

## Winter Arts Preview 2019-2020

*by Advocate Staff | Nov 27, 2019*



Philadanco. Photos courtesy of UMass Fine Arts Center

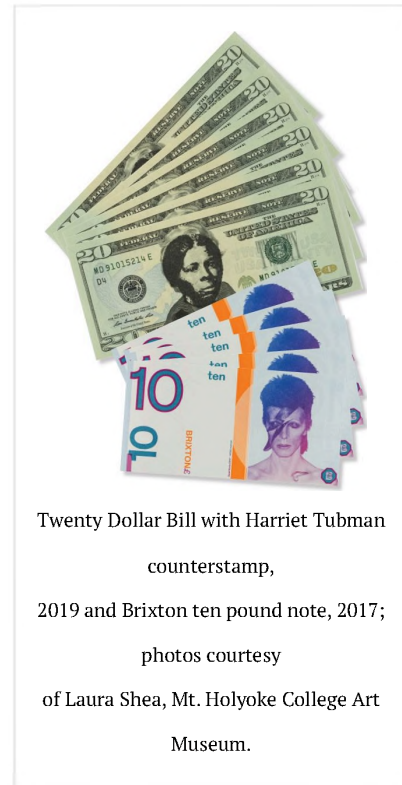
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It's winter again. Or almost anyway. As the days grow shorter, it's no coincidence that religious holidays emphasize light-up decorations and light in and of itself. At the same time, arts organizations also put an effort into bringing some light into our lives with events that take place during the chill of the year. Here's a collection of a few of them to check out over the coming months, compiled by your humble *Valley Advocate* staff. Enjoy! — *Dave*

## **“Money Matters” exhibit at the Mount Holyoke Museum of Art, ongoing through June**

Yes, David Bowie is on currency somewhere — his hometown of Brixton in the U.K., where an image of him in Ziggy Stardust makeup is on the 10-pound note of local currency. The fact that local currency even exists (as a sharp criticism of the larger ills of multinational corporation-driven capitalism) is among the ideas and issues explored in an ongoing exhibit at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum called “Money Matters: Meaning, Power, and Change in the History of Currency.” The exhibit also has an American currency note that rights the wrong Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin perpetrated in delaying production of the Harriet Tubman \$20 bill to 2028. It features a stamp of Harriet Tubman's image over Andrew Jackson's.

Money Matters guides visitors through the history of coins including those from Greek city states and also the Spanish eight-reales, the first truly global currency (and famous in pirate lore as “pieces of eight”). The exhibit also features the equivalent of Mesopotamian credit cards (which were made of clay rather than plastic). Curated by Desmond Fitz-Gibbon and Aaron Miller, the exhibition will be on display through June 21, 2020, at 50 College Avenue, South Hadley. Open Tuesday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m. Free. Information at [artmuseum.mtholyoke.edu](http://artmuseum.mtholyoke.edu). — *Dave*



Twenty Dollar Bill with Harriet Tubman counterstamp, 2019 and Brixton ten pound note, 2017; photos courtesy of Laura Shea, Mt. Holyoke College Art Museum.

## **Springfield Symphony Orchestra & Y@H Chorus Holiday concert, Springfield, Dec. 7**

In November, Northampton's beloved vocal group, the Young@Heart Chorus, held the most recent of its “Mash Up” concerts — shows in which the acclaimed senior singers share the stage with other groups — with a small ensemble from the Springfield Symphony Orchestra (SSO). Eight players from the orchestra — on strings, brass and woodwinds — played scores written by Mark Gionfriddo, Young@Heart's keyboardist, on several of the chorus' songs, and the collaboration, a first for the two groups, was a success (I was there, and it sounded great). The chamber music backing for three of



Springfield Symphony Orchestra

those tunes — a number from the 19th-century opera *Carmen*, Mose Allison’s “Was,” and “Elderly Woman in a Small Cafe” by Pearl Jam — was especially notable.

Now Y@H will return the favor by joining SSO for the orchestra’s annual holiday concert at Springfield Symphony Hall on Dec. 7. Under the direction of guest conductor Nick Palmer — the SSO Chorus will be led by Nikki Stoia — SSO will play any number of seasonal favorites, including “Rudolf the Red-Nosed

Reindeer,” “Frosty the Snowman,” “Sleigh Ride,” and many others. Then Y@H, with longtime director Bob Cilman, will weigh in with some of its special holiday repertoire, which includes less traditional fare by artists such as Tom Lehrer. In addition, the concert will feature some solo work by soprano Jamie-Rose Guarrine, who has performed with opera companies across the country and also teaches voice at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Tickets for the 7:30 p.m. show range from \$25 to \$70 and can be purchased at [springfieldsymphony.org](http://springfieldsymphony.org). — *Steve*

## Chris Smither at The Parlor Room, Dec. 12-13

Veteran guitar picker and singer-songwriter Chris Smither is like folk music’s version of the Energizer Bunny. At 75, he just keeps on touring and turning out excellent songs that draw on deep traditions in folk and blues but which he also stamps with his fluid fingerpicked guitar, gravelly vocals, dry wit, and search for meaning. A native of New Orleans who’s made his home in New England since the mid 1960s, when he headed north to check out the burgeoning acoustic music scene in Boston and Cambridge, Smither has won acclaim for his songwriting from any number of sources, including the *Associated Press*, which once called him “an American original, a product of the musical melting pot, and one of the absolute best singer-songwriters in the world.” And ever since 2009, when he moved to Amherst from the Boston area, Valley music fans have been happy to call Smither a local treasure.



Chris Smither. Jeff Fasano photo

In an interview with the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* last year, Smither joked that he’s not the most prolific songwriter around: “I try to put out a record every three years or so, and when the time comes for something new, I have to get off my ass and start writing, make sure no one thinks I’ve expired.” But his albums, like last year’s *Call Me Lucky*, on Northampton’s Signature Sounds label, are worth the wait. On that disc, recorded outside Austin, Texas, Smither was joined by a number of other players, including his longtime producer, Dave “Goody” Goodrich, and the Valley’s Matt Lorenz, better known as The Suitcase Junket. The album was studded with gems, from the toe-tapping “Nobody Home,” on which he satirized Donald Trump (among other things), the old-timey “Change Your Mind,” and inventive covers of tunes by Chuck Berry and the Beatles. And then there was the title song, on which he sang “They call me lucky but I don’t know why.” Valley music fans — music

fans anywhere, really — are lucky to have Smither. His shows at The Parlor Room both begin at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$40 and are available at [signaturesoundsresents.com](http://signaturesoundsresents.com). — *Steve*

## Weege and the Wondertwins at New City Brewery, Dec. 13



Weege and the Wondertwins. Gabbi Rae photo

A Weege and the Wondertwins show has a little bit for everyone. In the covers department, there's a mix of Johnny Cash, The Rolling Stones, Bill Withers, and The Doors, but that's just scratching the surface of this quintet's musical prowess. There's "Shatzie" (Lexi Weege) with a stellar vocal range that belts, soothes, and dazzles through bluesy and soulful performances. The band's rhythm section, made up of "Big Sal" (AJ Del Negro) on bass and Candy Brown (Erek Brown) on drums, keeps the party going with a hip-shaking drive. To top off this exquisite group of

debauchees are Sunny D (Tom Del Negro) and the Bondsville Creeper (Nick Ferrara) on guitars with melodic and energetic guitar riffs that often ramp up to sizzling solos.

Their latest album, *Do I Seem Weird Lately?*, was released in May and it showcases the many sides to this band. There's the classic rock and roll with "Always," "Just Another," and "Sourpuss." There's some really serene and gorgeous songs like "Damn the Wind," "Funky Country (Heartbreak Tune)" and "Why Can't I Hear the Birds Anymore?" And yet the thread throughout the whole record is its incisive and sharp-as-knives penmanship as exemplified in the title track: "I wish I could say it will all be OK but we know how this kind of song ends / Just climb on into bed with the one you wish to wed and pretend, pretend, pretend."

Weege and the Wondertwins have recorded another handful of songs since finishing their second album and plans for releasing them are underway. During live performances, some of those tracks have made their debuts and one in particular, "Living Hand to Mouth," encapsulates the many influences the band embodies. It's a fast-paced, country-flavored number that is sure to get those dancing shoes a-tapping. Show starts at 8 p.m. and there's no cover. 180 Pleasant Street, Easthampton. — *Luis*

## No Theater's *A Skull in Connemara*, December 20-21, 27-28

*A Skull in Connemara* will be staged at A.P.E (126 Main St., Northampton) throughout late December. You'll have four chances to see the 90-minute dark comedy performed by No Theater veterans Roy Faudree, Charles Holt, Jane Karakula, and Tom Mahnken. The play takes place in fictional rural West Ireland in a small town where "people smile at you 'til you're a mile away before they start talking behind your back," according to A.P.E.'s website.

Northampton-based No Theater (A.P.E's resident theater company) has been staging new original experimental works in the Pioneer Valley since its inception in 1972. For this production, the

company will bring the 1997 play by Martin McDonagh to the Valley in all its savage ironic humor, which centers around a gravedigger, whose job is to dig up the bones of 7-year-old bodies and smash them to a pulp, and is also suspected of killing his wife.

Faudree described the play as “a dark comedy that plays like a grim fairy tale for adults.”

The house opens at 7:30 p.m. followed by the performance at 8 p.m. There will be no late seating.

As well, seating will be limited to 20 people. There will be performances on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 20 and 21 as well as Dec. 27 and 28. Tickets are \$20. — *Chris*



A Skull in Connemara. Matthew Cavanaugh photo

## Moon Hooch at Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center, Dec. 27



Moon Hooch

No, Moon Hooch isn't a new boozy craze. But it'll definitely get you up and dancing with its blend of virtuoso jazz, groovy funk, and pulse-pounding electro dance pop. The three-piece band got its start in 2010 on the subway in New York City and in the past decade has taken the world by storm. The trio [returns to Greenfield at Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center](#) on Friday, Dec. 27.

From the band's humble beginnings playing on subway platforms to a couple years later touring with internationally known artists such as Beats Antique,

They Might Be Giants, and Lotus, Moon Hooch has gone on to become a powerhouse headliner in its own right, combining dueling saxophones and heavy drums.

“What we discovered playing in the subway is that the more focus and the more energy you put into the music, and the more you listen to everything around you and integrate everything around you into your expression, the more the music becomes this captivating force for people,” wrote Moon Hooch horn player Wenzel McGowen on the band's Facebook page.

Moon Hooch will play a pre-New Year's Eve show alongside special guest Jackson Whalan, who combines classic hip hop with a modern aesthetic. Tickets are \$16 to \$20. Doors open at 8 p.m. and show starts at 8:30 p.m. — *Chris*

## Inaugural Franklin County Last Night at the Shea Theater, Dec. 31

Ring in the new decade with a seven-hour affair at the Shea Theater with a line-up of diverse and talented musical acts. You can expect some psychedelic blues, some theatrical avant-garde, some

good ol' rock n' roll, and acoustic guitar folk to grace the stage throughout the evening.

The line-up includes: She Said, an all-female group playing blues, rock and country with a badass, punk vibe; Sister Jawbone giving a nod to classic soul, gospel and blues rock; Raspberry Jam, a progressive indie band combining dreamy guitars with complex syncopation; Wallace Field, a member of Ona Conoa, plays a baritone ukulele and sings with a bold voice; Old Flame, a psychedelic rock outfit with bluesy tendencies; The Leafies You Gave Me, a theatrical avant-garde free jazz group; AfterGlo, a mix of classic rock with some modern pop and country; Corey Laitman, who sings narratives of dreams; Josh LeVangie and The Pistoleros, an outlaw country band.



The Shea Theater on Ave A in Turners Falls in 2017.

Paul Franz photo

This all-ages event highlights some of the rich talent in Franklin County, and the performers range from solo acts to multi-piece ensembles. The show starts at 6 p.m. and tickets are \$12 in advance. 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Info at [sheatheater.org](http://sheatheater.org). — *Luis*

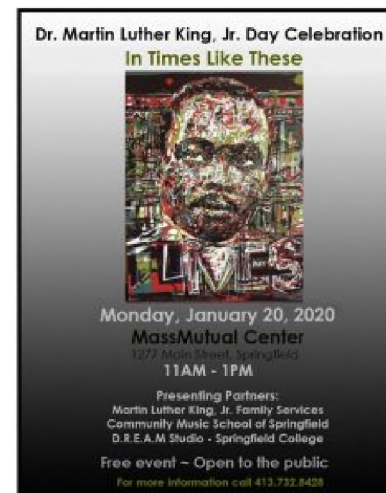
## Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration at the MassMutual Center, Jan 20

Springfield's annual celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day has been taking place for nearly a decade now, and pulls together various Springfield community organizations, led by Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services, and also including Community Music School of Springfield, D.R.E.A.M Studio, and Springfield College. While the program this year has yet to be finalized, past events have included gospel singing, drumming, and dance, all dedicated to the inspirational figure of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his call for nonviolent action against intolerance.

This year's theme will be "In Times Like These," which were words Dr. King spoke. It will take place on Martin Luther King Jr.

Day, Monday, January 20, 2020, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the MassMutual Center at 1277 Main Street in Springfield. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, call 413 732 8428. —

*Dave*



## Winter Festival 2020 at Gateway City Arts, Jan. 30 – Feb 2

It's hard to think of a better way to beat the winter doldrums than heading over to a four-day festival dedicated to arts, music, and food. Better still when the event is free. Gateway City Arts has our backs and for the past several years has packed their Winter Festival with exciting examples of what local artists have to offer. While information and a schedule for this year's event (the fifth annual) has yet



to be released by Gateway City Arts, they have announced that they will be continuing to hold their chili competition as well as their annual “C’artboard Competition,” a collaboration with Holyoke’s Department of Public Works in which entrants make 2-D and 3-D art made entirely out of cardboard and other recyclable materials.

Past years have included live music, art and cooking demonstrations, adult puppet performances, a winter market, drag queen bingo, and circus performances. The festival goes from Thursday, Jan. 30, through Sunday, Feb. 2, which means that by the time it is over, the groundhog will have told us if we can expect an early spring. Gateway City Arts is located at 92 Race Street in Holyoke. Information at [gatewaycityarts.com/winterfestival](http://gatewaycityarts.com/winterfestival), which is also where you sign up for the chili and C’artboard competitions. — *Dave*

## **Philadanco! The Philadelphia Dance Company at the UMass Fine Arts Center, Feb. 6**

Philadanco! is Philadelphia’s world-recognized modern dance company, which returns to the University of Massachusetts Amherst’s Fine Arts Center on Thursday, Feb. 6, bringing spellbinding and highly choreographed dance rooted in African-American traditions to the Fine Arts Center Concert Hall stage.

According to the company’s website, Philadanco was founded in 1970 by Joan Myers Brown in response to the lack of opportunities for artists and dancers of color in the Delaware Valley. Almost half a century later, it’s grown into an internationally recognized institution in modern dance that “promotes new and emerging dance talent from all walks of life,” while breaking barriers and “building bridges across cultural divides.” The company was also the first to offer financially accessible dance instruction to low and moderate income families and one of the first in the country to put dancers on a 52-week salary.



Philadanco. Photos courtesy of UMass Fine Arts Center

The group’s performance at UMass Amherst combines the company’s iconic past works during the past five decades as well as newer work highlighting social issues such as “Endangered Species,” a 2018 dance piece about police violence against African American men. The event will also include a pre-performance talk in the lobby at 6:30 p.m. as well as post-performance discussion following the show. \$25 to \$45, Five College students and youth 17 and below: \$10 to \$15. — *Chris*

## **“Finding Neverland” musical at the UMass Fine Arts Center, Feb. 25**



Finding Neverland. Jeremy Daniel photo

Peter Pan is one of the most enduring characters in children’s literature. He first appeared in 1902 in an adult novel by British writer J.M. Barrie, and a few years later Barrie made Peter the center of a play about a boy who wouldn’t grow up, then developed the character further in his 1911 novel, *Peter and Wendy*. Since then, Peter has been the focus of myriad stage, film, and TV productions — probably too many to count. So it was refreshing to see a new treatment of the subject arrive in 1998 in the form of

a play, and in 2004 a movie, *Finding Neverland*, based on that play, which was all about how Barrie created the Peter Pan story for the entertainment of a dying woman friend and her young sons.

The next step in *that* progression was the creation of the musical *Finding Neverland*, drawn from both the 1998 play and the 2004 film, which first opened in London in 2012. A revamped version debuted in Boston in 2014 and then on Broadway in 2015. Now the show is touring, and it comes to the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst on Feb. 25 for one night only. The musical was awarded Broadway.com’s Audience Choice Award for Best Musical and was also called “far and away the best musical of the year” by *National Public Radio*. Directed by Broadway veteran Diane Paulus, with music and lyrics by Gary Barlow and Eliot Kennedy, the story traces Barrie’s staging of his play *Peter Pan* against the advice of his producer. But Barrie has been inspired by the antics of the four sons of his widowed friend Sylvia Llewelyn Davies — and the play is a success. The UMass Amherst show takes place at 7 p.m. in the Fine Arts Center Concert Hall. Tickets range from \$20 to \$65; visit [fac.umass.edu/online](http://fac.umass.edu/online) to order. — *Steve*

## Josh Ritter with Ramblin’ Jack Elliot at The Academy of Music, Feb. 28

While Josh Ritter promoting an album that he had self-funded and recorded at various recording studios in the early 2000s, he caught the eye of Jim Olsen, a founder of Signature Sounds Recordings. Ritter had spent \$1,000 to record his second album, *Golden Age of Radio*, in the hopes of making a name for himself by distributing the album at shows as the opener for the Frames on a tour of Ireland. Word spread quickly about a young man who sounded a bit like Nick Drake, Bob Dylan, and Neil Young, and his song, “Me & Jiggs” broke into the Irish Top 40 — a tribute band named Cork even began playing Ritter songs exclusively at Irish pubs.



Josh Ritter, left, and Ramblin’ Jack Elliot.

With that backdrop, Olsen offered to remaster and re-release *Golden Age of Radio* and Ritter returned to the States to sold-out shows in New York City and Boston as well as an invitation to the 2003 Sundance Film Festival. Fast-forward to 2019 and Ritter has released his 10th full-length album,

*Fever Breaks*, which *NPR* praised for “the singer’s ever-incisive songwriting with a bit of gutty Southern-rock heft.”

Joining Ritter at the Academy of Music is Ramblin’ Jack Elliot, the man who most likely inspired your favorite singer-songwriter’s source of inspiration. Elliot began recording in the mid-1950s and is a Woody Guthrie contemporary, having met Guthrie at a picking session in Greenwich Village and traveled through the South together. Truly a living legend, he’s often described as “one of the last true links to the great folk traditions of this country.” Tickets are \$30 to \$40. Visit [www.aomtheatre.com](http://www.aomtheatre.com) for more information. The show starts at 7 p.m., 274 Main Street, Northampton. — *Luis*

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## What's Going On

Today in the Valley ...

**MON 16** **Guys and Gals Fitness with Marty (Free)**  
Sterling Senior Ce... | Sterling, MA

**FRI 13** **Comedy Night at the Hartford Funny Bone with Michael Yo**  
Funny Bone Hartfor... | Manchester, CT

**FRI 13** **Support the Housatonic Valley at Big Y Torrington**  
Big Y | Torrington, CT

**FRI 13** **Barbara Jo Kingsley Exhibition**  
The Optimist Cafe | Jaffrey, NH

**FRI 13** **Manchester Art Association, Winter Wanes, Spring Sprouts Exhibit**  
Manchester Town Ha... | Manchester, CT

**FRI 13** **John Darby / The Five Tantric Mandalas**  
The Elusie Gallery | Easthampton, MA

**FRI 13** **Still, Here: As the Water Shifts**  
Cooley Dickinson H... | Northampton, MA

**FRI 13** **Lasting Impressions: Celebrating the Possibilities of Printmaking**  
Forbes Library | Northampton, MA

**FRI 13** **ex Libris: Bloomfield - found windows by Eddie Hall**  
Bloomfield Public ... | Bloomfield, CT

**FRI 13** **Community Sauna Sessions**  
Wild Carrot Farm | Brattleboro, VT

**FRI 13** **2026 Spring Greenhouse Show**  
Elizabeth Park | West Hartford, CT

**FRI 13** **Reshaping Tradition: Contemporary Explorations in East Asian Art**  
Trinity College | Hartford, CT



13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE

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