



## East meets West with childhood memories of rain

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Sunday, June 8, 2003

**By JIM BECKERMAN**  
**STAFF WRITER**

It's the job of the artist to look at familiar things with fresh eyes.

Or in the case of filmmaker Jane Steuerwald, a fresh lens.

Out of an ordinary life experience - rain - the lifelong Glen Rock resident and her directing partner, Juneyup Yi, have created a 10-minute personal odyssey, "I Am Driving in My Car, I Am Walking Up the Hill." The film, which will be shown 7 p.m. June 27 at the 26th Annual Asian American International Film Festival in New York, uses rain the way Marcel Proust, in "Remembrance of Things Past," used the taste of a biscuit - as a trigger to memory.

"We both discovered that we had really powerful memories in our respective childhoods that were derived from the feel and smell of rain," Steuerwald says.

The two filmmakers began as teacher and pupil. Yi, from Seoul, Korea, was a student in a filmmaking class taught by Steuerwald at New Jersey City University in Jersey City, where Steuerwald has taught for 20 years. But though the two were separated by culture and age (Steuerwald is 51, Yi is 25), they found they had a lot of common ground. "We have so many parallels in our life, it's funny," Steuerwald says. "We have the same birthday, January 7 - two serious Capricorns here. And we have the same aesthetic sensibility."

Their film re-creates, and intercuts, memories from their respective childhoods. Steuerwald's recollection of being driven home from school, rolling down the window, and listening to the rain on the pavement, is paired with Yi's story of walking up the hill to his school in Seoul in the rain. The two filmmakers narrate their own stories. "He [Yi] says that even though he doesn't like rain, that on this certain day he wasn't sad because all the colors were incredibly rich because of the rain," Steuerwald says.

The film also points out the similarity of basic experiences in two vastly different cultures. "He's from an Eastern culture, I'm from a Western culture, so how is it we speak the same language?" Steuerwald says. "That's one of the things this piece is about."

It's also one of the things that drove up the cost of the film: \$3,000 for 10 minutes, a large part of which was the cost of airfare to Korea last summer to film Yi's experience on the actual hill he had climbed 20 years ago.

Steuerwald, whose last film short, "Rocket Experts" (about her family's Fourth of July), was shown at the Museum of Modern Art, is now working on a feature film about another commonplace phenomenon. "Doing the Dishes," she says, will wring all kinds of surprising significance from this mundane household ritual. "Anyone you talk to has a story about doing the dishes," she says.

The 26th Annual Asian American International Film Festival runs June 20-29 at the Asia Society and Museum, 725 Park Ave., New York, N.Y., (212) 989-1422 or visit [www.asiancinevision.org](http://www.asiancinevision.org)

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This summer in Newark, there's music in the air. The open air.

Jazz in the Garden at the Newark Museum and Absolut Sounds of the City at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center are both launching new seasons of al fresco jazz, gospel, and world music. Every Thursday, residents and visitors will be able to hear jazz by daylight and a potpourri of swingin' sounds by moonlight.

"This is bringing people back to downtown Newark," says NJPAC spokeswoman Shelley Roberts. "It's outdoors, it's social, it's a chance to get to meet all kinds of people."

The Absolut series, launched in 1999, features as many as four bands a night, selected with an eye and ear to the diverse cultures of the Newark area. The evening series has become so popular that it's been known to attract up to 3,000 people to the plaza in front of NJPAC.

The Newark Museum lunchtime series, held in its Alice Ransom Dreyfuss Memorial Garden, has been around for more than 30 years. "It's a wonderful place to experience jazz and be outside and escape from the office or other indoor spaces," says museum spokeswoman Cynthia Hollod. "It's a great mix of people: business people, senior citizens, families."



JAZZ IN THE GARDEN: Houston Person (Thursday), Chucho Valdes (June 19), Steve Wilson (June 26), Dena DeRose (July 10), Harry Allen and Joe Cohn (July 17), Joe Magnarelli (July 24), Dr. Lonnie Smith (July 31), Donald Harrison (Aug. 7), Carrie Smith (Aug. 14). 12:15 to 1:45 p.m. Alice Ransom Dreyfuss Memorial Garden, Newark Museum, 49 Washington St., (973) 596-6550. \$2 suggested admission.

ABSOLUT SOUNDS OF THE CITY: Diane Moser's Composer's Big Band, Gafiera Armada (Thursday); Phoenix Rising, Martino Atangana with African Blue Note (June 19); DJ Edyed, Stella Chiweshé, Leonardo Suarez Paz Quintet (June 26); DJ Hard Hittin Harry, Iqua Colson, Somi, Raices Habaneras (July 10); Dj Mario Roberto, Richard Reiter & Afro-Jazz Project, Shiner Massive Soundsystem, Antibalas (July 17); Ernie Edwards Group Featuring Vida Key, Susheela Raman (July 24); Stein Brothers Quintet, Candela Soul, George Gee and the Jump Jivers (July 31); SIII & the Truth, Emeline Michel (Aug. 7); Diana

Silva, Blue Number Nine, Edmar Sextet (Aug. 14); Burnt Sugar The Arkestra Chamber , Lab Addicts, Oliver Lake Steel Pan Quartet (Aug. 21). 5 to 9 p.m. Courtyard, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center St., Newark. (888) GO-NJPAC. Free.

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