



Happy 20th Birthday, NJPAC

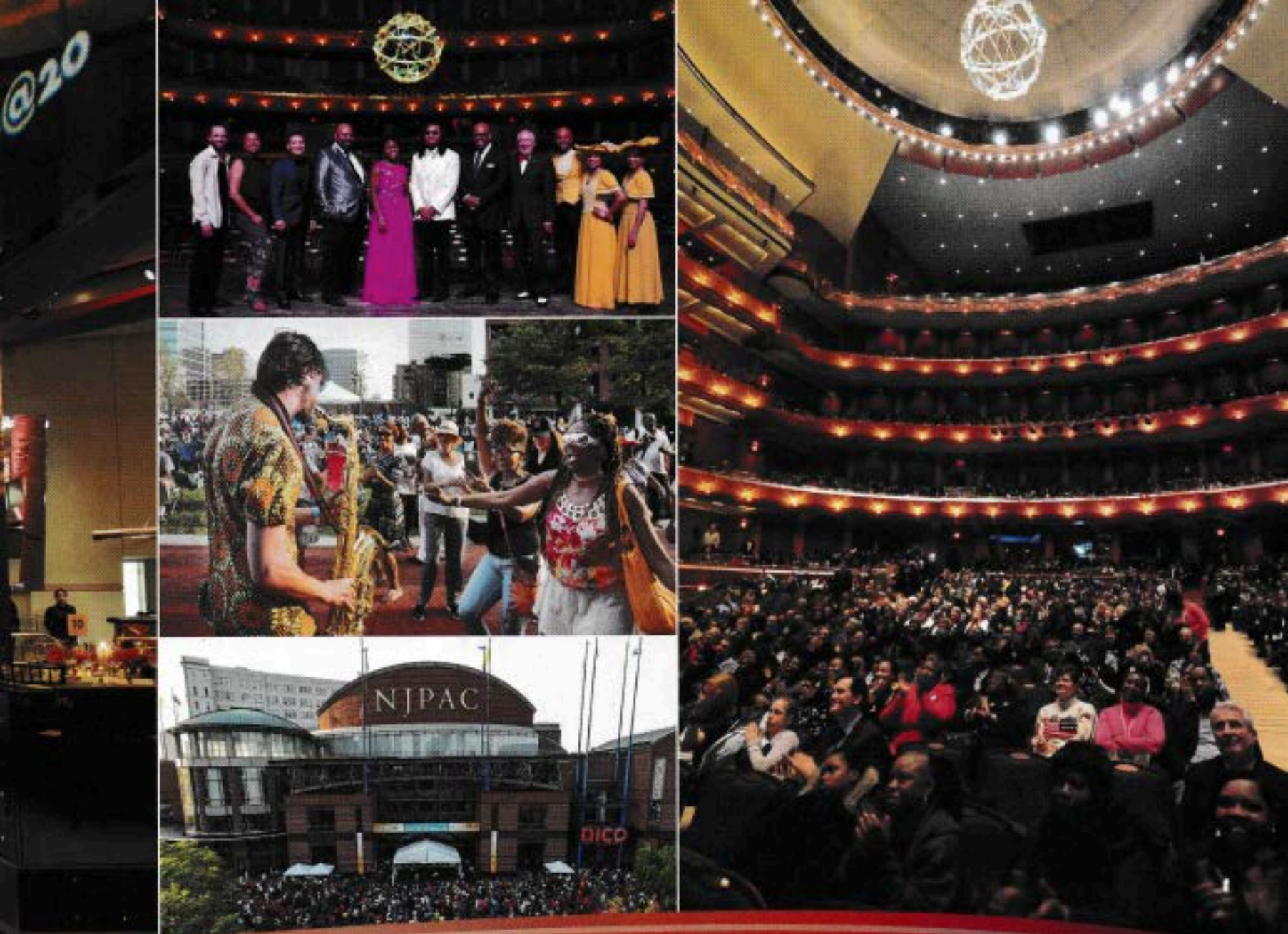
The New Jersey Performing Arts Center opened its doors in 1997 and Newark hasn't been the same since. Starting out as a grand idea to bring new civic engagement and economic development to the area, NJPAC has grown into a source of community pride and is an undeniable contender for events featuring every major performer, lecturer, dignitary and celebrity the world has to offer.

The center celebrated its historic birth with a stellar season of local, national and international artists, including an inaugural gala to rival all galas. That's what happens when you invite Wynton Marsalis, Chita Rivera, the American Ballet Theatre, Tango X2 and Savion Glover to a party! And in addition to the hundreds that

turned out for the event, a whopping nine million people viewed the opening night event on PBS.

To commemorate its 20th anniversary this past September, NJPAC again invited a host of equally impressive showstoppers—including Christian McBride, Michael Feinstein, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater—to recognize the beginning of its 20th season of entertainment and its legacy as Newark's premier arts education and performance space.

Yet, NJPAC has never forgotten its humble beginnings as a project designed to restore good will and economic revitalization in Newark after years of neglect. When then-Governor of New Jersey Thomas McKean assigned a committee to select a site for a



By Candace Nicholson

new state-of-the-art performing arts center in New Jersey, Newark seemed like the obvious choice because of its population size, access to public transportation, major airport, and proximity to New York. Its only major obstacle: public perception.

Although turning the tide of public opinion hasn't been easy, the center's mission, community outreach and stellar lineup, year after year, of national and international talent helped bring more patrons into the city, slowly replacing negative stereotypes with positive experiences. Within a decade of opening, NJPAC had become the anchor of Newark's arts and cultural district.

NJPAC wouldn't have been possible without the vision of architect Barton Myers. Though based out of Los Angeles, Myers understood the spirit and personality of Newark and proposed a design to capture it. The brick, steel and glass structure was cre-

ated to connect the city's residents to their industrial roots, while also invoking the graceful inspiration of classic theatrical spaces. Myers, who hoped to build "a world-class facility that is not a fortress, but a responsible neighbor," knew that any cultural arts venue in Newark should reflect a community that values expression and authenticity without sacrificing a message of inclusivity.

Newark's premier performing arts center has grown by leaps and bounds over the years. Today, it stands out in the cultural district with not only impressive seasonal lineups but its majestic glass lobby and brick rotunda, performance spaces and executive offices, and restaurants. And, coming in 2018, the addition of One Theater Square, a residential and retail project, will continue to build upon NJPAC's legacy as what "The New Yorker" calls "one of the best modern concert halls on the Eastern seaboard." ▶

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NJPAC



FEATURE



VICTORIA THEATER

An elegant, intimate space for everything from first-run performances to seminars to televised awards shows.

THE PARSONNET ROOM

An adaptive, sophisticated venue with a balcony view of the main lobby and a 10' x 30' terrace overlooking One Theater Square.

RYAN GALLERY/TIER 3 CAFE

The preferred site for meet-and-greets with performers before or after the show, and home to Tier 3 Café, a modern-cuisine bistro that features pre-performance, buffet style dining. Open for select performances only. Get more info at NJPAC.org.



ONE THEATER SQUARE

One Theater Square will be a 22-story residential and retail structure designed to build on the splendor of NJPAC and the surrounding cultural district. The building will fulfill the current economic demand for more commercial space during the day, more residential space in the downtown area, and more nightlife amenities to enjoy after-hours.

All that NJPAC is

When most people think of NJPAC, they think of Prudential Hall with its massive 2,800-capacity theater and grand stage that's played host to a variety of great performers, guest speakers and award ceremonies. But there's more to the center than initially meets the eye.



GOLDMAN COMMUNITY ROOM

With mirrors, barres and a resilient hardwood floor perfect for dance rehearsals and other community engagement activities, this versatile space also serves as a functioning boardroom for presentations.



THE CHASE ROOM

Audiences regularly enjoy cabaret-style performances, spoken word series, luncheons, film screenings and even the biannual Hip-Hop music festival here.



CLEMENT'S PLACE

Located on the first floor at 15 Washington St., this cozy lounge is the place to find talented musicians every third Thursday for a free monthly jazz series.



PRUDENTIAL HALL

Whether seated in the orchestra, box seats, or any of the four horseshoe-shaped balcony tiers, the views and acoustics are guaranteed to impress.



NJPAC ARTS EDUCATION BUILDING

Located at 24 Rector Street, the Arts Education building is where the majority of NJPAC's arts education programming occurs. Classes and workshops in vocal and instrumental music, dance, theater and visual arts are available for students inexperienced in the arts, as well as experienced students.



NICO KITCHEN + BAR

Both performance ticket-holders and merely hungry visitors can enjoy inventive modern American cuisine at NICO Kitchen & Bar. A two- and three-course prix fixe menu is available to those who arrive at least 90 minutes before their show begins. NICO also has a sophisticated Happy Hour with crafted cocktails and a specially priced menu.



All that NJPAC does

A major component of NJPAC's mission is to uplift the city while providing guidance and opportunities to artists and students who are often overlooked in marginalized communities. Here are some of the ways the center provides philanthropic support to the community and beyond.

1 Center for Arts Education

The Center for Arts Education, which was founded by NJPAC's Vice President Philip J. Thomas, is the foundation of NJPAC's arts education department and outreach program. Since 1993 the arts education curriculum has engaged more than 1.6 million children, teachers and families in the metro area, including classes led by dancer, actor, choreographer and Newark native, Savion Glover.

2 The Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival

Artists from around the country and across the globe travel to Newark every other fall to celebrate the largest poetry event in North America. Hosted by NJPAC, the four-day event, marked by readings and spoken word performances throughout the city, has featured appearances by Sonia Sanchez, Fatimah Asghar, Mark Doty, and current U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera.



3 Horizon Foundation Sounds of the City

Dubbed Newark's longest-running summer party, NJPAC's free courtyard concerts take place every Thursday evening throughout July and August. Combining music, community engagement and access to the Get Healthy, Newark! Initiative, which spreads positive lifestyle advice related to physical, psychological and financial health, this annual event draws thousands of music and dance lovers every year.

4 NJPAC's Department of Community Engagement

This department was created to strengthen NJPAC's strategies for building relationships with New Jersey's diverse communities through innovative and targeted events designed to educate, inform and entertain. Working with New Jersey's cultural and educational partners, the Department of Community Engagement works to develop programming that will appeal to every audience.

5 Women's Association

The Women's Association is NJPAC's largest fundraising network. Created in 1994—before the construction of NJPAC was even finished—the Women's Association presently has over 2,000 members and has raised more than \$49 million since it began. The annual Spotlight Gala and Spring Luncheon & Auction are its signature fundraising events.