



What's Happening in Houston's Theater District

December 2009

A CHRISTMAS CAROL – A GHOST STORY OF CHRISTMAS

November 20 – December 27 (Times vary)

Alley Theatre

Houston's seasonal favorite that the Houston Press described as having "Spectacular London sets ...the inimitable Dickens' tale – spiced with the usual fog and an unusual twist on the ghosts past, present and future." A Christmas Carol - A Ghost Story of Christmas returns this year with a re-telling of Charles Dickens' classic story, that follows Ebenezer Scrooge's journey with the three ghostly spirits that visit him on Christmas Eve. A Christmas Carol instills a powerful message about redemption and the spirit of the holiday season, through a dazzling production created by Tony Award-winning scenic designer Tony Straiges (Alley's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?), with costumes by Alejo Vietti (Alley's Rock 'n' Roll, Mauritius, Eurydice, Cyrano de Bergerac), lighting by Rui Rita (Alley's Eurydice, Cyrano de Bergerac, To Kill a Mockingbird), and original music by John Gromada (Alley's Subject to Fits, Treasure Island, The Pillowman). *Recommended for general audiences.*

Hubbard Stage

Tickets: \$21 - \$100

(713) 220-5700 / alleytheatre.org

THE NUTCRACKER

November 27 – December 27 (Times vary)

Houston Ballet

Featuring glorious scenery and costumes by Tony Award-winning designer Desmond Heeley, Ben Stevenson's breathtaking production of The Nutcracker is, in the words of The Houston Chronicle, "the crown jewel of holiday entertainment." Set in nineteenth century Germany, the ballet opens at a charming Christmas party at which the mysterious Dr. Drosselmeyer gives his little niece Clara a magical toy that takes her on an unforgettable journey. From the Christmas tree that grows to a towering forty feet in the first act to the cooks who fly magically through the air in the second act, The Nutcracker is sure to enchant audiences of all ages.

Wortham Center's Brown Theater

Tickets: \$17 - \$94

(713) 227-ARTS / houstonballet.org

THE SANTALAND DIARIES

November 28 – December 27 (Times vary)

Alley Theatre

Company Actor Todd Waite will reprise his role as "Crumpet the Elf" in the outlandish, and true, chronicles of David Sedaris' experience as a worker in Macy's SantaLand display. This compact, one-character comedy has been described as "a dream rendition at the Alley Theatre, courtesy of the ideally cast Todd Waite" by the Houston Chronicle. The Santaland Diaries is an hilarious cult classic, featuring comic encounters during the height of the holiday crunch. NPR humorist and best-selling author of Me Talk Pretty One Day and Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim, David Sedaris has become one of America's pre-eminent humor writers. *Recommended for mature audiences due to language and subject matter.*

Neuhaus Stage

Tickets: \$21 - \$100

(713) 220-5700 / alleytheatre.org

JACKSON BROWNE

December 1 (7:30 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$39 - \$59

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

A LITTLE DAY MUSIC

December 2 (Noon)

Da Camera of Houston

A Little Day Music concerts fulfill an important aspect of Da Camera's mission to develop the audience for chamber music and jazz by making it accessible to everyone and part of everyday life. Downtown workers, schools, seniors and day care centers are among the many who enjoy Da Camera's free lunchtime concerts on the first Wednesday of each month, October through May, at noon in the lobby of the Wortham Theater Center. Bring your lunch and enjoy the wide variety of artists and ensembles presented this season.

Wortham Center's Grand Foyer

Tickets: Free

(713) 524-5050 / dacamera.com

BOWFIRE

December 3 (7:30 pm)

Society for the Performing Arts

Holiday Heart Strings mixes greatest hits with a holiday twist! Celebrate the festive season with some of the world's greatest fiddlers and violinists in many genres, with step dancing like you have never seen. Get ready for a Ho Ho Ho Down! *Holiday Heart Strings* includes all-time favorite classics, such as "The Nutcracker Suite," "Sleigh Ride," "So This Is Christmas," "Dreydl, Dreydl, Dreydl," and "The Christmas Song," with added singing, as well as the best of BOWFIRE that audiences have come to love from its years of touring and performing.

As seen on PBS, BOWFIRE's ensemble of world-renowned musicians takes audiences on a journey that moves seamlessly from jazz to classical to bluegrass to Celtic to rock. It is a must-see performance.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$22 - \$62

(713) 227-4SPA / spahouston.org

JUBILEE OF DANCE – 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

December 4 (7:30 pm)

Houston Ballet

Looking back and looking forward, the 40th anniversary Jubilee of Dance celebrates the best of Houston Ballet. Featuring highlights of company and audience favorites, previews of upcoming productions, and works created especially for the 40th Anniversary Jubilee, this is a one-night-only event. The 2009 Jubilee of Dance will also pay tribute to retiring company star Barbara Bears with a video montage and a one-time only performance by Ms. Bears of Mikhail Fokine's bravura solo *The Dying Swan*. Recommended age: 5

Wortham Center's Brown Theater

Tickets: \$35 - \$160

(713) 227-ARTS / houstonballet.org

DIANNE REEVES – CHRISTMAS TIME IS HERE

December 4 (8:00 pm)

Da Camera of Houston

Vocalist Dianne Reeves performs music from her beloved recording *Christmas Time is Here*, which includes her renditions of *Carol of the Bells*, *Let it Snow*, *Little Drummer Boy*, *I'll Be Home for Christmas* and other holiday favorites. Dianne Reeves is the pre-eminent jazz vocalist in the world today. As a result of her virtuosity and improvisational prowess, Reeves was awarded the Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Performance for four consecutive recordings -- a Grammy first in any vocal category. When Reeves' first holiday collection, *Christmas Time Is Here*, was released in 2004, Ben Ratliff of *The New York Times* raved "Ms. Reeves, a jazz singer of frequently astonishing skill, takes the assignment seriously; this is one of the best jazz Christmas CD's I've heard."

Wortham Center's Cullen Theater

Tickets: \$40 - \$60

(713) 524-5050 / dacamera.com

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

December 5 (10:00 am & 11:30 am)

Houston Symphony

Just one day of Christmas is never enough. The Houston Symphony will give you twelve like you've never experienced before! Dancers. Costumes. Lighting. Enjoy this perfect family holiday outing, complete with a visit from Santa Claus and an audience sing-along.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$15 - \$22

(713) 224-7575 / houstonsymphony.org

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December 6 (8:00 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$45

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

INAUGURAL CONCERT OF THE 2009-2010 SEASON

December 6 (7:30 pm each day)

Virtuosi of Houston

Virtuosi of Houston, a non-profit arts organization, is a premier youth chamber orchestra celebrating its fourteenth season. The musicians, ages 11 to 18, are from the greater Houston area and are selected from annual auditions. Unlike most youth orchestras, the educational focus of Virtuosi of Houston is on chamber music. The limited size of the orchestra, 50 players, requires the young artists to perform at an exemplary level. Artistic directors and conductors are Franz Anton Krager and Andrzej Grabiec, who are also faculty members at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston. The repertoire, to be announced later, will be classical chamber music.

Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall

Tickets: \$10 - \$35

(713) 315-2525 / thehobbycenter.org or virtuosiofhouston.org

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

December 8-20 (Times vary)

Theatre Under the Stars

After last season's WHITE CHRISTMAS with "snowflakes that stay on my nose and eyelashes," this year TUTS presents another holiday gift from the wish list of your favorite things ... that classic show for all ages, THE SOUND OF MUSIC. Winner of five Oscars, including Best Picture, the show is one of only four which also won Broadway's Best Musical Tony Award®. The songs everyone loves, including "Lonely Goatherd," "Do Re Mi," "Sixteen Going on Seventeen," and "Climb Ev'ry Mountain" form a score still a top-seller for nearly five decades. THE SOUND OF MUSIC, last and greatest success of Rodgers & Hammerstein, will charm you once again just in time for the holiday season. Your "heart will be blessed"... and you'll "sing once more!"

Hobby Center's Sarofim Hall

Tickets: \$24 - \$107.50

(713) 558-8887 / tuts.com

GARRISON KEILLOR'S CHRISTMAS

December 9 (7:30 pm)

Houston Symphony

Join Garrison Keillor and the Houston Symphony for a Christmas concert featuring Keillor's unique blend of improvisational storytelling and songmaking.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$35 - \$130

(713) 224-7575 / houstonsymphony.org

HALLELUJAH MESSIAH

December 11 (8:00 pm)

Mercury Baroque

The holidays aren't complete without the family tradition of hearing Handel's famed Messiah. Ring in the holidays with Mercury Baroque in a moving performance of the most famous and recognized highlights from this quintessential holiday masterpiece. Hear the Messiah and its Hallelujah chorus as you have never heard it before with the clarity and freshness Mercury's period instruments. Make your holiday tradition Handel's Messiah with Mercury Baroque.

Wortham Center's Cullen Theater

Tickets: \$25 - \$52

(713) 533-0080 / mercurybaroque.org

VERY MERRY POPS

December 11-13 (Times vary)

Houston Symphony

You and your family will treasure this festive, heartwarming annual tradition featuring Mike Krajewski, the Houston Symphony and Houston Symphony chorus and a very special guest, Santa Claus.

Plus this year, we introduce you to pop piano sensation William Joseph, recently featured on the PBS special *David Foster and Friends* along with Michael Buble, Josh Groban, Andrea Bocelli, Celine Dion and Barbra Streisand.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$29 - \$122

(713) 224-7575 / houstonsymphony.org

MESSIAH

December 12 (8:00 pm)

Mercury Baroque

Handel's Messiah is the quintessential holiday tradition, yet it is rarely performed uncut. Hear Handel's epic masterpiece in its complete and excellent entirety as Mercury Baroque performs the Messiah on December 12th, 2009. There is plenty more to the Messiah than the Hallelujah chorus, so explore the brilliance of the work this holiday season with Mercury Baroque.

Wortham Center's Cullen Theater

Tickets: \$25 - \$52

(713) 533-0080 / mercurybaroque.org

SECOND SATURDAY BOAT CRUISE

December 12 (10:00 am)

Buffalo Bayou Partnership

These 30-minute boat rides are a great way to spend the afternoon with your family. Escape from the city and enjoy the cool breeze as you glide along the bayou's waters. Look for graceful herons, jumping fish, and even the occasional alligator sunning on the bayou's banks. After your cruise, enjoy a picnic lunch on the Sabine Promenade grounds.

No reservations necessary (20 person capacity per trip). Boat picks up at Sabine Street Bridge North Boat Landing. Children under 4 are not permitted.

Sabine Promenade

Tickets: \$5 - \$7 (cash only)

(713) 752-0314 / buffalobayou.org

A TWISTED HOLIDAY

December 15 (7:30 pm)

Bayou City Performing Arts

The holiday season is full of beautiful music, but we've come to realize that it can be so repetitive every year. GMCH will take many of these popular tunes, re-familiarize you with them, then twist them till you are rolling with laughter. For good measure, they'll even throw in a few unique songs for your future holidays. GMCH is here for your holiday rescue twisting up and down Carolers' Lane.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$22 - \$55

(713) 521-7464 / bayoucityperformingarts.org

JIM BRICKMAN – BEAUTIFUL WORLD CHRISTMAS

December 16 (8:00 pm)

Jim Brickman Touring

Since the release of his debut album "No Words" in 1994, Jim Brickman's romantic piano sound has defined him as a marquis among contemporary instrumental hit makers. His signature style of playing and songwriting has also brought him six Gold and Platinum selling albums, 26 charted adult radio hits, a Grammy nod in 2003, Two SESAC "Songwriter of the Year" awards, a Canadian Country Music Award and a Dove Award presented by the Gospel Music Association.

Beautiful World is inspired by Jim's many travels and his memorable experiences of music bridging borders and cultural divides. It's theme of friendship, healing and connecting cultures includes the quintessential Jim Brickman sound and unites worldwide musical influences.

Wortham Center's Cullen Theater

Tickets: \$35 - \$50

(713) 629-3700 / tickmaster.com

UNDEROATH

December 16 (7:30 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$20 \$23

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

HANDEL'S MESSIAH IN CANDLELIGHT

December 18-20 (Times vary)

Houston Symphony

Experience Handel's Messiah as audiences would have in the 1700s. Feed your soul through this transcendent experience of text and music.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$25 - \$80

(713) 224-7575 / houstonsymphony.org

AMAHL & THE NIGHT VISITORS

December 19-20 (2:00 pm & 7:30 pm each day)

Sandra Organ Dance Company

Sandra Organ Dance Company presents Amahl and the Night Visitors, the heartwarming story of Amahl, a poor lame shepherd boy who, with his mother are visited one night by three wise men seeking lodging during their star-led journey. The magi tell Amahl of the remarkable child they have set out to see. Choreographed by James Sewell, Amahl also includes American Sign Language to tell Amahl's story and share the themes of hope, healing, and compassion. This family-friendly Christmas story is fast becoming a holiday favorite.

Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall

Tickets: \$22 - \$42

(713) 315-2525 / thehobbycenter.org or organdance.org

SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS

December 21-23 (8:00 pm)

Southern USA Falun Dafa Assn.

Brilliant. Inspiring. Glorious. A global phenomenon! **Shen Yun Performing Arts** is the world's premier Chinese music company. They have performed to acclaim in over 100 cities around the world. **Shen Yun Performing Arts** brings to life classical Chinese dance and music in a gloriously colorful and exhilarating show. Its masterful choreography and graceful routines range from grand classical processions to ethnic and folk dances, with gorgeously costumed dancers moving in stunning synchronized patterns. Based on ancient heroic legends and modern courageous tales, Shen Yun and its breathtaking beauty are not to be missed.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$30 - \$150

(713) 629-3700 / tickmaster.com

A NEOPOLITAN NEW YEAR

December 31 (8:30 pm)

Ars Lyrica

Ring in 2010 with Houston's most elegant New Year's Eve celebration. Rising stars soprano Ava Pine and mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton join the ensemble for the American Première of J. A. Hasse's Neopolitan masterpiece *Marc Antonio e Cleopatra*. A festive gala follows, with champagne, delectable hors d'oeuvres and fabulous prizes at our annual silent auction.

Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall

Tickets: \$31.25 - \$41.25

(713) 315-2525 / thehobbycenter.org or arslyricalhouston.org

