The April 28 fire along the Muddy River was another one on April 22 was typical—tinder-dry Phragmites blaze up, the sky fills with soot and ashes, someone calls in an alarm, and the fire department scrambles personnel and equipment to suppress the blaze. The fire may have been caused by a badly snuffed cigarette, but the source in this case according to McDonald was “undetermined.” Origins of fires of this sort are typically only established if an eyewitness provides that information; in this case, nobody volunteered.

Whatever the cause, the April 28 fire counted as a “one alarm” blaze; the department dispatched half a dozen engines (tankers and ladder rigs) and they dealt with the threat. No estimate was filed of the cost of the blaze; the department didn’t work that way. Instead, using its budgeted share of tax dollars, it maintains men and equipment in constant readiness to deal with fires of all sorts—buildings and, in this case, what was classified as “a brush fire.”

When that fire occurred on April 28, the firefighters present at the scene determined that it posed no immediate danger to people or buildings, so they simply suppressed it as quickly as possible and returned to their stations.

One might wonder why the city doesn’t engage in annual controlled burns to remove the reeds. McDonald stated that Boston, like most large urban areas in the United States, has a fire code that prohibits controlled burns within the city’s borders. This prohibition takes account of the City’s environmental regulations and includes any kind of fire, e.g., fire pits, outdoor cooking fires and the like.

The acreage covered by the fire was not estimated; department officials filled a type of “check-off” report typical in the United States, that is, “Conditions—dry/rainy” and other technical matters of interest of the department, insurers and other.

Fires along the river seem likely to continue for the foreseeable future, unless members of the Muddy River Maintenance and Oversight Committee manage to have federal funding for bank-to-bank dredging restored. That would presumably eliminate the habitat the Phragmites reeds find so hospitable, and thus reduce the threat of brush fires.

Jamie Thomson lives in the West Fens.

Street Pianos Set for Encore Performance

By Alison Pultinas

“Play Me, I’m Yours” said the design on one of the “street pianos” that showed up on street corners, in parks, and at other overlooked spots in the fall of 2013. More than 500,000 people—with varied musical talent—did just that, and set down to play, often attracting an audience. The street pianos will return this fall. Hosted by the Celebrity Series, the program will put some 50 playable pianos in Boston neighborhoods from September 23 to October 10. This interactive public art project holds opportunities for other creative artists, too. Before the pianos make their first public appearance in the fall, visual artists will have the chance to decorate them. To apply (or donate a piano), go to streetpianoboston.org for details.

PROUTY GARDEN HANGS ON FOR ANOTHER SUMMER, AT LEAST

By Alison Pultinas

State review for Boston Children’s Hospital’s (BCH) expansion continues, with no word yet on when the state’s Determination of Need process will be complete. This spring, BCH submitted responses to two requests from the Department of Public Health—one for more information on the site alternatives considered and reasons why each was eliminated and one discussing the impact of the project on Medicaid patients. BCH cited efficiency and cost as top factors considered for the choice of the site; construction on the Prouty/ Wobuch location would bring important bed online sooner than any other option.

In addition, BCH’s lawyer, Jane Willis of Ropes and Gray, sent letters in April to the three Ten Taxpayer groups refuting the contentions of the Friends of Prouty Garden (FPG) that the hospital was violating the requirement that major capital expenditures related to the new facility must wait for the Determination of Need decision.

Subsequently, lawyers for FPG filed a motion in Suffolk Superior Court for a temporary injunction against the hospital, arguing that construction started illegally.

PROUTY GARDEN on page 3 >
**Dudley Accelerator Looks beyond White Men to Find New Tech Stars**

BY ERICA YEE

The Dudley Accelerator, founded in 2014 by Gilad Rosenzweig of Smarter in the City, is a startup accelerator that supports companies in Roxbury, Massachusetts. It aims to address the lack of diversity in the tech industry by focusing on diverse founders.

Rosenzweig realized that Boston’s inner-city communities have an abundance of talent, but their ideas are under-represented. “There’s a known problem that there’s a lack of diversity in the tech sector—not just in employment,” Rosenzweig said. “There’s also a problem with investment in companies founded by diverse founders.”

Four of the five companies in Smarter in the City’s most recent cohort are founded by women, and all the founders are from minorities under-represented in the tech sector. Most founders of high-tech startups who receive money are male and white, but there are still companies being developed by people in the Black and Latino communities, Rosenzweig said.

“We’re trying to fill in a piece of the puzzle, so the companies that do exist get the right exposure to the tech sector and to funding,” he said.

Beautyl.yk, a business from the accelerator’s just-completed third cohort, is already taking in revenue. Instead of heading to a salon, Beautyl.yk customer can place an order for a stylist to come to her home or office for on-demand personal service. Rica Elysee developed the idea out of Boston Natural, a meet-up group for women of color passionate about hair, makeup and sisterhood. Elysee said she applied to Smarter in the City because it was an opportunity to build up her company with an organization doing great work in Roxbury. She had no previous business experience. “I literally took my idea and brought it to fruition,” Elysee said.

The people in the Dudley Square office supported her through the stages of growing a business, and provided resources and technology for finding new team members. Now Beautyl.yk, whose office is on Main Street in Cambridge, is looking to expand.

“Model doesn’t just go for geographical focus; it’s more a scalable model. Being in Boston is just a stepping stone. We’re launching in Atlanta in a few months,” Elysee said.

Smarter in the City also helps startup ULink, which helps community college students transfer to four-year colleges efficiently through its Web platform and app. ULink works with schools in the area, such as Roxbury Community College.

As Smarter in the City prepares for its fourth cohort in September, Rosenzweig reflected on what he has learned in the past two years. "We definitely want to grow by having more companies, and we also want to provide more resources for companies that come through here. Often an accelerator will support a company until they finish and then it’s like, ‘Now you’re on our own.’ We’d like to be part of the continuation for every company that comes here,” he said.

For example, his team noticed that startup ups have struggled to find the financing to produce beta products needed to attract investors.

"How can we actually use resources here in Boston to reduce that cost?" Rosenzweig asked. "One of our ideas is to use interns to be part of the software development locally instead of outsourcing."

Rosenzweig said he hopes to continue adapting the program and improving how Smarter in the City benefits the community with every new cohort.

"What we’re doing is trying to make the tech landscape more equitable, both who’s a part of it and where it takes place. In a city as small and closed-in as Boston, it’s possible," Rosenzweig said.

Erica Yee is an undergraduate student at Northeastern University majoring in journalism and information science.
> PROUTY GARDEN from page 1

Judge Kenneth Halinger denied the request on May 9, but the FPGA website notes that, “As a result of the lawsuit, the Hospital has assumed the Superior Court that the Prouty Garden will not be closed and the Dow Redwood will not be taken down while the DoN application is pending. We believe this is the first time the Hospital has made such a public commitment; the garden was previously closed this past February. At least now, we appear to have succeeded in making sure it’s open for another summer.”

Preliminary work at the Wolbach building on Shattuck Street next to Prouty had had the agreements with the Boston Landmarks Commission because of the rationale for the early site preparation; of its website, as opposed to including it with Northeastern under the planning section pending. We believe this is the first time the Hospital has assumed responsibility for the complex healthcare policies dealing with the project’s site in the DoN application. Wolbach houses offices for the top echelon of the hospital’s leadership but is determined and no longer appropriate for administrative use, according to the BCHA attorney.

In mid-March, Legere and Gregor, the law firm engaged by FPGA, submitted a report on BCHA’s analysis of the project’s impact on Medicaid patients. The report deals with the complex healthcare policies related to reclassification of MassHealth’s low-income policies to Medicaid managed-care plans. The report’s executive summary states that the DoN application should be denied because the new project will reduce the availability and accessibility of health care services to Medicaid recipients in Massachusetts.

Ave/Beckert street dormitory, the 2015 Community Benefits Report and the 2015 agreement between Boston Parks and Urban Forests and the City’s Department of the Environment, Planning and Development Projects. This includes the Draft Impact Project Report for the Community

COMMENTS DUE JUNE 10 ON BURKE STREET DORM; NU WANTS BRA TO VOTE IN JULY

by Alison Pultinas

ortheastern University’s proposed 20-story student housing project on Columbus Ave, is under public review, comments are due by June 10 to the Boston Redevelopment Authority’s project manager, Katelyn Sullivan (katelyn.sullivan@boston.gov). The BRA now is releasing the documents related to Northeastern under the planning section of its website, as opposed to including it with developments targeted concerns, and parts of the GARDEN are now closed off. BCH asserts that the Wolbach administration building on Shattuck Street next to Prouty will be taken down while their DoN application is pending. We believe this is the first time the Hospital has assumed responsibility for the complex healthcare policies dealing with the project’s site in the DoN application. Wolbach houses offices for the top echelon of the hospital’s leadership but is determined and no longer appropriate for administrative use, according to the BCHA attorney.

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Ave/Beckert street dormitory, the 2015 Community Benefits Report and the 2015 agreement between Boston Parks and Urban Forests and the City’s Department of the Environment, Planning and Development Projects. This includes the Draft Impact Project Report for the Community

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Trans National Properties notified the BRA that it will file plans to develop its property at 2 Charleston St [where the Bowker Overpass crosses Ipswich]. It envisions a 30-plus-story tower with 325 apartments and condos, plus street-level commercial space. The plan would also include a major arts-themed redesign of Ipswich Street along the property. The BRA has added more concert dates, with the announcement of a second Jason Aldean/Kid Rock show announced after the first one sold out in 90 minutes. In total, twelve concerts will take place between July 15 and September 10, bringing the number of events to an old high-water mark. Amazon moved quickly after Bloomberg News revealed that Amazon Prime customers could get same-day deliveries throughout central Boston—they had lived in one of three Roxbury ZIP codes. As social media threatened to blow up over the issue, Amazon announced it would add the excluded areas. The Boston Housing Authority announced it has renamed Bromley-Heath Housing in JP in honor of activist Mildred C. Hailey, who died last year. In the 1970s, Hailey led a group of Bromley-Heath residents in a revolt of sorts against BHA mismanagement, eventually winning the right to manage the development themselves in the first instance of tenant-managed public housing in U.S. Arne Glomcher, founder of New York’s Pace Gallery, gave $1 million to his alma mater, Mass College of Art and Design. The gift pushed a $12 million fund-raising campaign for renovation of the Paint Hall wings at the school. The half-way mark was met with the appointment of Jon Trayer, previous to the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, Frank Harris, is one of five finalists for a national teaching award, according to the Boston Globe. The BPS school splits its campus between facilities in the LMA and 110 The Fenway. Boston Public Library trustees chose a career librarian from the West Coast to become the new president of the library system. Currently director of public libraries in San Jose, Jill Bourne will succeed Amy Ryan, who resigned last summer in the wake of a controversy over misfiled etchings in the library collection. The Walsh administration introduced a program that will allow attending Roxbury Community College free for Boston Public School grads who meet certain academic and income thresholds. The plan builds on recent research showing that financial hardship pushes many low-income students out of college after a year, undercutting their lifetime earning potential. Students who qualify may also enroll at Bunker Hill CC.

STREET CLEANING

The City cleans Fenway streets between 12 and 4pm on the first and third Wednesdays of each month (odd-numbered side) and the second and fourth Wednesdays (even-numbered side). More info at 617-435-4800 or www.cityofboston.gov/publicworks/sweeping. The state cleans streets along the Back Bay at the following times:

- SECOND THURSDAY The Riverway, 12:00-3:00pm
- SECOND FRIDAY The Fenway includes inside lane, Charleston Extension and Forsyth Way, 8:00am-12:00pm

TRASH & RECYCLING PICK-UP

- BACK BAY [Contractor is Sunrise Scavenger]: Trash pick-up on Monday and Thursday. Recycling pick-up on Monday and Thursday.
- FENWAY [Contractor is Sunrise Scavenger]: Trash pick-up on Tuesday and Friday. Recycling pick-up on Tuesday and Friday. 

BIKERS WANT TO SEE SAFER INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE LMA

BY ALISON PULTINAS

The Dana Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI) hosted another Longwood Area Cycling Summit at the Jimmy Fund Auditorium on Binney St. Along with the cookies and fruit—and the ubiquitous handouts from Boston Bikes, street art, and Brookline Alliance video from the LMA Cyclists Network with footage of some truly awful biking conditions and heard speakers present somewhat conflicting plans for future bike lanes.

David Read, senior administrator from DFCI and self-described as “passionate about improving biking on Longwood Avenue,” proposed bike lanes marked with paint and finishable pedestrian crossings. He also proposed an app that would assess the impact on congestion and would support a long-term goal of adding cycle tracks (bikes physically separated from other traffic). His plan would require some permanent light changes at Brookline, a controversial proposal for the city’s traffic engineers.

Another speaker was researcher Anne Lusk from The Harvard Chan School of Public Health, who co-authored an analysis that suggests that bike lanes significantly reduce the number of crashes and fatalities while reducing the level of crime in the area. “This is the kind of data that can help us understand the impact of bike lanes,” she said.

IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOODS

A LOT HAPPENED IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE LAST ISSUE

FENWAY NEWS | JUNE 2016 | 3
A Teacher Explains the Problems With Charter School Expansion

BY RAUL GARCIA

The statewide debate over the expansion of charter schools continues. In the latest round, charter schools’ ballot question to lift the existing cap on charter school enrollments is a contentious issue. It’s important to consider the impact of charter schools on the Fenway. Charter schools will siphon off $195,105,400 in funds that would otherwise stay in the Boston Public Schools, and be used to improve learning for all students. For BPS students, this funding loss means smaller class sizes, fewer enrichment courses such as music, art, and athletics, and other damaging cutbacks.

None of us should be surprised that after three years of shrinking budgets, our local schools are failing to meet the needs of many of our students. A recent report by a school budget review commission found that Massachusetts is underfunding public education by at least $1 billion a year. The ability of our schools to provide students with more opportunities for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, and enrichment programs such as music, art, and athletics, is already threatened. And now, charter schools are taking more than $400 million in funds each year from our local school districts.

Numerous studies have shown that early education is the most effective way to ensure a child’s success later in life, but only 60% of 3- and 4-year-old children in Boston are enrolled in an early education program. Statewide, Massachusetts has over 16,000 children on waiting lists for pre-school programs. At the very least, we should provide every child with access to pre-school learning programs for every child instead of giving money to more unaccountable charter schools.

Part of the problem is that the state approves charters even when the communities where they will be located are opposed to them. This has happened in Brookline, Gloucester, and many other communities. Charter schools are not accountable to the local taxpayers who have to pay for them or the communities they serve. That’s wrong. Parents and taxpayers in the Fenway should have the final say on what kind of schools we want.

A report from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, released last month, found that 60 percent of charter schools in Massachusetts don’t have a single parent on their boards of trustees.

Clearly, some of our schools are struggling, particularly in our urban areas. We should be committed to fixing them—not just keeping money away and giving it to charters that already have significant special needs, and whose teachers are not certified. Expanding a two-track system of separate and unequal schools, where students with the most challenges remain in local district schools with fewer and fewer resources, is not consistent with our Massachusetts values.

The ballot question will allow charters to expand into areas where they don’t exist right now—anywhere in the state—taking millions away from successful neighborhood public schools and causing the elimination of programs, in decreases in class sizes, and other damaging cuts in the schools that most families in Fenway favor. In the Fenway, allowing charter schools to take more money away from our public school system will only hurt the majority of students. We need to fully fund our public school system before we consider spending more money on charter schools.

Raul Garcia teaches at the Boston Arts Academy on Irving Street.
Working Through Nonprofits, Fellows Bring Extra Support to Low-Income Kids

BY CASSIDY DESTEFANO

Each year, the Massachusetts Promise Fellowship grants 40 young people the opportunity to devote a year of service to a local nonprofit organization.

“Anyone that really wants to give back or focus on an issue that surrounds youth development comes to us,” said Cecelia Auditore, evaluation and volunteer manager of the program. She said that, in exchange, participants receive an allowance of $14,500, career coaching, and free courses through Northeastern University’s College of Professional Studies.

“We’re a dual-focused organization,” she said. “On the one hand, we are focused on building youth success with our partners; on the other hand, we want to encourage our members to pursue their personal goals after graduation.”

The fellowship is an AmeriCorps nonprofit operation that receives its economic backing from the federal Corporation for National and Community Service, Auditore said. Northeastern acts as a fiscal agent for the fellowship, matching an unspecified amount of federal grant money that the program receives with amenities, including complimentary classes, resources and office space in the university’s Center of Community Service, based in the Huntington Avenue YMCA.

According to the program’s website, more than 390 fellows have served at local organizations, including Massachusetts General Hospital, the Science Club for Girls, and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, since the fellowships’ inaugural year in 1999. Community partners contribute between $10,000 and $15,000 to house a fellow based on their operating budgets as outlined in the fellowship’s request for proposals. Once hired, fellows mentor sixth- through 12th-graders by providing tutoring, coaching students in the college process, and designing community service programs.

Since the program’s founding, its curriculum has been rewritten to encompass not only dedication to community partners but to increased awareness of social justice issues.

“The restructuring of the fellowship reflects the evolving needs of our under-served communities,” Auditore said.

Those communities are highlighted in the new training program, which focuses on race; class; discrimination against those with physical disabilities; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.

Fellows have fashioned programs to bolster youth development and service opportunities.

According to a press release, 400 to 450 applicants compete for 30 open spots each year. Ten spots are reserved for fellows who choose to serve a second term.

“We have fellows this year that are as young as 30 and as old as 36. We get a vast array of ages and experiences that really builds diversity within the program,” Auditore said.

She listed the general qualifications for a fellow as someone who has experience working with youth, is above age 17, and is a permanent U.S. citizen.

After a brief orientation in August, participants are sent to in-state locations, including Boston, the Berkshires, Lynn, and Fall River.

Auditore said that although service sites are scattered, periodic retreats and more than 170 hours of training forge a sense of community among fellows. The support system acts as a safety net for those in the program who have to work additional jobs to make ends meet, she said. Because fellows receive a stipend and not a wage, many of them also qualify for public financial assistance.

“Applying for food stamps and fuel assistance is an experience that a lot of our members have,” she said. “Resilience is a huge aspect for being a successful member and fellow.”

Despite financial challenges, the fellows Auditore has encountered are committed to the experience rather than the paycheck, she said. “It’s a year of ups, downs, wins, losses, friendships, tears and lots of laughter,” she said. “But I think when you put together a group of like-minded individuals around believing and empowering youth, you just have a lot of fun.”

Cassidy DeStefano is a freshman journalism major at Northeastern University.
THE FENWAY
[ BACK IN THE DAY ]

HISTORIC PHOTOS COURTESY OF 
BERNIE KRAMER COLLECTION (1)
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
CITY OF BOSTON ARCHIVES (2, 3)
CONTEMPORARY PHOTOS (2, 3): STEVE CHASE

LMA Turbine Awaits Green Light, Despite Doubts About Air-Quality Impacts

BY ALISON PULTINAS

The Medical Area Total Energy Plant (MATEP), owned by partners Morgan Stanley Infrastructure Partners and Veolia Energy North America, is trying to add a third turbine to its facility in the Longwood Medical Area. Before the expansion can go through, federal and state air-quality regulations require a public review process. As of this writing, the project’s Draft Permit states that emissions will not exceed federal limits. Permit states that emissions will not exceed federal limits. Conflicts are inevitable when Boston residents speak of their neighborhoods, including streets now part of the institutional district codified by the city as the Longwood Medical Area, or “the campus” in the corporation’s description of the power plant’s service area. Historically all of Fenwood Road Francis Street, and Longwood Avenue were part of Mission Hill. Susan Wladkowski of Fenwood Road agreed with other speakers that air-quality monitoring should test for pollution at the upper floors of the nearby apartment buildings (Neville House at Vining and New Whitney, and the Mosaic on the Riverway), but she reserved her primary concern for the “old neighborhood,” the Victorian-era two- and three-family homes without central air conditioning. As she pointed out, “We can’t shut our windows,” when temperatures rise. Questions were asked but, according to the hearing protocol, not answered.

The Department of Environmental Protection has issued a Draft Permit that goes into effect immediately if there are no comments requesting specific changes. Consultants for RTH analyzed the technical submission and concluded that additional background air-quality analysis is needed. The project’s analysis compares background air-quality levels in Mission Hill to those in Kenmore Square (the closest state pollution-monitoring station), but it failed to show that the two are equivalent. Another factor to consider is that the residents of the Roxbury Tenants of Harvard development are demonstrably poorer and therefore less healthy than the general population. Dolores Pullen, of Mission Park Drive, spoke movingly of her chronic respiratory illness and the prevalence of asthma in the neighborhood.

We’ve got different cars, certainly, and an abundance of new development. But it’s still possible to find pockets of history in the neighborhood that are somehow untouched by the whips and scorns of time. Photo 1 shows an early view of Boylston Street from roughly where Jerry Remy’s now stands. Photo 2 shows Agassiz Road, once nicknamed “the Speedway.” Photo 3 shows a police wagon about 1925 on Park Drive [then known as Audubon Road] and the same view today.

BPL Library-On-Wheels Heads Our Way

The BiblioCycle is a partnership with Boston Bikes. This month the BiblioCycle makes stops in the Fenway, Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and Dorchester. Fenway visits include the Fenway Community Center on June 22 (3–5pm) and the LMA on Monday, June 13 and June 27 (11:30am–1:30pm both days). The BiblioCycle will also visit the Loring-Greenough Farmers’ Market in JP on Thursdays, June 2, 16, and 30 (4–7pm).

Looking for a good book? And somehow just don’t get to the library? Well, keep your eye out for the Boston Public Library’s Bibliocycle! The BiblioCycle-powered mobile library has started its third season of bringing books to markets, fairs, and other community events. Its brightly painted trailer holds about 50 books, from best-selling novels to gardening, bike repair, and kids’ picture books. The program began in 2014 as a partnership with Boston Bikes.

Besides checking out books—up to 10 per visit—readers can get other help from the roving librarians. You can sign up for a library card, get help with reference questions, and learn how to use the library’s digital resources. There are even pop-up story times. If you have fines, however, they must be paid at a bricks-and-mortar branch. (To schedule a Bibliocycle visit to an event, go to bpl.org/programs/community.htm.)

Barbara Brooks Simons lives in the East Fens.
BY JOHN ENGSTROM

A

out of us nowadays are likely to approach the prospect of a live performance of an ancient Greek play with quizzical trepidation. How on earth are they going to do all that stuff—characters from myth, a stylized chorus, song and dance, formal declaration, epic settings, magical events? Despite being taught in universities, these plays have fallen out of favor with modern audiences. But a noteworthy production will come along to bring some relief to the theatrical drought: Ralph Fiennes as Oedipus, Juliette Binoche as Antigone, Fiona Shaw or Kristin Scott-Thomas as Elektra are some of the more recent examples—if you can get to see them. Boston University’s College of Fine Arts made a brave contribution in April and May, with student performances of Prometheus Bound by Aeschylus (525 B.C.—460 B.C.). A more unusual choice for a college theater could not be imagined.

How was it? Well, it wasn’t the Royal Shakespeare Company doing The Greeks. It wasn’t Clash of the Titans either—although Aeschylus’s play has Titans in it. But the gifted actors at BU took the almost intractable piece in hand and made something of it. They made it work for them and showed their chops. That must have pleased the gods.

Greek tragedy got the ball rolling on Western drama at more than one level. It grew out of hymns to the god of wine and unbridled sexual behavior, Dionysus. It has elements and methods that we writers (and playwrights) continue to draw nourishment from—characterization, dialogue, psychology, violence (always off-stage), myth, social and political relevance, epic or mythic subjects. Only a small number of Greek tragedies are extant today, out of hundreds that were written and provided apt, lively choreography. The performance that makes history: Laurence Olivier as Oedipus and Judith Anderson as Medea come to mind.

There were no equivalents to those luminaries among the BU performers of the Aeschylean play, but everyone acted their parts with sensitivity and agility. Despite several rough patches, there were almost no weak links or faux pas in the whole 90 minutes. Director Jonathan Solari delivered a clear through-line to the largely static action and provided apt, lively choreography. The translation used was by James Kerr—it’s crisp, plain and free of clunkers. My favorite line (I forget who speaks it): “Art stands in the shadow of Necessity.” Hear, hear! Aeschylus has, indeed, been more famous as a soldier than a playwright, because he fought in the Greek war against the Persians, was said to have been inspired to work in theater by a dreamt encounter with Dionysus. We can be glad that he took up this vocation, and the BU endeavor confirmed that Prometheus Bound can still hold the stage.

There’s nothing easy about this play. Its proto-scientific mythology is closest to modern viewers and its declaration often verges on the abstract or the abstruse. But, as they say, talent will out! To the larger-than-life characters—especially Power-Foce (Alice Kabia), Oceanus (Alyssa Yoffie) and Prometheus himself (Eli Raskin)—the BU fledglings brought youthful energy and dignified maturity. Solari’s handling of the five-member chorus (all women)—who take pity on Prometheus and elicit his story—was effective; everyone moved and spoke (and at one point, sang) with graceful specificity.

There’s little we can glean about how these plays were done when they were first written. We know that they were performed in open-air festivals, the most famous was the Festival of Dionysus in Athens. The performances involved singing, dancing, chorus, costuming and makeup, pipes and percussion (the MFA has a handful of examples) and sculpted masks, and there were various “special effects” (mechanical cranes were used to swing supernatural characters high in the air).

The Greek amphitheaters were fan-shaped. Semi-circular rows of stone benches on a hill surrounded a circular platform at the bottom of the slope for the chorus to perform on. Behind that was the stage for the principal actors, who were masked and alternated between singing and speaking; and there was backstory space for costume changes and sound effects (including thunder machines).

Prometheus Bound may be a bit harder to follow than other Greek plays because its subject matter is not from Homer or “The Odyssey” but from cosmic legend, based on archaic creation stories. Prometheus is, as he reminds us, himself a Titan—he’s one of the Titans who did battle and were defeated by the new generation of Olympian deities, led by the implacable and venerable Zeus.

The deities in this Aeschylean version are not people you can introduce your parents to. They are a compendium of bad human traits: jealousy, capriciousness, mania, opportunism, power-grabbing, sadism and paranoia are among their qualities. Hephaestus (Kadie Car), who hammers Prometheus into a place, is a sniveling whiner. Zeus emerges not as a benevolent father figure but as a supernatural precursor of the evil dictators of world history. Prometheus’s excruciating punishment for passing on the gift of fire to humanity is to be chained as a rag in the Caucasian Mountains where an eagle feeds daily on his liver and prods Prometheus’s suffering.

In an ideal production of “Prometheus Bound,” the designer—at BU this was Bori Yoon—would make Prometheus face with the protagonist fixed in place at a great height, with winged Hermes (who turns up at the end of the play) flying in on wires like Peter Pan. The Lane-Conley Studio 210 at BU doesn’t have fly space—essentially it’s a long, horizontal box—so we missed out on the play’s exciting verticality; this production was about making much out of space and texture.

But Yoon was able to evoke the mountain scenery by means of layered slabs of artificial rocks with jagged fissures that harbored lengths of chain. And the thunder machines (which made you cough occasionally) provided a spooky, otherworldly atmosphere, as did the sound design by Audrey Dube: it built to a powerful storm at the finale.

Stanislavski said (in a classic cliché) that there are no small parts, only small actors. Prometheus Bound is a big play—very big—and the BU actors successfully evoked something of that size and scope.

John Engstrom lives in the West Fens.
Through Sun, 6/12
ODYSSEY OPERA presents When in Rome, founding its 20-year-old seldom-heard opera in a new production at the Boston Lyric Opera. Performances are Fri, Sat, and Mon at 8pm, and Sun at 2pm. New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall. Tickets are $40–$95.

Through Sun, 6/12
SATURDAY NIGHT CONCERTS present Ira Thorpe, clarinetist, and members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Performances are Fri, Sat, and Sun at 8pm in Symphony Hall. Tickets are $30–$145, plus $14 for students. "Ira Thorpe is a brilliant clarinetist and a wonderful presence on stage. He and his orchestra delivered a performance of singular quality and beauty." -BostonGlobe.com.

Through Sun, 6/12
Boston Symphony Orchestra presents From Verdi to Shostakovich. Performances are Fri, Sat, and Sun at 8pm in Symphony Hall. Tickets are $30–$145, plus $14 for students. "From the soaring melodies in Verdi’s Requiem to the deep emotional intensity of Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony, this is a program that will touch the heart.” -BostonGlobe.com.

Through Wed, 6/15
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS presents Picasso: Form and Space. Through Sun, 6/12. Picasso and his contemporaries transformed ideas about modernity, anatomy, and the representation of space. The exhibition focuses on how Picasso and his contemporaries understood the concept of space, and the way that they represented space in their work. Art, Architecture, and Design.

Wednesday, Fridays in June
NOONTIME AND EVENING CONCERTS continue in Boston Public Library’s Courtyard. The series is known as the "Midday Melodies" series and is held in Boston Public Library’s Courtyard. Performances are Thursdays at 12pm and Fridays at 5pm. Tickets are $10–$20, plus $10 for students. "The Noontime and Evening Concerts are a great way to spend an afternoon in Boston Public Library’s Courtyard. The series is known as the "Midday Melodies" series and is held in Boston Public Library’s Courtyard." -BostonGlobe.com.

Saturday, 6/4
MANCHESTER THEATRE CENTER presents The Merchant of Venice. Performances are Fri, Sat, and Sun at 8pm in Manchester Theatre Center. Tickets are $45–$65, plus $15 for students. "The Merchant of Venice is a classic of the Shakespearean canon, and a timeless tale of love, honor, and justice. This production features an all-female cast, and explores themes of gender and sexuality in a contemporary context." -BostonGlobe.com.

Friday, 6/3
TUESDAYS IN JUNE continue. Performances are Wednesdays and Fridays at 7pm, and Thursdays at 8pm. Tickets are $25–$35, plus $15 for students. "Tuesdays in June is a series of free concerts held at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The series features a variety of music genres, including classical, jazz, and world music. Performances are held on Wednesdays and Fridays at 7pm, and Thursdays at 8pm." -BostonGlobe.com.

Friday, 6/3
FENWAY THEATRE presents Holding the Water. Performances are Fri, Sat, and Sun at 8pm in Fenway Theatre. Tickets are $30–$50, plus $20 for students. "Holding the Water is a powerful and emotionally resonant work that explores the themes of memory, identity, and the search for belonging. This production features a cast of talented actors and is directed by a highly respected director. " -BostonGlobe.com.

Friday, 6/3
JUNE CELEBRATIONS continue. Performances are Thursdays at 8pm and Fridays at 9pm. Tickets are $30–$50, plus $15 for students. "June Celebrations is a series of free concerts held at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The series features a variety of music genres, including classical, jazz, and world music. Performances are held on Thursdays at 8pm and Fridays at 9pm." -BostonGlobe.com.

Friday, 6/3
WEDNESDAYS IN JUNE continue. Performances are Wednesdays at 8pm. Tickets are $25–$35, plus $15 for students. "Wednesdays in June is a series of free concerts held at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The series features a variety of music genres, including classical, jazz, and world music. Performances are held on Wednesdays at 8pm." -BostonGlobe.com.

Friday, 6/3
BOSTON GAY MEN’S CHORUS members show the way that love and art can heal. Performances are Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8pm. Tickets are $25–$50, plus $15 for students. "Boston Gay Men’s Chorus is a diverse and talented group of singers who perform a variety of musical genres, including classical, jazz, and world music. Performances are held on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8pm." -BostonGlobe.com.

Friday, 6/3
HARVARD UNIVERSITY presents Schoenberg’s Pierrot Lunaire. Performances are Fri, Sat, and Sun at 8pm in Sanders Theatre. Tickets are $30–$60, plus $15 for students. "Schoenberg’s Pierrot Lunaire is a hilarious and poignant opera that explores the themes of love, loss, and madness. This production features a talented cast and is directed by a highly respected director." -BostonGlobe.com.

Friday, 6/3
WEDNESDAYS IN JUNE continue. Performances are Wednesdays at 7pm. Tickets are $15–$30, plus $10 for students. "Wednesdays in June is a series of free concerts held at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The series features a variety of music genres, including classical, jazz, and world music. Performances are held on Wednesdays at 7pm." -BostonGlobe.com.

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Friday, 6/3
BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA presents Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9. Performances are Fri, Sat, and Sun at 8pm in Symphony Hall. Tickets are $20–$120, plus $10 for students. "Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 is a powerful and emotional work that explores the themes of love, loss, and redemption. This production features a talented cast and is directed by a highly respected director." -BostonGlobe.com.

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Friday, 6/3
SATURDAY NIGHT CONCERTS present Ira Thorpe, clarinetist, and members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Performances are Fri, Sat, and Sun at 8pm in Symphony Hall. Tickets are $30–$145, plus $14 for students. "Ira Thorpe is a brilliant clarinetist and a wonderful presence on stage. He and his orchestra delivered a performance of singular quality and beauty.” -BostonGlobe.com.

Friday, 6/3
BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA presents From Verdi to Shostakovich. Performances are Fri, Sat, and Sun at 8pm in Symphony Hall. Tickets are $30–$145, plus $14 for students. "From the soaring melodies in Verdi’s Requiem to the deep emotional intensity of Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony, this is a program that will touch the heart.” -BostonGlobe.com.

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