



What's Happening in Houston's Theater District

November 2009

OUR TOWN

October 2 – November 1 (Times vary)

Alley Theatre

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* follows the courtship and marriage of George and Emily, and in following the two, reveals the hidden mystery behind the everyday. Wilder's portrait of life, love and death is set in Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, a fictional New England town at the start of the 20th century. With a penetrating wisdom about living in community, this play is an enduring American treasure and one of the greatest plays of world theatre. *Recommended for general audiences.*

Hubbard Stage

Tickets: \$21 - \$100

(713) 220-5700 / alleytheatre.org

GRUESOME PLAYGROUND INJURIES

October 16 – November 15 (Times vary)

Alley Theatre

Gruesome Playground Injuries charts two lives, using scars, injuries and calamity as the mile markers. An imaginative tour de force for actors and audiences, the play explores why people hurt themselves to gain another's love, and the cumulative effect of such damage, of such demands. Director Rebecca Taichman will make her Alley debut. *Recommended for mature audiences. Strong language, profanity, violence.*

Neuhaus Stage

Tickets: \$21 - \$100

(713) 220-5700 / alleytheatre.org

MARY POPPINS

October 22 – November 8 (Times vary)

Broadway Across America

Combining the best of the original stories by P. L. Travers and the beloved Walt Disney film, the Tony® Award-winning *MARY POPPINS* is everything you'd hope for in a Broadway musical—and more. Produced by Disney and Cameron Mackintosh, the show includes such wonderful songs as *Chim Chim Cher-ee*, *A Spoonful of Sugar*, *Let's Go Fly a Kite* and, of course, *Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*. The NY Daily News hails *MARY POPPINS* as "a roof-raising, toe-tapping, high-flying extravaganza!" Don't miss all the magic of Broadway's super hit musical, and let your imagination take flight.

Hobby Center's Sarofim Hall

Tickets: \$20 - \$130

(800) 745-3000 / broadwayacrossamerica.com

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

October 23 – November 7 (Times vary)

Houston Grand Opera

This sparkling folktale is one of Donizetti's most popular operas. Lovesick Nemorino falls madly in love with the young landowner Adina knowing well that she is out of his league. Luckily, the scheming Dr. Dulcamara has just the cure to what ails him. Russian soprano **Ekaterina Siurina** sings the minx Adina and **Eric Cutler** is Nemorino. Internationally renowned Italian bass-baritone **Alessandro Corbelli** plays Dr. Dulcamara, and **Liam Bonner** is the flamboyant Sergeant Belcore. Directed by **Annabel Arden**, this delightful production takes place in a rustic Italian town square.

Wortham Center's Brown Theater

Tickets: \$20 - \$200

(713) 228-6737 / houstongrandopera.org

KAVAKOS PLAYS & CONDUCTS MOZART

October 30 – November 1 (Times vary)

Houston Symphony

Gramophone has written of Kavakos—and Houston audiences have heard—that “the exquisite tenderness of his playing gives the music a sense of timeless, poignant beauty.” Now hear this extraordinary musician conduct your orchestra.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$29 - \$116

(713) 224-7575 / houstonsymphony.org

LOHENGRIN

October 30 – November 15 (Times vary)

Houston Grand Opera

One secret protects one great love in Wagner’s mystical romantic opera. Celebrated Wagnerian tenor Simon O’Neill makes his Houston Grand Opera debut as the knight Lohengrin, whose pure love is threatened by common human greed. Canadian soprano Adrienne Pieczonka sings the misguided Elsa, bewitched into betraying the very one she loves. Soprano Christine Goerke is the sorceress Ortrud and Richard Paul Fink plays her husband Frederick of Telramund, who will stop at nothing to gain the throne. Daniel Slater directs this grand-scale production, conducted by HGO Music Director Patrick Summers.

Wortham Center’s Brown Theater

Tickets: \$20 - \$200

(713) 228-6737 / houstongrandopera.org

A LITTLE DAY MUSIC

November 4 (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

ITZHAK PERLMAN

November 4 (7:30 pm)

Houston Symphony

The world falls in love with music when Itzhak Perlman takes up his violin. A superstar by any standard and a rarity in the classical field, Perlman has taken hold of the public imagination as few violin virtuosos ever have, bringing joy to millions with his playing. Having lost the use of his legs after falling victim to polio at the age of four, Perlman always sits as he plays. But he never fails to bring audiences to their feet. Perlman’s tone has been described as aristocratic, but his playing is decidedly populist: from the most jaded music lovers to the youngest initiates whose love of music Perlman loves to encourage, it is all but impossible to remain unmoved by the musician and his music. Join him as he conducts and plays with the Houston Symphony.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$45 - \$115

(713) 224-7575 / houstonsymphony.org

KENNY ROGERS

November 5 (7:30 pm)

Houston Symphony

Hear this American icon with the Houston Symphony as he performs songs including “Lady,” “The Gambler” and “We’ve Got Tonight.”

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$35 - \$120

(713) 224-7575 / houstonsymphony.org

KENNY GARRETT PRESENTS

November 6 (8:00 pm)

Da Camera of Houston

Kenny Garrett is “one of the more imposing musicians of his generation,” writes the New York Times. “[His] solos give the audience the sense of experiencing a natural event, of power and elegance in the form of music.” Known for his five years with Miles Davis, saxophonist Kenny Garrett’s music is roll-up-your-sleeves, in your face, hard bop blowing of rippling melodic songs.

Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater

Tickets: \$30 - \$50

(713) 524-5050 / dacamera.com

HAIL! BRIGHT CECILIA

November 6 (7:30 pm)

Ars Lyrica

The glorious voices of the Houston Chamber Choir lift in song as we celebrate the 350th birthday of composer Henry Purcell with a collaborative musical trip to late 17th-century London. This grandiose tribute to music's patron saint features Purcell's extravagant but seldom heard Hail! Bright Cecilia.

Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall

Tickets: \$31.25 - \$41.25

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

THIRD EYE BLIND

November 6 (8:00 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$27.50

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

MARY WILSON OF THE SUPREMES

November 6-8 (Times vary)

Houston Symphony

Mary Wilson, recently portrayed in the Oscar-winning film Dreamgirls, brings her sultry, smoky voice to the Houston Symphony stage for songs like "Baby Love," "Come See About Me," and "Stop! In The Name of Love."

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$29 - \$122

(713) 224-7575 / houstonsymphony.org

LAS NUEVAS TAMALERAS

November 7 (8:00 pm)

Talento Bilingue de Houston

Written and directed by San Antonio playwright, Alicia Mena, Las Nuevas Tamaleras, is a one act bilingual comedy that captures three contemporary Chicanas in an uproariously comical attempt at making Tamales for the first time. The show erupts when the spirits of Doña Juanita and Doña Mercedes appear on the scene to invisibly guide the younger generation of women. The situation becomes even more outrageous and entertaining when the experienced Tamaleras disagree on the proper way to make the perfect tamal. The new Tamaleras blunder through the daunting task, frustrating their spiritual guides and delighting the audience.

Wortham Center's Cullen Theater

Tickets: \$15 - \$20

(713) 222-1213 / tbhcenter.org

OPERA GEMS

November 8 (4:00 pm)

Houston Ebony Opera Guild

A celebration of the 100th birthday of the NAACP, this year's Opera Gems Concert will feature works associated with great African American singers whose voices, struggles and triumphs made them legends: Marian Anderson, Leontyne Price, Camilla Williams, Robert McFerrin, Simon Estes, Kathleen Battle and many more!! In addition to a line up of stellar soloists, the HEOG Chorus will be featured.

Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall

Tickets: \$31.25 - \$56.25

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

REGINA SPEKTOR

November 10 (8:00 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$25 - \$30

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

ROB ZOMBIE

November 11 (7:30 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$35

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

DETHKLOCK & MASTODON

November 12 (6:30 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$34.50

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

MARIZA

November 12 (8:00 pm)

Society for the Performing Arts

In a word, Mariza is sensational. Having risen to even greater heights on the international music scene since SPA presented her in 2007, she represents the new face of Fado, the traditional music of Portugal. Supported by her impressive acoustic trio, her voice is a gorgeous, evocative instrument, and she sings with bravura and power. "Mariza is the music's biggest star for a reason: She sings it not as musty nostalgia but as exuberant twenty-first-century pop," says Rolling Stone.

Mariza walks the fine line necessary to both genuinely carry the tradition of Fado and bring it freshness for today. Her performance style captures the raw emotion that characterizes the genre, but with her own personal twist. Mariza is a performer who has it all - charisma, stunning looks, a voice to die for and shows that deal in musical passion and drama. With her heart breaking voice, she performs with graceful, dramatic gestures, leaving slender wistful notes hanging in the air. If you cannot understand Portuguese, there is no problem. The way she sings Fado communicates directly to the soul and the emotions, tugging at the heart with a performance that speaks of longing, love and nostalgia.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$20 - \$45

(713) 227-4SPA / spahouston.org

JEWEL

November 13 (8:00 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$39 - \$49.50

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

RACHMANINOFF'S FIRST SYMPHONY

November 13-15 (Times vary)

Houston Symphony

Rachmaninoff's quicksilver First Symphony explodes with tenderness, fire and passion fitting the 23-year-old composer.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$29 - \$116

(713) 224-7575 / houstonsymphony.org

TREY MCINTYRE PROJECT

November 13 (8:00 pm)

Society for the Performing Arts

Led by Houston Ballet's former choreographic associate, this ground-breaking contemporary ballet company makes its Houston debut. What makes Trey McIntyre's choreography unique is "in the rhythm" says Los Angeles Times. He makes "brainy choices about a dance's tempo, harmony and timbre." Among other dances, the SPA program will include his latest work (serious), a trio set to the music of Henry Cowell. "McIntyre's approach to dance is ingrained in classical technique and movement, but (with serious) he is moving into new territory," says Idaho Statesman.

"Our goal is to use the inherent beauty of ballet vocabulary to create dances that authentically and clearly convey the emotion and grace of life's journey, while meaningfully engaging audiences in the experience of art," says Trey McIntyre, Artistic Director. Three short years ago, Trey McIntyre Project (TMP) burst onto the national dance scene with its debut performances at The Vail International Dance Festival. TMP's "fresh and forward-thinking choreography" (Washington Post) was an immediate sensation with both critics and audiences alike.

Led by celebrated choreographer Trey McIntyre, whose work has been commissioned by American Ballet Theatre, Stuttgart Ballet, and many other top ballet companies around the world, TMP also boasts an ensemble of top professional dancers, who have danced with companies such as The Washington Ballet, Alonzo King's LINES Ballet, Ballet Memphis and Oregon Ballet Theatre.

Wortham Center's Cullen Theater

Tickets: \$20 - \$55

(713) 227-4SPA / spahouston.org

PLAYGROUND OF LOVE

November 14 (6:00 pm)

Shamelessly Saved Productions

The play is about three different teenagers who are enticed to play on the devil's playground of his so called love for them. Darlene, a fifteen-year-old, is the first character in Playground of Love who searches for love and longs to hear the words I Love You from the opposite sex. She finds herself in the wrong bed, to the point that it nearly destroys her. Miracle, second featured character, is thirteen years old, and tells of how she is in love with Luc, her cyberspace boyfriend. He enchants her into an unexpected playground of lust that leaves her heart aching as all her secrets are revealed. Finally, Amber and Bryce's obsessed passion lead them to a playground of unwanted teen pregnancy, betrayal, and unforgiveness.

Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall

Tickets: \$31.25 - \$46.25

(713) 315-2525 / thehobbycenter.org or shamelesslysaved.com

SECOND SATURDAY BOAT CRUISE

November 14 (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

9TH ANNUAL HOUSTON BUDDY WALK

November 14 (11:00 am)

Down Syndrome Association of Houston

This is an annual down syndrome awareness event attended by 2,000+ people in 2008. Every person with down syndrome is celebrated and surrounded by their circle of support! Music, food and family activities are enjoyed by all after a 1 ½ mile walk around Buffalo Bayou.

Jones Plaza

Tickets: Free

(281) 992-9022 / houstonbuddywalk.org

CELTIC THUNDER

November 17 (7:30 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$35 - \$65

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

MAHLER'S DAS LIED VON DER ERDE

November 19-22 (Times vary)

Houston Symphony

Be both thrilled and touched by these songs of youth, wine, death and beauty. Mahler called Song of the Earth "my most personal creation." While it's an expansive work, its words based on ancient Chinese poems speak to us with intimacy and directness.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$29 - \$116

(713) 224-7575 / houstonsymphony.org

GENERATION PURCELL

November 20 (8:00 pm)

Mercury Baroque

Mercury Baroque celebrates the 350th birthday of Henry Purcell with an elegant concert dedicated to his music and the music of his closest contemporaries. Canada's Les Voix Baroques joins the Mercury chamber ensemble, led by Antoine Plante on the viola da gamba, in an intimate performance of some of England's finest baroque music by Croft, Jenkins, Locke, and Purcell.

Wortham Center's Cullen Theater

Tickets: \$20 - \$47

(713) 533-0080 / mercurybaroque.org

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

AFI

November 21 (8:15 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$25 - \$27

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

LEIF OVE ANDSNES

November 22 (2:00 pm)

Society for the Performing Arts

"The most accomplished pianist of the new generation" (The New York Times), Norway's international piano star Leif Ove Andsnes debuts with *Pictures Reframed*, a fascinating, multimedia collaboration that is centered around Mussorgsky's epic piano suite *Pictures* at an Exhibition with video installation by South African artist Robin Rhode. The program also includes a new work composed by Thomas Larcher and selections from Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15 and Mussorgsky's *From Memories of Childhood*. An afternoon extraordinaire!

Andsnes has been referred to as "an eminently sensual musician, an artist capable of grace and introspection" by the Financial Times whilst the BBC Music Magazine commented on "how hard it is to over-praise the vitality and distinction of this princely pianist." Andsnes has recorded over 30 discs spanning repertoire from Bach to the present day, been nominated for seven Grammys and awarded many international prizes. His latest disc released in Spring 2009, entitled "Shadows of Silence", features works by the Danish composer Bent Sørensen and the French Marc-André Dalbavie both of which works Leif Ove Andsnes premiered at New York's Carnegie Hall and London's Proms respectively.

Wortham Center's Cullen Theater

Tickets: \$20 - \$45

(713) 227-4SPA / spahouston.org

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

November 22-29 (Times vary)

Masquerade Theatre

The beloved Charles Dickens novel has been adapted a hundred times or more, but this is the production that will crown them all! The Houston Premiere of *A Christmas Carol* by award-winning composers and lyricists Alan Menken and Lynn Ahrens will be a treat for you and your family to treasure. Miserly Ebenezer Scrooge declares charity, compassion and Christmas itself to be a humbug, and turns in for a miserable Christmas Eve - only to have his fitful sleep interrupted by a series of ghosts, each imploring and cajoling and threatening the wicked old man to change his ways or be bound to the heavy chains of regret and avarice in the afterlife! Join us in welcoming a Houston premiere, featuring fantastic songs like "Link By Link", "Nothing To Do With Me", "A Place Called Home" and "God Bless Us Every One", and revel in the joys of a Christmas miracle brought to brilliant life on the Masquerade stage!

Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall

Tickets: \$36.25 - \$66.25

(713) 315-2525 / thehobbycenter.org or masqueradetheatre.com

WORTHAM TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

November 26 (11:00 am)

Houston Ballet, Houston Grand Opera & City of Houston

Hundreds of Houston area children will celebrate the beginning of the holiday season at the Wortham Center Tree Lighting Ceremony, a joyous, colorful festival held in the Grand Foyer of the Wortham Theater Center downtown. The highlight of the event will occur when the Sugar Plum Fairy will illuminate 8,000 twinkling lights on Wortham Theater Center's twenty-five foot Christmas tree. The festivities will include visits by costumed characters from Houston Ballet's *The Nutcracker*, including life-size fuzzy mice and toy soldiers.

Wortham Center's Grand Foyer

Tickets: Free

(713) 237-1439

PUSCIFER

November 27 (8:00 pm)

Live Nation

Tool frontman Maynard James Keenan takes his side project **Puscifer** on the road for the first time with an 11-city tour.

Jones Hall

Tickets: \$39.50 - \$195

(713) 629-3700 / ticketmaster.com

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

MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER

November 29 (7:30 pm)

Verizon Wireless Theater

Tickets: \$40 - \$85

(713) 230-1600 / livenation.com

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

