

What's Happenin': Tuesday, April 12, through Wednesday, April 27

Written by Mike Schulz
Tuesday, 12 April 2011 06:00

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MUSIC

The New Pornographers & The Walkmen

Iowa Memorial Union

Wednesday, April 27, 8 p.m.

Not to get all bitter-middle-aged-man on you here, but university students today have it so sweet. New fields of study ... new recreation facilities ... New Pornographers

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That last mention, at least, is something that students at the University of Iowa will to be treated to when the indie rockers of The New Pornographers – led by songwriter Carl Newman, and including popular solo artist Neko Case – play the school's Iowa Memorial Union on April 27. Happily for the rest of us, both their performance and that of openers The Walkmen are collegiate perks that the public (for \$24) can share in as well.

Originally formed in Vancouver in 1997, The New Pornographers and their infectious power-pop stylings were critical hits right out of the gate, with the band's first three albums each ranking in the top 40 on *Village Voice's* annual best-of-the-year polling of hundreds of music reviewers. With *Blender* magazine, in 2007, naming the group's *Mass Romantic* the 24th best indie album of all time, and with *Rolling Stone*, in 2009, ranking *Electric Version* one of "the 100 Best Albums of the Decade," The New Pornographers have continued to enjoy the critics' adulation. And with the musicians' most recent CD, 2010's *Together*, the highest-ranking of the group's albums thus far (number 18 on the *Billboard* charts), the critics and the public appear to be enjoying a rare moment of agreement.

As for The Walkmen – frequent touring artists whose songs have been heard in such films as *Spider-Man 3* and *In Bruges* – the American indie-rock band is experiencing a career trajectory much like that of their Iowa Memorial Union companions; the group's own 2010 album, *Lisbon*, is the most successful in its history (number 27 on the *Billboard* charts). It's cool that the University of Iowa booked them, but really, these student perks are getting out of hand – when I was in college, I only had one Walkman, fer Pete's sake

For more tickets to The New Pornographers' and The Walkmen's Iowa City concert, call (800)745-3000 or visiting ScopeProductions.org .



Music

An Evening with Mason Jennings

The Redstone Room

Friday, April 22, 8:30 p.m.

On singer/songwriter Mason Jennings' Web site (MasonJennings.com), the acclaimed folk rocker and acoustic guitarist states: "I guess I have come to the point in my life and my art where I just want to make music that I love and not mess with it. If people dig it: cool. If not: cool." I feel exactly the same way about my writing ... with the exception being that if people don't dig it, I go off into a dark room and cry.

To be honest, you might feel like doing the same after listening to some of Jennings' more heartfelt, haunting songs – or *would*, if the musician's plaintive vocals and soulfully honest compositions weren't also so invigorating.

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Performing at Davenport's Redstone Room on April 22, the Honolulu-born, Pittsburgh-bred Jennings released his self-titled, independently produced debut album in 1997, subsequently treating fans to eight additional CDs, including such critically lauded titles as 2002's *Century Spring*, 2006's *Boneclouds*, and last year's *Live at First Ave.* And by all means, you should consider music critics among those fans; *Paste* magazine called Jennings' album *Blood of Man* "as raw and real as the writing itself," while *American Songwriter* lauded the artist for "possessing a rare talent for describing, without pretension, both earnest longing and his struggle to understand life's intertwined pain and beauty."

But if you're unfamiliar with Jennings' talents, don't feel compelled to merely take the critics' word for it – pop over to the Redstone Room's Web site and listen to the man's acoustic performance of "The Field," a parent's mournful lament for a son killed overseas. It's a beautiful ballad, but in addition to stocking the bar, the Davenport venue may want to consider setting up a Kleenex concession.

Tickets to Mason Jennings' area concert are \$25 in advance and \$28 on the day of the show, and can be reserved by calling (563)326-1333 or visiting RedstoneRoom.com.



Event

Cirque du Soleil's *Dralion*

i wireless Center

Tuesday, April 19, and Wednesday, April 20

You ever have one of those work days where you just feel like ditching it all and joining the circus? I'm kind of having one today. So with the impending area arrival of internationally-renowned troupe Cirque du Soleil and their touring smash *Dralion* – being performed at the i wireless Center on April 19 and 20 – I thought I'd take a look at some of the production's circus acts and see which one I'm going to audition for.

Let's see According to CirqueDuSoleil.com, *Dralion* features the "Aerial Pas de Deux," in which a couple is suspended over the stage in a band of blue cloth, performing "various acrobatic figures that demand great feats of strength and agility." Hmm. Just gonna check over the others before making a hasty choice.

There's the "Bamboo Poles" segment, in which "six men balance long decorative poles" and "keep the poles 'in flight' overhead while performing acrobatic feats on the ground." Okay. Good option.

There's "Hoop Diving," in which "10 male artists throw themselves like arrows through small wooden hoops." O-kay.

Maybe "Medusa"? "Artists execute graceful and lithe movements which emphasize their extreme flexibility and balance."

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“Trampoline”? “Artists cascade perilously through the air performing spectacular stunts at a dizzying pace.”

“Single Hand-Balancing”? Nope. Not even going there.

A-*ha!* “Skipping Ropes”! “A children’s game familiar to everyone ... ” – I can *do* this! – “ ... the skipping rope takes on a new dimension in

Dralion

as the artists perform flips, make pyramids, and even form a human column.”

You know, I guess I could always keep my job and just *watch* Cirque du Soleil

If you’re thinking the same thing, *Dralion* tickets are available by calling (800)745-3000 or visiting [iwirelessCenter.com](http://www.iwirelessCenter.com) .



Theatre

Lady Windermere’s Fan

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St. Ambrose University

Friday, April 15, through Sunday, April 17

The great Irish wit Oscar Wilde was quoted as saying: "A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal." Also: "A man can be happy with any woman as long as he does not love her." Also: "America is the only country that went from barbarism to decadence without civilization in between." And people think *I'm* bitchy.

Yet for all of Wilde's cynicism, the man could also be lyrically, wonderfully funny, as audiences will discover, or *re*-discover, when St. Ambrose University stages *Lady Windermere's Fan* in the Galvin Fine Arts Center April 15 through 17. A classic comedy of manners, the show will find its student performers – among them the pictured Aaron Randolph III, Sidney Junk, Jonathan Smith, and Amanda Kochanny – enacting Wilde's farcical tale of adultery, scheming family members, and a woman's attempt to buy her way into high society. And with director Corinne Johnson setting this 1892 work in the 1930s, the production will offer a new interpretation of a timeless entertainment, one that predated its playwright's legendary *The Importance of Being Earnest* by 13 years.

Yet as you'll soon see (and hear), Wilde's endlessly quotable cleverness was already in full swing with *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Just how quotable *is* that cleverness? Let's examine. Of the following, which of the following is *not* a Wilde-ism uttered in St. Ambrose's latest production?

1) "Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes."

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- 2) "I am the only person in the world I should like to know thoroughly."
- 3) "I can resist everything except temptation."
- 4) "I don't care what is written about me so long as it isn't true."
- 5) "Life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it."
- 6) "My own business always bores me to death. I prefer other people's."

Lady Windermere's Fan will be performed at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 3 p.m. on Sunday, and tickets are available by calling (563)333-6251 or visiting SAU.edu/galvin

Answer: 4. That one is actually attributed to the great American wit Dorothy Parker. If she'd been born 40 years earlier, I bet she and Wilde would have totally hooked up. Or, you know, maybe not.

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Theatre

Sweeney Todd

Harrison Hilltop Theatre

Thursday, April 21, through Saturday, May 14

(To be sung to the "Ballad of Sweeney Todd" prologue.)

Attend the tale of *Sweeney Todd*.

The cash you'll spend won't be a wad.

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I'm telling you, ladies and gentlemen,

That Harrison Hilltop has done it again.

This Sondheim show is truly mod.

It's *Sweeney Todd*,

The Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

Its co-director is Jason Platt,

With Tristan Tapscott sharing that hat.

And with Tom Walljasper in the lead,

A couple of castmates are certain to bleed.

In *Sweeney*,

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In *Sweeney Todd*,

The Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

Hear that classic score, patrons!

Hear those voices ri-ise!

Hear them 'fore the chorus becomes

Meaty pies.

So grab your friends and reserve some tix,

'Cause if you're needing a musical fix

This bloody-good time is surely the one –

Oh, cannibalism was never so fun!

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That's *Sweeney*.

That's *Sweeney Todd*,

The Demon Barber of Fleet ...

...

... *Street*.

Sweeney Todd runs at the Harrison Hilltop Theatre April 21 through May 14, and tickets and available by calling (563)449-6371 or visiting HarrisonHilltop.com .

What Else Is Happenin'...?

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MUSIC

Thursday, April 14 – The Miró Quartet. Award-winning ensemble performs selections from Brahms, Glass, and Haydn, in a Hancher Auditorium concert presentation. Riverside Recital Hall (405 North Riverside Drive, Iowa City). 7:30 p.m. \$10-30. For tickets and information, call (319)335-1160 or visit <http://www.Hancher.Ulowa.edu>
[u](#)

Friday, April 15 – Tom Sadge as Neil Diamond. Impersonator performs the pop star's greatest hits. Quad-Cities Waterfront Convention Center (1777 Isle Parkway, Bettendorf). 7:30 p.m. \$10-15. For tickets and information, call (800)724-5825 or visit Bettendorf.IsleOfCapriCasinos.com

Saturday, April 16, and Sunday, April 17 – Quad City Symphony Orchestra. The sixth and final *Masterworks* concert of the season, with Mark Russell Smith conducting, guest violinist Midori, and a program featuring pieces by Toch, Stravinsky, and Beethoven. Saturday: Adler Theatre (136 East Third Street, Davenport), 8 p.m. Sunday: Augustana College's Centennial Hall (3703 Seventh Avenue, Rock Island), 2 p.m. \$12-52. For tickets, call (800)745-3000 or visit QCSymphony.com

Sunday, April 17 – Hersong Spring Concert: What Matters? The 23rd-annual fundraising concert by the Quad Cities' women's vocal ensemble, with proceeds benefiting area anti-bullying programs. Davenport Unitarian Church (3707 Eastern Avenue, Davenport). 3 p.m. \$10. For information, call (309)737-9898 or e-mail hersong@earthlink.net

Sunday, April 17 – Semenya McCord. Jazz vocalist performs and educates as part of Polyrhythms' Third Sunday Jazz Matinée & Workshop Series. The Redstone Room (129 Main Street, Davenport). All-ages jazz workshop: 3 p.m., \$5 per adult, children free. Concert: 6 p.m.,

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\$10-15. For tickets and information, call (309)373-0790 or visit

Polyrhythms.org

and

RedstoneRoom.org

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Friday, April 22 – Tommy Cash: A Tribute to Johnny Cash. Tommy performs songs made famous by his legendary brother. Quad-Cities Waterfront Convention Center (1777 Isle Parkway, Bettendorf). 7:30 p.m. \$10-15. For tickets and information, call (800)724-5825 or visit Bettendorf.IsleOfCapriCasinos.com

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Friday, April 22 – Patio. Third incarnation of the popular area band, with Pat Willis, Dan Olds, Derek Reid, Dan Kelly, and Chris Cushman, performing with openers Festival of Fools. Rock Island Brewing Company (1815 Second Avenue, Rock Island). 9 p.m. \$5. For information, call (309)793-4060 or visit RIBCO.com .

THEATRE

Friday, April 15, through Saturday, May 7 – *Alexander & the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*

. Family-musical adaptation of Judith Viorst's children's book, directed by Tyson Danner. Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse (1828 Third Avenue, Rock Island). 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. performances on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. \$8.50 For tickets and information, call (309)786-7733, extension 2, or visit Circa21.com .

Friday, April 15, through Sunday, April 24 – *Urinetown*. Tony Award-winning musical/comedy inspired by the works of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill. The University of Iowa's E.C. Mabie Theatre (UI Theatre Building, 200 North Riverside Drive, Iowa City).

Thursdays-Saturdays 8 p.m.; Sundays 2 p.m. \$5-20. For tickets and information, call (319)335-1160 or visit

~theatre

Ulowa.edu/

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DANCE

Saturday, April 16, and Sunday, April 17. The Polka Club of Iowa's "Spring Fling Fest." Dance to music by Barefoot Becky & the Ivanhoe Dutchmen (noon-2 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. Saturday), The Barry Boyce Band (noon-2 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. Sunday), and SqueezeBox (2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. both days). Walcott Coliseum (116 East Bryant Street, Walcott). Noon-8 p.m. \$12, or \$20 for a two-day pass. For information, call (563)285-5989.

COMEDY

Saturday, April 16 – Upright Citizens Brigade. Long-form improvisation with some of New York City's and Los Angeles' finest comedians. Englert Theatre (221 East Washington Street, Iowa City). 8 p.m. \$15-20. For information, call (319)688-2653 or visit Englert.org

LITERATURE

Thursday, April 14 – River Readings at Augustana: Dora Malech. Poet and former Augustana College Teaching Fellow reads from her works, with a reception following. Augustana College's Wallenberg Hall (3520 Seventh Avenue, Rock Island). 7 p.m. Free admission. For information, call (309)794-7231 or visit

Augustana.edu

MOVIES

Wednesday, April 20 – *The Grateful Dead Movie Event*. 1977 concert documentary co-directed by Jerry Garcia and Leon Gast, featuring clips from the group's 1974 tours. Rave Motion Pictures Davenport 53 (3601 East 53rd Street, Davenport). 7:30 p.m. \$12.50. For information, visit [FathomEvents.co](http://FathomEvents.com)
[m](#)

Tuesday, April 26 – *Freedom Riders*. WQPT-TV hosts a preview screening of Stanley Nelson's Civil Rights documentary, with a post-show Q&A session. Putnam Museum & IMAX Theatre (1717 West 12th Street, Davenport). 5:30 p.m. Free admission, but reservations recommended. For information, call (309)764-2400 or visit PBS.org/freedomriders

Wednesday, April 27 – *Prisoner of Her Past*. Documentary on Holocaust survivor Sonia Reich, with a post-screening discussion with Sonia's son Howard Reich, music critic for the *Chicago Tribune*. Co-hosted by the Jewish Federation of the Quad Cities. Figge Art Museum (225 West Second Street, Davenport). 7 p.m. \$5. For information, call (563)326-7804 or visit JFQC.org

EVENTS

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Saturday, April 16 – Treat House Trot and Run for Renewal. A half-mile kids' walk at 8:30 a.m. and a 5K run/walk at 9 a.m., with proceeds benefiting the Project Renewal Youth Program. Refreshments and door prizes after the races. Sister Concetta Park (corner of Fifth and Warren streets, Davenport). \$16-20 per adult, children free. For information, call (563)324-0800 or visit ProjectRenewal.net

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Wednesday, April 20, and Thursday, April 21 – Stylin' Against Breast Cancer Wine & Cheese Party and Fashion Show & Luncheon. Annual fundraisers for the Trinity Health Foundation's breast-cancer awareness and support programs. Quad-Cities Waterfront Convention Center (1777 Isle Parkway, Bettendorf). Wine & Cheese Party: 6:30 p.m., \$20-25. Fashion Show & Luncheon: 11:30 a.m., \$25. For tickets and information, call (309)764-7610 or visit TrinityHealthFoundation.com .