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Spring Arts Preview 2017

Twenty-seven can't-miss books, movies, exhibits, shows, and more. —
Edited by Matthew Reed Baker

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Get our weekly picks of what to do this weekend and the latest on Boston's arts and entertainment scene.

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APRIL

TRENDING

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Henri Matisse's *Interior with Egyptian Curtain* / Courtesy Image

FINE ARTS

“Matisse in the Studio”

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Henri Matisse was one of the true pillars of modern art, and this month the MFA stages a landmark survey of his work, but with the most intimate approach. In addition to more than 80 Matisse works, the show also features actual objects from his studio in France.

In collaboration with the Musée Matisse in Nice, this exhibit's trio of scholars worked with some 40 institutions and private collectors. Almost all of the studio objects have never been seen outside France, says co-curator Helen Burnham, of the MFA. One of their biggest finds: an Egyptian tent curtain that directly influenced one of Matisse's last great paintings, from 1948 (above). Seeing them side by side shows how Matisse's canvases were deceptively complex, absorbing decorative forms from other cultures.

“You're going to see the works in a different light,” Burnham says, “because you'll be able to understand some of the choices he was making in the moment.” —*Matthew Reed Baker*

April 9–July 9, Museum of Fine Arts, 617-267-9300, mfa.org.

FILM

Gifted

This drama stars Sudbury’s Chris Evans as a man fighting for custody of his niece, whose teacher—played by Milton’s Jenny Slate—thinks the young girl is a budding prodigy.

Out April 7, foxsearchlight.com/gifted.

Boston

With a world premiere at the Wang, this documentary tells the story of our venerable marathon. The filmmakers were granted exclusive access to the Boston Athletic Association’s archives, and the film features narration by Matt Damon.

April 15, Wang Theatre, 800-982-2787, bochcenter.org.



Tiger Lily. / Sharon Friedman

FINE ARTS

“Expanding Abstraction”

The history of abstract art often focuses on men, but this show features work by nearly 40 women—all of whom come from New England.

April 7–September 17, DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, 781-259-8355, decordova.org.

28th MassArt Auction

Each year MassArt raises money for student scholarships by auctioning off

work from superstar artists. This year features offerings by Kara Walker, Shepard Fairey, Nick Cave, and more.

April 8, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, massart.edu/auction.



Photograph by Mike Spencer

MUSIC

The Lord of the Rings Symphony

Film composer and Berklee alum Howard Shore condensed his Oscar-winning scores to the cinematic Tolkien trilogy into one six-movement symphony. This massive work will be performed by the Berklee Contemporary Symphony Orchestra.

April 19, Symphony Hall, 888-266-1200, bso.org.

Aimee Mann

The singer is promoting a new album, *Mental Illness*, and though she's long lived in L.A., we like to remember her 'Til Tuesday days playing old Boston clubs like Spit.

April 23, The Wilbur Theatre, 617-248-9700, thewilbur.com.

THEATER/DANCE

The Gift Horse

Former BU professor Lydia Diamond uses a sharp-edged mix of comedy and drama to tell the story of Ruth, a vivacious teacher whose wit hides her troubled past. It's the Boston premiere of this early work.

April 22–May 14, New Repertory Theatre, 617-923-7060, newrep.org.

The Sleeping Beauty

Boston Ballet continues its eclectic season with this classic, featuring Marius Petipa's choreography and Tchaikovsky's triumphant score.

April 28–May 27, Boston Opera House, 617-695-6955, bostonballet.org.

MAY

“I hope to read another novel as strong and wise and beautiful and heartbreaking as *Saints for All Occasions* this year, but I’m not sure I will.”

—RICHARD RUSSO

J. COURTNEY SULLIVAN

A novel by the best-selling
author of *Maine*

Saints for All Occasions



Saints for All Occasions by J. Courtney Sullivan. / Courtesy Photo

BOOKS

Saints for All Occasions

Milton native J. Courtney Sullivan regularly draws on her home state for her novels, including *Maine* and *Commencement*, and her latest is the most ambitious yet: a 50-year saga of an Irish immigrant family in Boston. “I’ve always felt so rooted to the Boston area,” says Sullivan, a longtime New Yorker who only recently gave up her Massachusetts driver’s license.

As Sullivan writes about two young immigrant sisters and how their decisions in the 1950s resonate through the years, she touches on conflicted Catholicism and familiar Boston characters (the smooth-talking political operative, the prototypical Southie bartender).

The family is fictional, but one moment of local flavor in the book is drawn

from Sullivan’s younger days, when she ordered a Blue Moon beer from a Dorchester bartender. “Her exact words to me were, ‘I’m not putting a fucking orange in it,’” she recalls. “For the record, I did not ask for the orange.” —*Lisa Weidenfeld*

Out May 9, Knopf, \$27, jcourtneysullivan.com.

FILM

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul

Plainville’s Jeff Kinney created a kids’ lit empire with his *Wimpy Kid* book series. In this fourth film adaptation, titular hero Greg goes on an ill-fated family road trip to visit his great-grandmother on her 90th birthday.

Out May 19, foxmovies.com.

Baywatch

Newton North alum Priyanka Chopra takes a break from her *Quantico* duties for this movie reboot of the 1990s lifeguard TV show. She co-stars as a villainous club owner who goes up against hunky heroes played by the Rock and Zac Efron.

Out May 26, thebaywatchmovie.com.



Lisa Tan

FINE ARTS

“An Inventory of Shimmers”

Subtitled “Objects of Intimacy in Contemporary Art,” this show features a range of media showing how our bodies interact with one another and the world around us.

May 19–July 16, MIT List Visual Arts Center, 617-253-4680, listart.mit.edu.

“Ocean Liners”

These ships were the most glamorous way to travel from the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries. Organized with London's Victoria and Albert Museum, this collection features 200 works that sum up the touring culture of this bygone era.

May 20–October 9, Peabody Essex Museum, 978-745-9500, pem.org.

MUSIC

Pixies

Over the decades, they've become Gen X's answer to Aerosmith, but they still play vicious rock on record and in concert—as you can see during their three-night residency.

May 19–21, House of Blues, 888-693-2583, houseofblues.com/boston;
Paradise Rock Club, 617-562-8800, thedise.com.



Boston Calling

The festival inaugurates its new Allston home with a lineup of international headliners such as Tool, Chance the Rapper, and Mumford & Sons; locals Converge and Buffalo Tom; and many more.

May 26–28, Harvard Athletic Complex, bostoncalling.com.

THEATER/DANCE

Arrabal

Tango dancers help tell the story of a woman trying to learn what happened to her father, one of the *desaparecidos* who vanished during the tenure of Argentina's junta government.

May 12–June 18, Loeb Drama Center, 617-547-8300,
americanrepertorytheater.org.

Ripcord

Southie native and Pulitzer winner David Lindsay-Abaire comes to the Huntington with a comedy of a battle of wits between roommates in an

assisted-living facility.

May 26–June 25, Calderwood Pavilion, Boston Center for the Arts, 617-266-0800, huntingtontheatre.org.

JUNE



Leslie Odom Jr. / Photograph by Amy Sussman

MUSIC

Leslie Odom Jr.

Before he earned a Tony for originating *Hamilton*'s Aaron Burr, Leslie Odom Jr. was living in L.A. and thinking of giving up acting. But a pep talk from his acting coach and future father-in-law, Stuart Robinson, put him back on track. "He meant I needed to get into the driver's seat of my own career," Odom says. He moved to New York for a role in NBC's *Smash*, started an album, and got involved in a work in progress called *Hamilton*. By 2015 he was a star.

Now Odom will achieve another goal: performing with a symphony behind him. He's eagerly preparing his show with the Boston Pops, which should feature jazz standards and classics from his self-titled debut, plus new songs and, of course, some *Hamilton* hits. "I'm not interested in disappointing that audience at all," he says with a laugh. "I'm just grateful that my moment is here." —*Jacqueline Cain*

June 6, Symphony Hall, 888-266-1200, bostonpops.org.

FILM

Roxbury International Film Festival

Since 1999, RIFF has screened more than 600 films by or about people of color, and it's going strong again this year, with events around Boston.

June 22–29, roxburyinternationalfilmfestival.com.

The House

In Burlington native Amy Poehler's latest, she and Will Ferrell are parents who open a basement casino to cover their daughter's college tuition. As the business expands to strip shows and soccer-mom MMA fights, what could go wrong?

Out June 30, warnerbros.com/house.



Fafnir Adamites

FINE ARTS

Fafnir Adamites/John Christian Anderson

This duo create work that defies your initial response. A shopping cart, by Roslindale's Anderson, is made of scavenged twigs. Adamites, from Turners Falls, makes monolithic sculptures of paper and felt.

June 14–July 23, Boston Sculptors Gallery, 617-482-7781,
bostonsculptors.com.

Renegade Craft Fair

This traveling fair has established outposts in America's coolest cities, and now it's our turn. The event features more than 100 artisans, plus workshops, food, and drink.

June 24–25, The Cyclorama, Boston Center for the Arts,
renegadecraft.com.

MUSIC

“Four Voices”

Tanglewood opens its season with folk-rock legends the Indigo Girls, Mary Chapin Carpenter, and Joan Baez, who launched her career at Club 47 in 1950s Harvard Square.

June 17, Koussevitzky Music Shed, 888-266-1200, tanglewood.org.

Solid Sound Festival

Wilco's annual festival at Mass MoCA features Peter Wolf and Alloy Orchestra, jazz and hip-hop keyboardist Robert Glasper, and punk icons Television.

June 23–25, Mass MoCA, solidsoundfestival.com.



Celso Enrique

THEATER/DANCE

“Spring Revue”

Urbanity Dance's show boasts an array of work, from solo performances to Doug Varone's "Of the Earth Far Below," with eight dancers accompanied by musicians from the J.P. orchestra A Far Cry.

June 2–3, Tsai Performance Center, Boston University, 617-572-3727, urbanitydance.org.

The Midvale High School Fiftieth Reunion

In this comedy by MIT theater professor emeritus Alan Brody, two members of the class of 1954 return to their high school and form a romantic connection.

June 1–July 2, NYPD Blue's Gordon Clapp stars. Central Square Theater, 617-576-9278, centralsquaretheater.org.

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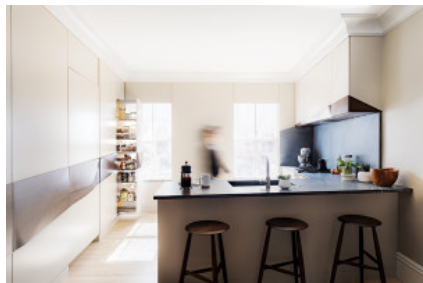
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