



[Inside SubCulture, New York City's New Gallery and Music Venue](#)

By Jackie Spear
06/05/2013

In our exploration of Untapped music venues in New York City, **perhaps SubCulture personifies this the most as “a subterranean music-and-arts oasis hidden beneath the streets of New York.”** SubCulture is situated right beneath the Culture Project Theatre in NoHo. **The appeal of the venue is its urban and edgy construction, which draws genre-bending musical artists and daring performance artists to the stage.**

We had the opportunity to do a walk through of the venue before attending a musical performance by Mary Lambert. The founders of the venue, Steven and Marc Kaplan, share the vision that SubCulture will serve as an **environment that cultivates community, ingenuity, and new connections to different creative mediums.** They selected the basement of the Culture Project because they felt that the location best fit their creative and aesthetic vision. They also felt that the close-knit NoHo community would be the perfect home for their venue as the neighborhood fully embraces the performance arts.

The actual construction of the venue took about four months to complete and they initially started the conception of the build-out in August of 2012. They faced a very daunting task of renovating and morphing the 100+ year old basement into the multidisciplinary concert hall. The end result is a very modern space, but it maintains some of the character of the original structure. The underground haunt provides the perfect acoustics for concerts. When Marc and Steven are vetting potential artists, they are really seeking out performers that deliver a dynamic performance. Their tastes are very diverse, and ultimately they want SubCulture to support artistic disciplines from a multitude of genres.

Mary Lambert's show was the tenth concert at SubCulture as part of their summer long soft opening. Their public launch is slated for September. The intimate setting was the perfect environment for Lambert's rich and soulful voice. She deftly played the piano during her entire show and further captivated the audience with her unparalleled talent for “spoken word”. Lambert has risen in the music charts since the launch of her EP Letters Don't Talk in 2012 along with her collaboration on the track “Same Love” with musical power-duo Macklemore and Ryan Lewis. She has also been touring nationally with Macklemore and Ryan Lewis and the solo performance at SubCulture was to celebrate the upcoming release of the acoustic version of “Same Love” entitled “She Keeps Me Warm”.

Her performance was very moving and she showcased the true depth of her talent; all the while engaging with the audience in a jokingly affectionate manner. She has the vocal maturity and range of Adele with the wit, satire and sharpness of Lily Allen. With her accompanied vocalist, the songs “This Heart” and “My Moon” vibrated richly and fully in the space. Her “spoken word” track, entitled “I know girls (body love)“, was a very emotionally provocative number. The audience was completely entranced by the lyrics in this song and by her pace of delivery. **The acoustics of the stage served Lambert justly.**

SubCulture is located at 45 Bleecker St., New York, NY. To view the schedule of upcoming performances visit their website [here](#).



Things to Do

Sybarite5

Sat Jun 8

Classical & Opera | Post-classical

Time Out says...

June 3, 2013

A fast-rising string quintet whose repertoire stretches from canonical Mozart and operatic Purcell to reworked Radiohead and beyond, Sybarite5 plays two shows tonight to help break in **SubCulture**, a newly relaunched **Bleecker Street** space destined to play a major role in NYC's new-music culture come the 2013-14 season.



[Top Five New or Refreshed Concert Venues for Fall 2013](#)

By Amanda Angel
Thursday, August 29, 2013

1. **SubCulture**

Greenwich Village, bursting with jazz clubs and bars with live music, became a destination for classical music buffs when (le) poisson rouge opened in the former Village Gate in 2008. Since last May, **SubCulture** (45 Bleecker St)—formerly a black box theater operated by its upstairs neighbor, Culture Project—**has added another reason for contemporary and chamber music fans to head downtown.** With partnerships with the 92nd Street Y, which just closed downtown outpost 92YTribeca, and the New York Philharmonic’s Contact! series, **the space seems to be off to a good start.**

HOT HOUSE[®]



Musician-Club Owner's Corner

By Seton Hawkins

September 2013

“My brother and I grew up hearing a wide range of music,” explains Marc Kaplan, co-owner of the new venue SubCulture. “One thing we found at clubs was that all too often, during an amazing point in the music, the ice machine would start running or people would place a food order. We wanted to change that and place the focus on the music and the musicians.

Indeed, the aesthetic goals of SubCulture can be traced to Kaplan’s lifelong involvement in music. An educator and choral conductor, Kaplan found himself changing career courses at the start of the decade. With his brother Steven, a financial consultant who also plays trumpet and piano, Kaplan began the search for a music venue. “We really wanted a room that had no pillars, in order to make sure we had great sightlines. However, that’s near impossible in New York! After searching in a lot of areas, we finally found the space at 45 Bleecker and it had a wonderful feeling,” Kaplan says. “The pillars actually frame the seating area, so we can set up as a concert venue or set up the show in the round.”

The programming has been remarkably diverse including David Murray, Laura Metcalf, Richard Bona, and the New York Fringe Festival. A CD release party by Matthew Shipp is a September highlight. “Although we’re a for-profit organization, I’m thinking from a not-for-profit arts presenter standpoint,” Kaplan explains. “We’re not a club, and we want to present diverse artists in a space that really supports them with an audience that’s listening and enjoying the music.”

Indeed, the focus at SubCulture is on an undistracted listening experience. Kaplan or a manager introduces each set and asks patrons to turn off their phones and to not visit the bar during the set. Cabaret-style seating is absent and food options are few. While the venue’s limited kitchen and bar may seem like a ticket path to profitability, Kaplan notes creative business advantages. “We can be open all day and we don’t have to devote time to prepping a kitchen-. The space can be available to a wide range of uses: rehearsals, daytime events and even company gatherings. That way, we’re able to make better use of the space from a business perspective, without sacrificing some of the artist-driven goals.”

Visit www.subculturenetwork.com for a schedule of upcoming events.



[New York City Gets Ultimate Audience Experience with New Venue – SubCulture](#)

Posted by: [Michael Mascia](#) September 9, 2013

Brothers Marc and Steven Kaplan bring NYC its new standard in premium venues. On September 16th **SubCulture** will celebrate its Grand Opening and offer what the Kaplan brothers call the ultimate audience experience. Located at 45 Bleecker Street, in the heart of NoHo, **SubCulture** was created to bring an enhanced level of sound to the public with a sound system built to compliment the natural acoustics of the room. Made to be flexible for all kinds of music and decibel levels, **SubCulture** is looking to bring a spectrum of acts to the newly renovated space. “While scouting different locations for the venue, we knew that we needed a special type of space in order to create the unique “listening room” environment that we’d imagined. That meant that we needed a footprint that was wide enough to create fantastic sightlines from anywhere for the ultimate audience experience.” **SubCulture brings just that, a wide-open venue with a great view of the stage from anywhere in the room.** “we wanted the space to retain its soul, so we focused on improving the skeleton and skin, and for this we brought in Alliance TCC, which is a theater design firm. Alliance oversaw everything from design concept to execution, and they used the venue name –**SubCulture**– as an aesthetic touchstone.”

The idea for a venue in NYC came about when Marc Kaplan a music entrepreneur, educator, conductor, and composer came together with his brother Steven Kaplan a passionate entrepreneur and music enthusiast wanting to combine their passions together and be able to have a venture together as brothers. “A venue seemed like the perfect fit because we could do something as brothers that combined our individual skill sets in way that allowed us to contribute something valuable to the medium”

Though the venue was built for top quality sound, **SubCulture** will not be strictly for live music. In May NoHo Design District used the space to show off their furniture designs. Aziz Ansari did 2 secrets shows at the space and unique acts are constantly present themselves. “We wanted to bring something to the New York music scene that we felt was missing; so, we set about creating our dream venue, and in an effort to produce an experience that emphasized the connection between artists and the audience” **SubCulture** hosted a sold out crowd for the live taping of the podcast “How did This Get Made” and starting this fall a live trivia act called “The Big Quiz” will bring people to the venue to interact with.

Opening night will bring a line up that showcases the different types of acts that **SubCulture** plans on bringing in. Currently the line up brings jazz musicians, Laila Biali and Jo Lowry, Jazz pianist Fred Hersch and Classical pianist, Gregg Kallor, some Acapella vocal quarter with NY Polyphony and chamber music with ACJW. The future leaves many options open for **SubCulture** and it’s going to be interesting seeing the different acts that the venue will bring to NYC.

Find out more about this unique venue and to view a line up of acts scheduled to perform on their website at subculturenewyork.com

Follow [SubCulture](#) on Facebook



SubCulture Brings New Listening Room to NoHo

by Melanie Wong
September 9, 2013

After a yearlong search for a vibrant space "where artists and audiences [can] connect," brothers and co-owners Marc and Steve Kaplan settled at 45 Bleecker Street, in the basement below [The Culture Project](#), as the home of their new performing-arts venue. Dubbed [SubCulture](#), the owners are calling it a "listening room" that promises to deliver a concert-hall experience in an intimate setting, with a little food and beverage service on the side.

Now, you may be thinking to yourself, "Wait, don't we already have [one of those on Bleecker Street?](#)" However, unlike its many area counterparts, SubCulture's snacking selection is limited and the atmosphere—without tables, servers, or minimums—lends itself to a more performance-based focus.

After a soft launch in May, the brothers used the summer to experiment with the widest possible variety of acts—from soloists to big bands, singer-songwriters to ska, and even a comedy act—in order to ascertain what worked best in the room. As Steve explained, "Anything can work in the room, but there's a line between what we want to present and what we think the room wants. The room almost dictates. It was more us listening to the room than trying to control the room." Marc added: "Moving into the fall, we have a greater definition of what we know we *love* in the space."

The official [grand opening on September 16](#) will kick off a two-week cross-genre piano festival featuring SubCulture's beautiful [Steinway](#) and highlighting a variety of pianists, including jazz phenoms [Fred Hersch](#) and [Taylor Eigsti](#); [Gregg Kallor](#) on the classical side; as well as [Jon Regen](#) and [Vonda Shepard](#) from the pop scene.

SubCulture is also making some serious headway in the classical world, having secured a partnership with [92Y](#) that includes six chamber music concerts and the [NY Philharmonic's CONTACT!](#) series (featuring [Esa-Pekka Salonen](#) and [Yefim Bronfman](#)), not to mention a pending collaboration with Carnegie's [Ensemble ACJW](#).

The brothers also hope to present some original programming that they hope will serve as an added benefit to the community and the city as a whole. Marc explained, "If we're looking at artists [that

would play a larger room], we're looking to have the ability to invoke a special project or a different type of performance from them. Like, if we got Donald Fagen (of Steely Dan) to do solo piano."

The brothers stressed SubCulture's versatility as a differentiator amongst NYC's vast selection of performance spaces. According to Marc, "Even though we hold less than 200 people, we have the ability to perform in the center of the space or onstage, you have a breadth of acoustics . . . our focus is on showcasing our room." The room boasts a glorious set of retractable cushioned seating that adds the flexibility to create standing-room space, roundtables, fully seated events, or just about any other setup you can imagine. Steve added, "The sound system that we have and the vibe really accentuates and amplifies subtlety and that's what we're really going for. It's something intangible that people are picking up on and language doesn't do justice to it."

The Kaplans also strove to maintain the space's distinctive historical element. The stairway leading to the stage takes you through a photographic "time tunnel" that depicts a chronological history of the Bowery (courtesy of the [Lower East Side History Project](#)). Once inside, the brothers' architectural philosophy of "don't design by force, design by adaptation" is evident in the steam-pipe-lined ceiling, pipeline chandelier, and original 117-year-old flooring.

In the increasingly crowded spectrum of NYC performance venues, SubCulture seems poised to become one of the most exciting. Be sure to check out their [calendar](#) for information about upcoming shows.



[A Parade of Jazz and Classical Talent Showcases the Sonics at SubCulture](#)

September 16, 2013

Alan Young

There was no need for the parade of musicians on the bill this evening at SubCulture to do anything more than phone in their performances. After all, they were only there to give a by-invite-only audience of media and a few friends an idea of how both amplified and unamplified acts sound in the newly renovated space. But they did far more than that: **if the quality of most of these artists is an indication of what the venue will be booking in the coming months, that's something to look forward to. And the sonics here are exquisite, to rival the Village Vanguard and Carnegie Hall: SubCulture has quietly vaulted to the ranks of Manhattan's top-tier listening rooms.**

On the unamplified side, a-cappella quartet New York Polyphony – Christopher Dylan Herbert, Craig Phillips, Geoffrey Williams and Steven Caldicott Wilson – blended voices richly and intricately in pre-baroque Palestrina motets and then with a slyly joyous new arrangement of Rosie the Riveter. The up-and-coming ACJW String Quartet – Grace Park, Clara Lyon, John Stulz and Hannah Collins – made energetic work of a Philip Glass excerpt and then took what could have been Schubert's String Quartet No. 12 – if Schubert had finished writing it – to the next level. The famous nocturnal theme became a suspenseful springboard for animated, even explosive cadenzas, a mystery unfolding with an increasing sense of triumph. Student ensembles can be erratic, but they also bring fresh ears and ideas to a performance and this was a prime example of that kind of confluence.

On the more groove-oriented side, pianist/chanteuse Laila Biali sang her driving, playful new arrangement of This Could Be the Start of Something New with Joel Frahm on tenor sax, Ike Sturm on bass and Jared Schonig on drums. The highlight of the night, unsurprisingly, was pianist Fred Hersch, who delivered an understatedly bittersweet, strolling blend of ragtime-tinged pastoral shades on Down Home, his homage to Bill Frisell (with whom he collaborated memorably about fifteen years ago), a standout track from Hersch's new live album, Flying Free, with guitarist Julian Lage. Singer Jo Lawry then joined Hersch and over lush, glimmering, Debussy-esque cascades, delivered a biting, half-sung, half-narrated reflection on clueless parades of tourists in the Louvre crowding around to take pics and videos of the Mona Lisa – and then moving on. The two wound up their brief set, joined by Richie Barshay on hand drum, for an electrically dancing, animatedly conversational take of the new album's bossa-flavored title track, an Egberto Gismonti tribute.



[A WORLD OF MUSICAL TALENT ON DISPLAY AT THE GRAND
OPENING OF SOHO'S COOLEST NEW VENUE: SUBCULTURE](#)

S E P T E M B E R 1 7 , 2 0 1 3

A whole new landscape of cultural expression has emerged in the heart of SoHo!

The Sound of Music...all KINDS of music...filled the air last night at the Grand Opening of the new SubCulture Performance space at 45 Bleecker Street. This **beautiful basement venue** below Located in the basement of the Culture Project Theatre **will provide a welcoming home to eclectic and diverse forms of music from all corners of the globe.**

Evidence of that happy news was on full display at last night's joyous event in **this subterranean music and arts oasis**, with a lineup of musical performers as diverse as the population of the city it will provide entertainment for.

Last night's bill included such artists as Canadian jazz pianist Laila Biali, a 2011 Juno Award winner for her album Tracing Light; New York Polyphony a New-York based professional male classical vocal quartet; the ensemble ACJW String Quartet who are all alumni or current fellows of The Academy Music program; Australian jazz vocalist, Jo Lawry; classical pianist and improviser Greg Kallor; jazz composer and pianist Fred Hersch; and the funk-jazz and African-influenced Richard Bona Quartet which rocked the house in the finale.

The unique venue is the creation of the Marc and Steven Kaplan who wanted to provide a space to showcase the many kinds of music that have touched and influenced them.

"When we dreamt up the idea for SubCulture, we envisioned the ultimate listening room," the brothers wrote in their welcoming message. "This is a place where people could come and experience music performances in a way that put the focus on the music and their craft. Along the way, we realized that the venue would be the perfect place to share our love of not only music, but art in all its many facets, mediums and genres. It is our hope that people will come to see the venue as a place they can trust to find inspiration, provocation, and above all else—a truly experience."

The venue will offer an array of artists with its "15 Days/15 Acts" from September 17 through October 1. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit: www.subculturenewyork.com



[SubCulture Opens Its Doors](#)

Peter Matthews

September 18, 2013

SubCulture, the new subterranean performance space on the corner of Bleecker and Lafayette, officially opened its doors Monday night with an invite-only concert that **showcased its eclectic booking policy**, ranging from jazz to classical and rock. While the comparisons to another liquor-shilling, cross-genre club on Bleecker Street are inevitable, SubCulture—which we profiled last week—**seeks to separate itself from places like LPR by replacing the cocktail tables with rows of theatrical seating, placing the focus squarely on the musicians.**

And, while owner brothers Steve and Marc Kaplan have invested heavily in state-of-the-art sound and light systems, the room—which seats less than 200—**is intimate enough to allow for unamplified performances**, such as Monday's sets by the Renaissance quintet New York Polyphony and the Ensemble ACJW String Quartet. Other highlights from Monday included jazz pianist Fred Hersch playing both solo and with his Pocket Orchestra (Jo Lawry, vocals; Richie Barshay, percussion) and bassist/vocalist Richard Bona, whose music blended Afropop with Latin music and jazz. (Bona's version of Jaco Pastorius' "A Portrait of Tracy" was simply electric.)

While I can't say there's anything on SubCulture's calendar I'm hankering to see right now, the club already seems to have their stuff together better than most venues at this stage. And, from the musicians and promoters I've talked to, they are grateful to having another place to ply their musical wares; a little competition never hurt anyone.

Welcome to the scene, SubCulture. Look forward to hearing more from you soon. More pics on the photo page.

all about jazz



SUBCULTURE - GRAND OPENING

By **SCOTT KRANE**

Published: September 18, 2013

The art of recording has changed music, more so in the information age. Nevertheless, it seems consensus in New York: jazz sounds better live. SubCulture is a new performance space in the district of Manhattan that is called "NoHo." The building is located at 45 Bleecker Street right in front of a stop for the B, D, F, M and 6 trains. The recommended drink as per space owner, Marc Kaplan is the Liberty School cabernet and a semi-local brew, the Greenport seasonal ale. **The suggestion of spirits is valuable coming from a man whose spot features a musical menu that is even more appetizing.** Inside, folding chairs are set up for performance spectators. Before the musicians takes the stage, mellow banter hums amidst the familiar and low-played audio of Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue*.

Downstairs in the space, metal rafters grasp light fixtures and red bricks give the room a sense of homeliness. The underground location has a lovely, chilled humidity. The walls of the stairs connecting the entrance to the performance space are covered with prints of international and old-fashioned newspaper clips.

SubCulture's lights and acoustics are state of the art. Marc and brother, Steven Kaplan worked in conjunction with Alliance TCC "out of Connecticut" to "do overall design" for the room's artificial ambience and sound. You can see the specs on the Subculture website. As for the music, "We believe in programming artists that create a high level of artistry," said Marc Kaplan, "We believe in programming artists that not only showcase their own work but also draw on their influences and we believe in showcasing diversity in the music and in the art that we present."

The New York Times



MUSIC REVIEW

[Schubert, Underground | Shai Vosner at SubCulture](#)

By VIVIEN SCHWEITZER

Published: SEPT. 19, 2013

In the not-so-distant past, the recently opened [SubCulture](#), **an intimate subterranean space with a bar, cinema-style seats with cup holders and a purple-lighted brick wall framing the piano**, might have seemed an unlikely site for classical music concerts.

But **SubCulture**, a **stylish multigenre performance space underneath the Culture Project on Bleecker Street**, is the latest in a growing number of quirky additions to the New York classical scene, off-the-beaten-track halls where concerts of fledgling and mainstream soloists and ensembles increasingly take place. In a very short time the nightclub Le Poisson Rouge, also on Bleecker Street, has become a regular haunt for prominent musicians and fledging groups. (Unlike Le Poisson Rouge, SubCulture doesn't serve food or drinks during performances.)

On Tuesday evening, [Shai Vosner](#) opened a two-week piano festival at SubCulture, featuring mostly jazz musicians. Later this fall, the 92nd Street Y will present several concerts at SubCulture, including a program for guitar and accordion on [Oct. 8](#). The New York Philharmonic and the Y will organize three programs at SubCulture as part of Contact!, the orchestra's new-music series.

Mr. Vosner, a young Israeli-born pianist, has been focusing on Schubert in recent seasons; along with several recitals he has demonstrated his mettle with an all-Schubert disc on the Onyx label. And Schubert was the theme of the evening here, beginning with the Klavierstück in E flat minor (D. 946, No. 1), enhanced by Mr. Vosner's delicate, graceful pianissimos and lithe touch. He barely paused at the end of the piece before beginning Jörg Widmann's "Idyll and Abyss: Six Schubert Reminiscences," a series of brief, witty and whimsical miniatures with titles like "Unreal, as if from afar" and "Mournful, desolate."

Mr. Widmann filters Schubertian language and gestures through a contemporary prism, complete with quirky harmonies and whistling. In the final movement, he quotes an opening phrase of Schubert's Sonata in B flat (D. 960), which concluded the intermission-less program.

I enjoyed Mr. Vosner's interpretation of the sonata's first movement the most. His playing was imbued with distinctive (but not eccentric) ideas and an arresting tension and momentum.

For the encores, he offered Schubert's Hungarian Melody in B minor (D. 817) and his own gentle, Schubert-inspired improvisation.

SubCulture's Piano Fest runs through Oct. 1; 45 Bleecker Street, East Village; (212) 533-5470, [subculturenewyork.com](#).

The New York Times



Events

[Jazz Listings for Sept. 20-26](#)

Published: SEPT. 19, 2013

SubCulture Piano Festival (through Oct. 1)

In a smart marshaling of resources, SubCulture, the newish downtown performance space, hosts a wide range of pianists over the next two weeks. They include dedicated experimentalists like Matthew Shipp (Saturday at 7:30 and 10 p.m.); next-level Cuban modernists like Fabian Almazan (Sunday at 6:30 p.m.); classically poised searchers like Dan Tepfer, in a duo with the eminent saxophonist Lee Konitz (Monday at 10 p.m.); and adaptable post-boppers like Taylor Eigsti (Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.), Aaron Goldberg (Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.) and Gerald Clayton (Wednesday at 10 p.m.). At SubCulture: Arts Underground, 45 Bleecker Street, downstairs, near Lafayette Street, East Village, (212) 533-5470, subculturenewyork.com; prices vary. (*Chinen*)

THE **VILLAGER**



[Just Do Art! Sept. 19, 2013](#)

SUBCULTURE PIANO FEST

After a soft launch this spring, and a summer's worth of activity (including gigs from Macy Gray, Canon Logic and Aziz Ansari), **the music-centric venue founded by brothers Marc and Steven Kaplan had a raucous launch party on September 16.** One day later, SubCulture began its official existence with night #1 of a 15-day, 15-performance piano festival. **Dedicated to showcasing multiple genres — and shining a spotlight on the sonic versatility that can be coaxed out of 88 keys — a diverse assembly of emerging and established artists will perform in unique setup (such as ensemble players who'll perform solo or in a duo).** The roster of talent includes award-winning composer Gregg Kallor (7:30pm on 9/26, representing the Classical series), Jazz Series performers Matthew Shipp (7:30 & 10pm on 9/21) and Taylor Eigsti (7:30pm on 9/24) and Pop/Rock Series acts Grayson Hugh (7:30pm on 9/23) and ELEW (7:30pm on Oct. 1).

The SubCulture Piano Fest runs through Oct. 1, at SubCulture (in the downstairs space of the Bleecker Street Theater — 45 Bleecker St., btw. Bowery & Lafayette). Ticket prices vary from show to show; \$15-\$40. Visit subculturenewyork.com. Facebook: facebook.com/subculturenewyork. Twitter: twitter.com/subculture_nyc.

I CARE IF YOU LISTEN

A blog about new classical music, art, and technology.



SubCulture's Grand Opening: Already Established

THOMAS DENEUVILLE

September 20, 2013

Even though a lot of things happen in New York, it is not every day that a major venue opens its doors. On Monday, September 16, SubCulture, located in the downstairs space at 45 Bleecker Street, celebrated its official Grand Opening.

Marc and Steven Kaplan, founders of Kaplan Music and Entertainment and owners of SubCulture, curated an evening of performances that reflected how eclectic SubCulture's programming will be:

"Like most people's, our tastes span a diverse range of styles and interests, and our programming ideology reflects that diversity through a wide array of genres and mediums. We want this to be the kind of place where people find exactly what they love one night, and are completely taken by surprise in the best possible way the next night."

– Marc and Steven Kaplan

Fred Hersch, ACJW of Carnegie Hall, NY Polyphony, Gregg Kallor, Jo Lawry, Laila Biali, and many more offered remarkable performances in front of an enthusiastic audience.

The parallel that one would be drawn to make between SubCulture and (le) Poisson Rouge, the other underground new music venue on Bleecker Street, cannot go much further than the location. They are both on Bleecker. Period. **SubCulture has a very distinct vibe and offers a different listening experience.** Where (le) Poisson Rouge can comfortably accommodate diners and drinkers, SubCulture looks a lot more like a very welcoming black box with a large bar. **The acoustics/sound engineering were (and, one can assume, will be) excellent** and besides a few dead spots due to the massive structural columns, **the stage could be enjoyed from anywhere.**

For a newcomer, **SubCulture already projects standards of excellence of a major NYC venue.** Welcome to SubCulture. We are looking forward to seeing it become a part of New York City's cultural life.

SubCulture's Piano Fest started on September 16 and will continue until October 1. For more info, visit: <http://www.subculturenewyork.com>.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



An Underground Sound

[A Bleeker Street Venue Focusing on Quality Acoustics Welcomes the Philharmonic](#)

By CORINNE RAMEY

Nov. 1, 2013

For brothers Marc and Steven Kaplan, the owners of new Bleeker Street venue SubCulture, a music hall is more than just a space, but a living, breathing partner in every performance.

"We're really running the space not as something where you play our room, but running it like we have a performance to give too, every single night," said Marc Kaplan, 35 years old.

Though the 150-seat venue is still in the startup phase—it officially opened in September—it has put itself on the map with a concert series called "CONTACT!" a collaboration between the 92nd Street Y and the New York Philharmonic. Monday night's concert will feature works by composer and conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen performed by Philharmonic musicians.

One of the reasons the Philharmonic was attracted to SubCulture is the **venue's attention to acoustics**, said Edward Yim, the Philharmonic's vice president of artistic planning. It is rare for the Philharmonic to perform in lesser-known venues; previous "CONTACT!" concerts took place at well-established spaces like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Symphony Space.

"I like that it is a room built for music," Mr. Yim said "We just liked the vibe."

Zoë Keating, a cellist who recently played at SubCulture, said the venue has a digital sound board that allows the sound system to be mixed from anywhere in the room with an iPad. **"It was kind of like my dream venue, honestly," she said.**

The room has a cavernous ceiling and the brothers added brick, wood and steel. The only fabric—which absorbs sound—is on the seats.

The brothers tweak the space to cater to the sound of the performers. That could involve removing curtains, figuring out ways to deaden the hum of the bar, and making sure the rumbling subway—the venue is below ground level—isn't too noticeable.

"The train will go by, and it's a little New York-y, and we love it, but we've worked really hard to get it at the right frequency so you know it's there and it doesn't bother you," said Steven, 32.

It helps that the brothers, who grew up in West Hartford, Conn., share a sense of aesthetics.

"You put on five seconds of music and we're like, 'We hear this, we hear that,'" said Marc. "We hear stuff the same way, which is why creating a venue like this with the same goal makes sense."

Entering SubCulture entails walking through a lobby shared with Culture Project, the space's upstairs tenant, down a hallway of papier-mâché neighborhood memorabilia and past a tree-roots-and-junk sculpture, which has a loose metaphorical association with venue's name.

"There's this idea that everything cultural, in theory, must be above ground," said Marc. "However, the deeper you go, and you open the crack, you see how much culture is within New York."

Fitting the Philharmonic into an underground culture metaphor may seem dubious. But the orchestra values occasional jaunts outside of Lincoln Center, said Mr. Yim.

"For a long time the New York Philharmonic was seen as this monolithic cultural institution, and it is nice to see people's receptivity when we say, 'Hey, let's do something together,'" said Mr. Yim.

For 92Y, the partnership with SubCulture fills a similar role as its now-closed downtown location, 92YTribeca: the potential for a younger, less formal audience, and more adventurous programming in a more intimate space.

SubCulture is often compared with a better-known venue down Bleecker Street, (Le) Poisson Rouge. The comparison is flattering, said Marc, but he believes the only thing the venues have in common is diverse programming.

After Monday's performance, "CONTACT!" will return to SubCulture in January and June of 2014.

The New York Times



[Here, Home for a Baton](#)

[SubCulture Gives Home to Philharmonic's Contact! Series](#)

By STEVE SMITH

Published: NOV. 7, 2013

Good news: With the fifth season of Contact!, the contemporary-music series the New York Philharmonic inaugurated in 2009, **comes a performance space that finally suits the informal tone the orchestra desired but never previously delivered.**

That's not meant as a knock on the two previous Contact! locations. But when the series started, all the Metropolitan Museum of Art could offer was its modest Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, the antithesis of casual. (How different things might be now.) Symphony Space was funkier, but still a conventional theater — and on the Upper West Side, too close to Lincoln Center to lure a different crowd.

The new Contact! season, which opened on Monday night with a concert of chamber music by Esa-Pekka Salonen, was initially planned for 92YTriBeCa, the downtown satellite of 92nd Street Y. When that space was shuttered this year, the Y moved concerts intended for that location to SubCulture, newly opened under the Culture Project on Bleecker Street in the East Village.

Talk about serendipity. **Finally, Contact! has the home it needed,** and in a more accessible, better-trafficked part of town than 92YTriBeCa proposed. Like Le Poisson Rouge, just a few blocks down the street, **SubCulture embraces a range of styles, classical music included.** In terms of chamber-music concerts, the new space has an edge on its neighbor, **with clear sightlines, raked seats to the rear and, to judge by Monday's performance, a welcome dearth of commerce during events.**

All of this works to the Philharmonic's advantage — and a good thing, because on Monday's evidence, an identity for Contact! remains frustratingly unsettled.

Initially, the series showcased newly commissioned pieces by up-and-coming composers: a commendable goal for any orchestra and a real breakthrough for this institution. Before long, avant-garde staples by composers like Elliott Carter, Pierre Boulez and H. K. Gruber seeped into the mix. It meant less exposure for emerging talent, but it didn't suggest a failed experiment.

The present season, though, is limited to just two events at SubCulture, each built around a starry guest: Mr. Salonen, already in town to conduct subscription concerts at Avery Fisher Hall, on Monday, and the pianist Yefim Bronfman in January. Of two further programs to be held elsewhere — both part of the laudable NY Phil Biennial — one is a prefab import from the Salzburg Festival, and the other, the only Contact! event to feature emerging American composers, is limited to solo works.

Some specifics about Monday: The cellist Nathan Vickery did strong work in Mr. Salonen's personable "knock, breathe, shine." A clever, lovely wind quintet, "Memoria," showed his imaginative grasp of timbre. Sumire Kudo, another cellist, gave a dazzling account of a flamboyant older piece, "YTA III." The oboist Robert Botti and the pianist Steven Beck were eloquent in "Second Meeting," and "Homunculus," a succinct, puckish string quartet, was a vivid closer. A sold-out house got what it came for.

Trust me, I feel churlish complaining about so strong a concert, especially one with the substantial added appeal of Mr. Salonen as a droll host. But for someone who laments the shelving of the original Contact! premise, this felt like two steps forward, one off to the side.

The next Contact! program is on Jan. 13 at SubCulture, 45 Bleecker Street, near Lafayette Street, East Village; 212-875-5656, nyphil.org.

The New York Times



[The Intrepid Explorer, Leaping From Lush to Spiky Benjamin Hochman's Deep Dive Into Contemporary Work](#)

By ANTHONY TOMMASINI

Published: MARCH 11, 2014

A recital by a thoughtful young pianist in a basement performance space that seats about 150 people may not seem particularly significant. Yet on Monday night at SubCulture, as I listened to the pianist Benjamin Hochman's sensitive, exciting renditions of four contemporary works that explore the form of theme and variation (including one premiere), I kept thinking that classical music doesn't get better than this.

Here was a brilliant, self-effacing 33-year-old artist who simply wanted to share his enthusiasm for some formidable sets of variations in an ideally intimate setting, ending with the composer Frederic Rzewski's epic, nearly hourlong 36 variations on a popular Chilean resistance song, "The People United Will Never Be Defeated," written in 1975. The recital was part of a 92nd Street Y series at SubCulture, the new mini-concert-hall and bar under the Lynn Redgrave Theater in the East Village.

Mr. Hochman has always shown natural curiosity about old and new music. Last fall the Avie label released his solo recording titled "Homage to Schubert," with elegant, impressive accounts of two Schubert sonatas, along with two contemporary works in tribute to that composer by Jörg Widmann and Gyorgy Kurtag.

Mr. Hochman spoke to his audience on Monday about each piece on the program and about the genre of theme and variations, an exercise in exploration where a theme, sometimes a simple one, is investigated for all its possibilities. He opened with Oliver Knussen's Variations (1989). The theme is just an elemental statement of a few emphatic notes.

The variations, however, unfold in music of constantly shifting moods, character and intensity. At times, the music is plush with crystalline colorings and melting harmonies, which Mr. Hochman played gorgeously. Then the work bursts into fidgety stretches of keyboard-spanning lines, like a pointillist toccata.

Before playing the next work, Berio's "Cinque Variazione" (1952-53), Mr. Hochman suggested to audience members that instead of trying to follow the individual variations, they listen to the overall

flow and sweep of this piece. And in his rhapsodic performance, this ingenious, complex modernist score indeed sounded like a fantasy.

The first half ended with the premiere of “Frédéric Variations,” by the composer Tamar Muskal, who wrote the piece for Mr. Hochman. The title refers to Chopin. Ms. Muskal took as a theme his Étude No. 2 from “Trois Nouvelles Études,” a lilting, hazy work. In Ms. Muskal’s variations, that étude soon becomes fractured and frenzied, setting off a long, expansive, sometimes fitful exploration, with pummeling rhythms, spiky chords and onrushing riffs.

The Rzewski work, which, as Mr. Hochman writes, has become “something of a cult hit,” begins with the protest song stated in thumping octaves, then turns into a kind of swinging, mellow jazzy dance. From then on, for nearly an hour, the tune is transfigured into variations based on milky arpeggios, staggered chord bursts, twisting strands of clashing counterpoint, hints of Rachmaninoff and Bach swathed in a modernist haze, what could be a Scottish air and more. The inventiveness of the piece is staggering. So is its difficulty, though you would not have guessed this from Mr. Hochman’s commanding performance.

The next 92nd Street Y concert at SubCulture is by the Cypress String Quartet on April 1; 45 Bleecker Street, near Lafayette Street, East Village; 92y.org.

THE NEW YORKER



Sublime Sounds

An inviting living room for music downtown.

BY RUSSELL PLATT

March 31, 2014

Since its opening, in 2008, the West Village music club (Le) Poisson Rouge has boldly redefined the New York concert experience, replacing the ostensibly stuffy feel of a mainline classical venue with a relaxed atmosphere, often with table seating, more akin to that of a jazz event. This was all healthy, and inevitable, catching up with the tastes of a younger generation for whom musical styles—classical, folk, world music, whatever—are arranged on a spectrum, not in a hierarchy.

Yet those “stuffy” older places have their advantages—like good acoustics, which L.P.R. lacks. The bulk of the venue’s schedule is taken up by non-classical groups, and for contemporary classical artists that likewise use amplification; this isn’t much of an issue. But for shows with “unplugged” ensembles such as string quartets or solo pianists, the space is completely without resonance—and the continual food and drink service, not to mention the hubbub at the bar, can be annoying. It’s concerts like these that can make you feel that while L.P.R. is a great place to *be*, it’s not always a great place to *listen*.

SubCulture, another underground venue on Bleecker Street, has recently emerged as a complement to L.P.R., if not a corrective to it. The young founders, Marc and Steven Kaplan, who are brothers, announce their intentions silently: the walls of the opening corridor are lined with reproductions of newspaper clippings, handbills, and photos that conjure up an Olde New York that stretches from the heyday of the Yiddish theatre to that of CBGB, and the entrance is adorned with a frieze in which a long tree root seems to reach down through a patch of earth thick with transistor radios, turntables, and outdated computer keyboards. The irony is teasing, but the message is clear: the best aspects of the traditional concert experience will be updated, not discarded.

The space itself, in which brick walls and mellow lighting offset the rolling concrete vault of the ceiling, is a shoebox that makes room for some hundred and fifty patrons. A pathway between the two sections of seats—comfy, padded, with drink holders attached—leads straight to the bar, which is open before and after the concert, but which is usually closed during classical shows.

SubCulture's over-all atmosphere is living-room convivial, not nightclub crush. "We've been compared to L.P.R. because of our common diversity of artists, but Steven and I come out of a concert-going background, not a club background, and our business models are very different," says Marc Kaplan. "We're focussed above all on providing a great acoustic environment for music that will limit distractions." **The sound is somewhat sweeter in the front section than in the slightly elevated mezzanine, but even at the back of the bar there is enough warmth and clarity to showcase the strengths of a variety of artists.**

It's a mark of the venue's success that the Kaplans have been able to quickly forge relationships with such organizations as the New York Philharmonic and the 92nd Street Y, which have collaborated in presenting two of the Phil's "Contact!" concerts of new music there (featuring such stars as Esa-Pekka Salonen and Yefim Bronfman). **Clearly, the brothers are exercising a strong curatorial hand;** this week offers a concert by the acclaimed Cypress String Quartet on April 1, but broad-minded listeners can return later in the month to hear the inimitable Andrew W. K.'s pop-driven "Grand Piano Party" rock the house. (45 Bleecker St. subculturenewyork.com.) ♦



[Philharmonic members fly solo in rewarding night of new music](#)

June 04, 2014

By Kurt Gottschalk

Tuesday was a night of novelty for the New York Philharmonic. Members of the orchestra performed new works in a relatively new space as part of the first NY Phil Biennial. Five world premieres and one New York premiere, all for solo instruments, were presented at this “Contact!” event, shining a rather different light on the orchestra – or at least a half dozen of its members – **at SubCulture, a posh new downtown venue with a nightclub vibe.**

The evening was kicked off by composer, mover and shaker Paola Prestini, a curator of the annual River to River festival and creative director of the Brooklyn-based Original Music Workshop. Her *Eight Takes* for solo cello was inspired by “One Love Story, Eight Takes” by Brenda Shaughnessy, who read an excerpt of the poem before the performance. Each of the eight short moments were no doubt titled after the poem (“moody,” “with passion,” “in limbo”) but they also served as score directions. The music is lushly romantic, falling into staccato lines, forceful tempo shifts and percussion against the cello’s body, all played with beautiful articulation by Sumire Kudo. It was difficult to count the “takes” in the love story, which was played without a break. One easily could have counted three dozen of them before a few fast arpeggios and a satisfying, resolving tonic resolved the piece.

Eric Nathan wrote his *As Above, So Below* as an exploration of the trombone while in Italy. The composer and trumpeter purchased a trombone and toyed with it, discovering that tones could be projected both in front of and behind the player with the removal of the F attachment valve. He then composed a musical fantasy of taking flight over Rome, ultimately landing in the pine groves that (he later learned) inspired Respighi’s *Pini di Roma*. This novel preparation was well utilized in what turned out to be a more turbulent flight than one might have hoped for. Sudden, midstream volume shifts and even trompe-l’oreille flutters filled Joseph Alessi’s playing. Having established the novelty in the first section, Nathan used the bifurcated tone palette for simpler accents in long, somber lines as the piece concluded.

Oscar Bettison’s *Threaded Madrigals*, played by violist Rebecca Young, used harmonic structures particular to the instrument to make a piece very much of the instrument. A repeated and varying

two-note dirge became a foundation over which the instrument sang, finding its way back to that simple, mournful motif. Sometimes the same note repeated on two different strings (giving it a slightly different voicing), sometimes landing a half step off and ultimately placing the two patterns at opposite ends of the register.

Four Pieces for Solo Piano, on the other hand, seemed an attempt to undermine the instrument. Ryan Brown restricted himself to the half of the keyboard above middle C in order, he explained before Eric Huebner's performance, to divorce himself from the instrument's history. The first, "Cellar Door," was, he said, an attempt at beauty, based on the often-cited pleasing sound of the two words. It was nearly a pop song, somewhere between the realms of Kate Bush and Radiohead. "Buckle" was a percussive effort, mechanical but playful. "Stage Whisper" was slight and brief and, like the stage direction it is named for, softer more in pace than in volume. "Shoestring" was named for a film Brown saw of mechanics in West Africa fixing a car engine with laces and, he said, an attempt at their spirit of "making a lot out of a little." It seemed to reduce the keyboard by half again, nearly a music box now and only escaping to the bass clef for the final note.

The highpoint of the evening was Michael Hersch's *Of Sorrow Born: Seven Elegies*. The beautiful little miniatures, gracefully played by violinist Yulia Ziskel, didn't defy expectation so much as hover in a realm where expectations were immaterial. The first pieces alternated between bold atonality and languid, mournful statements, climaxing in the fifth piece with long, sustained tones interrupted by sudden outbursts. The sixth held fast in the upper register, seeming barely even present while the final delivered light, plaintive harmonies that felt liquid, even weeping.

After that, Chris Kapica's *Fandanglish* for solo clarinet was a spritely melange of Latin, pop and swing fragments, heavy breathing, reed-popping and -stomping, all stretched across six music stands for Pascual Martinez Forteza. Playful and referential, it was a perfect coda for a refreshingly casual program unconcerned with tired divisions of Up- and Downtown.

The New York Philharmonic's Biennial continues through June 7. nyphil.org.

BROOKLYN RAIL



FALL MUSIC SCENE 2014

[New Venues New York](#)

by Marshall Yarbrough

SubCulture

(Le) Poisson Rouge had an enormous effect on the contemporary classical scene when it first opened in 2008, just as the wave of indie rock-inspired post-minimalism was building. During its first couple of years, the excitement and glee of seeing an opera singer, a piano festival, or a performance of *Music for 18 Musicians* in a basement nightclub—with tables, food, and alcohol—was palpable. LPR is still an essential concert venue, but one whose limitations now show: noise from the bar and crowd, acoustic problems, the hectic clearing of the room to make way for the regular disco.

For pure listening, LPR has been superseded by a new basement space a few blocks away: SubCulture, on Bleecker at Lafayette. **SubCulture is dedicated to the listening experience**, and the music you can hear there, while often close in style to LPR, seems deeper and more serious. It's a space where the configuration means everything to the experience: there's a bar, but they don't serve while the music is playing, and the seats are arranged in traditional terraced rows (there are seats perpendicular to the stage too), each with a cup holder for your beer or cocktail. **Rather than the music accompanying your drinking, you drink while focused on the music.**

The sound is superior too, rarely requiring amplification, and **SubCulture appears to be the new favorite home for the New York Philharmonic's CONTACT! new music series, and also hosts chamber music concerts for 92Y.** Regular programs cover jazz, pop, folk, and comedy. Typical of the weight and adventure of the music you can find at SubCulture was a concert in March, with Van Cliburn 3rd Prize Winner Sean Chen joining jazz pianist Dan Tepfer in an extraordinary joint exploration of how composition and improvisation go hand-in-hand: Chen played each of Chopin's *Impromptus*, Tepfer responded with his own improvisation on each. Subliminally, it was a clear argument for how improvisation is at the core of classical music, and musically **it was a unique and dazzling experience.**

THE NEW YORKER



Goings On About Town - Classical Music

[SUBCULTURE: CHRISTOPH DENOTH](#)

September 4 2014

Manhattan's new underground venue goes from strength to strength with an ambitious array of concert projects for the fall season. It begins quietly with a recital by the esteemed Swiss guitar virtuoso, offering a slate of classic works by English composers (a suite of Dowland pieces and Britten's haunting "Nocturnal") and Hispanic ones (compositions by Falla, Turina, Albéniz, and Villa-Lobos). (45 Bleecker St. subculturenewyork.com. Sept. 4 at 7:30.)



CLASSICALITE

[SubCulture's Inaugural Composer-In-Residence Program Debuts September 16 with Pianist Gregg Kallor](#)

Sep 10, 2014 04:48 PM EDT | **Ian Holubiak**

A downtown hotspot that we most recently featured (care of Jonatha Brooke), SubCulture takes a great leap into the unknown with its newest Composer-in-Residence program. Their inaugural composer: pianist Gregg Kallor.

The two-year residency will hopefully evolve the local watering hole from a presenter of artists to "a cultivator of new music."

Kallor is a worthy first contender to take the SubCulture stage. His musical fusion of classical and jazz traditions develop "a personal language" with his audience. A conceptualist, perhaps, of the future of music, Kallor should be a historic first to kick off the new program.

The performances will take place in three installations so far.

The New York Times



Events

[Classical Music/Opera Listings for Sept. 12-18](#)

Published: SEPT. 11, 2014

PianoFest (Saturday, Monday and Tuesday) New York's latest subterranean performing arts space, **SubCulture**, continues to work hard to put itself on the map as an important player in the classical music scene. It hosts this genre-hopping festival of piano music, opening with the much-lauded pianist Weiyin Chen, joined by soloists from the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, on Saturday. Monday features the Lysander Piano Trio; Tuesday, the composer-pianist Gregg Kallor. At 7:30 p.m., SubCulture: Arts Underground, 45 Bleecker Street, near Lafayette Street, East Village, 212-533-5470, subculturenewyork.com; Saturday and Monday, \$20; Tuesday, \$25. (da Fonseca-Wollheim)

THE NEW YORKER



Goings On About Town - Classical Music

[SUBCULTURE PIANOFEST: WEIYIN CHEN](#)

September 13 2014

The vital new underground venue continues its ambitious programming with a fall keyboard festival. Sept. 13 at 7:30: Camerata RCO, a chamber group comprised of members of Amsterdam's magnificent Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, joins the young Taiwanese piano virtuoso Weiyin Chen for an intermissionless evening of music by Mozart (including the Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major) and Mendelssohn.

The New York Times



Events

[Classical Music/Opera Listings for Sept. 19-25](#)

Published: SEPT. 18, 2014

Inon Barnatan (Tuesday) The two-week PianoFest at **SubCulture, the inviting and intimate basement performance space on Blecker Street**, runs through Sept. 27 and presents artists of wide-ranging styles and approaches to the piano. Classical music fans should be particularly tempted by this brilliant, probing Israeli-born pianist's recital on Tuesday, with works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Franck, Matthias Pintscher and, to conclude, Barber's teeming, rhapsodic Piano Sonata, Op. 26, a work introduced by Vladimir Horowitz. It's first-come first-served seating. At 8 p.m., SubCulture, 45 Blecker Street, near Lafayette Street, East Village, 212-533-5470, subculturenewyork.com; \$25 in advance, or \$30 at the door. (Tommasini)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



Fall Forward: Insiders' Picks for the Arts & Entertainment Season

From 'St. Matthew Passion' to the Passion of 'Scandal,' What 35 New Yorkers Recommend You See, Read and Hear This Autumn

September 19, 2014

Inon Barnatan

Inon Barnatan is the New York Philharmonic's first artist-in-association, a new program spotlighting emerging artists. He makes his debut with the orchestra in March.

I think SubCulture is a really cool and fantastic addition to New York. It has this downtown/uptown blend, where you have a downtown club feel but still have concentration and focus. Between now and Sept. 27 they have "PianoFest." I like the variety—that classical and jazz and folk are equally likely to have an evening there.

A very good friend of mine, Adam Haslett, is also one of my favorite authors and has a new book coming out. His perceptiveness of human nature is just amazing to me. I think the most powerful thing you can have in a book is to read something that has always been in your head, and suddenly you find it written down.

The New York Times



[Stylistically Diverse, but United by One Soul](#)

Contact! Series Opens With John Adams's Choices

By ANTHONY TOMMASINI

Published: NOV. 18, 2014

For the composer John Adams, hosting the New York Philharmonic's Contact! program at SubCulture in the East Village on Monday night must have felt like getting back to basics in contemporary music. Two days earlier, the Metropolitan Opera had presented the final performance of Mr. Adams's opera "The Death of Klinghoffer," which at the start of its run drew hundreds of protesters angry over this ruminative work's attempt to grapple with a brutal terrorist act. The last performance played to a sold-out house; Mr. Adams and the cast received a prolonged ovation.

On Monday, though, Mr. Adams had the happy task of presenting five works by four composers he had selected for the opening concert in this season's Contact! series. This was the first of three Contact! programs presented by the Philharmonic and the 92nd Street Y at **SubCulture, the appealingly intimate basement performance space.** (The two others in the series will be at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

Speaking to the audience on Monday, Mr. Adams said he was "horrified" to see a photograph of himself in the program book. This evening "is not at all about me," he emphasized.

Yet, in a way it was, since he had put together this program of stylistically diverse and fascinating works. Three of the composers — the Americans Timo Andres and Missy Mazzoli and the Icelander Daniel Bjarnason — are in their mid-30s or younger. At 72, the American composer Ingram Marshall was the "éminence grise" of the evening, Mr. Adams said, adding that, unfortunately, Mr. Marshall was ill and unable to attend.

The program opened with Mr. Bjarnason's "Bow to String," a 2009 work originally written for solo cello with multilayered electronic elements. The version played here, by members of the Philharmonic with a few guest artists, is for solo cello and nine instrumentalists. The first movement is pulsing, thick and frenetic, with aggressive, Bartok-like chords, given extra punch by a thumping piano. The second movement is like a fractured, jittery dance, at once cosmic and sensual. In the slow, subdued final movement, the elegiac solo cello is comforted by hazy, plush, pungent chords.

“Mahler would be envious,” Mr. Adams said. Nathan Vickery was the formidable cello soloist; the impressive ensemble was conducted by the dynamic Jayce Ogren.

Mr. Marshall’s “Muddy Waters” (2004) uses a tune from the Bay Psalm Book of 1692, which is put through extraordinary transfigurations during this atmospheric, involving work, scored imaginatively for cello, bass, electric guitar, bass clarinet, marimba and piano.

Ms. Mazzoli wrote “Dissolve, O My Heart” as a solo work for the violinist Jennifer Koh, part of Ms. Koh’s Bach & Beyond project, in which she asks composers to write pieces that spin off in some way from Bach. This one begins with the “iconic opening chord,” as Ms. Mazzoli said, of Bach’s stunning Chaconne in D minor for solo violin, then ventures impetuously into excursions of runs, riffs and teeming outbursts. Ms. Mazzoli explained that her intriguing concept here was to suggest a piece that “keeps trying to become a chaconne” but “keeps failing.” It was played brilliantly by Anna Rabinova.

There was another work by Mr. Bjarnason, “Five Possibilities” for clarinet (Pascual Martínez Forteza), cello (Patrick Jee) and piano (Eric Huebner), a quirky suite of short, epigrammatic movements in various moods.

The program ended with an intensely dramatic account of Mr. Andres’s compact, densely packed “Early to Rise,” a string quartet of four sections integrated into one episodic movement. Mr. Andres uses a five-note motif from a Schumann piano piece as a “seed,” as he said, “hardly anything,” yet “just enough” to suggest all manner of things that can be done with it.

Afterward, as is the tradition at SubCulture, the artists and the audience mingled over drinks and snacks by the space’s inviting bar.



[Drillinger Does: Beer and Beethoven at SubCulture NYC](#)

By Meagan Drillinger

January 26, 2015

Chances are when you think “epic Saturday night,” you are not thinking Beethoven. I don’t know you, but I’m just guessing.

My relationship with classical music is strained at best. After 10 years of playing the bass in public school orchestra — and that time(s) I fell asleep at the Metropolitan Opera — my parents finally gave up hope that I would be the next Lorin Maazel. I’m not opposed to catching a Philharmonic performance; you could even find some choice classical music on my iPod. But usually, you can find me at Williamsburg Music Hall or at some secret location in a random Brooklyn neighborhood with a weird European DJ. If you want me to attend a classical performance, it has to be something cool. Enter SubCulture (already we’re off to a good start with a name like that).

Tired and hungover from the previous night’s 4 a.m. antics out in Bed Stuy, dragging myself from Astoria to the East Village to be intimately involved with Beethoven was losing out to sweatpants, Seamless, and Tinder. But with the promise that this venue was something unlike anything I had ever experienced, I decided to suck it up.

SubCulture lives on Bleeker and Lafayette underneath the Lynn Redgrave Theater. This East Village performance space, open since 2013, **is all about musical immersion and taking the performance experience to the next level.** The underground listening room (underground in style, but also literally under the ground) is a far cry from the stuffy, velvet-and-gold trimmed music halls that we are supposed to revere. **Industrial-chic is more what they go for at SubCulture, with slate, wood, exposed brick, steel pipes and bare bulbs.** The brick-and-steel bar (yes, a bar!) is backlit with a rotating neon color scheme. **It’s like Avery Fisher got drunk at a loft in Bushwick.**

SubCulture isn’t just about classical music. The programming has partnerships with the New York Philharmonic, but also hosts jazz series, folk, pop artists like Andrew WK, Mary Lambert, and

Stephen Kellogg, and lately, has been dipping into the comedy sphere with top names like Aziz Ansari, Chelsea Peretti, and Rory Scovel.

Tonight's program was a midnight performance of Beethoven's "Opus 132 in A Minor," played by The Ariel Quartet. This group of young musicians was formed in Israel 16 years ago when its members were young students, and they have been performing together ever since. Toting around a large satchel of accolades, including the Cleveland Quartet Award, the group is the faculty quartet-in-residence at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music. They also have learned under the hand of Itzhak Perlman, who, for those classical neophytes out there, is the Michael Jordan of the violin.

The seats were arranged in an intimate circle, putting the musicians directly in the middle of the audience. The members of the quartet took their seats and put bows to strings. What followed was a swell of mellifluous, intense, and **sweet sound that flooded over the small room, bouncing off the brick walls and straight into the core of the audience.** This wasn't the posh, impersonal space of Alice Tully Hall, where the connection with the music is overwhelmingly high-brow and inaccessible to people inexperienced with the classical style (**the fact that you could basically reach out and touch a violin certainly added to the intimacy of the experience**). Unlike the Metropolitan Opera, where get lost in a sea of nearly 4,000 audience members, you feel like you are having a private performance in a room that seats 150 (it's a lot harder to fall asleep in that scenario). **But what was so rich about the evening was sitting face-to-face with the musicians, watching their expressions as they looked like they were having love affairs with the notes on the page and the instruments in their hands.**

As the movements shifted from one to the next over the following 45 minute-performance, I glanced around the room at my fellow audience members. There was the typical Philharmonic patron, with a *New York Times* tucked under his tweed, but there was also a significant amount of beanie-headed youths with plaid shirts and ironic eyewear. From one to the next each had his or her eyes closed in rhythmic meditation.

The final movement ended to a standing ovation among Brooklyn bohemians, hipsters, and the erudite alike. Casual comments flew back and forth amongst them in between applause. The musicians grabbed their instruments and walked off through the crowd to pour themselves a pint. The audience then broke to the back bar to mingle with the musicians and each other — a meeting of ages, styles, and tastes that could find a moment on a Saturday after midnight to immerse themselves in Beethoven and beer.

The New York Times



[Review: Ariel Quartet's Beethoven Cycle at SubCulture, With Energy to Spare](#)

By DAVID ALLEN

Published: APRIL 15, 2015

If the aristocratic salons of the late 18th and early 19th centuries have any equivalent today, it might be a place like SubCulture. At this little NoHo basement space, which has fast established itself as a major music presenter, there's a tangible, deserved sense of pride. Why? "The Cycle."

If that billing sounds portentous, it's not. Offering one program per month this season, the talented young Ariel Quartet has embarked on all 16 of Beethoven's string quartets plus the "Grosse Fuge." It's the group's second season playing with the whole set, and SubCulture's first endeavor on this scale since its opening in 2013. On Tuesday evening I caught the seventh of eight concerts, which featured two quartets in F major, the first of both the Opus 18 and 59 batches.

Whether of symphonies, piano sonatas or these quartets, Beethoven cycles have become numbingly common, domesticating a composer whose music always longs to be radical. But the members of the Ariel — Gershon Gerchikov, Alexandra Kazovsky, Jan Grüning and Amit Even-Tov — have rebooted the idea: **sitting in a full circle, dressing casually, performing in the round and at touching distance, all to bring Beethoven to life once more.**

A little too alive, on this occasion. Certainly the group never stinted on Beethoven's showiness in the opening movement of the Opus 18 quartet, and they found unsettling, pugnacious rage in the finale of the one from Opus 59, its Russian theme written in honor of Count Razumovsky, the czar's ambassador to Vienna. Physicality was the name of the game, and the quartet never seemed happier than when darting forward as a group, attacking an accent together or swaying back to underline the full breadth of the slow movements.

The problem is that at such close quarters every misstep is magnified. Unruly intonation and square phrasing undercut moments of elegance a little too often. In my earlier visits to SubCulture I'd never thought the acoustics too challenging, but with the quartet's bright tone and playing that rarely moved from the mezzo-forte-to-forte level, they sounded too constrained for proper appreciation. Perhaps it was just my seat — plenty in the capacity crowd hollered with joy.



Jason Robert Brown at Home at SubCulture

By Ruthie Fierberg | Posted April 15, 2015

Jason Robert Brown first played SubCulture in the summer of 2014, only because the usual spots were booked. **But once he played the NoHo arts venue, he never wanted to leave.** “I thought, This is a place that I would like to have as a home,” said Brown. His wish was granted. Today, Brown is SubCulture’s 2015 artist-in-residence.

“There’s always a mysterious alchemy at work when you find a venue you connect with,” Brown said. Unlike most other music clubs, **SubCulture features concert-style seating, not tables; a walkup bar; no minimums; a bigger stage; and “an insanely good sound system, a fantastic piano,”** according to Brown. “There’s very little that room can’t do.” As lovers of the arts, brothers and co-founders Marc and Steven Kaplan created a multigenre space that they would want to frequent. **An experience there is a highly curated exercise in listening and musical immersion.**

Knowing the sensitivity Brown brings to his work, **it makes sense that he would connect with this space, which capitalizes on intimacy, musicality, and a tangible dynamic between audience and performer.** “They care about the music,” said Brown. “They care about what’s going to make the artist feel like they have the freedom to make the music they want to make. That’s rare.”

Freedom is exactly what SubCulture wants its artists, particularly its artist-in-residence, to enjoy. “We want Jason to feel like he has the flexibility to do what it is he wants and that we support his creative desires to thrive in this room,” said Marc Kaplan. It’s clear that this partnership hinges on mutual respect and trust.

This leeway yielded the concept for Brown’s April 20 show: a night of dueling pianos between Brown and longtime friend, composer Tom Kitt (“If/Then”). **Collaborations like these have solidified SubCulture as a player in the theater community,** adding to the mix of 54 Below, Joe’s Pub, and others. The night promises to be something no audience has ever seen.

To date, Brown has performed with artists from his past, including Norbert Leo Butz, but also uses this residency to connect with people with whom he’s always wanted to work but hasn’t had the chance. “The idea that I’m going to explore all these musical collaborations, that’s really what I’m in it for,” Brown said.

“Every month I’ve got some ideas about what I want to do and how I want to do it, but part of the collaboration is with the room itself and with the audience that shows up,” he continued. “Any number of things could happen, which is really thrilling.”

For those who think they’ve got JRB’s number, this residency elicits new dimensions of the artist. “You’re getting to see him legitimately grow as an artist before your eyes, and you’re not in a large room so you can feel it changing,” said Kaplan. “You’re experiencing who he is in addition to his music. I think that’s incredibly special.”

THE NEW YORKER



[Listen to Dom La Nena](#)

BY SARAH LARSON

APRIL 16, 2015

Dominique Pinto, a twenty-five-year-old cellist and singer, goes by the name Dom La Nena, or Dom the Little Girl. It's a nickname she got when she was a young prodigy surrounded by older people. As a child, she moved from Brazil to France and back again; at thirteen she moved to Buenos Aires to study cello, without her parents. Her cello-focussed pop music is influenced by the styles of those places, and by a certain wistfulness. She's compared her songs to lullabies and to sambas; she sings them in Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English, in a style that's both whispery and self-assured. The melodies stay with you, and the mood is transporting. I first heard her music a few months ago, and am often in the mood to listen to her latest album, "Soyo," which is even warmer and lovelier than her début, "Ela," from 2013. "Soyo" 's appealing first track, "La Nena Soy Yo," a jaunty and sweet vocals-and-ukulele declaration of self, has been my mind's theme music for weeks. Like much of her music, it sounds bashful and confident at the same time. I was eager to see Pinto in concert, and a couple of weeks ago I went to see her play at SubCulture, downtown.

SubCulture, the two-year-old venue that's the latest of several efforts to encourage people to spend time in the basement of 45 Bleecker Street, **is the most impressive incarnation I've seen there yet**—a sort of (Le) Poisson Rouge East, with a bar and chairs on several levels, in a space **that feels reasonably inviting, capacious, and intimate**. The show was sold out. Pinto came onstage alone, smiling a little. She has dark hair and dark eyes and a thoughtful, amused expression. She wore a silky gold dress. She played the breathy "Era Una Vez." Like many other contemporary singer-songwriters—Merrill Garbus, for example—Pinto makes copious and inventive use of a looping pedal. With it, she can become a one-woman band, setting up a beat or a tune and then alternating between instruments. She played her cello and looped it. "Thank you!" she said at the end of the next song, "Llegaré." "How are you? I'm super happy to be here—it's my first show in the U.S." (She meant this tour's first show here—she's played in the U.S. before.) The crowd, swooning a little, clapped and said, "Aw!"

On "Ela," she played the cello while tapping out percussion with her foot. Then she asked if there were any Argentinians in the room. A few people whooped. "The next song is called 'Buenos Aires.' Are you from there?" she asked. The song was in Spanish, she said; the past few had been in

Portuguese. “They’re different languages,” she said, a bit slyly. People laughed. I was intrigued by this: she was teasing the Americans a bit. She played a small keyboard on her lap, making an accordion sound. “Buenos Aires,” from “Ela,” is a gorgeous song, and the way she says “Buenos Aires,” to my American ears, is also gorgeous. After a while, she began conducting the audience, encouraging us to sing along. She waved her arms broadly to make us loud—“Bue-nos Ai-res”—and then brought them in smaller, to quiet us down. When she made tiny conducting motions with her fingers, we sang very softly. “Poco de Buenos Aires,” she said.

On the next song, “Vivo Na Mare,” she knocked on her cello, looped that rhythm, and bopped her head, plucked her cello, picked up a mallet, hit a drum next to her, looped that. Then she played cello with all of them going. On “Lisboa,” she played a shimmery little phrase with her bow, looped that, and sang. Her voice was tender, singing about lagrimas. She was like a very deft magician, and every song sounded sacred.

“So now that you’ve sung, you’re going to dance,” Pinto said. Dance? Here? Among all these chairs? With whatever the cabaret laws are now? “I hope you dance. Is there any Brazilians here?” she asked.

A few yelled, “Yeah!”

“Some of them samba?”

“No!”

“Next is the story of Sambinha, who doesn’t know how to dance, it’s a tragedy,” she said. “We’re going to do, how do you say, a game? A dance prize? I just played in Quebec. They were good. Tomorrow I’m going to play in Boston. You don’t want me to say ‘I played in New York, they weren’t good.’” She plucked her cello’s strings and began to sing “Sambinha.” People clapped and got up and danced: an unexpected transformation of a sit-down concert into a lovely party, an atmosphere of movement and warmth. There was some close partner dancing, the cuddle-up kind; some game twirling; some shambolic samba. The whole room came alive. It was like the joyous final scene of “Dirty Dancing,” except that Baby was alone, plucking a cello. When it ended, Pinto descended the stairs into the audience and handed out the prize—a CD—to an excited young couple.

She played a song on the ukulele, singing in French and strolling up the aisle, and people settled down. “We’re going to do Spanish next,” she said, and began to strum the melody to “La Nena Soy Yo.” People began to clap along. She stopped playing and smiled kindly, guiding us again. “You can do two fingers!” she said, showing us how to clap quietly. People laughed and clapped her way. She danced a bit as she sang. “La Nena soy yo,” she began. If she had an anthem, I figured, this was it. I almost wanted her to save it till the end, so we could walk out singing. It’s a song that feels both buoyant and teasing—there’s almost a singsong quality to the chorus, whose lyrics include “Don’t try

to shut me up, no no.” She encouraged us to sing along. We sat there singing “La Nena soy yo” over and over: we were all her, and she was commanding us, and we were delighted.

She sang a quiet, sweet song, “Juste une Chanson.” She sounds natural in French, Portuguese, Spanish, and English, perhaps because her approach to all music sounds so kind and openhearted. She looped her vocals, the beat, while playing cello; she stood up and shook a percussion instrument, looping everything else. Her relationship to all of these sounds, and the transitions between them, feels as natural as her switching between languages.

Toward the end of the show, she said, “Thank you so much to have come. I only have three friends in New York. Thank you so much for being here and not just be here with my friends.” She said that she’d do her last song in English. “Do you make Carnival in New York?” No, we said. “It’s a song to tell you how it’s Carnival.”

“Carnaval” is lovely and melancholy. It has people coming for Carnival, including “kings and queens in cloaks of blue,” as in a fairy tale or a fable, and lyrics like “Glad eyes shine when sorrow fades.” She put her cello down and looped it; she picked up a tambourine and drummed it with her fingertips. It sounded like a heartbeat. Her cello, looping, still played. She stood, tapping, turned, singing, “Ya ya ya,” and walked to the wings. A stagehand opened the door and she walked out.

The crowd leapt to its feet, cheering. Pinto returned to center stage, half skipping. She clutched her heart and bowed. After an encore, she turned her second standing ovation into another sing-along: our two-finger clap to a rhythm she taught us, her ukulele, everyone singing in Portuguese. “Bom-bom-bom,” she sang, dancing in a circle. This song turned into “La Nena Soy Yo,” which we all sang as she came into the audience, strumming and singing among us. She walked to the middle of the room, up the stairs, off to the left of the room, and out the door. We were all singing that we were La Nena after she was gone.

THE NEW YORKER



Goings On About Town - Classical Music

[SUBCULTURE: GREGG KALLOR](#)

April 28 2015

Within months of setting down roots, the inviting downtown music club appointed its inaugural composer-in-residence: Kallor, an admired young composer-pianist whose straddling of the classical-jazz divide **reflects SubCulture's open-minded philosophy.** In an event marking the sesquicentennial of Yeats's birth, Kallor will be joined by the mezzo-soprano Adriana Zabala and the baritone Matthew Worth in a concert featuring recent settings of poems by Yeats and Dickinson, in addition to a world première. (45 Bleecker St. subculturenewyork.com. April 28 at 7:30.)

The New York Times



[Review: New York Philharmonic's Contact! Series, With New Compositions From Italy](#)

By CORINNA da FONSECA-WOLLHEIM

Published: MAY 12, 2015

Location, location, location.

Logistically, it might have been easiest for the New York Philharmonic to use one of the smaller spaces at Lincoln Center for its Contact! series of contemporary chamber music. Instead, it has divided the series between performances at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and, as on Monday in a program devoted to new music from Italy, at SubCulture in the East Village. This basement space, with its subdued lighting, a bar serving cocktails and seats outfitted with cup holders, exudes an air of unforced cool that the Philharmonic should continue to cultivate — especially when it meshes so well with the fearless and poised playing of its musicians.

The program was devised and introduced by Vittorio Montalti, an Italian composer who, at 30, is young enough to be the grandson of the great 20th-century composer Luciano Berio. He opened with Berio's "Différences" for viola, cello, flute, clarinet, harp and tape, a work whose blend of live acoustic instruments and recorded sounds was brand-new at its premiere in 1959, even as it harked back, as Mr. Montalti suggested, to the baroque form of the concerto grosso.

The conductor Joshua Gersen led a shapely performance notable for the warmth of the acoustic sound and the dramatic, sometimes humorous way in which the live instruments interacted with the taped components, rendered with luscious clarity by SubCulture's excellent sound system.

The cellist Maria Kitsopoulos and the percussionist Daniel Druckman gave a compelling performance of Mr. Montalti's "Passacaglia" for marimba and cello. Built on a sequence of four high squeals of the cello, the piece borrows a certain head-on energy from rock music, with both players pushing to transcend the limitations of a rigidly repetitive structure. The cello also struggles to transcend its own cello-ness with extended techniques producing sounds that are breathy and furry; at one point Ms. Kitsopoulos bowed the instrument's backside while Mr. Druckman played the resonant tubes underneath the marimba's keys.

Extended technique and special effects are the trademark of Salvatore Sciarrino, who builds them, in Mr. Montalti's words, into "a theater of sound." The violist Dawn Hannay, the flutist Yoobin Son and the bassoonist Kim Laskowski joined forces for a profoundly expressive reading of "Tre Duetti con L'eco" ("Three Duets With Echo"). The attention is turned inward in these quiet and intimate miniatures. In fact, the resulting sounds — inhalations amplified through the flute, the crunchy pressure of bow on viola string — seem to hint at the private lives of the instruments themselves and the extreme energy fluctuations they live through.

The sense of sound as a living organism was especially strong in Luca Francesconi's "Encore Da Capo" for flute, clarinet, vibraphone, piano and cello. There is a fresh fluency to the writing here, which sets it apart from the other more self-consciously sculpted pieces on the program. The musicians imbued it with a strong sense of pulse and deeply hued colors, bringing exuberance to the agitated passages and serenity to its moments of stillness.

The final concert in the Contact! series will be on June 5 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; 212-875-5656, nyphil.org.

The New York Times



[Reviews: Chelsea Music Festival, Gregg Kallor and St. Petersburg Philharmonic](#)

By JAMES R. OESTREICH, VIVIEN SCHWEITZER and CORINNA da FONSECA-WOLLHEIM

Published: JUNE 14, 2015

With its unstuffy, contemporary vibe and serious focus on quality live music, SubCulture in the East Village is a welcome recent addition to the classical scene. The pianist and composer Gregg Kallor seems a natural choice as its inaugural composer in residence. At home in both jazz and classical forms, he writes music of unaffected emotional directness. Leavened with flashes of oddball humor, his works succeed in drawing in the listener — not as consumer or worshipful celebrant, but in a spirit of easygoing camaraderie.

On Thursday, Mr. Kallor shared the stage with the violinist Miranda Cuckson and the cellist Joshua Roman in a program of chamber music that showed a strong vocal quality in Mr. Kallor's writing for strings. In "Short Stories" for violin and piano and "Undercurrent" for cello and piano, Mr. Kallor was at his most assured in the lyrical passages that combined a suave melodic line with a hint of subcutaneous sadness. These moments brought out the rich sweetness of Mr. Roman's effortlessly expressive tone. Ms. Cuckson, a fiercely virtuosic new-music specialist with a lean, slightly tart sound, appeared most comfortable in the fast and rhythmic passages.

Mr. Roman revealed a playful zest for exploration in his own composition, "Riding Light," for solo cello, a propulsive work that mined the full technical range of the instrument with only the briefest echoes of Bach.

The three musicians came together for Mr. Kallor's "An Unbelievably True Story," a suite of five movements, which for all their melodic pleasantness and rhythmic spritz, left only a fleeting impression.