Urban Beat for Poetry Festival

By VELICIA B. LEE

Count Philip Roth, Allen Ginsberg and Amiri Baraka among the sons of Newark, a place more often associated with urban woes than with distinguished wordsmiths. But from Thursday through Sunday, the backdrop for Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival will be the dynamic, Newark arts district, the first urban setting for this celebration, the largest poetry event in North America. That choice for the 13th annual festival was not a coincidence — the hope helped also be the recent $100 million pledged to Newark schools by the Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg — that the city is on an upward trajectory, both in the idea that poetry can flow in the"urban veins of the streets as well as from more sedate settings."

"We are on the cusp of a new day in Newark," said Dodge Poetry Festival executive director Linda Goldman, the president and chief executive officer of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the festival’s main stage. The city “is essentially the second London of New Jersey” he added, as evidenced by galvanized cultural institutions like Newark Symphony Hall and the Newark Museum, as well as new art galleries and restaurants and the showy $375 million, three-year-old Slovenian Palace Congress building for sports and entertainment events.

In the 21st century, poetry belongs in the complexity, density and energy of an urban setting,” Mr. Goldman contended.

Cory A. Booker, the second
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Singing Her Way to Victory

Ceslie McMorris, Salvant, right, won the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocal Competition, held in Washington. A critic's note by Ben Ratliff, Page 2.

A Film Without Words

Bill Plympton's "Idiots and Angels" depicts an animated dystopia with grunts and grumbles, but no dialogue. Review, Page 12.

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arm mayor of Newark, said the time was right for "endotrunk" Newark, which he described as "a place that we haven't taken the time to experience.” Now "the poetry festival creates this dynamic stage, so to speak," Mr. Booker said, showing off the new Newark series and initiatives. "We've got the big Mo, as they say in sports — the momentum.

The truth of that statement will be painfully evident by an expected audience of about 20,000 poetry lovers at the festival, which is held every two years. They will interact with dozens of the most celebrated poets in the world, appearing in a lineup that this year includes Billy Collins, Ron Padgett, Kiki Ryun, Ryan Strand, Mark Strand, Mr. Baraka, Martin Espada, Sharon Olds and Genevieve K把握。The streets will be transformed into a "poet village" of readings, discussions and performances at the performing arts center, as well as at the Newark Museum, the New Jersey Historical Society and several nearby cultural institutions. At various points during the festival, events will be held simultaneously on 10 stages.

In downtown Newark, a trolley to restaurants and consult a guide to art and cultural attractions; distance; Newark residents are eligible for special $10 festival tickets for daytime events on Saturday. (The usual price for Saturday events is $20.) On Thursday afternoon, 1,000 Newark high school and middle school students have been invited to "Poets on Poetry" at Newark Symphony Hall, a chance to hear readings and discussion by Tara Betts, Jericho Brown and Michael Cirelli.

On Saturday and Sunday, the previous festivals, an initiative of the Gertrude Stein Foundation, have been held in the decidedly bucolic setting of Watercolor Villas in the city’s west side. The downtown state park not only reached its capacity of poets have praised the shift to Newark.

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poet laureate, agreed that Newark was a metaphor for where poetry is now. "Poetry itself in a postcard view, and the public, which reflects major changes in poetry over the past 50 years. "Dodge Poetry Foundation had more prosaic reasons for the "Poets of Newark," saying that a drop of one-third in the foundation’s endowment and in the annual production of poems and poetry-related events, the officials said in 2009 that they could not sustain a festival of the same scope, size, said, "the time was right for "endotrunk" Newark, which he described as "a place that we haven't taken the time to experience.” Now "the poetry festival creates this dynamic stage, so to speak," Mr. Booker said, showing off the new Newark series and initiatives. "We've got the big Mo, as they say in sports — the momentum.

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