

'Hamilton' tickets too pricey? Try the wealth of local theater

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Chris Gilbert, producer of the Produce Series at Palos Verdes Performing Arts, shares details of the season's new productions with Abby Douglas, president of the PVPA board, and Julie Moe Reynolds, PVPA executive director. Photo by Meredith Grenier

By [Meredith Grenier](#), The Daily Breeze

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While the newly opened blockbuster "Hamilton" is grabbing headlines at the Pantages with its hip-hop music and rap lyrics, the show is far from the only gig in town. Local theaters are offering an exciting new season of shows and performances in the South Bay for a fraction of the astronomical prices for "Hamilton" tickets. And parking is free.

The 35th season of Palos Verdes Performing Arts, for example, offers a diverse selection of Broadway musicals, concerts, dance and comedy. Ditto for The Torrance Cultural Arts Center and the Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro, which also offers a film series and spectacular holiday specials.

ADVERTISING

These large local establishments not only bring culture to the community, but they also offer opportunities for theater lovers to support their favorite venues by volunteering or joining groups that hold special events and receptions to help underwrite the season and keep the lights on.

The PVPA has no less than eight support groups, including its newest devotees, dedicated to raising funds for its performing arts school. Longtime support groups include Bravo, Encore Circle and Act II, among others.

The Norris fundraising season kicks off with the Encore Circle's dinner Sept. 8 at the theater's Pavilion prior to the Presents Series' tribute to Ricky Nelson performed by twin brothers Matthew and Gunnar Nelson. With hits such as "Hello Mary Lou," "Poor Little Fool," and "Travelin' Man," the production showcases video footage of the Nelson family, including his famous parents, 1950s television icons Ozzie and Harriet.

Comedy star and multiplatinum-selling artist Bill Engvall opens the 2017-18 Norris season Sept. 2 with his "Just Sell Him for Parts" tour. On Oct. 7 singer and songwriter Kenny Loggins returns to the Norris, and Oct. 19 brings two-time Grammy award-winning country hit maker Travis Tritt, performing an intimate acoustic concert.

Other highlights in the Norris' packed schedule include five-time Grammy winner and Nashville royalty, Wynonna Judd, along with her band, The Big Noise, on Jan. 13.

In addition to the tribute to Nelson, the Presents Series includes "Tribute to Benny Goodman at Carnegie Hall," which re-creates the jazz leader's legendary concert, and the Atlantic City Ballet's production of "Sleeping Beauty" Oct. 22, plus a musical tribute to Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons "Oh What a Night" (March 31) and the most authentic Eagles tribute in the country, "On the Border" (April 7.)

The Produced Series includes the 25th annual Putnam County Spelling Bee Sept. 15 through Oct. 1; Picasso at the Lapin Agile Jan. 26 through Feb. 4 and 42nd Street April 27 through May 13. Finally, don't miss the Cabaret Jazz Series opening with Jacob Miller and the Bridge City Crooners Nov. 5, followed by three other jazz bands.

Check the Norris' website at pvperformingarts.com for the theater's full 35th season schedule.

Torrance Cultural Arts Center

Meanwhile, the Torrance Cultural Arts Foundation will host the premiere of "In Perfect Harmony," featuring beloved songs from the 1960s and '70s by groups such as The Beatles, The Beach Boys, The Mamas and the Papas and Simon and Garfunkel. Performances are at 2 and 8 p.m. Oct. 7 at the Torrance Cultural Arts Center, 3330 Civic Center Drive, Torrance.

The performance will feature Lee Lessack, Johnny Rogers and Susannah Mars singing some of the most popular songs from the era. It will also feature renowned guitarist Joe Ravo, along with local musicians to create a toe-tapping, feel-good, sing-along concert.

Tickets for both performances range from \$25 to \$35 and are available online, at the James R. Armstrong Theatre box office or by calling 310-781-7171.

The Torrance Cultural Arts Center also will feature popular performances such as "South Bay's Got Talent" at 7 p.m. Sept. 23; "Streetlight Cadence" at 7:30 Oct. 13 and 14; Los Cancioneros Master Chorale's "Just Desserts: Let's Dream" at 7 p.m. Oct. 15; and "Vaud and Villains" at 8 p.m. Oct. 21.

Also watch for National Theatre Live's "No Man's Land" at 2 p.m. Nov. 5; "Italian Undercover" at 8 p.m. Nov. 10; "Aileen Quinn and The Leapin' Lizards" at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 17; "Irish Christmas in America" at 2 and 7 p.m. Dec. 3; Torrance Civic Chorale's "Holiday Light" at 8 p.m. Dec. 15 and 16; and Los Cancioneros "A Latin Holiday" at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 17.

For a comprehensive season's brochure of performances, visit TorranceArts.org.

Warner Grand Theatre

On tap at the Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro is a lineup of favorites, such as the International Film Festival

Oct. 5-15; "Twisted Nutcracker" at 1 p.m. Nov. 18; "The Nutcracker," featuring the San Pedro City Ballet, at 2 and 7 p.m. Dec. 9 and 2 p.m. Dec. 10; and the Golden State Pops Orchestra Holiday Spectacular on Dec. 16. For information, visit www.grandvision.org.

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