



Springsteen talks of his time in therapy. **SideShow, C2**



Matriarchs square off in 'Downton' Season 3. **C2**

Tuesday, July 24, 2012 ★ Section C



This 'Roof' is superheated

Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival presents Tennessee Williams' "Cat" in a sizzling-fresh production.

By Howard Shapiro
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Here's something that might happen with a play, but not with a movie: You go to see it again and because of a different interpretation, or the way an ensemble clicks, or maybe a fresh staging that literally moves the play in a new direction, it's as if you've never seen it before. The production you're watching has given it a new and different life.

That's what's happening at the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, where Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, an American classic, is playing out as if our besotted, bewitched, and brilliant playwright of the last century had written it last night. See **CAT** on C4

Brick and Maggie, played by Tom Degnan and Eleanor Handley, in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." LEE A. BUTZ



Warner Bros. Pictures

The dark night of cinema's soul

By Steven Rea
INQUIRER MOVIE CRITIC

LOS ANGELES — *The Dark Knight* disappeared from TV, radio, and newspapers over the weekend. No ads anywhere. But in Los Angeles, the image of the soul-ravaged vigilante superhero still loomed: Christian Bale's chiseled jaw jutting beneath his Bat-mask on billboards in Hollywood and Santa Monica, Pasadena and Sherman Oaks, images of Batman and *The Dark Knight Rises'* uber-terrorist villain, Bane, facing off on bus shelters and parking garage kiosks.

On Saturday morning, I was in a bookstore in Los Feliz, just east of the heart of Hollywood. There on a table was a whole *Dark Knight* library: the graphic novels, the movie tie-ins, and a giant new coffee-table book, *The Art and Making of the Dark Knight Trilogy*. See **KNIGHT** on C5

Women break into the comics boys' club

Their place in the industry is growing.

By Noeleen Clark
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES — Selina Kyle's lacy red bra and its ample contents fill the first panel of *Catwoman* No. 1, published last year when DC Comics relaunched 52 of its most popular titles. By the last page, she's straddling Batman and spilling out of her leather suit once more.

Catwoman wasn't DC's only female superhero to make her "New 52" debut in lingerie. In *Red Hood and the Outlaws* No. 1, extraterrestrial princess Starfire strikes a Playboy-like pose, bursting out of her purple bikini as she propositions Red Hood. And *Voodoo*, a shape-shifting half-alien hybrid, spends half of her first issue stripping.

Comics blogs buzzed with debate, and critics cried sexism, pointing to the compa- See **COMICS** on C4



Truth vs. fabrication in drama of a Prohibition-era character

By Howard Shapiro
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

The only thing I hate about Bruce Graham's new play, *Mr. Hart & Mr. Brown*, is that I can't really tell you much about it without giving away its several surprises. And if you see it at People's Light & Theatre Company, where it's getting a remarkable world premiere and is an engrossing story for a summer's night, you shouldn't, either. Let everyone be as pleasantly

surprised as you'll be. Graham, the prolific Philadelphia-based playwright who gets better with each new work, takes *Mr. Hart & Mr. Brown* straight from a footnote to American history — like many footnotes, quirky and hard-to-believe and about a character well-known for a time and now completely faded from the national psyche. See **HART** on C4

Richard Ruiz as Al Brown (left) and Christopher Patrick Mullen as Richard Hart in "Mr. Hart & Mr. Brown" at People's Light. MARK GARVIN

Pittsburgh conductor Honeck: Solidarity plus imagination

By David Patrick Stearns
INQUIRER MUSIC CRITIC

The scene is London's Royal Albert Hall, specifically the Elgar Room, where the international press had been invited for post-concert drinks following one of the Philadelphia Orchestra's better tour performances. But the talk of the room was that other Pennsylvania institution — the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Music
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
8 p.m. Tuesday at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, 5201 Parkside Ave. Tickets: \$12.50-\$49.50. 215-893-1999, <http://manncenter.org>

Pittsburgh steals focus from Philadelphia periodically, last September's incident being because of a risky performance of music nobody

knew but everybody loved: *Fantastic Apparitions on a Theme by Berlioz*, by the Nazi-oppressed composer Walter Braunfels.

The hero du jour was Manfred Honeck, Pittsburgh Symphony music director, who had fought for the piece and won a partial victory. Rumored to be three hours long, *Apparitions* (which is really 45 minutes) was presented in an abbreviated See **PITTSBURGH** on C3



Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra music director Manfred Honeck. STEPHANIE STRASBURG

Honeck stays serious and creative

PITTSBURGH from C1 suite. In the entire European tour, only the London Proms took a chance on it. A classic underdog strategy?

Strategy, scheming, all that stuff is not what Honeck does. And to hear him talk about Braunfels spells out his priorities: "Braunfels is extremely honest in his attitude and artistry," says Honeck. "He's a master of instrumentation. A great composer."

Solidity plus imagination equals brilliance in his world. That's also what has marked Honeck's four-year tenure with the Pittsburgh orchestra — and what Philadelphia audiences can expect Tuesday at the Mann Center when he leads the orchestra in one of two concerts.

With the Philadelphia Orchestra spending more time elsewhere (such as Vail, Colo.), the Pittsburghers have been filling the void. And Honeck, whose contract has been extended through the 2019-20 season, isn't about to abandon his players amid the summer heat.

The conductor was one of them for a long time. Though trained in a variety of disciplines in his native Austria, he was a rank-and-file violist in the Vienna Philharmonic until he was 33. Now 53, he has found the orchestra that gives him a world-class platform.

"When I first came to Pittsburgh, I didn't know they were looking for a music director. I came very innocent — somehow — and loved the immediate energy and attitude of the orchestra," he said the other day by phone from Stuttgart, Germany. "This is not one of those orchestras that wants to lean back in the chair thinking, 'We can do this Tchaikovsky or Beethoven symphony.' They want to work. And I'm very detail-oriented. Maybe a bit too much...."

Such details are exactly what allows Honeck to treat the Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 5* as a talisman of sorts, though the piece has been performed and recorded by all the great conductors in history. Honeck conducted it in his 2006 debut with the Pittsburgh orchestra at the Kimmel Center, in 2011 at the London Proms, and now on Tuesday at the Mann Center.

He brings his own subtext to the music: A hard-won victory of humanity. "At the end of the first movement, it's a military march, but with a group that goes into death. That's the reason it goes down lower and lower and lower, and at the end you have only the bassoons and contra-bassoons left," he says. "When you start the second movement, it comes out of nothing. It's another light. And then the horn solo... Tchaikovsky has said, 'This is the light.'"

That kind of subjectivity inevitably receives mixed reviews, both in concert and his recently released recording of the symphony on the Exton



Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra music director Manfred Honeck grew up in Austria and still lives there. **FELIX BROEDE**

label. And that, perhaps, is the element that stands to make Honeck's chapter in Pittsburgh Symphony history a step apart from the others.

The orchestra's distinguished music-director history is that of steely objectivists; Fritz Reiner, William Steinberg, Andre Previn, and Mariss Jansons kept personal fingerprints off the music. In contrast, Honeck can't be a literalist, because he believes so many important musical elements can't really be written down.

Growing up in rural Austria (where he is still based with his wife and family), Honeck's father relocated with his nine children to Vienna following the death of his wife, mainly for classical music education. Oddly, the father insisted that young Manfred learn the folk instrument the zither, best known from the film soundtrack of *The Third Man*.

"I hated it," Honeck recalls. "I was being trained in violin to play ever more precisely and rhythmically, and my zither teacher couldn't even read the notes at all. He would say, 'Maybe it's not written that way. But we play it that way.'" Thus, the birth of a subjectivist.

Also, Honeck's rich inner life can't help but fuel his music making. A devout Catholic, he freely discusses praying before concerts, sometimes with like-minded orchestral musicians, and even has a chapel in his western Austria home.

"When I gave an interview [discussing religion] with the New York Times, some people said, 'Manfred, you should not do that. You're connecting art with religion.' And of course I understand that," he explains. "But I want to be myself, and I don't see my way of living as being disconnected with what I believe."

"One of the most essential things is to be true to yourself and love people. You can't stop doing this. I want to be like I am."

He's not one to evangelize for a particular school of faith and invites all sorts of prayer

Symphony Orchestra, with whom he's recording Mahler symphonies. The recordings are trend-buckers: In an age of low-fi MP3 files, his Exton releases have the best sound in the business, beautiful packaging, sell for more than \$20, and are hard to find. That last problem, he swears, is temporary: "I had a big discussion with Exton...."

He wants to be heard at a certain standard. But he also wants to be heard.

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partners. "I respect every human so much because I love them," he said.

How might that translate into a fundamentally autocratic profession like conducting? He's known to invite snow shovelers around Heinz Hall to lunch with him. When the orchestra accepted a 9.7 percent pay cut, he took a 10 percent reduction. He programs concerts carefully: The orchestra expects to run a yet-to-be-determined deficit at the close of the current season.

Not that he's a pushover.

Honeck walked into a troika arrangement in Pittsburgh: From 2004 to 2008, the orchestra's artistic leadership was spread among Andrew Davis, Yan Pascal Tortelier, and Marek Janowski, any one of whom would be a suitable music director. Having dealt with a similar arrangement at the Leipzig Radio Orchestra, Honeck didn't want any vestige of that. Such diversified leadership doesn't work in business, he says, and it doesn't work in art.

He stepped down from the Stuttgart State Opera at the end of his four-year contract last year, ostensibly because he couldn't afford the large blocks of time needed for new opera productions. But his relationship with director-dominated German opera — with standard repertoire updated to encompass sex, drugs and nudity — meant that he wouldn't allow his six children to see many of the performances he led. The worst part, for him, is how such productions go against the grain of the music.

"I had some difficulties accepting those things," he says. "Is it the music that makes the opera or the staging? I believe it's both. But without the music, the opera will not exist. And I wanted people to come to the opera because of the music and not because of the staging. The most important reason to go to the opera is the music."

That's what his life is about now: A principle guest position with the Czech Philharmonic, and the Pittsburgh