

CityBeat

21 Must-See Cincinnati Fall Arts Productions

Staff picks ranging from theater and visual arts to dance and Henry Rollins

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CityBeat's Fall Arts Preview is an annual rundown listing the performances and shows our critics are most excited to see in the upcoming season.

Read our feature stories on:

- Choreographer Jennifer Archibald and the Cincinnati Ballet's 2018-19 season [here](#);
- Curator William Messer's FotoFocus retrospective at Iris Bookcafe [here](#);
- Broadway musical *The Who's Tommy* coming to Memorial Hall [here](#);
- And Cincinnati World Cinema's new home at the former Cincinnati Shakespeare Company's theater [here](#)

Or check out these 21 additional picks for must-see fall arts...



Stephen Markley PHOTO: MICHAEL AMICO

LIT: Stephen Markley

Stephen Markley's *Ohio* is creating buzz as a "Great American Rustbelt Novel" for its story of four former high-school classmates returning to New Canaan, Ohio after 9/11 and the start of the Great Recession to confront unresolved personal issues against a societal backdrop of foreclosures, Walmarts and opioid addiction. Its publisher, Simon & Schuster, considers it a fiction counterpart to *Hillbilly Elegy* or *Janesville*. The author will be here to discuss and sign copies of his ambitious book, a debut novel. 7 p.m.

Sept. 13. Free. Joseph-Beth Booksellers, 2692 Madison Road, Rookwood Commons, Norwood, josephbeth.com.

EVENT: The World's Largest Twist Dance

Central to the King Records legacy is that its recording artist Hank Ballard recorded the original version of "The Twist" — the greatest dance craze ever — at King 60 years ago this November. (It didn't become a hit until non-King artist Chubby Checker covered it in 1960.) To celebrate Ballard's musical milestone during King Records Month, attendees at the Sept. 7 Cincinnati Reds game will attempt The World's Largest Twist Dance at Great American Ball Park, after the game's conclusion and before the traditional Friday night fireworks. If this catches on, watch for The World's Largest Mashed Potato Dance next year. 6:40 p.m. game Sept. 7. Free with game ticket. Great American Ball Park, 100 Joe Nuxhall Way, Downtown, kingstudios.org.

VISUAL ART: *Collecting Calligraphy: Arts of the Islamic World*

Collecting Calligraphy: Arts of the Islamic World at the Cincinnati Art Museum explores the craftsmanship, skill, beauty and function of calligraphy from the 9th century to the 20th, featuring 55 works on paper including historic manuscripts, pages from the Qur'an, calligraphic practice sheets and political decrees from such countries as Spain, Turkey, Syria, Iran and India. The show celebrates a recent gift to the museum from Cincinnati residents JoLynn and Byron Gustin, but the institution has been acquiring Islamic calligraphy since the 1940s and has a substantial collection. Many of these items will be on public display for the first time. Sept. 7-Jan. 27, 2019. Free admission. Cincinnati Art Museum, 953 Eden Park Drive, Mount Adams, cincinnatiartmuseum.org.



Matthew Lewis Johnson as Pseudolus "A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to Forum" PHOTO: MIKKI SCHAFFNER PHOTOGRAPHY

ONSTAGE: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*

After 25 years, the venerable Cincinnati Shakespeare Company tries something “new” — for it, if not for us. It is presenting a musical: Stephen Sondheim’s 1962 Tony Award-winning *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. A humorous tale about a scheming slave in ancient Rome, it has the infectious energy of vaudeville along with such songs as “Pretty Little Picture,” “Everybody Ought to Have a Maid,” “I’m Calm,” “Bring Me My Bride” and more. *Sept. 7-29. \$67 adult; \$63 senior; \$41 student. Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, 1195 Elm St., Over-the-Rhine, cincyshakes.com.*

LIT: Luc Sante

The author Luc Sante, this year’s guest for the Mercantile Library’s Albert Pyle Urban Lecture, writes about the forgotten lives of cities by using photographs, police records, newspapers, pamphlets, song lyrics, legends and anecdotes as research material. His books include *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York* and *The Other Paris*. Sante’s appearance starts with a reception followed by a talk. *6 p.m. reception; 6:30 p.m. talk Sept. 13. \$15; free for members. Mercantile Library, 414 Walnut St., Downtown, mercantilelibrary.com.*

VISUAL ART: Mickalene Thomas

Mickalene Thomas rules the fall season at Ohio art museums. As part of the region-wide FotoFocus Biennial 2018 (see separate entry), she'll be featured in Dayton Art Institute's *Muse: Mickalene Thomas Photographs* from Oct. 20-Jan. 13, 2019. (There's also a companion show, *tête-à-tête*, featuring photos that inspired her.) The brilliant African-American artist also has a major show — *Mickalene Thomas: I Can't See You Without Me* — at Columbus' Wexner Center for the Arts Sept. 13-Dec. 30. It will include nearly 30 paintings, videos and immersive installations. The show will focus primarily on her large-scale paintings, with each of the Wexner's four galleries devoted to one of Thomas' strong influences: her late mother, Sandra; her former lover, Maya; her current partner, Racquel; and herself. *Mickalene Thomas: I Can't See You Without Me: Sept. 13-Dec. 30. \$8 adults; \$6 seniors/faculty and students. Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St., Columbus, wexarts.org. Muse: Mickalene Thomas Photographs: Oct. 20-Jan. 13, 2019. \$8 adults; \$5 seniors/military; free students, youth. Dayton Art Institute, 456 Belmonte Park North, Dayton, daytonartinstitute.org.*



Henry Rollins PHOTO: PROVIDED

PERFORMANCE: Henry Rollins Travel Slideshow

Renaissance man Henry Rollins has already made his mark in the worlds of Punk and Post-Punk, Spoken Word, film criticism, writing, publishing, acting and radio programming. Now he's taking on Rick Steves as a travel personality. For his *Henry Rollins Travel Slideshow*, he is showing photos he took during visits to Baghdad,

Pyongyang and other hot (or cold) spots in the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, South America and Antarctica. And he will tell the stories behind the pictures. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 20. \$30; \$155 VIP. Music Hall Ballroom, 1241 Elm St., Over-the-Rhine, cincinnatiarts.org.

CLASSICAL: *Alma de España*

When was the last time you could attend an opening gala for only \$35? Cincinnati Song Initiative launches its third season with *Alma de España*, a three-year project presenting songs by six Spanish-speaking composers. There is a good reason for celebration because the featured singers are soprano Paulina Villarreal and mezzo Jessica Rivera, who was Nuria in Cincinnati Opera's 2008 production of Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar*. Cincinnati Song Initiative's concert settings are always intimate and followed by a reception. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 22. \$35; \$15 student. Willis Music Steinway Gallery, 8118 Montgomery Road, Kenwood, cincinnati-song-initiative.org.

COMEDY: Improv Festival Cincy

Improv Festival Cincy celebrates its fifth anniversary in September with an increase in shows, more local troupes and more chances to see headliners. It also has workshops taught by traveling artists and after-parties with the artists. Among the headliners are Atlanta's Working Title, Chicago's Emily Fightmaster and Friends, Portland's Broke Company, Minneapolis' The Bearded Company and from Chicago an improvised Rock Opera titled *Anarchy*. Sept. 27-29. \$35 for two performance tickets; \$65 for four performance tickets; \$90 for six performance tickets. Memorial Hall, 1225 Elm St., Over-the-Rhine, ifcincy.com.

CLASSICAL: Akropolis Reed Quintet

Matinee Musicale has been working to change its image of being your grandparents' concert series, and there's no better demonstration of its progressivism than the Akropolis Reed Quintet. In less than a decade, Akropolis has won major awards recognizing its innovative performances and commitment to education. Now, at long last, they're here. Don't expect standard rep; the audience and a boom box may be part of the act. 3 p.m. Sept. 30. \$25-\$35. Memorial Hall, 1225 Elm St., Over-the-Rhine, matineemusicalecincinnati.org.



Miranda July will be at the FotoFocus Biennial PHOTO: TODD COLE

VISUAL ART: FotoFocus Biennial 2018

The FotoFocus Biennial, which has a theme of “Open Archives” in photography, has so many exhibits at various venues going on during October (with some spillover into subsequent months) that it really deserves its own *CityBeat* cover story. And it’s getting one — watch for the Oct. 3 issue. But the heart of the FotoFocus organization’s own programming occurs Oct. 4-7 at such locales as the Taft Museum of Art (the opening of *Paris to New York: Photographs by Eugène Atget and Berenice Abbott*); Contemporary Arts Center (openings of *Akram Zaatari: The Fold—Space, time and the image*; *Mamma Andersson: Memory Banks*; and *No Two Alike: Karl Blossfeldt, Francis Bruguière, Thomas Ruff*); Memorial Hall (an all-day Oct. 6 symposium followed by a performance of Teju Cole and Vijay Iyer’s *Blind Spot*); and the Woodward Theater (an Oct. 7 appearance by the filmmaker, artist, author, screenwriter and actress Miranda July). *Passports for all events are \$25. More info and tickets at fotofocusbiennial.org.*



Tracy Silverman PHOTO: MARTIN CHERRY

CLASSICAL: *The Dharma at Big Sur*

The Dharma at Big Sur is one of John Adams' most popular compositions, written for solo electric six-string violin and orchestra. The 2003 world premiere featured violinist Tracy Silverman, a proponent for new music whose work inspires composers including Nico Muhly and Terry Riley and who is making his Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra debut. Adams' dream-like soundscape evokes a soaring flight up the Pacific coast and Silverman's performance will be one you want to hear. Visuals by videographer Adam Larsen accompany this performance, but with *The Dharma*, just listening is enough. 11 a.m. Oct. 5; 8 p.m. Oct. 6. \$14-\$99. Music Hall, 1241 Elm St., Over-the-Rhine, cincinnatisymphony.org.

VISUAL ART: *Life: Gillian Wearing*

For its contribution to FotoFocus, the Cincinnati Art Museum is presenting a major exhibition featuring works by the Turner Prize-winning British conceptual artist Gillian Wearing, who will also receive the museum's Margaret Schiele Prize. *Life: Gillian Wearing* will include a concise selection of the artist's past lens-based work, including photographs and videos, along with four new projects receiving their world premiere in Cincinnati. The \$12 ticket price (members are free) also includes admission to the overlapping *Fabric of India* show. Oct. 5-Dec. 30. \$12; \$6 seniors/students/children; free for members. Cincinnati Art Museum, 953 Eden Park Drive, Mount Adams, cincinnatiartmuseum.org.

CLASSICAL: *A Woman's Voice*

concert:nova kicks off its 12th season of innovative collaborations with *A Woman's Voice*, musical responses to a video created by visual artist Gillian Wearing that touches on memory and identity "among other things." The video is part of *Life: Gillian Wearing*, a FotoFocus Biennial exhibition coming to the Cincinnati Art Museum, and the concert program features works by seven different women. 7 p.m. Oct. 7 and Oct. 9. Ticket prices TBD. Cincinnati Art Museum, 953 Eden Park Drive, Mount Adams, concertnova.com.



Sycamore Place interior PHOTO: DOWNTOWN TOUR OF LIVING

EVENT: Downtown Tour of Living

After a hiatus, the Downtown Tour of Living is returning in October to show off some of the many apartments and condos in the booming central city. Presented by Downtown Cincinnati Inc. and Switch Collection, it will offer a self-guided, walkable tour of the brand-new Crane Factory Flats, formerly the Cincinnati Board of Elections headquarters, as well as visits to AT580, City Club Apartments, ENCORE Urban Living, Radius at The Banks, Renaissance at the Power Building, Seven at Broadway, Eight One Three Broadway, East Eight Lofts, Shillito Lofts, The Dominion Condos, The Reserve, The Biltmore, Sycamore Place and The Gramercy. Noon-5 p.m. Oct. 13. \$10 advance; \$15 day of. downtowncincinnati.com.

VISUAL ART: *The Fabric of India*

Organized by London's Victoria and Albert Museum, *The Fabric of India* is a major exhibition that features examples of Indian textiles from the V&A, international partners, leading designers and the Cincinnati Art Museum's own permanent collection. India's handmade textiles date back at least 6,000 years and are central to the country's identity. The exhibit will be in six thematic sections and trace the development of the nation's fabric from its origin to work today by leading designers. Admission is \$12 (members free) and will also allow entry to the overlapping Gillian Wearing special exhibition. Oct. 19-Jan. 6, 2019. \$12; \$6 seniors/students/children; free for members. Cincinnati Art Museum, 953 Eden Park Drive, Mount Adams, cincinnatiartmuseum.org.



Gujarati Embroidery, cotton embroidered with silk Gujarat, 1680-1700 from the Art Museum's "The Fabric of India" exhibit PHOTO: VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM LONDON

CLASSICAL: Imani Winds

Imani Winds has been defying the traditional definition of a chamber ensemble for more than 20 years. They've collaborated with Jazz musician Wayne Shorter, commissioned dozens of works and brought a sense of adventurous delight to the Classical rep. The five members cite music from Africa and Latin and North America as their influences. The Cincinnati program includes works by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Astor Piazzolla, György Ligeti, Reena Esmail and the ensemble's French horn player Jeff Scott and flautist Valerie Coleman. Bonus: The encore might be music from John Coltrane. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 23. \$30. Aronoff Center, 650 Walnut St., Downtown, cincychamber.org.



"On the Road" by ZviDnace PHOTO: MENA BRUNETTE OF XMBPHOTOGRAPHY

DANCE: *On the Road*

Contemporary Dance Theater gets its always rewarding 2018-19 season underway with a production from ZviDance, the company led by Israeli-born choreographer Zvi Gotheiner, sure to be interesting to fans of both dance and literature. *On the Road* is a multi-media collaboration of contemporary dance and video design, utilizing Jack Kerouac's landmark Beat road-trip novel as a starting point. To create it, Gotheiner, four dancers and video artist Josh Higgason retraced Kerouac's first two-week trip from New York to Los Angeles. On occasion, they would stop the car to develop dance moves right on the road. The commissioned music score is by Swedish composer Jukka Rintamäki; lighting design is by Mark London. 8 p.m. Oct. 26 and Oct.

27. \$29-\$34 adults; \$29 senior; \$24 student; early bird discounts through Sept. 13. Aronoff Center, 650 Walnut St., Downtown, cincinnatiarts.org.

ONSTAGE: *Cincinnati King*

Local music history gets transformed into a contemporary musical (with a historic bent) in the long-awaited Cincinnati Playhouse world premiere of KJ Sanchez's *Cincinnati King*, about this city's revolutionary King Records. Based on interviews, the play traces the rise of music pioneer Syd Nathan and shares behind-the-scenes stories about the singers and musicians who played the tunes. It features such hits as "The Twist," "Blues Stay Away From Me," "Fever" and "Need Your Love So Bad." Nov. 8-Dec. 23. Tickets start at \$35. Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, 962 Mount Adams Circle, Mount Adams, cincyplay.com.

PERFORMANCE: *Something Is Happening Here*

Bob Dylan's 1965 album *Highway 61 Revisited* is one of the most impactful in recorded-music history — it made a Pop superstar out of an artist whose songs ("Like a Rolling Stone," "Ballad of a Thin Man," "Desolation Row") seemed way too mysteriously surrealistic and dangerous for mainstream culture. But those were the times. To mark it, the Cincinnati Response Project is presenting its *Something Is Happening Here* multimedia event, at which 12 pianist/composers, nine filmmakers and six multidisciplinary artists will create a community-wide artistic response to the songs on Dylan's album. The event's different sections will be curated by the Contemporary Arts Center (solo piano), Mini Microcinema (film) and Chase Public (multidisciplinary responses). Ticket prices are on a sliding scale. 7 p.m. Nov. 15 and Nov. 16. \$8-\$25 single night; \$15-\$45 two-night. Woodward Theater, 1404 Main St., Over-the-Rhine, theresponseproject.org.

ONSTAGE: *Susan Swayne and the Bewildered Bride*

The Know Theatre is calling its production of *Susan Swayne and the Bewildered Bride* — from rising-star playwright Reina Hardy — "Mary Poppins meets The League of Extraordinary Gentleman." The Society of Lady Detectives consists of proper Victorian women who love swordplay. But a member might be Isabelle Fontaine-Kite's missing husband, so Swayne must investigate. Cross-dressing, double crosses, opium and topless fencing ensue in this swashbuckling farce. Nov. 24-Dec. 16. \$25; \$5

Wednesday performances. Know Theatre, 1120 Jackson St., Over-the-Rhine, knowtheatre.com.

CLASSICAL: Opera Fusion: New Works

Opera Fusion: New Works provides the opportunity to see operas in progress, many of which go on to successful premieres — and subsequent productions at major opera houses (see: *Fellow Travelers*, *Champion*, *Doubt*). *Postville: Hometown to the World*, with a libretto by Kimberly Reed and music by Laura Kaminsky, is the next opera in the workshop series. Cultural clashes abound in this true story of a Kosher meat-packing plant in Postville, Iowa that employed dozens of illegal Mexican workers. Both Reed and Kaminsky made their operatic debuts with *As One*, the standout of this past Cincinnati Opera season. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Dec. 6. Free but reservations are required. Music Hall's Wilks Studio, 1241 Elm St., Over-the-Rhine, cincinnatiopera.org.