

Theater events: Chicago Shakespeare re-imagines 'The Tempest'

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- Larry Yando plays Prospero and Eva Louise Balistreiri plays his daughter, Miranda, in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's re-imagined "The Tempest."

Courtesy of Bill Burlingham

Magical 'Tempest'

Aaron Posner and Teller (of the magic duo Penn & Teller) helm Chicago Shakespeare Theater's season-opening production of William Shakespeare's "The Tempest," which also features music by singer/songwriter Tom Waits and choreography from the dance ensemble Pilobolus. Award-winner Larry Yando stars as Prospero, the deposed duke turned sorcerer, who lures his enemies to an enchanted island to take revenge on them. Previews begin at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 8, at Navy Pier, 800 E. Grand Ave., Chicago. The show opens Sept. 17. \$48-\$88. (312) 595-5600 or chicagoshakes.com.

Snapshot of war

Mary-Arrchie Theatre Co. begins its 30th and final season with Peter Morris' war drama "Guardians." Arianna Soloway directs this two-hander starring Jaci Entwisle and Adam Soule, which unfolds as a series of monologues chronicling the torture of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers. Mary-Arrchie recently announced that having lost its longtime home, it will close next year after its 30th season. Previews begin at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 8, at Angel Island, 735 W. Sheridan Road, Chicago. The show opens Sept. 10. \$10-\$30. (773) 871-0442 or maryarrchie.com.

On the bright side

Metropolis Performing Arts Centre's 15th anniversary season continues with "Spamalot," the Eric Idle and John DuPrez musical that premiered in Chicago 10 years ago. Based on the 1975 film "Monty Python and the Holy Grail," "Spamalot" centers on the efforts of King Arthur and his knights to complete their quest despite ill-mannered Frenchmen and killer rabbits. Joe Bianco, of Elk Grove Village, plays King Arthur in director Robin Hughes' revival. Previews begin at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 10, at 111 W. Campbell St., Arlington Heights. The show opens Sept. 16. \$30, \$38. (847) 577-2121 or metropolisarts.com.

Other theater events

- Previews begin Friday, Sept. 4, for Interrobang Theatre Project's Midwest premiere of "Katrina: Mother-in-Law of 'Em All." Rob Florence's dark comedy unfolds in New Orleans' Mother-in-Law Lounge where Katrina survivors recount their experiences during the 2005 hurricane. The play inaugurates the company's sixth season devoted to "Unnatural Disasters" and how people cope with them. Co-artistic director Georgette Verdin directs the show, which opens Sunday, Sept. 6. See interrobangtheatreproject.org.
- "The Revel," a play with music in which the order of a former coal town is contrasted with the revelry occurring on a nearby mountain, begins previews Friday, Sept. 4, at Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division St., Chicago. Leslie Buxbaum Danzig, of 500 Clown, directs Damon Kiely's adaptation of Euripides' "The Bacchae," which was commissioned and developed by The House Theatre of Chicago and the University of Chicago. The show opens Sept. 13. (773) 769-3832 or thehousetheatre.com.
- BoHo Theatre concludes its 2015 season with "Dogfight," the 2012 musical adaptation of the film set in 1963. It's about marines about to be deployed to Vietnam who agree to an ugliest date contest known as a "dogfight." Eddie invites an awkward but idealist young woman named Rose who makes a bigger impression on him than he expected. Peter Marston Sullivan directs principals Emily Goldberg and Garrett Lutz in the musical, which begins previews Saturday, Sept. 5, at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. The show opens Sept. 12. (773) 975-8150 or bohotheatre.com.
- "Heroes," the next installment of the Waltzing Mechanics' "El Stories" inspired by the stories of public transportation

users, centers on "small moments of kindness that just may have saved someone's day," said director and adapter Sara Sawicki in a prepared statement. The show opens at 11 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 5, at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago. (773) 404-7336 or waltzingmechanics.org.

- Previews begin Saturday, Sept. 5, for "Splatter Theater," the parody of slasher films now its 27th year at The Annoyance Theatre, 851 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. The adults-only show opens at 10 p.m. Sept. 19 and runs through Oct. 31, with an additional performance at 8 p.m. Oct. 31. (773) 697-9693 or theannoyance.com.
- Desperate to get from her native Jamaica to the United States, 18-year-old Debra Ehrhardt arranges with a CIA agent to smuggle millions of dollars into Miami in "Jamaica, Farewell," Ehrhardt's based-on-fact play. Performances begin Tuesday, Sept. 8, at the Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted St., Chicago. (312) 988-9000 or jamaicafarewelltheplay.com.
- The Artistic Home artistic director Kathy Scambiaterra directs a cast of 22 in William Saroyan's slice-of-life drama "The Time of Your Life," about the cops, drunks, prostitutes and longshoremen who populate a San Francisco saloon in 1939. Previews begin Wednesday, Sept. 9, at 1376 W. Grand Ave., Chicago. The show opens Sept. 11. (312) 243-3963 or theartistichome.org.
- Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago, debuts a new event titled Backstage at the Biograph, which takes audience members behind-the-scenes to experience the rehearsal process for each production. It begins at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 9, with a look at Roy Williams' "Sucker Punch." Boxing coach Ruben Gonzalez, fight choreographer Chuck Coyl, and actors Maurice Demus and Denzel Love show audience members what it takes to stage a boxing match. Admission is free, but reservations are required. (773) 871-3000.
- Court Theatre resident artist Ron OJ Parson returns to direct his sixth play for Court, August Wilson's "Gem of the Ocean." Part of the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright's Century Cycle, the play centers on Ester Tyler, who cleanses souls from the lingering malaise of slavery. Previews begin Thursday, Sept. 10, at 5535 S. Ellis Ave., Chicago. The production opens Sept. 19. (773) 753-4472 or courtheatre.org.
- In Aline Lathrop's "Merchild," parents find themselves at odds over their 8-year-old son who dreams of becoming a mermaid and marrying a prince. 16th Street Theater, 6420 16th St., Berwyn, presents the world premiere drama about a transgender child and the family's response. Previews begin Thursday, Sept. 10. Director Ann Filmer's production starring Lia D. Mortensen, Malcolm Callan and Peyton Shaffer, of Drury Lane Theatre's "Billy Elliot," opens Sept. 16. (708) 795-6704 or 16thstreettheater.org.
- The League of Chicago Theatres relaunched Theatre Thursdays showcasing one premiere each month from Chicago companies. The 2015-2016 season begins Thursday, Sept. 10, with "The Revel," a celebration of mountain music by writer Damon Kiely, director Leslie Buxbaum Danzig and composer Jess McIntosh. Theater fans who attend at least six of the 12 Theatre Thursday events will be eligible to win a gift card to Formento's restaurant. See chicagoplays.com.
- "Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash," has been extended through Nov. 1 at Mercury Theater Chicago, 3745 N. Southport Ave., Chicago. A commercial transfer from Indiana's Theatre at the Center, "Ring of Fire" chronicles Cash's career with more than two dozen songs including "I Walk the Line," "Folsom Prison Blues" and others. The production recently received Joseph Jefferson Award nominations for production, director Brian Russell, music director Malcolm Ruhl and performers Kent M. Lewis (Johnny), Cory Goodrich (June Carter Cash) and Michael Monroe Goodman (Young Johnny). (773) 325-1700 or mercurytheaterchicago.com.
- The Illinois Theatre Association named First Folio Theatre in Oakbrook Terrace as professional company of the year and circus artist Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi, co-founder of The Actors Gymnasium in Evanston and an artistic associate with Lookingglass Theatre Company, as the recipient of its honor award for 2015.
- Royal George Theatre announced headliner Hershey Felder -- the multihyphenate piano-composer-producer-

director -- will oversee its main stage shows for 2015-2016, beginning on Tuesday, Sept. 8, with "Jamaica, Farewell." That's followed by "I Found My Horn" (Oct. 30-Dec. 6), about a newly divorced man who decides to master the French horn he abandoned decades earlier. Opening Dec. 11 is "Baritones Unbound," a music and comedy showcase featuring Marc Kudisch, Mark Delavan and Nathan Gunn. The season concludes in early 2016 with the Chicago premiere of "Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin" about the life of the man who composed "God Bless America," "There's No Business Like Show Business," "Blue Skies," "Puttin' on the Ritz" and others. Performances take place at 1641 N. Halsted St., Chicago. Tickets range from \$50 to \$60. Buy tickets for all four shows and save \$15; buy three shows, save \$10, buy two shows, save \$5 per ticket. (312) 988-9000 or ticketmaster.com.

- Pegasus Theatre Chicago opens its 2015-2016 season with the world premiere of "For Her as a Piano" a drama by Nambi E. Kelley ("Native Son") with music by Jaret Landon. Performances begin Sept. 30 for this solo show about a woman discovering her family history. The company's 29th annual Young Playwrights Festival, a competition for Chicago high school playwrights, runs Dec. 30 to Jan. 24, 2016. The season concludes with a spring 2016 production to be announced. Performances take place at Chicago Dramatists, 1105 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago. Tickets are available by phone at (866) 811-4111 or online at pegasustheatrechicago.org.