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WHAT: The Fine Arts Center
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Catch the Beat, Share the Joy
Fine Arts Center/Center Series Announces 2002-2003 Season

WHERE: Fine Arts Center, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Call (413) 545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS for brochure and tickets, or go online to www.fineartscenter.com

(Catch the Beat, Share the Joy: Fine Arts Center/Center Announces 2002-2003 Season)

The Fine Arts Center's 2002-2003 Center Series starts quite literally with a blast in October and continues with high-energy programs all season long. Catching the beat will be easy with such rhythmically charged highlights as Blast II: Shockwave, Stomp, Kodo, Cirque Eloize, Mingus Big Band, Rhythm in Shoes and so much more. Sharing the joy will come from the ongoing focus on keeping the programs accessible and affordable for families and friends.

Theater, Musical Theater, and Opera
The season starts with Blast II: Shockwave is the next generation of its parent Blast. Blast II accommodates theaters the size of the Fine Arts Concert Hall but doesn’t compromise the spectacle of Blast, winner of the 2001 Tony Award for “Best Theatrical Event.” Call it the American answer to Riverdance or Stomp, combining brass and percussion musicianship, choreography and precision drill while bridging the music styles of classical, blues, rock n’ roll, and techno-pop music. Its British counterpart, Stomp, comes to the FAC in November. Filling out the theatrical offerings throughout the year are the Stanislavsky Opera Company of Russia in Puccini’s tragic/romantic opera La Boheme, Theatre de la Jeune Lune with Shakespeare’s Hamlet, the musical Fosse, and Cirque Eloize.

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Classical Music
For those who love Beethoven, the season begins a three-year Beethoven Quartet cycle. Six quartets, two each year will perform the complete quartets of Beethoven. Each evening will include a pre-performance talk and Viennese coffee and desserts. This season’s quartets include The Orpheus String Quartet and The American String Quartet. Other classical offerings include pianist Van Cliburn Gold Medalist Jon Nakamatsu, the all-male a cappella ensemble Lionheart with a program dedicated to love, and the Rotterdam Philharmonic with Valery Gergiev conducting the monumental Symphony No. 6 by Mahler.

Dance
For dance lovers, the ever-popular Mark Morris Dance Group brings Morris’s trademark of innovative choreography performed to live music in October. Also on the dance roster is Grupo Corpo combining Afro-Brazilian dance forms with ballet, contemporary dance and an intense theatrical sensibility, and Rhythm in Shoes joined by the bluegrass group Red Clay Ramblers for traditional American dance, swing tunes and tap.

Jazz and World Music
Grammy winner for “Best Jazz Vocalist” Dianne Reeves will perform as part of the Fifth Annual Billy Taylor Jazz Residency in February followed by Downbeat’s 2001 Critics and Readers poll award for “Best Big Band,” the Mingus Big Band in April. Always a sell-out, the Kodo Japanese drummers will take the stage in March with their unique performance of percussion and movement.

The Fine Arts Center also continues its focus on families with many performances that appeal to kids (and their parents) of all ages. And for those 17 and under, tickets are still only $10, $15 for theater and popular events. Five College students also receive substantial discounts on tickets.

To make it easier to experience this season’s offerings with family and friends, a savings of 15% is available on orders of three or more events and ticket prices in price range C are always $15. The Fine Arts Center also provides tickets to area non-profit, human service organizations through its Angel Ticket program.

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Subscription tickets are on sale now, single event tickets go on sale May 30th. A brochure with a complete description is available now by calling the box office at 413-545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS. The online version will be available as of June 1 at www.fineartscenter.com.

Here is the entire season line up, in chronological order:

Catch the Beat, Share the Joy: Center Series 2002-2003 Season

Blast II: Shockwave
Thursday, October 3
Jon Nakamatsu, piano
Thursday, October 10
Mark Morris Dance Group
Thursday, October 17
American String Quartet
Tuesday, October 22
Stanislavsky Opera Co.
in Puccini’s La Boheme
Saturday, October 26
Theatre de la Jeune Lune
in Shakespeare’s Hamlet
Friday & Saturday
November 1 & 2
STOMP
Tuesday & Wednesday
November 5 & 6
Fosse
Thursday, November 14

Cirque Eloize
Saturday, December 7
Dianne Reeves
Thursday, February 6
Lionheart
Thursday, February 13
Orpheus String Quartet
Thursday, February 27
Grupo Corpo
Saturday, March 1
Kodo
Wednesday, March 12
Rotterdam Philharmonic
Sunday, March 30
Mingus Big Band
Saturday, April 12
Rhythm in Shoes
with the Red Clay Ramblers
Thursday, May 1

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