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**By Ronni Reich**

**Relax and recharge: Arts organizations open their doors for performances — some free — and more to lift the spirits of Jerseyans**



Two River Theater in Red Bank opened its doors to provide charging stations and coffee to local residents *Courtesy of Two River Theater Company*

There may be no phrase in the world of the performing arts more famous than this: “The show must go on.”

Even when “going on” has meant contending with no heat, limited rehearsal time and a countywide curfew, theaters and classical music ensembles throughout New Jersey have been making that happen.

And in many cases, they’ve been offering more than just entertainment.

On Thursday, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra’s offices opened for the first time all week and, by midday, the staff had decided definitively to go through with this weekend’s concerts.

Not only that, they chose to make them free to those who did not already have tickets.

“We’re opening the doors so people can have a few minutes of solace,” said NJSO interim president and CEO Susan Stucker. “We’d love for people to understand that music has such a power to lift your spirits.”

To prepare for two concerts, including one today at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the orchestra planned a reduced, yet jam-packed weekend rehearsal schedule and simplified its offerings. In place of Schoenberg’s “Verklärte Nacht” — a challenge for performers and audiences — the ensemble will perform Mozart’s Symphony No. 29.

Originally titled “A Mozart Duo,” the concert is now an all-Mozart trio, including the Sinfonia Concertante with NJSO principal violist Frank Foerster and guest conductor and violinist Augustin Dumay as the soloist. Dumay also will play and lead the Violin Concerto No. 3.

When the concerts were planned, the State Theatre still had no heat, but by the end of the day, it had been restored. The American Symphony Orchestra is slated to perform there today.

The Princeton Symphony Orchestra, also performing today, nearly canceled its afternoon concert. The orchestra normally rehearses on Tuesdays and Thursdays. As of Thursday, the campus still had no power and the orchestra staff had decided to cram in practice sessions on Saturday and Sunday.

The PSO is offering \$25 seats — its usual student rate — to anyone who does not already have tickets.

Instead of performing Aaron Jay Kernis “Colored Fields,” a work including a cello soloist that premiered in 2000 — and likely new to all the musicians in the PSO — the ensemble will stick to a more traditional program.

As planned, the orchestra will perform Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Scheherazade,” and instead of the Kernis, Borodin’s “Polovetsian Dances” and Saint-Saens’ “Bacchanale” from “Samson and Delilah.”

The orchestra made a proposal to the university to ensure that the show would take place, said executive director Melanie Clarke.

“Everyone’s going stir-crazy already,” she said. “People are going to want to get out.”

#### **more than a show**

In addition to the NJSO’s free Mozart, Lyrica Chamber Music has scheduled a free all-Beethoven performance today. Donations to the United Way Hurricane Sandy Recovery Fund will be accepted at the concert.

The Beethoven performance takes the place of an originally planned trio, quartet and quintet by Dvorak. Instead, the concert will feature only three musicians, co-artistic director and pianist David Kaplan, cellist Benjamin Capps and violinist/violist Edwin Kaplan. As of Thursday, there was no power at the venue, so listeners were advised to dress warmly. Hot coffee and tea will be provided.

Free refreshments also have been on hand before performances of “The Select” at the McCarter Theatre, which has its final show today. On Thursday, the New York-based Elevator Repair Service, which is presenting the show, tweeted that it was “like a military campaign” figuring out how to get the company to the theater before the curtain rose.

The Montclair Art Museum offered free admission on Thursday, which meant free art and heat for visitors. The Newark Museum also set up charging stations in its Englehard Court, and opened its galleries for free this weekend, including noon to 5 p.m. today.

Two River Theater Company could not hold weeknight shows because of a 7 p.m. curfew throughout Monmouth County, but on Thursday afternoon, the company still opened its doors to anyone who needed to plug in electronics and provided complimentary coffee and tea.

Stephanie Coen, the associate artistic director of the theater, said she expected to provide the power and caffeine over the course of the weekend as needed.

As of Thursday, when the administrative offices opened for the first time all week, weekend matinees (and possibly evening shows) were expected to go on, with pay-what-you-can tickets. The theater has two shows running — Ethan Lipton’s “No Place To Go,” a serio-comic cabaret about unemployment, and Shakespeare’s “Henry V.”

In an e-mail, Coen wrote, “We are taking to heart one of the famous lines from ‘Henry V’ — ‘we band of brothers’ — and, in the spirit of Ethan Lipton’s show, giving people who have ‘no place to go’ an opportunity to gather, be together and enjoy great theater.”