

THIS MONTH AT THE



# Mechanics' Institute

www.milibrary.org

VOL.5, NO.5 MAY 2015

## EVENTS & SPECIAL PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHT



**Tuesday, May 12, 6:00 pm**

***Beautiful Chaos: A Life in the Theater***

(City Lights Foundation Books) CAREY PERLOFF

**Author Carey Perloff in conversation with Mechanics' Institute Executive Director Ralph Lewin**

**Carey Perloff**, Artistic Director of San Francisco's legendary American Conservatory Theater, pens a lively and revealing memoir of her twenty-plus years at the helm, and delivers a provocative and impassioned manifesto for the role of live theater in today's technology-infused world.

Full listing on page 2

## MECHANICS' INSTITUTE BI-ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING



**Thursday, May 28**

**Reception at 5:30 pm; Meeting at 6:00 pm**

4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM

Join us for our bi-annual Mechanics' Institute community gathering to meet fellow members, staff and trustees. Hear from the staff about new plans and programs, technology updates, and our efforts to improve your experience as members. **MI Members and Guests; Free.**

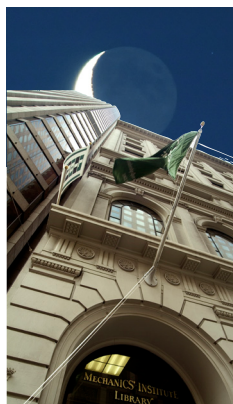
## MECHANICS' INSTITUTE TOUR @ NIGHT

**Monday, May 11, 6:00 – 7:00 pm**

MEET AT THE 3RD FLOOR LIBRARY

Have you been unable to take the Wednesday Tour at Noon because it's at an inconvenient time? The Institute is offering the Tour at night! If you are a new, long-time, or prospective member the Tour of the Institute will orient you to our building, include an overview of our history and mission, and outline our current services and the benefits of membership. Tours typically take 45 to 60 minutes.

**A wine and cheese reception will follow the tour. Free.**



### INSTITUTE

## Member Spotlight: Roddy Lindsay

*Executive Director Ralph Lewin talked with Mechanics' Institute member and building tenant Roddy Lindsay about chess and the evolution of San Francisco.*

**Ralph Lewin:** You're a newer member to Mechanics'. How'd that come to pass?

**Roddy Lindsay:** I

had left my previous job in 2013 and was working at home, which became too small. A friend suggested the Mechanics' Institute and I started coming here to work and read – it soon became an everyday habit. After a few months in the library, I realized I needed a bigger space for my things and found an office on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the building.



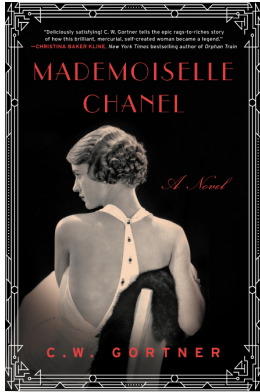
**Ralph:** What impressed you when you  
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# EVENTS & SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Attend these intimate and up close author programs and engage directly with local, national, and internationally known writers talking about their newly released books. - LAURA SHEPPARD, EVENTS DIRECTOR



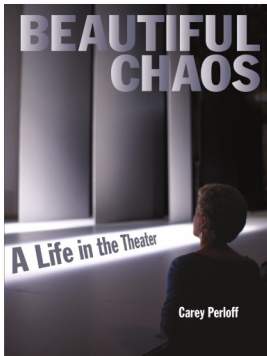
**Wednesday, May 6, 6:00 pm**

**Mademoiselle Chanel: A Novel** (William Morrow) C.W. GORTNER

Born into rural poverty in 1883, Gabrielle Chanel and her siblings are sent to an orphanage after their mother's death, where Gabrielle nurtures her exceptional sewing skills. Through many trials she transforms herself into Coco—a seamstress and sometime torch singer—who eventually befriends a wealthy gentleman who becomes the love of her life. "My life doesn't please me, so I must create my life," says Chanel as she immerses herself in his world of money and luxury, discovering a freedom that sparks her creativity. But it is only when he takes her to Paris that Coco discovers her destiny and power.

**C.W. Gortner** is a former fashion executive and lifelong admirer of Coco Chanel. His passion for writing led him to give up fashion, and his many historical novels have been bestsellers, published in over twenty countries. He is author of *The Queen's Vow: A Novel of Isabella of Castile*, *The Confessions of Catherine de Medici*, *The Last Queen*, and *the Tudor Secret*. He lives in San Francisco.

**Members Free; Public \$15**



**Tuesday, May 12, 6:00 pm**

**Beautiful Chaos: A Life in the Theater** (City Lights Foundation Books) CAREY PERLOFF

Author Carey Perloff in conversation with Mechanics' Institute Executive Director Ralph Lewin

Perloff's personal and professional journey—her life as a woman in a male-dominated profession, as a wife and mother, a playwright, director, producer, arts advocate, and citizen in a city erupting with enormous change—is a compelling, entertaining story for anyone interested in how theater gets made. She offers a behind-the-scenes perspective, including her intimate working experiences with well-known actors, directors, and writers including Tom Stoppard, Harold Pinter, Robert Wilson, David Strathairn, and Olympia Dukakis.

Whether reminiscing about her turbulent first years as a young woman taking over an insolvent theater in crisis and transforming it into a thriving, world-class performance space, or ruminating on the potential for its future, Perloff takes on critical questions about arts education, cultural literacy, gender disparity, leadership and power.

**Carey Perloff** is an award-winning playwright, theater director, and the Artistic Director of the American Conservatory Theater of San Francisco since 1992.

"This is an engaged, engaging, deeply intelligent, and passionate account of why the theatre matters and how it works in a city and in a society. It is also a fascinating and essential chapter in the history of San Francisco itself, as well as the story of a committed theatre artist's determination and vision." —Colm Tóibín, author of *Nora Webster*

**Members Free; Public \$15**



# CINEMALIT

CURATED & HOSTED BY MICHAEL FOX

**Fridays: Cafe 5:30 pm; Program 6:00 pm**  
**Members Free; Public Suggested Donation \$10**

## MAY: REEL ACTING

For fourteen years Mechanics' Institute's **CinemaLit** has offered a monthly mini-film festival/salon, showcasing directors, stars, film genres, and classics. Each film is introduced by film critic and CinemaLit curator **Michael Fox**, or by guests who include local film writers, critics and aficionados. Come for the movie. Stay for the discussion!



**Friday, May 1**  
***Dangerous*** (1935)  
DIRECTED BY ALFRED E. GREEN  
Bette Davis, Franchot Tone

Davis won her first Oscar for playing an alcoholic actress rescued from the abyss.

**Special guest:** David Thomson, critic and author of *Why Acting Matters* (Yale University Press)



**Friday, May 8**  
***The Freshman*** (1990)  
DIRECTED BY ANDREW BERGMAN  
Marlon Brando,  
Matthew Broderick

Brando spoofs his Godfather character in a terrific, off-center comedy about a film student who gets involved with a Mafia family.



**Friday, May 15**  
***The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*** (1969)  
DIRECTED BY RONALD NEAME  
Maggie Smith,  
Pamela Franklin

A liberated schoolteacher at a girls' school in 1930s Edinburgh instructs her students on the ways of life in this modern classic.



**Friday, May 22**  
***Cyrano de Bergerac*** (1990)  
DIRECTED BY JEAN-PAUL RAPPENEAU  
Gerard Depardieu,  
Anne Brochet

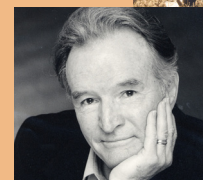
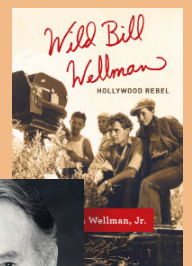
Beautifully mounted and brilliantly acted, Rostand's touching romantic drama brims with wit and audacity.

## SEASON FINALE



**Friday, May 29**  
***Frisco Jenny*** (1932)  
DIRECTED BY WILLIAM A. WELLMAN  
Ruth Chatterton, Louis Calhern  
A thriving S.F. brothel is threatened by a crusading D.A. who is unaware that the madam is his birth mother, in this pre-Code melodrama.

**Special guest:** William Wellman Jr., author of *Wild Bill Wellman: Hollywood Rebel* (Pantheon)



**Information & registration:** 415.393.0100 or [milibrary.org/events](http://milibrary.org/events). All events are held in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor Meeting Room and require advance registration unless otherwise noted.

# CLASSES AT THE LIBRARY

## TED Talks

**Tuesday, May 5, 12:00—1:00 pm**

### First Tuesday TED Talk

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Meeting Room

Bring your lunch and curiosity to talk about ideas, stories, and concepts with fellow Mechanics' Institute members and staff. This month we'll watch a video from June 2014 of Thomas Piketty talking about capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. An informal discussion will follow the viewing.

**Walk-ins Welcome.**

**Thursday, May 14, 12:00—1:00 pm**

### Hoover's – Search the World's

#### Largest Business Directory

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Classroom A

Looking for timely business information, developing a list of key contacts for sales or as a potential employer, researching competitive intelligence, or grasping industry developments? Class attendees will discover the resourcefulness of Hoover's in handling these topics. The company and industry coverage is truly international in scope, with extensive research, analysis, and descriptive summaries and profiles for some twenty million North American public and private companies, as well as non-profits. Sample searches will show the breadth of information available using Hoover's, such as a company's products, services, and business news, its subsidiaries and competitors, financial data, news stories, and lists of company officers. **Registration Required.**



**Thursday, May 21, 3:00—6:00 pm**

### eBook Workshop—Axis 360

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Classroom A

Through a new partnership with Axis 360, the Mechanics' Institute offers hundreds of digital titles - including fiction bestsellers - that can now be downloaded to your computer, tablet, or smartphone from anywhere there is an internet connection. Bring your device to this drop-in workshop for one-on-one help where you will set up an account, have your questions answered, and get started downloading eBooks from Axis 360.

**Walk-ins Welcome.**



mikebaird via Wikimedia Commons

**Tuesday, May 26, 5:30—6:30 pm**

### Ancestry.com Library Edition

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Classroom A

Want to research your family history? Now's your chance with our new subscription to the Ancestry database which provides access to billions of records in census data, vital records, directories, photos, and more. The class will provide tips on searching and how to decipher the records, and plenty of time for hands-on practice.

**Registration Required.**



## TECH OFFICE HOURS:

Reserve a time to meet with our librarians for a one-on-one technology consultation

**Thursday, May 28, 10:00 am—4:00 pm**

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Meeting Room

Reserve a half hour appointment with our tech experts to work on questions regarding your email, eBook readers, making the best use of the Library online catalog features, safely managing your social media accounts, or other computer or technology-related questions.

Advance registration is appreciated for this free session, although some walk-in opportunities may be available. To register, contact Erik Sandall with your available time frame and a brief description of your question or problem by emailing [esandall@milibrary.org](mailto:esandall@milibrary.org) or by calling 415.393.0111.



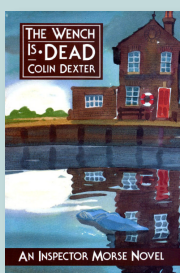
Stuart Miles FreeDigitalPhotos.net

**Information and registration:** 415.393.0102 or [milibrary.org/events/learn](http://milibrary.org/events/learn). All classes are held in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor classrooms and require advance registration unless otherwise noted.



# BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

Our members-only Book Groups select, read, and discuss books of a particular type or genre. Members lead the discussions and new members are always welcome. **Please note that Book Groups are not author events and the authors will not be present during the discussions.**

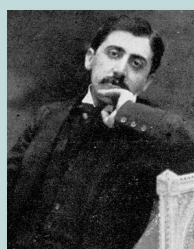


**The Wench is Dead** by Colin Dexter

**Wednesday, May 6, 5:30 pm**

**First Wednesday Mystery Book Group**

The often irascible Inspector Morse of the Oxford Police never reveals his first name, sometimes scorns official procedure, and always solves the crime. This novel, whose title comes from a Christopher Marlowe play, is a favorite of Morse fans for its unusual structure. Hospitalized and impatient, Morse is given a book about a 19th-century Oxford murder. He quickly realizes the wrong men were hanged for it, and sets out to find the real killer. **Members Only. Walk-ins Welcome, but Registration Preferred.**



**The Proust Society of America: San Francisco Chapter**

**Wednesday, May 13 and 27, 5:30 pm**

Under the leadership of Dr. Mark Calkins, Mechanics' Institute offers two bi-weekly discussion groups, on a semester basis. **The Proust Group** discusses Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, vol.2 (*In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*), from 5:30 – 6:30 pm. From 6:45 – 8:00 pm, the **World Literature Group** discusses Proustian-inspired works. The new semester began on March 11<sup>th</sup>; **registration is now closed for this semester.** For more information, contact Dr. Calkins at [mark@tempsperdu.com](mailto:mark@tempsperdu.com) or Diane Lai at [dlai@milibrary.org](mailto:dlai@milibrary.org).



**Laura** by Vera Caspary

**Monday, May 11, Noon**

**Brown Bag Mystery Readers**

Laura Hunt was the ideal modern woman: beautiful, elegant, highly ambitious, and utterly mysterious. No man could resist her charms—not even the hardboiled NYPD detective sent to find out who turned her into a faceless corpse. As this tough cop probes the mystery of Laura's death, he becomes obsessed with her strange power. Soon he realizes he's been seduced by a dead woman—or has he? **Members Only. Walk-ins Welcome.**

**Information & registration:** Diane Lai at 415.393.0118, [dlai@milibrary.org](mailto:dlai@milibrary.org), or [milibrary.org/events/book-group-meetings](http://milibrary.org/events/book-group-meetings). A copy of each book is available at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Circulation desk. All Book Discussions are held in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room.

## LIBRARY

### New Music in the Mechanics' Institute collection

CHRIS TAYLOR,  
LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Looking for something new to listen to? On the 3rd Floor balcony, there are a number of new additions to our music collection, from calming ambient to anthemic singer song writer fare, and everything in between.



**Brian Eno – Apollo**

Originally composed to accompany a documentary film concerning our moon missions, this soundtrack has independently gained

a reputation as a career highlight for producer Brian Eno. Pairing country-western guitar motifs with his signature introspective ambient sound, *Apollo* simultaneously pays tribute to two beloved frontiers: that of the American West as well as the expanse of space.

**Blind Boys of Alabama – Spirit of the Century**

With a discography stretching all the way back into the 1960's, this group has experienced recent success, culminating in a Grammy win for this very album. Loyal rooted in the gospel and blues traditions, their versions of traditional American folk songs, as well as more current selections such as Ben Harper, The Rolling Stones and Tom Waits, will surely win over listeners.



(continued on page 6)

## Roddy Lindsay (continued from page 1)

first walked through the doors of the Mechanics' Institute?

**Roddy:** I grew up in the New York City area and the Mechanics' Institute reminds me of some of my favorite institutions, like the New York Public Library or the Marshall Chess Club. They are, like Mechanics', institutions with gravitas and are dripping with history. These buildings have great bones – you can feel the longevity and endurance as soon as you walk in. It's rare to find institutions like this, particularly in a city like San Francisco – a city that seems to be always reinventing itself.

**Ralph:** You were a competitive chess player as young person; tell me about what that's like.

**Roddy:** I played chess in elementary school and was in the top 100 kids in the nation (by the time I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade). Now, I'm a recovering chess player. I like that I'm upstairs from the chess club. Chess is a beautiful and fun game – the more you play the more you understand the subtlety. As a kid the fun is in winning. As you learn the game there are so many different components – open and end game theory, etc.

To explain the attraction of chess is like trying to have someone explain why they love classical music – it's difficult to put into words. Chess can be both Apollonian and Dionysian... the strategic grind of a closed positional game played out over the course of the hours, and the exhilaration of an unexpected (and likely unsound) rook sacrifice in a 3-minute blitz match

**Ralph:** Mechanics' was founded in 1854, at a time when the gold rush was coming to an end and there was massive

unemployment. The founders envisioned a place that would become a civic institution – a place devoted to the future and well being of San Francisco and California. Do you see any parallels with today's San Francisco?

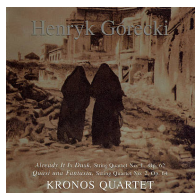
**Roddy:** San Francisco is a unique place of fast change that is cyclical – something deeply rooted in its character. As a city founded by drifters, impermanence was and still is a value held in high esteem. Think about our nearby Burning Man festival, where people create an entire city only to tear it down ten days later, or a tech industry obsessed with “creative destruction.” In San Francisco, the idea that institutions need to be supported and nurtured can occasionally seem radical. On the contrary, I would say that institutions, like Mechanics', are absolutely necessary because many outcomes require both a shared set of values and a multi-decade or multi-century time horizon that only institutions can provide.

**Ralph:** You recently sent me an email with this quote from Lawrence Ferlingetti, *A new brand of dot.com millionaires and generally Silicon Valley money moved into San Francisco with bags full of cash and no manners and very little education in the great culture of Western civilization.* What do you think of that?

**Roddy:** He later put out a statement that said he may have been too harsh and there was an opportunity for dialogue. I think it's easy to stereotype tech workers “as these people on the buses.” A common perception is that tech workers don't have culture and they're pushing out the culture of San Francisco. To say they have “no manners” speaks volumes. The reality, I would say, is much more nuanced. We shouldn't apply a normative label or a particular set of values to a people.

(continued on next page)

## New Music (continued from page 5)



### Henryk Górecki – *Already it is Dusk*

San Francisco's own Kronos Quartet continue their lively exploration of new music, with an appetite for experimentation coupled with an unparalleled level of chemistry and virtuosity. Here they play the late Polish composer's first and second compositions for string quartet, commissioned by the group themselves. Merging folk melodies with hypnotic repetitive figures, these pieces will please fans of adventurous contemporary composition.

### Tori Amos – *Tales of a Librarian*

Structured and sequenced in tribute to the Dewey Decimal system, this retrospective of Amos' career is a perfect introduction for new listeners of her music. Compiled by the artist herself, this is less a greatest hits and more of a peek into her world of music, where theatrical delivery and literary lyrics are coupled with an abundance of technical ability.



## Roddy Lindsay (continued from page 6)

Maybe the more interesting trend is that San Francisco is becoming one of the economic and creative engines of the planet. The creative and entrepreneurial minds of the entire world want to come to this city. The opportunity of having people like that here is that we really could solve some of the important problems facing us as a state, country and planet

in the coming years and decades. To me, San Francisco is a wildly exciting place to be a part of right now.

**Ralph:** Roddy, thanks for our conversation and for being a member and supporter of the Mechanics' Institute.

# Chess

INTERNATIONAL MASTER JOHN DONALDSON, DIRECTOR OF THE CHESS ROOM

**G**randmaster Sam Shankland was the winner of the Stephen Brandwein Blitz, the largest (76 players) and strongest (six Grandmasters and six International Masters competing) event of this kind ever held at the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club. The contestants played twelve games at a time control of four minutes apiece with two seconds added to their clock for each move made. Shankland scored 10 ½ from 12 followed by International Master Ray Kaufman with 10 points. Grandmaster Batchuluun Tsegmed and National Master Andrew Boekhoff shared third with scores of 9 ½ – 2 ½.



Stephen Brandwein Blitz in action

## Chess for Women

**Sundays, May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31**  
**11:00 am – 1:00 pm**

TAUGHT BY EWELINA KRUBNIK  
Funded by Vega Capital Group

## Tournaments

**Saturday, May 2**  
**10:00 am – 8:00 pm**  
15<sup>th</sup> Annual Charles Powell Memorial G/45

**Sunday, May 3**  
**1:00 pm – 5:00 pm**  
8<sup>th</sup> Ray Schutt Memorial Blitz

## Tuesday Night Events

**May 5, 26**  
**5:15 pm – 6:15 pm**  
LECTURE BY JOHN DONALDSON  
**6:30 pm – 10:30 pm**  
Spring & Summer Tuesday Night Marathons

## Ewelina Krubnik's After Six Chess Class for Adults

**May 6, 13, 20, 27**  
**6:00 pm – 7:30 pm**

## Wednesday Night Blitz

**May 6, 13, 20, 27**  
**6:40 pm – 8:50 pm**

DIRECTED BY JULES JELINEK

## Saturday Morning Chess Class for Kids

**May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**  
**11:00 am – 1:00 pm**

TAUGHT BY INTERNATIONAL MASTER  
ELLIOTT WINSLOW



**Information & reservations:** 415.393.0110 or [chessclub.org](http://chessclub.org). **Photo credit:** Richard Shorman.





## Our Story – A Bay Area Heritage Open House

Thursday, May 7, 5:00 - 8:00 pm

His-story, her-story, what about OUR story? Join Mechanics' Institute on May 7<sup>th</sup> to meet representatives from other local cultural, historical and genealogical entities at this Open House. Find out about their services and how they are going about collecting, preserving, and disseminating our shared

heritage and communal memory. Hear writers, film makers, and aficionados discuss insights into our past through presentation and interaction. If you delight in local culture and family history, or just wish to socialize over food and drink with innovative people who are transforming awareness of our history and culture, you will enjoy this special event.

**Free. Registration Required.**



historyp'n

**Shaping San Francisco**  
History is a creative act in the present.



MECHANICS' INSTITUTE  
LIBRARY & CHESS ROOM

57 Post Street, San Francisco, CA 94104

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Library Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9 am - 9 pm

Friday: 9 am - 6 pm

Saturday: 10 am - 5 pm

Sunday: 1 pm - 5 pm

Sarah Cruz, Editor

## JUNE PREVIEW

Tuesday, June 16, 7:00 pm

Co-sponsored by Irish Literary & Historical Society

**14<sup>th</sup> Annual Bloomsday Celebration: Re-Joyce in the Stacks**  
**Muses, Music and Dramatic Readings from**  
**James Joyce's *Ulysses***



Sojourn through the streets of Dublin with Leopold Bloom and other characters featured in James Joyce's quintessential novel *Ulysses* and other works. The evening includes dramatic readings and song performed by Bruce Bierman, John Ilyin, Esther Mulligan, Melanie O'Reilly, Josiah Polhemus, and Laura Sheppard. Fiddler Anne Goess, flutist Jason Pollack, and guitarist Will Wheeler offer lively accompaniment with a selection of traditional and well-known Irish music.

This year's Bloomsday Celebration will be held in Mechanics' Institute's glorious 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Library and performed "in the round". The Circ Bar will have a special **Bloomsday Menu** available!



## Weekly Tours of The Institute

**Every Wednesday @ Noon**  
Begin on the Library's 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.  
For more information, please  
call 415.393.0101.



**Members of MI & ILHS \$15; Public \$25.**

**Advance Reservations Required.** Purchase tickets through EventBrite or with cash, check or credit card in the Events Office located on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor or call 415.393.0116.