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Music Soothes Raw Sept. 11 Emotions

By THERESA JUVA

One man sat in a lawn chair wearing a denim jacket decorated with American flag and yellow ribbon patches. A group of ladies lounged on a blanket and ate fried chicken and macaroni salad. Some walked their dogs by the water while some just stood and listened – and reflected.

Sonorous voices floated through Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City Monday night as part of the citywide Sept. 11 concert series that included 11 performances in Queens.

Socrates' outdoor opera, organized by The Little Opera Theatre of NY, featured Manhattan as a backdrop and drew more than 300 people. By paying tribute to some of the great American composers – George Gershwin, Kurt Weill and Leonard Bernstein – the concert also commemorated an important day in American history.

For many people who attended the free concert, it offered a reprieve from the somber ceremonies that marked the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

"I'm interested in commemorating 9/11, and I can't think of a better way to do it than with music," said Karen Wallace of Long Island City. "Music can be soothing."

A sparkling sunset turned the sky golden and rose as people enjoyed the last vestiges of late summer warmth.

Cathy Ziegler picnicked with friends and said the opera was even more special because it was outdoors.

"It's a beautiful space," she said. "It's a good way to celebrate being alive."

Others agreed that the concert was hopeful and uplifting and gave them a chance to reflect on not what was lost, but what has been gained since the attacks

Artistic director Phillip Shneidman said he chose songs that were about looking ahead.

One of the final songs, "Somewhere" from West Side Story, captured the mood of the night with its lyrics: "We'll find a new way of living. We'll find a way of forgiving. Somewhere, there's a place for us."



Operatic performers honor Sept. 11 by bringing music to Socrates Sculpture Park.
Tribune Photo By Theresa Juva

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forgiving. Somewhere, there's a place for us.

On a cool September evening by the East River, that somewhere was a park in Queens.

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