

Negin Farsad

Saturday, February 22, 2020

7:30 pm



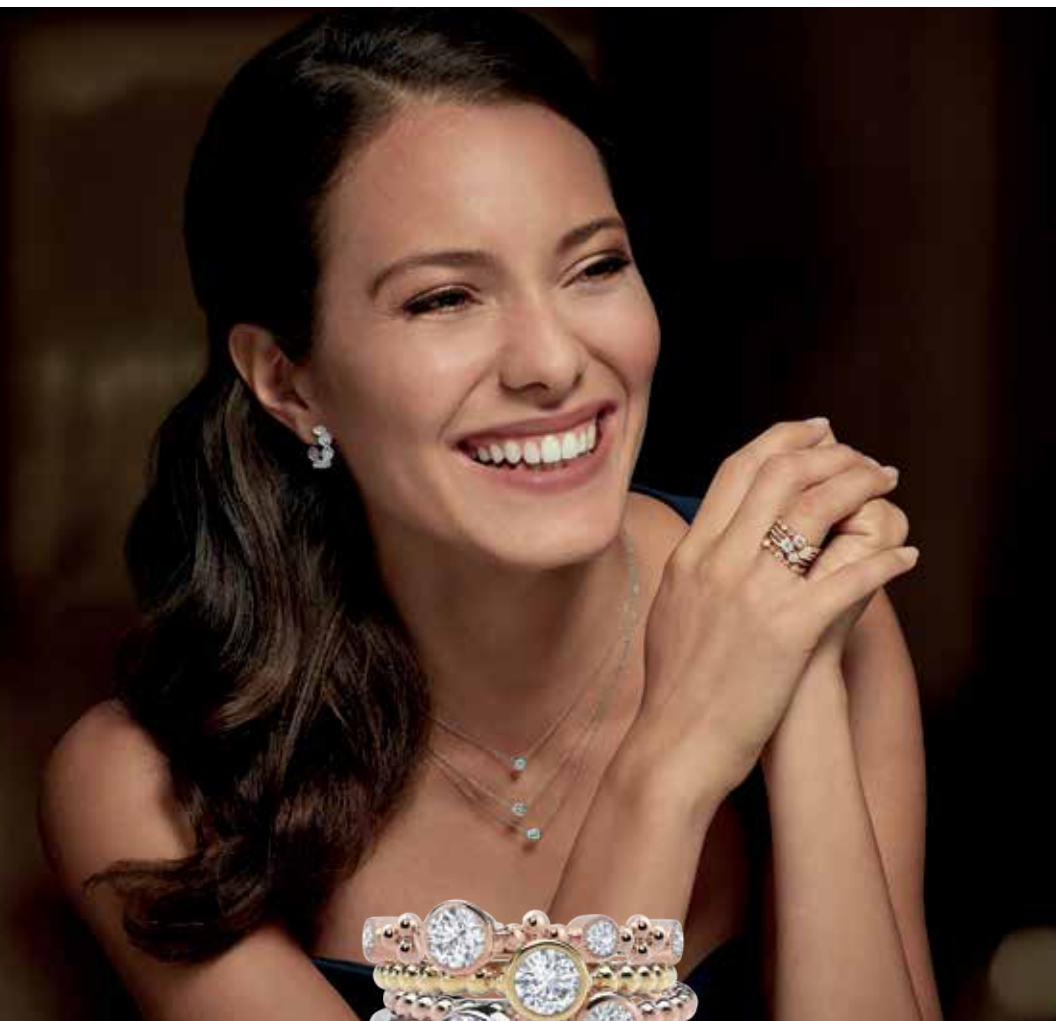
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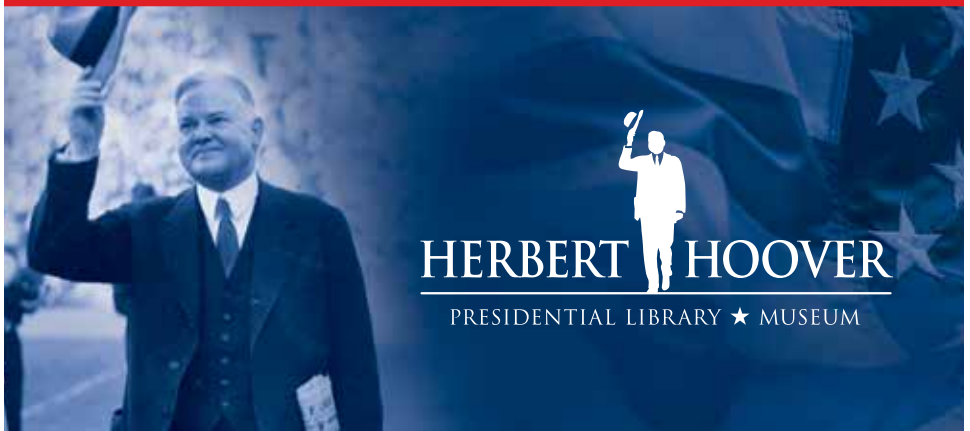
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About the Artist

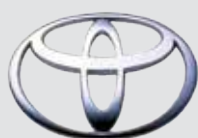


Photo © Charles Lu

NEGIN FARSAD was named one of the 50 Funniest Women by *Huffington Post*, one of the 10 Best Feminist Comedians by *Paper Magazine*, and was selected as a TEDFellow and gave a TEDTalk for her work in social justice comedy. She is author of the Thurber Prize-nominated book *How to Make White People Laugh* and host of the podcast *Fake the Nation* on the Earwolf network. She is a regular on NPR's *Wait Wait Don't Tell Me* and can be seen on HBO's *High Maintenance*, the reboot of CBS's *Murphy Brown*, ABC's *Emergence* and as the voice of Meredith on Adult Swim's *Birdgirl*. Negin is the filmmaker behind the Amazon & Netflix feature films *The Muslims Are Coming!* (with Jon Stewart), *3rd Street Blackout* (with Ed Weeks & John Hodgman), and *Nerdcore Rising* (with Weird Al Yankovic). She has a column in *Progressive Magazine* and you can read her op-eds in *The Guardian*, *Oprah Mag*, and other publications. She started her comedy career as a Cornell and Columbia-educated policy advisor for the City of New York.

There will be no intermission.

*Negin Farsad will be signing copies of her book, *How to Make White People Laugh*, in the lobby immediately following the performance.*



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An A to Z History of Comedians at Hancher Auditorium

A

STEVE ALLEN

1993 | October 21



TOM ARNOLD

2007 | January 11

DAVE ATTELL

2005 | December 7

AVNER THE ECCENTRIC

1994 | March 6

B

P.D.Q. BACH

1975 | March 2

1982 | October 25

1987 | October 17

BOB BERKY

1985 | September 29

LEWIS BLACK

2007 | September 22



VICTOR BORGE

1979 | September 16

1991 | December 13

JOHN BOWMAN

2007 | September 22

C

THE CAPITOL STEPS

1996 | September 6

1999 | October 28 & 29

2002 | May 3



GEORGE CARLIN

1985 | March 19

MARGARET CHO

2003 | August 29

BILL COSBY

1980 | October 18

D



PHYLLIS DILLER

1979 | January 28

F

NEGIN FARSAD

2020 | February 22

**MICHAEL FELDMAN,
WHAD'YA KNOW**

2000 | September 23

2006 | June 3

AL FRANKEN

1998 | April 20

G

MARGA GOMEZ

1994 | November 17

KATHY GRIFFIN

2008 | October 4

I

**INCONVENIENT JOKES: HOT
HUMOR FOR A HOT PLANET**

2007 | September 13

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

An A to Z History of Comedians at Hancher Auditorium

K

SAM KINISON

1987 | March 6

TOMÁŠ KUBÍNEK

2006 | May 7

2010 | November 5

2016 | November 5

MIKE LAWRENCE

2012 | January 28

L



JAY LENO

1986 | December 1

1988 | September 8

JERRY LEWIS

1993 | October 13

*LIVE FROM IOWA CITY...
IT'S SUNDAY NIGHT FUN*

1997 | June 22

O

JOHN OLIVER

2012 | January 28

R

ANNA RUSSELL

1978 | April 11

MARK RUSSELL

2000 | September 9 & 10

S

THE SECOND CITY

1976 | January 23

1989 | March 4

JERRY SEINFELD

1988 | April 12

PAULY SHORE

2005 | December 7

T



LILY TOMLIN

1976 | January 30

2005 | October 14

2013 | November 16

W

STEVEN WRIGHT

1986 | May 2

Y



WEIRD AL YANKOVIC

2004 | April 2



BASSEM YOUSSEF

2018 | April 7

The New Colossus

Brings our Stories to the Stage



Photo: Ashley Randall

In *The New Colossus*, The Actors' Gang members tell their ancestors' stories, their struggles, and their journeys from oppression to freedom. The play celebrates the courage and great character of the refugees who came to this country throughout the last 300 years. The ensemble of twelve reflects the great diversity that has defined who we are as a nation; *The New Colossus* is a celebration of our diversity.

Set somewhere between the 19th century and now, the play tells the story of forced migration and the constant struggle for survival and dignity in an uncertain and hostile environment. The members of the acting company are from different parts of the world; they tell their stories, each in a different language, and each in different dress. Actors from Iran, Turkey, Malaysia, Germany, Vietnam, Louisiana, Mexico, Finland, Hungary, Soviet Union, and Austria will be in the company.

The director of *The New Colossus* is Academy Award-winner Tim Robbins (*Mystic River*, *Dead Man Walking*, *The Shawshank Redemption*). He said, "I live in Los Angeles, where one can only be struck by the contributions made to our city by immigrants and people who came here as refugees. The Actors' Gang felt compelled to respond to the government's anti-refugee and anti-immigration policies—and to tell a story that draws attention to the true nature of people that live in this country. Save for the Indigenous, all of our families came here as refugees, immigrants, or were brought here against their will.

"The characters in the piece all seem different, from different parts of the world, travelling at different times—but the stories are remarkably the same: the common experience of all refugees is that they are fleeing some kind of oppression and moving toward safety and hopefully, freedom. Our hope is that we will be able to illuminate the courage, fortitude, and humor of the refugees that have defined this land and, in doing so, discover the similarities that exist between our ancestors and those who are currently struggling for dignity and freedom today."

The New Colossus

by Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-brided harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”



The New Colossus shares a title with the sonnet written by poet Emma Lazarus in 1883 for an exhibit to raise funds for the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty, which opened in 1886. Even though the Statue of Liberty was not conceived as a symbol of immigration, Lazarus’s “The New Colossus” reinvented the statue’s purpose, turning Liberty into a welcoming mother, a symbol of hope to the outcasts and oppressed of the world.

At the end of each performance the actors will engage the audience and ask them to share either their experience of immigration or their family’s experience.

The New Colossus has its beginnings in The Actors’ Gang 2017 Refugee Project Workshop Production, in which actors told true, personal stories about their ancestors—where they came from, why they had to leave, and where they arrived and settled.

The New Colossus is at Hancher Auditorium February 29, 2020. For tickets, visit hancher.uiowa.edu or call 800-HANCHER.

The Actors’ Gang

Over the past 36 years, The Actors’ Gang has produced over 200 plays in Los Angeles, in forty-five U. S. states, and on five continents. The company was founded in 1981 by a group of young artists looking to build a theatre that would present relevant and vibrantly entertaining plays.

Guided by Founding Artistic Director and Academy Award-winning actor Tim Robbins, the company provides a supportive environment for a diverse ensemble of artists and the development of their groundbreaking work.



César Pelli (1926–2019)

Hancher architect and friend

César Pelli was a brilliant architect, and it was truly an honor to have him design the current Hancher Auditorium. We were even more honored to call him our friend.

That friendship began immediately after Pelli Clark Pelli Architects was selected to design a new Hancher Auditorium following the destruction of the original building by the flooding of 2008. César felt a personal connection to Hancher's work, and he made sure to connect with members of the staff and the University of Iowa community to ensure his ideas honored Hancher's past and elevate its future. At his firm's offices in New Haven, Connecticut, he devoted an entire room to the project, and he was always happy to share his thoughts about the building with visitors.

César was delighted by the beautiful setting—often commenting that it was the most gorgeous site for which he had designed a building—and he was committed to making the most of the space. He brought the indoors and the outdoors together in the lobby spaces and rehearsal room and designed an exceptional performance space.

His joy for the project was palpable from beginning to end. He came to Iowa City for the major milestones of the project, including our Site Ceremony connecting the original Hancher to the new, our Leave Your Mark beam signing (after which he joined hundreds of construction workers on the as-yet-unfinished stage for lunch), and our Gala Opening. On opening night, César took the stage with Hancher Executive Director Chuck Swanson to launch a new era for Hancher. We'll always remember his words that night: "Hancher was built with love."

We are saddened to lose our friend. We are blessed to have the opportunity to serve our campus and community in a building that will always stand as a tribute to César.

Above: César Pelli at the opening night of the Hancher Auditorium, 2016 (Photo: Bill Adams)

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The Vision for Hancher Auditorium: Cultivating the Arts at Iowa

This is the third in a series of essays about Virgil Hancher and his vision for the arts in general, and Hancher Auditorium in particular, at the University of Iowa. The essays will appear in playbills throughout this season and will be available on the Hancher website, as well.

By Daniel Boscaljon

Virgil Hancher was an important part of a larger context that championed innovations in the fusion of academics, the arts, and student life that coalesced in the vision for what is now called Hancher Auditorium on the University of Iowa campus. Hancher had recognized the need for a vital student center due to his experience of isolation as a freshman. Then he was part of campus life in the early 1920s when administrators first began to envision Iowa as a cultural leader.

President Walter Jessup and Graduate Dean Carl Seashore initiated the *Iowa Idea* of integrating creative and critical work and bringing artists into academic contexts. Thanks to them, Iowa was one of the first schools to reward creative work with graduate degrees beginning in 1922. This work came in conjunction with the creative leadership of departments in the arts that were beginning to emerge.



Walter Jessup



Carl Seashore

Philip Clapp came to Iowa in 1919 and both created and led the School of Music until his death in 1954, with courses earning academic credit beginning in 1921. One of Clapp's innovations was to broadcast his music appreciation/music theory course over the radio beginning in 1931, with a positive response



Philip Clapp



E. C. Mabie

from "students" all over the state. The Department of Speech was not far behind following the appointment of E. C. Mabie, who led the department from 1923-1956. Mabie worked together with the Englert Theatre and the university (using what is now Macbride Auditorium) as stages.

A third important ingredient in the foundation of what became Hancher Auditorium is the Iowa Memorial Union and its director Rufus Fitzgerald, who was also active in the cultural scene of the early 1920s. He left the YMCA in 1923 to become as the director of the IMU, which was beginning to raise funds to construct a building that would house extracurricular clubs as well as serve as a place where students and faculty could socialize. Virgil Hancher recognized the need for a Union early on, writing of the need for one in a 1919 editorial. He became one of Fitzgerald's active fundraisers among alumni in 1923.



Rufus Fitzgerald



Above: a map of proposed Fine Arts campus, The University of Iowa, 1933

By 1933, following SUI's acquisition of land on the west bank of the Iowa River, Jessup, Clapp, and Fitzgerald joined together to dream about an arts campus along the river.

Soon after, the campus saw an explosive expansion of academic and artistic hybrids in various departments throughout the liberal arts. Wilbur Schramm



Campus planning conference in UI president Jessup's office about fine arts campus, 1930s

began the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1936, and Lester Longman, the first chair of the Department of Art, merged Art History and Studio Arts together beginning in 1938. Grant Wood taught at Iowa from 1934–1941, as did Robert Penn Warren in 1941.

This innovative foundation led to additional new developments. For example, a collaboration between Norman Foerster (English) and Harrison J. Thornton (History) using history and the social sciences as a way to discuss the production of literary texts became the American Studies program in 1947 with Alexander Kern serving as its first director.

Thus, by 1941 and Hancher's inauguration as President of SUI, the campus had created a clear culture of aesthetic and academic innovation—one that



Hancher had participated in from its beginnings. Some changes were made in leadership at this time, including Paul Engle taking over the Writers' Workshop. The idea for an auditorium was important as an expansion on the space of the IMU, one that was designed to provide a home that would showcase work of the caliber of its increasingly esteemed faculty and serve as a home for a vital, creative student body.

The larger international context of conflict and racialized hatred made the success of SUI's innovative leadership even more important. In an age of nationalistic attempts to use fear to unite people in hatred, the creation of a space of unity via the arts was an important alternative. It is in this spirit that Earl E. Harper—who took over Fitzgerald's role as Director of the IMU in 1938, declared in his October 30, 1943 speech *Fine Arts when Peace Comes*:

...the more the limited interests of the present keep the minds of the people narrowed and subjugated, the more urgent becomes the desire to unite the politically divided world under the flag of truth and beauty. ...[while] the fine arts as the free expression of the free spirit of mankind are driven out or forgotten for a while in ancient centers where they once reigned supreme, they will find new homes.

The State University of Iowa had developed a forty-year legacy of becoming an inviting home of the free expression of the free spirit of humans under the flag of truth and beauty. Hancher's vision for an auditorium would cement this vision and commit the University of Iowa to continuing to create, innovate, and promote a liberated and expanded vision of human community.

Daniel Boscaljon is a longtime contributor to arts writing in the ICR, often providing interviews, reviews, and essays on aesthetics for Little Village and The Englert as well as for Hancher. An independent scholar, teacher, and arts critic, he is committed to inviting others to incorporate wisdom and joy as part of everyday life. In addition to teaching workshops and holding free public conversations in the area, Daniel also has three current ventures including the Center for Humanist Inquiries (professional consultations), Coffee with Dan (spiritual direction and philosophical life coaching), and The Thoughtful Life (a non-profit venture that includes his "Making Space for Yourself" podcast). You can find his writing and more information about his services at danielboscaljon.com.

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The Hancher Showcase offers unique items perfect for gifts—or for yourself! All proceeds support Hancher's educational programs.

HOURS

The Hancher Showcase is open one hour before performances, during intermission, and after.

Wednesdays

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Thursdays

5:00 to 7:30 pm



A photograph of a man with a shaved head and a goatee, wearing a blue t-shirt and khaki pants, lying on his back on a white surface. He is holding a young child with curly hair, wearing a yellow shirt and blue jeans, up in the air with both hands. The child is looking down at the man. The background is a solid yellow color.

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