

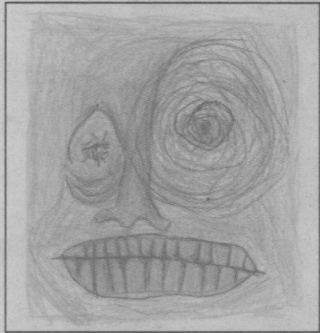
THE RIVERTOWNS Enterprise

The Hometown Newspaper
of Hastings-on-Hudson,
Dobbs Ferry, Ardsley
and Irvington

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 41 • JANUARY 6, 2017

75 CENTS

Inside



Migraine Book

*Painful affliction leads to
pictorial memoir*

— PAGE 10



Asymptote

*Chou melds East and West
into mathematical harmony*

— PAGE 11



RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE FILE PHOTO

The Hilton Garden Inn under construction in November at Rivertowns Square in Dobbs Ferry.

Governor sanctions 'bed tax' for Greenburgh

By Kris DiLorenzo

REGION — State Assemblyman Tom Abi-

January of 2012, but since there was no Senate sponsor, the bill didn't reach the governor's desk. In 2013, Sen. Andrea

houses, Abinanti and other Hudson Valley lawmakers restated their case.

Abinanti told the Enterprise on Dec. 29

Chou melds East and West into mathematical harmony

By Julian Caldwell

Jazz, pop, classical, and traditional Chinese music and texts collide on the new solo album from Stephanie Chou, a 29-year-old singer, saxophonist, and composer raised in Irvington. A lover of math, Chou named the 11-song album “Asymptote,” which in geometry describes two curves that get infinitely close to each other but never meet.

The title track is a love song and metaphor for human relationships, written by Chou. On the album as a whole, Chou’s Chinese background and American upbringing meet for a unique blend executed by Chou and seven other musicians, with Chou singing in English and Chinese.

“For this album, I explored my heritage, my roots, by combining traditional Chinese music in a jazz setting,” Chou explained. Her father, James, is Chinese-American; her mother, Emily, is Chinese-Taiwanese. “I thought about all my early memories — Chinese tongue-twisters, traditional melodies, and recordings of guzheng pieces that my mother used to play for me — things that were so ingrained in my mind as a young kid that I’ve never forgotten them.”

A guzheng is a traditional Chinese plucked string instrument. While there is no guzheng played on Chou’s album, on four songs musician Andy Lin uses the erhu, which is a two-string bowed instrument sometimes referred to as the “Chinese fiddle.” Piano, bass, drums, percussion, guitar, synthesizers, vibraphone, and saxophone also appear on the album as Chou builds her own compositions around elements of Chi-

nese tradition, including lyrics from Chinese poems and other texts.

“Growing up in Irvington, where I was one of few Chinese people in the community at the time, I was of course exposed to lots of American culture. I always felt very American,” said Chou, who attended Irvington schools from kindergarten through ninth grade. Chou picked up the saxophone as a fourth-grader, and played throughout middle and high school — in band, wind ensemble, jazz combo, and musical productions. After she graduated from the Horace Mann School in Riverdale in 2005, she studied Chinese at Columbia University and spent a summer living in Beijing.

“This entire album was a way for me to interact more with my Chinese roots, which have always been a big part of my life,” she continued. “The whole point was to blend those existing works with my own musical ideas, to modernize them with a new perspective.”

“Eating Grapes” is a fast, rhythmic song based on a popular Mandarin tongue-twister. As only drums and percussion provide the music, Chou varies her cadence as she swiftly repeats the phrase “Ch pútáo, t pútáo pí/ Bù ch pútáo, bù t pútáo pí,” which translates to “If you eat grapes you spit out the peels/If you don’t eat grapes, you don’t spit out the peels.”

The following song on the album, “In the Moon (You’ll See My Heart),” is sung in English and features elements of a modern American pop song, though it’s translated from a Mandarin

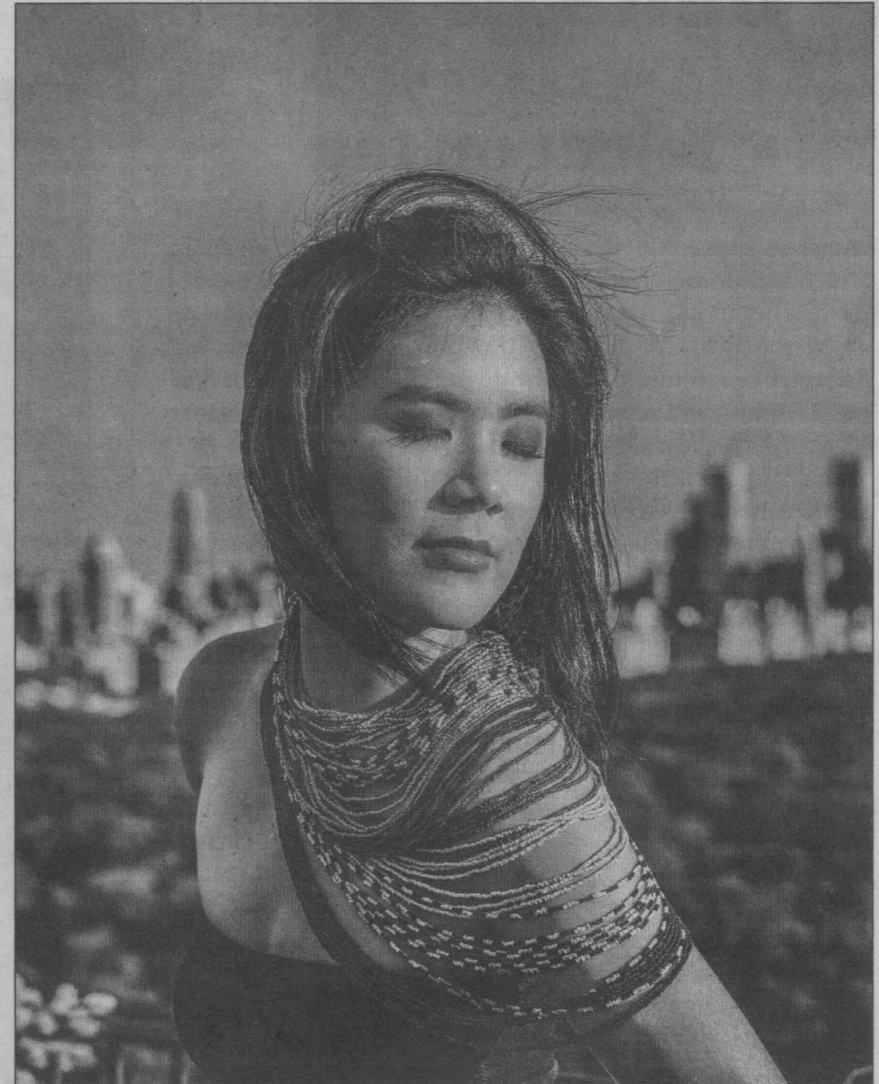


PHOTO BY EMRA ISLEK

Stephanie Chou performs at Joe’s Pub in Manhattan on Jan. 14.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

**New York City’s Top
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Winter is around
the corner



Breakfast

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

dents Elizabeth Galletta and Karen Sokol, and adult volunteers Mary McDonald, Elizabeth Gabay, Anna Pearson, Lori Walsh, Jeanne Newman, and Jeff Edelman. Village staffers include director of youth services JoAnn Reed, youth advocate Donald Waterous, and Youth Employment Service coordinator Jill Iturbe.

“The Council’s mission follows in line with Dr. King’s belief that ‘Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?’” Galletta and Sokol wrote in a statement to the Enterprise. “It is the Hastings Youth Council’s mission to care individually for each and every child and each and every family in our village.”

A high point of each year’s breakfast is

the announcement of essay contest winners from each of the district’s three schools. Top winners receive a \$100 gift card; runners-up receive \$50. Elementary students were asked to write about the theme “What does Martin Luther King mean to me?” Middle and high school students’ essays answer the question “What would Dr. King think about race relations in America today?”

That question will also be the theme of the event’s keynote speaker, Westchester County Legislator Kenneth W. Jenkins (D-Yonkers). According to Jerry Sternberg, Jenkins will talk about the progress that has been made and will discuss “what he feels are some of the remedies for the future.” Jenkins, an outspoken critic of the administration of County Executive Rob Astorino, a Republican, has announced his intention to run against Astorino in the 2017 election.

Doors to the community breakfast open at 9:15 a.m. Jerry Sternberg explained that all guests will be asked to pay for their tickets at the door, in cash or via a check made out to cash. But those who contact the Sternbergs (call 914-231-5286 or e-mail geraldjer@optonline.net) or another member of the event’s committee by Jan. 11 for advance reservations will get a discount at the door. Tickets for adults are \$12 with reservations, \$18 without. Children with advance reservations are \$10, \$12 without reservations. Children under 5 attend free.

Members of the event’s committee are Sue Smith, Herbert Brown, Shigadi Bekelu, Genevieve Spruill, Steve Frankel, Tara Werner, Marilyn Gutman, Elizabeth Hemingway, and Alex Cornwell, plus eighth-graders Joshua Thigpen and Seamus Pugh, who were among last year’s essay contest winners.

Chou

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

song written by Sun Yi in the early 1970s and made even more popular by singer Teresa Teng in 1979. The translated lyrics and updated music set Chou’s version apart.

Chou, who now lives in Manhattan, began writing the music for the album in 2012 and workshopped ideas while performing in clubs throughout New York City. Her first recording session with the band happened in 2013 and the album was completed in 2015 before being released a year later.

“From the steps involved in composition, revision, playing with the band, recording in the studio, editing, mixing, mastering, I learned so much about music and myself — it helped me grow in ways nothing else could have,” she said.

“Asymptote” builds on the concept of Chou’s debut album, “Prime Knot,” another reference to a mathematical term, which was released at the beginning of 2011.

“While this album continues the theme of blending Chinese music with American jazz, ‘Asymptote’ is more musically ambitious than ‘Prime Knot,’ and features more vocals, a wider variety of songs, and actually, less traditional jazz,” Chou said. “It was fairly challenging for me, because I hadn’t done a project like this before, but I did receive a lot of help from many trusted resources and amazing musicians, producers, and industry professionals along the way. It was definitely a team effort.”

Since completing “Asymptote” a year ago, Chou released a duo album with singer and guitarist Octavia Romano in February, featuring folk songs and originals in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Portuguese. Throughout her career she’s also written music for ballet and theater, with one of her pieces commissioned and choreographed by Susan Jaffe, a former principal ballerina with American Ballet Theater.

Putting together her own albums with Chou with a more freeing



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MLK JR. DAY - Monday, January 16

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MLK JR. DAY - Monday, January 16 Public Skating Schedule

Friday, January 13

9:30am-11:30am, 11:40am-1:20pm, 1:30pm-4:30pm,
7:30pm-10pm

Sat & Sun, January 14 & 15

1:30pm-4:00pm

Monday, January 16 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

9:30am-11:30am, 1:30pm-4:50pm



Hockey Clinic

Mite/Squirt 11:40am-1:10pm Cost \$70

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3:00pm-4:30pm Cost \$75 For skaters of all ages and abilities

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Putting together her own albums provides Chou with a more freeing creative experience than composing for the stage.

"Making my own album is harder in many ways, at least for me," Chou said. "When writing for theater or ballet, there is a specific task to be completed, and the music supplements the dance or theater, so it takes more of a background role. The music provides support to the story, which already suggests certain musical things to occur and things to write. When making your own album, you have a blank slate, you can do anything."

Chou is celebrating the release of "Asymptote" with a concert next Saturday, Jan. 14, at the notable Manhattan venue Joe's Pub, located in The Public Theater on Astor Place. It's an opportunity to see Chou and her band bring to life a body of work that exemplifies her mission.

"My goal is to create global music that is artistically challenging, bold, and fearless, and which presents a unique musical perspective," she said. "For those listeners who have some background in Chinese culture and know some of the references, I hope they feel the songs provide a fresh perspective on something they are already familiar with. For listeners for whom the source material is completely new, I hope the music provides an interesting gateway into Chinese culture."

"Asymptote" is available on iTunes; CDs are available at stephaniechoumusic.com. For tickets to Joe's Pub on Jan. 14, visit the "Shows" section of her website.