

Fall Arts Preview

by Brent Hallenbeck

Normally the fall arts season comes to Vermont on the heels of a glorious summer, after the barbecues and boat rides and parties have ended. Autumn arrives and it's time for students to head back into the classroom and the rest of us to head back into performing-arts venues, with the idea of expanding our minds a little after all that frivolous fun.

This fall, though, the tone is different. It's been less than three weeks since what was left of Tropical Storm Irene camped out over the Green Mountain State and dumped many inches of rain on its slopes. The deluge had nowhere to go but into the heart of many of Vermont's communities, tearing roads and houses and lives apart. Those of us in northern Vermont who were largely spared Irene's vehemence felt pangs of pain for our neighbors to the south. We were shocked to see and hear of towns we've passed through and lingered in devastated almost beyond recognition. Many Vermonters were impacted; all of us were affected.

The term "healing arts" usually applies to things like massage or acupuncture. But "healing arts" is a redundancy, really: All arts are healing. Sometimes the arts can be joyous and uplifting, sometimes melancholy and thought-provoking, but all works of art celebrate what it means to be alive, to have some sense of wholeness. When a performer is in full command of his or her skills, the energy that flies from the stage into the audience can course through your veins like rushing blood. Even when a piece falls short, there's a slice of magic in the effort that person made to get up on stage and share his or her passion with the rest of us. Creating art and sharing it unabashedly takes raw guts many of us will never have. Inspiration and strength exist even in failure.

So as Vermont begins to heal, the arts are here to help. They couldn't have come at a better time.

Popular music

In two months of popular music there's sure to be an event for everyone, from Peter Yarrow (of Peter, Paul and Mary) to blast from the past The Spin Doctors and even older but new to the stage, Young@Heart -- a group of senior singers made famous by belting Talking Heads tunes, among others. 8 tonight, guitarist Jorma Kaukonen of Jefferson Airplane and Hot Tuna fame visits the Higher Ground Showcase Lounge in South Burlington. \$33. 652-0777, www.highergroundmusic.com.

8:30 tonight, indie-rockers from opposite coasts play at Club Metronome in Burlington when the San Francisco duo The Dodos and Montreal group The Luyas perform. \$14. 865-4563, www.clubmetronome.com.

9 tonight, Chicago-based jam-rock favorites Umphrey's McGee head back into the Higher Ground Ballroom in South Burlington. \$25. 652-0777, www.highergroundmusic.com.

9 tonight, The Monkey House in Winooski hosts the bluesy punk-rocker from Texas, Scott H. Biram. \$8. 655-4563, www.monkeyhousemusic.com.

7 p.m. Saturday, Quebec fiddlers Paul Dacier and Scott Campbell will be joined by dancers from the Vermont school McFadden Academy of Irish Dance for The Magic of Master Fiddlers at the Flynn Center in Burlington. \$26-\$30. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

8 p.m. Sunday, it's bluegrass, not surprisingly, from the group Greensky Bluegrass at the Higher Ground Showcase Lounge. \$10 in advance, \$12 day of show. 652-0777, www.highergroundmusic.com.

8 p.m. Tuesday, Canadian folk-rocker Bruce Cockburn pays a visit to the Tupelo Music Hall in White River Junction. \$50. 698-8341, www.tupelohallvermont.com.

8 p.m. Sept. 23, Canadian country-pop singer k.d. lang pays another visit to the Flynn Center in Burlington with her band the Siss Boom Bang, plus opener Teddy Thompson. \$50-\$80. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

Sept. 23-25, the Nor'easter festival presented by Eastern Mountain Sports moves into Waterfront Park in Burlington for a weekend of outdoor sports and music from the likes of G. Love and Special Sauce and Okkervil River as well as local acts such as Barika and the Dave Keller Band. \$20-\$55. www.noreaster.ems.com.

8 p.m. Sept. 24, remember that documentary that had elderly singers grooving to rock songs by the likes of Talking Heads and Sonic Youth? They're playing live at the Flynn Center in Burlington in the concert Young@Heart is Alive and Well. \$29-\$48. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org. The group will also be at the Hopkins Center for the Arts just over the state line at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., at 7 p.m.

Sept. 22. \$10-\$40. (603) 646-2422, www.hop.dartmouth.edu. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 30, Peter Yarrow, one-third of the legendary folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary, performs at the Chandler Music Hall in Randolph. \$32 in advance, \$37 at the door. 728-6464, www.chandler-arts.org.

9:30 p.m. Sept. 30, members of The Disco Biscuits and RAQ unite for the electronic act Conspirator. \$18 in advance, \$20 day of show. 652-0777, www.highergroundmusic.com.

7 p.m. Oct. 10, the After Dark Music Series is no more, but organizers will still put together the occasional concert, such as this one featuring folk-rock legend Richard Thompson in a solo performance at the Town Hall Theater in Middlebury. \$50 in advance, \$55 at the door. 388-0216, www.afterdarkmusicseries.com.

7:30 p.m. Oct. 14, Texas swing masters Hot Club of Cowtown visit the University of Vermont Recital Hall as part of the UVM Lane Series. \$20-\$25. 656-4455, www.uvm.edu/laneseries.

8 p.m. Oct. 15, avant-garde music legend Laurie Anderson presents "Delusion," a multi-media piece inspired by the decline of her mother, at the Flynn Center in Burlington. \$37-\$57. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

8 p.m. Oct. 16, '90s rock vets The Spin Doctors spin into the Higher Ground Ballroom to play their best-known album, "Pocket Full of Kryptonite." James Maddock opens. \$15 in advance, \$20 day of show. 652-0777, www.highergroundmusic.com.

8 p.m. Oct. 18, Higher Ground presents a power couple, guitarist Derek Trucks and singer/guitarist Susan Tedeschi, when the Tedeschi Trucks Band performs at the Flynn Center in Burlington with Scrapomatic. \$44-\$72 in advance, \$47-\$75 day of show. 652-0777, www.highergroundmusic.com.

7:30 p.m. Oct. 20, Grammy-winning singer India.Arie joins with popular Israeli performer (and signee to the Charlotte world-music label Cumbancha) Idan Raichel for a concert at the Flynn Center in Burlington. \$40-\$55. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

7 p.m. Oct. 23, country songstress LeAnn Rimes heads to the Northeast Kingdom to perform in Fuller Hall at St. Johnsbury Academy. \$67-\$110. 748-2600, www.catamountarts.org. 8 p.m.

Oct. 26, he's achieved fame in Buffalo Springfield, Crosby, Stills & Nash and on his own -- Stephen Stills performs at the Higher Ground Ballroom. \$30-\$45. 652-0777, www.highergroundmusic.com.

8 p.m. Oct. 26, Higher Ground might be competing with itself, as at the same time as Stephen Stills' show at its home base in South Burlington the night spot is presenting Americana favorite Gillian Welch at the Flynn Center in Burlington. \$33.50 in advance, \$36.50 day of show. 652-0777, www.highergroundmusic.com.

8 and 10:30 p.m. Oct. 29, creative keyboard man Marco Benevento offers up two performances at FlynnSpace in Burlington of his live soundtrack to the Roger Corman film "House of Usher," just in time for Halloween. \$25 per show. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

8 p.m. Nov. 1, powerhouse singer-songwriter Brandi Carlile returns to the Higher Ground Ballroom for a solo acoustic show. \$30 in advance, \$33 day of show. 652-0777, www.highergroundmusic.com.

7:30 p.m. Nov. 4, folk-blues guitarist and multi-instrumentalist Harry Manx returns to the University of Vermont Recital Hall for the UVM Lane Series. \$20-\$25. 656-4455, www.uvm.edu/laneseries.

8 p.m. Nov. 19, "Still Black, Still Proud: An African Tribute to James Brown" features the late soul master's former band mates Pee Wee Ellis and Maceo Parker along with guests Vusi Mahlasela and Cheikh Lo at the Flynn Center in Burlington. \$28-\$46. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

8 p.m. Nov. 19, the jazzy, jammy instrumental group Bela Fleck and the Original Flecktones comes back to Vermont, this time at the Paramount Theatre in Rutland. \$36.50-\$56.50. 775-0903, www.paramountvt.org. Jazz/world music 8 p.m. Saturday, the Alfredo Rodriguez Trio brings Cuban jazz to FlynnSpace in Burlington. \$21-\$25. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

7:30 p.m. Sept. 27, the Mongolian folk group AnDa Union performs ancient songs at the Flynn Center in Burlington. \$22-\$38. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

7:30 p.m. Sept. 30, the University of Vermont's Lane Series begins in the UVM Recital Hall with music from Mexico courtesy of Pasatono Orquesta. \$20-\$25. 656-4455, www.uvm.edu/laneseries.

8 p.m. Oct. 15, the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival gets all the attention in June, but the Vermont Jazz Center in Brattleboro is the top stop for Vermont jazz fans in fall and winter. The big show this season features pianist Kenny Barron and his trio at the Latchis Theater. \$15-\$35. 254-9088, www.vtjazz.org.

8 p.m. Oct. 28, saxophone player Ravi Coltrane carries on the family's famous jazz name in a performance at the Flynn Center in Burlington. \$23-\$40. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

7:30 p.m. Nov. 18, the violin-driven music of Regina Carter fits both the jazz and world categories; she performs at the University of Vermont Recital Hall as part of the UVM Lane Series. \$20-\$25. 656-4455, www.uvm.edu/laneseries.

8 p.m. Nov. 18, music, dance and environmental awareness merge in "Water is Rising," a performance at the Flynn Center in Burlington that addresses the threat rising sea levels poses for inhabited atolls in the Pacific Ocean. \$21-\$35. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

Classical music

Though summer in Vermont offers beautiful backdrops for classical music, the music doesn't stop when the leaves fall. Local acts fill the calendars this season.

7:30 p.m. Saturday, the chamber group Burlington Ensemble returns for its second season of benefit concerts, this one titled "Precocious Prodigies: Teenagers." The Ensemble will perform works by Mendelssohn and Mozart at the College Street Congregational Church in Burlington to help the Stern Center for Language and Learning. \$5 suggested donation. 598-9520, www.burlingtonensemble.com.

7:30 p.m. (unless otherwise indicated) Sept. 23-Oct. 3, the Vermont Symphony Orchestra takes its "Made in Vermont Music Festival" on the road for performances Sept. 23 at the Dibden Center for the Arts at Johnson State College; Sept. 24 at the Vergennes Opera House; 4 p.m. Sept. 25 at the Haskell Opera House in Derby Line; Sept. 29 in the Alexander Twilight Theater at Lyndon State College; Sept. 30 at the Bellows Falls Opera House; Oct. 1 at the Chandler Center for the Arts in Randolph; Oct. 2 at the Town Hall Theatre in Woodstock; and Oct. 3 in the Castleton State College Fine Arts Center. The tour features "Dark Mountains," a new work by Robert Paterson, composer-in-residence with the Vermont Youth Orchestra. \$6-\$26. 1-800-876-9293, www.vso.org.

Sept. 23 and 25, speaking of the Vermont Youth Orchestra, the VYO fall concert program starts at 8 p.m. Sept. 23 at the Bellows Free Academy-St. Albans Performing Arts Center (\$2-\$5) and continues at 3 p.m. Sept. 25 at the Flynn Center in Burlington (\$10-\$15). The program includes Woodstock native and violinist Justin Truell performing a selection from Edouard Lalo's "Symphonie Espagnol" at the Flynn Center in Burlington. 655-5030, www.vyo.org.

7:30 p.m. Sept. 30, Capital City Concerts begins its 12th season of chamber music by presenting Trio Pasquier at the Unitarian Church in Montpelier. \$10-\$25. www.capitalcityconcerts.org.

7:30 p.m. Oct. 7, pianist Sara Davis Buechner performs works by Haydn and other composers in her University of Vermont Lane Series concert at the UVM Recital Hall. \$20-\$25. 656-4455, www.uvm.edu/laneseries.

8 p.m. Oct. 14, pianist Paul Lewis resumes his Schubert project with performances of the "Wandererfantasie" and "Moments Musicaux" in the Mahaney Center for the Arts Concert Hall at Middlebury College. \$6-\$25. 443-6433, www.middlebury.edu/arts.

7:30 p.m. Oct. 21, the Spanish foursome Cuarteto Casals performs chamber music at the University of Vermont Recital Hall as part of the UVM Lane Series. \$20-\$25. 656-4455, www.uvm.edu/laneseries.

1 p.m. Oct. 30, another UVM Lane Series performance, a matinee featuring chamber music from the St. Petersburg String Quartet, takes place at the UVM Recital Hall. \$20-\$25. 656-4455, www.uvm.edu/laneseries.

7:30 p.m. Nov. 5, the second performance this season by the Burlington Ensemble, "Giving Bach," benefits the Vermont Children's Trust Foundation. \$5 suggested donation. 598-9520, www.burlingtonensemble.com.

7:30 p.m. Nov. 11, the music director of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, violinist Jaime Laredo, and his wife, cellist Sharon Robinson, celebrate three decades of marriage with a concert in the University of Vermont Recital Hall for the UVM Lane Series. \$30-\$35. 656-4455, www.uvm.edu/laneseries.

7:30 p.m. Nov. 12, the Montpelier-based Capital City Concerts stages a concert in the Unitarian Church featuring the Talich String Quartet. \$10-\$25. www.capitalcityconcerts.org.

7 p.m. Nov. 18, pianist Alexander Melnikov performs an extended concert highlighting the works of Dmitri Shostakovich in the Mahaney Center for the Arts Concert Hall at Middlebury College. \$6-\$25. www.middlebury.edu/arts.

Theater

As we return indoors, theaters around the state offer entertainment of great variety, from classic tales such as Moby Dick and Romeo and Juliet, to a science-themed play called "Photograph 51." Today through Saturday, the off-Broadway theater company known as PTP/NYC comes to Middlebury College to perform a couple of pieces at the Mahaney Center for the Arts.

"Territories" offers a double bill of short plays by Steven Dykes at 8 p.m. today and Saturday while "Splatter Pattern" will be presented at 8 p.m. Friday and 2 p.m. Saturday. \$6-\$25 per performance. 443-6433, www.middlebury.edu/arts.

Thursdays-Sundays through Sept. 25, Lost Nation Theater features Vermont actor John D. Alexander in the title role in "Bully! An Adventure with Teddy Roosevelt" at the City Hall Arts Center in Montpelier. \$10-\$30. 229-0492, www.lostnationtheater.org.

7 p.m. Friday-Saturday and Sept. 23-24, 2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday and Sept. 24, the Vermont-made musical "Bully Be Gone!" addresses bullying through a mix of humor and sensitivity in productions staged at the Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center in Stowe. \$20-\$35. 760-4634, www.sprucepeakarts.org.

7:30 p.m. Saturday and Nov. 19, the new Vermont sketch-comedy troupe Potato Sack Pants Theater presents "A Mini Series: A Series of Mini Shows!" at the Off Center for the Dramatic Arts in Burlington. \$6. 540-0773, www.offcentervt.com.

2 and 7 p.m. Sunday, The Henry Sheldon Museum, based in Middlebury, presents "Remember Me to All Good Folks: A Play of Vermont Voices from the Civil War" in commemoration of the war's 150th anniversary. The production, which premiered last week in Middlebury, will be staged again at FlynnSpace in Burlington. \$25. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

Sept. 28-Oct. 23, the White River Junction theater company Northern Stage gets its 2011-12 season going in the Briggs Opera House with arguably the world's most famous play: William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." \$10-\$60. 296-7000, www.northernstage.org.

Sept. 29-Oct. 9, the University of Vermont Department of Theatre starts its season as well with a production of the Diana Son play "Stop Kiss." \$7-\$18. 656-2094, www.uvmtheatre.org.

Oct. 5-23, the Burlington company Vermont Stage and its new producing artistic director, Cristina Alicea, get the 2011-12 season going with the Anna Ziegler science-themed play "Photograph 51." \$26-\$31.50. 862-1497, www.vtstage.org.

7:30 p.m. Oct. 6, the tale of Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton gets a dramatic multi-media treatment in the production "69 Degrees S." at the Flynn Center in Burlington. \$24-\$42. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

Thursdays-Sundays from Oct. 6-23, Lost Nation Theater concludes its 2011 season with the Mary Zimmerman play "Metamorphoses" at the City Hall Arts Center in Montpelier. \$10-\$30. 229-0492, www.lostnationtheater.org.

8 p.m. Oct. 8, the Broadway National Tour of the famed musical "My Fair Lady" stops at the Flynn Center in Burlington. \$45-\$65. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

7:30 p.m. Nov. 1, another Broadway National Tour visits the Flynn Center in Burlington when the urban-fueled musical "In the Heights" takes the stage. \$45-\$62. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

Nov. 2-20, the wacky air-travel-themed comedy "Boeing-Boeing," staged this summer by St. Michael's Playhouse, lands at Northern Stage in White River Junction. \$10-\$60. 296-7000, www.northernstage.org.

7:30 p.m. Nov. 10-12, 2 p.m. Nov. 12, 6:30 p.m. Nov. 13, the community group Lyric Theatre returns to the Flynn Center in Burlington with its production of the John Waters musical "Hairspray." \$21-\$33. 658-1484, www.lyrictheatrevt.org.

7:30 p.m. Nov. 16-17, the Irish theater company Gare St. Lazare Players presents a solo performance based on Herman Melville's novel "Moby Dick" in two performances at FlynnSpace in Burlington. \$25. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

Comedy

The carefree days of summer may be fading fast, but that's no reason not to have a laugh. Events this fall make that easier, and the first will make laughing at Tropical Storm Irene an act of charity.

7 p.m., Sept. 23, laughter is healing and this event is intended to raise money for Tropical Storm Irene healing. Comic Relief From Irene will feature three comedians from New England, and proceeds will benefit the Vermont Disaster Relief Fund. Tickets are \$30 and will include food. Cash bar. Hampton Inn and Event Center in Colchester. \$30, 655-6177.

7 p.m. Sept. 29, the comic juggling team the Flying Karamazov Brothers brings its mayhem to the Lyndon Institute Auditorium. \$20-\$34. 748-2600, www.catamountarts.org.

They cross the state for a show at 8 p.m. Sept. 30 at the Flynn Center in Burlington. \$25-\$45. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

9 p.m. Oct. 15, star of Comedy Central and VH1 Michael Ian Black plans to make people laugh in the Higher Ground Ballroom in South Burlington. \$16 in advance, \$18 day of show. 652-0777, www.highergroundmusic.com.

7 p.m. Oct. 16, writer and humorist David Sedaris returns to Burlington for readings of his work and a book signing at the Flynn Center. \$49.50-\$60. 863-5966, www.flynntix.org.

8 p.m. Oct. 16, legendary funny man Bill Cosby holds court at the Paramount Theatre in Rutland. \$85-\$135. 775-0903, www.paramountvt.org. 8 p.m. Oct. 19, the Paramount Theatre gets back into the comedy business three nights after Cosby when renowned ranter Lewis Black presents his show "In God We Rust." \$48.50-\$78.50. 775-0903, www.paramountvt.org.

Visual art/film 4:30 p.m. today, a lecture by Elin Danien of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology kicks off the exhibit "Painted Metaphors: Pottery and Politics of the Ancient Maya" at Middlebury College. The lecture will be in the Mahaney Center for the Arts while the exhibit opens Friday and continues through Dec. 11 at the Middlebury College Museum of Art. Free. 443-6433, www.middlebury.edu/arts.

Through Dec. 3, Burlington City Arts presents "Outdoor Excursions," an exhibition by several internationally known artists whose experimental nature-oriented work is on display on multiple levels of the BCA Center. Free. 865-7166, www.burlingtoncityarts.org.

6 p.m. Oct. 6, the University of Vermont Film Series begins its 2011-12 season, which this year centers on international women directors, with "Sex Is Comedy," a French film directed by Catherine Breillat of France. The night at the Billings Lecture Hall starts with a lecture, followed by the film at 6:45 p.m. \$4-\$10. 656-4455, www.uvm.edu/laneseries.

Oct. 21-30, the 26th Vermont International Film Festival features independent pictures from around the world at venues in Burlington, South Burlington and Essex. 660-2600, www.vtiff.org.

Dance 8 p.m. Sept. 30-Oct. 1, it's a night of Latin American dance at the Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center in Stowe with performances by the Argentine Tango Society in the program I Tango. \$35-\$150. 760-4634, www.sprucepeakarts.org.

7 p.m. Nov. 2, the famous intense dance of Spain comes to the Lyndon Institute thanks to the company Ballet Flamenco Jose Porcel. \$20-\$44. 748-2600, www.catamountarts.org.

7 p.m. Nov. 18-19, Middlebury College student Jeremy Cline performs his senior thesis dance concert at the Mahaney Center for the Arts Dance Theatre. \$6-\$12. 443-6433, www.middlebury.edu/arts.

Miscellaneous

10 a.m. Saturday, the Vermont Performing Arts League opens its new space, Studio A, at the North End Studios in the old North End of Burlington. Free entertainment will be offered from 11 a.m.-midnight by acts including comedian Jason Lorber, Latin-jazz band GuaGua, the Eastern European group Brass Balagon and the drag outfit House of LeMay accompanied by musical group The Decoys. 863-6713, www.vpal.typepad.com.

Sept. 23-25, the seventh-annual Burlington Book Festival arrives at a variety of locations in the city with authors of local and national renown including Harry Bliss, David Budbill, Myla Goldberg, Major Jackson, Ed Koren, Tanya Lee Stone, Elinor Lipman and recently-selected U.S. Poet Laureate Philip Levine. Free. 658-3328, www.burlingtonbookfestival.com.