



Legendary Performer Ben Vereen Takes Raue Center Stage One Night Only on Sept. 21

Posted on 12 September 2013 by Michael J. Roberts

Ben remains the consummate entertainer with a storied and legendary career. He has entertained audiences on Broadway and off, on television (guest appearances on Grey's Anatomy, Law and Order: Criminal Intent, Tyler Perry's House of Payne and more), and musically.

His first love and passion is and always will be the stage. "The theater was my first training ground. It taught me discipline, dedication and appreciation of hard work and values that will stay with me a lifetime. The stage sharpens the creative instrument and encourages you to go deeper inside and try new things," states Ben.

His next project Khumba, an animated film with Liam Neeson is scheduled to open worldwide in the summer/fall of 2013.

Tickets range from \$53 to \$60. They can be purchased online at rauecenter.org or via the Box Office at 815.356.9212 or 26 N. Williams Street in downtown Crystal Lake.

About Ben Vereen

Few entertainers today are as accomplished or versatile as Ben Vereen. His legendary performances transcend time and have been woven into the fabric of this country's artistic legacy.

On Broadway, Ben Vereen has appeared in Wicked, Fosse, I'm Not Rappaport, Hair, Jesus Christ Superstar, Grind, Pippin, Jelly's Last Jam and A Christmas Carol. Off-Broadway credits include the award-winning original production of The Exonerated. His role in Pippin garnered him both the prestigious Tony Award and Drama Desk Award for "Best Actor in a Musical." Clive Barnes of the New York Post stated, "Ben Vereen – unquestionably one of the finest performances seen on Broadway." Ben headlined with Chita Rivera in Chicago, the first Broadway production to play Las Vegas.

For over 35 years, Ben has showcased his versatility and creativity, performing countless one-man shows not only in the United States, but also Europe, Asia and the Caribbean. He was the first simultaneous winner of the "Entertainer of the Year," "Rising Star," and "Song and Dance Star" awards from the American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA). He also earned a coveted spot in the Casino Legends Hall of Fame. Ben and his band are currently touring his one man shows, "Ben Sings a Tribute to Sammy Davis Jr." and "An Evening with Ben Vereen" at top performing arts centers and symphonies around the country.

While performing worldwide, Ben's acting credits continue to give us memorable roles that stand the test of time, such as the unforgettable Chicken George in Roots and Louis Armstrong in Louis Armstrong – Chicago Style. Ben's television guest appearances include Grey's Anatomy, for which he won the Prism Award, Law and Order: Criminal Intent, Tyler Perry's House of Payne, OZ, Touched By An Angel, Second Noah, New York Undercover, The Nanny, Star Trek – The Next Generation, The Jamie Fox Show, The Promised Land, and Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, as well as

recurring roles on *Silk Stalkings*, *Webster*, *J.J. Starbuck* and *Booker*. For Nickelodeon, Ben provided voice-overs on the show *Wonder Pets!* Additional credits include: Anne Rice's *Feast of All Saints* (Showtime), *Intruders They are Among Us* (Emmy nomination), *Zoobilee Zoo*, *Faerie Tale Theatre's Puss N' Boots* with Gregory Hines, *The Jesse Owens Story*, *Ellis Island* (Golden Globe Nomination), *Lost in London*, and *Salute to Liberty Special*. His own network television shows are *Ben Vereen: His Roots* (Seven Emmy Awards), *Tenspeed and Brownshoe* and *You Write the Songs*. In the early 90's, he released a number of well-received children's *Sing-Along* musical videos.

Ben was recently nominated for an NAACP Image Award for his performance in the Hallmark movie *An Accidental Friendship* with Chandra Wilson. He also appears in two soon-to-be-released features, *21* and *Wake Up* starring Faye Dunaway and *Mama I Want to Sing*, in which Ben co-starred opposite Ciara and Patti LaBelle. While filming Miramax/HBO Film's *Idlewild* with the award-winning group *Outkast*, Ben also served as the acting coach for both *Andre 3000* and *Big Boy*. In addition, Ben has been coaching the singing sensation Usher both as an entertainer and an actor. Ben was featured in the movie, *On The One – Preaching to the Choir* directed by Charles Randolph-Wright. Other film credits include *Sweet Charity*, *All That Jazz*, *Funny Lady* (Golden Globe nomination), *Why Do Fools Fall in Love*, *And Then Came Love* starring Vanessa Williams, the animated movie *Once Upon a Forest*, *Christmas in Washington* and *The Painting*, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. In 2004, Ben was nominated for a "Career Achievement Award" by the Le Prix International Film Star Awards Organization.

The lecture circuit has become an integral part of Ben's career, as he has become one of the Nation's most requested speakers among audiences of all ages. His strong sense of social consciousness has enabled him to reach out to his audiences and convey to them a deep feeling of understanding. His topics range from overcoming adversity, arts in education, Black history, motivational topics, recovery through physical and occupational therapy and the importance of continuing education – to name a few.

Ben's gift of time has benefited many organizations. He has served on Ballet Florida's Board of Directors, the American Red Cross and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Association. In addition, he has served as chairman of several renowned organizations including the American Heart Association and the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Association. In 1989, he spearheaded his own organization, "Celebrities for a Drug Free America," which raised more than \$300,000 for drug rehabilitation centers, educational programs and inner city community-based projects. The Community Mental Health Council awarded Ben with their 2004 Lifeline Celebration Achievement Award. For his humanitarian contributions, he has received a number of awards including Israel's Cultural and Humanitarian Awards, three NAACP Image Awards, an Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian Award and a Victory Award. He has received honorary doctorates from the University of Arizona, Emerson College, St. Francis College, and Columbia College in Chicago. In 2001, Medgar Evers College created the Ben Vereen Scholarship for the Performing Arts, and in 2004, he received an Achievement in Excellence Award from his alma mater, the High School of the Performing Arts.

Ben celebrated Eartha Kitt's 80th birthday in concert at Carnegie Hall to multiple standing ovations and in front of the Armed Forces for those men and women who have served in Iraq, truly a major highlight of his career. He performed at the Inaugural Ball and entertained at the reopening of the Ford Theater in Washington, D.C., which was attended by President Obama, and also entertained at the Friar's Club gala honoring CBS president Leslie Moonves. Ben is leading an ongoing diabetes awareness campaign called "S.T.A.N.D." in partnership with sanofi-aventis pharmaceuticals. This year Ben starred in the Broadway-bound play *Fetch Clay, Make Man* at the award-winning McCarter Theater, directed by Des McAnuff (*Jersey Boys*).

About Raue Center For The Arts

Raue Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of all through the arts. For 11 years, they have provided quality programming – striving to make it pertinent, available and affordable to all. As a painstakingly restored, 1920s regional showcase theatre named for its benefactor—Lucile Raue—Raue Center has attracted the finest stars, Broadway shows, musicians and artists. Named on the League of Historic American Theatres, Raue Center is one of the finest examples of restored art and decor in the nation. The 750-seat theatre, located in historic, downtown Crystal Lake, is a gathering place for our region's citizens and has become a true destination. For additional information, visit rauecenter.org, [facebook.com/RaueCenter](https://www.facebook.com/RaueCenter) and twitter.com/RaueCenter.