

# The New Criterion

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## The Critic's Notebook

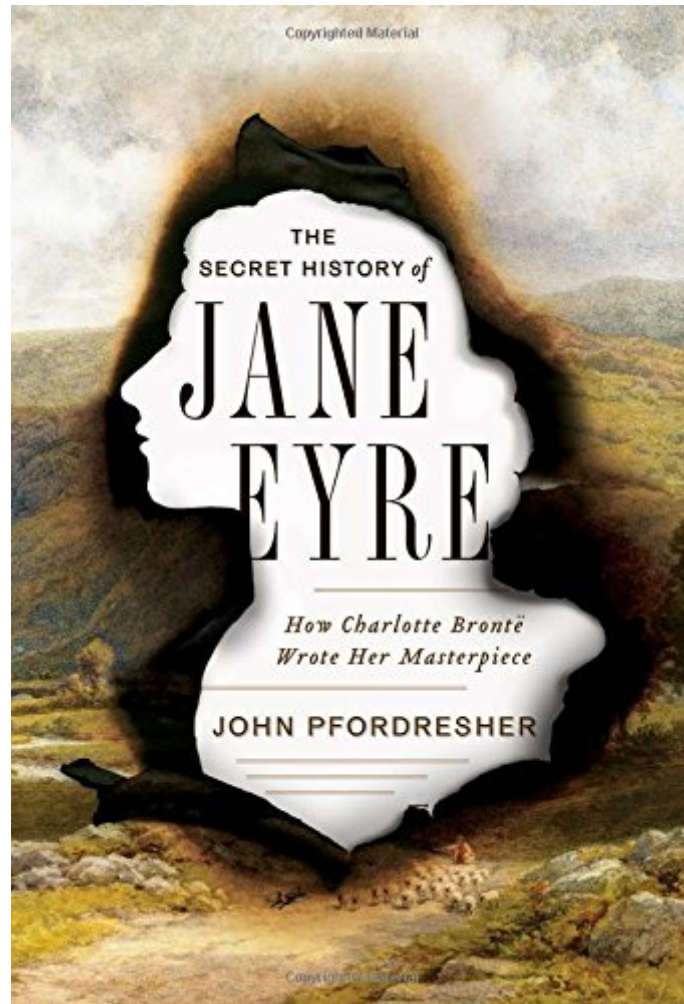
*by The Editors*



*Lois Dickson, Wing Tip, 2017, Oil on linen. Photo: loisdickson.com*

**This week: Chamber music at the Lincoln Center, Nineteenth-Century newspapers & more from the world of culture.**

**Nonfiction:**



**Book Talk: *The Secret History of Jane Eyre*, by John Pfordresher:** Traditional literary historians typically argue that Charlotte Brontë's decision to take the pseudonym "Currer Bell" was motivated primarily by a desire to avoid the bias that critics of her day held against literature written by women. Brontë herself once wrote (after she had already revealed her true identity to the world) that she and her sisters "had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice; we had noticed how critics sometimes use for their chastisement the weapon of personality, and for their reward, a flattery, which is not true praise." However, in his new book *The Secret History of Jane Eyre: How Charlotte Brontë Wrote her Masterpiece*, John Pfordresher, professor of English at Georgetown University, suggests that there may have been more personal reasons for Brontë's inclination towards secrecy. On Thursday at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, the author will share his interpretation of this period in Charlotte Brontë's biography, which may have had more influence on the fictive world of *Jane Eyre* than previously thought.—AS

**Art:**



*Lois Dickson, Chicken Scratch, 2017, Oil on wood. Photo: loisdickson.com*

**New Worlds: Lois Dickson at the New York Studio School Gallery (ends July 16):** This week is the last chance to see the painterly abstractions of Lois Dickson at the New York Studio School. The show, which began on June 12 and ends this Friday, presents seventeen recent paintings by Dickson that toe the line between organic and geometric form, between purist non-representation and faint shades of figuration. Dickson has stated that her nature-inspired biomorphism draws from the pictorial precedent of early American abstractionists such as Arthur Dove and Marsden Hartley. Unsurprisingly, the NYSS delivers with this exhibition, a true showing of high-level draughtsmanship and painting.—AS

**Music:**





*Arnaud Sussman and David Finckel perform at the Lincoln Center. Photo: [lincolncenter.org](http://lincolncenter.org)*

**Summer Evenings at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (July 12, 16):** While other of Lincoln Center's tenants seem to cycle through a reliable stream of turmoils, the Chamber Music Society has emerged as the steadiest of the resident organizations, presenting consistently intriguing programs with a host of talented artists. CMS's "summer evenings" concerts, begun just two years ago, have been a welcome addition to the bleak early weeks of July, bringing serious programming to an otherwise barren music scene in New York. This week they're on twice, Wednesday and Sunday, offering favorites of various instrumentations by Beethoven, Dvořák, Mendelssohn, and Prokofiev.—ECS

**Other:**



*The Mount Vernon Museum & Garden. Photo: Wikipedia*

**The Rise of Newspapers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century at the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden (July 11–October 22):** Today it seems like the newspaper industry is quickly degenerating into a bunch of rags and tabs. With two-thirds of Americans believing the mainstream press publishes “fake news” and only 30 percent of Americans having a “great deal/fair amount” of trust in the mass media, it’s a dark time for journalistic standards. Starting on July 11, the historic Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden on Sixty-first Street is here to show us what the newspaper industry used to look like by exploring its major growth in the 1820s. The museum’s building, which dates from 1799 and was converted in 1826 into a “fashionable country resort” at a time when New York City’s northern-most border was Fourteenth Street, is itself a beautiful relic of history and one of the oldest existing buildings in Manhattan. Now maintained by the Colonial Dames of America, the building’s original claim of being “free from the noise and dust of the public roads, and fitted up and indeed for only the most genteel and respectable” patron holds true.—RH

**From the archive:** “Why ‘Civilisation’ matters” by Drew Oliver. Why Kenneth Clark’s 1969 television program still matters today.

**From the current issue:** “Gallery Chronicle” by James Panero. On the 2017 Met Gala, “Frieze New York” & “TEFAF New York Spring.”

**Broadcast:** Eric Gibson: Notes on the postmodern museum.

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