

Sports Illustrated

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Catchy Tunes

A concert features a tenor's take on Mike Piazza and other sports notes

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Last Thursday, on the eve of spring training's opening game, one of baseball's greatest catchers was being channeled on stage by an opera singer in Brooklyn. At the Galapagos Art Space, New York City tenor Dimitri Pittas (*below*, with pianist Blair McMillen) performed *Stepping into the Batter's Box, He Hears His Father's Voice*, a five-song cycle that imagines Mike Piazza's in-game consciousness, as part of the American Modern Ensemble's Good Sports concert.

The event, which AME artistic director and *Stepping* composer Robert Paterson said was aimed at attracting nontraditional concert audiences, also featured six other sports-themed pieces, including *Brooklyn, October 5, 1941*, Annie Gosfield's piano driven interpretation of a Dodgers fan's World Series heartbreak that employs baseballs and a mitt to pound the keys; and *Dark and Stormy Night*, by USC grad Roger Zare, which involved Ping-Pong balls hopping

and dancing on piano strings.

To underscore the athletic motif, most performers took the stage in sports regalia—ranging from a Michael Vick jersey to a Ronaldo kit—and the night ended with a raffle for a baseball inscribed with an excerpt from *Stepping* (which can be read or heard at robpateron.com). It was—unlike the third-inning at bat invoked in song by Pittas's Piazza—a hit.