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a cultural revolution
FIRST-E VER RINGLING INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL
OPENS OCT. 7

BY KATHY GREY kgrey@floridaweekly.com
FLORIDA HAS A PLETHORA OF FESTIVALS. THERE ARE WINE feasts, art feasts,
Shakespeare feasts, feasts for feasts' sake. Feh! (Loosely, that's an irritated "ho-hum" in
Yiddish.)



COURTESY PHOTOS J.D. SCOTT, KARL GIANT AND JULIETA CERVANTES

When the first-ever Ringling International Arts Festival was announced, people started talking. They knew it would be something spectacular. The festival brings together a mix of edgy performances and curious couplings of fine art sure to wake up the brain cells. It's a collaboration between the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art and the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York City. Baryshnikov's center refers to itself as a creative laboratory for a vibrant community of artists from around the world. Ringling touts a gilded age mansion, glorious gardens and a Rubens or two.

Call it zest meets west. So, who needs another festival? We do. At least, we need this one.

From Oct. 7-11, the Ringling grounds will be transformed into a cultural canvas that combines the classic and the controversial. There will be visual arts, dance, theater and music from around the world.

The initial plans are to conduct the festival once every two years, giving people a little down time to develop an appetite for the next one. There will be no "feh" at this festival.

Opening Night — Wednesday, Oct. 7
Museum of Art Courtyard, 5:30 p.m.

This is an opening night cocktail event in the courtyard of the museum to toast the opening of the festival. The "Louise Fishman Among the Old Masters" and "Venice in the Age of Canaletto" exhibits will be available for viewing in the gallery, and the night culminates in a concert of the Florida State University Symphony Orchestra led by Robert Spano.



Sonja Kostich, Robert Spano and Meow Meow are coming to Ringling International Arts Festival this year.


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Theater — Oct. 8 - 11 "Eight," by Ella Hickson at the Asolo Theater

This debut play swept the major awards at the 2008 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. A portrait of modern Britain through a collection of incisive monologues.



COURTESY PHOTOS/THE JOHN AND MABLE RINGLING MUSEUM OF ART, BELL SOTO, KARL GIANT, PASCAL VICTOR / ARTCOMART Top clockwise: The Historic Asolo Theater was built in 1798 in the Castle of Caterina Cornaro and relocated to the Ringling Museum; Pedja Muzijevic; Meow Meow; Bruce Myers and Natasha Parry in rehearsal for "Love is my sin;" and Maria Pages.

Tickets are \$10-\$30.

Elevator Repair Service — a workshop premiere

ERS is known for its intoxicatingly original work, tapping sources from film to novels to TV and combining slapstick, hi and low-tech design and unique choreography. This new work is commissioned by the Ringling International Arts Festival.

Tickets are \$10-\$25. (Saturday night performance may be sold out.)

"Love is my Sin," by Peter Brook — a U.S. premiere

Shakespeare's sonnets are brought to life as intimate diaries covering passion, jealousy, fear of aging and even death. Performed by longtime collaborators Bruce Myers and Natasha Parry.

Tickets are \$10-\$30.

Music — Oct. 8 - 11 Chamber Music

Acclaimed composer Mason Bates created new work for the festival, which will be performed by Anne-Marie McDermott (piano), Jennifer Frautscho (violin), Edward Arron (cello) and Eric Ruske (French horn). Mr. Bates' music has been performed at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall, with the San Francisco, Atlanta and Phoenix symphonies.



Tickets are \$10-\$30.

"Beyond Glamour: The Absinthe Tour" — Meow Meow

Internationally celebrated drag queen and post-modern showgirl Meow Meow has performed at venues from the Sydney Opera House to Lincoln Center. Meow Meow navigates the uncharted territory between Weimar-era wit, 1930's Shanghai show tunes, 60's French pop, and post-punk hilarity, creating a parody of glitz. Meow Meow is accompanied by pianist Lance Horne and cellist Yair Evnine.

Tickets are \$10-\$30.

Dance: "Arena" — Deganit Shemy & Company — Oct. 8-10



Five women enact an unsettling and intense physical game within the boundaries of a tight square of light and set to the insistent ticking of a metronome.

The New York Times said Ms. Shemy is "a choreographer just beginning to unfurl her formidable talents."

"Flemenco y Poesia," — Compania Maria Pages — Oct. 8-11

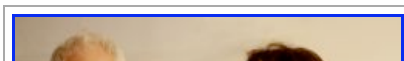
Ms. Pages is one of Spain's leading flamenco virtuosos and the recipient of the National Dance Award, her country's highest honor. Here, she translates poetry into dance, utilizing the words of Jose Saramago and Federico Garcia de Lorca and rhythms of the human body.

Tickets are \$10-\$30.

Aszure Barton & Artists — World Premiere — and OtherShore "The Snow Falls in the Winter" — Oct. 8-10

"The Snow Falls in the Winter" was named one of Dance Magazine's 10 best choreographies in 2008. The piece borrows from Eugene Ionesco's The Lesson, exploring boundaries of right and wrong.

Aszure Barton is one of Canada's most talented young choreographers and is the resident choreographer for Les



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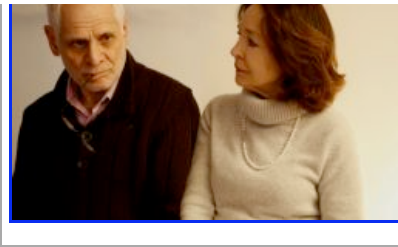
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Ballets Jazz de Montreal. She has

choreographed for Mikhail Baryshnikov, Sydney Dance Company, The Martha Graham Dance company and Broadway shows.

Tickets are \$10-\$30.

Save 15-25 percent with a festival pass. For more information, visit www.ringlingartsfestival.org.



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