

April Theater: The Dark Side of the Stage

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Apr 2014 | By Robert Loerzel |

It may finally be spring, but this month's noteworthy plays have a dark tinge.

Death will come dancing at Writers Theatre, while the past disturbs a young man at Next. Elsewhere, a sea captain's obsessive quest will drive him toward destruction. But it won't be all doom and gloom—hope springs eternal at the theater.

Road Show

Through May 4

"Gypsy" has bowed out, but **Gary Griffin's** double feature of Stephen Sondheim isn't over. Griffin is also directing "[Road Show](#)," a lesser-known Sondheim musical, in the intimate space at this Navy Pier theater. **Michael Aaron Lindner** and **Andrew Rothenberg** play the charismatic Mizner brothers, who wheel and deal their way from the Alaskan gold rush of the late 1800s to the Florida real estate boom of the 1920s. [Chicago Shakespeare Theater](#), 800 E. Grand Ave., Chicago, 312-595-5600 (pictured)



The Great God Pan

Through May 11

Two years ago, **Kimberly Senior** directed playwright **Amy Herzog's** "After the Revolution" for this Evanston company. Now, she's staging this Midwest premiere of another drama by Herzog, who explores the mysterious nature of human memory and how it shapes us in the present moment. The protagonist of "The Great God Pan" has a beautiful girlfriend, a new job and loving parents, but his life is shaken when a possible childhood trauma comes to light. [Next Theatre](#), 927 Noyes St., Evanston, 847-475-1875

The Dance of Death

Through July 20

The title of Swedish playwright August Strindberg's 1900 drama about a crumbling marriage is a dead giveaway: This isn't going to be a lightweight frolic. This new version is by **Conor McPherson**, the masterful Irish author of plays including "Port Authority," which Writers Theatre staged this past winter. When McPherson's version of Strindberg's "Dance" hit the London stage in 2012, a critic for the Telegraph called it "spectacularly bleak yet curiously bracing." Now, **Henry Wishcamper** (the guiding force behind [Goodman Theatre](#) shows including "Animal Crackers") is directing the U.S. premiere—quite a coup for this Glencoe company. [Writers Theatre at Books on Vernon](#), 664 Vernon Ave., Glencoe, 847-242-6000

Moby Dick

April 25–May 4

Northwestern University productions star talented students, but they're also worthwhile because experienced and innovative faculty members are at the helm. Visiting assistant professor **David Catlin**, a [Lookingglass](#) ensemble

member who recently directed “The Little Prince” at that theater, is staging his new adaptation of Herman Melville’s classic novel about Captain Ahab and his maniacal quest for that elusive white whale. And he’s doing it with help from Evanston’s [Actors Gymnasium](#), taking advantage of their high-flying aerial acrobatics and physical style of storytelling. [Northwestern University’s Ethel M. Barber Theater](#), 30 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7282

Theater Guide

BANK OF AMERICA THEATRE

[Peter and the Starcatcher](#)

April 2–13

312-977-1700

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

[Tristan & Yseult](#)

Through April 13

[Henry V](#)

April 29–June 15

312-595-5600

GIFT THEATRE

[Thinner Than Water](#)

Through May 25

773-283-7071

GOODMAN THEATRE

[God’s Work](#)

April 4–19

312-443-3800

LOOKINGGLASS THEATRE

[In The Garden: A Darwinian Love Story](#)

April 16–June 15

312-337-0665

MARRIOTT THEATRE

[Cats](#)

Through May 25

847-634-0200

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

[33 rpm and a few seconds](#)

April 10–12

312-397-4010

ORIENTAL THEATRE

[Motown the Musical](#)

April 22–July 13

312-977-1700

PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE (AT STAGE 773)

[How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying](#)

April 26–June 1

773-327-5252

A RED ORCHID THEATRE

[Mud Blue Sky](#)

April 9–May 25

312-943-8722

REMY BUMPPO THEATRE (AT GREENHOUSE)

[Our Class](#)

Through May 11

773-244-8119

SHATTERED GLOBE THEATRE (AT THEATER WIT)

[Mill Fire](#)

April 24–June 7

773-975-8150

STEEP THEATRE

[If There Is I Haven't Found It Yet](#)

April 17–May 24

866-811-4111

STEPPENWOLF THEATRE

[The Way West](#)

Through June 8

312-335-1650

TEATRO VISTA (AT VICTORY GARDENS RICHARD CHRISTIANSEN THEATER)

[A View From the Bridge](#)

April 11–May 18

773-599-9280

TIMELINE THEATRE

[Juno](#)

April 23–July 27

773-281-8463

Photo by Michael Brosilow