

Homegrown jazz legends return to play at festival

BACKSTAGE PASS



ANN DELISI

It's not just your imagination. You really do have a greater number of significant summer music events in the Detroit area to enjoy than ever before.

As you pluck the best of the late summer harvest of festivals, don't forget about the first and best of the jazz crop.

It has been twenty years since The Montreux Detroit Jazz Festival began its Labor Day week-

end tradition of featuring accomplished artists from the full spectrum of the genre.

While there are now five or six noteworthy jazz festivals to look forward to each season, the Montreux Festival was unique two decades ago. Festival Director Jim Dulzo believes there were several factors that contributed to its early success.

"The sheer size of the event was sure to attract attention. From the beginning, there were so many quality artists in the program that appealed to the core jazz listener. The public radio broadcasts of the performances also helped to raise the profile of the event."

This year's festival at Hart Plaza in downtown Detroit, Thursday-Monday, Sept. 2-6, features an unprecedented gathering of some of Detroit's greatest "jazz alumni," who have become international stars.

"There's an incredible buzz among local jazz fans about the return of Yusuf Lateef, the extraordinary reed player who has not performed in his hometown Detroit in over twenty years," says Dulzo.

With over one hundred performances planned on the festival's five stages, you'll want to do some planning to catch your favorites. It sounds like Ron Pangborn, music producer for

Detroit Public TV's BACKSTAGE PASS series, is planning to go on a five-day jazz bender.

"I'm especially eager to see Elvin Jones, the original drummer for the John Coltrane Quartet. Not only is he a phenomenal performer, but he remains one of the most innovative drummers ever," says Pangborn.

A couple of months ago, BACKSTAGE PASS did a segment on the legendary musicians of the Case Corridor, which included the band CJQ. A reunion of the group is one of the highlights, and I'm also looking forward to the tribute to Marcus Belgrave on Sunday, Sept. 5."

Detroit's homegrown jazz legends get the salute during a special Montreux Festival edition of BACKSTAGE PASS, airing 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 29 on Detroit Public TV. The program visits with Harold McKinney at his weekly SereNgeti Ballroom workshop for aspiring jazz artists, and offers the reflections of Alberta Adams, whose Montreux appearance is another highlight of her more than 50 years as Detroit's "Queen of the Blues."

The innovative Jeff Haas Trio performs with guest trumpeter Marcus Belgrave, and a rare local stop by the legendary Donald Byrd includes a Detroit trib-

ute piece. Byrd's homecoming concert at last weekend's African World Festival was his first local public performance in about twenty years.

During its long run, it's clear that the Montreux Detroit Jazz Festival has been more than just a good time with great music. It has become a chapter of the city's music lore.

I have an opportunity to be a part of it by introducing the acid jazz band Liquid Soul on closing night, Monday, Sept. 6. The way I look at it, why should guys like Pangborn have all the fun? See you there.

COMMUNITY THEATER

St. Dunstan's Guild, Ridgedale Players host open houses

Would you like to tour one of this country's oldest operating outdoor Greek theaters? How about viewing a theater designed by Eliel Saarinen and built in the 1990s?

Would you like a behind-the-scenes look at costumes, props, the scenery workshop and Green Room of one of Michigan's oldest community theaters?

You can do this and more 3-6 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 12 when St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook hosts their first theater open house at the theaters on the Cranbrook Educational campus, 400 Lone Pine Road in Bloomfield Hills.

Everyone is welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served outdoors (weather permitting) around the reflecting pool behind the Greek stage where St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook members will be available to answer your questions and share information on the history of the theater, and plans for the upcoming season.

St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook is an independent, non-profit community theater.

Their season kicks off Friday, Oct. 29 with "The Heidi Chronicles" by Wendy Wasserstein. The show continues Oct. 30-31, Nov. 3-6.

A to-be-announced children's theater production will be pre-

sented Nov. 19-21.

Larry Shue's "The Foreigner" will be presented Jan. 21-22 and Jan. 27-29 followed by "Foxfire" by Susan Cooper and H. Cronyn, March 17-19, March 23-25.

The season wraps up with the musical "Damn Yankees" to be presented June 2-3, June 8-10 in the outdoor Greek theater.

Call (248) 644-0527 for information about season tickets or the open house.

Is holding an open house 1-5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 12 at their playhouse, 205 W. Long Lake Road, between Crooks and Livernais in Troy.

Children and adults interested in theater are welcome to come and tour the theater. Refreshments will be served. For your entertainment, Ridgedale players will present musical highlights from "Nunsense," opening Friday, Sept. 10.

Call (248) 988-7049 for more information and a season brochure.

Here's the schedule:

"Nunsense" by Dan Goggin — Sept. 10 (sold-out), Sept. 11; 17-19 and 24-26.

"Jest a Second!" comedy by James Sherman — Nov. 5-6, 12-14 and 19-21.

"Deathtrap" by Ira Levin — Jan. 14-15, 21-23, and 28-30.

"Oklahoma!" by Rogers and Hammerstein — March 10-11, 17-19, 24-26.

"Moon over the Brewery" by Bruce Graham — May 5-7, May 12-13, and May 19-21.

Ridgedale is holding auditions for "Jest a Second!" 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 1 at the playhouse. Call (248) 398-2725 for more information.

Plymouth Theatre Guild

Is holding auditions 7:30 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, Sept. 13-14 for "It's a Wonderful Life," opening Friday, Nov. 19 at the Water Tower Theatre on the campus of the Northville Psychiatric Hospital, 1/2 mile west of I-275 at 41001 W. Seven Mile Road, between Haggerty and Northville roads in Northville.

Auditions will be held at the Water Tower Theater from 7:30 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, Sept. 13-14 until they're finished. Call director Kristin Curie, (248) 344-1723 or the PTG phone line (248) 349-7110 for more information.

Visit PTG online at www.causeway.com/ptg

Schoolcraft College

Is holding open auditions for its fall theater production of Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice," 7 p.m. Tuesday and

Wednesday, Aug. 31 and Sept. 1 in the Liberal Arts Theatre on the Schoolcraft College campus, 18600 Haggerty Road, between Six and Seven Mile Roads, Livonia. There are 30 roles for males and females. Auditions open to the public, no experience necessary. Call (734) 462-4400 Ext. 5270.

Village Players of Birmingham

The Village Players of Birmingham kick off their season with "Back to Backch & David," a collection of hits by composer Burt Bacharach and lyricist Hal David. Sept. 17-19, 24-26, Oct. 1 & 2 at the theater, 752 Chestnut, on the east side of Woodward Avenue, two blocks south of Maple. Tickets are \$14/play; season — 6 shows for \$55, 3 shows for \$36.

Call (248) 644-2075 for more information.

The season continues with:

"The Man Who Came To Dinner" — A classic comedy by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman, Nov. 12-14, 19-21, 26 & 27.

"Oliver" — The classic musical adapted from Dickens' novel set in 19th-century London, Jan. 21-23, 28-30, Feb. 4 & 5.

"Sherlock Holmes" — March 17-19, 24-26, March 31 & April 1.

"Forever Plaid" — May 12-14, 19-21, 26 & 27.

Farmington Players

The Farmington Players 1999-2000 season begins Nov. 5 with "The Women" by Clare Booth. The show continues Nov. 6-7, 12-14, 18-21, and 26-27.

Here's the rest of the schedule:

"Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck, Feb. 4-6, Feb. 11-13, 18-20, and 24-26.

"Kiss Me Kate," Music by Cole Porter, May 5-7, 12-14, 19-21, and 25-27.

The theater is at 32332 W. 12 Mile Road Farmington Hills between Orchard Lake Road and Farmington Road on the north side of 12 mile Road. Shows start 8 p.m. except 2 p.m. Sunday matinee. For ticket information, call (248) 553-2955 or online at www.wvnet.net/~earlson/playcrst.txt.html

Send us your community theater schedules for 1999-2000 and we'll do our very best to publicize your shows.

Send schedules to Keely Wygonik, Entertainment Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

We're also looking for people to review community theater productions. If you're interested, send samples of your writing to Wygonik at the address listed.

To fax information, call (734) 551-7273 or e-mail kwygonik@oe.homecomm.net

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Every year thousands of people travel to visit the Vietnam War Memorial Wall to remember, to reflect and to heal. The Wall is a powerful emotional experience. The Vietnam Wall Experience—a 240-foot near-size replica of the famous Vietnam Memorial Wall will be on display in Southeast Michigan for three days only.

- All are welcome—admission is free
- The Wall is open 24 hours beginning Friday, August 27 at 8 a.m. to Sunday, August 29 at 6 p.m.
- Located at Christian Memorial Cemetery, 521 East Hamlin Road, Rochester Hills (approximately two miles north of M-59 and just east of Rochester Road)

Schedule of Events

Friday, August 27 Flag Raising Ceremony-----8:00 a.m. Opening Ceremony-----7:00 p.m.	Saturday, August 28 Flag Raising Ceremony-----8:00 a.m. Wreath Laying Ceremony--6:00 p.m.
Sunday, August 29 Sunrise Interdenominational Worship Service and Flag Raising Ceremony -----8:00 a.m. Rolling Thunder Motorcycle Motorcade-----12:30 - 1:00 p.m. Closing Ceremony-----3:00 p.m.	

Information Line: 810-997-7797

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