



VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

Volume 35, No. 2
Summer 2024

Jackson Heights
Beautification Group

www.JHBG.org

Jackson Heights – “A Garden in the City”

RHYTHM & SOUND IN JACKSON HEIGHTS



**Help the JH community by volunteering at our cleanups and other events!
Go to JHBG.org or e-mail info@jhbg.org to sign up!**

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On the cover: Art by Kirsten Magnani.
 Within the cacophony of urban sounds—the 7 train, cars honking, fire engines—beautiful bird songs stand out. Birds are integral to the urban ecosystem and the food chain. How does one portray something so ephemeral as birdsong?

**en español
 páginas 6-7**

President's Message

Music in Jackson Heights BY LESLIE ELLMAN



Flushing Town Hall

Though music might not be the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of beautification, JHBG has a proud history of providing free opportunities to all of our neighbors to listen to live music. To do this, we supported the creation of our first neighborhood classical ensemble, The Jackson Heights Orchestra (JHO). Now in its 14th year, the JHO presents free seasonal concerts of classical music throughout the year. We also started the very popular Summer Sundays in the Park concert series at Travers Park. Summer Sundays began back when Travers was mostly a blacktop playground. Throughout the years, the series has consistently created opportunities for local musicians to showcase their talents. Every Sunday throughout the months of July and August, neighbors get to come together and enjoy the unique pleasure of live outdoor music. We are looking forward to lovely summer evenings at Travers Park. Our series will open with the JHO, on July 7. We hope you can join us!!

Leslie Ellman, President

Editor's Message

The Rhythms of Jackson Heights BY MELISSA ZAVALA

New York City has inspired classic songs paying tribute to its lights, skyscrapers, its beauty, pulse, groove, and some of its tragic elements too. Neighbors conflict over livable noise levels in the city that never sleeps. The pandemic lockdown brought us unexpected and unusual silence interrupted by sirens and birdsongs. There were also cheers from people at their windows supporting frontline workers and others creating music. Queens as a whole has been an important hub of innovation for Jazz, Hip-Hop, Rock, and other genres. For a neighborhood with historic ties to the theatre world and to musicians like Gene Simmons (read about him in our Spring 2024 issue at jhb.org/the-views), music is a vital part of our community. This issue salutes the rhythm and sound of our community, a clatter of global cultural vibrations.

More than car horns and rattling subway tracks, our neighborhood offers lively music, as this issue tracks. One of



our summer highlights, our annual concert series in Travers Park, and our neighborhood orchestra with its new magnetic Conductor, Alex Wen, are also featured. Besides music, this issue also includes a story on the Art Club, Flaco the owl, and more.

As temperatures heat up, families travel, and others rest, we take this time to thank everybody for their ongoing support. Send us your stories and/or ideas and other suggestions. Would you like to see special neighbors featured here? Please share your thoughts by emailing us at info@jhb.org or writing to us by mail at JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.



This past spring, local artists decorated the traffic blocks along Paseo Park, some of them reminding us of the music all around us.

Summer Events in Jackson Heights

Arts Events

JH Art Talks

Wednesday, June 12

at 8pm at [Espresso 77](#) cafe, 35-57 77th St. Artist [Sam Ita](#) will present a short talk about his paper engineering works. Ita will be followed by featured artist [Micki Watanabe Spiller](#) who will discuss her book-inspired art practice.

The Jackson Heights Art Club

Meets at St. Mark's Church, 3350 82nd St.

This Summer:

The exhibit **On the Fence** will take place on

Saturday, June 8, and **Saturday, June 15th**, from 9am-4pm on the 34th Avenue fence of IS145 between 79th and 80th Streets.

The Jackson Heights Beautification Group Presents

JACKSON HEIGHTS ORCHESTRA

SUN. JULY 7, 2024
TRAVERS PARK
76-9 34th Ave

6:00 P.M.
Concert is free
\$20 suggested donation
Visit [JHORCHESTRA.ORG/DONATE](#) to make a gift to the JHO.



WENQILI
ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Join us for a festive outdoor concert of pops classics, iconic soundtracks, and everything in between!

@JHORCHESTRA

[JHORCHESTRA.ORG](#)

Music

Summer Sundays

6pm at Travers Park

July 7 Jackson Heights Orchestra (Classical)

July 14 Alex Owen Quartet (New Orleans Jazz)

July 21 Sebastian Cruz Quartet (Colombian Rock Fusion)

July 28 Zikrayat (Traditional Arabic Music & Dance)

August 4 Jennifer Wharton's Bonegasm (Modern Jazz Trombone Choir)

August 11 Guachinangos (Mexican Folk Music & Dance)

August 18 Zac Zinger Group (Contemporary fusion w/Shakuhachi flute)

August 25 M.A.S. Swing (Traditional Big Band Dance Band) preshow at 5:45pm featuring warmup acts.

Reminder!

Early Voting begins June 15 and ends on June 23. Cast your vote!

Summer Sundays in Jackson Heights: A Musical Journey Through Diversity

BY JAVIER ARAU



Get ready to immerse yourself in a cultural extravaganza as the *Summer Sundays in the Park* concert series returns to Jackson Heights for another season of free music and community celebration. Presented by the Jackson Heights Beautification Group, this year's lineup boasts a diverse array of musical styles, promising something for every taste.

Kicking off on July 7th, the series begins with the enchanting melodies of the Jackson Heights Orchestra, treating audiences to classical masterpieces in the heart of Travers Park. Following on July 14th, the Alex Owen Quartet brings the soulful sounds of New Orleans jazz to the park.

As the summer progresses, the music continues to captivate on July 21st when the Sebastian Cruz Quartet takes the stage, infusing Colombian rock fusion with infectious rhythms that will have attendees dancing in the summer breeze.

August brings even more excitement, starting with Jennifer Wharton's Bonegasm on August 4th, delivering modern jazz with a twist through a trombone choir unlike any other. On August 11th, Guachinangos takes center stage, showcasing the vibrant rhythms and colorful traditions of Mexican folk music and dance.

The musical journey reaches new heights on August 18th with the Zac Zinger Group, as contemporary fusion meets ancient traditions with the captivating sounds of the Shakuhachi flute. Closing out the series on August 25th, M.A.S. Swing brings the Swing era back to life with their traditional big band dance tunes, ensuring a lively finale to a summer of musical magic.

Summer Sundays is more than just a concert series; it's a celebration of our community's rich cultural heritage. We invite everyone to join us as we come together to enjoy the music and embrace the diversity that makes Jackson Heights truly special.

For more information and updates on Summer Sundays, including additional performers and special events, visit [jhb.org](#). ♦

CELEBRATE HISTORIC JACKSON HEIGHTS

Sponsored by the Jackson Heights Beautification Group

Join the JHBG in celebrating Jackson Heights, the first planned garden and cooperative apartment community in America and a City, State, and Federal Historic District.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

Raindate for Garden Tour: June 15 - all other events rain or shine

Lecture on the History of Jackson Heights
At 10:45am and 12:15pm at the Community Church, 81-10 35th Avenue; FREE

Exhibition of Vintage Photos and Memorabilia
From 10:00am to 2:00pm at the Community Church, 81-10 35th Avenue; FREE
Leisurely view many original photographs, maps and brochures from Jackson Heights' early days

A Self-Guided Tour of Private Interior Gardens
From 12 noon to 4:00pm. These park-like private gardens, surrounded by 1920s-era garden apartments, are only open to the public once a year. Visit up to fifteen gardens at your own pace, following a map included in your ticket; Tickets can be purchased in advance or in front of the Community Church, 81-10 35th Ave, on Saturday morning; \$15

SUNDAY, JUNE 9

Escorted Walking Tours of the Historic District - Rain or shine
At 12 noon. Tickets must be purchased or reserved in advance. The tours will meet in front of the Community Church, the southwestern corner of 82nd Street and 35th Avenue; \$15

Tickets are \$15 each
Tickets may be purchased beginning May 28 at Espresso 77
For ticket information and directions leave a message at (347) 766-9129

The Jackson Heights Art Club: The World is Our Canvas

BY NINA DARATSOS

The Jackson Heights Art Club has been bringing art to the community for over 60 years. After attending an exhibit by a Nassau County artist at the Jackson Theater, Natalie Norris, a local artist, contacted other local artists from the same theater, and founded the Art Club. The organization has changed along with the community, but its roots remain the same: the club aims to support art in Jackson Heights and our neighboring areas. You may have seen club members at one of the *On the Fence* events or seen our work at the Annual Member Art Show.

The Jackson Heights Art Club has adult sessions on Tuesday and Thursday

afternoons in watercolor, oil, acrylic, pastel, charcoal, and drawing. Each student receives individual guidance and assistance from our professional instructors at the Club's Studio. Year-round classes for children aged seven and above are available each Saturday.

Membership is open to everyone at all levels so come and join us for some creative inspiration! Feel free to drop in and take a class. A drop-in class is \$35. Membership is \$75 per year and classes are \$100 for a 4-week block. Visit us at St. Mark's Church in Jackson Heights or on the web at jacksonheightsartclub.org. We look forward to meeting you. ♦



Artists paint different subject matter and share their talent with the neighborhood for free.



JACKSON HEIGHTS NOTABLES

Highlighting former Jackson Heights residents of notable interest for the ways in which they represent our neighborhood.

Ray Dalio

The Hedge Fund Titan BY DAN KARATZAS

One of the wealthiest men in the world spent the first eight years of his life in Jackson Heights. Hedge fund billionaire Raymond Thomas Dalio, the only child of Italian-American parents, was born in our very own Jackson Heights. And according to the 1950 Queens telephone book, the Dalio family resided at 34-26 75th Street, a two-family house built in 1940. The accompanying photo shows how the house looked before a major, multi-floor enlargement took place about a half-dozen years ago.

Ray's father, Marino, was a jazz musician who played at various clubs in Manhattan. And he was hardly alone: in the middle of the last century, Jackson Heights was home to a number of well-known musicians, including Les Paul (featured in our Summer 2022 issue, jhb.org/the-views), Glenn Miller and Woody Herman. However, in 1957 the family, like many other City residents, moved east to the greener pastures of Long Island. In the Dalio family's case, it was Manhasset.

In a 2011 interview with *The New Yorker*, Dalio admitted he was not a great student. However, his proximity to prominent Wall Street players for whom he caddied during his adolescence at the neighboring Links Golf Club, afforded him an early start to investing. After attending C.W. Post on Long Island, Ray made his way to Harvard Business School. He was then hired by the Wall Street firm Shearson Hayden Stone but was fired soon thereafter. At 26 and on his own, he founded the company now known as Bridgewater Associates, one of the largest hedge funds in the world.

In the almost 50 years since Bridgewater was founded in 1974, it has become a behemoth in the world of hedge funds. Hedge funds are private investment vehicles, typically only available to high-net-worth accredited investors. Unlike mutual funds, they are not constrained in their choice of investments. Hedge funds can invest in whatever the



This house is similar to the Dalio Family home before its expansion. Like others in the area, a multi-family building now closely abuts this historic home.



management team deems worthwhile. They can also use leverage (borrow money) to invest, or sell stocks short, hoping that they fall, rather than rise in value. Dalio moved his operations to Connecticut, and Bridgewater became the world's largest hedge fund in 2005. He has authored four books and is generally viewed as one of the great investors of the last half century.

By virtue of their compensation

structure, successful hedge funds are extremely lucrative for their owners. In addition to an annual fee based on assets managed, the fund also retains 20 percent of investment returns. So, by the 2020s, Dalio's personal fortune, thanks to the success of Bridgewater Associates, was estimated to be between \$15 and \$20 billion. Dalio also formed and funded the Dalio Foundation, and has signed the "Giving Pledge," agreeing to donate half of his fortune to charity during his lifetime. Just another local boy done good. ♦

The Jackson Heights Orchestra Welcomes Alex Wen as New Artistic Director

BY CHAD TINDEL

The Jackson Heights Beautification Group is thrilled to announce that Alex Wen will be the new permanent Artistic Director of the Jackson Heights Orchestra (JHO) this coming 2024-2025 season. After an inspiring year as Interim Artistic Director where he expanded the orchestra's repertoire and elevated its skill and visibility, Alex is set to continue his visionary work in a permanent capacity.

A seasoned conductor with a rich background in music, Alex is a graduate of the master's program in Orchestral Conducting at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College. There, he studied under the tutelage of Maurice Peress and collaborated with esteemed composers such as David Amram and George Tsontakis. His experience is further complemented by his participation in the prestigious 2019 Conductors Workshop of the Cabrillo



Festival for Contemporary Music. Alex honed his skills in both viola performance and conducting, earning a Bachelor of Music from Azusa Pacific University, where he also assisted the APU Chamber Singers.

Succeeding Patricia Glunt, the beloved JHO founding director who

retired in 2023, Alex expressed his gratitude and excitement: "I'm thrilled to accept this role with the JHO and to continue this relationship with the wonderful community of Jackson Heights. The spirit of music making in the past year brought great joy and camaraderie and I look forward to sharing even more programs that will connect and strengthen our ties in the community". Listen to Alex Wen discuss music and his vision for the orchestra on our podcast: jhorchestra.org/media

Under Alex's leadership, the Jackson Heights Orchestra looks forward to a future filled with innovative performances and a continued celebration of music's power to unite, inspire, connect, and thread the rich diversity of our Jackson Heights community. For our schedule of events visit: jhorchestra.org/schedule. ♦

Don't Love Nature to Death

BY LEN MANIACE

Many of us love blooms filling street-tree beds along our streets. Lots of JHBMG volunteer time is spent creating these micro-botanical gardens along 37th Avenue.

But that's not always possible, or at least it can be tricky, when beds are filled with roots from established trees. There often isn't enough room to plant potted flowers from garden centers.

So if they can't dig down into the soil, some gardeners do something they should NEVER do, pile soil up on a tree bed often six-, eight-, or 12-inches deep. This practice can put trees—the reason tree beds exist—into decline, eventually killing them. This happens too often in Jackson Heights and the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, which owns street trees, urges people not to do it.

Here's why: tree trunks are NOT like roots; they did not evolve to be buried in soil, which exposes them to rot and fungi that can sicken and take down trees. What's more, piling on soil reduces the necessary oxygen to roots, also spinning a tree into decline.

If you want your tree and flowers to bloom, here is a possible solution. You can grow annual and perennial flowers from seed, which unlike potted plants, don't need a lot of room in crowded tree beds. As seed roots grow, they can maneuver around tree roots. And the roughly quarter inch of soil needed for seed generation should not be a problem for the trees. Just keep extra soil away from the trunk and prevent seeds and seedlings from drying out.

And finally, if you love nature, remember that trees in tree gardens need to come first. ♦

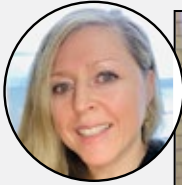


Enclosing tree beds with wooden frames for piling soil higher is harmful to trees, no matter how well-loved and cared for the tree gardens are.

Mensaje de la presidenta

POR LESLIE ELLMAN

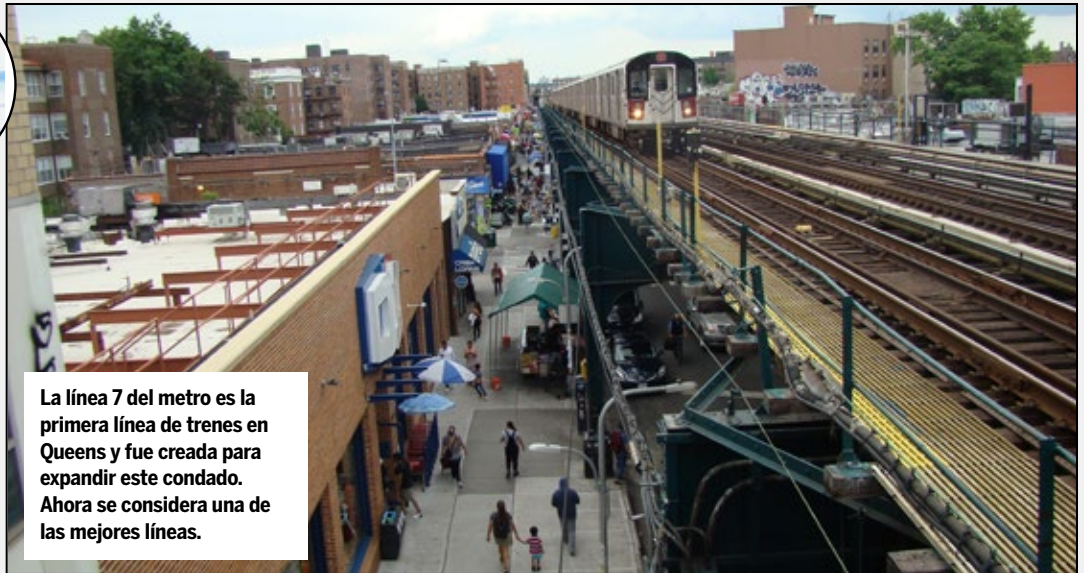
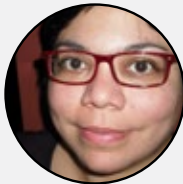
Aunque la música no sea lo primero que nos viene a la mente cuando hablamos de "embellecimiento", el JHBG se enorgullece de ofrecer la oportunidad de escuchar música en vivo gratis a los habitantes de Jackson Heights. Y para hacerlo posible, apoyamos la creación del primer ensamble de música clásica del vecindario: la Orquesta de Jackson Heights (JHO). También iniciamos la popular serie de conciertos "Domingos de verano en el parque" en Travers Park, que tienen lugar los domingos de julio y agosto. Este año, la JHO iniciará la serie el 7 de julio. ¡Te esperamos!



Mensaje de la editora

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

La ciudad de Nueva York ha inspirado canciones clásicas que rinden tributo a sus luces y rascacielos, a su belleza y su vibra, pero también a algunos de sus elementos trágicos. Queens ha sido un centro importante de innovación para el jazz, el hip-hop, el rock y otros géneros. Por eso, en esta edición celebramos el ritmo y los sonidos de nuestra comunidad, el estrépito de vibraciones multiculturales. Además, incluimos notas sobre nuestro Club de Arte, el búho Flaco y más. Queremos agradecer a todos por su apoyo y los invitamos a enviarnos sus historias, ideas o cualquier comentario a info@jhb.org o a la dirección postal JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.



La línea 7 del metro es la primera línea de trenes en Queens y fue creada para expandir este condado. Ahora se considera una de las mejores líneas.

Domingos de verano en el parque: un viaje musical a través de la diversidad

POR JAVIER ARAU

Prepárate para una inmersión en la celebración cultural con el regreso de la serie de conciertos del programa Domingos de verano en el parque. Este año el JHBG presenta una selección de varios estilos musicales que inicia el 7 de julio con la JHO. El 14 de julio, el Cuarteto Alex Owen llega con ritmos del jazz de New Orleans. La serie continúa el 4 de agosto con Bonegasm de Jennifer Wharton y su jazz moderno sazonado con el toque único de un coro de trombones. Guachinangos



La banda Bonegasm es única por su trombonista, Jennifer Wharton, una de las pocas mujeres del jazz que tocan este instrumento.

presenta ritmos vibrantes y tradiciones de la música folklórica mexicana el 11 de agosto. Una mezcla de música contemporánea y tradiciones antiguas continúa el 18 de agosto con los cautivadores sonidos de la flauta de Shakhuchi. Y para cerrar con broche de oro, el 25 de agosto, M.A.S. Swing revive la época del swing con las melodías tradicionales del baile big band. ¡Te esperamos en Travers Park! Visita jhb.org para ver actualizaciones y otros eventos.

Club de Arte de Jackson Heights: el mundo es nuestro lienzo

POR NINA DARATSOS

Fundado por Natalie Norris, una artista de la localidad, el Club de Arte de Jackson Heights ha traído arte durante más de 60 años. El Club ofrece clases de acuarela, aceite, acrílico, pastel, carbón y dibujo. Las clases para adultos son los martes y jueves por la tarde; y para niños mayores de siete años, los sábados. La membresía está disponible para cualquier nivel y cuesta \$75 al año; paga \$100 por cuatro semanas

de clases o \$35 por una sola clase. Si necesitas más información visítanos en la iglesia de San Mark o en jacksonheightsartclub.org. ¡Te esperamos!

Los destacados de Jackson Heights. Ray Dalio, el titán de los fondos de inversión de alto riesgo

POR DAN KARATZAS

Uno de los hombres más ricos del mundo pasó los primeros ocho años de su vida en Jackson Heights. El multimillonario Raymond Thomas Dalio, hijo único de padres italoamericanos, nació en nuestro vecindario y residió en el 34-26 de la calle 75, en una casa construida en 1940. Ray asistió a la Escuela de Negocios de Harvard y, después de graduarse, obtuvo su primer empleo en la firma Shearson Hayden Stone de Wall Street. A los 26 años fundó su propia compañía, conocida como Bridgewater Associates, que se ha convertido, desde su fundación en 1974, en un gigante de los fondos de alto riesgo. Ha escrito cuatro libros y es considerado como uno de los mayores inversores del último medio siglo.

Flaco toca el corazón de los neoyorkinos

POR KIRSTEN MAGNANI
Flaco era el hermoso búho euroasiático que encendió la imaginación de la ciudad luego de escapar de su encierro en el Zoológico de Central Park el 2 de febrero de 2023. La gente estaba fascinada por su vida como ave libre que aprendió a cazar ratas y palomas después de depender de sus cuidadores. Pero sólo 15 meses después de encontrar la libertad, lo encontraron gravemente herido en el patio de un edificio de la calle West 89, donde al parecer se había impactado. Ahora sabemos que la causa de su muerte se atribuye a varios factores ambientales, en particular a raticidas y un virus de las palomas. Esto nos llevo a preguntarnos cómo ayudar a salvar la vida de las aves en la ciudad. Sugerimos que los edificios utilicen pellets de esterilización en lugar de raticidas, y también podemos apoyar al Bird Safe Buildings Act, ahora llamado Flaco Act, para evitar que los pájaros se estrellen contra las ventanas y mueran.

No ames la naturaleza a morir

POR LEN MANIACE
Los voluntarios del JHBG dedican mucho tiempo a crear jardines micro-botánicos a lo largo de la Avenida 37. Sin embargo, no siempre es posible llenar de plantas las jardineras que rodean los árboles, aunque nos encante verlas florecer. Cuando los lechos se llenan de raíces-troncos, no hay suficiente espacio para poner otras plantas; si no puedes



Un camión de North Shore Animal League llega a Travers Park para ayudar a las familias a encontrar nuevas mascotas.



La carrera anual conocida como Jackson Heights Mile es uno de los eventos especiales del verano. Participa en la carrera este año o apoya a la comunidad como espectador.

escarbar en la tierra, debes evitar amontonarla sobre el lecho, porque puedes matar a los árboles. Los troncos NO son raíces y no han evolucionado para estar bajo tierra, lo que podría pudrirlos o producir hongos que los enfermen. Recuerda que, en las jardineras de los árboles, los árboles mandan.

La Orquesta de Jackson Heights da la bienvenida a Alex Wen como su nuevo director artístico

POR CHAD TINDEL
El JHBG se complace en anunciar a Alex Wen como el nuevo director artístico de la Orquesta de Jackson Heights

(JHO) para la temporada 2024-2025. Experimentado director con una magnífica formación musical, Alex es egresado del programa de maestría en Dirección Orquestal de la Escuela de Música Aaron Copland, de Queens College. Alex es sucesor de Patricia Glunt, la querida fundadora de la JHO, que se jubiló en 2023. Escucha a Alex Wen hablar de música y de su visión para la orquesta en nuestro podcast: jhorchestra.org/media y consulta nuestra programación de eventos en jhorchestra.org/schedule.

Los jardines de plantas nativas proliferan en Queens

POR DAVE WATSON
Los jardines de plantas nativas van en aumento en Jackson Heights, es especial en Dunolly Gardens y The Towers. Por su parte, Len Maniace y sus colaboradores han creado jardines públicos como el de abejas y mariposas de la Oficina de Correos y los de la escuela PS69. Existen muchas razones para elegir plantas nativas: los beneficios ecológicos de eliminar áreas que dependen de sustancias químicas, la disminución de

riegos y mantenimiento, y, sobre todo, la gran diversidad de vida que atraen. Esta práctica se traduce en respeto y cuidado hacia otros organismos con quienes compartimos el planeta.

Resonancias musicales: una manera fácil de identificar los pájaros locales por su canto

POR MELISSA ZAVALA
Los transeúntes que cada mañana se encaminan a jornadas impredecibles pueden encontrar calma en el canto de los pájaros mientras recorren las calles—claro, si se toman el tiempo para escuchar—: los estridentes chirridos de los gorriones, tan comunes en las calles de la ciudad, mezclados con otros cantos, como los del petirrojo americano, el herrerillo bicolor, o el gorrión corona blanca. La próxima vez que estés a punto de subir a todo el volumen de tus audífonos mientras caminas apresurado, reconsidéralo: escucha las resonancias musicales que flotan sobre nuestras cabezas. Puede que no entendamos el lenguaje de las aves, pero, tenlo por seguro, es música para nuestros oídos. ♦

Musical traditions spanning the globe from the diverse cultures at home in Jackson Heights are passed down through generations including those born here.



Corridor of Nostalgia: Ode to the Sounds of Jackson Heights

BY ZAIN SHEIKH & KELLY ARMENDARIZ

When we listen closely to the orchestrations of the urban clang and clamor in New York City, with its grumbling old trains and exasperated car horns, whirring gas engines and whizzing electric bikes, there is an elaborate symphony of noise all around us. One that perhaps doesn't immediately translate as music to our ears, but very possibly as music to the mind's inner heart. Sound, whether purposefully or not, arranged into music, evokes inexplicable emotions with a power to unlock treasures of memories, often buried so deep they are nearly forgotten. This is where nostalgia is stored.

Coined by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer in 1688, nostalgia comes from the Greek words, *nostos* meaning to return home, and *algos*, meaning pain. He invented the word to describe the anxious state of soldiers who were away from home for extended periods. Its contemporary usage expresses more than just a maudlin longing for a place

or time, with dismissive or medical connotations—but more potently, as an instrument evoking a desired emotion in audiences, spiking dopamine levels in consumers, and even disrupting the effects of dementia by triggering memory snapshots in the afflicted.

Nostalgia, incanted through music, bares an even richer meaning, especially when the backdrop is the tapestry of cultures reverberating in the streets of Jackson Heights. The musical mingling across our neighborhood can produce a receptive calm in the corridors of the mind, allowing us to hear the knock of our own recollections, and even some borrowed from previous generations.

On an evening ramble down Roosevelt Avenue, we are bombarded with sounds ranging from melancholia to mania. We

begin at the westernmost point, where a resonant call to prayer from an illustrated minaret beckons the faithful to the Islamic Center. Devotion is instantly fractured by an interjecting roar of the 7 train, and then just as swiftly overlaid with live Bollywood music coming from Himalayan Yak. Suddenly, a fabulous queer Latin pop beat meshes in from Music Box. And even before you've made it (barely a



The local rock, metal, hardcore, and punk scenes once had a home in the neighborhood called Castle Heights, at 83-11 Northern Boulevard. JH/Elmhurst band ATTACKU.



Fogo Azul, an all women Brazilian Samba Reggae band is just one of the diverse marching bands spreading camaraderie at the Queens Pride Parade every year.

few blocks by now) to Diversity Plaza, to watch the seemingly spontaneous dance circles of Nepalese and Bangladeshi families honoring festivities back home, you've witnessed a staggering medley of reminiscence. And perhaps by this point you've also picked up an earworm specific to your own personal story.

But if not, keep roving around the multitude of inviting spaces, all the way to Junction Boulevard. Stop in at KTM, Terraza 7, Friend's Tavern, Hairo's Discoteca. And surely somewhere you will find a familiar frequency, a rhythm summoned from the past, that tickles your cerebellum's fancy—be it through the myriad of musical venues, restaurants, and bars, passing cars with blasting radios, buskers, food trucks, or even just from the roaring speaker swinging in the hand of a casual by-stroller.

Petrichor, the smell of soil after the first rain, has a universal ability to make us yearn for a moment in childhood, or for a more recently past season of fondly recalled affairs. Such is also the moving sway of music—but music carries the additional, uncanny ability to draw nostalgia beyond our own lived experiences.

Musical traditions, inherited by our neighborhood children's culturally rich families, act as a window into the times of our collective ancestors and as a multigenerational transference of memory. The accessibility and

shareability of music in our contemporary world, made possible by breakneck technological advancements, has only enhanced this effect. Sound first initiated as spoken word half a millenia ago, in a faraway region, choreographed under a candle-lit soiree and almost permanently lost, can now be brought back to life today through a simple digital seance on Spotify.

But the people of Jackson Heights aren't just relishing music from times and lands of others; they are also deeply exploring their own identities and the nostalgia of their families' immigrant histories. The abuelas, babushkas and dadis of Jackson Heights each conjure a repertoire of vivid images, with accompanying soundtracks, rooted deeply in the grounds we emigrated from. Human cognition transforms these scenes away from mere third-person tales into nearly first-person experiences with sentimental attachments, bestowing nostalgia across generations.

Anemoia—a word created by author John Koenig to describe a nostalgia for a time or place one has never directly experienced—feels more possible in a setting like Jackson Heights. Here, the mix of communities, with their dense musical histories, allows us to indulge in others' nostalgia with genuine curiosity,

Surely somewhere you will find a familiar frequency, a rhythm summoned from the past, that tickles your fancy.

rolling them all up into our own. In this fertile ground, new variations and cross-pollinated styles meld together, sprouting innovation.

A testament to this is our fellow Jackson Heights resident and renowned DJ Rekha, who blends Bollywood, Bhangra and Hip Hop. Since the late nineties, they have paved the way for a new musical form that today electrifies dance floors everywhere and has become a household genre for the South Asian diaspora. Where were the sources of material and inspiration? DJ Rekha was quick to tell us, "In my experience, the music is in the streets, not just the venues."

DJ Rekha also shared anecdotes of old Jackson Heights record shops, like Numbers, which offered a unique collection gathered by its Indo-Caribbean music enthusiast owner.

It was here that DJ Rekha acquired their non-Desi music—hip-hop, dancehall, house, and new wave tracks, on 12-inch vinyl made especially for DJs. Numbers was one among a plethora of local music stores whose awning lights flickered until digital music made them obsolete. These shops gave DJ Rekha the opportunity

to access glinting libraries of imported and eclectic records, and to experiment.

And so, as we wander our streets, it is important to appreciate those bygone keepers of sound and music—the record shops, venues, and even fleeting street music moments, that have all kept the

beat alive. The memory bank mined from other Jackson Heights neighbors left a hundred crumbs of nostalgia. Like the Metal hangout, Castle Heights; the 1950s hotspot named the Montclair Supper Club; the Broadway concerts organized in the early years of the JHBG, to name a few.

But, of course, don't just let the soundwaves of other people's yesteryears drown out what is happening today. Be a saunterer. Instead of zipping through the crowds at a New Yorker's pace, be a wide-eyed explorer, like Alice, as you hop from one street, music venue or bar to another, down a rabbit hole in our community's Wonderland of nostalgia. ♦

VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

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Jackson Heights Beautification Group

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Native Plant Gardens Spread Across Queens BY DAVE WATSON

Native plant gardens are growing in Jackson Heights, especially at Dunolly Gardens and The Towers. Some of the plants there include purple coneflowers, bee balm, calico asters, northern sea oats, seaside goldenrods, sedges, goat's beard, common blue wood asters, and others. Len Maniace and his helpers have created public gardens like the bee and butterfly garden at the Post Office as well as native gardens at PS69 to replace the front lawn. Tree LC has also been creating a mini, native-woodland habitat on the west side of PS69. They plan to continue understory native plantings with native ground covers. We should also plant more native plants in Travers Park.

Thinking about these gardens as patches across our borough means helpful habitats for animals. Hunters Point's South Waterfront Park is envisioned as an international model of urban ecology and a world laboratory for innovative sustainable thinking. Many native plants grow there. Large native grasses and other regional plants now grace Gantry Plaza State Park, next to the East River. Eastern red columbines, plantain leaved pussytoes, common milkweed, smooth blue aster, and blue stemmed goldenrod grow on Roosevelt Island's native plant gardens. On April 6th, a brand-new, tiny forest was planted at the southern tip of the island on the East River. Its creators will include 1,000 native plants, as well as trees and shrubs covering just 2,700 square feet.

Queens Botanical Gardens (QBG), located at 43-50 Main Street, is a 7-train ride to Flushing, walking south on Main Street. The garden has events and workshops for planning pollinator gardens, and other introductory workshops for considering local ecosystems. Attendees learn about companion and native plants; all materials are provided.



A model of urban resilience, the LIC waterfront is a stretch of marshes buffering the coastline. Bottom: Queens Botanical Garden showcases the beauty of native species as part of its storm capturing gardens.



There are many reasons to choose native plants. The ecological benefits of eliminating chemically dependent landscapes, reducing irrigation which wastes precious water, and lowering maintenance. But perhaps the most important thing is the incredible diversity of life that is attracted to native plants. Plant diversity brings birds, butterflies, moths, pollinators, reptiles, small mammals, hawks, owls, and other raptors. The mere act of establishing a native plant community of flowers, grasses, sedges, and shrubs is an investment for our overall quality of life. And it signifies our respect and care for all the other amazing organisms with whom we share the Earth. ♦



Another familiar sound in JH is the "Caw-caw!" of the murders of crows which now make a home here year-round.

Musical Resonances: Easy Ways to Identify Local Birds by Their Songs

BY MELISSA ZAVALA

Commuters bracing for unpredictable commutes each morning can nevertheless find comfort in the songs of birds as they race through the streets—if only they take the time to listen. As the sun's rays break the dark and the hum of traffic and loud cellphone users have not yet soared to noise pollution levels, chatty birds can still drown out urban racket. The raucous drawn-out chirps of sparrows, so common in city streets, now mix with a growing number of other songs. One detectible musical chant mixes complicated whistles and repetitive syllables promoting good cheer. It is the American robin, joyfully encouraging us on our travels, "cheerily cheer up, cheer up, cheerily cheer up". Take heart, straphangers! There are reasons for cheer: more songbirds have been making an appearance around the city ... as climate change reworks environments and bird migration patterns, cities adapt, offering hospitable homes to more species.

Robins are not the only birds identifiable by mnemonic phrases. Whenever you hear multiple calls sounding like "Peter, Peter, Peter", that is the tufted titmouse calling and not someone trying to get the attention of a person by that name. That patriotic sounding "Oh, sweet Canada, Canada, Canada" chant is no neighbor from the north challenging American patriotism, but the white-throated sparrow maybe instead saying, "Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody". The melancholy croon and loud whistling of wings during liftoff and landing of mourning doves has become a common sound in the area this century. But don't confuse that cooing with owl hoots which are different (owls as a group have very varied sounds as well!). Next time you're tempted to set your speaker to its loudest setting while on the run, reconsider! Listen to the musical resonances above our heads instead. We may not be able to understand bird languages, but it sure is music to our ears. ♦

Flaco Touches the Hearts of All New Yorkers

BY KIRSTEN MAGNANI

Flaco was the stunning Eurasian eagle-owl that sparked the city's imagination after escaping from his vandalized enclosure at the Central Park Zoo on Feb. 2, 2023. New Yorkers were fascinated by his life as a free bird, learning to hunt rats and pigeons after relying on zookeepers for all of his needs. But only 15 months after finding freedom, he was found fatally injured in a courtyard after seemingly striking a building on West 89th Street. We now know that several environmental factors contributed to his death, specifically rat poison and pigeon virus.



under his sternum, by his liver, and behind his left eye—except he had no signs of head trauma or broken bones. Reports also noted that toxicity tests indicated Flaco had been exposed to four different anticoagulants in rodenticides, all causing internal hemorrhaging and commonly used for rat control in New York City. While the use of rat poison in Central Park is halted during nesting season from February to August, its use persists beyond the park. Rats that ingest rodenticides often move more slowly, making them easy prey. The State Department of Environmental Conservation reported that the cause of death of several red-tailed hawks in 2023 was also rodenticide. A juvenile red-tailed hawk in Jackson Heights was spotted last year, often eating rats. Will our neighborhood hawk meet the same fate as Flaco?

According to *The New York Times*, Flaco was in “good body condition”, with “good musculing” and “adequate fat stores”. He weighed 4.1 pounds at death, just one-tenth of a pound lighter than at his last weigh-in at the zoo. Being in apparent good shape then suggested that the cause of death might have been a deadly building strike since Flaco had signs of substantial hemorrhage

How can we help save the lives of birds? We can encourage our buildings to use sterilization pellets instead of rodenticide. According to the National Audubon Society, we can also help the annual 230,000

birds which die from striking glass windows by supporting the Bird Safe Buildings Act, now called the FLACO Act (Feathered Lives Also Count). Because birds see window glass as reflections of vegetation and open sky, low rise structures are most deadly for them. I encountered a dead songbird just before the time of this writing (end of April). Let's support the mandates encouraging the use of visible patterns and other deterrents making glass surfaces more easily identifiable to birds. ♦



- **Low-cost ways to make our buildings safer for birds:** abcbirds.org/solutions/prevent-home-collisions
- **More about Flaco:** nytimes.com/2024/02/23/nyregion/flaco-owl-central-park-zoo-dead
- **Get involved @ Audubon: Project Safe Flight** nycaudubon.org/our-work/conservation/project-safe-flight

COMMUNING WITH CITY CRITTERS A Dog Whisperer reports on the healing connection between people and pets.

New Pets, New Beginnings

BY GAIL SIEGEL

Life is a roller coaster. The world is full of sadness and obstacles. Having pets in our lives can make a big difference to our



quality of life, improving our physical, mental, and social lives. It was terribly painful when my friend had to bid farewell to her adoring and adored dog of many years, leaving a hole in her life. Deciding to get a new dog was complicated because my friend could no longer take care of herself after a debilitating disease she suffered with for 30 years. She knew she didn't have much time left herself and wasn't sure it made sense to add to her husband's burden of being responsible for her care and that of a new animal in the house.

After much soul-searching and going online to Petfinders, they found a small eight-year-old foster dog named Lucy, of mixed breeds, in need of a home. They knew what to expect as far as health, behavior, and temperament. They decided to go for it and put in an application that was approved. The first obstacle was that the dog was in Oklahoma and would be



Lucy is delivered to her forever family after traveling a long distance to her new home.

driven to Connecticut where adoptive families would be waiting. Then my friend, who had been in hospice for more than a year, seemed to rally before passing away after saying, “When are we going to get the dog?”. Her husband was thinking he might need to cancel his request as he was filled with grief at the loss of his beloved. Once the service was planned,

it was interrupted by torrential rain, preventing the digging of a grave, requiring finding a second cemetery. The next obstacle was the huge snowstorm stopping all work and much transportation. Then there was a mechanical problem with the bus. Finally, the stars aligned. The day dawned sunny, but the graveside service had to be delayed an hour. As if deliberately planned, it was on the day of the eclipse.

The bus made it to CT the day before the burial at the second cemetery. It arrived in the afternoon with 68 dogs that had been adopted by couples arriving from a wide radius. As the name of their dog was called, they picked up blue folders and lined up to review their dog's condition, vaccination, and chip where their information was already encoded. The dogs were young, old, big, and small. Every color, breed, and level of energy. When the husband's turn came he stepped up and met his wife's dream dog and his new companion.

The following day, the funeral was small but lovely, with the sun shining until just at the end when the sky dimmed, the temperature dropped, the shadows danced with new shapes, and we stood and marveled at a new view of the world. The husband held the dog as he said his last goodbye to his wife knowing he and Lucy would visit often. ♦



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IEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS – Summer 2024

ONGOING EVENTS

Saturdays, 11am-1 pm

JH-SCRAPS (composting)

69th St. & 35th Ave.

For info on what is compostable,
contact info@JHBG.org

Most Saturdays, 10 am

Tree LC Meets at the NE corner

of 80th St. & 37th Ave.

Schedule may vary and include
some Sundays. Check the

[JHBG Facebook page](#)

for complete information.

Saturdays 10 am

Clean and Green

For complete details,

go to info@JHBG.org.

Saturdays 10:30 am

Meet at the gardens at St. Mark's

Episcopal Church on 34th Ave.,

between 81st and 82nd Streets.

Daily

JH-CREW dog run

69th St. between 34th & 35th Aves.

To join, go to info@JHBG.org

for application. Suggested
donation, \$25/year.

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS:

Please join us or renew your membership (there are 2 ways):

Go to www.JHBG.org/membership and pay by credit card.

It's quick and easy! Mail a check with this form
for the membership level you select to:

**JHBG–Membership • P.O. Box 720253
Jackson Heights, NY 11372**

Membership includes a subscription to *Views from the Heights* and helps fund our numerous
community activities. JHBG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so your contribution is tax deductible.

Please check membership level:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$1,000 |
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If you're interested in being contacted about any JHBG activities, please email
info@JHBG.org.