

DATEBOOK

LEAH GARCHIK

Sometimes a soul is a fixer-upper, too



Contractor **Stephen Byrne** says that when an architect with whom he was working postponed a client meeting because he was attending a “shamanic healing seminar,” “the client hardly raised an eyebrow.” To Byrne, however, “it felt like an ‘only in San Francisco’ moment.”

P.S.: “San Francisco isn’t a city,” e-mails **Will Durst**, who’ll be at the Marsh over the weekend. “It’s a pageant. A 49-square-mile circus in search of a tent. The birthplace of competitive yoga.”

» Meyer Sound, which did the **Ai Weiwei** sound installation — words of political prisoners in individual cells — on Alcatraz, and **Kary Schulman** of San Francisco Grants for the Arts invited leaders in the Bay Area arts community to see and hear the installation last week. The group included **Rozie Kennedy** of the Contemporary Music Players, choreographers **Brenda Way** and **Margaret Jenkins**, Berkeley Rep’s **Susie Medak**, Cal Shakes’ **Jon Moscone** and husband **Darryl Carbonaro**, **Julie Phelps** from CounterPulse, **Adam Fong** from the Center for New Music, **David Mayeri** (who is working on refurbishing the UC Theatre in

Berkeley), City Arts & Lectures’ **Sydney Goldstein**, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts’ **Deborah Cullinan**, Red Poppy Art House founder **Todd Thomas Brown**, **Janet Cowperthwaite** and **Laird Rodet** of the Kronos Quartet, **Terri Winston** from the Women’s Audio Mission, the San Francisco Arts Commission’s **Rebekah Krell** and **Perrin Meyer**, who created the audio in the cells. The group was led by **Marnie Burke de Guzman** of FOR-SITE.

And at the end of the tour — because what else goes with political prisoners and human rights? — coffee and Kara’s Cupcakes were served.

» In other news of inspiring visions, **Julie Freestone** says that during the weeks before election day, “Richmond was ringed with billboards paid for by Chevron.” Their candidates lost big. And now, she writes, “a strange billboard” has replaced one on 23rd Street: Smokey Bear, saying, “Only you can prevent forest fires.”

It’s odd, she writes, because it’s on a treeless urban street. Is this an all-purpose public service announcement?

» Thursday night’s activities started at SFJazz, where we went to hear **Henry**

Butler, Steven Bernstein and the Hot 9 in a New Orleans-oriented show. Butler is a broad-backed man, and when he sat down at the piano, I could hear the magic of his music but couldn’t see his fingers flying, striding, slamming, tiptoeing, romping across the keyboard.

I was mesmerized by his left leg and foot, which were giving their own performance, as though he were dancing (tap-dancing in some instances) at the keyboard. In the audience, fans’ heads were bobbing along with the beat.

It was a soul-satisfying show, led by maestro Bernstein, a New York brass man who was brought up here, and who, at one point, paused for the tiniest moment to pay homage to his trumpet teacher, **Johnny Coppola**. “If Johnny is out there, I love you,” said Bernstein. And Johnny *was*, looking very pleased.

» From there, we went on to Foreign Cinema, where Modernism gallerist **Martin Muller** was hosting a dinner party for **Diane von Furstenberg**, whose new books are “The Woman I Wanted to Be” and “Journey of a Dress.” Muller is obliquely related to the designer — through a string of parental exes — and his affection for her was plain. DVF sat at dinner between **Alyse Nelson**, head of Vital Voices, a global nonprofit supported by von Furstenberg, which encourages

women in leadership positions; and biologist **Anne Wojcicki**, co-founder of 23andMe, which enables genetic testing.

The party was also to celebrate Modernism’s 35th anniversary, and with typical generosity, the guest list included a breadth of well-wishers: feminists, fashionistas and tech entrepreneurs, as well as the gallerists’ pals and stalwarts of the San Francisco

social scene. And the Valrhona dark chocolate cake was so irresistible that, damn-the-calories, just about everyone polished off a slice.

A sprig of mistletoe misery for the holidays:

“Every year,” says a message sponsored by Milk-Bone, “countless dogs in the Bay Area head to the vet after Thanksgiving” be-

cause of “left-out leftovers. Many dogs get sick not from being fed directly but because they climb up on the table and eat huge quantities of food.”

(It’s discussed less often, but this is true for humans, too.)

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JON CARROLL appears Tuesday through Friday on this page

PUBLIC EAVESDROPPING

“Charles Manson is getting married. I can’t even get a date.”

Man to man, overheard at La Mediterranee in the Castro by Stewart Ingram