

Second Village Trip bigger & better than first

BY GABE HERMAN

The second-avenue Village Trip festival, which ran from Sept. 26-29 across Greenwich Village, featured an expanded lineup of events including social justice panels, writing seminars, poetry readings and concerts showcasing a variety of musical genres.

After a pre-festival poetry reading on Wednesday, Sept. 25 at St. Mark's in the Bowery, the following night featured the Village Trip's Hootenanny at The Bitter End. It was also a salute to Izzy Young, who was at the center of the Village folk scene and died earlier this year.

There was also an opening night event on Sept. 26 at NYU's Bobst Library in honor of David Amram, the celebrated composer who is Artist Emeritus of the Village Trip.

"David is the spirit of the Village," said Liz Thomson, founder and executive producer of the Village Trip. She presented Amram with a personalized Village Trip jacket and a portrait of him by local artist Rita Paul, whose work is featured throughout the nearby Washington Square Hotel.

Amram noted that he first came to Greenwich Village in 1955, and met all kinds of artists and interesting people. "All coming to be together in the concrete jungle and hang out and support each other," Amram said.

"I still love the Village," Amram added, "I just live somewhere else because I can't afford to be here." But he noted that the area still has a spiritual feel to it, and said it's an amazing place just to walk through.

Thomson also noted the Village's great history in so many fields, including art, history and social movements. "These crooked streets speak volumes," she said. "I hope we can make it an an-

nual festival."

Friday's lineup included a social justice panel at the Jefferson Market Library called "Censorship and Erosion of First Amendment Rights." The panel included George Gibson of Grove Press, Arthur Eisenberg of the ACLU and Jeremy Kutner of Pro Publica. Discussion topics included the history of banned and censored books in America, President Trump's efforts to subvert democracy by suppressing speech and the media, and the current state of local and investigative journalism.

Weekend events included another social justice panel, on LGBTQ issues, and a classical music concert of musicians performing compositions written by Amram during his years in the Village that were inspired by the neighborhood.

There was also a concert in Washington Square Park, featuring Steve Earle, Mark Ribot and The Tall Pines. An evening performance at Joe's Pub starred singer-songwriter Shaina Taub, and a jazz concert at the New School featured performances by faculty and other guests.

After the festival concluded, Thomson summed up the weekend to the Villager: "The Village Trip 2019 was a broader event than our inaugural festival last year, including social justice discussions and a creative writing masterclass with Adriana Trigiani, who held her capacity audience spellbound for three hours.



Founder and executive producer Liz Thomson with David Amram at an opening night event.

PHOTO BY GABE HERMAN

"The New School all-star jazz concert was a blast, while memories of the great Izzy Young and the folk revival were conjured up at The Bitter End in an emotive hootenanny that brought Blues Awards-winner Rory Block back to the streets where she grew up and honed her craft.

"And of course glorious weather ensured that Bringing It All Back Home to Washington Square, our free concert in the Park headlined by Steve Earle, was a great success. His set spoke directly to the history of Greenwich Village – which is exactly what The Village Trip aims to do."

Thomson added about the festival's second year, "Our thanks to everyone who took part, and to those who came

Shaina Taub performing at Joe's Pub.

PHOTO BY MILO HESS



– and of course to all the sponsors, partners and donors whose support has made The Village Trip possible.

"Now we need to evaluate what works and create a sustainable festival that is both *of* and *for* the Village community yet which brings people in from across New York and far beyond to spend money downtown and boost the local economy."



A social justice panel focused on First Amendment issues. From left: George Gibson of Grove Press, Jeremy Kutner of Pro Publica and Arthur Eisenberg of the ACLU.

PHOTO BY GABE HERMAN

