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Globe West

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People & Places

NANCY SHOHET WEST

ARTS

BEST BETS

This is our pick of the best of the burbs. For more information, go to www.boston.com and search music, restaurants, arts and crafts, and other goings-on throughout Greater Boston.

EVENTS

Arlington: Less than a week after her last show touring the United States and Europe for four months with guitar legend Steve Vai, harpist Deborah Henson-Conant is bringing it back home in a special solo show, "Solstice Celebration," combining blues, flamenco, jazz, and world music with theater and an instrument invented just for her, the electric body-harp, Friday, 8 p.m., at the Regent Theatre, 7 Medford St. Tickets: \$25, \$22 advance; students and seniors, \$16; VIP \$75. 781-646-4849, www.regenttheatre.com.

Arlington: The staff at Artbeat will lead a last-minute holiday gift-making workshop on Sunday, noon to 8 p.m., at 212 Mass. Ave. 781-646-2200, www.artbeatonline.com.

Newton: "Hanukkah Happens XXIII: King David and Jerusalem, the City of David" features the Zamir Chorale of Boston performing the oratorio "King David" ("Le Roi David") by Arthur Honegger, as well as other familiar songs about Jerusalem, with orchestral accompaniment and featuring cantor Elias Rosemberg and guest conductor Amy Lieberman at 7:30 p.m. Monday at Temple Emanuel, 385 Ward St. \$15 to \$30. 617-558-8100, www.templemanuel.com.

Event organizers: Submit items directly at www.boston.com/addevents.

Alternative tradition: Chinese food and a flick

Growing up in Newton in the 1970s and 1980s, Michael Leviton had a mix of Jewish and Christian friends. When he was a teenager, it was the Jewish friends who introduced him to a delightful holiday tradition: eating Chinese food and going to the movies on Christmas Eve.

"If you're not observing the holiday, there's not a lot to do on Christmas Eve," he said. "What do you do when everyone else is celebrating a religious holiday? Traditionally, the only places open on Christmas Eve have been Chinese restaurants and movie theaters."

Today, Leviton is the chef and owner of one of his hometown's most admired restaurants, Lumiere, on Washington Street in West Newton.

"We've often been asked to stay open on Christmas Eve, but for many years we resisted because it's such a difficult night to staff," Leviton said.

In the past few years, though, he rethought his stance. This Christmas Eve, he'll return to that favorite custom from his past by preparing a menu heavily influenced by Chinese cooking, with a nod to both Hanukkah and Christmas.

The options at Lumiere on Monday night will include chow fun with Maine shrimp and black vinegar; five-spice pork tenderloin and crispy braised pork belly with Chinese greens; Chinese black chicken soup with ginger, ginseng and jujubes; potato latkes with house-smoked sablefish and sauce ravigote; and chicken roulade for two with stuffing galette, wild mushrooms, and gilette gravy.

"It's a nice way to blend traditions," Leviton said. "Yes, it's somewhat tongue-in-cheek, and I appreciate that we can be



BOSTONCHIEFS

Lumiere chef and owner Michael Leviton has continued two popular contemporary Jewish traditions from the Christmas Eves of his youth: going to a movie and eating Chinese food.

that way with our clientele. But the reality is that if my restaurant were not open on Christmas Eve, I would in fact take my kids out for Chinese food and then we'd go home and watch a movie."

Leviton, who also owns a restaurant in Cambridge called Area Four, was primarily trained in the tradition of classic French cuisine. His knowledge of Asian cooking came more from the streets than from a formal culinary education.

"Before moving back to Newton, I lived in San Francisco, where I worked for a chef who was known for French and Japanese fusion," he said. "And I was living in one of San Francisco's outer neighborhoods, which had a huge Asian population with block after block of Asian restaurants and grocery stores. So I had an incredible

exposure to the flavors of authentic Asian cooking."

It remains one of his favorite ways to eat. "On my days off, when I'm not in my restaurants, I'm out with my family eating Chinese or Thai or Vietnamese or Japanese," he said. "I actually don't cook all the time for my family at home. When I have a day away from the restaurants, we often go out and try food from different palates and flavors."

Moreover, he isn't overlooking the other popular contemporary Jewish tradition he learned about on the Christmas Eves of his youth: going to the movies.

"As it happens, Lumiere is right across the street from the West Newton Cinema," he said.

"So we are hoping diners will fit in a movie before or after dinner. It's not only tradition," he said, "it's a nice kind of

neighborhood synergy."

Christmas Eve dinner at Lumiere will be served from 5:30 to 9 p.m., and reservations are strongly recommended; call 617-244-9199. For more information, go to www.lumiere-restaurant.com.

SEASON OF SONG: The Concord Women's Chorus presents "Rejoice and Be Merry," a program of seasonal works by Schubert, Rheinberger, Chatman, and Perrera, as well as a selection of traditional Christmas carols, Friday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m. in Trinity Episcopal Church, 81 Elm St. in Concord.

Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors and students, and \$10 for children age 12 and under.

For more details, call 978-852-4239 or go to www.concordwomenschorus.org.

THEATER LESSONS: Theatre with a Twist Inc. of Acton invites children in kindergarten through eighth grade to put their school vacation week to good use by learning a little bit about stage performance.

Three-day musical theater and drama workshops will be offered Dec 26-28 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the ensemble's studio, 278 Great Road in Acton. Registration is open for both the Little Stars program, for kindergartners through Grade 4, and the Drama Club, for grades 4 through 8. Participants should bring a nut-free snack and lunch.

The registration fee is \$175, with a 10 percent discount for siblings.

To register or get more information, call 978-302-0985 or go to www.theatrewithatwist.org.

STORYBOOK TREES: For the 17th year, the Concord Museum, at 200 Lexington Road in Concord, presents its popular exhibition of specially decorated holiday trees.

Running through Jan. 1, "Family Trees: A Celebration of Children's Literature" features 38 fanciful trees of all shapes and sizes, decorated with original ornaments inspired by acclaimed children's storybooks and contemporary picture-book favorites.

Admission, which includes "Family Trees" as well as all other Concord Museum galleries, is \$15 for adults, \$10 seniors, \$6 for ages 4 to 18, and free for ages 3 and younger and for museum members. For hours and more information, call 978-369-9763 or go to www.concordmuseum.org.

Send ideas to nancyswest@gmail.com. Please include the date of your event in the subject line.