

**The Denver Post**  
**May 14, 2011**

the cultural connection

## **Aspen quakes with arts offerings**

By The Denver Post

Posted: 05/14/2011 06:38:42 AM MDT

Updated: 05/14/2011 06:38:56 AM MDT



The 2,050-seat Benedict Music Tent is the site for many of Aspen's big music events. (Aspen Chamber of Commerce)

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Aspen is a sensory experience in the summer, a town transformed into a smorgasbord of arts-oriented activities. Get your culture fix at one of these world-class offerings.

**SEE:** The Aspen Art Museum (590 North Mill St., 970-925-8050, [aspenartmuseum.org](http://aspenartmuseum.org)) is always on the cutting edge of the international contemporary art world. Through the middle of the summer, view works by Nico Muhly and Cathy Wilkes along with "The Anxiety of Photography," by Mario Garcia Torres. In addition, at 3 p.m. every first Thursday, 17 galleries participate in an art walk; for a list, visit [aspensojourner.com](http://aspensojourner.com) (or look for the red balloons in front of the galleries in



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Aspen and Aspen Highlands).

Aspen Film's Summer Films series ([aspenfilm.org](http://aspenfilm.org)), a joint venture with the Aspen Institute, runs July 11-Aug. 8 and will feature "New Views: Premiere Documentaries," which highlights critically acclaimed documentaries along with conversations with the filmmakers. The program will be announced in June.

Theatre Aspen operates out of the Hurst Theatre (505 Rio Grande Park, 970-925-9313, [theatreaspen.org](http://theatreaspen.org)) and this summer will present "Becky's New Car," starring [Sandy Duncan](#) (June 24-July 23), as well as "Annie" (July 7-Aug. 20) and "Vice: A Love Story" (July 28-Aug. 20). See website for tickets.

**FEEL:** The annual Aspen Institute Aspen Ideas Festival ([aifestival.org](http://aifestival.org)), being held June 27-July 3 this year, considers such weighty topics as the economy, the digital universe, medicine, food and the meaning of happiness. Co-sponsored by The Aspen Institute and The Atlantic magazine, the Ideas Festival offers attendees the chance to sit in on lectures, presentations, debates and panel discussions with some of the top thinkers of our time, including writers, artists, teachers and



Bill Gates, at right, attended last year's Aspen Ideas Festival. The fest, June 27-July 3 this year, considers such weighty topics as the economy, the digital universe, medicine, food and the meaning of happiness. (Provided by the Aspen Institute)

leaders in a variety of other fields ô doctors, politicians, CEOs. The 2011 sessions will include Arianna Huffington, editor in chief of The Huffington Post; Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; and jazz musician Wynton Marsalis. This year's festival is sold-out, but there is a waiting list. Absolutely have to get in on a think- tank session of some sort? Visit the institute's site for the lectures being held on its grounds during the rest of the summer.

**HEAR:** Jazz/Aspen Snowmass festival already has Sheryl Crow and Jennifer Hudson onboard for the June 24-July 2 event, to be held at the Benedict Music Tent in Aspen. Tickets start at \$20; visit [jazzaspensnowmass.org](http://jazzaspensnowmass.org). Meanwhile, you can see bands perform Latin, blues, zydeco, soul, reggae, funk and country for free on Fanny Hill in Snowmass on Thursdays during the annual Summer of Free Music series; bring a picnic and a blanket (they have food and alcohol for sale, as well).

Aspen Music Festival and School ([aspenmusicfestival.com](http://aspenmusicfestival.com)) hosts music of all sorts from June 29 to Aug. 21 ô orchestra, chamber, opera, contemporary. Concerts are held at the Benedict Music Tent and Harris Concert Hall in the West End neighborhood, a 10-minute walk from downtown. Tickets start at \$10, except for the free Music on the Mountain offerings, which are held at 1 p.m. Saturdays at the top of Aspen Mountain (a gondola ticket is required; \$25 adult, \$15 youth). Aspen Music also stages three operas in the summer at Wheeler Opera House; see website for details.

Normally, though, Wheeler Opera House (320 E. Hyman Ave., 970-920-5770, [wheeleroperahouse.com](http://wheeleroperahouse.com)) is about everything but opera. From rock concerts to fashion shows, the refurbished 1889 building gives the people what they want: a wide variety of pop-culture entertainment. Coming up: an Eco Fashion Show on June 4 and acoustic duo Jackopierce on Sept. 10.

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