

## ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

# Arts community prepares for a busy fall

BY NANCY SUNDSTROM

Special to the Record-Eagle

Even though summer isn't over just yet, fall seems to be closing in quickly, ready to wrap trees in blazing colors and produce a remarkable bounty of fruits and vegetables from the earth. The most unique cornucopia, though, can be found in the region's vibrant cultural scene.

From special appearances by nationally renowned performers to the kick-off of new concert and theater series, September marks the start of a bustling new year for the arts. No matter where your interest lies, you'll find a quality event to match.

Like much of the activity in northwest Michigan that is driven by a September-August season, arts groups look forward to this time of year because they began sharing with audiences what they have in store for them, said George Beeby, Executive Director of Old Town Playhouse in Traverse City.

"Before most arts groups have ended their previous year, they've already solidified plans for what they'll be doing in the next and then spend the summer working to get the word out," Beeby said. "This is a great time of year for the



**Music Director Kevin Rhodes will lead the Traverse Symphony Orchestra in its 2004-05 season, with the theme, "It's Happening Here." The seasons open with the Summer Gala on Aug. 28.**

arts community, because we get to share what's in store, from shows and concerts to special promotions and activities, and then roll everything out."

Mary Bevans Gillett, a longtime fixture on the regional arts scene and a member of the area's cultural coalition, a group of representatives from all of the major arts organizations, agreed about the sense of excitement that comes with each new season of growth for the arts.

"It all reinforces what a diverse, impressive and thriving arts community we have, and every year, we just seem to add to what's available, what's new and what can be done," said

Gillett. "I just encourage people to take a good look at all the schedules and options out there and get your tickets early."

The following are just a few of the many options available to enjoy in September.

"It's Happening Here" is more than Traverse Symphony Orchestra's (TSO) marketing theme for its 2004-05 season, it's also a promise that Music Director Kevin Rhodes intends on keeping.

Rhodes said he "deliberately raised the bar" in planning the slate of concerts and special events, and the highlights reflect a number of ambitious and first-time undertakings.

The TSO season will begin with the Summer Gala at 8 p.m. on Aug. 28 at Kresge Auditorium at Interlochen Center for the Arts (ICA).

Trumpeter and conductor Doc Severinsen will lead TSO in a gala pops program to kick off the year, bringing his signature trumpet playing, flashy outfits, humor and arrangements of music from Broadway to Big Band.

This will mark the TSO's first concert at the 4,000-seat outdoor venue and its first collaboration with Severinsen, best known as the Grammy-award winning leader of "The Tonight Show Band" in the days of Johnny Carson.

Next for TSO will be Symphonic Concert I at 8

p.m. on Sept. 25 and 3 p.m. on Sept. 26 at Corson Auditorium at Interlochen showcasing Yugoslovian-born violinist Walter Verdehr in an all-Beethoven program of his Egmont Overture, Violin Concerto and Symphony No. 5 pieces.

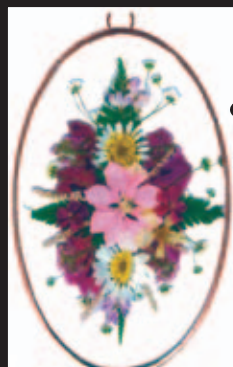
For more information on TSO or to make ticket reservations, call 947-7120, email [tso@tso-online.org](mailto:tso@tso-online.org) or fax 947-8118.

Old Town Playhouse will open its "A Tony Award Winning Season" with a highly regarded, though controversial Stephen Sondheim musical entitled "Assassins." This darkly funny musical is based on nine different people from various eras of history who achieved notoriety for trying to assassinate American presidents.

While the show is adult-oriented and contains some strong language and violence, it also made a strong showing at the 2004 Tony Awards, garnering seven prizes in all. "Assassins" runs Sept. 3-4, 9-11, 19-18 and 23-25 at 8 p.m. and at 3 p.m. on Sundays, Sept. 12 and 19.

Online orders can be placed at [www.oldtownplayhouse.com](http://www.oldtownplayhouse.com). The box office can be reached at 947-2443.

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