

**BEST**▼ CONT INUED  
FROM 15

from the car to the stage. He was so pleased with the club, and McBride, that Ansari returned a week and a half later for 10 more soldout shows in three days, including five in one night. McBride opened for all of them.

## Bridge Street Theatre

During its first full year of presenting events, Bridge Street Theatre in Catskill in 2015 offered area audiences unusual and extraordinary productions. Run by the married couple John Sowle and Steven Patterson, who have been artistic collaborators for more than 30 years, Bridge Street both brought in outside shows and mounted original productions of its own in the theater, still under development in a former factory and warehouse on West Bridge Street.

In May, Florida-based actress and writer Roxanne Fay appeared in "Home Fires Burning," a pair of monologues she also wrote. Relatively brief in length, at less than an hour combined, the monologues were expansive in emotional terrain and lasting effects. The world Fay created was at once the quickest of snapshots, akin to an image seared into the brain after a glimpse from the car during a drive through backwoods Appalachia, and as richly detailed as a novel.

A month later, Patterson, directed by Sowle, starred in his own one-man adaptation of "The Epic of Gilgamesh," which predates Homer's "Iliad" by a millennium. Told over the course of tens of thousands of words and nearly two hours, during which the Patterson portrayed about 20 characters, the story was truly epic in its sweep, its adventure and its wisdom.



Paul Buckowski / Times Union

The pair upped their ambition further in October, when they presented a rare revival of "Grinder's Stand," a play by Oakley Hall III that premiered in 1979 Lexington Conservatory Theatre, a summer company deep in the Catskills that was the forerunner to Capital Repertory Theatre in Albany. Patterson had worked with Hall in Lexington, and the production was both a labor of love for an old friend, who died a few years ago, and a demonstration of the power of an unjustly neglected play. Rich in emotion and language, "Grinder's Stand" tells a close-focus personal story set against the sweep of history as it recounts a version of the final weeks in the life of explorer Meriwether Lewis, who died mysteriously in 1809. Eloquent and intellectually engaging

in its iambic pentameter, the verse play was a pleasure to listen to, but it also brimmed with big ideas as well as the human toll they sometimes take.

— Steve Barnes



## MUSIC POPULAR



### JD McPherson @ the Hangar, Aug. 31

JD McPherson sounds like the bastard child of Little Richard and Buddy Holly, with a splash of Sun Records-era Elvis on the side. His throwback, but not anachronistic, rockabilly sound turned the Hangar into a '50s-style dance hall rave-up this past August. He had



Samantha Franklin

the sold-out crowd bopping to the rockin' "Fire Bug" and the punky "Everybody's Talking 'Bout the All-American." The tender ballad "Precious" showed off his soulful croon. A closing set of the Sonics' "Have Love Will Travel" and his own "Scandalous" were raucous and ended the evening to riotous applause. The show was loud, sweaty and fun. The bumper stickers he sold at the show read, "I Like JD." After a performance like his, anyone would.

### Brandi Carlile and Anderson East at the Palace Theatre, Albany, May 23

From start-to-finish, Brandi Carlile and Anderson East's performance at the Palace was incredible. Carlile and her band's three-part harmonies were beautiful,



Provided by the artist

culminating in a powerful a capella performance of "Beginning to feel the Years," conducted sans amplification. Her band was tight, her vocals soared and there was never a dull moment during her 100-minute performance. Opening act Anderson East was a revelation. He wowed the audience with his 40-minute set of old school soul of the Stax and Muscle Shoals variety. The Solomon Burke-esque "Only You," searing ballad "Keep the Fire Burning" and potent "Satisfy Me" won him hundreds of fans and he sold out of his "Delilah" EP soon after his set ended. Carlile was great, but East alone made this show worth it.

### George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic at Upstate Concert Hall, Nov 28.

I've been a fan of Clinton and P-Funk for half my life, but I had trepidations before this show due to Clinton's past excesses. It turns out that didn't matter, and Clinton and his band of funkateers threw down a three-hour, career-spanning show that was delightously fun. Clinton's voice sounds better than it has in years, and his sense of mischief and love of music is intact. He cajoled the audience with scatological raps and funny dances; he got down to lead guitarist Blackbyrd McKnight's nasty fretwork and sweet sax solos from Greg Thomas. The classic tunes were spot-on, the new numbers were tight, and Clinton was at the center of it all, acting like a kid in a candy shop. What a great time.

— James Shahan



Provided by the artist



## MUSIC CLASSICAL



### "Requiem Reimagined" Albany Symphony Orchestra, Albany Pro Musica at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, March 21-22

Sleeping Giant, a collective of six composers, took Mozart's Requiem and rethought it from start to finish. Most of the best parts remained intact, but other sections were rearranged or stripped down or even cast aside. New material got slipped in here and there, but more often was boldly inserted. Heightening the experience was the contribution of a stage director and a video artist. The result was surprisingly reverent and thought-provoking. With the continual flow of ASO premieres, audiences have become a bit blasé about the