

March 17, 2006

Arts, Briefly

Compiled by BEN SISARIO

Masur Drops Out of American Concert Tour

A lingering viral infection has left [Kurt Masur](#) too exhausted to conduct, forcing him to cancel his appearances with the London Philharmonic Orchestra on its American tour, including concerts at Lincoln Center on Monday and March 26. "He is on the mend, but he does not yet have the energy to come back full speed," Stefana Atlas, his agent, said. Mr. Masur is resting at his home in Leipzig, Germany, she said, and hopes to be back for his next scheduled engagements at the beginning of April, with the Bavarian State Opera Orchestra in Munich. He fell ill during a concert in Dublin on March 5. Organizers were hoping he could join the 16-concert tour with the London Philharmonic, of which he is the principal conductor, until he decided this week to cancel the whole thing. Roberto Minczuk will take his place on Monday, conducting Dvorak's Symphony No. 8. In the same concert, Anne-Sophie Mutter, who was to have performed the [Beethoven](#) Violin Concerto with Mr. Masur on the podium, will instead play [Mozart's](#) Concertos Nos. 1 and 3, and conduct the orchestra herself. Yan Pascal Tortelier will conduct on March 26, as well as on many of the tour's other dates; Neeme Jarvi will take over at the Tilles Center on Long Island and at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark this weekend. DANIEL J. WAKIN

Microsoft in Deal With Epic Records

One day after Sony announced a delay for its forthcoming PlayStation 3 video game console, Microsoft tried to show that it was moving ahead with its Xbox 360 platform as it announced a modest promotional deal with Epic Records to provide high-definition videos as free downloads over the Xbox Live Internet service. The companies also said that Epic artists, including the singer Natasha Bedingfield would play games against users over the network. As Microsoft tries to expand its foothold in the gaming market, Xbox Live has emerged as perhaps its most important weapon because its Japanese rivals — Nintendo and Sony — offer no similar service. So in addition to delivering worldwide gameplay, Microsoft has been offering additional video programming, like movie trailers, over the service. Later this year, Microsoft may offer a more extensive iTunes-like service that will allow Xbox 360 users to download full music tracks to the machine's hard drive. Microsoft's game unit is also trying to move into television. Earlier this week, the company announced a deal with 4Kids Entertainment, the company behind the Cabbage Patch Kids and Yu-Gi-Oh!, to develop a new television and game franchise called Viva Piñata. SETH SCHIESEL

Lollapalooza Grows

Lollapalooza, the groundbreaking alternative-rock package tour of the 1990's that fizzled out when it was first revived in this decade, seems to have prospered in its new incarnation as a weekend festival in Chicago. Last year it drew 65,000 fans to Grant Park over two days, and yesterday this year's lineup was announced, with more than 120 acts — twice that of last year — over three days. Among the artists to

take the stage from Aug. 4 to 6 are the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Kanye West, Wilco, Common, Death Cab for Cutie, the Shins, Queens of the Stone Age and, in a rare American appearance, the Spanish-French internationalist Manu Chao.

Spain Tries to Halt Auction

The Spanish government is trying to halt a planned auction of five 10th-century wooden beams from the Great Mosque of Córdoba until the police can determine whether they were removed legally, the Ministry of Culture has announced. Christie's of London plans to auction the intricately carved beams on April 4, with bids ranging from \$180,000 to \$520,000 each. But upon learning about the auction last week, the ministry asked Interpol to investigate how the beams left the country, citing a 1985 law prohibiting export of any piece more than 100 years old. The Christie's catalog says the beams were removed either when the mosque's roof was replaced in the early 18th century, or during renovations in the early 20th century. Church officials in Spain, who oversee the mosque, have said that they may have lost track of some pieces in the multiple renovations. DALE FUCHS

Another 'Idol' Victory

It is rare that a single half-hour television show can lift a network to a first-place finish in the ratings for the entire night. But most shows are not "American Idol." On Wednesday at 9 p.m., the first results show of its final round drew an audience of 27.84 million in Nielsen's estimates, giving Fox an easy victory. The series premiere of "The Loop" followed, and, as often happens with shows after "Idol," half the audience was lost: 13.75 million tuned in. Earlier in the night, Fox's "Bones" delivered 12.13 million viewers. In recent weeks, the network has given that crime series a post-"Idol" berth to boost its audience, and has now moved the show to 8 p.m. The strategy appears to have worked: "Bones" tied for first for the hour among adults 18 to 49, and placed second in the time slot to CBS's "Survivor" recap (12.69 million) in total viewers. ABC's combination of piggybacking "Lost" and "Invasion" has been less successful. Wednesday's episode of "Lost" (7.14 million) at 9 p.m. was a low-rated repeat, causing the creeping aliens of "Invasion" to tank at 10 p.m., with 7.23 million. KATE AURTHUR

More Stand-Ins for Levine

At the [Metropolitan Opera](#), [James Levine's](#) replacement for Wagner's "Parsifal" will be Peter Schneider, and Philippe Auguin will take over to conduct Wagner's "Lohengrin." ... Mr. Levine has also dropped out of his appearance with the Met Chamber Ensemble at Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall on Sunday; two pieces that Mr. Levine was to conduct, Elliott Carter's "Luimen" and an arrangement of Schoenberg's Five Pieces for Orchestra, have been taken off the program. ... For tonight's performance of "Luisa Miller" at the Met, Karen Slack will sing the title role, replacing Veronica Villarroel, who is ill.

Classical Notes

The English National Opera's 2006-7 season will include 12 productions, 9 of them new, the company announced yesterday. Among the highlights are "Gaddafi," a new hip-hop opera by Steve Chandra Savale and the Asian Dub Foundation about Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#), the Libyan leader, which had originally been scheduled for this spring and will now open the season on Sept. 7; Britten's "Death in Venice," directed by Deborah Warner, with the Trinidadian conductor Kwamé Ryan and the tenor Ian Bostridge; Philip Glass's "Satyagraha"; and new productions of Janacek's "Jenufa," Handel's "Agrippina," Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" and "Kismet." ... David Robertson of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra has won the Ditson Conductor's Award, a \$5,000 prize given by [Columbia](#)

[University](#) for a commitment to American music.

Footnotes

[Michael Jackson](#) has made arrangements to pay employees at his Neverland Valley Ranch for the first time since December, avoiding legal action by the State of California, Reuters reported. But the 2,600-acre ranch, in Santa Barbara County, will remain shut down until Mr. Jackson obtains the proper insurance. ... Gary Glitter will appeal his three-year sentence for child molestation, The Associated Press reported. The British glam-rock singer, whose real name is Paul Francis Gadd, was recently convicted in Vietnam of committing obscene acts with two girls aged 10 and 11 at his rented villa in a seaside town in southern Vietnam.

[Copyright 2006The New York Times Company](#) | [Home](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [XML](#) | [Help](#) | [Cont](#)

--