San Diego’s Hidden Economic Engine – The Dollars and Cents of Arts, Culture and Entertainment

We have been compared to the Smithsonian. We give Broadway a run for its money at Tony Award time. We lure top musical talent from the San Diego Symphony’s Jahja Ling to opera’s grand diva Beverly Sills with her farewell performance. And, we create world-class exhibitions that reach a global audience and inspire people in cities from Berlin to Sidney. San Diego has emerged as one of the most dynamic, culturally-rich regions in the country, supporting a thriving industry of arts, culture and entertainment that has become a source of jobs, revenue, and opportunities for economic growth.

According to a recent economic impact study\(^*\), the nonprofit arts and culture sector generates $579.4 million in annual economic activity in the City of San Diego – supporting 17,817 full-time local and state government revenues. Those figures are enhanced by another $341 million in event-related spending by audiences (excluding the cost of admission) who also dine in local restaurants, pay for parking, buy gifts and souvenirs, and even pay a babysitter.

**Cultural Tourism**

Then there are the visitors who come to our city for unique experiences from festivals to theater premieres, adding more to local coffers with spending on hotels, transportation and meals in a lucrative segment of the travel industry dubbed Cultural Tourism. The City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture and the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau were at the forefront of the development of the concept in the United States, hosting the first conference for industry leaders in 1998. The commission reports that the arts attracted two million visitors who contributed $170 million to San Diego’s economy in fiscal year 2011. Its success is the San Diego Opera, a widely respected member of the international opera community. Their North American tours, adding contemporary American operas to complement the traditional repertoire each season. Another San Diego mainstay, Mainly Mozart, in its 25th season, produces the largest Spring music festival in the region, the Mainly Mozart, in its 25th season, adding contemporary American operas to complement the traditional repertoire each season. Another San Diego mainstay, Mainly Mozart, in its 25th season, produces the largest Spring music festival in the region, the Mainly Mozart, in its 25th season, adding contemporary American operas to complement the traditional repertoire each season. Another San Diego mainstay, Mainly Mozart, in its 25th season, produces the largest Spring music festival in the region, the Mainly Mozart, in its 25th season, adding contemporary American operas to complement the traditional repertoire each season. Another San Diego mainstay, Mainly Mozart, in its 25th season, produces the largest Spring music festival in the region, the Mainly Mozart, in its 25th season, adding contemporary American operas to complement the traditional repertoire each season.
La Jolla Playhouse Offers Fertile Ground For Artists And New Work

Spring is a very fertile time at La Jolla Playhouse. Known for its innovative and adventurous programming, the prestigious theater continues that trend with a new play development initiative, the DNA New Work Series, running through March 3. The series offers audiences the chance to see the birth of a new work while giving playwrights and directors the opportunity to develop a script by providing rehearsal time, space and resources, culminating in a workshop production or public reading.

“As the place to look for what’s next in American theatre, it’s not only a major tenet of our mission to cultivate and develop the work of emerging and established artists, it’s in our DNA,” said Playhouse Artistic Director Christopher Ashley. “The Playhouse’s commitment to these artists and their work is the lifeblood of our theatre, and it is our hope that we can create an annual series to shine a spotlight on the development of the eclectic and diverse theatre that has become a hallmark on our stages.”

Upcoming DNA offerings include a workshop production of Meg Miroshnik’s The Tall Girls and a concert reading of a new musical, Chasing the Song, directed by Ashley and written by the creators of the Tony Award-winning musical Memphis: Joe DiPietro and David Bryan, founding member of the band Bon Jovi.

On March 9, the Playhouse will host its annual star-studded Gala, featuring entertainment by the iconic rock band The Flaming Lips, composers of the Playhouse’s acclaimed 2012 world-premiere musical Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots. The Gala raises funds to support the institution’s award-winning education initiatives, such as the Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour that brings a Playhouse-commisioned, world-premiere production to elementary schools throughout San Diego; summer theater programs like the Young Performers Workshop; and numerous others that reach over 30,000 children each year. The Gala also helps support the Playhouse’s play development programs, including the DNA New Work Series, Page To Stage, and readings and workshops throughout the season.

Later in March, the Playhouse will bring back the internationally-renowned comedy troupe The Second City for a return engagement March 20 – 23 in the cabaret-style performance space in the Potiker Theatre. The company’s Laughing Matters tour features some of the best sketches, songs and improvisations in The Second City’s 53-year history. Having launched the careers of Tina Fey, Steve Carell, Gilda Radner and Bill Murray — among many others — The Second City now presents the next generation of the comedy world’s best and brightest in an evening of hilarious sketch comedy.

Following The Second City, the Playhouse will present Steppin’ Out with Ben Vereen March 29 - 31. This one-man show highlights Mr. Vereen’s unique artistry, combining a tribute to Broadway, Frank Sinatra and a very special homage to Sammy Davis Jr. The New York Times dubbed him, “an old-school song and dance man who never lets up. He wins you over with his sheer energy... and showbiz know-how.” These are just a few of the amazing artists taking up residence at the Playhouse this spring. Because of the relationships built by Christopher Ashley, as well as the theater’s mission to provide a safe harbor for playwrights, directors, designers and actors to develop their work, the theater’s upcoming season will feature some of the most anticipated productions in the region. Works will include John Guare’s delightful and insightful adaptation of His Girl Friday, which Ashley will direct; Rex Pickett’s Sideways, based on his own novel that was adapted into the popular 2011 indie movie; Nina Raine’s Olivier Award-winning play, Tribes, about the ways we communicate; and a re-imaging of the hit Broadway musical Side Show; written by the creative team behind Dreamgirls and helmed by The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Parts 1 and 2 director Bill Condon.

These world-class artists choose the Playhouse for a reason: they know that their work will receive the theater’s one-of-a-kind support on all levels. It’s the reason the Playhouse has been home to the birth of 24 world-premiere productions that later transferred to Broadway, winning some 35 Tony Awards. This season alone the Playhouse will open its acclaimed commissioned musical Hands on a Hardbody on Broadway; celebrate the 8th year of Jersey Boys on the Great White Way, and witness the launch of the national tours of Chaplin: The Musical and Peter and the Starcatcher. Fertile ground, indeed.

UP NEXT LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS

the Second City
LAUGHING MATTERS
March 20 – 23, 2013
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Friday at 5:30 pm
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— The New York Times

STEEPPIN’ OUT WITH BEN VEREEN
March 29 – 31, 2013
TICKETS START AT $40
Former Old Globe Co-Artistic Director Darko Tresnjak returns to direct A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder, a new musical premiering at The Old Globe. When Monty Navarro, the black sheep of the D’Ysquith family, finds out he is ninth in line to inherit a dukedom, he decides to eliminate the other eight heirs standing in his way— all played by Tony Award winner Jefferson Mays (I Am My Own Wife).  

Set in England’s elegant Edwardian era, this witty music hall comedy was proclaimed “gorgeous, funny and melodic” by the Hartford Courant. Named one of the top 10 “Hottest Tickets of the Year” by The New York Times, A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder explores how low we’ll go to make it to the top. “I know that this beguiling and very funny new musical will delight Globe audiences,” said Old Globe Artistic Director Barry Edelstein. “The remarkable team of Robert L. Freedman and Steven Lutvak has crafted a show that is sharp, surprising and entertaining, and at its helm is the great Darko Tresnjak, an old friend I’m delighted to welcome back to the Globe. Tresnjak’s partners in crime are the stellar Ken Barnett and Jefferson Mays, two of the most exciting stage actors in America, whose deft and hilarious performances are real tours de force.”  

Ken Barnett stars as the charming and vengeful Monty Navarro. He has appeared on Broadway in Wonderful Town directed by Kathleen Marshall and The Green Bird directed by Julie Taymor, and his Off Broadway credits include the world premiere of February House, Manon/Sandra, Debbie Does Dallas, The Whore of Sheridan Square and La Ronde, for which he received the Best Actor Award at the New York International Fringe Festival. Jefferson Mays plays all eight ill-fated members of the D’Ysquith clan. Mays’ Broadway debut in the one-man show I Am My Own Wife earned him the 2004 Tony Award for Best Lead Actor in a Play as well as Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Obie, Helen Hayes and Drama League Awards. His other Broadway credits include Journey’s End, Pygmalion and last season’s Gore Vidal’s The Best Man, and his Off Broadway credits include the American premiere of Blood and Gifts, Measure for Measure, Quills and Orestes. The cast of A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder also features Chilina Kennedy (Phoebe D’Ysquith), Lisa O’Hare (Sibella Hallward) and Heather Ayers, Rachel Izen, Kevin Ligon, Kendal Sparks, Price Waldman and Catherine Walker (Ensemble).  

Lisa O’Hare, Heather Ayers and Chilina Kennedy. Photo by Joan Marcus.
San Diego Symphony: From New York City to Shanghai, Beijing and Beyond

The San Diego Symphony is about to make history. The dates are set. The plans are in motion. On October 29, 2013, the San Diego Symphony will make its debut at Carnegie Hall, one of the most prestigious concert halls in the world. Under the leadership of music director Jahja Ling, the San Diego Symphony and world renowned pianist, Lang Lang, will join the ranks of all the great musicians who have graced this landmark New York City stage. It’ll be a date for the history books. A night to remember.

Next Stop: People’s Republic of China

Immediately following Carnegie Hall, the San Diego Symphony will depart for China. Yes, the San Diego Symphony is now ready to take a giant leap forward onto the international stage as it embarks on the China Friendship Tour. First stop: Shanghai, China’s largest city and a global mecca for commerce, culture, fashion, finance, media, technology and transportation. Next, it’s onto Yantai, San Diego’s sister city. And then to Beijing, the nation’s capital and political, cultural and educational center where the San Diego Symphony will perform at the National Centre for the Performing Arts.

In December 2010, the San Diego Symphony – California’s oldest orchestra – celebrated its centennial. Upon reaching that milestone, we began to plan our next move. To set further goals. To reach new heights. To make the city of San Diego proud of its Symphony both at home and abroad.

So if you’ve ever wondered, “How do I get to Carnegie Hall?” The answer is as simple as: Contact the San Diego Symphony. Join us as we make history.

Internationally-Renowned San Diego Opera Offers World-Class Productions and Local Community Commitment

San Diego Opera is one of the top ten opera companies in the United States and a respected member of the international opera community. San Diego Opera produces performances of the highest artistic quality featuring the world’s finest opera singers, directors and conductors. The 2013 season still offers the grand opera “Samson and Delilah,” (opening February 16) the world’s first Mariachi opera “Cruzar la Cara de la Luna” (To Cross the Face of the Moon), the extraordinary Murder in the Cathedral and the colorful designs of Zandra Rhodes take on Verdi’s masterpiece “Aida.”

In 2013, San Diego Opera is dedicating more than $1.5 million to serve the greater community through our award-winning education and outreach programs. An estimated 55,000 students will receive a free arts education including 69 percent from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds with no access to arts education in their schools.

San Diego Opera also is a gathering place for leading life science and technology executives. On February 22, we will host the 14th annual Life Sciences Live – at the Opera and on April 26 we will host the 14th annual High-Tech Night @ the Opera. At these two prestigious events, hundreds of leading executives, investors, research scientists and innovators will gather together for an evening of exceptional networking and world-class opera – all in support of our company.
Smithsonian of the West

Balboa Park boasts the largest collection of museums in one geographic location outside the Smithsonian complex in Washington D.C. Currently, the park hosts about 10 million visitors a year, 60 percent of whom visit the San Diego Zoo and 40 percent the balance of the park. From the Museum of Art with its vast permanent collection to the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, home of the world’s first IMAX Dome theater, the park’s institutions are a major stream of revenue from day visitors, members and docents, to thousands of school children in customized educational outreach programs. With the park’s Centennial rapidly approaching in 2015, committees are scrambling to put a comprehensive plan in place to showcase the entire city and generate a record amount of spending from locals and visitors alike.

Seafaring Tradition Translates to Global Exposure

San Diego’s cultural traditions take root in its military and seafaring orientation which translates into global exposure for the city as well as revenue. Berthed in San Diego Bay are a collection of ships that draw international interest. The USS Midway Museum, with more than one million visitors, has had a unique impact, becoming a platform on which San Diego has been showcased repeatedly to national and international audiences. From American Idol, PBS, History Channel, Travel Channel, National Geographic, NCAA basketball, to last week’s Tim McGraw album debut streaming on Yahoo, plus multiple European and Japanese television shows—all have filmed and broadcast from Midway. It’s estimated that more than 350 million broadcast households have been exposed to San Diego by the aircraft carrier museum. Anchoring the Midway is the Maritime Museum complex that maintains a fleet of one of the world’s finest collections of historic ships, including the world’s oldest active ship the Star of India. In the selected years the Star of India sails, worldwide attention focuses on San Diego.

*National economic impact sturdy, Arts & Economic Prosperity IV. The most comprehensive economic impact study of the nonprofit arts and culture industry ever conducted in the United States, Arts & Economic Prosperity IV was conducted by Americans for Arts, the nation’s leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education.

Zandra Rhodes brings her “Aida” to San Diego Opera for the first time on April 20, 2013. Starring Latonia Moore as Aida, Jill Grove as Amneris and Walter Fraccaro as Radames. Photo by Cory Weaver, San Francisco Opera.

Supplement Facts

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