

# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

## Jazzing it Up on Alberta



The Harlem Quartet brings a new attitude to classical music with a varied repertoire that includes works by minority composers. The group performs Thursday, April 14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Alberta Rose Theater in northeast Portland.

Friends of Chamber Music present the "Harlem Quartet," a New York-based ensemble dedicated to advance diversity in classical music by engaging young audiences through a repertoire that includes works by minority composers. Named for the Harlem Renaissance, the quartet was founded in 2006 by the Sphinx Organization.

The group will perform the program "Jazzing it Up" on Thursday, April 14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Alberta Rose Theatre, 3000 N.E. Alberta St. All seating is \$40 general admission, half-price reserved student tickets, \$5 student rush and \$5 Arts for All tickets, subject to availability. Call 503- 503-764-4131 or visit fcm.org.

## Slate of Documentaries

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found he had struck gold with this performer. This inspired film will get a theatrical release in late May--expect a longer review from me then. In the meantime, follow the film on its website (magpictures.com/presentingprincessshaw/) and on Facebook.

3. "Weiner" is a surprisingly illuminating window into the political career of former New York Congressman Anthony Weiner, who famously resigned his House seat after an embarrassing "sexting" scandal in 2011, and made a bid for mayor of New York City in 2013. One of the film's directors, Josh Kriegman, served as Weiner's congressional chief of staff before becoming a filmmaker, and the film benefits both from his perspective on Weiner--much more nuanced than the feeding frenzy around his stupidest mistakes--and also from the more distanced perspective of his co-director, Elyse Steinberg. They began filming their documentary when Weiner launched his mayoral bid and were along for the ride when new revelations about Weiner's former behavior restarted the media frenzy and derailed what had been a promising return to politics. What emerges is a very insightful portrait of a smart politician with good ideas that may well threaten those at the top of the power structure, whose failings bring out the worst in everyone else. If only the media were as relentless in investigating leaders who lie to Congress about the basis for war as they are about investigating salacious and stupid behavior like Weiner's. He certainly suffers from the kind of hubris and narcissistic tendencies common to politicians, but actually also seems more self-aware and willing to own up to his mistakes. In the end, it seemed to me that this film, without ever directly saying it, reveals more about what is wrong with American politics and the media--including how much we love to have someone to judge--than it does about Weiner's well-documented failings. It won the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance and will have a limited theatrical release beginning in May.

4. "Sherpa" focuses on the experience of the Himalayan locals who for decades have jeopardized their lives in order to literally power the ambitions of wealthy adventure junkies from mostly Western countries who are intent on summiting Mount Everest. These guides glean a relatively small slice of the economic benefit but assume as much as 30 times more risk than the tourists they assist, who scarcely notice the effort that goes into bringing them creature comforts and transporting all their equipment to the various camps along the route. In 2014, a major avalanche which cost the lives of 16 Sherpas brought these dynamics to a head in surprising ways, and the way the Nepalese government and Westerner climbers and expedition heads responded to the concerns raised by the devastated community of Sherpas as a result is shocking and very telling. The perspective of this marginalized community turns out to be both a literally and metaphorically important window into the many ways in which privilege affects perception. It has won documentary film awards in Australia and will, I hope get a limited U.S. theatrical release, given the critical acclaim that it has justly garnered. Follow it on its website (sherpa-film.com) and on Facebook.

5. "Kiki" won a Full Frame Human Rights award, and was my favorite of the films in competition that we saw. It sheds a long-overdue spotlight onto a particular New York underground expression of ballroom, a flamboyant performance-based art form that has long been popular and life-sustaining among LGBTQ people of color. The Kiki balls offer a safe and empowered space for LGBTQ youth of color to enact modes of gender expression that often have not been safe for them to express elsewhere, and the Kiki community provides a haven for a particularly vulnerable youth population disproportionately susceptible to homelessness, violence, and HIV. The film offers windows into the scene and especially into the stories of seven people--their hopes, their struggles, and the beauty they each express on the runway and in the world. It's not an art form that I know well, and a lot of the joy of the film comes with the opportunity to appreciate the courage and tenacity it takes for these young people to find a form of expression that feels authentically theirs. Hearing their stories is important and enriching, and motivated me to continue to shake loose of the ways in which norms of gender conformity blind me and all of us from seeing and appreciating real beauty in the world. Hopefully the

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