CINCINNATI BUSINESS COURIER

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A Focus on Film

Leyla Shokoohe

ARTS FRONT
A look at the creative forces shaping our city

CLASSICAL MUSIC

CSO extends contract of maestro Langrée

The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra took the occasion of the orchestra’s 125th anniversary gala to announce that it extended the contract of music director Louis Langrée.

Rob McDonald, board chair and partner at Taft Stettinius & Hollister, announced him at Music Hall that the orchestra has extended Langrée’s contract through the 2021-22 season. Langrée, who conducted concerts featuring superstars soprano Renée Fleming and also celebrated his 56th birthday over the weekend, is in his seventh season with the CSO.

“It is a blessing for me to be here,” Langrée said the next day. “When I first accepted the offer from (former president) Troy Dewey to be music director in 2012, it was eight years ago. I didn’t imagine that it would be such a strong, powerful and meaningful chapter of my life. Because now, really, Cincinnati is home. I’m here. It changes the role. It’s not only thinking about music, it’s thinking about the role of music in the community. I’m eager to continue the voyage. I really hope to see whether he and the orchestra will win a Grammy award for ‘Best Orchestral Performance’ for ‘Translating,’ an album featuring the first recording of a new critical edition of Beethoven’s ‘An American in Paris,’ the original version of Vaughan’s ‘American’ and Stravinsky’s ‘Symphony in C.’

Langrée said he plans to attend the 62nd Annual Grammy Awards ceremony in Los Angeles, among others, in May. It is the music director’s second Grammy nomination with the orchestra.

In addition to his Cincinnati post, he has been music director of the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center in New York City since 2013. It is his third contract extension for Langrée, who began his tenure in 2013.

A FOCUS ON FILM

BIENNIAL FESTIVAL HOPES TO CREATE NEW COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES VIA SCREENINGS

BY LEYLA SHOKOOHE
Cincinnati contributor

PhotoFocus is marking its 10th anniversary this year with the expansion of its film offerings through “Second Screens,” a free monthly series. PhotoFocus, a biennial festival celebrating lens-based art, brought in C. Jacqueline Wood, a Cincinnati-based filmmaker and artist, as film curator at large to focus on film and video programming both prior to and during the festival. “PhotoFocus decided to introduce some new initiatives, and this is one of them,” said Wood, who is most familiar to local audiences for the Mini Mushroom, her People’s Liberty-sponsored art film house located on Main Street in Over-the-Rhine.

The physical location of the Mini recently closed after three years of operation. Wood, who has contributed curatorially to PhotoFocus in more limited capacities, began to build on the appreciation for photography demonstrated by Cincinnati audiences.

“Personally, it’s a relief to have a new venue and to feel that there’s a nice change in my life because I’ve been a fan of the Mini for many years. I think our viewers will be excited by the expansion of our programming and the fact that PhotoFocus is going to be showcasing this work in Cincinnati,” Wood said. “PhotoFocus is always interested in the latest and greatest, but I think our viewers will be excited by the expansion of our programming and the fact that PhotoFocus is going to be showcasing this work in Cincinnati.”

Wood’s relationship with PhotoFocus began in 2018, when she organized the Mini Film Festival at the Mini. “I’ve always been interested in the idea of having a film festival that was not only focused on photography, but also on the other mediums that are connected to it,” Wood said.

“We’ve been waiting to work more deeply with film,” said Mary Ellen Goode, PhotoFocus executive director. “We’ve got opportunities with each month’s presentation to really highlight an important film or filmmaker, and it’s also an opportunity to say, ‘Yes, PhotoFocus is interested in this.’ We’re moving around the city to show off many interesting, significant venues that we’re lucky to have here.’”

Over the years, the PhotoFocus is the largest photography and lens-based biennial in the U.S. The organization was founded in 2008, celebrating its medium with a festival every two years, held in October, and a symposium in the non-biennial years. More than 60,000 visitors attended the first biennial in
2012, and more than 200,000 attended the 2018 iteration.

In addition to core programming and keynote speakers, Fotofocus provides grants and financial support to several organizations and artists. To date, the non-profit organization has given away nearly $5 million.

“The vision is to inspire conversations about the world through the art of photography and lens-based practices,” said Carissa Barnard, Fotofocus deputy director of exhibitions and programming.

“You can talk about the state and the history of the world through the art of photography,” she said. “If you look at the biennial offerings, we support conversations, art-based practices that give us this full gamut of appreciation of the world. It’s very much democratic, the camera, the ability to take a photograph.”

Second Screens takes place on the second Tuesday of the month in different venues across the city, and Wood’s take on the project is very intentional.

“My vision for Second Screens is an eclectic mix of important work that will bring in different demographics and highlight important voices,” Wood said.

“I always like to mix serious work with fun work. I like to mix political with storytelling, with narrative, with avant garde, with classic Hollywood cinema, with the most extreme art films. How do you look at that mix and make sense of it?”

The first Second Screens took place Jan. 14 at the Woodward Theater, with a screening of "Vanilla Ice Cream," a documentary by the late French New Wave filmmaker Agnes Varda about her own life and career.

On Feb. 11, Terrence Malick's "Days of Heaven" will screen at the Newsreel Theater in the Cincinnati Museum Center.

On March 10, "United Skates," a documentary about the underground subculture of African American roller skate communities, will screen at Rhythm Box in Over-the-Rhine.

> IF YOU GO

When: Second Tuesdays in 2020
Where: Locations across the city
Information: www.fotofocus.org

> THEATER

NUKANNOUNCES2020-21 THEATER-DANCE SEASON

Northern Kentucky University’s School of the Arts has unveiled its lineup for the 2020-21 theater-dance season. The schedule, which includes collaborations and guest artists, will be released in August.

*Noise Off* by Michael Frayn, directed by Ken Jones, Sept. 34-Oct. 4, NKU Corbett Theatre

*Noise Off* takes a fond look at the follies of theater folk, whose susceptibility to out-of-control egos, memory loss and passion affairs turn every performance into a high-risk adventure.

*Zanna, Don’t!* book, music and lyrics by Tim Acuto, directed by Michael Hatton, Oct. 22-Nov. 1, NKU Studio Theatre

*Zanna, Don’t!* is set in a world where everyone is gay—well, almost everyone. The students write a show called “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” about straight people in the military, which becomes the catalyst for a young man and woman to fall in love. Enter Zanna, a musical fairy who, with a wave of her wand, brings true love to one and all.

*Floyd Collins* book, music and lyrics by Adam Guettel, directed by Lesli Margherita, Nov. 15-22, NKU Corbett Theatre

Based on a true story. In 1922, after turning a Kentucky cave into a tourist attraction, Floyd Collins becomes the attraction when he gets trapped 200 feet underground. Collins fought for his sanity and ultimately his life as the rescue effort above exploded into the first genuine mass media circus.


Set in the late 80s, this story of friendship and revenge in the Robotech era is outrageous, thought-provoking and even romantic. Three female coworkers concoct a plan to get even with the sexist bigwig they call their boss—Franklin Hart. In a hilarious turn of events, Violet, Judy, and Doralee give their boss the boot.

*The Y.E.S. Festival of New Plays—20th Anniversary*, directed by Mike King, Nicole Sillman, Charlie Roosting and Robert Anderson, April 8-11, 2021, NKU Corbett and Studio Theatres and the Carnegie

Four world premiere plays, including a first-of-its-kind regional collaboration, The Carnegie and NKU School of the Arts will work together to produce a new play by Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati producing artistic director Dr. Lynn Nottage.

Tickets will go on sale in September. For information, call the box office at 859-672-EVENT or go to tickets.vendini.com

> AWARDS

CINCINNATI FOUNDATION WINS GOVERNOR’S AWARD FOR THE ARTS

The Cincinnati Foundation is among eight winners of the 2020 Governor’s Awards for the Arts in Ohio. The Ohio Arts Council announced the winner on Sept. 9.

The Charles H. Dater Foundation was the winner in the Arts Patron category.

The foundation preserves the memory and philanthropic commitment of Charles H. Dater (1912-90) and his ancestors. It was founded in 1969 to make grants to organizations in Greater Cincinnati that carry out projects to benefit young people in arts and culture, education, health care, social services and other community needs. Since then, the foundation has awarded more than 3,100 grants totaling $31 million.

The Governor’s Awards, founded in 1979, showcase Ohio artists, arts organizations, arts leaders and patrons, and business support of the arts.

— Bill Cieslinski