



ARTS | WESTCHESTER

# A Couple's Offerings of Film, Theater and Music

By SUSAN HODARA  
Published: April 30, 2011

ARMONK, N.Y.

[Enlarge This Image](#)



Courtesy of Evan Ferrante

**FEATURED** Adrian Grenier in a scene from "Across the Hall," one of the eight short films to be screened during the Small Town Film Festival.

## Related

Times Topics: [Westchester Arts](#) | [Westchester Arts Listings](#)

BY day, he's a chemical engineer and she's a college preparation counselor. But on nights and weekends, Sam Morell and Donna Garr, who have homes in Armonk and Katonah, take on quite different roles. They become producers, directors, actors, lighting and sound technicians, videographers, publicists and sometimes brownie bakers for [Small Town Theater](#)

[Company](#), the Armonk-based performing arts organization the couple founded in 2008.

Over the past few years, Small Town Theater has harnessed the talents of professional and amateur performers from the region to present theatrical plays and readings, outdoor summer concerts, a variety showcase and a theater festival. Its next event, on May 6 and 7, is the Small Town Film Festival, featuring two full-length independent films and eight shorts.

Among the festival highlights are "[The Cake Eaters](#)," the 2007 feature directorial debut for the actress [Mary Stuart Masterson](#), starring [Kristen Stewart](#) and an ensemble cast that includes Bruce Dern and [Melissa Leo](#), and the 25-minute "Across the Hall," with the "Entourage" actor [Adrian Grenier](#).

Following the last film each evening, some of those involved in creating the films will participate in a panel discussion; they include Evan Ferrante, the producer of "Across the Hall;" Alex Merkin, the director; and Jayce Bartok, who wrote and played the supporting

- [RECOMMEND](#)
- [TWITTER](#)
- [SIGN IN TO E-MAIL](#)
- [PRINT](#)
- [REPRINTS](#)
- [SHARE](#)



Log in to see what are sharing on ny [Privacy Policy](#) | [W](#)

## What's Popu

[To the Limit](#)

Ads by Google

[Newest Film I](#)  
See This Inspirir  
Jacobs!  
[www.terri-movie.c](#)

[The New Goo](#)  
Gingerbread is t  
Yet!  
[www.google.com/](#)

[Acting and M](#)  
Live Your Drea  
Exposure!  
[www.iGotTalentN](#)

[50% Off Theat](#)  
Half-Price Ticke  
Shows!  
[www.goldstar.co](#)

[Home Theater](#)  
Highest perform  
dealers.  
[www.quietrock.co](#)

MOST E-M

lead in "The Cake Eaters." A wine reception at a nearby Armonk restaurant will take place after each evening's discussion.

Later in May, Small Town will host a reading of "Mr. Charles, Currently of Palm Beach," a two-person playlet written by [Paul Rudnick](#).

This summer's concert series begins in July, with "Jazz It Up With the Hudson Valley Fellowship Band," starring the quintet that includes [Bernie Williams](#), the former Yankee and an Armonk resident, on jazz guitar. Except for the theater and film festivals, all events are free and take place in Armonk; the summer concerts are also held in Bedford, and selected play readings are repeated in Rye.

Small Town Theater is financed by Mr. Morell and Ms. Garr, who have transformed part of their Armonk home into a rehearsal and video studio, complete with microphones, lights and a green screen. It was there that Mr. Morell recently taped an interview with Oscar Andrew Hammerstein III, grandson of the celebrated lyricist and the author of "The Hammersteins: A Musical Theater Family," a recently published family biography. Mr. Hammerstein, who is a resident of South Salem, will introduce the second Small Town summer concert, a program of songs from Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals.









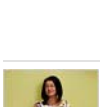
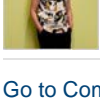
Mr. Morell and Ms. Garr acted in community theater productions prior to founding Small Town, and Mr. Morell had a role in Small Town's premiere play reading, Lyle Kessler's "Orphans," which Ms. Garr directed. Mr. Morell, who is the president of S. P. Morell and Company, a specialty chemicals distributor, referred to his activities with Small Town as "flipping over to the right side of the brain."

He mentioned the enthusiasm he observed in performers who became involved in Small Town's projects. "They come together from very different lives," he said, citing a singer who was a roofer by trade and an actor who was a vice president at MasterCard. "When people have to memorize lines, or get their characters down, when they gather to rehearse, they get so immersed in what they're doing that they don't think about anything else. For them to be able to practice their craft is such a release."

Audiences, too, seem to find release at Small Town's events, with most performances filled to capacity. "We have so many repeat patrons that it's like a family now," said Ms. Garr, the former director of guidance at Westlake High School in Thornwood, now the owner of Donna Garr & Associates. "People look forward to intermission, when we have refreshments. They eat cookies and have coffee and catch up on each other's lives. Then they go back in for the second act."

*Small Town Film Festival will be held at Whippoorwill Hall, 19 Whippoorwill Road, Armonk (\$20 a day; \$25 with wine reception). The May 6 screenings begin at 6 p.m. and will be followed by a reception at the [Beehive Restaurant](#); May 7 screenings, at 5 p.m., will be followed by a reception at [Restaurant North](#). For more information: [smalltownfilm.com](#).*

*"Mr. Charles, Currently of Palm Beach" is on May 19 and 20 at 8 p.m. at the Hergenhan*

1.  M
2.  St
3.  Of  
To
4.  C  
F
5.  F  
P
6.  AF  
F  
C
7.  T  
S
8.  PF  
N
9.  Of  
P
10.  W  
th

[Go to Complete Lis](#)



## Same-se Street

ALSO IN VIDEO  
Behind the sur  
New rules for l

[nytimes.c](#)

*Center, 40 Maple Avenue, Armonk; admission is free. For more information: [smalltowntheatre.com](http://smalltowntheatre.com) or (914) 273-0300.*

ADVERTISEMENT



A version of this article appeared in print on May 1, 2011, on page WE9 of the New York edition with the headline: A Couple's Offerings of Film, Theater and Music.

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

---

PRINT

---

REPRINTS



**Get 50% Off The New York Times & Free All Digital Access.**

Ads by Google

[what's this?](#)

### [MiniBus Charter & Van](#)

Coach Buses, Passenger Van Services

Many sizes NYC-NJ-CT 718-772-7885

[CitivanLines.com](http://CitivanLines.com)

Ads by Google

#### [Home Theater](#)

Home Theater:  
Installation & M  
[www.sightandsour](http://www.sightandsour)

#### [Hollywood Filr](#)

"Bad Teacher" -  
Find Tickets & t  
[areyouabadteache](#)

#### [Comparing To](#)

An Oral-B® Toc  
100% More Pla  
[www.OralB.com/P](http://www.OralB.com/P)

#### Get Free E-mail Alerts on These Topics

[Theater](#)

[Armonk \(NY\)](#)

[Westchester County \(NY\)](#)

#### More Headlines From Around the Web

Sponsored Links

MOVIEFONE

[William Shatner Will Not Be in 'Star Trek 2'](#)

FANDANGO

[Orlando Bloom Confirmed For 'The Hobbit'](#)

MOVIEFONE

['Crouching Tiger' Star Michelle Yeoh Deported Over Movie Role](#)

STYLE GOES STRONG

[Jessica Seinfeld's Angled Bob \(Love It for 40+!\)](#)

**INSIDE NYTIMES.COM**

THEATER »



Hold Onto Your Morals: Life Is Tough

U.S. »



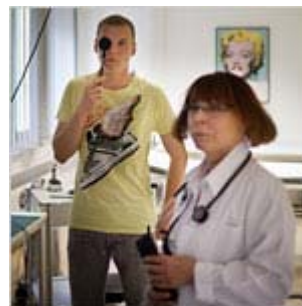
San Francisco Is Awash With Mayoral Candidates

OPINION »

### For Some With Autism, Jobs to Match Their Talents

A Dutch company has created a place for highly skilled workers with autism to succeed.

WORLD »



Germany Ends Military Conscription, and an Era

OPINION »



Op-Ed: The Weeds