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SHOWTIME



MURRAY'S DIFFERENT STRIPES

Actor Bill Murray and German cellist Jan Vogler bring "New Worlds" to the Festival of the Arts Boca. **P.4**

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E.T. phone Boca?

Bill Murray and extraterrestrial headline Festival of the Arts Boca

By Phillip Valys
STAFF WRITER

Last October on “The Late Show With Stephen Colbert,” actor Bill Murray appeared onstage in full lounge-crooner mode, flashing a theatrical smirk before singing “I Feel Pretty” from Stephen Sondheim and Leonard Bernstein’s “West Side Story.” Sashaying around German cellist Jan Vogler, his musical partner, Murray also performed a dramatic, spoken-word rendition of the musical’s “America” with sly political commentary, closing the song with the lyric “Puerto Rico’s in America.”

Joanna Marie Kaye, director of Festival of the Arts Boca, says she thought Murray must have summoned his Nick the Lounge Singer from the actor’s “Saturday Night Live” heyday. She hopes Murray’s performance will be just as comical when he and Vogler bring “New Worlds,” one of the festival’s marquee concerts, to Mizner Park Amphitheater on March 2.

“Musically, they’re on such a high level, and how much more entertaining can you get than Bill Murray?” Kaye says of the duo, who will be accompanied by violinist Mira Wang and pianist Vanessa Perez.

“New Worlds,” a hybrid of songs from musicals, Walt Whitman poetry and Van Morrison covers featuring the velvet-voiced Murray, celebrates often unexpected connections between literature and music, Kaye says. Which makes the concert an ideal pairing for the 12th annual Festival of the Arts Boca, a diverse bill of music, authors and ideas returning Friday through March 4 to Mizner Park’s amphitheater and cultural-arts center.

Celebrated soprano Kathleen Battle will raise the curtains on the festival today at 7:30 p.m. at Mizner Park Amphitheater, bearing a program that includes selections from Brahms and three Gershwin



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A big-screen showing of Steven Spielberg’s “E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial” at 6 p.m. March 4 will close the festival. Musician-producer T Bone Burnett, left, will appear Thursday with a discussion titled “On the Road With T Bone Burnett: Stories, Music and Movies.”



LESTER COHEN/COURTESY

classics (“Summertime,” “By Strauss,” “Embraceable You”).

Here’s what else is happening at Festival of the Arts Boca.

The music

Violin virtuoso Itzhak Perlman (8 p.m. Saturday) will revisit his 1995 album, “In the Fiddler’s House,” a deeply personal collection of klezmer songs that also became an Emmy-winning PBS special. Cuban jazz pianist Harold López-Nussa, who has picked up awards at the Jazz Solo Piano Competition at the Montreux Jazz Festival, will perform the following night (7 p.m. Sunday). Lopez-Nussa replaces Grupo Company Segundo, a Cuban act who canceled their appearance after encountering travel-visa issues. Meanwhile, “Russian Fantasy” (8 p.m. March 3) will feature music from violist Chad Hoopes and pianist Nikolay Khozyainov will be accompanied by the Symphonia chamber orchestra, conducted by Constantine Kitsopoulos.

The film

Closing out the festival will be a big-screen showing of Steven Spielberg’s classic “E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial” (6 p.m. March 4). The film, projected onstage, will have its John Williams-scored soundtrack performed by Symphonia and Kitsopoulos.

The speakers

Not scheduled to perform this year, T Bone Burnett (7 p.m. Thursday/March 1), the Grammy-winning producer-musician behind the soundtracks to “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” and “Crazy Heart,” will bring a discussion titled “On the Road With T Bone Burnett: Stories, Music and Movies.” Also part of the festival’s Authors and Ideas series will be Hannah Tinti, author of “The Twelve Lives of Samuel Hawley”

Festival of the Arts Boca

Where: Mizner Park Amphitheater, 590 Plaza Real, and Mizner Park Cultural Arts Center, 201 Plaza Real, in Boca Raton.

When: Through March 4

Cost: Tickets cost \$15-\$250.

Contact: 866-571-2787, or FestivalBoca.org.

and “The Good Thief” (4 p.m. Sunday); Richard Haas, author of “A World in Disarray: Causes, Consequences, Choices” (7 p.m. Wednesday); technology entrepreneur and X Prize Foundation creator Peter Diamandis (7 p.m. March 3); and documentarian James Marshall, creator of “The American Dream Project” (4 p.m. March 3).