

HOME PAGE | TODAY'S PAPER | VIDEO | MOST POPULAR | TIMES TOPICS

Log In | Register Now | Help

The New York Times

N.Y. / Region

Search All NYTimes.com

Go ING DIRECT

WORLD | U.S. | N.Y. / REGION | BUSINESS | TECHNOLOGY | SCIENCE | HEALTH | SPORTS | OPINION | ARTS | STYLE | TRAVEL | JOBS | REAL ESTATE | AUTOS

YOU READ IT HERE FIRST.



The New York Times

ARTS | WESTCHESTER

A Glimpse Into a Maestro's Salon, After Hours



Gregg Vigliotti for The New York Times

OPENING NIGHT "Late Night With Leonard Bernstein," presented by Copland House opened in the music room at the Merestead estate in Mount Kisco.

By PHILLIP LUTZ
Published: October 14, 2011

LEONARD BERNSTEIN, a man of peace with an innate theatricality, knew the value of playing against type; when the mood struck, he would jokingly threaten to clear the wee-hour revelers from his living room by digging into **Aaron Copland's** gnarly Piano Variations. So said his daughter, **Jamie Bernstein**, as she narrated "Late Night With Leonard Bernstein," a look at the after-hours maestro, which opened the 2011-12 season in the **Copland House** concert series last month.

Related

Times Topic: [Westchester Arts](#)

Connect With Us on Twitter

Follow @NYTMetro for New York breaking news and headlines.



[Enlarge This Image](#)



Gregg Vigliotti for The New York Times
Leonard Bernstein's daughter Jamie Bernstein was the narrator.

[Enlarge This Image](#)

Whether Bernstein cleared any rooms was beside the point. Ms. Bernstein's story revealed his mischievous personality and musical predilections, and that was enough to engage the packed opening-night crowd. After the pianist **Michael Boriskin** attacked the variations with the kind of gusto Bernstein was known for, the audience filled the music room at the **Merestead estate** in Mount Kisco with lusty laughs and applause — much as Bernstein's merrymakers might have done.

Mr. Boriskin, the artistic and executive director of Copland House, said the concert series, now in its third season, was tailored to an audience "for whom the sense of adventure and discovery is important to their musical experiences." In programming the relatively obscure abstract works of Copland, and presenting them in a context that shed light on a lesser known side of another icon of American music, the show was typical of the offerings at Merestead, a long-

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

PRINT

REPRINTS

From **ALEXANDER PAYNE**
Director of **SIDEWAYS**

Log in to see what your friends are sharing on nytimes.com. [Privacy Policy](#) | [What's This?](#)

Log In With Facebook

What's Popular Now

Tom Waits's New Album, 'Bad as Me'



Police Kill Dozens of Animals Freed From Ohio Preserve



Bank of America advertisement featuring a video player and text: "When people are reluctant to seek care, we bring care to them. Tracy Ng, M.D. - TRIBECA RADIATION, New York, NY. See Now >

TimesLimited E-Mail

Sign up to receive exclusive products and experiences featuring NYTimes.com's premier advertisers.



[Privacy Policy](#)

[Sign Up](#)

MOST E-MAILED

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU



1. MUSIC
[Korea Rediscovered Its Rock 'N' Roll Soul](#)



2. [Barry Feinstein, Photographer of Defining Rock Portraits, Dies at 80](#)



3. [RED BULLS 1, UNION 0 Red Bulls Bring Home Final Spot in Playoffs](#)

Log in to discover more articles based on what you've read.

PRESENTED BY PERSONAL SAVINGS from American Express

[Log In](#)

[Register Now](#)

[f Log In](#)

[What's This?](#) | [Don't Show](#)



Gregg Vigiotti for The New York Times
The pianos used to perform Copland's Piano Variations.

gone magnate's onetime home that Copland House is developing as a kind of main stage for its concert series.

By offering first-rate fare focused on the modern American repertory, the performances at Merestead are gaining a reputation for quality — one to match those of the coveted Copland House composers' residencies at the former Copland home in Cortlandt Manor. Beyond the Copland variations, there were lots of little surprises at the Bernstein show: early bits of aborted projects that later surfaced,

reimagined, in famous works like "West Side Story" and "Mass"; a tongue-twisting parody by Bernstein's buddy [Adolph Green](#), gamely executed by Ms. Bernstein; a film clip of Bernstein at the piano, singing a [Marc Blitzstein](#) novelty number with the kind of sporting humor he was said to display at his late-night soirees.

As the program unfolded, the performers' small asides, fleeting smiles and tears — Ms. Bernstein's eyes welled up at the sight of her father on screen — were clear to most of the audience of 90. The Merestead space — a former living room, smaller than Lincoln Center's [Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse](#), where the show was first staged last fall — has an intimacy that Ms. Bernstein said marked it as "ideal" for a program that peeks into her father's home, and head.

The atmosphere was so relaxed that [Amy Burton](#), a celebrated soprano who had dazzled the audience with numbers by Bernstein and Noel Coward, could be found after the show grabbing fresh air, sipping wine and minding her dog as she chatted up Merestead — a place, she said, where she was able to explore songs that she and the pianist [John Musto](#), her husband and accompanist, would incorporate into their cabaret act.

Cabaret, in fact, is one type of fare the Merestead room readily accommodates, though it is hardly a predominant one. While the room was used recently for memorable strolls through the American songbook by the soprano KT Sullivan and the tenor [Darius de Haas](#), it has shown itself to be a setting suitable for almost any small-scale production.

But Copland House never loses sight of its namesake or his close associates, few of whom were closer than Bernstein, and "Late Night" offered hints of shows to come. Notable among them is "The City at Night," which on Nov. 13 will feature Copland's "[Quiet City](#)," a work that began in 1939 as incidental music for a short-lived play that evoked an after-hours urban setting. The show will include a restored chamber version of music conceived for the play, as well as Bernstein's Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, which had its premiere in 1942.

Even when Copland is not on the bill, his spirit guides the programming, said Dr. Lawrence L. Faltz, the president of the Copland House board of trustees. Copland, for example, was one of the first recipients of the [Pulitzer Prize](#) in music, which he was awarded in 1945 for "Appalachian Spring." Building on that distinction, Copland House has booked the 2011 Pulitzer winner, Zhou Long, and the 2010 winner, [Jennifer Higdon](#), on Oct. 30 and April 15, respectively.

The 2009 winner, Steve Reich, appeared last May. It has also celebrated nominees for the prize, winners or not. Last July, its resident ensemble, Music From Copland House, presented "Prizing the Pulitzer" at the [Caramoor International Music Festival](#) in Katonah. The program included works by Ms. Higdon, Mr. Musto (a Pulitzer finalist in 1997), [Charles Ives](#), [Samuel Barber](#), [Paul Moravec](#), [David Del Tredici](#), [William Bolcom](#) and [John Cage](#).

The event strengthened the ties between Caramoor and Copland House, a process that should advance again in the season finale on June 3, when Caramoor's chief executive and general director, the pianist [Michael Barrett](#), will join Mr. Boriskin at Merestead, nearly a year after the two played together there. On tap this time: "Strings, Mallets, Hammers and Ivory," featuring Bartok's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, and [Stewart Wallace's](#)



ADVERTISEMENTS



Exclusive offers delivered to your inbox

WHERE THE STORY COMES FIRST.
BECOME A DIGITAL SUBSCRIBER.
JUST 99¢ FOR 4 WEEKS ► *The New York Times*

Ads by Google

what's this?

Chromebooks have arrived

Less loading. More surfing.

Instant resume & 8 second startup.

google.com/chromebook

“Gorilla in a Cage.”

The show may be held in the estate’s barn, which will allow for more ticket sales than the music room, though at the expense of some intimacy. That is one trade-off Copland House will have to weigh, and the issue could get more complicated if, as planned, the organization gains access to other buildings on the property, which is owned by the county.

Another, perhaps more defining issue will be cultural globalization. Dr. Faltz said the trend might make it “difficult to defend the notion of American music in the future.” But he also expressed faith that Copland’s pioneering efforts in multicultural expression would provide inspiration.

“The ethos of the organization,” he said, “is to carry on as though Aaron Copland were looking over our shoulder.”

The Copland House season continues with concerts through June at Merestead, 455 Byram Lake Road, Mount Kisco. Information: coplandhouse.org or (914) 788-4659.

A version of this article appeared in print on October 16, 2011, on page WE18 of the New York edition with the headline: A Glimpse Into a Maestro’s Salon, After Hours.

All the articles, insight and innovation. Get a Times Digital Subscription today.

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL
PRINT
REPRINTS

SPONSORED HEADLINES

[What's This?](#)

Get Free E-mail Alerts on These Topics

Vulture

Kurt Russell Is the Newest Bad Guy in Tarantino's Django Unchained

Art

HaircolorForWomen.com

Hair Color Tips- Avoid Common Mistakes

Westchester County (NY)

Patch - Fort Greene-Clinton Hill, NY

Oct. 20: Alternate Side Parking Rules Suspended

Bernstein, Leonard

The Etsy Blog

The Candy Corn Debate

Classical Music

Enjoy the article? Learn more about this topic.



Art



INSIDE NYTIMES.COM



TRAVEL »



36 Hours in Albuquerque

MOVIES »



'Margin Call'

OPINION »

Op-Ed: In Tripoli, Shouts of Joy

Libyans celebrated the news of Qaddafi's death with hope that it will bring a new beginning to the country.

U.S. »



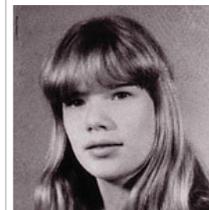
Gel Cuts Women's Risk of Herpes, Study Finds

OPINION »

Disunion: First as Farce, Then as Tragedy

Ball's Bluff, a battle born in comic confusion, became a horrifying disaster for the Union.

WORLD »



A Father's Long Pursuit of Justice