

Best of Art & Performance



PERFORMANCE

Best Use of Brooklyn Outdoors

The Spoon River Project in Green-Wood Cemetery

This adaptation of Edgar Lee Masters' free-verse classic was most notable for letting its characters make their posthumous confessions of small-town scandal in the gloaming of Green-Wood, amid an ambience established by torch smoke, moonlight and soft, fragrant breezes.

Best Slow-Motion Sports Sequence (tie)

Beautiful Burnout at St. Ann's Warehouse and *In The Pony Palace/FOOTBALL* at The Bushwick Starr

In DUMBO, the boxing drama by Frantic Assembly and the National Theatre of Scotland had Olivia Newton John-on-speed choreography, slowed down and gussied up with stellar production values, but the drama lacked punch; in Bushwick, Half Straddle's all-girl high school football mindfuck slowed the pace to heighten the tension with winning results.

Best Regular-Motion Sports Sequence

The Ring Cycle Part 1+2 at The Bushwick Starr

The Bushwick Starr's Sue Kessler joked before the performance we attended that every season they seem to have at least one (this time two) sports plays. This adaptation of the first half of Wagner's Ring Cycle took the action into the ring, where its mythic competitors became ridiculous 80s pro wrestlers whose choreographed moves were nevertheless thunderous.

Best Current-Events Musical

In The Footprint at the Irondale Center

It's not often you see the story of your own neighbors, performed so close to their own community, expertly transformed into high tragedy. Using the tropes of narrative journalism and musical comedy, theater group The Civilians left attendees roused to act, exiting the theater into the very streets that needed that action.

Best Maniacal Shakespeare SingSong

Derek Jacobi in *King Lear* at BAM

Most Lears default to booming, hoping to discover gravity through volume. But in a Lear that will define the role for a generation of New Yorkers, Jacobi came in whispering, affecting the gestures of a child, and at his loudest squawked like an angry bird, exposing a thrilling voice intoning language of desperate beauty.



Best Ukranian–Australian Collaboration in Brooklyn

Geoffrey Rush in *Diary of a Madman* at BAM

With tufts of bright red hair and an increasingly ridiculous costume, the Aussie actor turned Gogol's short story into a crash course in clowning.

Best Russian–Brooklyn Collaboration in Manhattan

Maggie Gyllenhaal in *Three Sisters* at Classic Stage

In Austin Pendleton's production of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, Maggie Gyllenhaal's Masha took stock of her life, realized that it was a total failure, and then hauntingly cried, "Better luck next time!" in a tone of furious, dark-humored, despair.

Best Rarefied Death– and Law–Defying Aerial Performers

Seanna Sharpe and Savage Skinner on the Williamsburg Bridge

Provoked, perhaps, by heat-induced delirium, these two scaled the east tower of the Williamsburg Bridge on the evening of July 11th, and Sharpe performed a 15-minute daredevil aerial dance that produced some of the most breathtaking images of the year. Sadly, but not surprisingly, the duo left in handcuffs.

Best Ubiquitous Death–Defying Action Performers

STREB

Seems to us that Elizabeth Streb's Williamsburg-based extreme movement company has been especially prolific of late, with performances in Brooklyn, the Meatpacking District and Lower Manhattan over the last three months, and a fall full of free rehearsals ahead of their December extravaganza at the Park Avenue Armory.

Best Wordless Acting Marathon in a Prospect Heights Church Basement

This Time Tomorrow by 600 Highwaymen

We doubt Underhill Avenue's Duryea Presbyterian Church had ever seen anything quite like this manic comedy in which three actors tore around the building's expansive basement throwing furniture and each other.

Best Use of Live Video Onstage (tie)

Lover. Muse. Mockingbird. Whore. by Company XIV and Roadkill Confidential by Clubbed Thumb

These productions took place worlds apart in weirdly similar warehouse-style venues (Gowanus's 303 Bond Street Theatre and the Financial District's 3LD), where huge white walls allowed video designers Jamie Nesbitt and Peter Ksander, respectively, to use multiple cameras, projectors and screens to amplify the gathering, frantic energy of each show.