

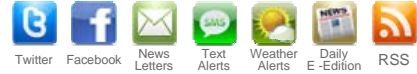


Friday, Nov. 11, 2011

Myrtle Beach area theaters take a merry turn

By Steve Palisin - spalisin@thesunnews.com

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If you go

Carolina Improv Company

Where | Uptown, inside Myrtle Beach mall, close to Bass Pro Shops, at U.S. 17 and S.C. 22, near Briarcliffe Acres

What and when |

- "Best of CIC" two-year anniversary show for the Salvation Army's Angel Tree – 7:30 p.m. Nov. 18. Bring an unwrapped gift for a child (minimum \$10 value; pajamas and socks are most needed) for one free admission.

- "Whose Holiday Is It Anyway?" with audience suggestions turned into skits – 7:30 p.m. Nov. 25 and Dec. 2, 9, 16, 20, 22, 23 and 27; and 8 p.m. Nov. 26 and Dec. 3, 10 and 17.

- "Dysfunctional Holiday Gathering," for ages 18 and older – 7:30 p.m. Nov. 23 and Dec. 1, 7, 15, 21 and 28

How much per show (unless otherwise noted) | \$10 ages 12 and older, \$8 ages 4-11

Information | 272-4242, www.carolinainprov.com or www.uptownmb.com

'The South's Grandest Christmas Show'

Where | Alabama Theatre, Barefoot Landing, on U.S. 17 in North Myrtle Beach

When |

- 7:30 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays through Dec. 23, and Dec. 26-30

- 2 p.m. Saturdays through Dec. 17

- 2 p.m. Tuesdays, Nov. 15 and 29, and Dec. 6

- 2 p.m. Wednesdays, Nov. 30 and Dec. 7

- 2 p.m. Fridays, Nov. 19-Dec. 9

- 3 and 9:15 p.m. Dec. 31

How much | \$39.45, \$43.80 and \$49.25 ages 17 and older; and \$19.95 ages 4-16

The day after Halloween, many area entertainment venues are bursting at the seams to start feeling festive for Christmas, turning merry with music and comedy.

Carolina Improv Company, based at Uptown inside Myrtle Beach mall, has brought back "Whose Holiday Is It Anyway?" a tweak of its rest-of-the-year, family friendly show, "Whose Beach Is It Anyway?" Anyone ages 18 and older also is invited to another show, "Dysfunctional Holiday Gathering."

"We had so many phone calls from visitors looking for something to do other than shopping," said Gina Trimarco Cligrow, director of training and entertainment, "so we made sure to beef up our schedule this year."

She said the "Dysfunctional" show expanded to midweek dates this holiday season especially for local residents, and "we're not nasty, but just a little naughty ... and Santa is OK with that."

Every Christmas movie provides fodder for Carolina Improv's shows, Cligrow said.

"We all relate to the craziness of the holidays," she said, "and that makes people laugh. At the end of the day, comedy is about relating to others, and people like to laugh at themselves. It makes life relatable."

Approaching comedy in general, Cligrow said the actors "try to tap into what you experience as a human being."

Subject matter last Christmastime revealed that many people were not aware of Festivus, made famous on one episode of the former NBC sitcom "Seinfeld," and Kwanzaa, Cligrow said, and some Jewish audience members enlightened the cast about more customs associated with Hanukkah.

Posing the question "What do you want for Christmas?" also generates grand suggestions for skits, Cligrow said, such as among children who answer, "a bat cave."

Overall, "You can see people are looking for laughter," Cligrow said, "to get past what's going on economically in our world and the instability of where things are going."

Another modification made for scheduling Carolina Improv dates arose from people inquiring about shows in the week between Christmas and New Year's, she said, but with folks who vacation on the Strand that week, this marks another way of the company customizing its product for the market, something the cast does every night on stage with every crowd.

From 'Idol' to 'Opry'

Nathan Herron, from Fox's "American Idol" fourth season and CMT's "Can You Duet" first season, joined Calvin Gilmore's cast in October, just in time for the 26th year of "The Carolina Opry Christmas Special" in Myrtle Beach.

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Information | 272-1111, 800-342-2262 or www.alabama-theatre.com

'The Carolina Opry Christmas Special'

Where | Gilmore Auditorium, at northern junction of U.S. 17 Bypass and U.S. 17 Business in Myrtle Beach, next to Dolly Parton's Pirates Voyage Fun, Feast & Adventure

When |

- 1 and 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through Dec. 17
- 1 and 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Nov. 15 and 22, and Dec. 6 and 13, and Wednesday, Nov. 30
- 1 and 7 p.m. Thursdays, Dec. 1 and 8
- 7 p.m. Nov. 16-17, 21-23 and 28
- 7 p.m. Dec. 5, 7, 12, 14-15, 19-21 and Dec 26-Jan. 2

How much | \$39.95, \$45.95 and \$54.95 ages 17 and older; \$26 or \$54.95 ages 3-16 and students with ID

Information | 913-8888, 913-4000, 800-843-6779 or www.thecarolinaopry.com

'Christmas on Ice'

Where | Palace Theatre, Broadway at the Beach, at 21st Avenue North and U.S. 17 Bypass in Myrtle Beach

When | 8 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m. Wednesdays and 2 p.m. Thursdays through Dec. 31, but not Nov. 24 or Dec. 24

How much | Ages 13 and older: evenings \$38.57, \$43.95 or \$49.32, and matinees \$33.20; ages 3-12: \$11.70 all shows

Information | 448-0588, 800-905-4228 or www.palacemb.com

Legends in Concert

Who | Tribute artists to Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly (but not Nov. 17-19, when Roy Orbison fills in), Liberace, Marilyn Monroe and Tim McGraw

Where | 2925 Hollywood Drive, Myrtle Beach, at U.S. 17 Bypass and 29th Avenue North, next to Planet Hollywood, at Broadway at the Beach

When |

- 8 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays through Dec. 21, and Dec. 26-30
- 2 p.m. Tuesdays through Dec. 6
- 2 p.m. Friday, Nov. 25
- 2 p.m. Saturdays, Nov. 26-Dec. 10
- 6 and 10 p.m. Dec. 31

How much | \$37.95 regular and \$42.95 preferred/VIP for ages 17 and older; and \$14.95 and \$19.95 respectively, for ages 3-16; and VIP table booth seats are \$52.95 all ages. For 10 p.m. show Dec. 31 only: \$47.95 regular, \$52.95 VIP/preferred and \$62.95 booth, all of which includes party favor with a telecast of the Times Square ball drop at midnight

Information | 238-7827, 800-960-7469 or www.legendsinconcert.com

'Dino's TV Christmas Special' and 'The Marvelous Wonderettes - Holiday Prom'

Where | 2001 Entertainment Complex's StarLight Room, 920 Lake Arrowhead Road, just north of Myrtle Beach

When | each at 7 p.m. twice weekly at 7 p.m. - Dino's on Friday, Thursday and Nov. 23 and 30, and Dec. 1, 7, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22 and 27; and "Wonderettes" Tuesday and Nov. 18, 25 and 29, and Dec. 2, 6 and 10.

How much | \$29 each show only, \$39-49 for dinner-show package each

Information | 234-2229 or www.dinostvvarietyshow.com

Other major shows

'Christmas Wishes'

He said that learning the Christmas show in just weeks "brought back some memories" of reading scripts and that such experience comes in handy when a set list changes slightly on certain nights when people have a night off.

"Last night," Herron said on Nov. 3, "Calvin was out, and I had to lead the introduction and welcome to the show."

Herron said spending this Christmas season 10 hours away from family in Nashville, Tenn., prompted an adjustment but that the Opry has taken he and wife Chelsea have been taken in like family.

With live TV on his resume, Herron said it has primed him for audiences of any size.

"For me, it's kind of what I longed for," he said, and that having gone before the judges on "Idol," nothing will ever scare me again."

Gilmore said having Herron aboard, people will see "an incredible singer ... and he's doing a great job as emcee."

Anytime "a new talent or face" joins the show," Gilmore said, "it invigorates everyone in the show and the audience."

Herron said having grown up listening to "cathedral quartets," he loves singing in foursomes, with Moses Braxton's bass as the anchor.

Alabama-style celebration

Bob Wood, president of the Alabama Theatre, said its 19th year of yuletide shows ushered in some changes, such as all-new costumes for the singers and dancers, and some new numbers and a music video.

For dressing up the players in "The South's Grandest Christmas Show," Wood said designers in Las Vegas assemble the attire, and that Christmas show garb "can last two to three years if you really take care of it."

For clothes donned in "One the Show," every February through October, "about a year is all you get out of those," Wood said.

Longtime Alabama favorite Denise Tichenor has returned for this season, and the cast includes a new dancer, Clare Williams from England, Wood said.

Grant Turner, who's made Ricky Mokol a signature character year round at the theater, will unleash new comedy bits, Wood said, also excited about a new take on "What Child Is This?"

"It's an uptempo bluegrass version with six singers," he said. "The band cooks on that one."

Alabama also has fun with "video mapping," Wood said, showing Santa Claus dancing in the doorway, "making it look like he's in the house on the set."

The show also includes a video tribute, "I'm Coming Home for Christmas," for deployed military returning stateside.

"If you can't cry after seeing that one, you're not human," Wood said.

Seeing double this Christmas

Jason Aiesi, Legends Theatre's general manager, said the personalities and variety of eras brings an "energetic and memorable" mix to the holiday season.

"We will bring our fans a balanced blend of holiday favorites and classic hits," he said. "We really give all fans 'the best of both worlds' during the most wonderful time of the year."

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Who | Serendipity Singers with the Georgetown County School District's Beach Singers

When | 3 p.m. Sunday

Where | Belin United Methodist Church, on U.S. 17 Business in Murrells Inlet

How much | Free

Information | 215-1171 or www.serendipitysingers.org

Coastal Carolina University

What | 12th annual Holiday Concert

Who | CCU Concert and Chamber choirs, with the Carolina Forest High School Advanced Chorus and a chamber orchestra that includes members of the Long Bay Symphony

Works include | Handel's "Messiah," Vivaldi's "Gloria," and the "Hallelujah Chorus"

Where | CCU's Wheelwright Auditorium, in Conway

When | 7:30 p.m. Nov. 29

How much | Free with ticket

Information | 349-2502 or www.coastal.edu/culturalarts

'A Christmas Story'

Who | Atlantic Stage

When | 7:30 p.m. Dec. 1-3, 8-10 and 15-17; and 3 p.m. Dec. 4, 11 and 18

Where | 79th Avenue Theatre at the Coastal Carolina University Myrtle Beach Education Center, at U.S. 17 Bypass

How much | \$25 individuals; \$20 educators, military personnel, and anyone 55 and older; and \$15 students, including Osher Lifelong Learning Institute members

Information | 877-287-8587 or www.atlanticstage.com

Steve Wariner 'An Acoustic Christmas'

When | 7:30 p.m. Dec. 2

Where | Brunswick Community College Odell Williamson Auditorium, Supply, N.C., 150 College Road N.E., south of U.S. 17

How much | \$27 adults, \$25 ages 65 and older, and \$10 children

Information | 910-755-7416, 800-754-1050, ext. 7416, www.bccowa.com and www.stevewariner.com

Festive Brass of Myrtle Beach

What | Christmas concerts

When |

7 p.m. Dec. 2 at St. Paul's Waccamaw United Methodist Church, on U.S. 17 in Litchfield Beach, next to the Hampton Inn

3 p.m. Dec. 4 at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 2061 Glens Bay Road, west of Surfside Beach

How much | Free

Information | 293-6162 or www.festivebrassofmyrtlebeach.org

16th annual Christmas Cantata

Who | Larry Elliott Memorial South Strand Community Choir

When | 4 p.m. Dec. 3, and 2 and 5 p.m. Dec. 4

Where | Surfside Presbyterian Church, 8732 U.S. 17 Bypass, west of Surfside Beach

How much | \$8

Information | 450-7546

'Handel and Bach for the Advent Season'

Who | Long Bay Symphony Chamber Orchestra

The producers of the "Dino's TV Variety Show" throwback evenings in 2001 Entertainment Complex's StarLight Room, in the area known as Restaurant Row, are seeing double this Christmas, with two productions.

Cindra Marshall, co-owner and producer, said a Louis Armstrong player has settled in for the season in "Dino's TV Christmas Special."

The ladies of "The Marvelous Wonderettes," which opened earlier this year, have their prom during the holidays for the next month.

"It's the same show but now in a fully decorated superclub," Marshall said, "and we'll add some references to it being during the holidays – as many proms were."

Ice and pirates

An ice rink has returned for a second straight Christmas to the main stage of the Palace Theatre, at Broadway at the Beach, and a third season of "Christmas on Ice" is already booked for late 2012.

The show blends the grace of world competition professional skaters with singers and dancers.

Sabrina Israel, who oversees the Palace's marketing, said "The skating is even better than last year."

Anyone who enjoyed Dolly Parton's "Christmas at Dixie Stampede" in the past two decades in Myrtle Beach might notice the new show that premiered there this summer, Pirates Voyage Fun, Feast & Adventure, like Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament, doesn't have a Christmas show per se, but still raises its curtain through the season.

Larry McCoy, director of sales and marketing for Pirates Voyage, said heavy response to Parton's new show prompted a consensus within the company to keep its initial momentum going. Still, Christmas might be on the wish list for next year, and officials have looked at several possibilities.

"This show is just coming out of the gate," McCoy said, "and as we get into next year, we'll have more time to figure out what will fit" for Christmas.

Mixing planks, pirates, mermaids and diving into a Christmas thing would take creativity and planning.

"Whenever we do it, we want to do it right," McCoy said.

Reach STEVE PALISIN at 444-1764.

Works | Bach's "Sleepers, Wake! (Cantata No. 140)" and portions of Handel's "Messiah" oratorio

When and where | 7:30 p.m. Dec. 3 at First Presbyterian Church Great Hall, on Robert Grissom Parkway in Myrtle Beach; and 7 p.m. Dec. 4 at Our Lady Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Church in North Myrtle Beach

How much | \$15 advance, \$20 at door

Information | 448-8379 or www.longbaysymphony.com

Also | "A Holly Day Tea & Symphony" by the Long Bay Symphony Guild, 1-4 p.m. Dec. 11 at the Carriage House Restaurant at Litchfield Plantation in Litchfield Beach, including music by the youth orchestra; \$35, benefiting Long Bay Symphony programs. Reservations at 448-8379; information at 497-0545.

'Holiday on Main Street: Christmas Wishes'

Who | Theatre of the Republic

Where | Main Street Theatre, 337 Main St., Conway

When | 8 p.m. Dec. 7-10 and 13-17; and 3 p.m. Dec. 10-11 and 17-18

How much | \$18 advance, \$20 at door

Information | 488-0821 or www.theatreoftherepublic.com

'The Nutcracker Ballet'

Who | Coastal Youth Ballet Theatre of Murrells Inlet

When | 5 p.m. Dec. 10, 3 p.m. Dec. 11 (and for schools: 9:45 a.m. Dec. 12)

Where | Myrtle Beach High School Music and Arts Center, 3302 Robert Grissom Parkway, between 29th and 38th avenues North

How much | \$25 ages 17 and older (\$20 if purchased by Dec. 4) and \$15 ages 16 and younger; call for school rates for Dec. 12

Information | 651-2006 or www.coastalyouthballettheatre.org

'Do You Hear What We Hear? Christmas, Hanukkah and the Voices of Passion'

Who | Carolina Master Chorale

When and where | 8 p.m. Dec. 10 at Trinity Episcopal Church in Myrtle Beach, and 4 p.m. Dec. 11 at First United Methodist Church in Conway

How much | Advance: \$20; at door: \$25, and \$20 seniors, \$5 students with ID

Information | 444-5774 or www.carolinamasterchorale.com

'TubaChristmas'

When | 4 p.m. Dec. 11

Where | Myrtle Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2351 Carolina Forest Blvd., Carolina Forest, adjacent to The Farm residential development

How much | Free

Information | Daniel Johnson at 910-962-7559, www.tubachristmas.com, johnsond@uncw.edu or www.mbsda.org

'The Nutcracker' live on silver screen

Who | New York City Ballet

When | 6 p.m. Dec. 13

Where | Cinemark at Coastal Grand mall, on Seaboard Street in Myrtle Beach

How much | \$15 adults, \$14 seniors, \$13 children

Information | 839-3225

More information

Tribute shows

Since moving from Surfside Beach and reopening in spring in a renovated site at Broadway at the Beach, Legends in Concert will have its first Christmas shows in two years. Look for a tribute artist lineup with Liberace tapping the ivories in a cast with Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, Marilyn Monroe and Tim McGraw.