

Celine Dion concert won't be this week



If you have tickets for the concert on Tuesday, you now have a free evening to watch those election returns roll in instead. **PAGE 2**

CHICAGO HUMANITIES FESTIVAL

David McCullough accepts the Chicago Tribune Literary Prize while fellow honorees Garry Wills and Aleksander Hemon take home Heartland Prizes. **PAGE 4**

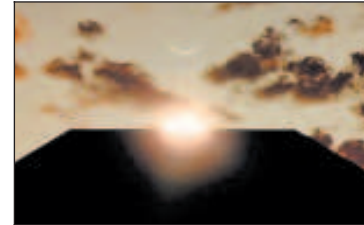
And there's more from Alex Ross of The New Yorker. **PAGE 4**

Classical music's middle-brow act

It turns out that classical 20th Century music isn't as highfalutin as one might think.

Alex Ross, music critic for The New Yorker magazine, pointed out on Saturday that "difficult" modern sounds permeate mainstream pop culture, consorting with the likes of Jack Nicholson and "Friday the 13th."

Ross, in town for the Chicago Humanities Festival, offers these examples:



depicts the Earth rising over the moon and sun moving over the Earth, the music represents eternity.

2 "The Shining." Kubrick utilized Gyorgy Ligeti's "Atmospheres" in "2001: A Space Odyssey" to convey the transcendent transformation of character. Here, the director employs the composer's "Lontano" to express terror. Viewers hear the frightening music while witnessing Jack Nicholson's escalating madness and alienating winter extremes outside the hotel.



les incorporated avant-garde classical and turned it into mass-market phenomenon.

4 "Halloween" and "Friday the 13th." Themes to these franchise films (and countless other horror movies) draw upon the simultaneous sounding of multiple distinct notes. The approach, and the resultant terrifying effects and dissonant chords, traces back to composer Arnold Schoenberg, who proclaimed tonality dead and sought out "new violence" in his music.



5 Cutting-edge music clubs. Venues such as Chicago's Empty Bottle, at which programming varies widely from night to night, show how free jazz, noise rock and new music have similar identities and indistinguishable borders. The musicians' training may differ but they speak the same language. Listeners are unable to detect a geographical divide.

—Bob Gendron

TOP MOVIES

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, in millions, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. High School Musical 3: Senior Year	\$15
2. Zack and Miri Make a Porno	\$10.7
3. Saw V	\$10.1
4. Changeling	\$9.4
5. The Haunting of Molly Harvey	\$6
6. Beverly Hills Chihuahua	\$4.7
7. The Secret Life of Bees	\$4
8. Max Payne	\$3.7
9. Eagle Eye	\$3.4
10. Pride and Glory	\$3.3

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Denyce Graves (foreground) plays the title character in "Margaret Garner" at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University.

OPERA REVIEW

'Garner' confronts shame of slavery

By John von Rhein
TRIBUNE CRITIC

America is still processing its racial legacy, starting with the original sin of slavery, and, as the presidential campaign draws to an end, that legacy remains the uninvited guest in the room.

Translating the shame of slavery to the operatic stage would be a daunting task for any artist. But composer Richard Danielpour, working with a libretto by Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Toni Morrison, has brought it off to stunning effect in his opera "Margaret Garner."

By hosting the Chicago premiere of "Margaret Garner," the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University is reclaiming, if but briefly, its former title as the home of grand opera in Chicago.

Michigan Opera Theatre brought its 2005 world-premiere production and several members of the original cast, including the compelling Denyce Graves in the title role, from Detroit for a weeklong run ending Sunday. The performers and creators drew a prolonged ovation after the opening performance Saturday night.

In a period of momentous social debate, the gruesome and morally fraught story of Margaret Garner

'Margaret Garner'

When: 7 p.m. Thursday; 7:30 p.m. Saturday; 3 p.m. Sunday

Where: Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress Parkway

Tickets: \$40-\$150; 312-902-1500

feels timely. Garner, a Kentucky slave who briefly escaped to Ohio in the winter of 1856 before being caught by her master, killed her own daughter rather than see her grow up in slavery. Her desperate action led to a sensational trial a few years before the Civil War broke out.

With its accessible score and unabashed theatricality, "Margaret Garner" is an opera calculated both to pull in operatic neophytes while keeping faith with the old guard. Some would say that the sheer ease with which it goes down musically renders it less thought-provoking than it wants to be, but I would argue the reverse.

The sharp, ironic observations of Morrison's poetic text resonate through Danielpour's eclectic score. His neo-Romantic music aspires to be all things American: There are

stretches of *faux* Copland and Bernstein, original spirituals, evocations of gospel hymns and agitated, jazzy syncopations.

Kenny Leon's staging has the snazzy fluidity of one of his recent Broadway musicals. Stefan Lano, conducting the Chicago Sinfonietta, moves the music along with biting rhythms and warm, surging sonorities. Marjorie Bradley Kellogg's simple but handsome sets and Paul Tazewell's sepia-colored slave attire look terrific. The chorus sings robustly.

Mezzo-soprano Graves, who dazzled Lyric Opera audiences with her Carmen three seasons ago, has said the Margaret Garner saga is close to her heart. Her passionate commitment is fully on display in her proud, vibrant, intensely gripping performance. Tracie Luck will portray Garner in the three remaining performances.

Mary Elizabeth Williams was deeply affecting as Cilla, Robert Garner's wizened mother. Gregg Baker was a powerful, virile presence as Robert. James Westman brought a tight, woolly baritone to the plantation owner Edward Gaines, a role that veers unconvincingly between brutality and inner torment.

johnvrhein@tribune.com

Buildings as poetry's canvas

By Julia Keller
TRIBUNE CRITIC

Elections come and go; financial crises descend and lift; nations rise and fall. But certain poems last.

Chicagoans will be meeting Wislawa Szymborska's poems head-on—but only for a while. Artist Jenny Holzer has been projecting Szymborska's words on downtown buildings. When the installation ends, the words go away.

The work of the 85-year-old Polish poet, though, may linger much longer in the minds of those who are willing to look up from their lives to reflect upon it.

Szymborska, who won the 1996

Nobel Prize for Literature and who lives in Krakow, Poland, writes an elegant, spare sort of poetry that is brusque and conversational in its directness. There are no flowery touches in Szymborska's verses, no dreamy moonlit glades.

She can be epigrammatic: "When I pronounce the word Future, the first syllable already belongs to the past." Her observations about the natural world are coldly precise: "The buzzard never says it is to blame."

But mostly she is political—not as in Republicans and Democrats, but in the sense that we live amid competing claims for our attention and resources.

Each of us decides, every day, what kind of person we will be,

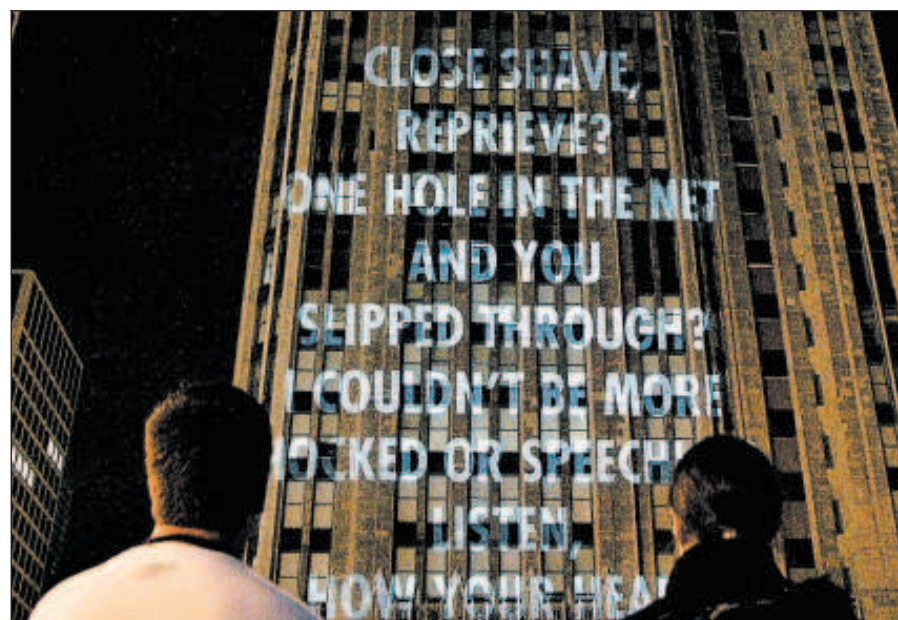
how we will treat others.

"We are children of our age, / it's a political age," Szymborska writes in "Children of Our Age," which appears in her best-known collection, "View With a Grain of Sand" (1996): "Whatever you say reverberates, / whatever you don't say speaks for itself. / So either way you're talking politics."



Poetry speaks

Artist Jenny Holzer projects words on other notable Chicago buildings. On Monday, she will repeat the projections on the Merchandise Mart. For more images of Holzer's work in Chicago, go to chicagotribune.com/holzer



John Jines (left) and Juliana Pivato watch as Wisława Szymborska's poetry is projected onto Tribune Tower Sunday night. STACIE FREUDENBERG/FOR THE TRIBUNE