

Vereen to sign CDs in advance of TPAC show

WIBW's Hipp to interview Broadway star at free Barnes & Noble event



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Before he takes the stage Saturday night to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Topeka Performing Arts Center, the artist to mark its grand opening, Ben Vereen, will greet fans and sign copies of his CD on Thursday night.

The free event at 7 p.m. today at Barnes & Noble, 6130 S.W. 17th, will feature WIBW-TV news anchor Ralph Hipp interviewing Vereen about his career and why he decided to return to Topeka to celebrate TPAC's 20th anniversary.

Those attending will have an opportunity to purchase and have signed a copy of Vereen's CD, "Steppin' Out Live," which was released Feb. 11 by Sh-K Boom Records, the label created by Tony Award-nominated actress and singer Sherie Rene Scott, who grew up Topeka and had her first acting roles here. "Steppin' Out Live" includes songs Vereen recorded live at a Hartford, Conn., theater where he performed material he will do at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at TPAC, 214 S.E. 8th.

Tickets can be purchased at the CD signing for the live concert. Prices are \$75, \$35 (floor and lower balcony) and \$20 (upper balcony). Tickets also are on sale at the TPAC box office and through Ticketmaster at (800) 745-3000, www.ticketmaster.com and the ticket service's retail outlets.

Best known for his Tony Award-winning role of Leading Player in "Pippin" and his Emmy Award-nominated role of Chicken George in the landmark "Roots" miniseries, Vereen has had scores of other television and film roles, as well as other success on the stage and in concert halls.

Saturday's TPAC concert, "An Evening with Ben Vereen," is presented by Capitol Federal Savings. Co-presenters are WIBW Channels, St. Francis Health Centers and the Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey. Sponsors include Bartlett & West; Security Benefit; Krumins McGee Financial Group of Wells Fargo Advisors; CoreFirst Bank & Trust; Goodell, Stratton, Edmonds & Palmer, LLP; HDB Construction; His & Her Salon & Day Spa; INTRUST Bank; Irigonegaray & Associates; LJ Building Maintenance; My Company Inc.; NAACP; Kelly Deeter, DDS; Kansas Medical Clinic; Oriental Express; Teach Inc.; Topeka Collegiate School; and the Topeka Chapter of The Links Inc.

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