

# Summer Arts Preview: Performance

By **Gary Tischler** - May 16, 2019

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*Michael Urie in "Hamlet," Shakespeare Theatre Company's 2019 Free For All production. Photo by Scott Suchman.*

## THEATER

**Round House Theatre** — having commandeered the Lansburgh Theatre while its Bethesda, Maryland, home is being renovated — will twist Henrik Ibsen into a knot at the regional premiere of playwright Lucas Hnath's "A Doll's House, Part 2," starting out with the return of Nora, the disaffected heroine of Ibsen's 1879 play, after 15 years. The production, directed by Nicole A. Watson, features a stellar cast, including Nancy Robinette, Craig Wallace and Holly Twyford as Nora (June 5 to 30).

We also look forward to the return of the National Players to **Olney Theatre Center** in Maryland. America's longest-running touring company will bring productions of Jules Verne's "Around the World in 80 Days" (May 22 to 26) and Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" (May 29 to June 2).

**Woolly Mammoth** will stage its final production of the season, "Describe the Night" by Rajiv Joseph, directed by John Vreeke. The play, which won the Obie award for Best New American Play of 2018, concerns the Russian Revolution, Isaac Babel, a KGB agent and a plane crash (May 27 to June 23).

At **Arena Stage**, the defiant force, full of trenchant humor and courage, that was the late Texas Gov. Ann Richards will be portrayed by Jayne Atkinson in "Ann" (July 11 to Aug. 11).

And for something really brand new, there's the arrival at **Studio Theatre** of "Showroom." This newly curated performance series will transform Studio's Milton Theatre into a vibe-filled and vibrant hangout for new shows: "Every Brilliant Thing" by Duncan McMillan, directed by Jason Loewith, Olney's artistic director (June 19 to July 7); "Bright Colors and Bold Patterns" by Drew Droege, directed by Michael Urie (July 9 to 28); Dian Oh in concert (June 28 and 29); "Spokaoke" by Annie Dorsen" (July 6 and 7); "Mortified" (July 13); and "Werk! A Cabaret Celebrating Black Women" with Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi (July 23).

In the **Kennedy Center** Terrace Theater, there will be an up-to-the-minute staging of the new play "Byhalia, Mississippi" by Evan Linder, exploring race, family and betrayal in the South (June 11 to 30). Meanwhile, it's another summer of musicals. "Hello, Dolly" will return to the Opera House starring Betty Buckley of "Cats" fame, reminding us of the recent death of the original Dolly Levi, Carol Channing (June 4 to July 7), followed by "Aladdin," just in time for the movie (July 18 to Sept. 7). The Eisenhower Theater will host "Falsettos," the Tony Award winner by William Finn and James Lapine (June 11 to 23), and "Dear Evan Hansen," full of teen angst, which we saw at Arena Stage before it became a Broadway hit (Aug. 6 to Sept. 8).

At the **Atlas Performing Arts Center**, the **In Series** is staging a remarkable "deconstruction and reconstruction" version of Handel's 1738 opera "Serse" including a narration by Sufi poet Rumi, harking to the opera's Iranian roots (June 1, 2, 8 and 9). Also at the Atlas, **Mosaic Theater** is presenting the comedy "Sooner/Later" by Allyson Currin (May 15 to June 16) and "Twisted Melodies," a one-man show by Kelvin Roston Jr. about soul singer Donny Hathaway (June 19 to July 21).

This summer's **Shakespeare Theatre Company** Free For All production in Sidney Harman Hall will be "Hamlet" with Michael Urie, as directed by departing Artistic Director Michael Kahn in 2018 (July 10 to 21).

Finally, the **American Shakespeare Center** in Staunton, Virginia, will present Sophocles's "Antigone" directed by Dorren Bechtol (May 16, 19 and 24; June 1 and 7).

## OPERA

**Wolf Trap Opera's** 2019 productions — sung by rising stars participating in Wolf Trap's residency program — will be: a double-bill of Christoph Willibald Gluck's "Merlin's Island" and a new production of Viktor Ullmann's "The Emperor of Atlantis," conducted by Geoffrey McDonald, in the Barns (June 22, 26, 28 and 30); a new production of Richard Strauss's "Ariadne auf Naxos," conducted by Emily Senturia, also in the Barns (July 19, 21, 24 and 27); and a single performance of Gioachino Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" conducted by Lidiya Yankovskaya, in the Filene Center (Aug. 9).

For those missing the **Castleton Festival** in Virginia, there are two opportunities to hear music at the farm: "Looking Back, Looking Forward," a recital by soprano Elizabeth Blancke-Biggs, pianist Michael Recchiuti and artists from the Loren Maazel Castleton Institute (June 1); and "Lorin Maazel In Memoriam," with details to follow (July 13).

Farther afield, in Cooperstown, New York, is the annual **Glimmerglass Festival**, where this year's offerings include Kern and Hammerstein's "Showboat"; Verdi's "La traviata"; "The Ghosts of Versailles," a comic creation that echoes "The Marriage of Figaro" and "The Barber of Seville"; and the world premiere of the contemporary opera "Blue" by Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson, focusing on the travails of an American family facing urban violence (July 6 to Aug. 24).

## JAZZ

The **DC Jazz Festival** (June 7 to 16, see separate story) kicks off at the same time as the **Capital Jazz Fest** at Merriweather Post Pavilion (June 7, 8 and 9), but keeps on swinging, District-wide. As part of the DC Jazz Festival, **Jazz in the Garden**, the series of free Friday-evening performances in the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden, will feature trombonist Shannon Gunn on June 7 (May 17 to Aug. 23).

Internationally famed club **Blues Alley** in Georgetown will present, among others: the John Pizzarelli Trio performing "For Centennial Reasons: 100 Years Salute to Nat King Cole" (June 6, 7, 8 and 9), blues singer Shemekia Copeland (June 28, 29 and 30), percussionist Poncho Sanchez (July 18, 19, 20 and 21), keyboardist Marcus Johnson (Aug. 1, 2, 3 and 4), singer and actress Melba Moore (Aug. 9, 10 and 11), pianist and singer Freddy Cole (Aug. 15, 16, 17 and 18) and pianist Cyrus Chestnut (Aug. 22, 23, 24 and 25).



*Blues Alley will present Shemekia Copeland on June 28, 29 and 30.*

## POP, ROCK & MORE

Familiar names coming to **Capital One Arena**: Ariana Grande (June 21), New Kids on the Block (June 25), Hugh Jackman (July 1), the Backstreet Boys (July 12), Jennifer Lopez (July 17), John Mayer (July 23), Khalid (Aug. 3) and the Jonas Brothers (Aug. 15).

The Wharf's main venue, the **Anthem**, isn't thought of as a classical venue, but National Symphony Orchestra Music Director Gianandrea Noseda will conduct a performance of Dvořák's "New World" Symphony next month (June 5). Later this summer, the Native Tongue Fest will celebrate 30 years of hip hop (July 18). Top summer acts include: Elvis Costello and Blondie (July 26), Ben Folds and Violent Femmes (July 30) and the Raconteurs (Aug. 17).

In Columbia, Maryland, **Merriweather Post Pavilion**'s summer variety pack includes: Florence + the Machine (June 3), Willie Nelson & Family and Alison Krauss (June 19), Phish (June 22 and 23), Hootie & the Blowfish and Barenaked Ladies (Aug. 8) and Heart and Joan Jett & the Blackhearts (Aug. 13).

Also in Maryland, the Theater at **MGM National Harbor** will welcome area metalheads for Vince Neil of Mötley Crüe with Queensrÿche (July 11) and Aerosmith (Aug. 8, 10 and 13).

At **Wolf Trap** in Vienna, Virginia, fans of alternative rock can come out for Big Head Todd and the Monsters, Toad the Wet Sprocket and the Posies (June 30). More summer highlights: legendary pop crooner Lionel Richie (July 15); Grammy-winning genre crosser Bruce Hornsby (July 24); incomparable jazz fusion keyboardist Herbie Hancock with saxophonist Kamasi Washington (July 30); the one-and-only Tony Bennett (Aug. 17); and, closing out the season, reggae band UB40 with original vocalist Ali Campbell and founding member Astro, at a show that also includes Grammy-winning singer Shaggy (Sept. 1).

The grounds of **Strathmore** in North Bethesda, Maryland, will come to life with one-man circus L'Homme Cirque (June 27 to July 7) and "Live from the Lawn," the free outdoor concert series on Wednesdays in Gudelsky Gazebo (July 10 to Aug. 28). Uniquely Strathmore, Ukefest will conclude with a "Live on the Lawn" performance (Aug. 17 to 21). And standing out from the MusicCenter's summer lineup: Youssou Ndour (May 29) and Pilobolus (July 9).

Even with Jerry Lee Lewis's June 8 show canceled (he is recovering from a stroke), the **Birchmere** has star after star coming in June: David Crosby (June 4), Southside Johnny (June 15), Amy Grant (June 20), the Smithereens with Marshall Crenshaw (June 21), the Righteous Brothers (June 28) and LeAnn Rimes (June 30). Shows to look for later on: Aimee Mann (July 18), the Bacon Brothers (July 19, 20 and 21), Johnny Gill (July 26, 27 and 28), Chris Isaak (Aug. 6) and the Manhattan Transfer (Aug. 23).



*Aimee Mann will be at the Birchmere on July 18.*

The summer lineup at Georgetown's own **Gypsy Sally's** includes local favorite White Ford Bronco (June 1), a Father's Day show with the Rock and Roll Playhouse playing music of the Grateful Dead for kids (June 15) and O'Malley's March, the Irish folk-rock band of former presidential candidate and Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley (July 6).

## **DANCE**

The **Ballet Across America** festival at the Kennedy Center will focus on women's creativity and leadership in ballet, with engagements by Dance Theatre of Harlem and Miami City Ballet (May 28 to June 2).

Diane Coburn Bruning's **Chamber Dance Project** will present "New Works +" at Sidney Harman Hall, including two world premieres: Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's "Rondo Ma Non Troppo" and "Prufrock," co-conceived and directed by Bruning and Matt Torney. Also part of the program are the Washington premiere of "Extremely Close" by Alejandro Cerrudo, resident

choreographer of Hubbard Street, with a piano score by Philip Glass, and "Songs by Cole" and "Journey," both by Bruning (June 20, 21 and 22).

## FESTIVALS

**By The People**, the international arts and civic dialogue festival organized by Georgetown-based nonprofit Halcyon, will return for two weeks in June. The free festival will feature installations and programs at four official hubs: the Smithsonian's Arts + Industries Building, Union Market, CityCenterDC and a barge based primarily on the Southeast D.C. waterways. Additional satellite locations include: the Anacostia Arts Center, DC Arts Center, Gallery 102, Greater Reston Arts Center, **IA&A** at Hillyer, Prince George's African American Museum & Cultural Center, VisArts and Washington Studio School. New this year, the barge, carrying a floating art installation by Hank Willis Thomas titled "THEY ARE US, US IS THEM," will visit Georgetown's Washington Harbour. On "Solstice Saturday," June 22, Smithsonian museums will stay open until midnight with free performances and programs (June 15 to 23).

This year's **Capital Fringe Festival**, the 14th annual, will showcase 89 productions and 500 individual performances at Arena Stage and seven other Southwest D.C. venues in July. Tickets and passes go on sale on June 17 and there will be a festival preview on June 28 at Market SW. The Fringe Festival Curated Series will feature the 18-part "A People's History" by monologist Mike Daisey, "Arcade" by projection artist Robin Bell and "Shakespeare's Worst" by "The Simpsons" writer Mike Reiss and clown Nick Newlin (July 5 to 28).

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