



Julia Louis-Dreyfus talks taking on politics in her new show, 'Veep.' Page 27

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E-mails to [pgenovese@starledger.com](mailto:pgenovese@starledger.com).

Letters: Address them to Munchmobile, The Star-Ledger, 1 Star-Ledger Plaza, Newark, N.J. 07102.

General questions? Call the Munchmobile Hotline at (973) 392-1765.

As far as the Munch 2012 season, watch out! There will be new and tasty categories; if you have a category or restaurant suggestion, don't hesitate to e-mail or call.

To get you in the right mood, follow @NJ\_Munchmobile on Twitter, as Pete Genovese lists his top picks in a different food category every day. Feel free to chime in with your own!

— Peter Genovese

## NEW YORK STAGE REVIEW



KEN HOWARD

Daphne Rubin-Vega plays Stella and Blair Underwood is her brutish husband, Stanley, in the latest revival of "A Streetcar Named Desire" on Broadway.

# 'Streetcar' disappoints

Well-known cast fails to summon the spirit of Tennessee Williams

By Robert Feldberg  
THE RECORD

In the multiracial "A Streetcar Named Desire" that opened last night at the Broadhurst Theatre, the impact of seeing such iconic characters as Blanche Du Bois and Stanley Kowalski played by actors of color drifts away surprisingly quickly.

As with the Broadway revival of Williams' "Cat On a Hot Tin Roof" several seasons back that was cast with African-Americans, you almost instantly home in on the characters as individuals. Race takes a back seat to drama.

On that basis, the revival of the 1947 "Streetcar" — set, for

### A Streetcar Named Desire

**Where:** The Broadhurst Theatre, 235 W. 44th St., New York  
**When:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7 p.m., Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.; matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.  
**How much:** \$49.50 to \$131.30. Call (212) 239-6200 or [telecharge.com](http://telecharge.com).

some reason, in 1952 — is a disappointment, undone by several one-note characterizations.

TV and film actress Nicole Ari Parker, who plays Blanche, seems to

put more effort into maintaining a deep-Southern accent than in delving into the woman's complexities.

Having left the debt-ridden family plantation in Laurel, Miss., for New Orleans' raffish French Quarter, where she joins her sister Stella and brother-in-law Stanley in their squalid apartment, Blanche suffers culture shock.

She's already built a shield of gentility and propriety to protect her from reality — especially her own sexual transgressions — but her effort to carry the fanciful notions to her new environment crashes against Stanley's rough, crude clear-sightedness.

Blanche is complicated, and her

combination of ego, flirtatiousness, romanticism, delicacy and blind self-delusion are a challenge for any actress.

Parker, a tall, very attractive woman, mainly, and oddly, suggests sturdiness. Her Blanche comes across as an entitled interloper who intrudes herself into her sister's brutal-but-passionate marriage.

There's little poignancy in the performance. When, at the end, Blanche goes crackers, it seems to come out of nowhere, rather than being the inevitable result of a long slide.

Blair Underwood, another performer from films and TV — and normally a sensitive actor — overdoes Stanley's machoness

SEE 'STREETCAR,' PAGE 23

# Yardbird continues to soar — and is headed for Jersey

By Mark Voger

STAR-LEDGER STAFF

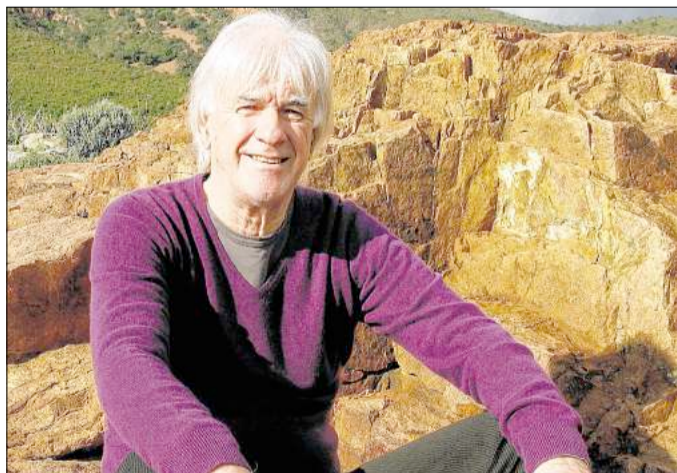
This Rock and Roll Hall of Famer's place is assured: He played on five Top 20 hits and was in a band with Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck.

But Jim McCarty — drummer for '60s British rockers the Yardbirds — is merely grateful that the ride isn't over.

"Without trying to blow my head up big, it's like a fine wine that's maturing the whole time," McCarty says of his long career, in a call from France.

Liverpool native McCarty, 68 — whose latest album is "Sitting on the Top of Time" (Troubadour) — is set to perform Sunday in Lakewood, where he'll be joined by former Strawbs keyboardist John Hawken. (McCarty and Hawken were in the earliest lineup of Renaissance.)

The Yardbirds were part of



"I suppose musicians like me are becoming rarer and rarer," says Jim McCarty, a founding member of the Yardbirds. Photo right: McCarty, at far right, with the Yardbirds in the groovy '60s.

the musical movement known as the British Invasion, which introduced the Beatles, the Rolling Stones et al. to American audiences in the mid-1960s. Back in England, the first Yardbirds lineup — which

included Clapton — took over the Stones' residency at the legendary Crawdaddy Club in Richmond, once the Stones' success lured them away.

"It was very exciting," McCarty recalls. "We wondered



how it would be, following the Stones, but we went down a storm straightaway. It was a mad club. Everyone went mad. They used to swing on the rafters and jump around."

A pivotal moment for the

Yardbirds came when the band played on the bill at the Beatles' Christmas shows in 1964 in London. Songwriter Graham Goldman (later a founding member of 10cc)

handed the Yardbirds a demo

of a song that would become the band's breakthrough hit: "For Your Love." McCarty says the Yardbirds' recording was faithful to Goldman's demo.

He recalls: "It was played on a 12-string (guitar); it had a time change in the middle; I believe the demo had bongos, too. It was (Yardbirds bassist) Paul Samwell-Smith's idea to use the harpsichord with the bass. Paul took the role of musical director."

"For Your Love" went to No. 6 in 1965, and the Yardbirds were bound for America. McCarty is asked if the Yardbirds, like the Beatles, had to fight off screaming girls in the States.

"Originally, we did," he says with a laugh. "But we weren't really interested in that side of it. We really enjoyed the music more than anything else. But when the British

SEE MCCARTY, PAGE 23

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RUTGERS



KEN HOWARD

Nicole Ari Parker's Blanche clashes with Blair Underwood in the new multiracial production of "Streetcar," directed by Emily Mann.

'Streetcar'

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to the point of excluding any other qualities.

He certainly gets our attention, as the raging Stanley threatens to explode in almost every scene. We need, though, to see other aspects of his personality to understand him more fully as a man.

Daphne Rubin-Vega ("Rent"), too, gives a perhaps too-passionate portrayal of Stella.

As the "normal" one, trying to satisfy the needs of both husband and sister, while keeping them apart, Stella usually provides a necessary cool spot in the play. I'm not sure that another heated character is needed.

(There's also a great height disparity between the tiny Rubin-Vega and Parker — even in head heels, Rubin-Vega is a head shorter — which, at least visually,

makes it difficult to accept that they're sisters.)

In some ways, the most satisfying performance comes from Wood Harris (of TV's "The Wire") in a sweet portrayal of the gentlemanly Mitch, Stanley's buddy, who woos her deceitfully.

Director Emily Mann's production emphasizes the interracial nature of the French Quarter, with residents of different colors living together in harmony. It's interesting, but makes little dramatic difference.

More telling about the revival is the way that Blanche's famous lines land. You anticipate the effect of "I don't want realism. I want magic!" and, at the end, "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."

But what happens is ... nothing. In this production, they come across as just words, more layoffs in a frustrating evening.

ON JAZZ Tim Wilkins

Musicians rally behind ailing Clark Terry

More than 50 jazz stars — including saxophonists Jimmy Heath and Lou Donaldson, and bassist Ron Carter — will perform at St. Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Ave., New York, tonight at 7, to raise money to help trumpeter Clark Terry recover from major surgery. At 91, Terry sits at the apex of musical achievement: An NEA Jazz Master and Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, he is a veteran of the Basie, Ellington and "Tonight Show" bands, and has played on more than 900 albums. The evening will be hosted by saxophonist David Demsey, who runs the jazz studies program at William Paterson University in Wayne. Other luminaries who will play include Mulgrew Miller, Paquito D'Rivera and Conrad Herwig. \$25 suggested donation; visit clarkterry.com.



CLARK TERRY

of Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson and other early piano masters. He will be joined by the equally virtuosic Meral Guneyman, who has staked her claim in classical music by winning prizes for playing Chopin and Schumann with top orchestras, at the Stockton Performing Arts Center, 101 Vera King Farris Drive, Gallopway, tonight at 7:30. The two will play works by Gershwin and Ellington. \$10 to \$20; visit stockton.edu.

Hyman and Guneyman

Dick Hyman has an encyclopedic knowledge of jazz styles and is one of the few contemporary pianists who fully grasps the achievements

of us, but particularly for Jeff. Because he was a very highly strung person. He had a very nervous disposition — a brilliant player, but going along with that, he'd be very particular about his sound, about what amps he wanted. And if didn't get them, he'd sort of freak out. So he was very, very keyed up most of the time. Of course, we were traveling the whole time. We were already tired, playing night after night."

After Beck's departure, the dissolution of the Yardbirds happened incrementally, according to McCarty.

"It was slow," he says. "We went through all of the relentless working on the road, because, basically, that was where we earned all of the money in those days. There were no royalties coming in

Innanen and Ehlis

Saxophonist Mikko Innanen picked up his horn at age 10 in Poutiainen, Finland, and hasn't put it down since. He first played along with records by pianist Thelonious Monk and quickly developed his own sound, which, like Monk's, combines a deep sense of swing with a taste for exploration: He was voted Finland's best jazz musician in 2008.

He plays at Trumpets, 6 Depot Square, Montclair, Sunday at 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., with the similarly expansive John Ehlis Ensemble. The group's relaxed tone draws colors from world music, which should offer an excellent backdrop for Innanen's solos. \$10 with a \$5 minimum; visit trumpetsjazz.com.

Wrembel in Woodbridge

Paris-born guitarist Stephane Wrembel is known to Woody Allen fans for writing the theme to the 2011 film "Midnight in Paris," but long before that, he was learning to play in the style of gypsy jazz pioneer Django Reinhardt around Romany campfires in Reinhardt's hometown of Fontainebleau, France. Wrembel, 38, is one of a group of young

jazz musicians, such as the members of the Hot Club of Detroit, who have rediscovered Reinhardt's legacy and are breathing new life into the genre. He performs at the Baron Arts Center, 582 Rahway Ave., Woodbridge, Thursday at 7:30 p.m. \$22 to \$25; visit woodbridgeartsnj.org.

R.I.P., George Mesterhazy

George Mesterhazy died in his sleep on April 13, at the age of 59. The Hungarian-born pianist immigrated to the United States in the 1950s and settled with his family in Somers Point, where he fell in love with jazz and was a driving force of the local jazz scene for decades. He played dozens of clubs and casinos in Atlantic City before becoming singer Shirley Horn's musical director until her death in 2005. He then accompanied other top singers and often performed at the Merion Inn in Cape May, which he ran with his girlfriend, Vicki Watson. Donations in his memory can be made to Animal Outreach of Cape May County, aocmc.org.

Tim Wilkins: jazz@starledger.com. Wilkins is digital content manager for jazz radio station WBGO-FM.

McCarty

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Invasion — the so-called British Invasion — started, when we came over, we'd get lots of girls hanging around outside of the hotel. I guess it wasn't quite as bad as the Beatles or the Stones."

Pop stardom didn't sit well with Clapton, who quit the band to join John Mayall's Bluesbreakers before forming the superblues trio Cream. It was the first in a succession of shake-ups: Clapton recommended future Led Zeppelin guitarist Page as his replacement; Page declined the offer, but recommended Beck; Beck accepted; Page joined the next year anyway; Beck was fired.

"It was very difficult with Jeff," McCarty recalls of the period. "It was difficult for

Jim McCarty with special guest John Hawken

Sunday: 7 p.m. at the Strand Center for the Arts, 400 Clifton Ave., Lakewood. \$25; call (732) 730-5925 or visit strand.org.

May 2: 8 and 10 p.m. at the Iridium Jazz Club, 650 Broadway, New York. \$27 or \$50; call (212) 582-2121 or visit theiridium.com.

Jimmy Page was relatively new to the band — he was quite fresh. And he was in touch with fresh, energetic musicians, like Robert Plant and John Bonham."

Page led the Yardbirds to form Led Zeppelin in Plant and Bonham. The Yardbirds fizzled, but the music never went away. McCarty is performing as a solo artist in Lakewood, and he still tours with a latter-day lineup of the Yardbirds.

"I suppose musicians like me are becoming rarer and rarer," McCarty says. "People are dying out there; people are disappearing. The fact that I can still play on the road is nice for me — and the fact that people are encouraging me to do it."

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