

THE KATE: A LITTLE GEM WITH A MOVIE STAR NAME

KATHARINE HEPBURN CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

Katharine Hepburn was born on May 12 in Hartford, Connecticut. So was I. She was born in 1907. I was not.






But I did attend the new Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center in Old Saybrook, Connecticut for the musical performance of “Over The Rhine,” and Vienna Teng and Alex Wong.

Arriving on a stormy Saturday night, dressed to the nines for a night at the theater, I felt a bit like Cinderella as I emerged from my car. It occurred to me how infrequently we take the opportunity for an elegant evening of cultural art. Yes, there are art openings and gallery exhibitions aplenty, but there is something magical about experiencing, as our parents once might have, the warmth and intimacy of sitting in a darkened theater for a musical performance, perhaps even opera. Making this part of a regular lifestyle (without having to travel to Hartford, Boston or New York) is now more accessible for residents and visitors of the Connecticut shoreline — because of The Kate.

As the outside attendants politely direct you with illuminated wands to a prime parking spot, the sound of high heels and leather shoes click clack along the pavement to a new and immaculate entrance. Upon entering, the first floor contains the box office, a gift shop and museum, which houses the actress’s history and memorabilia. The carpet is new and the walls freshly painted.

Executive Director Chuck Still speaks to the goals for this new house. “The Kate has been blessed

	<p>ON EXHIBIT THROUGH FEBRUARY 21, 2010</p> <p>Disparate Dialogue: A Roger Kizik Retrospective</p> <p>kimberly witham: transcendence</p>		
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with a wonderful name and an historical legacy,” he said. “Now it is up to us to build upon these things and find our cultural, artistic identity, our place at the heart of this community. If we are true to our namesake, ours will be a mission steeped in tradition, but flavored with iconoclastic individualism, tradition with an edge as it were. It is too early to tell how such a mission will be received along the shoreline, but that is our initial goal.”

The house lights flicker and having acquired my glass of Freixenet, I join other guests as we ascend the stairs to the second floor auditorium. The 250-seat theater is intimate. The seating is plush and comfortable. Teng and Wong take their places onstage and I am surrounded by rich acoustics that move me emotionally and physically. The sound in this little theater is outstanding.

“The Kate, a little gem of a place with a movie star name, has been off and roaring since its opening in September of 2009,” said Ann Nyberg, Vice

President, Board of Trustees. “Because the venue is a cultural arts center where all things are possible, it is our hope that theater goers will come to think of The Kate as their living room, warm and cozy and a place for all ages.”

The Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center is located at 300 Main Street in Old Saybrook, Connecticut in the recently renovated theatre/town hall. The building was originally opened in 1911 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It takes its name from Katharine Hepburn, of course, who is Old Saybrook’s most celebrated resident. The programming is eclectic, and those interested should visit The Kate’s website at katharinehepburntheater.org for the current list of programming, or call the box office for more information.

Lisa Mikulski



LEFT PAGE: Katharine Hepburn.
THIS PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM: The Kate from the front.
The Kate interior.

