Music

Mike Garson

First Presbyterian Church of Davenport

Saturday, December 10, 4 p.m.

Performing in a December 10 concert at Davenport's First Presbyterian Church, the latest guest in Quad City Arts' Visiting Artist Series is acclaimed pianist/composer Mike Garson, and according to his Web-site bio at MikeGarson.com , he's a musician "to whom the word 'no' is quickly transformed into the word 'now.'" Which is funny, because that's exactly what happens whenever I say 'no' around here ... although it's always my editor Jeff who transforms it into '*now*.'

Alas, that word swap and our shared first name are about all I have in common with Garson, whose prodigious talents have consistently thrilled audiences and collaborators for nearly four decades. With Garson's touring appearances including concerts at UCLA's Royce Hall, the Tanglewood Jazz Festival, and the Kennedy Center, his exhilarating, frequently improvisational wizardry on the keys has earned him fans nationwide, as have his dozen-plus albums, with 2008's *Conversations with My Family* receiving four-and-a-half (out of five) stars from *Downbeat* magazine.

Yet while trained in classical music and particularly fluent in jazz, there appears to be no genre in which Garson *isn't* extraordinarily accomplished. The composer of, no kidding, more than 4,000 individual pieces of music to date, he has worked alongside such varied musicians as Seal, Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor, the Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan, and the members of the L.A. Philharmonic, while his piano and compositional skills have been heard on the soundtracks to such films as *Basquiat, Stigmata,* and *Se7en*.

However, he might be best known for being a longtime pianist for David Bowie, with whom Garson has recorded and toured since 1972 (appearing on *Saturday Night Live* with the man in 1997), and who apparently has nothing but his highest praise for Quad City Arts' latest visiting artist. Calling Garson "exceptional" and a musician who "naturally understand[s] the movement and free-thinking necessary to hurl themselves into experimental or traditional areas of music," Bowie sums up his collaborator's talents by stating simply, "It is pointless to talk about his ability as a pianist." Boy, David ... wish you had mentioned that 350 words ago ... .

Davenport's First Presbyterian Church is located at 1702 Iowa Street, and more information on Garson's public concert is available by calling (309)793-1213 or visiting QuadCityArts.com .

Theatre

All I Really Need to Know I Learned by Being in a Bad Play

Davenport Junior Theatre

Sunday, December 11, 2 & 4 p.m.

For Davenport Junior Theatre's annual holiday production, artistic director Daniel D.P. Sheridan is trying something experimental this year: the presentation of a 40-minute show that will be designed, rehearsed, and performed during a single, unbroken 30-hour period, with the play's student actors even staying in the theatre overnight to get the job done.

The first one of you to crack a Kathie Lee Gifford joke will no longer be allowed to read the What's Happenin' pages. (Besides, as Sheridan asserts, "For generations, Junior Theatre students have been dying to figure out a way to stay at Junior Theatre overnight.")

Written by Werner Trieschmann and titled *All I Really Need to Know I Learned by Being in a Bad Play*, this Junior Theatre outing examines the business behind "show business" ... with the show in question boasting a snooty narrator, a passive-aggressive stage manager, an on-stage meeting of the Small Part Support Group, and a misguided interpretation of *Romeo & Juliet* set in a Starbucks. In short, a bad play, and one that Sheridan believes will delight both audiences and his Junior Theatre participants.

"I would not have picked this show two years ago," says Sheridan, who also directs the production, "because it is a bit of a satire making fun of theatre and the process. But these kids have really become a company over the last three years ... . I know these students appreciate theatre, each other, and what being at Junior Theatre means, so I think we can now pause and poke fun at it, too!"

And, it should go without saying, also work hard to pull it off. While the students will have their lines memorized in advance, they – like the show's director, designers, and set builders – will have just 30 hours to bring *All I Really Need to Know* from first staging rehearsal to completion, and will also be shadowing the comedy's professional team through every aspect of play

production.

“All in all,” says Sheridan, “it will be extremely challenging. However, there are great benefits to only having 30 hours. There is no time to dilly-dally ... . This project forces everyone to be decisive.” Plus, he adds, “It will be nice to only focus on one thing for 30 hours.” Which, I’m guessing, is exactly what Kathie Lee thought when ... .

Oh, come on! You were thinking that joke *way* before I was!

All I Really Need to Know I Learned by Being in a Bad Play will be performed at 2 and 4 p.m. on December 11, tickets are $3 at the door, and more information is available by calling (563)326-7862 or visiting Davenport JuniorTheatre.com
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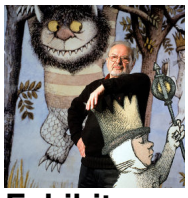

Exhibit

In a Nutshell: The Worlds of Maurice Sendak

Moline Public Library

Wednesday, December 28, through Friday, February 24

On December 28, the Moline Public Library will play host to the special traveling exhibition *In a Nutshell: The Worlds of Maurice Sendak*
. For those of you who may be confused by the accompanying image, Sendak is the guy in the middle.

The world-renowned Sendak, of course, is the author and illustrator of *Where the Wild Things Are* , the beloved fantasy adventure that has been a touchstone for young – and no-longer-young – readers since its original publication in 1963. Yet as the library's exhibition will explore in great detail, Sendak was, and continues to be, fascinating far beyond the fame he acquired for this seminal children's book.

Born to Polish immigrants in 1928, many of whose relatives perished in the Holocaust, Sendak became interested in themes of Jewish culture and history, geography, and mortality at a very early age. And as the *In a Nutshell* exhibit will display, those themes are visualized time and again in Sendak's art, as seen in his vivid, signature illustrations in more than 100 picture books published between 1947 and the present day.

The recipient of such esteemed prizes as the National Book Award, the National Medal of Arts, and the Hans Christian Andersen Award for children's book illustration, Sendak also holds the distinction of collaborating with such literary masters as Isaac Bashevis Singer and *Angels in America* aut
hor Tony Kushner. He also served as a designer for numerous operas – among them Mozart's *The Magic Flute*
, Prokofiev's
Love for Three Oranges
, and a 1979 stage version of his own
Where the Wild Things Are –
and was even on the National Board of Advisors for the Children's Television Workshop during the developmental stages of

Sesame Street
.

And if all that isn't enough to establish Sendak's coolness, try this on for size: In North Hollywood, California, there's actually an elementary school named after him.

So bring on the exhibit! Or, to put it in more Sendak-ian terms: "Let the wild rumpus start!"

In a Nutshell: The Worlds of Maurice Sendak runs through February 24, and information on the exhibit is available by calling (309)524-2470 or visiting
MolineLibrary.com
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Music

The Midtown Men

Adler Theatre

Saturday, December 17, 7:30 p.m.

Performing an evening of unforgettable ’60s tunes under the moniker The Midtown Men, four stars of the original Broadway production of *Jersey Boys* – Michael Longoria, Daniel Reichard, J. Robert Spencer, and Tony Award recipient Christian Hoff – will take the Adler Theatre stage on December 17. As someone who can occasionally go long weeks with nothing but *Jersey Boys* in his car’s CD player, this is kind of like God Himself coming to town ... if God treated us to His renditions of “Big Girls Don’t Cry” and “Sherry.”

With the *New York Daily News* raving that “The Midtown Men sound as crisp as their Rat Pack-inspired suits,” Hoff, Longoria, Reichard, and Spencer are sure to deliver an incredible night of musical favorites during their Davenport engagement. Yet in addition to tunes from *Jersey Boys* ’ Tony- and Grammy-winning salute to Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons, The Midtown Men’s performance will find its exceptional vocalists harmonizing to some of the most adored pop standards by other famed artists of the 1960s, among them numerous songs featured on the quartet’s 2011 CD *Sixties Hits* .

To help get yourself in the mood for this special concert event – if any of you are somehow *not* yet in the mood – try matching these seven numbers from *Sixties Hits* with the artists who originally made them famous:

1) “Ain’t That Peculiar”

2) “Breaking Up Is Hard to Do”

3) “California Dreamin’”

4) “Can’t Buy Me Love”

5) “Happy Together”

6) “Time of the Season”

7) “Up on the Roof”

A) The Beatles

B) The Drifters

C) Marvin Gaye

D) The Mamas & the Papas

E) Neil Sedaka

F) The Turtles

G) The Zombies

For tickets to The Midtown Men's December 17 concert, call (800)745-3000 or visit AdlerTheatre.com .

Answers: 1 – C, 2 – E, 3 – D, 4 – A, 5 – F, 6 – G, 7 – B. Too easy a quiz for you? Sorry. The freakin' Jersey Boys *are coming to town. I'm a little distracted these days.*

What Else Is Happenin'...?

MUSIC

Thursday, December 8 – The Chordbusters' Third-Annual Christmas Festival. Concert featuring the area barbershop performers, the Trinity Lutheran choirs, the Assumption High School Jazz Choir, the Three Guys with Soule quartet, an organ/trumpet duet, and more. Trinity Lutheran Church (1122 West Central Park Avenue, Davenport). 7 p.m. $5, ages 12 and under free. For information, visit
TheChordbusters.com
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Thursday, December 8 – *Christmas at the Speakeasy*. Holiday favorites performed by members of the Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse's
Nuncrackers
and the theatre's performing wait staff, the Bootleggers. Circa '21 Speakeasy (1818 Third Avenue, Rock Island). 7 p.m. $10-12. For tickets and information, call (309)786-7733 extension 2 or visit
Circa21.com
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Thursday, December 8 – Black Hawk College Holiday Choral Concert. Annual wintertime presentation with the college's choirs. First Congregational Church (2201 Seventh Avenue, Moline). 7:30 p.m. Free admission. For information, call (309)796-5478 or visit
BHC.edu
.

Thursday, December 8 – Catherine Russell. Concert with the acclaimed jazz and blues singer, appearing in a Hancher Auditorium presentation. The Mill (120 East Burlington Street, Iowa City). 7:30 p.m. $10-20. For tickets and information, call (319)335-1160 or visit
http://www.Hancher.UIowa.edu.

Friday, December 9 – Fishbone. Accalimed alternative-rock musicians in concert, with an opening set by Roots of Creation. Rock Island Brewing Company (1815 Second Avenue, Rock Island). 9:30 p.m. $15-20. For information, call (309)793-4060 or visit
RIBCO.com
. For a March interview with Fishbone's Angelo Moore, visit
RCReader.com/y/fishbone

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Friday, December 9 – Christmas Showcase Concert. Annual holiday presentation featuring the school's University Chorale, Chamber Singers, Symphonic Band, SAU-Community Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, and STAMVOJA. St. Ambrose University's Galvin Fine Arts Center (2101 Gaines Street, Davenport). 7 p.m. Free admission. For information, call (563)333-6001 or visit SAU.edu .

Friday, December 9 – The Grateful Dead *American Beauty* Project. A musical journey through the classic Grateful Dead albums
American Beauty
and
Workingman's Dead
, in a Hancher Auditorium presentation. Riverside Casino & Event Center (3184 Highway 22, Riverside). 9:30 p.m. $10-20. For tickets and information, call (319)335-1160 or visit http://www.Hancher.Ulowa.edu.

Saturday, December 10, and Sunday, December 11 – Handel's *Messiah*. The holiday masterwork performed by the 250-member Handel Oratorio Society and the professional Handel Oratorio Chamber Orchestra. Augustana College's Centennial Hall (3703 Seventh Avenue, Rock Island). Saturday 8 p.m., Sunday 2 p.m. $10-20. For tickets and information, call (309)794-7306 or visit
Augustana.edu
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Saturday, December 10 – *Jingle Bell Rock* with Eddie Money, Phil Gramm, & Mickey Thomas. Holiday concert with the famed pop and rock performers. Riverside Casino & Event Center (3184 Highway 22, Riverside). 8 p.m. $36-46. For tickets and information, call (877)677-3456 or visit
RiversideCasinoAndResort.com
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Thursday, December 15 – *Lessons & Carols*. The Augustana Chamber Singers and campus ministries present the story of Christ's birth in readings and song. Augustana College's Ascension Chapel (3701 Seventh Avenue, Rock Island). 4 and 8 p.m. Free admission. For information, call (309)794-7233 or visit August

ana.com
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Friday, December 16 – The Envy Corps. Noted indie-rock musicians in concert. The Redstone Room (129 Main Street, Davenport). 9 p.m. $8-10. For tickets and information, call (563)326-1333 or visit RedstoneRoom.com .

Friday, December 16, and Saturday, December 17 – *A Nova Christmas*. Annual holiday concerts with the professional vocal ensemble the Nova Singers. Friday – St. Paul Lutheran Church (2136 Brady Street, Davenport); Saturday – First Lutheran Church (364 East Water Street, Galesburg). 7:30 p.m. $12-16. For tickets and information, call (309)341-7038 or visit http://Departments.Knox.edu/novasingers/concerts.html.

Wednesday, December 21 – *The Christmas Music of Mannheim Steamroller*. Holiday-themed multimedia production of rock, acoustic, and electronic music. Adler Theatre (136 East Third Street, Davenport). 7:30 p.m. $39-56. For tickets, call (800)745-3000 or visit AdlerTheatre.com
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Saturday, December 31 – *Remember the King: Elvis Through the Years*. A salute to Elvis Presley's music from the 1950s, the 1968 comeback special, and the Las Vegas years, with party favors and champagne toast at midnight. Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse (1828 Third Avenue, Rock Island). 8-9 p.m. buffet, 9:15 p.m. concert. $65-77. For tickets and information, call (309)786-7733 extension 2 or visit Circa21.com
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Saturday, December 31 – *A Neil Diamond Tribute*. The story of the pop legend's life told through his own songs from the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, starring impersonator Keith Allynn. Ohnward Fine Arts Center (1215 East Platt Street, Maquoketa). 7 p.m. $13-25. For tickets and information, call (563)652-9815 or visit OhnwardFineArtsCenter.com
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Saturday, December 31 - Dr. Zhivegas. Popular Midwestern dance band in concert. Quad-Cities Waterfront Convention Center (1777 Isle Parkway, Bettendorf). 8 p.m. $30-45. For tickets and information, call (800)724-5825 or visit B ettendorf.IsleOfCapriCasinos.com
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DANCE

Saturday, December 10, and Sunday, December 11 – *The Nutcracker*. Ballet Quad Cities' production of Tchaikovsky's holiday classic. Adler Theatre (136 East Third Street, Davenport). Saturday and Sunday 2 p.m.; Saturday 8 p.m. $10-35. For tickets, call (800)745-3000 or visit BalletQuadCities.com
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EVENTS

Saturday, December 10 – Help-Portrait. Local photographer Jesse Inskeep, working with a team of other photographers, hairstylists, and makeup artists, will take free professional photos as part of a worldwide volunteer effort. Connection Church (4374 State Street, Suite #2, Bettendorf). 1-4 p.m. For information and to schedule a photo shoot, call (309)524-5024.

Sunday, December 11 – Holiday Magic. Family event featuring a visit by Santa, holiday-cookie decorating, craft activities, a live jazz band, a magic show with Ben Seidman, and more. Quad-Cities Waterfront Convention Center (1777 Isle Parkway, Bettendorf). Noon. $5-10 for adults, free for military families and veterans and ages 12 and under, with toys being collected for the Marines' Toys for Tots Program. For information, call (563)344-2697 or (563)349-1870 or visit QCUnited.org .

Friday, December 16, and Saturday, December 17 – Candyland. Visual art, face- and body-painting, fashion shows, and more, with artists including Nicole Cisne Durbin, Heidi Sallows, and Sarah Robb. The Village Theatre (2113 East 11th Street, Village of East Davenport). Friday: Kids' Night, 5-10 p.m., $5-7. Saturday – Adults' Night, 6 p.m.-midnight, $15-20. For tickets and information, call (562)477-4965, or visit RobbDesignsOnlineGallery.blogspot.com

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