



PHOTO PROVIDED

Philip Glass and four pianists will perform his work, "The Complete Piano Etudes" as part of Purdue Convocations' 2015-2016 season.

## My view on the Exponent's column buzz

So by now you might have heard about the opinion column by Jake Gerken in the Purdue Exponent. The one in which he calls out Purdue Convocations for not scheduling more shows that appeal to the student population. And says downtown Lafayette is "10 blocks of bars, meth labs and 55-year-old alcoholics on mopeds."

I read his piece yesterday, pored

over the comments, and thought about it overnight and this morning. I wanted a little time to collect my thoughts.

**DOMENICA  
BONGIOVANNI**



What many people have taken from the column is that it calls out Convos without

understanding the organization's purpose and mischaracterizes downtown Lafayette, thereby negating its culture, food, arts and nightlife.

As a reporter and arts advocate, I'd like to add some context about the arts scene to this conversation and to point

# BUZZ

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out just how many incredible things go on in this area.

I'll start with Convos. Recognizing its role in the community is germane to understanding its function. In a past interview, director Todd Wetzel told me the organization serves audiences here and in bordering states. That means it caters to a jazz presence — found at Purdue Bands and Orchestras, through the Jazz Club and at The Spot Tavern, to name a few — that's substantial for a town this size. Yes, children and young families form a good-sized niche. So do those who'd like to see internationally renowned composer Philip Glass in February and Henry Purcell's famous "Dido and Aeneas," which a live chamber orchestra, vocalists and the Mark Morris Dance Group will perform in April.

As for those artists who are considered popular with the college-aged crowd? That's the Student Concert Committee's focus. Want to tell them who you would like to see? Laura Clavio, SCC's adviser and Convos' assistant director, told me that the organization is always seeking students' opinions and involvement.

Here's the key: Convos complements everything else that's going on

in town, so evaluating it outside the larger community is impossible. Carnahan Hall, Lafayette Theater, Lafayette Symphony Orchestra, Long Center for the Performing Arts and so many more actually program with college-aged students in mind and perform a great deal of outreach to them. Looking for more details? In August, I wrote an in-depth piece that explores the music scene, its history with the college crowd and how two entrepreneurs at Lafayette Theater are bringing in a steady stream of national acts.

And those artists who have flown more under the radar help students, young professionals, parents, grandparents — anyone, honestly — stretch their ears and expand their cultural palate. With services like Netflix and Spotify that segment our entertainment and keep us tuned into our interests, expanding our tastes can be difficult. Live music is a way to break out of that comfort zone and experience new sounds.

I'll end this with a challenge — a fun one, I hope. Each week, I spend hours scouring the Internet and talking to those involved in the arts — locally and nationally — to compile what's going on for my TGIF column. So much is happening that most of the time, I can't fit everything into my word count. So to Gerken, Purdue students

and really anyone who's looking for something to do, try this as entertainment ramps up after the holidays: Attend at least one event a week that you would never dream of going to.

You might despise every minute of it. It might hurt your ears and eyes. It might be some-

thing you point to 20 years from now and say, "This show completely changed how I think."

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