

## VALENTINE TO CELEBRATE 10TH SEASON

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When the Valentine Theatre opens its 2008-2009 season on Sept. 20 with a black-tie gala featuring 10-time Grammy-winner Manhattan Transfer, it will be a double celebration of sorts.

It will kick off the theater's 10th anniversary and turn the page on a year that saw an explosion at the historic downtown venue force the relocation of numerous shows.

"We're back and we're reopened and we have what is the best season in our 10 years of operation," said Dale Vivirito, the Valentine's executive director. "It's our biggest season yet."

Preparations for the coming season, which includes familiar faces like Great Lakes troubadour Pat Dailey and high-energy musicals like *The Pajama Game*, were made at the same time as staff dealt with the whirlwind that followed the November basement explosion that required \$3.5 million in repairs.

As they say, the show must go on, and the theater has scheduled a number of different series for people whose tastes range from Broadway to dance to children's productions. Tickets may be bought individually or for a whole series.

For those tired of the seriousness of the presidential election, the Capitol Steps, a troupe of former congressional staffers who skewer politics and pop culture, will come to town Oct. 3. It's part of the Broadway Too! series, which also includes Robert Dubac's comedic attempt to answer the question, "What do women want?" in his Feb. 27 show *The Male Intellect: An Oxymoron?* Series tickets range from \$61 to \$83.

The Spotlight on Broadway series has a quartet of offerings. It begins with *Bye Bye Birdie* on Feb. 6 and is followed by *The Pajama Game* on March 25, the Southern classic *To Kill a Mockingbird* on April 25, and the nostalgic musical comedy *Take Me Along* on June 11-14, 2009. Tickets for the series range from \$123 to \$187.

Another series this year will be called Holy Toledo! It kicks off Oct. 11 with *Altar Boyz*, a fun look at a struggling Christian boy-band looking for their big break.

Then comes Sally Struthers in *Nunsense* on Oct. 29 and the return of *Sister's Christmas Catechism*, which tackles the mystery of how the Magi's gold disappeared from the stable in Bethlehem, on Dec. 13.

This three-show series has packages that range from \$96 to \$137.

For those interested in some culture from abroad, there's an international series that kicks off Oct. 14 when Compania Flamenco Jose Porcel comes to town with flamenco dancers, musicians, and singers.

It continues with the Russian National Ballet's performance of *Sleeping Beauty* on Jan. 7 and a show by the National Acrobats of China on Feb. 19. Series tickets range from \$87 to \$121.

Music lovers have plenty to choose from too. "Peter White Christmas" will feature some smooth jazz on Dec. 11 and the Lettermen's Spirit of Christmas show will take place the following night, Dec. 12.

Pat Dailey returns on Jan. 16 for his 10th visit to the Valentine, making him the theater's longest-standing act. Then there will be Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels on Feb. 14 and the Afro Cuban All Stars on March 21.

The series wraps up May 1 with Jim Witter and his band presenting some tunes from Billy Joel and Elton John in "Piano Men II," a musical journey through the '70s and '80s. Tickets for any three shows in the series range from \$84 to \$118.

Then, of course, there is something special for the kids. The Children's Series consists of four musicals this year: *Nate the Great*, about a pint-sized detective, on Oct. 4; *The Night Before Christmas: The Whole Story*, a Valentine holiday tradition, on Dec. 4-7; *Junie B. Jones*, following the adventures of a girl ready for first grade, on Feb. 7,

and *James and the Giant Peach*, based on Roald Dahl's books, on March 28. Series tickets range from \$24 to \$37 for children 16 and under and between \$37 and \$54 for adults.

Another show, *Drumline Live*, will bring the black marching band tradition to the theatrical stage on March 12, though this one will be held at the Stranahan Theater.

Information: 419-242-2787 or [www.valentinetheatre.com](http://www.valentinetheatre.com). Members of the theater receive seating priority on orders placed before May 31.

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[< previous](#)