



YOUR YEAR STARTS HERE

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**FIRST NIGHT BOSTON 2009 ANNOUNCES EVENT HIGHLIGHTS**

**Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Opera Boston, WGBH 89.7's live national radio broadcast "Toast of the Nation" with Berklee alum Hiromi's Sonicbloom, Sxip Shirey's Sonic New York, Monkeyhouse, Tony V and Kenny Rogerson, plus film, swing dancing, fireworks, ice sculptures, the FedEx Family Festival, *Metro Boston* Grand Procession, WBZ-TV Countdown and more**

(BOSTON) First Night Boston is the country's oldest and largest New Year's arts celebration. On Dec. 31, 2008 from 1 p.m. to midnight, First Night presents a day-long festival of art, music, dance, ice sculpture, fireworks and more. First Night is an alcohol-free event that welcomes children, families and revelers of all ages to celebrate community and unity through the arts. First Night 2009 will feature over 1000 artists in 200 exhibitions and performances in over 40 locations in downtown Boston. Listed below are **some** of the highlights of this year's festival. Times and exact locations can be found at [www.firstnight.org](http://www.firstnight.org) in mid-November.

**Hiromi's Sonicbloom – Berklee Performance Center**

First Night has partnered with Berklee College of Music and WGBH 89.7 FM to present a very special show with Berklee alumni Hiromi's Sonicbloom, to be broadcast live in Boston on 89.7 and on stations across the country as part of NPR's annual New Year's Eve broadcast "Toast of the Nation." An evening of talented Berklee alumni and students is headlined by jazz phenomenon Hiromi, a composer/pianist known for her virtuosic technique and energetic live performances that blend jazz, classical and progressive rock. Her band will feature bassist Tony Grey, drummer Martin Valihora and guitarist David Fiuczynski.

**Commonwealth Shakespeare Company – Orpheum Theatre**

From the people who bring Free Shakespeare to Boston Common every summer, selected pieces will blend speeches, sonnets, scenes and songs inspired by Shakespeare into a joyful celebration of language and love. Performed by some of Boston's finest up-and-coming actors and directed by Founding Artistic Director Steven Maler, the performance is sure to delight audiences of all ages. Presented in association with 92.5 *The River*.

### **Opera Boston – Emmanuel Church**

Opera Boston artists will present operatic favorites and classic songs. Tenor Matthew DiBattista, soprano Megan Tillmann, and pianist Linda Osborn-Blaschke will present arias and duets from a variety of composers, selected from beloved as well as lesser-known works. Program details available mid-November.

### **Sxip's Sonic New York – Park Plaza Castle**

Freshly returned from the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, circus composer Sxip Shirey and human beat boxer Adam Matta preside over a table of mutant harmonicas, industrial flutes, regurgitated music boxes, siren whistles and other sonic marvels creating the most incredible visual soundscapes you will ever see and hear. Last year, Sxip's Hour of Charm at the A.R.T. played to effusive reviews, and Sxip has also performed at Symphony Hall with Amanda Palmer.

### **Tony V. and Kenny Rogerson – Hynes Convention Center**

Boston comedy veterans Tony and Kenny present "700 Billion Laughs: A Bailout of Humor From Some Serious Stupidity." Says Tony, "Start your year by investing in some titters and watching them grow to guffaws. This will be an evening of covering our own assets, diversifying some foolishness and restructuring your Hedge Fun. We got your dividends, Right Here!"

### **Monkeyhouse – John Hancock Hall**

Monkeyhouse, voted Boston's Best Dance Company by the Boston Phoenix Readers' Poll, returns for their fourth First Night filled with new inspiration for idiosyncratic dance theater pieces. After a yearlong sabbatical saturated with adventures in Iceland, Italy and England (among other places), Artistic Director Karen Krolak is refreshed, renewed and ready to experiment. Aren't you curious?

### **The FedEx Family Festival at the Hynes Convention Center**

The Family Festival features all kinds of entertainment and activities for all members of the family. In addition to face painting and crafts workshops, there will be puppet shows, music, comedians, jugglers, stunts and more. Don't miss **ImprovBoston Kids Comedy**, geared toward kids 8 - 12, or original songs from well-known Boston folkies **Ellis Paul** and **Sara Wheeler** whose young kids' repertoire is sure to please. Crowd pleasers **The Yo-Yo People** return, along with local rockers **Cul de Sac** who will provide live music to films geared toward kids. Neighborhood children also perform, with the Tony Fonseca Drummers' Cape Verdean rhythms, Chu Ling Dance Academy's traditional and contemporary Chinese dance, and the dynamic baton twirling of Jamaica Plain's

**Estrellas Tropicales.** Sponsored by FedEx, the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, *The Boston Parents Paper* and WUMB.

In addition to these and other great events, First Night will also feature Japanese Anime; films of the Roxbury Film Festival; swing dancing; five ice sculptures; **The Metro Boston First Night Grand Procession**; the **Boston Family Fireworks** presented by Mayor Menino and Boston 4 Productions; the traditional midnight fireworks over Boston Harbor; a midnight countdown with **WBZ-TV's Jack Williams and Lisa Hughes** at Copley Square, the "Keep Your Resolutions" Dance Party with some of Boston's Hottest DJ's also at Copley Square; and the countdown at the Parkman Bandstand featuring **Black Taxi** and **The Downbeat 5**.

Complete programming will be announced in mid-November.

This will be the 33rd First Night Boston. Founded in 1976, First Night was started by artists who sought an alternative to traditional New Year's Eve revelry. The celebration has grown from a small arts event centered on the Boston Common to an arts organization that showcases work by local, national and international artists. First Night has gone from attracting about 25,000 people to drawing crowds over one million, and generating an estimated \$47 million dollars in revenue for business in the City of Boston. The concept that originated in Boston 33 years ago has served as a model for more than 200 similar celebrations worldwide.

All First Night outdoor events are free, though supported by sales of the First Night button, which is the ticket for admission to all indoor events. Buttons are \$18 (children under 4 admitted free) and will be available beginning Nov. 28 at Boston-area Shaw's and Star Markets, Store 24, Au Bon Pain and dozens of other locations. For a complete list of advance sale locations or to buy buttons online, visit [www.firstnight.org](http://www.firstnight.org). Buttons are available at a special web price of \$15 at [www.firstnight.org](http://www.firstnight.org) through Dec. 26. Information about the 200 performances and exhibits at First Night Boston 2009 will be announced in the coming weeks. For more information, visit [www.firstnight.org](http://www.firstnight.org).

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