

GLADSTONE GALLERY

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INTERNATIONAL ARTS | FRONT ROW CENTER

Summer Festivals, From the Eclectic to the Electric

Compiled by CHRISTOPHER D. SHEA MAY 27, 2015

DRAMA

POZNAN, POLAND

[Malta Festival June 8-28](#)

Thomas Mann's epic novel "The Magic Mountain" will have its premiere as an opera here, in a piece commissioned for the festival. The British artist Tim Etchells — who runs the performance art company Forced Entertainment, and who has recently made a splash with light installations built for urban spaces across Europe — curated this year's lineup. Other visiting artists include the edgy director Rabih Mroué and the German interactive theater group Rimini Protokoll, which will show "Home Visit Europe," an interactive piece that asks festival visitors to offer their views on the Continent.

AVIGNON, FRANCE

[Festival d'Avignon July 4-25](#)

This year's slogan is "Je Suis l'Autre" (I Am the Other) a title that turns on its head the "Je Suis Charlie" slogan that united France in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the newspaper Charlie Hebdo and asks viewers to consider those who do not belong. The festival opens with a new production of "King Lear," directed by Olivier Py, who took over as the festival's artistic director last year. A number of works this year focus on North Africa, like "Meursaults," an adaptation of the novel "Meursault, Contre-Enquête," by the writer Kamel Daoud, who won the Prix Goncourt, France's leading literary prize, this spring. A vast fringe festival runs alongside the prestigious international festival.

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EDINBURGH

[Edinburgh International Festival](#); [Edinburgh Fringe](#) Aug. 7-31



The TAO Dance Theater of China, one of the groups performing at the Edinburgh International Festival in August. Fan Xi/Edinburgh International Festival

Juliette Binoche will play “Antigone” at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival; the choreographers Akram Khan and Christopher Wheeldon will show new works; and the firebrand conductor Ivan Fischer will conduct a production of “The Marriage of Figaro.” Nonetheless, it’s the far more sprawling fringe festival that takes center stage here, with hundreds of comedy, theater and interdisciplinary works taking place at venues ranging from tiny pubs to major stages.

INTERDISCIPLINARY

AMSTERDAM

[Holland Festival](#) May 30-June 23

This eclectic festival has always included a mix of art both high and low, from small contemporary concerts to major productions by the Dutch National Opera. Ruth Mackenzie, a British administrator who organized the cultural programs at the 2012 London Olympics, will take on the role of artistic director at the festival this year, and

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push the event further. Performances run the gamut, and include a 12-hour classical music festival modeled on London's summertime "Proms"; "The Cherry Orchard" staged by Lev Dodin; and "As Big as the Sky," a world premiere Chinese-style opera, with stage designs by the artist Ai Weiwei.

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND

[Manchester International Festival July 2-19](#)

Interdisciplinary collaborations and adaptations of literary works will headline this year's festival. The choreographer Wayne McGregor, the light artist Olafur Eliasson and the composer and producer Jamie XX have worked for two years on "Tree of Codes," a new ballet based on a work by the novelist Jonathan Safran Foer (dancers from Mr. McGregor's company and the Paris Opera Ballet will perform). "Wonder.land," a new take on "Alice in Wonderland" featuring music by the Blur frontman Damon Albarn and directed by Rufus Norris, who took over as the artistic director of the National Theater in London this season, will also have its premiere here.

SINGAPORE

[Singapore International Festival of Arts Aug. 6-Sept. 19](#)



The dance-heavy Singapore International Festival of the Arts features "Wall Dancing" by the Indian choreographer Padmini Chettur. Courtesy of Sara

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The theater director Ong Keng Sen took over as the director of this international arts festival in 2014, and focused on bringing a wider array of East Asian artwork and opening the festival (which used to focus primarily on classical art forms) to a broader public. Performances in the dance-heavy event include “Cabanons,” a dance-circus piece designed by the French conceptual artist Daniel Buren; “A Male Ant Has Straight Antennae,” a meditation on gender by the New Delhi choreographer Mandeep Raikhy; and “Dream Hotel,” an abstract piece by the director Wei Ying-chuan that combines various elements of theater, dance, video art and even traditional Chinese opera.

TORONTO

Luminato Festival June 19-28

The composer Nico Muhly, the Canadian pop singer Nelly Furtado and the “This American Life” radio host Ira Glass are among the collaborators on “Contemporary Color,” an extensive performance competition featuring dance, music and acrobatics. The piece, which takes place over the course of several days, is based on color guard, a dance-competition format practiced in American high schools and colleges. Teams of high school students will take part in the performance, which is curated by the former Talking Heads frontman David Byrne. The performance is the headliner act in a weeklong festival of pop concerts, talks and parties centered around the festival hub, an outdoor pavilion.

DANCE

BERLIN

Tanz im August Aug. 13- Sept. 4

A revamped version of the choreographer Lucinda Childs’s 1983 masterpiece “Available Light” — which features music by John Adams and sets by the architect Frank Gehry — will play at this festival, a citywide affair that takes place in outdoor venues, theaters and on the city’s leading dance stage. Other works include a guest performance by the Korea National Contemporary Dance Company, and “Voronja,” a new meditation on hell and evil by the Spanish group La Veronal.

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OPERA AND CLASSICAL MUSIC

MASADA, ISRAEL

[Tosca at Masada/Carmina Burana at Masada](#) June 4-13

Near the banks of the Red Sea, with Israel's desert mountains in the distance, the Israeli Opera will perform its production of "Tosca," Puccini's tragic tale of jealous rage. The opera's lead conductor, Daniel Oren, will conduct the piece, which takes place in a pop-up theater. On two nights, the company will also stage the cantata "Carmina Burana," which they will accompany with a light show projected onto the mountains of the national park where this festival takes place each year.

BREGENZ, AUSTRIA

[Bregenzer Festspiele](#) July 22- Aug. 23

More than 200 terra-cotta warriors will adorn a stage backed by a 90-foot-tall rust-colored backdrop that evokes the Great Wall of China for "Turandot," this year's production on the festival's iconic lake stage. Katrin Kapplusch, Mlada Khudoley and Erika Sunnegardh will trade performances as Turandot, the beautiful princess who has her suitors solve a series of riddles to win her hand.

HONG KONG

[Chinese Opera Festival](#) June 19-Aug. 2

A smattering of traditional Chinese opera troupes from across China will gather in Hong Kong for this summer festival. It offers a mix of companies, including some provincial troupes alongside major organizations like the Peking Opera Theater of Beijing. Stage tours and talks about the history of the genre take place throughout.

VERONA, ITALY

[Arena Opera Festival](#) June 19-Sept. 6

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A star-studded revival of the director Franco Zeffirelli's production of "Aida," one of six operas being presented at the Arena Opera Festival in Verona, Italy. Foto Ennevi/Fondazione Arena di Verona

"Nabucco," Verdi's epic opera about the tyrannical and hubristic King of Babylon, opens this festival, set in the Arena di Verona, an amphitheater built in the first century A.D. Six opera productions will appear in all, including a star-studded revival of the director Franco Zeffirelli's "Aida." The conductors Andrea Battistoni, Julian Kovatchev, Omer Meir Wellber and Daniel Oren will trade duties on performance dates from June to September.

BAYREUTH, GERMANY

Bayreuth Festival July 25-Aug. 28

This year's festival opens with a new production of Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde," helmed by the festival's co-director (and Wagner's great-granddaughter) Katharina Wagner. Ms. Wagner generated a furor in 2011 when, at the age of 29, she staged a concept-heavy, postmodern production of "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg" here. The rest of the festival is, as always, dedicated to Wagner. A production of the "Ring" cycle by the director Frank Castorf that incited 20 minutes of booing when it premiered here will also appear. Mr. Castorf has claimed that the festival tamed and finessed his production against his will for its 2014 revival.

SAVONLINNA, FINLAND

Savonlinna Opera Festival July 3-Aug. 2

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Guest performances by the Volksoper Wien (“The Merry Widow”) and the Semperoper Dresden (“The Marriage of Figaro”) anchor this festival, set in a 15th-century castle on an island in Finland’s lake district. A number of other operas will take place during the festival, which closes with a concert dedicated to Finland’s leading composer of classical music, Jean Sibelius.

POP

FUJI, JAPAN

Fuji Rock Festival July 24-26

Foo Fighters, Muse and Noel Gallagher’s High Flying Birds headline this year’s lineup, which takes place at a mountaintop ski resort northwest of Tokyo. The festival includes a mix of mainstream acts from Europe and the United States, alongside artists from Japan. Chthonic, a heavy metal band from Japan, will make an appearance as will the 1970s rock band Sheena & the Rokkets and Seiho, a modern-day disco artist.

LONDON

[David Byrne’s Meltdown](#) Aug. 17-30

Months after his “Color Guard” extravaganza plays Toronto (see the Luminato Festival), Mr. Byrne will hit London to curate this pop festival, set on the city’s bustling South Bank. Past curators of the annual festival include Yoko Ono, Patti Smith and Ray Davies.

The wide-ranging lineup organized by the musician includes the British singer-songwriter Anna Calvi, the soulful spoken word artist Benjamin Clementine, and “Atomic Bomb!” a rotating roster of musicians who perform works by William Onyeabor, a Nigerian artist who was an early adopter of electronic music. Mr. Byrne himself will perform music for the theater production “We’re Gonna Die,” by the New York playwright Young Jean Lee.

BUDAPEST

[Sziget Festival](#) Aug. 10-17

Less than a decade ago, Sziget was an emerging member of the festival circuit, known for attracting acts on their way to becoming major players. Now, it is one of the music circuit’s biggest players, rivaling mainstream events like Lollapalooza. Headliners this year include Florence & the Machine, the British singing sensation Ellie Goulding and the wildly popular DJ Avicii. The festival still has room for lesser-known acts, too, including indie bands and Hungarian folk musicians, like the troupes Sondorgo and Szalonna es Bandaja.

HOBART, TASMANIA

[Dark Mofo](#) June 12-22

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Antony and the Johnsons, who mix contemporary sounds with a folk music vibe, will perform alongside the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra at this festival, which marks Australia's winter solstice. Works are wide-ranging, but many capitalize on the wintry harvest theme. On June 19, the jazz bassist Nick Tsivos will host a 14-hour concert from around 6 p.m. until 8 a.m., at which point attendees can mark the solstice by swimming naked in the ocean with festival performers.

DOUR, BELGIUM

[Dour Festival July 15-19](#)

Lauryn Hill, Santigold, Snoop Dogg and a number of other major pop and hip-hop names will visit this festival. But it's the D.J.s who will take center stage. Flume, the fast-rising remix artist, will play the festival's arena stage. Other acts, like the French dubstep group Panda Dub, the German D.J. group Modeselektor and the British producer Sub Focus, will play the smaller stages.

SOUTHWOLD, ENGLAND

[Latitude Festival July 16-19](#)

Late-night concerts in the woods will take place each night of this festival, set in rolling countryside on England's east coast. The pop programming includes a wide swath of British indie pop's most well-known acts — like alt-J, Savages, James Blake and Laura Marling. Movie screenings and performances by some of the country's leading theater companies will also take place.

BARCELONA

[Sonar Festival June 18-20](#)

Many of mainstream pop's most off-kilter players, like Zebra Katz, FKA Twigs and Lauryn Hill, will appear here. The festival focuses on the intersection of art and technology, and some artists incorporate computers into their shows (past performances have included floating drones). A series of concerts by lesser-known and local D.J.s round out the festival offerings.

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