

Destination Tidewater Virginia

The Old Dominion's Premier Cultural Event

Like Tanglewood in the Berkshires and Spoleto in Charleston, the Virginia Arts Festival is among the foremost multi-genre arts festivals in the East. Each festival offers performances at incredible venues in locations with centuries of history. The Virginia celebration spans six weeks in not one but six cities in the Tidewater area. The 2010 festival runs from April 15 to May 30.

Since 1997, the Virginia Arts Festival has reached across the globe to assemble renowned musicians, actors, dancers, entire festivals, and a distinctive military Tattoo. Last year, audiences flocked from 39 states and six foreign countries. It's no accident the Festival occurs during late April and May, concurrent with the Tidewater area's beautiful weather and gorgeous blooms. The event is recognized by the American Bus Association as one of the Top 100 North American Events.

Rob Cross, founding Festival Executive and Artistic Director, reports that, "like Spoleto, we're a world-class venture, but we're really like a lot of festivals rolled into one. Each venue has its own character. Williamsburg and Hampton are historical. Norfolk, Newport News, and Portsmouth are historic ports. Virginia Beach offers a beach waterfront. It's a different experience for each city. We're told we have an incredible number of venues for this sized area."

Festival Performances

Dance acts run from modern to folk to ballet. The wide array of musical offerings include a chamber series, classical soloists, quartets, and symphonies; bluegrass, folk, jazz; and even a rock symphony. There's Shakespeare Theatre and Cabaret. You can choose huge outdoor festivals featuring Caribbean Music, Virginia Beer, and World Drum. There's something for every cultural taste.

Equally interesting are the various venues spread across the Tidewater region. From performing arts venues like the Ferguson Center for the Arts in Newport News and Norfolk's Scope Arena and Chrysler Hall to Hampton's

American Theatre and Norfolk's Wells Theatre to outdoor venues in Virginia Beach to churches to the Williamsburg Winery, the places are as varied as the performances.

2010 Highlights

The Virginia International Tattoo: a centuries-old military tradition, this is the biggest Tattoo performance in North America and one of only three or four Tattoo events world-wide. This year, see military bands and 850 performers assembled from six countries (Norfolk).

An Evening with Kelli O'Hara: three-time Tony nominee and Broadway star performs cabaret-style (Williamsburg).

Leonard Bernstein's Mass: huge new production of a theatrical masterpiece featuring choruses, dancers, and the Virginia Symphony Orchestra (Norfolk).

Birmingham Royal Ballet: Britain's famous company makes its only U.S. appearance this season performing *Swan Lake* (Norfolk).

The Festival web site presents performances, calendar, tickets, and hotels in easy, findable links. A useful, all-inclusive brochure can be ordered free. The schedule clusters events around individual cities, offering different times for the same show. This convenient scheduling offers a perfect getaway for the day (matinee), weekend (multiple activities in one hub city), or week (fuller regional exploration).

Check the brochure or calendar; you're bound to find something to love!

By Deby Blum

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Virginia Arts Festival: 877-741-ARTS (2787), www.vafest.org

VIRGINIA ARTS FESTIVAL

APRIL 15-MAY 30, 2010



Spectacular new staging of **Leonard Bernstein's Mass** with Virginia Symphony Orchestra; **Johann Falletta, conductor**
APRIL 23-24, NORFOLK



An awesome display of music and might!
Virginia International Tattoo
APRIL 29-MAY 2, NORFOLK



Britain's Acclaimed **Birmingham Royal Ballet—Swan Lake**
Only U.S. appearance!
MAY 7-9, NORFOLK



Broadway Spotlight!
3 Time Tony Nominee
Kelli O'Hara
MAY 29, WILLIAMSBURG



Astonishing, Acrobatic
Pilobolus
MAY 15-16, VIRGINIA BEACH

NORFOLK VIRGINIA BEACH WILLIAMSBURG NEWPORT NEWS PORTSMOUTH HAMPTON JAMES CITY COUNTY

PLUS MORE MUST SEE WORLD RENOWNED PERFORMANCES!

For more information and to plan your Festival weekend getaway, Call 1-877-741-2787 or visit www.vafest.org/recreation • Groups (15+) save 15%–50%! Call 757-282-2819