

The Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts Renovations

By Pat Johnson

The Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts located on the Ocean County College campus is undergoing an extensive renovation to upgrade the entrance, lobbies, concession area, recital room and a new art gallery. In 2014 the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation endowed the Center for the Arts with a 5.75 million endowment that has allowed the college to offer hundreds of educational programs and entertainments to the students and community at large.

Even though the construction will be ongoing for another year, the Center is open and has an extensive program of concerts, lectures, musicals and more on offer through 2025.

Heidi Sheridan, Executive and Artistic Director for the Grunin outlined the changes. “We will be getting much needed upgrades. The building hasn’t been updated since the 1970s, though we had some updates to the theater in 2010.”

The renovations will feature a fresh, modern look, renovated restrooms, upgrades to audio and lighting,



Photo courtesy of Ocean County College.

a complete overhaul of the Bösendorfer Recital Room and a new art gallery.

For now, you will enter the lobby through the same doors as in the past and there will be a mobile box office set up for walk-up sales and will-call pickup of tickets.

When construction is finished, Sheridan said one of the most appreciated changes for patrons will be the ability to access the theater center without climbing a rather arduous and steep ramp from the parking lot. The entrance will be closer to parking and there will be stairs and an elevator to help make access easier.

One feature that excites Sheridan is the addition of a modern art gallery, one that can be secured when the Center is not occupied. “In the past we had to hang artworks on the walls and there was no way to secure them. It’s going to be a fantastic space where we can showcase student work and host art shows and where patrons to the theater can take a spin around the gallery before shows. The Foundation has been working on organizing the foundation’s art collection and it would be lovely at some point to do a show.”

Another upgrade that will enhance the arts experience is the reconfigured Bösendorfer Recital Room, which



Photo courtesy of Ocean County College.

used to be a classroom with typical classroom seating. “A few years ago we raised money to acquire a Bösendorfer piano. It’s a beautiful and rare instrument that has more keys on the left side to allow for duets. Our popular afternoon recitals will continue in a space with 45 theater seats.”

Friday afternoon recitals at 2 p.m. are affordable events highlighting talented performers of classical music. On October 10, prize-winning pianist Liana Paniyera plays Schumann and Brahms and on November 21, International concert duo violinist Robert Radliff and pianist Sharon Niessen will play Beethoven and Brahms.

Saturday, September 20 brings Lake Wobegon’s chronicler Garrison Keillor to the stage to entertain with his folksy tales from America’s heartland. ‘Garrison Keillor Tonight’ begins at 7 p.m. The Bronx Wanderers give two shows of their musical tour de force, singing and telling stories of the record business, 3 and 7 p.m. on September 28 at 3 p.m.

The main stage is also the venue for lectures through The Blauvelt Speaker Series. On October 8 at 6 p.m., the college welcomes Admiral James Stavridis, a former U.S. Supreme Allied Commander at NATO and best selling author.

Some of the highlights on the menu this fall and winter include The Bronx Wanderers, Swingadelic: The Three Louies, Scottish Folk singer Julie Fowles, Jazz greats April May Webb Trio and Grammy winning trumpeter Chris Bottie plus the World Famous Glen Miller Orchestra.

Theatrical performances start with ‘Sister’s Back to School Catechism –The Holy Ghost and other Terrifying Tales,’ the play ‘Dracula,’ Illusionist Leon Etienne in ‘Magic Rocks.’ The college presents traditional crowd pleasers for the Holidays, ‘A Christmas Carol,’ OCC Concert Band’s ‘The Most Wonderful Time of the Year,’ ‘Broadway for the Holidays’ and a condensed version of ‘The Nutcracker’, designed for younger audiences.

This is just a few choices from the entire upcoming programs to be held right here at the Grunin at Ocean County College. Don’t let some construction deter you from a great number of afternoons and nights out.

To see the entire lineup including dates and times and costs visit www.grunincenter.org and to contact the box office on Thursdays and Fridays between noon and 5 p.m., call 732-255-0500



Photo courtesy of Ocean County College

