

ARTS IN THE CITY

WHAT'S IN A PLAY?

A new off-Broadway play poses the question: "When love calls, will you be too hung up to answer?" But the creators of the production pose another: Can a couple of college kids throw together an off-Broadway show in less than six months? Written and directed by students from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, "Picking Up" is the story of Elle, a 20-something struggling actress looking for love in New York after a devastating break-up. "[Elle] spends the entire show trying to find someone new, but also trying to find herself after ending a relationship that defined her for so long," said **Jacey Powers**, the show's playwright and star. "She grows up and out of this experience. It's a romantic, serious comedy and coming-of-age story." Powers, a drama student, originally conceived "Picking Up" as a class project. But when her friend **Megan Walker**, an NYU alum, read the witty, yet touching work, she went on a mission to help Powers bring her work to New York audiences. With Walker as her producer, Powers approached fellow students to finish the job: **Emma Poltrack** to direct and **Brittany Gischner** to stage manage. Now, five months later, after scrambling for funds, auditioning actors to play



Stephanie McCarthy

Art-filled halls at the Chelsea Hotel.

the men in Powers' life and hoping every day that nothing else would go wrong, "Picking Up" will be going up on stage. "I still can't really believe it," Powers said. "I started writing this play in my dorm room, and now it's taken this great leap. It's amazing because the show is so personal. It's loosely based on my own experiences and the women around me. Not every story is mine, but every story is personal to me." Catch "Picking Up" at the DR2 Theatre July 5-8 and 11-15. pickingupproductions.com

—Jovana Rizzo

BARD OUT AT CHELSEA

The Chelsea Hotel, once the gritty playground of the city's artistic underground, is set for a makeover that some fear will erase the traces of its tawdry history. **Stanley Bard**, the hotel's manager for over 50 years, has been ousted and replaced by BD Hotels, the team behind the 2003 Maritime Hotel Renovation, and residents aren't happy. "The barbarians are at the gates and it's the end of an era, as all signs point to the conclusion that [hotel board member] **Marlene Krauss** and BD Hotels intend to create a sanitized version of the Chelsea Hotel," wrote **Ed Hamilton**, a blogger and author of the forthcoming book, "Legends of the Chelsea: Living with Artists and Outlaws of New York's Rebel Mecca," in an e-mail. "It's a damn shame too, because what we have here is real history, not fake history brought to you by Disney." The Chelsea is where poet **Dylan Thomas** met his end in 1953, and the hotel's rooms have seen hard partying by artistic types. Bard, who was rumored to have allowed tenants to pay for their rent in artwork, "is expected to have a role at the hotel" along with his son, according to a company press release. "New York needs all kinds of people," added Hamilton. "Especially creative people, if it is to retain the razor-sharp edge that excites the envy and admiration of the world."

—Heather Corcoran

WEEKLY PICKS

New York artist **Rudolf Stingel** gets a major museum retrospective with a show at the Whitney, a look at 20 years of art-making that challenged the conventions of material, method and the work of art itself. whitney.org

Soprano **Meryl Sher** performs "Facets of Love," a concert of songs and arias from the likes of Brahms, Verdi and Wagner at St. Bartholomew's Church on June 28.

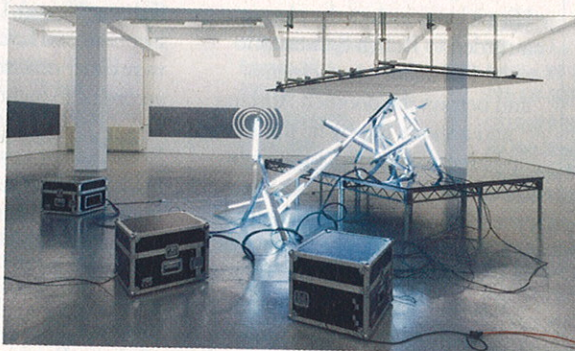
Tap legend **Savion Glover** performs at the Joyce Theater through July 14. Listen and watch as his feet transform into percussion instruments. joyce.org

Ex-Smith's singer **Morrissey** brings his solo act – and cult following – to Madison Square Garden on June 30. thegarden.com

It's the last chance to catch Pulitzer Prize finalist **Rinde Eckert's** allegorical drama "Horizon" at the New York Theatre Workshop, the first in the organization's 25th anniversary season. Through July 1. nytw.org

SPOTLIGHT

Fans of New York's own Banks Violette will have plenty of chances to see work by the artist this month with a pair of shows of new work at Team Gallery and Barbara Gladstone Gallery that bridges the gap between the downtown and Chelsea art scenes. Referencing heavy metal and art history with equal aplomb, the artist has been a link between the world of fine art and youth culture, looking at the darker side of American life through an eerie palette of glossy black and white. Violette's collaborations with musician Stephen O'Malley, of the experimental band Sun O))), create environments more powerful than the sum of their parts. Currently, Violette's work can also be seen in the Guggenheim exhibition "The Shapes



Banks Violette's work combines installation and sound to create new environments.

of Space." At Team Gallery and Barbara Gladstone gallery through Aug. 16 and 17, respectively. —H.C.