

Remembering 9/11

Through words, music and paintings, local artists commemorate anniversary

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Harry Kantrovich was flying on a USAirways flight from Memphis to Boston on Sept. 11, 2001. He was on active duty for the Navy, on his way to a meeting. The meeting was cancelled and the flight was diverted to Dayton, Ohio. It took him two days to get home, and three days after that he was in New York City working in the crisis center. Kantrovich of Woodbridge said that he lost friends in both the Pentagon and World Trade Center that day.

"It's important for me to keep this alive," said Kantrovich, 53, who is appearing in a local production of "That Day in September," a Sept. 11-based play.

Kantrovich is just one area performer who is commemorating the fifth anniversary of Sept. 11. Local musicians, artists and actors are responding to the events in their own ways. In addition to "That Day in September," musicians re-recorded a Sept. 11-inspired song, written the day after the attacks. A Manassas art gallery's current exhibition is partially inspired by Sept. 11.

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Zemfira Productions is commemorating Sept. 11 on stage for the second year in a row.

Zina Bleck of Reston directs "That Day in September," which opened last Friday at The Lyceum in Alexandria. Originally performed off-Broadway, the two-man play is an intense look at a true story of how a



Donnie Biggs/News & Messenger

"9/11 probably influenced my determination to express things that are beautiful in the world," said Alice Long, whose "Road Trip USA" is on display at the Art Beat Gallery.

man survived and dealt with the tragedy. It returns to Northern Virginia to commemorate the fifth anniversary of Sept. 11.

Bleck said the 80-minute play starts with the author, Artie Van Why, coming to New York, and describing

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

• "That Day in September" runs at 8 p.m. Fridays, 3 p.m. Sundays, 8 p.m. Monday through Sept. 17 at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria. Tickets: \$15 general admission, \$10 seniors and students. (703) 318-0619 for reservations. zemfirastage.com.

• "Time and Remembrance" runs through Oct. 29 at ArtBeat Gallery, 9407 Main St., Manassas. Opening reception Saturday from 6 to 9 p.m. (703) 365-8558 or artbeatgallery.org.

• "Spirit of America" is available for free download at dreamsoundmusic.com.

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the terrorist attacks and his response. She added that this year's production includes slides of photographs taken in New York.

"It's more of a staged reading," said Kantrovich, one of two actors to play Van Why. Kantrovich added that while one man originally performed the play, there are a lot of ways the material can be divided.

Kantrovich said that it is important for him to keep the story of Sept. 11 alive.

"It's something now that can happen again," said Kantrovich. "The world has changed."

He added that both performers are physically and emotionally drained after each performance.

"I think it's a very important and well-written piece," said Herb Tax, 45, of Manassas, the other actor to play Van Why.

"This is the type of work actors dream of getting the opportunity to do," said Tax.

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Shawn Key wrote the song "Spirit of America" on Sept. 12, 2001, to help sort out his emotions. He co-wrote the song with longtime friend and vocalist Josh Regan. Both originally



Ana Pimsler/News & Messenger

Harry Kantrovich, left, and Herb Tax perform in "That Day in September" at The Lyceum in Alexandria Sunday. The play is an intense look at a true story of how a man survived and dealt with Sept. 11.

from Manassas, Key lives in Gainesville and Regan lives in Woodbridge.

Regan, 34, said the song was recorded in four hours. It was played on radio stations such as WJFK 106.7 in the wave of patriotism that followed Sept. 11.

Key and Regan recently re-recorded the song with a stronger guitar part and different drumming to commemorate the fifth anniversary. The song, which Key describes as a mix between a rock anthem and Americana, is available for free down-

load at dreamsoundmusic.com.

"The Spirit of America that we show/in children that we raise and seeds we sow/you can choose to fight this land/or you can choose to understand/the spirit of America." Regan sings over a distorted guitar at

the climax of the song.

"We don't want a buck for the song, we just want people to put a buck where it's needed," said Key, 34, adding that he hopes the song inspires people to donate money to a charity of their choice.

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The exhibits at the ArtBeat Gallery, an artists' co-op in Manassas, both deal with Sept. 11, although not always directly.

"Time and Remembrance" features the artists of the co-op's interpretation of the theme, occasionally dealing with Sept. 11. There is also a featured artist exhibit, "Alice Long: Road Trip U.S.A.," showcasing seven paintings from the gallery member.

As the featured artist, Long has the option to tie her show into the main exhibit. She said her paintings tie into the theme of "Time and Remembrance."

On Sept. 8, 2001, Long and her husband loaded up the car for a two-week cross-country road trip. As with previous trips, Long planned on taking many photographs of the sights, to later be adapted into paintings.

"9/11 probably influenced my determination to express things that are beautiful in the world," said Long, 52, of Manassas.

The paintings include a beach cove at Malibu, the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in Outer

Banks, N.C., and palm trees in San Diego. Not all of the paintings in the exhibit were from places Long and her husband visited on that trip.

"I take pictures of anything beautiful," said Long. "I'm particularly interested in the effects of light."

Jackie Fitzpatrick is the vice president of operations at the ArtBeat Gallery. She said Long has seven new works on display as part of her show.

"They're very lovely," said Fitzpatrick.

The new show, titled "Time and Remembrance," however, is not necessarily about Sept. 11.

Each artist did his or her own interpretation of the theme; sometimes relating to places they've lived or visited. Fitzpatrick has a painting of Rippon Lodge, a historic Prince William County site, in the exhibit, in addition to a Sept. 11 painting.

"I think I'm the only one who's got 9/11 remembered there," said Fitzpatrick of her painting in the gallery window of the New York City skyline with the memorial skylights against a dark blue background.

"It's pure emotion," said Fitzpatrick.

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