

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Oct. 21: Scenes from the Arts-burgh

By The Tribune-Review
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Offerings from Pittsburgh's cultural arts and entertainment events.

Reba McEntire and Kelly Clarkson

The Reese's Peanut Butter Cup analogy cited by some people to describe the Reba McEntire-Kelly Clarkson joint concert on Friday night fit very well.

The two women might have different flavors, but when you merge them, you get an unexpected and delicious combo. Middle-aged country queen McEntire and 20-something pop princess Clarkson spent the entire concert onstage together, with each singer having some kind of presence in the other's songs. Some they sang together as a duet, while with others, one woman sang background vocals for the other's solo hit.

The bond between McEntire and Clarkson really showed throughout the concert at Mellon Arena, Uptown. It was almost like McEntire was Auntie Reba to Clarkson.

Many people come to the "2 Worlds 2 Voices" concerts to hear the one singer they like, promoters say. Yet, when they leave, these fans often are surprised to find themselves new fans of either McEntire or Clarkson. That's what happened for this Reba fan, who was unfamiliar with Clarkson's music, but loved it when she heard it for the first time at the concert.

Comedian Melissa Peterman, who was a cast member on the "Reba" sitcom, provided an entertaining introduction to the concert with hilarious wisecracks, and appeared onstage a few times during it to tease McEntire and Clarkson.

-- Kellie Gormly

Peter Reder's 'Guided Tour'

Part performance, part guided tour and part philosophical meditation, Peter Reder's "Guided Tour" offered a thought-provoking, slyly amusing meditation on the way we look at and present our personal and public heritage.

All three performances presented as part of the Pittsburgh International Festival of Firsts had sold out well in advance of their start last Monday.

Blurring the line between what's real and what's performance, Reder led a small group through public and private spaces of the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History

in Oakland. Employing low-key commentary plus film and slides, he charmingly offered an ambiguous blend of fact, fiction and deliberate lies to generate fresh perspectives.

One thing is certain.

I'll never again look at a heritage site, a photo album or the Carnegie Museums without thinking about Reder's work.

-- Alice T. Carter

'Heiress'

Last weekend, the Little Lake Theatre Company in Peters opened a nearly flawless production of "The Heiress."

Based on Henry James' novel "Washington Square," Ruth and Augustus Goetz's solidly classical play focuses on the interplay of heart and head as a shy, plain woman with expectations of a huge inheritance is pursued by a man whose interests might be more mercenary than amatory.

Director Sunny Disney has assembled a cast of experienced performers and leads them through a polished and engaging performance that feels far shorter than its two-hour-and-40-minute running time.

Leading the cast is Mary Liz Meyer as the retiring but intelligent Catherine Sloper, whose strength and resolve expands as she deals with those who fail to appreciate her real assets.

The ever-dependable Art DeConciliis plays her disapproving father with directness, intelligence and understatement.

Marcus Marceau plays Catherine's likable but bland and pragmatic suitor.

"The Heiress" continues through Nov. 1 at Little Lake Theatre, 500 Lakeside Drive South, Peters. Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays. Admission is \$13.60 to \$15; \$10 for age 15 and younger.

Details: 724-745-6300.

-- Alice T. Carter

'Liga'

For three performances last week, area audiences were treated to a lively and thoroughly captivating show about acting onstage and in real life.

Employing video and live stage performances, the Netherlands-based Kassys brought their adventurous show "Liga" to the New Hazlett Theater as part of the Pittsburgh International Festival of Firsts. "Liga" closed Saturday.

Kassys created an enigmatic, multilayered and almost language-free performance with its five actors, director, stage technician and a multitude of multipurpose props.

This alternately touching, daring and illuminating 75-minute show explores the blurry line that separates being yourself and honoring social norms. It investigates how we learn to negotiate the boundaries as well as how our presence as an audience member affects the dynamic.

Anyone who has ever been trapped in cocktail party small talk or feigned enthusiasm for a boss's lame idea could find much to ponder here.

-- Alice T. Carter

'El Eco de la Sombra'

"El Eco de la Sombra" could well be this year's most stimulating, spellbinding and sensuous adventure in the arts.

Performed by Teatro de los Sentidos from Barcelona, it's having an exclusive U.S. premiere here as a presentation of the Pittsburgh International Festival of Firsts. It plays through Saturday at The Ellis School Armory in Shadyside. But unless you already have one of the 50 timed tickets for one of the remaining performances, you're out of luck. It's completely sold out.

And with good reason.

It immerses you in a nearly wordless and dreamlike solitary journey through a labyrinth of gauzy and blackened corridors. Pathways of gauze or black velour lead you to encounters with characters who engage you in strangely moving sensual experiences generated by texture, aroma, imagery, taste and sound -- the crunch of dry leaves underfoot, the perfume of melting chocolate, the gentle lapping of water, the shimmer of moving shadows or the contact of a supportive and guiding hand.

The effect is both comfortingly familiar, and unlike anything you've previously experienced.

-- Alice T. Carter