

Your weekly guide to Houston: a *Salon of Beauty*, iron works at HCCC and the Heights Orchestra debut



BY JOEL LUKS

09.29.11 | 02:01 pm

Maybe it's because I'm a sucker for alliteration, but I have yet to miss a [River Oaks Chamber Orchestra](#) Beer and Brass musical bash at [Saint Arnold Brewing Company](#). This year's pairing did not disappoint, mixing lovely company, the trotting sounds of a French horn trio and quite the spread of delightful consumables by [La Villette](#).

Also that evening, young professionals convened at [Indika](#) in support of [Camp For All](#), which offers facilities and programs for those with challenging illnesses and conditions. Aside from the fusion restaurant's exotic food selections, it's nearly impossible to say no to a Kama Sutra. The drink, silly. With notes of passion fruit, cranberry and black salt, also known as Kaia Namak, I opted for several trysts with the cocktail.

The music scene was in full force over the weekend with Houston Chamber Choir, Musiq, Ars Lyrica, Da Camera and Opera in the Heights all presenting their respective 2011-12 season kick-off concerts. It's official; no rest for the weary music-lover.

Where will we be off to this week? With the help of my colleagues, here's the skinny. Don't live vicariously through us, though. Come out and play.

River Oaks Chamber Orchestra Chamber Series: ROCCO String Quartet at the University of St. Thomas

This concert christens a three-part series presented by the [River Oaks Chamber Orchestra](#) in collaboration with the University of St. Thomas, also part of a larger initiative to infuse the campus with professional arts groups. Given the intent to build a new performing arts complex within the university's grounds, it's a timely way to get started early.

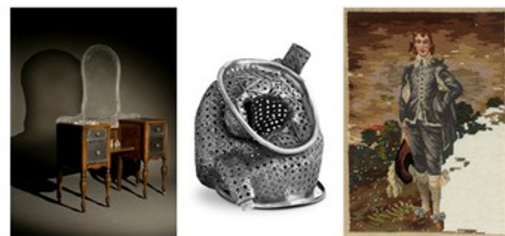
There is no better suited classical music troupe to begin such a journey than ROCCO. The musicians have a sixth sense that enables them to scrap the imaginary fourth wall between listeners and performers. Violinists CeCe Weinkauff and Kirsten Yon, violist and group leader Suzanne LeFevre and cellist Richard Belcher (talk to him, his accent is dreamy, but hands off, he's engaged) will perform Haydn's *String Quartet No. 81*, a movement of Elena Ruehr's *String Quartet No. 1*, Shostakovich's *String Quartet No. 11* and Erwin Schulhoff's *Five pieces for String Quartet*.



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view slideshow



Rendering by Gabriel Craig



Also at HCCC are domestic vignettes that explore connections between furniture, wall paper, ceramics, quilts, needlepoint, glass and metal.

Opening Reception for *Beyond Useful & Beautiful: Rethinking Domestic Craft* and *Soundforge* at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

In *Beyond Useful & Beautiful: Rethinking Domestic Craft*, the [Houston Center for Contemporary Craft](#) (HCCC) turns its focus on the intersection of beauty and the everyday. Vignettes have been set up in the large gallery that explore the connections between furniture, wall paper, ceramics, quilts, needlepoint, glass and metal.

Soundforge is an exhibition you can play with, literally. Gabriel Craig and Michael Remson collaborated for years to create the colossal iron work, resembling metal gates that function similarly to a xylophone. A case of science meets art meets music, participants are encouraged to pick up a mallet and try their hand at creating sounds. [Friday at 5:30 p.m.](#)

If you can't enough of HCCC, return on Saturday for the 10th Anniversary "Hands-On Family Festival."

Pink Ribbons Project's "Pink Pigeons" at Westside Sporting Grounds

Pink has never been so Rambo. Though I have never held a gun, nor shot or killed anything bigger than an insect, I am intrigued by the prospect of doing so while raising money and awareness about breast cancer.

In the first of what could possibly become a yearly tradition, this clay shooting event allows teams of five a chance to try their aim in clay pigeon shooting. [Friday at 9 a.m.](#)

Houston Heights Orchestra Opening Concert and Mixer at Divergence Music and Arts at Spring Street Studios

The Heights is getting a dose of class with the new addition of an orchestra made up of young professionals, music students and amateurs from its own community. Make no mistake, this is not your typical community orchestra. It has been structured by baton master [Jaemi Blair Loeb](#) to be an all-inclusive neighborhood group aimed at creating fun, lovely experiences for audiences and players alike.

The program includes Beethoven's *Coriolanus Overture*, Mozart's *Symphony No. 35 "Haffner"* and chamber selections by Wind Sync, the Apollo Chamber Players and members of the orchestra.

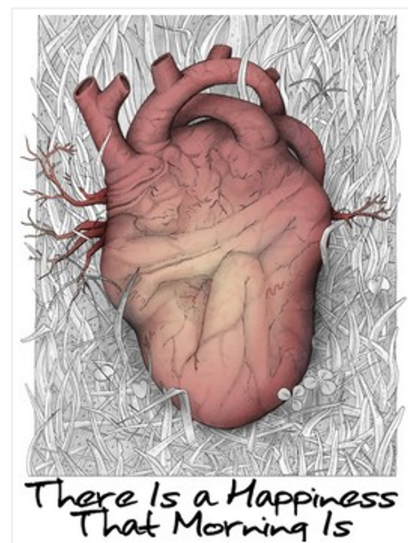
In true Heights style, expect a cheerful and slightly quirky reception post-concert. [Friday at 7:30 p.m.](#)

Through the Lens: The Early Days of the Rothko Chapel as Seen by Francois de Menil

The Rothko Chapel is a structure that carries significance for so many people and holds a vital role in Houston's academic, interfaith and artistic discourse. Entering its walls is often accompanied by a feeling of all-inclusive reverence, followed by strong desire to "let go."



Courtesy of Enso String Quartet



Nancy Wozny's pick is a "joy fest for word wonks."

This event chronicles the early days of the chapel through a film completed in 1972 and recently digitized by Francois de Menil (son of John and Dominique de Menil) and Jerry Michaels. It captures three religious ceremonies, conversations about the Mark Rothko panels and rare footage of the 1971 dedication.

A screening will take place outside in the plaza followed by a Q&A and reception with the filmmakers. [Saturday at 7 p.m.](#)

Arts contributor and Houston explorer Whitney Radley's pick: Opening of Ana Serrano's *Salon of Beauty*

[Whitney](#) says: "Los Angeles artist Ana Serrano's work is the stuff that my dreams are made of: Intricate miniature buildings. Detailed dioramas. City clusters reminiscent of a more vibrant São Paulo favela, a more precarious Cinque Terre. Her *Salon of Beauty* installation opens at [Rice Gallery this Thursday](#), and I'd love to see her work first-hand."

Assistant editor and nightlife expert Caroline Gallay's pick: Alamo Drafthouse Cinema Rolling Roadshow Screenings of *Animal House* at Market Square Park

[Caroline](#) says: "I'm one to pounce on any excuse to wear a toga, anyway, and it's a welcome convenience to have my favorite cinema come to me, for once!" [Friday at 8 p.m.](#)

Lifestyle contributor and CultureMap's resident cool guy Tyler Rudick's pick: Annual Artist Exhibition at Winter and Spring Street Studios

[Tyler](#) says: "I'd like to check out this weekend's [Annual Artist Exhibition at Winter and Spring Street Studios](#), featuring more than 100 artists working in a range of mediums. Together, these two massive studios boast the largest group of fine artists in the city — all housed in two amazing warehouse spaces that in themselves are worth the visit, just to get a nice dose of historic Houston. The Saturday reception from 5-9 p.m. even offers a complimentary bar and snacks. Free admission and parking all weekend."

Arts contributor, Dancehunter and all-around beer gal Nancy Wozny's pick: Catastrophic Theatre's *There Is a Happiness That Morning Is*

[Nancy](#) says: "Nobody knows their way around a Mickle Maher play like the folks at The Catastrophic Theatre, who currently have Maher's dream play, *There Is a Happiness That Morning Is*, [running through Oct. 23](#) in their nifty office space across from The Menil. Maher sets the action in a pair of Blake scholars' classroom the morning after they have sex out in the great lawn of their dingy liberal arts college. Hilarity, poetry and poignancy ensues. Directed by Jason Nodler and starring Catastrophic veterans Troy Schulze, Amy Bruce and Kyle Sturdivant, the play is just a feast for your ears and heart, a not-to-be-missed joy fest for word wonks, Blake lovers, and anyone that loves the way a good rhyme rolls off your tongue."