



Bright stage, dark screen

Official opening of Kulturhuset plays largely to raves, but films a no-show until this weekend

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Hey, at least it means another weekend of "firsts" people can afford because they didn't blow the month's entertainment budget all at once. Plus the workers and audience aren't completely burned out by non-stop shows.

A variety show commemorating the official opening of Longyearbyen's Kulturhuset

played as scheduled to an enthusiastic full house last Thursday. But a weekend heavily packed with inaugural events got considerably lighter due to an inoperative film projector.

So the first three movies at the culture center – but none in its new-to-Svalbard 3D capability – are scheduled starting at 5 p.m. Friday as part of a crowded lineup of performances during the coming weeks.

The official opening gala, coming nearly a month after the first of a few shows were staged as tests before partial-capacity crowds,

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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Scores of locals perform the finale of a variety show Thursday during the official opening of Longyearbyen's Kulturhuset.

Creating the tale of 'Element'

Periodic appearance by Sirkus Svalnardo puts fire, ice and more in the center ring

By KARLA PAZ
Staff writer

The development of a circus spectacle starts as an idea that grows into reality by gathering each part until a whole is made.

Those parts are fire, air, ice, water, light, storm, rocks and Northern Lights in "Element," a performance by Sirkus Svalnardo scheduled at 3:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. Saturday

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KARLA PAZ / ICEPEOPLE

Ida Sigernes, 15, rehearses a gymnastics act for Saturday's performances by Sirkus Svalnardo.

Trashing Svalbard for art's sake

Army of 'people' made of litter invades for final battle of global war



HA SCHULT

An oil print by German artist HA Schult depicts a less-than-appetizing Arctic ice floe.

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Trailer trash, white trash, talkin' trash ... the trashy clichés refuse to dispense from the grey lump atop the ol' carcass. Except for low-life trash, since this is about as high as it gets.

A massive amount of garbage is about to be prominently strewn across Svalbard's pristine lands by a German man who's spent decades turning hallowed sites into litter meccas. It won't be hard to miss, since it's literally an invading army of 500 "Trash People" who've already conquered the seven continents.

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Submitting material

Letters, columns, photos and other material are welcome, but we can't offer pay for published items since nobody here is getting paid at the moment. Submissions in electronic form (text, Word documents, JPEGs, etc.) are highly preferred, although typing and/or scanning of items will be considered on a per-case basis. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, accuracy, libel and other reasons, but we will also make every reasonable effort to contact the author about any changes prior to publication.



KARLA PAZ / ICEPEOPLE

Youths performing the "rock" part of Sirkus Svalbard's "Element" practice forming a human pyramid with guidance from instructors Vegard Krane, left, and Åselil Bjorklund.

Circus a serious study for youths

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at Kulturhuset.

The production from Kulta, a platform for creative and performing artists in Tromsø, gives people an opportunity to learn, teach, and meet professionals and amateurs. This is the fifth consecutive year Kulta has come to Longyearbyen, this year working for a week with about 70 youths to create the circus show.

"The most difficult (exercises) are the rolling, because it demands a lot of technique," said Ida Sofia Alnas, 10, training for her first circus. But "it's not difficult to train every day. I could train longer each day."

Her part in the show is representing the "rock" element with seven other children. The audience will see do them a human pyramid and a "rock" dance. But their focus isn't completely set in stone: they will also do a Santa's workshop dance.

The youths – some with experience from previous shows, some of the younger ones attempting such activities for the first time – started the week with games to warm up the body. Working with Kulta instructors and local volunteers, the students then started learning routines that will ultimately resemble the final artistic performance near the end of the week.

"It's challenging to set a performance in one week," said Åselil Bjorklund, a resident of southern Norway who, with Vegard Krane, are the Kulta instructors for youths ages eight to 11. Bjorklund has been with Kulta since 2003, but this is her first time working in Longyearbyen.

Tickets, available at www.lokalstyre.no or an hour before the show at Kulturhuset, are 100 kroner for adults, 50 kroner for youths.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Not to start trouble, but a couple of things we're wondering about the new Kulturhuset. First, who's going to be the first to sit in the "chairlift seats" along the top row when they're folded against the back wall of the theater (if a daredevil worker hasn't claimed the honor)? Gotta think commoners will have a tough time getting past the staff, who we hear also are speculating on who will be crazy enough to try. Second, how much does that glacier hanging as a prop across three-fourths of the stage during certain performances weigh and what's holding it up? ... "Is Santa Claus toxic?" asks the online news publication HealthCanal. Seems re-



searchers at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology are concerned for the Jolly Old Elf in Mine 2B due to the warming-enhanced toxins causing trouble for many Svalbard wildlife species. But "it's not all doom and gloom ... should Santa decide to diet a bit – by eating less fatty contaminated foods, for example – he won't have to worry about harmful health effects from the contaminants that are surely stored in his own fat, round belly." ... Speaking of Santa, he is livid the Wiki-Leaks documents include his gift list. "The leaked Christmas gift documents show that this year was going to be a bumper year in gifts," *The Daily Squib* reports. "However, because of this unwarranted leak, Christmas may now have to be cancelled." At the least, Santa's elves will "have to put in loads of unpaid extra hours to rectify the leak."



HA SCHULT

A portrayal of how artist H.A. Schult envisions his Trash People being stationed in Svalbard in March of 2011. Half of his 1,000 "people" are spending the winter in trailers in Longyearbyen before being deployed as the finale in a 15-year battle around the world to raise environmental awareness.

Trashing the planet to save it?

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By the way, if this sounds enticing, they're recruiting a fresh enlistee. The assignment isn't entirely clear, but it seems to have something to do with getting the locals to welcome the soldiers of scrap with open arms.

The person to contact about that is Birgit Fröhlich (haschult@hotmail.com), who also happens to deal with folks writing tomorrow's birdcage liners. In an e-mail interview, she noted the invaders – led by field general H.A. Schult, a German artist – are already among us.

"They are already in Spitsbergen in containers and wait for the light," she wrote. "Then they will be presented to the world."

Um, OK, but where's the containers bunkering those troops, what are they doing all winter and what is the battle plan when they emerge?

"Your other questions will be answered soon," was Fröhlich's throwaway reply.

This, of course, is where inquiring minds say "rubbish" and start rummaging through other people's scrapheaps.

It's not difficult, since Schult has been on the Trash People World Tour since 1996. They've stormed Moscow's Red Square, the Great Wall of China, the pyramids of Cairo, the Matterhorn, and other royal and pristine fronts. But his mission is winning hearts and minds over to a planet focused on cleanliness.

"After the ending of their odyssey over all continents, they (will) have been at 20 of the most outstanding locations of history of mankind," Schult wrote in an "artist's talk" brochure obtained in litter-free PDF format. "In 18 containers they roam around the world like refugees of the consumer society."

"The Trash People are images of ourselves. We produce trash and we will become trash. Today's Coca-Cola bottle is the Roman archeologists found of tomorrow."

Schult, 71, "has been called the 'German Christo' for the epic scale of his work," according to *Deutsche Welle*. He first caught the world's attention in 1969 with his art "action" titled "Situation Schackstrasse," consisting of covering a street in Munich with trash and paper, resulting in his immediate arrest.

He filled St. Mark's Square in Venice with old newspapers in an overnight action in 1976, again catching authorities off-guard. He's placed a golden-winged Ford Fiesta on top of a column marking the entrance to the Cologne's City Museum, hired a stunt pilot to crash a Cessna into the garbage dump on New York's Staten Island and created a paper river in downtown New York using old issues of *The New York Times*.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Also prosecutor to become Svalbard lieutenant governor

Lars Erik Alfheim, 39, an Oslo prosecutor, is scheduled to become Svalbard's next lieutenant governor in April, replacing Lars Fause after he departs at the end of this year. "I have worked with criminal cases where there are high levels of conflict," Alfheim said "I think it will be good to work with people in a more normalized relationship." He was selected from 28 applicants in a second field, with officials conducting the additional search after deciding they wanted a higher qualified pool than the 11 people who applied earlier during the year. Marianne Linnestad, a legal advisor for the lieutenant governor, will assume the second-in-command duties during the interim.

Mayor seeks clarification of residency rules for couples

Longyearbyen Mayor Kjell Mork is asking Norway's justice department for clarification about couples where a foreign spouse is seeking permanent residency in Norway. At least two local couples have not received answers to applications and inquires about obtaining such status. A new law this year sates foreigners who have lived in Svalbard and have temporary residence can live on the mainland for one year instead of three to receive permanent residency. One of the couples is also seeking clarification about whether their children can receive permanent residency if they have lived in Svalbard for a shorter time than their foreign parent. Norwegian officials said it can take up to 14 months to process permanent residency permits.

Hermansen still member of local board until end of year

Robert Hermansen resigned all company board positions after being accused of gross misappropriation of funds while head of Store Norske, but he remains a member of the the Labour Party on Longyearbyen's local governing board. He was elected to the position in 2007 and is head of the board's control committee. But he has given notice he will resign by Jan. 1 due to "relocation" and he has been absent from numerous meetings this year. No significant board work is expected this month.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday

Partly cloudy. NE winds at 7 km/h. High -28C (-35C wind chill), low -29C (-36C wind chill).
Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00

Thursday

Partly cloudy. N winds at 7 km/h. High -22C (-28C wind chill), low -29C (-36C wind chill).
Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00

Friday

Partly cloudy. ESE winds at 9 km/h. High -22C (-29C wind chill), low -25C (-33C wind chill).
Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00

Saturday

Cloudy. E winds at 11 km/h. High -21C (-29C wind chill), low -24C (-32C wind chill).
Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00

Extended forecast: Sunday, partly cloudy, -21C (-29C), -22C (-30C), light 0:00h; Monday, cloudy, -22C (-28C), -22C (-28C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, -22C (-28C), -23C (-31C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -22C (-30C), -24C (-32C), light 0:00h.

Data provided by yr.no



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

A pathway of candles, rather than a red carpet, guides the way for those arriving Thursday at the official opening of Longyearbyen's Kulturhuset.

Curtain officially goes up at Kulturhuset

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got universal accolades for the performances on stage and more mixed ones for the facility itself.

The performances ranged from familiar local stalwarts such as a certain cheesy Elvis impersonator to a menagerie of Thai and Russian dancers whirling to symphonic electronica from a mainland Norway duo. Presentations from dignitaries were heavy on poetic dialect.

"The culture today is dressed in new walls and are a signal that the city will continue as it has always wanted to," said Viva Mørk Kvello, a local culture board member, reading a prologue by Arne O. Holm, a longtime author and former *Svalbardposten* editor. "It is a notice that the city will continue to open up to the world in the knowledge that individual character and history are like a spike in the backbone. Generous. Safe. Free."

Many of the estimated 200 local residents performing or assisting with the evening gathered on stage for the final song. Among them – perhaps shockingly – was Anne Lise Sandvik, another local culture board member who was among the most vocal opponents of building the new facility to replace the 59-year-old Huset as the main performing arts center.

"If you can't beat them, join them," she said. "When the war's over, the war's over."

Her assessment after seeing and participating the opening act?

"It's too small," she said, echoing comments by several audience members about the theater's 245-seat capacity after the show. But her remarks extend offstage since "it's a bit of a challenge to find room for all of these activities."

Certainly more people would have liked to get into the concert by Vamp the following night. Tickets to see the Haugesund folk/Celtic/rock group sold out quickly, and those lucky enough to get in came away impressed by the musicians and the up-to-date acoustics.

"I think the sound is very, very good," said

Pernille Bronken Eidesen, a Longyearbyen resident for three years. "I tried sitting at the back and it still felt close to the stage."

Sitting at the back was the only option for Friday night's second concert, a reunion gig by the Longyearbyen rock/blues band Howlin' Huskies. The show offered another look at one of Kulturhuset's improvements over the portable chairs near the stage at Huset, as workers simply folded the new theater's seats simply against the back wall in a matter of minutes to make room for the dance crowd.

But Kulturhuset was dark for most of the weekend's remaining schedule, as a triple-feature film debut – first at the center, first in 3D in Longyearbyen and the Norwegian premier of the animated comedy "Mega Brain" – was among several movies canceled due to a missing piece of the new digital projector.

"The fan was missing for the projector we received," although it is now installed and tested, wrote Roger Ødegård, the city's cultural advisor, in a prepared statement. Instead "Elias og Jakten på Havets Gull," another children's film making its national debut, will be the first of three screenings this weekend "if we receive the movies in time."

Tickets go on sale an hour before showtime, with a small surcharge for 3D movies requiring battery-operated glasses that, unlike the plastic relics of decades ago, must be returned.

Another premier with a local theme will be "Polar Eufori," ("Polar Euphoria"), a 30-minute film and live music performance paying homage to Svalbard at 6 p.m. Wednesday, featuring Liv Mari Schei, Mari Tefre and Sigr Sandberg Meløy. Performing an hour after that show will be the TrondheimSolistene orchestra, featuring soprano singer Isa Katharina Gericke.

Also scheduled next week is the experimental poetry/multimedia show "Skuggar" ("Shadows") by Jon Fosse at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

What's up

Dec. 10

5 p.m.: Movie: "Elias og Jakten på Havets Gull," Norwegian children's, premier screening. Kulturhuset.

Dec. 11

3:30 p.m.; 5 p.m.: Circus performance by Sirkusuka 2010. 100 kroner adults, 50 kroner youths. Kulturhuset.

Dec. 12

11 a.m.: Third Sunday of Advent Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - Part 1," U.S. fantasy/family, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

9 p.m.: Movie: "Nokas," Norwegian drama/thriller, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Dec. 13

10:15 a.m.: Environmental and Economic Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

11 a.m.: Luciatog celebration, with lights-out storytime for children and free refreshments. Open to all. Longyearbyen Library.

Dec. 14

7 p.m.: Local beard meeting. Mediateket at Lompensenteret.

7 p.m.: Evening gathering/open fireplace. Svalbard Church.

7:30: Theater: "Skuggar" ("Shadows") by Jon Fosse, experimental poetry/multimedia. Kulturhuset.

Dec. 15

6 p.m.: Premier: "Polar Eufori," film to live music paying homage to Svalbard by Liv Mari Schei and Mari Tefre. Lyrics by Sigr Sandberg Meløy. Free. Kulturhuset.

7:30 p.m.: Concert: TrondheimSolistene orchestra and soprano singer Isa Katharina Gericke. Kulturhuset.

Dec. 17

8 p.m.: Movie: "Kongen av Bastøy," Norwegian action/drama, national premier. Kulturhuset.

What's online

Icepeople.net provides daily updates of news about Svalbard and the world's polar regions, plus extras for articles from the print edition. Among the latest news:

- *Russia: Warming pluses exceed minuses*
- *Warming may submerge island nation*
- *WikiLeaks adds twist to climate summit*
- *Can glowing plants light up Arctic night?*