

The Star-Ledger

Fall arts preview: 11 shows that shouldn't be missed



Fall 2016 arts preview

A performance by Renee Fleming, a Gustav Klimt exhibit and Savion Glover's dance autobiography are among the highlights for the fall arts season.

By Vicki Hyman | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

From old favorites such as Gladys Knight, Renee Fleming, and this guy named Will Shakespeare to newer talents in classical music, visual art and theater, New Jersey abounds in exciting arts offerings this fall. Here are some of the hot tickets:

A new maestra for NJSO

The New Jersey Symphony's 94th season opens this month with potluck concerts consisting of upbeat classical morsels conducted by Teddy Abrams, dance music by Bernstein and Copeland, with some Ravel and Piazzolla thrown in for spice.

But NJSO's new era begins in earnest the following month when Xian Zhang takes the podium for the first time as the orchestra's fourteenth music director. The maestra leads a weekend of all-Tchaikovsky programs starting Oct. 27 at NJPAC. Following those inaugural concerts, Zhang will conduct a program of Germanic music — featuring Haydn, Beethoven and Strauss — over three nights during the first weekend of November.

As NJSO says hello to Zhang, the band will also be saying good-bye to associate conductor Gemma New. New, a reliable presence on New Jersey's podiums the last few seasons, was named resident conductor for the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra this summer. She conducts four concerts over the first weekend of October, featuring music from Norway, Finland and New's own country, New Zealand. For a full schedule, go to njsymphony.org. — James C. Taylor

Klimt and the Woman of Vienna's Golden Age, 1900-1918 at Neue Galerie

If ever there was a fall season where women really took control, this has to be it. Cosmetics tycoon Ron Lauder's Neue Galerie, just up the avenue from the Metropolitan Museum, opens "Klimt and the Women of Vienna's Golden Age, 1900-1918" starting Sept. 22. Organized by Tobias Natter, author of Klimt's 2012 catalogue raisonnee, "Klimt and the Women" will include 12 paintings, 40 drawings, and 40 works of decorative art, including reconstructed tea dress designs (fin de siècle Vienna made the flowing, comfortable tea dress fashionable, freeing mid- and upper-class women from Victorian restraint). Sept. 22-Jan. 16, Neue Galerie, 1048 Fifth Ave., New York. Admission is \$20, seniors (over 65) \$15, students \$10, free 6-8 p.m. first Friday of every month. Children under 12 not permitted. See www.neuegalerie.org. — Dan Bischoff

"Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" at Two River Theater

Two River looks to continue its string of August Wilson successes with "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom." Under the direction of Wilsonian maestro Ruben Santiago-Hudson, with Brandon Dirden, James A. Williams, Arnetia Walker, and other deft Wilson regulars in the cast, this production should sizzle like hot Chicago jazz. Sept. 10 - Oct. 9. — Patrick Maley
"Richard III" at Shakespeare Theatre of NJ

"Richard III" at Shakespeare Theatre of NJ

Shakespeare's greatest villain takes the stage at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey for "Richard III." Richard begins the play as Duke of Gloucester, several steps removed from the throne, but he'll forge a path of deceit and blood in order to climb into England's highest seat. The show runs in conjunction with an exhibit of Shakespeare's First Folio at Drew University. Oct. 5-Nov. 6., Shakespeare Theater of New Jersey, 36 Madison Ave., Madison. Tickets are \$25-\$75, available at shakespearenj.org. — P.M.

"Chronology of a HooFer" at NJPAC

Tony-winning dancer and choreographer Savion Glover returns to his hometown for the world premiere of his autobiographical toe-tapper "Chronology of a HooFer." In this multimedia show, Glover will pay tribute to his many tap forebears, including Sammy Davis Jr., Lon Chaney, James "Buster" Brown and Gregory Hines. Oct. 8 at 8 p.m., NJPAC, 1 Center St., Newark. Tickets are \$65-\$85, available at njpac.org or ticketmaster.com. — Vicki Hyman

"Disgraced" at McCarter Theatre Center

A Jew, a Muslim, an African-American, and a pretty blonde assemble for a dinner party: What could possibly go wrong? After a few drinks, years of pent-up bitterness explode. Ayad Akhtar's powerful and complicated "Disgraced" will delve eagerly into charged, timely social tensions at Princeton's McCarter Theatre. Oct. 11-30., McCarter Theatre, 91 University Place, Princeton. Tickets are \$25-\$74, available at mccarter.org. — P.M.

Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival at NJPAC

The Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival celebrates its 30th anniversary in and around NJPAC in October with a partnership with the Academy of American Poets' annual Poets Forum, featuring current U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera, Mark Doty, Alicia Striker and Anne Waldman, among others. Oct. 20-23, NJPAC, 1 Center St., Newark. A four-day pass is \$100, but shorter and single-day passes are also available. For a full schedule or tickets, go to dodgepoetry.org. — V.H.



Gladys Knight will be performing sans Pips at NJPAC this fall.
Imeh Akpanudosen/Getty Images

Gladys Knight at Bergen Performing Arts Center

The Empress of Soul returns to New Jersey more than 50 years after she and her Pips embarked on their storied trek of R&B, pop, gospel and more. Though she now tours solo, Knight, 72, will surely revisit her array of hits with the band — there's no way she's skipping "Midnight Train To Georgia." Knight's most recent studio LP was 2014's "Where My Heart Belongs," a return to her gospel roots, featuring choir-inspired tunes and traditional hymns. Oct. 21 at 8 p.m., Bergen Performing Arts Center, Palisades Court, 30 N Van Brunt St, Englewood. Tickets are \$49 to 129, available at bergenpac.org. — Bobby Olivier

Kiki and Seton Smith

Kiki and Seton Smith, the two surviving daughters of sculptor/Minimalist theorist Tony Smith, are among the most distinguished American artists of their generation — not to mention descendants of one of New Jersey's best-known artistic families. And this October, the sisters are coming home to South Orange. From the appropriately witchy opening date of Oct. 30, the Walsh Gallery at Seton Hall University and the Lennie Pierro Foundation of South Orange will show "A Sense of Place — Kiki and Seton Smith," featuring prints and bronzes by Kiki and geometrically-aligned architectural photographs by Seton. "A Sense of Place" is a homecoming of sorts, with a public opening reception and tribute to the sisters on Oct. 30, and a conversation with Lynne Tillman on Dec. 6, in the university's Jubilee Hall. Oct. 30-Dec. 9, Walsh Gallery, Seton Hall University Library, 400 South Orange Ave., South Orange. Free, though off-campus visitors should call (973) 275-2033. See www.library.shu.edu. — D.B.

Renee Fleming at NJPAC

In her fourth decade of soprano prowess, American opera nobility Renee Fleming visits New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark this fall. Expect Fleming to perform classical arias as well as numbers from some of her compilation albums. Check out her exquisite cover of The Beatles' "In My Life." And as the November show brushes with the holiday season, a tune off her most recent release, 2014's "Christmas In New York," may be in order as well. Pianist Gerald Martin Moore will provide accompaniment for the event, deemed Renee Fleming in Recital. Nov. 4 at 8 p.m., NJPAC. Tickets are \$24 to \$109, available at njpac.org and ticketmaster.com. — B.O.

Get On Up: A James Brown Celebration! at NJPAC

"Get On Up: A James Brown Celebration!," led by Sharon Jones (the soul singer called the famed James Brown, and apparently just as indefatigable despite her ongoing battle with cancer), will pay tribute to the legend Nov. 18 at NJPAC with a high-energy line-up that also includes Christian McBride (NJPAC Jazz Advisor), singer and songwriter Bettye LaVette, singer Lee Fields and several James Brown Band alumni. Nov. 18, at 8 p.m., NJPAC. Tickets are \$25-\$79, available at njpac.org or ticketmaster.com. — V.H.

Vicki Hyman may be reached at vhyman@njadvancemedia.com. Follow her on Twitter [@vickihy](https://twitter.com/vickihy) or [like her on Facebook](#). Find [NJ.com/Entertainment on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NJ.com/Entertainment), and check out TV Hangover, the podcast from Vicki Hyman and co-host Erin Medley on [iTunes](#), [Stitcher](#) or [listen here](#).