



10 YEARS

The First Ten Years of Fine Performing Arts at **Your** Washington Pavilion

When the doors to the Washington Pavilion opened in 1999, the staff and board members made it their goal to bring high-quality, diverse and one-of-a-kind entertainment right here to Sioux Falls. Looking back on twenty years, it is plain to see that this mission was met and continues to be with each passing season. The Mary W. Sommervold Hall was known as the Great Hall back then. Here is a look back at the first ten years of performance series shows and the entertainment that travelled to our beautiful hall.

In the fall of 1999, the first performance series at the Pavilion opened with the Hubbard Street Dance Company of Chicago. Less than a month later, the iconic hit Broadway musical, CATS, became the first Broadway Touring show at the Washington Pavilion. The feline characters played to four capacity filled shows. Director of Performances and Events, Regina Ruhberg, remembers the actors dressing in their head-to-toe cat costumes and makeup and scampering around the building. It was Halloween week and many children who attended dressed up as CATS too. Great music was a highlight that first season with The Waverly Consort, The King's Singers and The Billy Taylor Trio with Andy Bey. Matchboxes, brooms, garbage cans, Zippo lighters and more filled the stage with energizing beats at four performances of STOMP. The season ended with Ohio Ballet's mixed repertoire performance.

In our second season (2000-01) we continued to draw musical acts from across the country and around the world with Dame Cleo Laine and John Dankworth, The Berlin Radio Choir, The Miami String Quartet and The Los Angeles Guitar Quartet. The dance artists Parsons Dance Company and The Royal Winnipeg Ballet both made their first visits to Sioux Falls. Broadway returned to Sioux Falls with multiple performances of CHICAGO: THE MUSICAL, a show that features everything that makes Broadway great. One show-stopping song after another and the most astonishing dancing you have ever seen. The three performances of the classic musical SHOW BOAT were some of the very few performances that have ever been cancelled at the Pavilion and rescheduled. They intended to perform in February of 2001 but due to bad weather and a truck accident, they postponed their show for a few weeks.

The third performance series season in 2001-02 featured more world-class entertainment. Touring Broadway shows were the rock musical FOOTLOOSE, RAGTIME THE MUSICAL and the beloved MY FAIR LADY. Diverse dance groups were presented that season including the flamboyant Ballet Hispanico, jaw-dropping Diavolo and one of the world's most highly acclaimed modern dance ensembles: The Paul Taylor Dance Company. This season also included the first opera to come to the Pavilion: Gilbert & Sullivan's THE MIKADO. Montana Repertory Theatre, one of the most dynamic and respected touring theater companies in the country made their first visit to the Pavilion and performed DEATH OF A SALESMAN. We continued to see talented musical acts grace the stage of the Great Hall: Empire Brass, The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Ensemble, and jazz musicians Regina Carter & Stefon Harris.

Season four (2002-03) continued the trend of awe-inspiring performances with shows featuring Ko-Thi Dance Company, Turtle Island String Quartet, the vivid stage presence of Van Cliburn International Piano Competition award winner Olga Kern, jazz musician James Carter, The Ying Quartet, and The Red Clay Ramblers and The Flying Leap Players. Opera lovers were thrilled to experience LA BOHEME by the Stanislavsky Opera Company. SOUTH PACIFIC, RENT and THE MUSIC MAN kept the new tradition of bringing Broadway to Sioux Falls alive.

In the fall of 2003, season five launched with Bulgaria's Opera Verdi Europa's production of RIGOLETTO, plenty of dance with Diavolo's daredevil performers returning to Sioux Falls, The Dayton Contemporary Dance Company and BalletNY. A very diverse music roster included Kathy Mattea's bluegrass stylings, The Brentano String Quartet, The Newport Jazz Festival and The Moscow Chamber Orchestra. KISS ME, KATE, FOSSE, and SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL toured their Broadway productions to Sioux Falls and The Guthrie Theatre presented their production of OHELLO.

One of the Washington Pavilion's largest season rosters came in 2004-05 with season six. The Count Basie Orchestra with Nnenna Freelon, BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet and The Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Cantus, Concertante and Grammy award winner Brazilian singer Luciana Souza performed outstanding music in the Great Hall. There was certainly no shortage of dance or theater with the return of Opera Verdi Europa and their production of CARMEN, Aquila Theatre Company's first visit with their national tour of THE INVISIBLE MAN, Royal Winnipeg Ballet's return with their tour of THE MAGIC FLUTE, Pilobolus Dance Theatre, and the Broadway musicals GREASE, THE FULL MONTY and MISS SAIGON.