

The Star-Ledger

Spring 2017 arts preview: 10 hot tickets for jazz, theater and comedy fans

By Natalie Pompilio | For NJ Advance Media

Jazz it up

Jazz lovers will enjoy the 48th annual Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp March 26 at the Birchwood Manor. The event, presented by the New Jersey Jazz Society, is named for clarinetist Charles Ellsworth "Pee Wee" Russell, had a distinct style and approach that some considered ahead of its time. He died in 1969. Scheduled performers include the Midiri Brothers Quintet, the Peter and Will Anderson Quintet, Professor Cunningham and his Old School and Dan Levinson's Russell of Spring Band.

\$10-45, March 26, 12 p.m. Birchwood Manor, 111 N. Jefferson Rd., Whippany. 800-838-3006.

Feeling tense? You're not alone. Let Dr. Chopra help

Author/doctor/spiritual guru Deepak Chopra, stops at Bergen Performing Arts Center March 24 to talk about his new book "You Are The Universe" and offer tips on reaching higher consciousness and healing. Practitioners of chair massage, acupuncture, yoga, Reiki and aromatherapy will offer free services 90 minutes prior to the show. Chopra will sign books after the show. The evening is sponsored by The Graf Center for Integrative Medicine at Englewood Hospital & Medical Center.

\$49-99, March 24, 8 p.m. Bergen PAC, 30 N. Van Brunt St., Englewood. 201-227-1030.

Eight woman stronger together than apart

"The Women of Padilla" focuses on eight women keeping the home fires burning while their husbands are away fighting an unnamed war. It runs at Red Bank's Two River Theater April 8-30. Inspired by poet Federico Garcia Lorca, the play looks at how the women's strength and connections grow through every day life. Bi-lingual playwright Tony Meneses saw his "Guadalupe in the Guest Room" premiere at Two River last season.

\$20-55, April 8 -30, times vary. Two River Theater, 21 Bridge Ave., Red Bank. 732-345-1400.

NJSO's principal tuba player takes center stage

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra takes the stage at State Theatre New Jersey in April 8 with a light-hearted program that include Ravel's Bolero and Saint-Saens' Carnival of Animals and features NJSO principal tuba player Derek Fenstermacher. The event is also a food drive and ticket buyers are asked to bring a non-perishable item to contribute.

\$20-90, April 8 at 8 p.m. State Theatre New Jersey, 15 Livingston Ave, New Brunswick. 732-246-7469.

Louis and Ella: Together again

Musicians Byron Stripling and Marva Hicks recreate the magic of Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald on the stage of Count Basie Theatre April 21, tackling songs like "Love is Here to Stay," "Just One of those Things," as well as highlights from Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess." The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra accompanies the pair. This event is also a food drive and ticket buyers are asked to bring a non-perishable item to contribute.

\$23-73, April 21, 8 p.m., Count Basie Theatre, 99 Monmouth St., Red Bank. 732-842-9000.

Yadda yadda yadda at Borgata, Borgata, Borgata

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld brings his stand-up routine to Atlantic City's Borgata Hotel, Casino & Spa April 22. More than 20 years after his eponymous television show ended its run, the the Staten Island-born star continues to take the stand-up stage, most recently completing a residency at New York's Beacon Theater.

\$99-169, April 22, 8 p.m. Borgata Hotel, Casino & Spa, 1 Borgata Way, Atlantic City. 609-317-1000.

Dating after 50 featured in musical comedy "Curvy Widow"

Based on a book by businesswoman Barbara "Bobby" Goldman, "Curvy Widow" follows Goldman's adventures in the on-line dating scene after the death of her husband. (She was married to playwright James Goldman, who wrote "The Lion in Winter" and "Follies." He died in 1998.) The funny, high-energy show, May 2 -21 at George Street Playhouse, will be the last one before the theater is torn down and rebuilt. Broadway veteran/Tony nominee Nancy Opel, who stole the show in GSP's "The Toxic Avenger," stars as the feisty widow.

\$43-69, May 2-21, various times. George Street Playhouse, 9 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick. 732-246-7717.

Find love and herself, one stitch at a time

Lynn Nottage's 2003 drama "Intimate Apparel" tells the story of a young African-American seamstress in 1905 New York who embarks on a journey that leads her to love and much more. The moving story plays at the McCarter Theatre stage May 5 - June 4. Nottage won a Pulitzer Prize for 2009's "Ruined," which was set in Congo

\$25-74, May 5 - June 4, times vary. McCarter Theatre Center, 91 University Place, Princeton. 609-258-2787.

Making and breaking the news: Anderson Cooper at MPAC

CNN News anchor Anderson Cooper has interviewed presidents, super stars and ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. The host of "Anderson Cooper 360" takes the stage at Mayo Performing Arts Center May 19 to talk about his life and career and the future of the republic. A moderated Q & A will follow.

\$59-150, May 19, 8 p.m., Mayo Performing Arts Center, 100 South St., Morristown. 973-539-8008.

Dance, the great unifier

The electrifying Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, one of the nation's premier modern dance companies, comes to New Jersey Performing Arts Center for three shows May 12-14. The show will include some of the company's most popular dances as well as new pieces inspired by the writing of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

\$25 - 89, May 12 and 13, 8 p.m. and May 14, 3 p.m. NJPAC, 1 Center St., Newark. 800-GO-NJPAC.