

SPOTLIGHT on Boston's Eclectic Entertainment

by Clint Hamblin

Ballet, opera and symphony have always been available in Boston. As a major theater stop, we are privileged to enjoy first-class national touring companies, and combined with our own fine resident companies Boston audiences enjoy the best of the best of mainstream entertainment.

And for those of us who appreciate the avant-garde, the choices are still great with **World Music/CRASHarts** leading the pack with outstanding international entertainment. A perfect example opens on Friday, June 12 at 8 pm at the Boston Opera House, located at 539 Washington Street, when World Music/CRASHarts presents *Pink Martini*.

Somewhere between a 1930s Cuban dance orchestra, a classical chamber music ensemble, a Brazilian marching street band and a Japanese film noir is the 12-piece *Pink Martini*. Heavily influenced by Latin music, jazz, cabaret, cinema scores and more, *Pink Martini* brings melodies and rhythms from different parts of the world together to create an eclectic and modern sound totally pleasing and popular to American audiences.

For tickets call 876-4275 or visit www.worldmusic.org.

SpeakEasy Stage is one of the most prolific theater-producing organizations in Boston. From a stunning production of the Broadway classic *Company* to the off-Broadway and off-the-wall production of *Zanna Don't*, practically nothing is off limits to this courageous South End theater



Pink Martini

company. The current and end-of-season production of *Jerry Springer – The Opera* is certainly no exception.

Composed by Richard Thomas, with a book and lyrics by Richard Thomas and Stewart Lee, this award-winning musical is based on “The Jerry Springer Show,” a popular and often bizarre American talk show known for its over-the-top guests who use profanity or their fists to express themselves.

Jerry Springer – The Opera follows Mr. Springer through a typical taping of his notorious talk show on what turns out to be the worst day in his career. The musical is completely sung, except for characters Jerry and his security guard Steve, who speak their lines. It's an amazing accom-

plishment.

Next year's season promises to be filled with outstanding productions including the hit Broadway musical [title of show], premiering in Boston as part of the SpeakEasy 2009-2010 season. Also included is the off-Broadway comedy *The Savannah Disputation*, the award-winning *Adding Machine: A Musical*, and the off-Broadway hit *The Great American Trailer Park Musical*. Finishing their season will be the Boston Professional Premier of Craig Lucas' comic Christmas fable *Reckless*.

All performances are held at the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts, 527 Tremont Street in the South End. For more informa-

tion call 482-3279 or visit www.speakeasystage.com.

Shear Madness, Boston's hilarious whodunit, with more than 12,000 consecutive performances to its credit continues to extend its record as the longest running play in American theater history. Opening in 1980 and about to celebrate its 30th consecutive year running, *Shear Madness* is set in a Boston hair-styling salon, where the landlady Isabel Czerny who lives above the shop is murdered. Every character has a reason to do her in. A mixture of improvisation and up-to-the-minute spontaneous humor, *Shear Madness* lets the audience solve the crime. Successful sleuthing leads to a delightfully different show every

time it is performed.

The audience has no problem pointing the finger or asking incriminating questions, or even making jokes when asked to participate in the investigation. You can't help but laugh throughout the entire performance. It's no wonder this crazy comedy is such a huge hit, and every time you attend a performance the references and jokes change to reflect what's going on in the world. Outrageous!

Performances are Tuesday through Friday at 8 pm, Saturday at 6 and 9 pm, and Sunday at 3 and 7 pm at The Charles Playhouse, 74 Warrenton Street. For tickets call 426-5225.



Jerry Springer



Shear Madness