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BBC MARCH 2024 NEWS AND VIEWS

BBC Membership

Thanks to all who have re-upped. Those of you who have not rejoined will find another membership form. It's very expensive to maintain our streets. We install tree guards when needed, do both spring and fall plantings and water throughout the summer months. Be sure to make your checks payable to BBC Block Association. Membership is \$25 per person. You can also go to www.bbcblockassociation.org and click on join. Either way, please consider making an additional contribution for our trees. You'll feel great—guaranteed!!

NABE NOTES

St. Luke in the Fields, Masterpieces of Mexican Polyphony The Choir of St. Luke in the Fields **David Shuler**, music director Thursday, March 7, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m. - lecture by **Dr. Raymond Erickson**, Church of St. Luke in the Fields, 487 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014. This program explores the wealth of Renaissance polyphony composed in New Spain in the sixteenth century. Music of **Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla** will be featured, including his double choir *Missa Ave Regina Caelorum* driven by traditional Spanish dance rhythms. Motets and villancicos by **Manuel de Zumaya**, **Gaspar Fernandes**, **Francisco López Capillas** and **Antonio de Salazar** will complete the program. \$40 general admission, \$30, students and seniors info@stlukeinthefields.org



Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla

The Greenwich Village Chamber Singers

Their tradition is to mix early music with contemporary compositions. This spring concert features both the majestic four-part Mass of the English Renaissance composer William Byrd and the premiere of a piece we have commissioned, New Yorker **Shahar Regev** and setting of a **Sara Teasdale** poem. The program also includes works by other twentieth and twenty-first century composers, including **Florence Price** and **Jean Ritchie**, with setting of poems by **Emily Dickinson**, **Paul Laurence Dunbar** and others, making an intriguing dialogue between the old and the new. A constant theme is a plea for peace, needed so much now.



You'll hear it all at the Church of St. Luke in the Fields, 487

Sara Teasdale

Hudson St., at 8:00 on Friday, March 15. \$27 on line including a service fee, or \$30 at the door. Come and enjoy! www.gvcsingers.org

West Village Chorale

Would You Harbor Me? (with NYC Master Chorale) Sunday March 3 and 10 5:00 p.m., Judson Memorial Church. This is a program of separate and shared pieces between our two choirs. through which we highlight the stories of individuals and communities and show how the act of singing together can inspire us to break down dividing walls. Join us to hear both traditional and contemporary works from remarkable composers including **Ysaye Barnwell**, **Michael Bussewitz-Quarm**, **Marques L.A. Garrett**, **Sarah Rimkus**, and **Bob Dylan**, and from the musicals *Ragtime* and *La Cage aux*



Ysaye Barnwell

Folles. It continues to be a rewarding process to prepare these pieces, and we are excited for the opportunity this music gives us to bring together our communities and center both our shared and unique humanity. Advance: General Admission: \$25 / Student: \$15 at the Door: General Admission: \$30 / Student: \$20 Free for Under 18 (registration requested) www.westvillegechorale.org

Municipal Art Society

SoHo Cast Iron Historic District, March 17, 11:00a.m.-1:00 p.m. [In-person tour] Cast-iron architecture began as a mid-19th-century cheap imitation of stone, in which the glories of the world's past could be offered in modern times in mass-produced, ready-to-build versions. But cast-iron soon developed into a remarkable technology expressive of the industrial revolution, capable of entirely new architectural effects. SoHo today includes the world's largest collection of such buildings. Threatened by a proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway, SoHo was rescued from near obliteration in 1973 by designation as one of the city's earliest historic districts. This tour with **Anthony W. Robins**, former Landmarks Preservation Commission Survey Director,



Anthony W. Robins



Roosevelt Building, 478 Broadway

considers the district's original architecture as well as new Commission-approved additions. Mr. Robins is also the author of the award-winning book *New York Art Deco: A Guide to Gotham's Jazz Age Architecture* (SUNY Press 2017.) \$20 members, \$30 non-members www.mas.org

East Harlem

March 23 11:00 a.m.- 01:00 p.m [In-person] El Barrio, Spanish Harlem, East Harlem, Italian Harlem. There are many names used to describe the neighborhood taking up space from 96th Street to 125th Street on Manhattan's eastern side. This tour will begin in the late 19th century when an influx of Sicilian, Jewish, and German immigrants moved to the area. We'll see sites famous for their history as Manhattan's first Little Italy and sites known for their relationship to the Genovese crime family. Then, we'll walk south to visit and view sites significant to the Spanish-speaking community and other recent immigrant groups. Along the way we will stop to admire many of the beautiful and unique



murals that dot the neighborhood. \$20 members, \$30 non-members www.mas.org

Gotham Center of New York City

The Witch of New York: The Trials of Polly Bodine and the Cursed Birth of Tabloid Justice, Monday, March 25, 6:30 p.m.- 8:00p.m. Before the sensational cases of **Amanda Knox** and **Casey Anthony** — before even **Lizzie Borden** — there was **Polly Bodine**, the first American woman put on trial for capital murder in our nation's debut media circus. On Christmas night in 1843, neighbors in a serene village on Staten Island discovered the remains of twenty-four-year-old mother **Emeline Houseman** and her infant daughter **Ann Eliza**, bludgeoned to death and burned in a fire. When an ambitious district attorney charged Emeline's sister-in-law with the murders, the new "penny press" exploded. Polly Bodine was a perfect villain for the media. When Bodine assembled a legal dream-



Polly Bodine

team, the debate expanded from the question of her guilt to her character as a "fallen woman," a separated wife who committed adultery, had several abortions, and drank gin. Between 1844 and 1846, reporting on

three separate trials over the “Christmas murders” enthralled the city and nation. **Edgar Allen Poe** and **Walt Whitman** covered the story as young newsmen. **P. T. Barnum** made a circus out of it. **James Fenimore Cooper’s** last novel was inspired by it. *The Witch of New York* is the first narrative history of the dueling trial lawyers, ruthless newsmen, and shameless hucksters who turned the case into America’s formative “tabloid trial.” In this origin story about how the US became addicted to sensationalized criminal trials. **Alex Hortis** (author of *The Mob and the City*) vividly reconstructs an epic mystery from old New York and uses it to challenge our system of tabloid justice of today. Register www.gothamcenter.org.



Alex Hortis

Resources & Information

Whitney Museum — Seventy-one visionary artists and collectives will participate in the 81st installment of the Whitney Biennial, opening March 20. Tickets are on sale. Members will enjoy five days of previews, beginning March 14. The artists and collectives in the latest chapter of the exhibition—*Whitney Biennial 2024: Even Better Than the Real Thing*—will follow in the footsteps of hundreds of Biennial artists before them to interpret our current landscape and tell stories, spark discussion, and comment on issues across a variety of media and disciplines.

Cooper Hewitt Museum — *Acquired! Shaping the National Design Collection on view March 16, 2024 through September 2, 2024* What does it mean to be a design museum today? This exhibition highlights how Cooper Hewitt acquires new work to shape the collection to better reflect current issues and design’s evolving role in daily interactions. Presented on the second-floor galleries, the exhibition will feature objects that represent the museum’s collecting legacy, as well as works brought into the collection since 2017.

MOMA — “Beyond the single, immaculate individual expression, I hear an enthralling symphony,” says the acclaimed London-based designer **Grace Wales Bonner**. For this exhibition, the latest installment of MoMA’s celebrated Artist’s Choice series, Wales Bonner has gathered nearly 40 artworks from the Muse-

um’s collection that explore sound, movement, performance, and style in the African diaspora and beyond. She brings together artists from around the world and across generations, including Terry Adkins, Moustapha Dimé, Agnes Martin, Man Ray, Betye Saar, and David Hammons. The works presented are not static objects or images but dynamic entities deeply connected to ritual, devotion, and collective experience. Sculptures seem to tremble with sound; scores evoke ceremonies; drawings trace states of reverie. These intimate and poetic relations inspired Wales Bonner’s title for the exhibition, *Spirit Movers*

Old News

Streetscapes /Barrow Street; A Block That Reflects Greenwich Village’s History
By Christopher Gray
Nov. 1, 1998

BARROW STREET, just off Sheridan Square, is a typical Greenwich Village street. Each house represents a layer of the Village’s special architecture and history. A few of the buildings are a bit bedraggled; others are noble, and some are both.

In the late 18th century the western part of Greenwich Village, including what is now Barrow Street, was dotted with large estates. One of them, Richmond Hill, near what are now Charlton and Varick Streets, was owned for several years by Aaron Burr -- around the time of the 1804 duel in which he killed Alexander Hamilton.

Barrow Street may have been named for Thomas Barrow, an artist, but it is unclear when this part of the street got its name. The oldest remaining house on the street is No. 25, built in 1826. Other houses followed, and by 1850 the street was almost completely built up.

Land maps after the Civil War show many small businesses in the area, among them the horseshoeing operation of Michael Hallanan, at the southeast corner of Barrow and West Fourth Streets. Hallanan, who was born in Ireland, invented a rubber horseshoe pad and made enough money to build, in 1897, an eight-story commercial loft, now numbered 9 Barrow Street, on the site of his horseshoe shop. The initials “MH” still sprout from cartouches at several points.

Hallanan was known as the “the father of Sheridan Square”; a longtime resident, he urged local officials in the 1890’s to name the square for Philip Sheridan, a Union general in the Civil War.

In 1897 Hallanan moved his horseshoeing operation down to 17 Barrow Street and altered the front of the building -- now home to the restaurant One if by Land, Two if by Sea -- to its present appearance, including its unusually wide vehicular opening. At the same time Conrad Schaper -- who listed his business in the city directory as "trucks" -- built a stable with a projecting horse's head at 15 Barrow Street. The building is now an apartment house, with a bar on the ground floor.

The census of 1900 showed that the houses on Barrow Street were well occupied -- No. 25 held three families, a total of 15 people. The block's residents came from Newfoundland, France, Italy and Wales and listed such occupations as goldbeater, electrician, hatter and seamstress.

The area was emerging as a slum district, which was one reason Greenwich House, a settlement house, was established a block away in an old building on Jones Street in 1902. The founders of Greenwich House included both old American aristocracy -- R. Fulton Cutting, president of the Citizens Union -- and an immigrant Jewish reformer, Felix Adler. In 1917 Greenwich House built a new headquarters at 27 Barrow, a Federal-style structure designed by the architects Delano & Aldrich to uplift the neighborhood's immigrants with its refined early American design, chaste finishes and murals by Arthur Crisp. By comparison, authentic early American buildings like 25 Barrow looked shabby. The new building had an art studio, running track, gym, auditorium and rooms for social workers; the 1920 census recorded 14 social workers in residence.

Hallanan's commercial loft building, at No. 9, has been converted to apartments, with a doorman outside. One if by Land, Two if by Sea, at No. 17, is known as a romantic hideaway -- and the owner, Armand Braiger, has added extra romance by maintaining that 17 Barrow was built in the 18th century and used as Aaron Burr's carriage house.

Unfortunately, title records do not list Burr as an owner; he died in 1836, only two years after tax and other records indicate 17 Barrow was built. And Regina Kellerman, an architectural historian, says that Burr's estate came "nowhere near" this block.

THE house at 25 Barrow is owned by Harry Nance, who moved in with his wife, Arlene, just after they were married in 1963, when the building had four apartments. Gradually they restored the front, took over the entire house and raised a family.

Mrs. Nance, a well-known village real estate broker, died this past summer, and Mr. Nance is moving downstairs to the parlor floor and converting the upstairs to a rental duplex.

Mr. Nance founded the block association and re-

members Barrow in the 1970's as "full of drug problems" and his house as "a wreck." But over the years the drug problems disappeared, he said, and recent work has vastly improved the house's exterior.

Next door, Greenwich House presents a different picture. Although designed with the elegance of a private club, it looks worn and lost. The murals have disappeared, the woodwork is battered and the exterior marble, which in historic photographs is deeply veined, has been painted over. Apparent neglect and ad hoc renovations have almost spoiled what is one of the Village's nicest public buildings.

Paul Racioppi, a spokesman for the organization, said that recent repairs had been limited to the mansard roof and the pointing on the side and rear walls, but that new windows are planned if the organization can raise the necessary \$150,000. Mr. Racioppi said that Greenwich House is used by 3,000 people a week, with services that include day care, a senior center and a drama project.

Greenwich House, he said, hopes to complete a facade and partial interior restoration in time for its centennial, in 2002.

from the New York Times



*Happy St. Patrick's Day
from the BBC*