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TOP TEN

1 'AN EVENING WITH LUCY LIU BENEFITING UNICEF'

Join Lucy Liu in her effort with UNICEF's "Believing in Zero" campaign—a worldwide initiative to bring childhood deaths from 24,000 per day, to zero. *Houston* magazine and The Houstonian sponsor the event. **Jan. 14, 7:30PM.** Tickets \$1,000; tables from \$10,000. *Home of John and Becca Cason Thrash, 713.963.9390, nherpin@unicefusa.org*



[Q&A]

Top Billing

Controversial comedian **Bill Maher** has been canned from network television, heckled by 9/11 conspiracy theorists and sued by ex-porn-star girlfriends. Maher, who turns 54 this month, brings his bad-boy humor to Cullen Performance Hall on Jan. 30. Here he riffs on Houston, oil and Twitter. —*Peter Barnes*

When were you last in Houston? Two or three years ago. It's one of my favorite cities to [visit]. I don't go to bed early, so the show's over at 10 o'clock, I've got like four hours to kill before I go back to the hotel. Houston is a fun town. It was always a town where things were open, people were up, people were partying. **Most important issue in this country right now?** Plastic. We have to stop using plastic, like, yesterday. **Got anything to say to Houston's big-oil execs?** They could be the ones leading the way environmentally, instead of always having to be tugged along. **You host a TV show, write books, perform on Broadway and pen a blog. Think your Twitter account is really necessary?** I do. I resisted it at first, as I resist all technology at first. I would have resisted the wheel, I'm sure, if I was a cave man.

2 'A CHORUS LINE'

Now one of the longest-running Broadway shows ever, this musical centers on the stories of 17 Broadway dancers auditioning for spots on a chorus line. **Jan. 5-17,** consult website for schedule. Tickets \$26. *The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Sarofim Hall, 800 Bagby St., 800.982.2787, broadwayacrossamerica.com*

3 PATTI LABELLE

This '70s and '80s soul-singing diva can still belt out hits like "Lady Marmalade" and "New Attitude." **Jan. 8, 8PM.** Tickets \$50. *Arena Theatre, 7326 Southwest Fwy., 713.772.5900, arenahouston.com*

4 'CABARET FOR A CURE'

This party kicks off with cocktails and a silent auction, followed by a seated dinner with a performance by Grammy award-winning singer Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis, Jr. Proceeds from the evening benefit Legacy Community Health Services. **Jan. 15, 6:30PM.** Individual tickets \$500; tables from \$5,000. *Hilton Americas, 1600 Lamar St., 713.574.9736, mmandola@legacycommunityhealth.org*

5 'THE NEW NORMAL'

A post-9/11 Dick Cheney dubbed the new methods of combating terrorism through wiretapping, public cameras and Internet monitoring "the new normal." Borrowing from this idea, DiverseWorks displays 13 recent works by artists who delve into themes of privacy. **Jan. 15-Feb. 20.** *DiverseWorks, 1117 E. Fwy., 713.223.8346, diverseworks.org*

6 ALLEY THEATRE 'WONDERLAND BASH'

In conjunction with the Alley's world premiere musical *Wonderland*, *Houston* magazine sponsors this Alice-approved shindig. **Jan. 28, 8PM.** Tickets \$75; sponsorships from \$500. *Winter Street Studios, 2101 Winter St., 713.315.3389, morgant@alleytheatre.org*

7 BILL MAHER

Maher brings political and social commentary to U of H. (For more, see "Top Billing" at right.) **Jan. 30, 8PM.** Tickets \$60. *Cullen Performance Hall, 4800 Calhoun Rd., 713.743.5133, ticketmaster.com*

8 'THE PLANETS—AN HD ODYSSEY'

The Symphony world premiere of Gustav Holst's score set-off by high-def NASA images. **Jan. 21-24,** consult website for schedule. Tickets \$35. *Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St., 713.224.7575, houstonsymphony.org*

9 'TOSCA'

HGO delivers the dramatic Italian love triangle with new stage sets and classic Roman costumes. **Jan. 22, 30, Feb. 3, 5, 7,** consult website for schedule. Tickets from \$23. *Wortham Theater Center, Brown Theater, 501 Texas Ave., 713.228.6737, houstongrandopera.org*

10 RODEO UNCORKED!

Spring ahead: The Rodeo's must-hit wine-and-dine competition is a treat! **Feb. 21, 6:30PM.** Tickets \$100; tables from \$1,000. *Reliant Center, Halls D & E, One Reliant Park, 832.667.1128, rodeohouston.com*