

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2005

The Desire For Tallest Building Persists

By ROBIN POGREBIN

Given the haunting image of the collapsing twin towers, it's hard for many Americans to fathom the enduring urge to build tall.

Yet now come plans for the nation's tallest skyscraper, a condominium and hotel building designed by Santiago Calatrava for Chicago's Near North lakefront. At 2,000 feet, the building, the Fordham Spire, would beat out the 1,776-foot Freedom Tower planned for ground zero.

Internationally, both of these designs are dwarfed by the Burj Tower under construction in Dubai, which is expected to reach 2,300 feet. Once completed, the Burj will overtake Taipei 101, a 1,667-foot office tower, as the world's tallest. And the Taipei building is certainly a short-time record holder; only in October did it surpass the 1,483-foot Petronas Towers in Malaysia.

"There are real bragging rights to being the tallest that go back 3,000 years," said Carol Willis, the founder and director of the Skyscraper Museum in Manhattan. "Exceeding or

Anxiety has done little to thwart the world's love for skyscrapers.

exalting for spiritual reasons or a demonstration of power dates back from Babylon on — wanting to take a place in history, reserve a place in the timeline. Height is a fixation."

For all the talk about jitters deterring potential tenants of a future Freedom Tower, the 9/11 terrorist attack has done little or nothing to diminish a global appetite to touch the sky. "The number of tall buildings being built around the world is at an all-time high," said Ron Klemencic, chairman of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, a professional group.

Chicago already has three of the 15 tallest buildings in the world: the Sears Tower, the John Hancock Center and Aon Center.

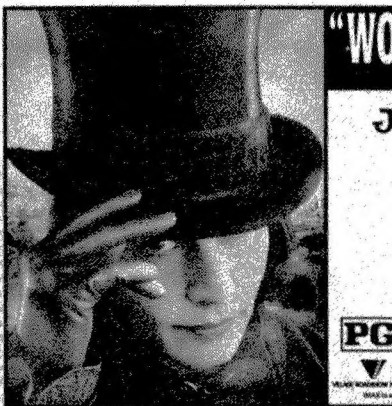
"The skyscraper was born in Chicago," said Christian K. Narkiewicz-Laine, director and president of the Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design. "The whole concept of the skyscraper has always been indigenous to the city."

Developers are planning four buildings of around 80 stories in the city, Mr. Klemencic said. (The Fordham Spire is to rise to 115 stories by 2009.) Miami, San Francisco and Las Vegas are also in the midst of bustling high-rise construction.

David M. Childs of Skidmore Ow-

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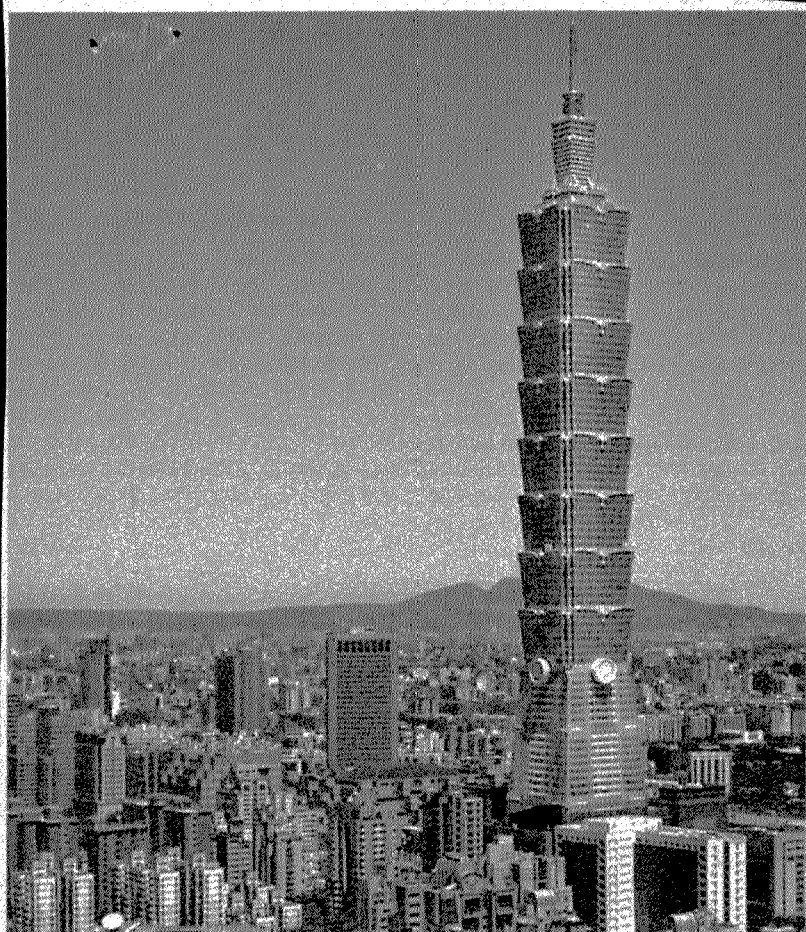
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Business Wire

At 1,667 feet, Taipei 101 tower in Taiwan is the world's tallest building.

Despite 9/11 Fears, the Desire For Tallest Building Persists

Continued From First Arts Page

ings & Merrill, the architect who designed the Freedom Tower, said he was not at all troubled by the notion that its height would be eclipsed by that of Mr. Calatrava's building. "More power to him," he said.

Mr. Childs pointed out that under current Federal Aviation Administration rules, Mr. Calatrava's proposed 2,000-foot tower is as tall as any building is allowed to be. And the Freedom Tower was not meant to be higher, given the patriotic symbolism of 1,776 feet mandated by Daniel Libeskind's master plan. Mr. Childs designed the roof and rooftop parapet to match the height of the two original World Trade Center buildings (1,362 feet and 1,368 feet); the antenna completes the distance to the top.

But the developer behind Burj Tower, Balfour Beatty, has made clear his intention to set — and keep — the record for the world's tallest building. "If anyone comes close," Ms. Willis said, "they'll build a taller spire."

That, of course, raises that perennial question in the skyscraper world: Does the spire count? Isn't it kind of cheating?

The Council on Tall Buildings, which certifies the tallest structures, has determined that the spire counts if it is "integral to the architecture of the building," Mr. Klemencic said.

"If you take off the top of the Chrysler Building, it doesn't look like the Chrysler Building anymore," he explained. "But if you take the antenna off the Hancock Tower, it still looks like the Hancock Tower."

The Freedom Tower's spire is expected to set off some squabbling. "I'm sure there will be heated de-

bate," Mr. Klemencic said.

The 2,000-foot-high Calatrava building in Chicago, to be built by the developer Christopher T. Carley, would be 1,458 feet without its spire — only eight feet taller than the Sears Tower.

Architecture buffs revel in the lore of such competition, recalling how the Chrysler Building beat out the Bank of Manhattan tower in 1929 with the last-minute hoisting of a secretly planned stainless steel top. In 1931, of course, the Chrysler was bested by the Empire State Building, which yielded the title to the World Trade Center four decades later.

While the Calatrava building may be major news for the country, experts say it is old hat for much of the rest of the world, particularly Asia. Hong Kong, with its notorious population density, has more skyscrapers than New York, Ms. Willis said, and its residential buildings typically reach 60 stories these days.

Along Shanghai's jostling skyline, plans are under way for an 1,614-foot tower, China's tallest, as part of the Shanghai World Financial Center. "They're not afraid of height at all," Ms. Willis said of developers in Asia. "There is no anxiety. They both need the space and want the attention."

Some New Yorkers no doubt remain deeply wary of living or working in skyscrapers in the aftermath of 9/11. More than any other building, the Freedom Tower is a natural locus for fears of a violent recurrence.

But architectural experts say that in general, plenty of people and institutions will succumb to the spell of an architecturally prominent tall building, not to mention the view. "All you need is the right number of people with sufficient money," Ms. Willis said.

from his role in the taut police thriller "Infernal Affairs," is appropriately fragile as the dreamy, love-struck Fan, and Mr. Wang is a riot as his bawdy Sancho Panza of a sidekick.

Like Giuseppe Tornatore's "Cinema Paradiso," "Just One Look," which opens today at the Two Boots Pioneer Theater in the East Village, is a tribute to the formative power of cinema, a coming-of-age film that nimbly interweaves the adolescent hero's struggles with clips from the movies that shape his romanticized notions of life. These excerpts will be more evocative for those familiar with Hong Kong cinema of the 1970's, but the story itself should resonate with anyone who's been through the painful apprenticeship of learning the difference between life and the movies.



Tai Seng Entertainment

Charlene Choi in "Just One Look," a nostalgic coming-of-age film.

Just One Look

Opens in Manhattan today.

Directed by Riley Ip; written (in Cantonese, with English subtitles) by Mr. Ip; director of photography, Chan Chi-ying; edited by Maurice Li; music by Henry Lai; produced by Albert Yeung; released by Tai Seng Entertainment. At the Two Boots Pioneer Theater, 155 East Third Street, at Avenue A, East Village. Running time: 96 minutes. This film is not rated.

WITH: Shawn Yu (Fan), Wong You-nam (Ming), Charlene Choi (Nam), Gillian Chung (Yew) and Anthony Wong (Crazy).

The Bolshoi Ballet performing on TV

BALLET REVIEW

Trivial to Sor

By JOHN ROCKWELL

Ah, well, the Bolshoi Ballet is in town and can't escape its past so here's another Soviet ballet. But "The Bright Stream," which opened a three-performance run Monday night at the Metropolitan Opera House, is a very different work in nearly every respect from "Spartacus," which ended its run on Saturday.

In a sense, albeit a negative sense, "The Bright Stream" is even more purely Soviet, not to say Stalinist, than "Spartacus." It was first done in 1935, to a brightly appealing score by Shostakovich and choreography by Fyodor Lopukhov, then a famous, progressive figure in Russian ballet. But Pravda, meaning Stalin, hated it; it disappeared from the stage, and it was revived only in 2003 by Alexei Ratmansk, the Bolshoi's new artistic director.

"Spartacus" is about a slave revolt, and "The Bright Stream" is about happy cavortings on a collective farm. Pravda proclaimed it formalistic and trivial, given the noble work that collective farms were supposedly undertaking in the mid-1930's. But the real animus may have been Stalin's hostility to Shostakovich; it seems likely that "The Bright Stream" was caught in the wake of Stalin's fury about Shostakovich's opera "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District." The composer, who in any event felt constrained by

The Bolshoi Ballet performs through Saturday at the Metropolitan Opera House, (212) 362-6000. "The Bright Stream" ends tonight and will be performed at the Orange County Performing Arts Center in Costa Mesa, Calif., Aug. 9 to 11.

CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEW

The Bulgarian Marimba Man:

By ALLAN KOZINN

When percussionists give recitals they usually pack the platform with instruments and objects to beat on. But Svet Stoyanov, a young percussionist from Bulgaria who won the Concert Artists Guild competition in 2003, used a surprisingly modest setup in his recital at the Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts at Pace University on Monday evening. Mostly, he played the marimba, and he did so with a winning combination of gentleness and fluidity. He also doubled on the vibraphone in one work, and offered short solos on a trap set and the tapan, a Bulgarian drum.

Mr. Stoyanov's recital was part of the Summer Stars series, which in turn is part of the River to River Festival.

The Summer Stars series includes concerts by Antares on Monday, and Daniel Bernard Roumain on Aug. 8, at the Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts at Pace, 3 Spruce Street.

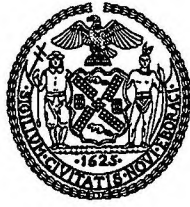
He began with Eric Sammut's "Four Rotations," an easygoing, gracefully melodic suite for marimba. Mr. Sammut's jazz-inflected harmonic language and contrapuntal textures often called to mind the

Svet Stoyanov

Pace University

Modern Jazz Quartet's flirtations with classical works. And at four short movements it was exactly the right length.

For a "Fantasy on Popular Bulgarian Rhythms," the first of two works played bearing Mr. Stoyanov's composition credit, he used the tapan, a round drum that looks like a small military bass drum but produces a lighter timbre. The piece offers what its title promises: an inventive and varied essay built on the metrically uneven patterns of Bulgarian folk dances, presented with an understated but unmistakable virtuosity.



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