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## PERFORMING ARTS



### THE DEAD WEATHER

The bluesy alt-rock quartet—fronted by The White Stripes' Jack White—drops its sophomore album, *Sea of Cowards*, this month. **May 1, 9PM.** Tickets \$30. *House of Blues, 1204 Caroline St., 888.40.blues, livenation.com*

### CINCO DE MAYO FESTIVAL

Salute Mexico's Independence Day by soaking up a series of cultural performances by local artists. **May 2, 6PM.** Free. *Miller Outdoor Theatre, 6000 Hermann Park Dr., 281.373.3386, milleroutdoortheatre.org*

### LUDACRIS

Luda's here to hype his latest album, *Battle of the Sexes*, armed with "How Low." **May 7, 8PM.** Tickets \$60. *Arena Theatre, 7326 Southwest Fwy., 713.772.5900, arenahouston.com*

### 'ARCADIA'

Tom Stoppard's famed time-traveling play delves into themes of passion, knowledge and attraction. **May 8- June 6,** consult website for schedule. Tickets \$10. *Main Street Theater, 2540 Times Blvd., 713.524.6706, mainstreettheater.com*

### 'BLAU & BAPTISM'

Local dance troupes Vault and 6 Degrees debut "Blau" and "Baptism," respectively, complete with flying bodies, trapeze artists and edgy choreography. **May 13-15, 20-22,** consult website for schedule. *DiverseWorks Art Space, 1117 E. Fwy., 713.335.3445, diverseworks.org*

### 'JANE EYRE'

Masquerade Theatre performs this much-loved Charlotte Bronte tale of a girl's journey from lonely governess to true love. **May 14-23,** consult website for schedule. Tickets \$30. *Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Zilkha Hall, 800 Bagby St., 713.861.7045, masqueradetheatre.com*

### BLUE OCTOBER

These hometown boys are dropping in to crank out faves like "Into the Ocean" and "Hate Me."

**May 15, 8:45PM.** Tickets \$15. *The Showgrounds at Sam Houston Race Park, 7575 N. Sam Houston Pkwy., 800.211.3381, livenation.com*

### 'INTELLIGENCE-SLAVE'

The Nazi wartime drama follows a concentration camp prisoner who is being kept alive because of rumors he's invented the world's first four-function calculator. **May 21-June 20,** consult website for schedule. Tickets \$40. *Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave., 713.220.5700, alleytheatre.org*

### 'RITE OF SPRING' AND 'RACH 3'

It's been said that this Igor Stravinsky masterpiece was so innovative in its 1913 debut that it caused a riot. **May 21-23,** consult website for schedule. Tickets \$25. *Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St., 713.224.7575, houstonsymphony.org*

### CITY WIDE DANCE FESTIVAL

Dance Houston's annual event features performances by all-local dance troupes—think Dominic Walsh Dance Theater—and highlights various styles including hip-hop, ballroom and contemporary. **May 22, 8PM.** Tickets from \$15. *Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Ave., 713.526.1049, dancehouston.org*

### TAYLOR SWIFT

Country-pop princess Swift is on the road for another go-round with her award-laden record *Fearless*. **May 25-26, 7PM.** Tickets \$25. *Toyota Center, 1510 Polk St., 866.446.8849, houstontoyotacenter.com*

### 'CIRQUE DE LA SYMPHONIE'

Aerialists, strongmen and impressive balancers deliver a mind-blowing performance set to the Symphony's soundtrack. **May 28-30,** consult website for schedule. Tickets \$25. *Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St., 713.224.7575, houstonsymphony.org*

Mercedes Smith



### Boy oh Boy!

HGO and Houston Ballet flutist Smith mans up

If not for the curtain separating performers from judges at blind auditions, HGO might've overlooked one of the city's most prolific classical musicians. "They didn't know I was 20 years old. They would have never hired me," says **Mercedes Smith**, who seven years ago became principal flutist in the middle of her senior year at Manhattan School of Music. She now pulls double duty with the same job at Houston Ballet, too.

This month she makes her *onstage* debut at the Wortham in Handel's *Xerxes* at HGO (through May 14), playing a male musician. "You wouldn't be a woman and play music 100 years ago." Smith's also prepping to play five different instruments in Broadway Across America's *Wicked* June 30-July 25.

On rare evenings out of the orchestra pit, Smith, 27, jogs through Midtown, where she lives with her pup Charlie. And, besides music, she adores other performance arts. "The saddest thing about having a job playing for Houston Ballet is that I never get to see the ballet, which is my favorite thing in the whole world." —Peter Barnes