

What's Happenin': September 17 - 23

Written by Mike Schulz

Wednesday, 17 September 2008 02:05

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Taikoza

Galvin Fine Arts Center

Friday, September 19, 7:30 p.m.



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For the opening presentation in the school's 2008-9 Performing Arts Series, St. Ambrose University presents the acclaimed ensemble Taikoza, which will bring the thunderous rhythms of Japanese drum, flute, and string music to the Galvin Fine Arts Center on September 19.

Originally formed in New York City in 1995, Taikoza has toured extensively throughout Japan, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, England, Canada, Mexico, and the United States; the group's members have performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and with the San Diego Orchestra and New York City Ballet. And the group's name is a derivation of "taiko," which literally translates as "big drum," and you'll definitely be seeing some of the biggest during Taikoza's Friday-night performance, with one taiko weighing in at a remarkable 350 pounds.

So now that I've given you a head start, care to test your knowledge on some *other* objects in a traditional Taikoza set? Correctly match the seven Japanese objects below with their definitions and win a prize!

1) Bachi

2) Byou-daiko

3) Fue

4) Koto

5) Odaiko

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6) Shakuhachi

7) Shime-daiko

A) A taiko with a nailed head, carved from a single log

B) A taiko with a head stretched over a hoop, and tensioned with ropes

C) A taiko with a head over three feet in diameter,

often played by two people at once

D) Sticks used to beat taiko drums

E) A bamboo flute held vertically

F) A bamboo flute held horizontally

G) The national instrument of Japan, featuring 13 strings

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More information on Taikoza can be found at Taikoza.com , and tickets to the group's St. Ambrose performance are available by calling (563) 333-6251.

Answers: 1 - D, 2 - A, 3 - F, 4 - G, 5 - C, 6 - E, 7 - B. If you got them all right: congratulations! And for your prize, feel free to pick up the next 10 issues of the Reader at absolutely no charge! (Sorry. I just looked at our prize budget for the month. It ain't great.)

Erin Feis, Our Big Fat Greek Festival, Oktoberfest

District of Rock Island, St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Moline Bier Stube

Friday, September 19, through Sunday, September 2

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So imagine you're in the same boat I'm in.*

You've made plans to spend this Friday and Saturday with relatives in Germany. But then your boss surprises you with plane tickets to Greece, and you discover that the trip is *also* scheduled for Friday and Saturday. But

then

you remember that you've also made arrangements to spend this Sunday with friends in Ireland. Of all the rotten luck! What's a world-traveler to do?!

My answer: Stay home, and enjoy *de facto* treks to all three countries with none of the globe-trotting hassle.

On Sunday, September 21, the District of Rock Island presents its annual Erin Feis festival, the celebration of Irish culture featuring Celtic food, vendors, activities, and performances by the likes of the Larkin & Moran Brothers, Donnybrook, the Mullane-Healy-O'Brien Irish Dance Academy, and the Quad City Ceili Band.

September 19 and 20 find the annual Our Big Fat Greek Festival taking place at Rock Island's St. George Greek Orthodox Church, and offering the finest in Greek cuisine, arts,

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crafts, and entertainment, with music by DJ Manolis Papadakis and dance by Chicago's Hellas Dance Troupe.

And for a taste of Germany, Friday and Saturday also offer the Moline Bier Stube's Oktoberfest, with performances by the Austrian musicians of The Alpenreisser (pictured), games and activities for kids of all ages, and games and activities for kids of *certain* ages, including contests in log-sawing, barrel-rolling, and mug-holding - a contest that, I guarantee you, I would be *awesome* at.

Oh, wait. Apparently, the mug-holding contest is just that - you *hold* the mugs. You're not allowed to drink from them.

Never mind.

For more information on this year's Erin Feis, visit StPatsQC.com ; for more on Our Big Fat Greek Festival, call (309) 786-8163; and for more on the Moline Bier Stube's Oktoberfest, call (309) 797-3049.

Ashton Gap

Ohnward Fine Arts Center

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Saturday, September 20, 7 p.m.



Based in Sandwich, Illinois, the bluegrass musicians of Ashton Gap perform at Maquoketa's Ohnward Fine Art Center on September 20, and are led by mandolin, fiddle, and guitar player Ashley Lewis (pictured), who established the group in 2002. Lending their innovative stylings and tight harmonies to both original tunes and such genre standards as Hank Williams' "I Saw the Light," Bruce Hornsby's "Mandolin Rain," and the bluegrass favorite "Old Joe Clark," Ashton Gap performs primarily throughout the Midwest, meaning that acclaim from national music critics is still in the group's future.

Yet considering the acclaim already received from fellow musicians on the group's Web site (AshtonGap.com), I doubt Ashton Gap is feeling the lack. Regarding the band's recent CD release

Past Presence

, noted bluegrass vocalist and mandolin player Bob Putnam wrote, "The bluegrass world is about to experience a new phenomenon." The International Bluegrass Music Association's 2007 Female Vocalist of the Year, Dale Ann Bradley, wrote that while listening to the CD, "I sat there with a smile on my face the whole time." And famed mandolin player Tony Williamson, addressing Lewis directly, wrote, "Your songwriting is deep and mature, showing the kind of wisdom and connection to the past that I have admired in authors much older than yourself."

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And how old *is* Lewis, you might ask?

Twenty-one.

Meaning she founded Ashton Gap at age 15.

Yeah, I'm totally feeling like I squandered my youth, too.

For more information on Ashton Gap's Saturday-night show, visit OhnwardFineArtsCenter.com

The Full Monty

Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse

Wednesday, September 17, through Saturday, November 8

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On September 17, the Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse unveils its production of composer David Yazbek's *The Full Monty*, the musical-comedy smash adapted from 1997's Oscar-winning movie.

It ran for nearly two years on Broadway, and was nominated for 10 Tony Awards.

It features some of the most entertaining songs, and some of the most enjoyable characters, in modern musical theatre.

And its current incarnation features a cast that includes such recognizable talents as Brad Hauskins, Kimberly Furness, Tristan Layne Tapscott, Erin Dickerson, Eddie Staver III, Liz Millea, Autumn O'Ryan, and Vaughn M. Irving.

As a former Bootlegger at the Rock Island venue, people frequently ask if I ever miss performing on the Circa '21 stage.

Well, I do *now*.

For *Full Monty* tickets and more information on this "for mature audiences only" presentation, visit Circa21.com.

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Closer Than Ever

Village Theatre

Thursday, September 18, through Sunday, September 28



"Jeff?"

"Mike."

"I've got a problem."

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"No kidding."

"I want to do a What's Happenin' piece on New Ground Theatre's latest production, *Closer Than Ever*, which opens on September 18. It's a revue by Richard Maltby Jr. and David Shire that won the 1989 Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway Musical, and *USA Today* called it a 'most satisfying and humanizing new musical.'"

"Sounds good. What's it about?"

"Well, there are about two dozen comic numbers and ballads in the show, and they all tell individual stories, and the stories cover such topics as mid-life crisis, second marriages, role reversals with parents, trying to stay fit after 40 ... so I guess you could say the subject is middle age."

"And who's in it?"

"Sheri Hess, Tyson Danner, Jackie Madunic, and Larry Adams, who's the twin brother of the show's director, Lora Adams. I have a photo of them and everything."

"So what's the problem?"

"Well, I'm torn between two options: talking about how I listened to the *Closer Than Ever* score years ago and loved it, and talking about how I performed *Closer Than Ever*'s opening number with the Circa '21 Bootleggers in 1997 and the audience absolutely ate it up. But I don't know which one to go with. I mean, I'd hate for one of these What's Happenin' pieces to come off as self-indulgent."

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"";

"Uh ... Jeff?";

"You crack me up, Mike.";

For tickets to Closer Than Ever, playing at the Village Theatre through September 28, visit NewGroundTheatre.org