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Berkshire Theatre Group Announces Additions to their 2017 Spring Season

Pittsfield, MA– Berkshire Theatre Group (BTG) announces additions to their 2017 Spring season, including: the Comedy Garage, and the return of the On the Stage Series, as well as the fourth annual *Encore! An Evening to Celebrate High School Musicals* at The Colonial Theatre. New this year, as part of the *Encore!* Series, BTG will present a High School Student Cabaret at The Unicorn Theatre.

Hailed as "The Best Place to see Comedy" by *The Berkshire Record*, join us at The Comedy Garage! On Thursday nights, for only \$5, The Comedy Garage presents acclaimed comedians from near and far. After the show, head down the street to Methuselah Bar & Lounge and show your Comedy Garage ticket for a \$5 beverage. Mark your calendars for 2/16, 3/16, 4/27 and 5/25!

The On The Stage Series gives audiences the opportunity to see their favorite performers, up close and personal, with artists and audience together on the historic Colonial stage. This year, folk singer/songwriter and musician, Jeffrey Foucault; and folk band Dana Louise and the Glorious Birds make their On The Stage debut.

The fourth annual *Encore! An Evening to Celebrate High School Musicals* features ten-minute encore performances from this year's Berkshire County high school musicals. And, new this year, as part of the *Encore!* Series, BTG will present a High School Student Cabaret at The Unicorn Theatre. Ticket proceeds benefit BTG PLAYS!, Berkshire Theatre Group's year-round education program. At the heart of BTG PLAYS! is a passionate commitment to bring live theatre, and all its inherent excitement and creativity, to children throughout our region.

In addition, for many of these students, this is the first theatrical experience on a professional stage. BTG hopes this experience will stimulate a lifelong love of theatre and help produce the next generation of playgoers, actors or other theatre professionals.

Tickets are now on sale. For tickets, please contact the Colonial Ticket Office at 111 South Street, Pittsfield by calling [413-997-4444](tel:413-997-4444), or online at www.berkshiretheatregroup.org. Ticket Offices are open Monday-Friday 10am-5pm, Saturdays 10am-2pm or on any performance day from 10am until curtain.

Comedy Garage: Myq Kaplan

at The Garage

Thursday, February 16 at 7:30pm

Tickets: \$5

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Myq Kaplan is a 2010 *Last Comic Standing* Finalist, and has appeared on *The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien*, *The Late Show with David Letterman* and *Comedy Central Presents*. You can listen to Myq's podcast, *Hang Out With Me*, on the Keith and The Girl network. His debut CD, *Vegan Mind Meld*, was one of iTunes' top ten best-selling comedy albums in 2010, followed by *Meat Robot* in 2013 and his one-hour Netflix special, *Small Dork and Handsome* in 2014.

On The Stage Series: Jeffrey Foucault

At The Colonial Theatre

Thursday, February 23 at 7:30pm

Tickets: \$25

The On The Stage Series gives audiences the opportunity to see their favorite performers, up close and personal, with artists and audience together on the historic Colonial stage.

Hailed as "contemporary and timeless" by *The New York Times*, Jeffrey Foucault is an American songwriter and record producer. He has been everything from solo country-blues troubadour, to frontman for a six-piece rock 'n roll band, along the way compiling a discography remarkable for its visceral power and complex poetics. Jeffrey's sound is influenced by American country, blues, rock 'n' roll, and folk.

Comedy Garage: Kyle Ayers

at The Garage

Thursday, March 16 at 7:30pm

Tickets: \$5

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Kyle Ayers is a comedian, writer, actor, living in New York City. He was a *Just For Laughs* "New Face Comedian" in 2015. He has written for the Roasts on Comedy Central and Friar's Club Roasts. Kyle has written for *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, *BBC*, *Wired*, *Post Grad Problems*, *Buzzfeed* and more. He also writes for the satirical sports website, *Korked Bats*.

He was the tweeter behind the internet sensation #roofbreakup, where he stumbled upon a couple breaking up on his roof in Brooklyn, and the entire world joined in. #roofbreakup was viewed over 10 million times worldwide, appeared on *NPR*, *BBC*, *Yahoo*, *Buzzfeed*, and was even reenacted by Jerry Springer.

On the Stage Series: Dana Louise and the Glorious Birds

at The Colonial Theatre

Thursday, March 23 at 7:30pm

Tickets: \$30

The On The Stage Series gives audiences the opportunity to see their favorite performers, up close and personal, with artists and audience together on the historic Colonial stage.

During a solo journey to the Azores Islands in 2011, Dana Louise, a visual artist, taught herself to play guitar. The daughter of Ezra Idlet of the Grammy-nominated Trout Fishing in America, Dana forged the beginnings of her sound, practicing amidst the archipelago's lava rocks and dragon trees. Back in the States, she began singing and songwriting professionally, touring regionally and internationally, and is currently touring her debut album with Trout Records.

Joined by the Glorious Birds—Adams Collins (vibraphone and 5-string banjo), and Ezra Idlet and Keith Grimwood (Trout Fishing in America/guitar, percussion and bass)—Dana brings her vibrant, melodic vocals and finger picking to a body of complex songs. Drawing from jazz and bluegrass, carrying a contemporary beat, the sound is roots-rooted flung-into-the-future folk. Dana Louise and the

Glorious Birds work to leave their audiences glowing with the magic music can bring: genuine human connection.

Comedy Garage: Emma Willmann

at The Garage

Thursday, April 27 at 7:30pm

Tickets: \$5

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Emma Willmann is one of the New York comedy scene's fast risers. In the past two years, she was featured in *Just for Laughs New Faces*, was named one of the "10 Funniest Women in New York" according to *Time Out New York*, featured in *Elle Magazine*, performed at the NY Comedy Cellar, became a regular on SiriusXM's *Raw Dog*, appeared on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, and will soon be appearing on a new show on FuseTV.

High School Student Cabaret

directed by Travis G. Daly

at The Unicorn Theatre

Wednesday, May 10 at 7pm

Tickets: \$10

BTG's first annual High School Student Cabaret features students from all over the county performing songs, poetry, dance and more! This cabaret-style setting celebrates student collaboration and features tried and true favorites and original works.

Ticket proceeds benefit BTG PLAYS!, Berkshire Theatre Group's year-round education program. At the heart of BTG PLAYS! is a passionate commitment to bring live theatre, and all its inherent excitement and creativity, to children throughout our region. In addition, for many of these students, this is the first theatrical experience on a professional stage. BTG hopes this experience will stimulate a lifelong love of theatre and help produce the next generation of playgoers, actors or other theatre professionals.

Encore! An Evening to Celebrate High School Musicals

directed by Travis G. Daly

at The Colonial Theatre

Friday, May 12 at 7pm

Tickets: Adults: \$15, Children 16 and under: \$12

The fourth annual *Encore! An Evening to Celebrate High School Musicals* features ten-minute encore performances from this year's Berkshire County high school musicals.

Ticket proceeds benefit BTG PLAYS!, Berkshire Theatre Group's year-round education program. At the heart of BTG PLAYS! is a passionate commitment to bring live theatre, and all its inherent excitement and creativity, to children throughout our region. In addition, for many of these students, this is the first theatrical experience on a professional stage. BTG hopes this experience will stimulate a lifelong love of theatre and help produce the next generation of playgoers, actors or other theatre professionals.

Comedy Garage: Joe Zimmerman

at The Garage

Thursday, May 25 at 7:30pm

Tickets: \$5

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New York City-based comedian, Joe Zimmerman, has had an eventful couple of years. In addition to making his Comedy Central debut on John Oliver's *New York Stand Up Show*, he was also one of the prestigious comedians to be chosen to film a Comedy Central *Half Hour Stand-Up Special* in 2014. Joe made his late night debut on the *Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson*, performed on Nickelodeon's *NickMom Night Out*, appeared on the nationally syndicated *Bob and Tom Show*, and was chosen as one of the acclaimed New Faces at *Just For Laughs Montreal*, where he was positively reviewed by both *The Spit Take* and *Time Out NY*. Joe's debut album *Smiling at Wolves* reached #2 on the iTunes Comedy charts when released by New Wave Entertainment in January 2014.

Praised for an accessible style pairing absurdism with a fun loving demeanor, Joe has been personally selected by Ricky Gervais as a Conan contest finalist, other festivals, and can be heard regularly on SiriusXM and Pandora.

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About Berkshire Theatre Group

The Colonial Theatre, founded in 1903, and Berkshire Theatre Festival, founded in 1928, are two of the oldest cultural organizations in the Berkshires. In 2010, under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Kate Maguire, the two organizations merged to form Berkshire Theatre Group (BTG). Berkshire Theatre Group's mission is to support wide ranging artistic exploration and acclaimed performances in theatre, dance, music and entertainment. Every year, BTG produces and presents performances to over 68,000 attendees and, through our Educational Program, serves over 13,000 Berkshire County schoolchildren annually. BTG's celebrated stages reflect the history of the American theatre; they represent a priceless cultural resource for the community. The Fitzpatrick Main Stage, cataloged by the National Register of Historic Places, has been home to the Berkshire Theatre Festival since 1928. Nestled at the corner of Main Street and Yale Hill Road in Stockbridge, this 318-seat theatre epitomizes summer theatre for many of its faithful patrons. The intimate 122-seat Unicorn Theatre in Stockbridge, is BTG's home for new and experimental works, showcasing world premieres and reimagined classics. Built in 1903 and declared a National Historic Treasure in 1998, the 780-seat Colonial Theatre is a cornerstone of Pittsfield's revitalization. Re-opening to the public in 2006 after a \$21 million restoration, the Colonial serves as a cultural resource for the community. Located in the lobby of the Colonial, the 150-seat Garage is a convertible space that serves as a dance floor, stage for comedians, bands, theatre and more.