

## ARTS BRIEFING

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## HIGHLIGHTS

**BRITAIN: MAJOR ARTS DONATION** A private donor has given nearly \$34 million to be shared equally by the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in London and the Wales Millennium Center, scheduled to open next November on Cardiff Bay in Wales. The gift, announced yesterday, came from **Donald Gordon**, a London-based South African businessman, and is believed to be the largest single private gift ever made to the arts in Britain. The money is payable over five years and is intended to act as a catalyst in the development of joint artistic projects by the Royal Opera and the Millennium Center, as well as to stimulate links with South African artists and troupes. Mr. Gordon, the founder of the Liberty Life Group, an insurance concern, and of Liberty International, the largest owner of shopping centers in Britain, holds dual British and South African citizenship. He said, "This donation is made ahead of my retirement as chairman of Liberty International and heralds the beginning of a fascinating new activity that will become an important and enjoyable focus of my life in retirement."



**ALL THIS JAZZ** Diana Ross, left, Roberta Flack, Dame Cleo Laine and Marian McPartland will be among the featured performers when the annual fall gala of Jazz at Lincoln Center pays tribute to **Billie Holiday**, **Sarah Vaughan**, **Ella Fitzgerald**

and other great women of jazz at 7 tonight at Avery Fisher Hall. With **Ed Bradley** as host and **Wynton Marsalis** and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra providing the music, "Here's to the Ladies: A Celebration of Great Women in Jazz" is a benefit for the performance and educational programs produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center. Concert tickets are priced from \$50 to \$100.

**DRAMA: AESCHYLUS AND THE MUMMY** An Egyptian mummy turned out to be a theatrical producer when it was found to be stuffed with papyrus fragments of the text of a 2,500-year-old trilogy by Aeschylus that was believed lost forever when the great library of Alexandria was consumed by fire in 48 B.C. Now a modern version of the ancient play about the Greek hero Achilles in the Trojan War is to be staged in Cyprus next summer by Thoc, the national theater company of Cyprus. Performances will be given later in Greece, Reuters reported. "This is a new production based on a very ancient text," said Andy Bargilly, the director of Thoc. Scholars had believed the trilogy by the Greek tragedian Aeschylus (c. 525-456 B.C.) to be irretrievable, but Mr. Bargilly said, "In the last decades, archaeologists found mummies in Egypt stuffed with papyrus, containing excerpts of the original plays of Aeschylus." A Greek writer, Elias Malandris, worked on the project for 10 years, Reuters reported. "We do think it is a faithful adaptation to a large extent,



Reuters

Kelly Clarkson, the "American Idol" winner, will now try to conquer the world — specifically, contestants from 10 other countries who will compete on "World Idol." (Report, below right.)

but nobody can say 100 percent," Mr. Bargilly said, adding, "Papyrus was a good material for stuffing mummies, fortunately for us."



**LINCOLN HONOR** Sam Waterston, left, who has portrayed **Abraham Lincoln** on stage, on television and in ballet (as a narrator), has been named the winner of the 2003 Richard N. Current Award of Achievement of the Lincoln Forum. Mr. Waterston, per-

haps best known as the executive assistant district attorney Jack McCoy in the NBC drama "Law and Order," received the accolade, in the form of a Lincoln statuette, in Gettysburg, Pa., yesterday at the eighth annual Lincoln Forum symposium. The organization is dedicated to the study of Lincoln and the Civil War. The prize is named for Professor Richard N. Current, dean of the nation's Lincoln historians.

**POP PREMIER ET AL.** The chart-topping heavy metal band Darkness features big hair, skintight cat-suits, ostrich leather boots and a lead singer, **Justin Hawkins**, who sports a flame tattoo rising from his crotch. And who loves the Darkness? None other than the British prime minister, **Tony Blair**. Mr. Blair told schoolchildren that when he wants to sample the music of his teenage offspring, he goes right for their Darkness discs, Reuters reported, citing British newspapers. (As

a university student in the 1970's, it was noted, Mr. Blair played guitar in a band called Ugly Rumors.) ... Not content with being an American Idol, **Kelly Clarkson** is going to compete for international honors. The Associated Press reported that on "World Idol," a two-part special to be broadcast on Christmas and New Year's nights on Fox, she will sing against winners from the first year of "Idol" competitions in 10 countries: Australia, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Germany, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and South Africa.

## FOOTNOTES

**Sir Peter Shaffer**, whose plays include "Amadeus" and "Equus," will be the guest lecturer at 8 tonight at the National Arts Club in the Shakespeare Guild's Speaking of Shakespeare series. His talk, titled "Brooding in the Snow," takes its title from a line in the song that ends "Love's Labor's Lost." ... In conjunction with the publication this week of "The Complete Lyrics of **Frank Loesser**" (Knopf), **Andrea Marcovicci** is calling her engagement at the Oak Room of the Algonquin, from tomorrow through Jan. 3, "If I Were a Bell: The Songs of Frank Loesser." Loesser's credits included the Tony Award-winning "Guys and Dolls" and "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying." Ms. Marcovicci's program will offer hits like "Heart and Soul," "Two Sleepy People" and "Baby It's Cold Outside."