

Part III of Artpark preview: Special season underway

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Artpark & Company President Sonia Kozlova Clark previewed the new season in a recent Q&A. This is part three of her interview.

More on Artpark's concert series:

Sonia Kozlova Clark: We have not one but two North American premiers: Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana," in a spectacular production by La Fura dels Baus with Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus, conducted by Gil Rose. It's a modern spectacle. It's a very edgy spectacle based on a medieval collection of poems and songs written in Latin and Middle High German. The texts cover a wide range of themes, such as drinking, gambling, love and the fickleness of fortune.

The poems were discovered in a Bavarian monastery in the 19th century and later set to music by composer Carl Orff in the 1930s. Musically it is extraordinary, recognizable and powerful. I call it the "Heavy Metal of the '30s." Its main song, "O Fortuna!," was recorded and remixed in so many different styles. The Trans-Siberian Orchestra has done a track; in addition to all the classical interpretations, of course. It runs the whole gamut. There's hardly a human being on this planet that doesn't know this tune.

The production is by a renowned company in Spain – La Fura dels Baus – who I have been in conversations with over a number of years now – their focus is on opera as a spectacle, oftentimes outdoors with immersive video, flying acts and spectacular stage effects. They've been in the United States a number of times. The last time they were at the Mostly Modern Festival at Lincoln Center with a production of Haydn in 2018.

Their "Carmina" production has toured around the world for over 10 years, but it's never been in

North America. And I'm very excited to be able to present this just at Artpark, just for us, just because we can, and just because it makes sense for us.

We are also fortunate to be working with the visionary conductor Gil Rose with whom we are building a long-term plan for reintroducing opera to Artpark, and, as always, with our friends at the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus, also the Tanz Dance and other local performers.

And the second North American premiere at Artpark will be with Cirque Inextremiste on Aug. 27, which we are bringing in partnership with University of Arizona and Rochester Fringe Festival. This French group are completely unique and out of their own kind, they define themselves as "sweet lunatics trapped in spite of themselves in a life-size epic" in one of the wildest shows you will ever see, called "EXIT."

Q: It's a big anniversary season. How will that milestone be recognized this summer?

Sonia Kozlova Clark: We plan to celebrate by the continuous growth of Artpark as an institution and exploration of its potential while also recognizing its legacy. We have programs that highlight our Haudenosaunee people through Strawberry Moon Festival and summer-long Indigenous programs. We are restarting the opera program, once so prominent at Artpark, and so well known in this country. We are bringing new voices and inter-



Artpark's Emerald Grove has expanded.

of opera – Gil Rose – I think that's a very momentous kind of occasion.

Being able to produce a series of "New Music" concerts, that's very much, again, an homage to something that was celebrated and developed at Artpark. It's what we call "New Music." Something that was started by Creative Associates in Buffalo, and very much developed in Artpark, as well, and really translated to the very fabric of this cultural organization, and to see it carried forward with the musicians of today. Jeremy Dutcher, Third Coast Percussion – these are very well-known new musicians working, and experimenting with the types of music that

quite a feat. It's a big risk – on many levels. We're doing it in partnership with two other presenters in North America: the University of Arizona and the Rochester Fringe Festival. We could not do this alone.

But again, it signals the beginning of something new and pretty large-scale going forward.

The Artpark opportunities are tremendous – and the 50th season brings it all together.

I'll also mention that, next year, we'll be celebrating our 50th anniversary. So, prepare to party for the next two years.

Q: We've spoken about the various initiatives Artpark is taking to give back to the community – and even to use the word you mentioned, "risk," as far as some of the programming and events Artpark is undertaking to benefit the community. How can that community – how can patrons – give back to Artpark?

Sonia Kozlova Clark: Thank you for that question. For us, the most important thing you can do is to come. Bring your friends. Bring your children. Bring your parents. Come, come, come. Come to anything you don't know yet. Come to things you have been too many times and love. Come, be here. Be with us. That's No. 1.

And, of course, we're a non-profit organization. We are a self-sustaining organization. We do work in partnership with New York State Parks, who maintain the facilities; but our park operates with only less than 5% of state funding. The rest is raised by our own team led by our very powerful and dedicated board of directors, through various funding opportunities. And the foundation for these resources is in the individual giving, so every small gift brings a compounded effect.

Our individual donor drive is always on and you can make a difference today by going to artpark.net; there's a button at the top of the menu that says, "Donate Now & Support." Any gift is good enough – \$5, \$20, \$5,000 – we will honor it, and use it appropriately, and it will move us forward, and make our programming available to the whole community in the long term.

•For more information on Artpark & Company programming, visit www.artpark.net. Tickets are available online at www.ticketmaster.com.

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national productions, which are impactful not only for our own audience, but for the artists themselves. Through these international collaborations and national partnerships, Artpark's name is now present in the professional discourse around the world.

I was recently at Carnegie Hall, at a concert, and a number of people I ran into from New York City ran up to me with their memories of Artpark as an opera hub back in the 1980s. It's still in the memories of people far away from here. So, being able to reinstate this program with a tremendous conductor – we call him a conductor in residence and also a curator

are both very new to us today, but also date back to the traditions that were first honed in the 1970s – just when Artpark was established.

So, there are all these kinds of overtones of going back and also moving forward, all at the same time – and building a brand-new program we have not had in the past, is Cirque. So, we've done smaller productions as a part of our Fairy House Festival and other special events: Cirque Orange from Hamilton, Cirque Barcode from Montreal, Giraffe Royal from Estonia and others over the past six years.

They all represent the artform known as Cirque Nouveau mixed with street theater, as we'll call it. It is a fast-emerging popular form of performance, normally not involving a tent nor animals, not necessarily with the kind of acrobatics and clowns that everybody expects from the past – the red nose kind of act. In this new type of cirque, the acrobats and clowns are also actors – they act within the parameters of dramaturgy. They tell stories. It's half circus, half theater.

And this year, we're bringing this French production called "Exit" by a circus company called Cirque Inextremiste. Again, it's

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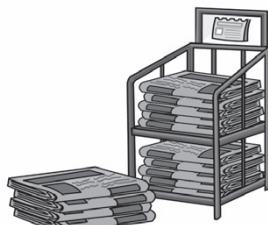
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