

GET 8 WEEKS **FREE** SUBSCRIBE NOW!

[▶ THE PRINT JOURNAL](#)

[▶ THE ONLINE JOURNAL](#)

TOP STORIES IN New York



1 of 12
New Districts Shuffle Races



2 of 12
Anthologizing the Historical and the Modern



3 of 12
Downtown Prices Are Set to Get Lift

NY CULTURE | Updated June 21, 2012, 10:52 p.m. ET

N.Y. Philharmonic Sees Triple

Article

Comments

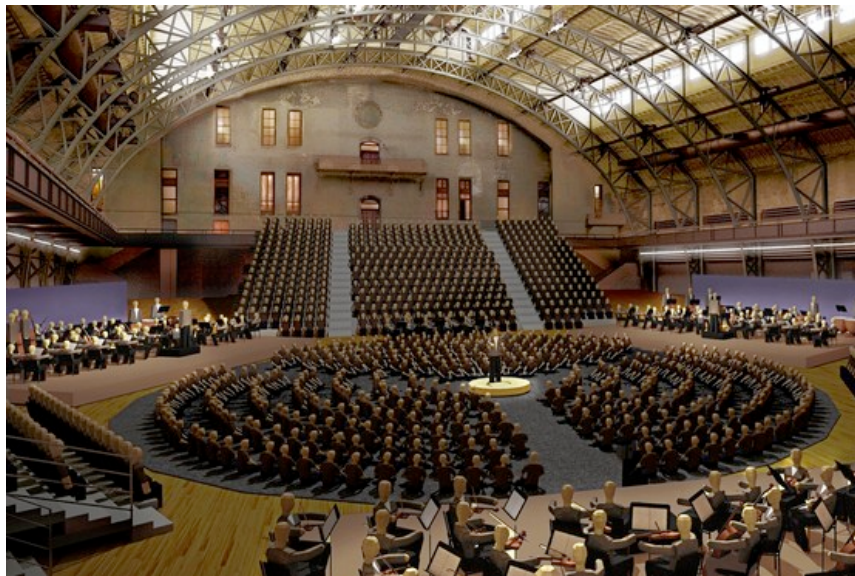
MORE IN NEW YORK-CULTURE >

ARTICLE FREE PASS

Enjoy your free sample of exclusive subscriber content.

GET ALL OF WSJ.COM: [SUBSCRIBE NOW - GET 8 WEEKS FREE](#)

By ANDY BATTAGLIA



New York Philharmonic

A rendering of the setup of the two-night 'Philharmonic 360' program by the New York Philharmonic at the Park Avenue Armory.

The vigorously committed, cosmically inclined composer Karlheinz Stockhausen was never known for small gestures—nor is the Park Avenue Armory, the setting next weekend for a presentation of one of Stockhausen's major creations.

"There's certain work that needs us," said Rebecca Robertson, the Armory's president and executive producer. "'Gruppen' is one of those works."

First performed in 1958, Stockhausen's "Gruppen" calls for three orchestras to play simultaneously in intricate arrays of clustered sounds enlisted to do nothing less than alter the nature of time and space. The piece will be presented in the Armory's 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall, with accommodation for more than 1,400 listeners placed all around—some in bleacher-style seating adjacent to the three orchestras, others amassed in the center of the hall on the floor, literally surrounded by the music.

"Gruppen" will be the centerpiece, so to

BARNEYS NEW YORK

DESIGNER SALE

UP TO **60% OFF**

SELECTED CLOTHING, SHOES AND ACCESSORIES FOR MEN

[SHOP NOW](#)

Available to WSJ.com Subscribers

U.S. Weans Itself From Mideast Oil



Obama Clings to Narrow Lead in Poll



Rebel-Army Backers Open U.S. Office

Wal-Mart Lags in Clinic Race



Get your 8 week risk free trial

[SUBSCRIBE NOW](#)

Most Popular

Read Emailed Video Commented



Enlarge Image

Associated Press

Composer Karlheinz Stockhausen in 1981

...speak, of the New York Philharmonic's "Philharmonic 360," a two-night event featuring four pieces of "spatial music," with like-minded works by Mozart, Pierre Boulez and Charles Ives.

"I've seen many productions of the New York Phil, but I've never seen one that looks like this before," said Michael Counts, the stage director charged with designing a means for musical presentation in a venue notably unlike a typical symphony hall. "One of the challenges set for me from the beginning was to have it be more than just a concert—to have it be a real event. It's not just a program where we all sit and experience music the same way."

Part of that mission entailed rethinking the conventional orientation among musicians, conductors and audience members assembled to listen and look. For "Gruppen," the surround-sound layout follows provisions similar to those conceived by Stockhausen himself when he composed the piece in the mid-1950s. (Having written music that once scored the patterns of a quartet of helicopters in flight, the German composer was not one to skimp on particulars.) The performance will be undertaken by the approximately 100 members of the Philharmonic, split into three groups.

For the other works, some of the musicians will migrate to outposts around the drill hall's empty environs. For the performance of Pierre Boulez's "Rituel in Memoriam Bruno Maderna," performers will scatter among eight different locations, including a balcony perched near the top of the vaulted ceiling. For an excerpt from Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni," a chorus of 40 will join several soloists taking up stations around and within the crowd.

At the epicenter will be conductor and New York Philharmonic music director Alan Gilbert, who devised the program in an effort to elevate the expressly spatial aspirations at work in the Stockhausen piece.



Enlarge Image

Chris Lee/The New York Philharmonic

The Philharmonic's director, Alan Gilbert.

"'Gruppen' is one of those 20th-century works that everyone in music knows about but very few have had a chance to experience, because it is so difficult to present and it really must be experienced live. A recording really doesn't capture what Stockhausen created," Mr. Gilbert said via email. "It is a legend, known through reputation more than hearing."

In addition to its need of ample space for three orchestras to spread out and make themselves at home, "Gruppen"—a dramatic and sometimes discordant piece that draws on Stockhausen's interests in mathematics and the metaphysics of space—requires special reserves of rigor from those in charge of its playing.

"It's a headache piece for the three conductors," laughed Magnus Lindberg, who will lead one of the orchestras, with Mr. Gilbert and Matthias Pintscher conducting the others. "It's a very complex and difficult world of three layers of tempo running simultaneously. The meter is changing all the time, and in the middle of one bar you have to follow from one conductor to another. You need to know exactly what the other conductors are doing or it becomes a mess within a fraction of a second."

When he first conducted a performance of "Gruppen," at a concert in Europe three years ago, Mr. Lindberg spent a whole summer poring over the score, two dense and demanding pages per day.

"It's tricky, but it's very organic, like being inside a huge plant," he said. "It's a unique

1. [Not All Calories Are Equal, Study Shows](#)
2. [On Orbitz, Mac Users See Pricier Hotels](#)
3. [Grammar, a Victim in the Office](#)
4. [Google Set to Unveil Tablet](#)
5. [Americans Are Divided on Health Law](#)

Most Read Articles Feed

Real- York

Weather Journal: Comfortable Temperatures for Now

Wednesday will warm up more than the beginning of the week, with temperatures rising above 80 while skies remain generally clear. Expect moderate wind while you're out, similar to Tuesday's breeziness.



New York's 'Girls Who Code' to Train Women for Tech Jobs

A shortage of female workers in tech has long posed an image problem for the industry. Now a one-time congressional candidate is trying to make a difference, starting with a summer training program in New York City.



Governors Island Ferris Wheel That Wasn't

Competitive Races Bring out Voters on Primary Day

Court Upholds Halting of City Rent Aid Program

See All

RSS Feed

Job Opportunities

- Enterprise Account Manager - Big Data - NYC - EMC Corp.
- Licensed P & C Insurance Broker - TBH Insurance Agency LTD
- AT&T Technical Sales Consultant 3 NJ or NY - AT&T
- AVP - Credit Suisse

keyword city, state, zip FIND JOBS

MORE JOBS AND CAREER NEWS

[Finance Jobs](#) | [Technology Jobs](#) | [Sales & Marketing Jobs](#)

[FINS for Employers & Recruiters »](#)

POST A JOB

More in New York-Culture

[Anthologizing the Historical and the Modern](#)

Getting Around Greater New York

Starting Address

OR Intersection or Popular Restaurant/Place

Destination Address

OR Intersection or Popular Restaurant/Place

Related Topics

[Broadway Shows](#)
[Lincoln Center](#)
[Metropolitan Opera](#)

[NY Philharmonic](#)
[American Ballet Theater](#)
[Museum of Modern Art](#)

milestone in 20th-century music. Without having heard 'Gruppen,' you can't make a link between how the orchestra has evolved and what the orchestra is today."



Enlarge Image

New York Philharmonic

An illustration of the New York Philharmonic's performance at the Park Avenue Armory in 1882.

It also suits the expansive space inside the Park Avenue Armory, which, since opening in 1881 as the headquarters for the Seventh New York Militia Regiment, has hosted ostentatious galas, tennis tournaments, chariot races with horses on the run, food festivals—and music.

"We do know that in 1881 and subsequent years they had huge music festivals here," Ms. Robertson said of early artistic intentions for the space she helped re-establish as a cultural venue just a few

years ago. "If they were thinking about music right when the building opened, they must have been thinking about it all along."

One of the earliest concerts featured a philharmonic society that was a predecessor of the New York Philharmonic itself. Since then, the lineage has remained as conventions have evolved. "In a concert hall, you go in and sit where you're supposed to sit, they let you have a little bit of light, you're separated from the artists and that's how it all works," Ms. Robertson said. "In this space, you don't have to do it that way. New music sounds really good in here, very live, very real—it goes through you. It's a very present experience."

A version of this article appeared June 22, 2012, on page A19 in the U.S. edition of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: N.Y. Philharmonic Sees Triple.

JOIN THE DISCUSSION
Be the first to comment

MORE IN
New York-Culture »

QUAN Top Stock Pick

Moving Aggressively to Become Major Player in Huge Industry, Buy Now!
www.QuantumInnovators.com

Make Money with Stocks

Start investing in New Stocks, Research Stock Now!
www.Nova-Mining.com

Could this Stock Triple?

Why the smart money is back in Gold
chicagofinancialtimes.com/PGLC/

President Lowers Mortgage

If you owe under \$729k you probably qualify for the Govt Refi Program.
www.MortgageRatesExperts.com

Add a Comment

JOURNAL COMMUNITY

[Community rules](#)

To add a comment please

Log in

Create an Account

Your real name is required for commenting.

Track replies to my comment

CLEAR

POST

[Login with Facebook](#)