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Concerts today star opera's Gunn, pianist Greene, ASFA faculty

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By Michael Huebner

With three concerts taking place at once today, it's another one of those days when even a coin toss won't solve the dilemma of which to attend.

The big event is Nathan Gunn, one of the hottest and brightest new stars on the opera circuit. He'll give a recital of Schubert songs and American fare at 3 p.m. in the Alys Stephens Center's Jemison Concert Hall (tickets, \$10-\$60), with his wife, Julie, on piano.

Next door at the center's Reynolds-Kirschbaum Recital Hall, Arthur Greene closes out this season's UAB Piano Series in a 4 p.m. recital (tickets, \$5-\$15). Greene is a "complete" musician. He has recorded all of William Bolcom's violin and piano sonatas with his wife, Solomia Soroka, on a Naxos CD released last month, performed the complete solo piano works of Brahms in six programs in Boston, and recorded all of Alexander Scriabin's etudes for the Supraphon label.

Even more impressive was a Scriabin marathon in Kiev, Ukraine, in which he played all 10 sonatas in a single day. A University of Michigan professor and gold medalist in the Kapell and Bachauer competitions, Greene also solos regularly with orchestras worldwide. His Birmingham recital includes two sonatas each by Beethoven and Scriabin and two Chopin Nocturnes.

And you might want to consider the free concert by Alabama School of Fine Arts faculty. It starts at 2:30 p.m. at Independent Presbyterian Church, 3100 Highland Ave., and features sonatas by Beethoven and Reinecke and Mozart's Quintet for Piano and Winds in E flat, K. 452. Performers include ASFA teachers Leslie Fillmer, Kevin Chance, Kimberly Scott and Laura Doss, and adjuncts Ai-Yi Bao, Romona Merritt, Judith Donaldson, Kevin Kozak and Jack Sharp.

Whither arts, culture?

Birmingham arts and cultural leaders will consult their crystal ball on Tuesday and talk about where the city is headed. "The Magic Continues: A Future Filled with Promise" is the topic of a panel discussion to be held at Vulcan Park. Kathy Yarbrough, director of the Cultural Alliance of Greater Birmingham, will moderate the talks, which feature Lawrence Pijoux of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Gail Trechsel of the Birmingham Museum of Art, William Foster of the Birmingham Zoo and Darlene Negrotto of Vulcan Park Foundation.

It will focus on new CAGB programs and their impact on the city's cultural institutions. The event starts at 6:30 p.m. and costs \$5, which includes admission to the Vulcan Center Museum and Observation Tower. Call 933-1409, ext. 28, for more details.

Kasman repeats triumph

UAB pianist Yakov Kasman triumphed again in Portland, Ore., last weekend. After he replaced Louis Lortie 18 months ago in a last-minute rescue of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No 3, the Oregon Symphony invited him back to play the composer's first concerto. Citing Kasman's "sheer aggression" and "swooning romanticism," Portland Oregonian music critic David Stabler went on to say that Kasman is a "remarkable pianist - powerful, measure, deeply serious, but also a little dangerous. He flirts with the devil."

Kasman is scheduled to solo with the Alabama Symphony in Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2 in April 2007.

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