

# ENTERTAINMENT



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## BEN MUNISTERI AT DTW

Ben Munisteri Dance Projects kicks off its season at Dance Theater Workshop this Wednesday through Saturday. Highlights include the world premieres of "Tuesday, 4 a.m. and other dances" and "Thunderblood." Tickets cost \$15-\$25. For more information, go to [www.dtw.org](http://www.dtw.org). METRO/KH



## MLK JR. TRIBUTE AT BAM

The 20th Annual Brooklyn Tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. takes place beginning at 10:30 a.m. today at the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House. The evening program will include music by Raul Midón and the Imani Singers of Medgar Evers College and a screening of the award-winning documentary "Standing on My Sister's Shoulders," and the documentary "Neshoba." Admission is free. For more information, go to [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org). METRO/KH

## It's a lark

David Gordon sets  
"The Birds" dancing.

**REVIEW** For 35 years, post-modern pioneer David Gordon has been constructing dance theater works that blend talking, moving and visual displays that often include lengths of fabric and folding chairs. The pieces are usually funny. In recent years, he has worked with dramatic texts, such as Shakespeare's "Henry V."

For his current outing in the sanctuary of St. Mark's Church, he has taken Aristophanes' ancient Greek comedy "The Birds" and transposed it to America, which he calls "Hysterica." He updates the play's plot to reflect the current political situation. He has introduced it with a wonderful collage of mid-century pop songs sung by Doris Day, Leadbelly, Etta Jones and Rosemary Clooney, among many others, and set it to music by Ottorino Respighi, more bird-themed pop tunes ("Mockingbird Hill" by Les Paul and Mary Ford and a country instrumental version of "Turkey in the Straw") and Japanese koto.

The result, "Aristophanes in Birdonia," is an entertaining fusion of simple, patterned dances, puns and other wordplay, rhymed couplets and the occasional truly-moving dramatic encounter, performed by actress/dancer Valda Setterfield (Gordon's wife) as the title character and other actors and dancers ranging from their 20s to their 70s playing birds and the humans who love them.

Wearing tattered plaid



If you go

• "Aristophanes in Birdonia" plays at 8:30 p.m. from Thursday through Sunday at Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church, 131 E. 10th St. For more information, call 212-674-8194.

costumes, the birds flutter, pose and molt. Into their midst wander two travelers, Stan and Ollie, in black jumpsuits. Like similar emissaries in the original Greek play, they want to set up a new kingdom for the birds, and their effort creates an opportunity to mock and criticize current political arguments such as the debate over "intelligent design" and the difficulty of getting a show produced in New York.

Parts of the hour-long confection go a little flat, but at its best it's deeply moving, as when Stan and Ollie decide to leave and we notice that their power relationship has changed. There are energetic soft-shoe turns for Setterfield and the others, square-dance-like choreography and a musical-chairs sequence. Fans of Gordon's oeuvre will be charmed; others may be a little bewildered. Children will probably love it.

CHAPPELLE CHAMBERS  
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# Too cute for its own good

'Almost, Maine' is full of hugs and kisses but low on laughs

**REVIEW** If you like your theater sweet and cute, "Almost, Maine" could just be the show for you. But if you're looking for something with even the tiniest bit of bite, stay away from John Ciarani's collection of saccharine vignettes at the Daryl Roth Theatre.

Set in a small township in the northern extremities of the state, "Almost, Maine" consists of eight simple-minded playlets (plus a prologue, "interlogue" and epilogue) on the subject of love. Situations include a married couple who no longer communicate, a chance meeting between a man and his former flame on the eve of her wedding to someone else, and a woman trying to break up with her longtime boyfriend because she believes he doesn't want to get married. All take place on a wintry Friday evening at 9 o'clock.

Characters are one-dimensional and plots simple. Metaphors are taken literally; as broken hearts are carried in paper bags, love gets stuffed into big red sacks, and shoes fall from the sky.



JUSTIN HAGAN and Miriam Shor star in "Almost, Maine."

Gabriel Barre's direction ramps up the cuteness quotient. Two actors in identical parkas convey scene changes, with hoods obscuring their faces, miming interaction and seemingly ending up as lovers. The cast of four — Todd Cerveris, Justin Hagan,

## If you go

• Catch "Almost, Maine" at Daryl Roth Theatre, 101 E. 15th St. For more information, call 212-239-6200.

Miriam Shor and Finnerty Steeves — is competent but unable to bring any depth to Ciarani's shallow script. "Almost, Maine" is full of

unexpected kisses and declarations of love, but it's short on insight and low on laughs.

MICHAEL BRACKEN  
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# NEA Jazz Masters throw down in NYC

Corea, Bennett, Barretto and Hubbard honored, among others.

**NEWS** When the two big bands filling the stage struck up the opening bars of the Count Basie Orchestra's theme "One O'Clock Jump," the siren call to take part in a jam session proved irresistible to the jazz stars seated in the audience at the NEA Jazz Masters Awards Concert.

Chick Corea, who had been presented his award earlier Friday evening as one of the National Endowment for the Arts' seven new Jazz Masters for 2006, sat down at the piano to energetically accompany the soloists.

Past Jazz Masters — the Cuban-born clarinetist Paquito D'Rivera, tenor saxophonist Jimmy Heath, trombonist Slide Hampton and a scat-singing James Moody — took turns soloing as several thousand people clapped

along enthusiastically in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton New York Hotel. A pint-sized trumpeter, 10-year-old Tyler Lindsay of Virginia Beach, Va., hit the high notes in his solo, earning high-fives from the jazz veterans on stage.

The jam session provided a rousing spontaneous conclusion to the awards ceremony honoring this year's NEA Jazz Masters: Corea, singer Tony Bennett, Latin jazz percussionist Ray Barretto, composer-arranger-trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, clarinetist Buddy DeFranco and John Levy, a bassist who became the first African-American to work in the music industry as a personal manager.

"This is amazing. I'm overwhelmed. It's music that I love so much from all of these magnificent artists," said Bennett, as he accepted his award, America's highest honor in jazz.



TYLER LINDSAY, 10, of Virginia Beach, Va., left, plays the trumpet alongside jazz legends Jimmy Heath, left center, Paquito D'Rivera, right center, and Chick Corea at the end of the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Awards Concert.

"More than anybody else, I'd like to thank Count Basie for teaching me how to perform," said Bennett, who, though known as a pop vocalist, has always acknowledged that his singing style was largely influenced by the jazz musicians he heard playing in New York clubs.

Singer Nancy Wilson, who cohosted the program with pianist Ramsey Lewis, became teary-eyed as she presented the Jazz Masters award to the 93-year-old Levy, her manager for nearly 50 years.

The NEA provides each Jazz Master with a one-time fellowship of \$25,000. AP

## Eminem and Kim remarry

**NEWS** Superstar rapper Eminem remarried his ex-wife Saturday, a month after he announced they were getting back together, his publicist says.

"Marshall and Kim Mathers were married tonight in a small private ceremony at Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester, Mich.," says Dennis Dennehy, a spokesman for Eminem's label, Interscope Records.

News helicopters hovered overhead and paparazzi congregated outside as the Grammy Award-winning rapper born Marshall Bruce Mathers III and his high school sweetheart arrived by limousine and were whisked inside the 110-



EMINEM

room mansion built for auto baron John Dodge's widow 80 years ago.

"Family and close friends were in attendance, including members of D12, 50 Cent, Obie Trice and members of G-Unit," Dennehy says.

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