



PARTNER'S PASS

YOUR TICKET TO WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE FOX CITIES PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Welcome to the first edition of "Partner's Pass," your gateway to behind-the-scenes information about upcoming events at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center. In each newsletter you'll find feature articles on upcoming performances as well as insider tidbits on what it takes to actually bring these spectacular events to the stage. As a way of thanking you for being an Annual Partner, "Partner's Pass" is designed to provide you with greater insight into the world of performance art. We hope this exclusive knowledge will add an even greater level of enjoyment to your experience here at the Center.

As modern audiences continue to change, so too, interpretations of Shakespeare's plays have adapted and transformed to better reflect contemporary times. Through these productions, as well as traditional renderings, individuals are able to experience Shakespeare on many different levels. And in celebration

own personal struggle of wanting creative freedom in a world being overtaken by an increasingly hostile socialist realism can be felt throughout the score, adding a whole new dimension to Shakespeare's tragic characters.

Following these two productions of *Romeo and Juliet* is Claire Bloom's *Women of Shakespeare*. Anyone acquainted with the long history of great Shakespearean actors and actresses will be familiar with Bloom's incredible talent. Her ability to transform herself into some of Shakespeare's greatest heroines while at the same time becoming one with the language must be experienced to be believed. Anyone intimidated by Shakespeare's Middle English will find Bloom's acting style a great comfort. But what makes Bloom truly exceptional is the way she relates to the heroines she portrays, playing them with a feminine strength and beauty that is hard to match.



From UW Oshkosh's rendition of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Shakespeare on the Fox concludes with UW Oshkosh's production of *Love's Fire*, a group of one-act plays inspired by Shakespearean sonnets and written by some of today's

leading playwrights. The plays bring the joy and frustration of intimate relationships to life through modern characters and settings while delving into the darker sides of human relations. Each of these productions are unique with some offering a more radical interpretation of Shakespeare's work than



Claire Bloom

others. But despite their modern language and departure from classicism, these plays fulfill an important role in celebrating Shakespeare. For the internal and external struggles of human beings has not changed all that much since the 1600s, and capturing human trials and tribulations in his words and plays is what Shakespeare was all about.

Tickets are available for the separate performances or you can see all four shows for one special price. For more information, contact the ticket office at (920) 730-3760 or visit us online at www.foxcitiespac.com.

of these different approaches, the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center – in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and the Grand Opera House – will present *Shakespeare on the Fox* — a multi-performance dedication to the world's most famous bard.

Shakespeare on the Fox begins with UW Oshkosh's traditional play version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare's timeless tragedy of young love struggling to survive in a world of enemies at war explores the intensity with which human beings experience love and hate, and the lengths they are willing to go to act on both. Everyone who has ever felt the joy and angst of an impossible love will discover a reflection of themselves in Shakespeare's words and characters. UW Oshkosh's performance is a great way to reacquire yourself with this literary legend.

Next in the series, the St. Petersburg Ballet will perform a dance interpretation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. By combining the visual excitement of ballet with the infiltrating power of classical music, the St. Petersburg Ballet invites the audience to explore the passionate depths of Shakespeare's characters as they come to life through movement and sound. Composer Sergei Prokofiev wrote the music for this ballet upon returning to Russia from a self-imposed exile in 1936. His

ODE TO SHAKESPEARE

"Give me my robe, put on my crown, I have immortal longings in me."

— William Shakespeare, from *Antony and Cleopatra*

It is not known whether William Shakespeare himself had immortal longings, but his lasting contribution to Western civilization can not be ignored. Shakespeare's insight into human nature and the nature of human folly has made a profound impact on individuals worldwide. Because of his "great man" legacy, Shakespeare and his work can regularly be found in high school and college curriculums everywhere. But by making Shakespeare a requirement, oftentimes the art of Shakespearean drama gets lost on students who have a hard time understanding this stylized language. As a result, Shakespeare's wisdom about all things human is becoming less and less appreciated.





Voices of Heaven

It was only fifteen years ago that South Africa was still practicing a policy of oppression and racial hatred. The dark cloud of apartheid had swept in after the storm of British Imperialism had passed and the light of freedom appeared to have been snuffed out indefinitely. After over half a century of discrimination and segregation, fierce clashes between the native Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho populations and the apartheid regime's police forces broke out throughout South Africa.

On June 16, 1976, a student uprising in Soweto exploded into chaotic violence when police opened fire on a crowd of unarmed protesters. Over 500 students were killed. The magnitude of this atrocity reverberated throughout South Africa, lighting a new fire in the hearts and minds of the native youth. They had had enough. It was time to take a stand. Throughout the 1980s, protests escalated while at the same time the international community began boycotting South Africa because of its oppressive, racist policies. Marches were staged regularly, and it was through them that the people of Soweto used one of their most effective weapons against the tyranny of apartheid – their voices.

The use of song to protest and alleviate the frustration of living under racial oppression resulted in some of the most powerful vocal music ever created. Drawing from traditional Zulu, Xhosa, and other tribal songs and chants, and incorporating the spiritual influence of Christianity, the music that flowed from these oppressed people captured both the anguish of the moment and the hope for a better future that dominated their lives. The voices of Soweto rose up from the enflamed population and were heard around the world. The apartheid regime began faltering in the

early 1990s, and in 1994 — with the election of Nelson Mandela as president — tyranny was vanquished. But Soweto continued to sing, only now the people raise their voices in praise, not protest.

In 2002, David Mulovedzi and Beverly Bryer decided to hold auditions for the creation of an all-star “super choir.” Twenty-seven of the best singers were chosen from the Holy Jerusalem Choir, various Soweto churches and the community at large. The Soweto Gospel Choir was born. The choir’s mission is to bring the best of South African spirituals, traditional Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho gospel songs together with popular folk songs to create an exotic, spine-tingling performance. The unique *a capella* sound that is the foundation for most of the choir’s pieces invokes colorful images of the African landscape and the proud tribal heritage of its native people. And it is a sound that has captured audiences throughout Europe, Australia, Africa and now here in the United States.

While Soweto is free from the darkness of apartheid, much of South Africa still struggles as a result of a weak economy. In response, the Soweto Gospel Choir established its own charity foundation in association with Nkosi’s Haven, a Soweto-based AIDS care project which raises funds for children who have been orphaned because of the disease. As a result of its fast-growing international fame, the choir has been able to raise a substantial amount of funds that have also been used to donate food and other essentials to aid organizations.

In 2003, the Soweto Gospel Choir released its first CD titled “Voices From Heaven,” which not only speaks to the choir’s spiritual music but also touches on Soweto’s tribal history. Zulu literally means “heaven,” with the members of the Zulu nation often referred

to as the “people of heaven.” While the CD is great for getting a feel for the music, seeing the Soweto Gospel Choir live takes the experience to a whole new level. The soulful voices will excite the senses while the vibrant colors and dancing will draw you into the remarkable world of African heritage and culture. That this performance arrives in the Fox Cities during Black History month only adds to this spectacular tribute to individual will and the human struggle to overcome tyranny.

SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR

FEBRUARY 24 · 7:30 p.m.

All seats are only \$18!

Join us for a dessert discussion across the street at Something Sweet immediately following the performance!

Thank you VOLUNTEERS

Each year hundreds of individuals ensure your experience here at the... our volunteers for their outstanding...





REDISCOVERING OPERA

Opera. For some people the word itself is enough to send them scrambling back to the comfort of their favorite movies, television shows and recording artists. The way they see it, opera is a cultural oddity reserved for the select few who actually “get it.” But as with any art form — both old and new — a little background information can go a long way toward understanding the artistic power of opera. And if you have a few moments to sit down and listen to a couple of recordings, you’ll find that the world of opera is not as unfamiliar as you might think.

Opera first burst onto the scene in Italy back in the 16th century. It was a revolution of thought and musical desire where the best of performance art was brought together in a way never before seen or heard. Opera soon became the stage where some of the greatest composers to ever live — Mozart, Wagner, Handel, Beethoven — would become immortalized. More importantly, with opera, composers

were able to invoke, inspire and capture all the human passions and struggles no written word could fully express. As a result, some of the greatest stories of love, revenge and human strife were brought to life through the music, voice, costumes, set and dance of opera.

“There’s something for everyone,” Lawrence University vocal coach Bonnie Kesner pointed out. Despite this, American audiences have a tendency to shy away from this daunting form of music theater. “We as a society, as a culture, have always put a big wall up against opera,” aficionado Roberta Roloff explained. Kesner agreed, stating that she felt the public stayed away as a result of an “uninformed fear.” While most people can appreciate classical music, one of the largest impediments to enjoying opera is the language barrier. Without the ability to understand what the opera singers are saying, audiences fear they will lose out because they won’t understand the “play” that is unfolding before them. As a result, they will have a harder time appreciating how the voice is being used as both instrument and narrative tool. But today opera companies are making great efforts to bridge this gap.

One of the most obvious ways of bringing classical opera to an American audience is by translating it into English. Problems arise for conductors and singers, however, because the difference in words and rhythm can potentially impact how the singing voices are brought into harmony with the orchestration. Because of this, most conductors are reluctant to use this method. Most opera companies are now turning to “supertitles” which provide a translation of what the singers are saying while the opera is being performed. Yet even with the language barrier removed, some people still feel intimidated when it comes to opera.

As Maestro Miro Pansky — who founded and headed the Pamiro Opera Company of Green Bay, WI for 18 years before it closed in 2003 — explained, one of the best ways to start engaging opera is by listening to a recording, reading and understanding the story, and then

going to a live performance. By listening to a recording, he stressed, one can get a feel for the entire performance as well as develop a familiarity with the music. For one of the most striking and enduring aspects of opera is the orchestration. “Without music there is no opera,” Maestro Pansky stressed.

And upon taking that first step toward a better appreciation of this formidable genre, many people will probably be surprised to learn that the world of opera is not as foreign as they initially thought.

DID YOU KNOW?

Georges Bizet’s *Carmen* opened in France on March 3, 1875 to a hostile and unappreciative audience. Bizet’s gypsy heroine, harsh realism and tragic ending did not sit well with 19th century Parisners despite his powerful score. Bizet died three months later. It was only after his death that *Carmen* started to gain in popularity. Today, it is one of the most popular operas and its music is easily recognized by even the most casual observer.

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from our area devote themselves to Center is the best it can be. We thank ontribution and support of the Center!



DON'T MISS CARMEN AT THE CENTER ON MARCH 16 AT 7:30 p.m.

sponsored by:

John C. Bax, M.D., Ph.D.
Hand & Upper Extremity Center

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY

- 7-8 UW Oshkosh's Romeo and Juliet **BOLDT** Kimberley-Clark Theater 7:30 p.m. \$10 (students)/\$16
- 14 St. Petersburg Ballet's Romeo and Juliet **BOLDT** 7:30 p.m. \$20/\$30/\$40
- 18-19 Claire Bloom's Women of Shakespeare **BOLDT** Kimberley-Clark Theater 7:30 p.m. \$25
- 20 UW Oshkosh's Love's Fire **BOLDT** Grand Opera House, Oshkosh 7:30 p.m. \$9 (students)/\$15
- 27 Count Basie Orchestra with special guest Nneenna Freelon  J&C Bank, M.D., Ph.D. Fox Valley Symphony Center 7:30 p.m. \$18/\$28
- 28 Tap Kids **THE DANCE CARE** 7:30 p.m. \$18/\$25

FEBRUARY

- 7 Young Men's Chorus Festival Appleton Boy Choir 7:30 p.m. \$10/\$12
- 8 Appleton North High School Bands 7:15 p.m. \$10/\$12
- 11 Violinist Caitlin Tully Fox Valley Symphony — Resident Partner 7:30 p.m. \$17/\$35
- 18-20 Dora the Explorer Live! Dora's Pirate Adventure times vary \$14.50 - \$27.50
- 22 National Acrobats of Taiwan, R.O.C. **BOLDT** 7:30 p.m. \$15/\$25
- 24 Soweto Gospel Choir Postshow discussion at Something Sweet 7:30 p.m. \$18

MARCH

- 3 Irish Rovers **OSCARA** 7:30 p.m. \$17/\$27/\$35/\$40
- 6 Youth Orchestra's Spring Concert Fox Valley Symphony — Resident Partner 7:00 p.m. \$6/\$10
- 9 Gaelic Storm  J&C Bank, M.D., Ph.D. Fox Valley Symphony Center 7:30 p.m. \$28/\$35
- 12 Art Garfunkel with the Fox Valley Symphony 7:30 p.m. \$48 - \$68
- 16 Opera Verdi Europa's Carmen Postshow discussion at Something Sweet  J&C Bank, M.D., Ph.D. Fox Valley Symphony Center 7:30 p.m. \$15/\$30/\$40
- 18 George Carlin 7:00/9:30 p.m. \$48
- 24 This Land is your Land: An American Songbook  J&C Bank, M.D., Ph.D. Fox Valley Symphony Center 7:30 p.m. \$17/\$27/\$35/\$40

APRIL

- 3 The Velveteen Rabbit Postshow discussion at Something Sweet  J&C Bank, M.D., Ph.D. Fox Valley Symphony Center 2:00 p.m. \$16
- 5 Alvin Ailey®  Kimberley-Clark Corporation **BOLDT** American Dance Theater 7:30 p.m. \$20/\$35
- 8 An Evening with Bernstein and Stravinsky Fox Valley Symphony — Resident Partner 7:30 p.m. \$17/\$35
- 15 Mark Schultz and FHH 7:00 p.m. \$17.50/\$19.50
- 16 Cookin' 7:30 p.m. \$20/\$38/\$40
- 19-24 Mamma Mia! M&I Bank Broadway in the Fox Cities times vary \$43-\$73
- 30 Spring Concert Appleton Boychoir 7:30 p.m. \$10/\$12

MAY/JUNE

- 7 David Clayton-Thomas with Blood, Sweat and Tears Fox Valley Symphony — Resident Partner 7:30 p.m. \$17/\$35
- 11 Sound Stage: Paul Dresher with Zeitgeist 7:30 p.m. \$16
- 31-12 Hairspray M&I Bank Broadway in the Fox Cities times vary \$43-\$71
- 12-17 Little Shop of Horrors M&I Bank Broadway in the Fox Cities times vary \$37-\$67

JULY

Call (920) 730-3760 or visit foxcitiespac.com



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