets a shout-out at the Byham Theater. A larger-than-life mural of a mill interior by Richard Haas, on the theater's Allegheny River side, spotlights the city's steelmaking past. (Stroll Pittsburgh's public art collection with the free illustrated guidebook available from the Visitor's Center on Stanwix Street.) More music and professional theater enlivens the city's South Side neighborhood.

Each June, the Three Rivers Arts Festival brings more than paintings to the public. Three weeks of free concerts, visual excitement, and the summer's best street food draw more than half a million visitors downtown. In 2007, says Lindsay Clark, communications coordinator, "It's more of an urban experience than ever and will really bring the downtown streets alive." One hundred local artists



PHOTO TOP CENTER: COURTESY OF HENRY KRAU; PHOTO BOTTOM RIGHT: COURTESY OF PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY



Clockwise from top left: Cabaret at Theater Square's *Forbidden Broadway*, Australia's Sway Poles at the Three Rivers Arts Festival, a restored 1940s trolley at the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center, viewing "Waterlilies" by Claude Monet at the Scaife Galleries of the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Principal Pops Conductor Marvin Hamlisch, Yoyoi Kusama's "Repetitive Vision" at The Mattress Factory, and an Andy Warhol self-portrait at the Warhol Museum

will join forces as creative group Unicorn Mountain, collaborating for a weekend event merging contemporary music with a wide range of art forms, including comic-book illustration. Also performing at the festival is Australia's Sway Poles, a troupe that brings dancers on four-meter stilts to an outdoor stage.

On the northern shore of the Allegheny River, by the home fields of MLB's Pittsburgh Pirates and NFL's Pittsburgh Steelers, lies another famous pair. The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Science Center are favorite family destinations. The Children's Museum's award-winning redesign includes "Text Rain," an interactive video installation; kids can tinker in The Garage and get wet in The River, a 53-foot water table. The Science Center rocks kids' worlds in the Earthquake Cafe and dazzles them with images at the Rangos Omnimax Theater and the Buhl Digital Dome, a brand-new planetarium experience.

Also on the North Shore, just across the Andy Warhol Bridge from downtown, is the world's largest collection of a single artist's work. Hometown hero and pop icon Warhol is honored at the seven-floor Andy Warhol Museum, which reflects his quirky humor and celebrity flair. The entertainment at its weekly "Good Fridays" can range from experimental films to live electronic music.

Other museums honor both human and evolutionary history. Three centuries

of local life, from early homesteaders to the Homestead Strike, are portrayed at the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center. Housed in a handsome restored 19th-century icehouse, the museum is a quick walk from the city center. The bronze diplodocus guarding the Carnegie Museums in Oakland, the university district in the city's East End, pays homage to the third-largest collection of dinosaur fossils in the world.

Late this fall, the Carnegie Museum of Natural History will open "Dinosaurs in Their World," a massive reinterpretation of the Mesozoic era. The adjoining Carnegie Museum of Art prepares for the 2008 Carnegie International, its 55th selection of the world's most striking contemporary art. Meanwhile, it will examine Venetian glass art, unveil treasures from its Japanese print collection, and showcase contemporary London architects in "Gritty Brits," an exhibit in its Heinz Architecture Center.

Fans of architect Frank Lloyd Wright happily detour 90 minutes south to view his masterwork, Fallingwater, famously situated over Bear Run Falls. Another Wright commission tops a nearby hill. Kentucky Knob is now owned by Britain's Lord Peter Palumbo, whose collection of sculpture adorns the grounds below.

The city built on the confluence of three rivers celebrates the convergence of imagination, ingenuity, and insight in its arts scene. There's never been a better time to go with its flow.



Stephen Protheroe demonstrates his art at the Pittsburgh Glass Center.

Celebrating Glass

Pittsburgh's biggest arts event for 2007? Clearly, it's the Year of Glass.

In the 1920s, some 80 percent of U.S. glass was made in the Western Pennsylvania region. This year, the city salutes its glassmaking history in a collaboration that will feature contemporary works in over 40 museums, galleries, and gardens.

The Phipps Conservatory will set Dale Chihuly's exuberant works amid botanical artistry from May through December. The Pittsburgh Glass Center will exhibit works by emerging Japanese glass artists, while the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts will feature works by local artists. A Carnegie Museum of Art exhibit will examine the links between glass art in Venice and America over the past 50 years. Bead-making will take center stage at the Pittsburgh Regional History Center, while the Society for Contemporary Craft will exhibit winners of its annual competition, this year geared toward glass art. — CO



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"Repetitive Vision" by Yoyoi Kusama at The Mattress Factory



A Museum for Everything

A Navy destroyer crashes through the third-floor wall of **The Mattress Factory**, one of the city's quirkiest museums. And that's just this week. This museum of contemporary installation art specializes in room-sized creations built on site by international luminaries such as Damien Hirst, Kiki Smith, and light artist James Turrell. This spring, the Mattress Factory launches "India: New Installations." mattress.org

On the classical side of quirk is the **Bayernhof Museum**, housing an eclectic collection of musical instruments and music boxes. Here, in a suburban mansion built in 1982 overlooking the Allegheny River, appointment-only visitors can view an antique serinette (a bird-call music box), giant band organ, phonographs, and more. bayernhofmuseum.com

Downtown Indiana, Pennsylvania, has the classic charm of a stage-set Main Street. That makes it the perfect location for the **Jimmy Stewart Museum**, honoring the beloved actor and native son. On the third floor of the local public library, it includes a cozy movie theater screening Stewart's most famous films, along with exhibits on his experiences in Hollywood and as a World War II pilot. jimmy.org — CO