

Theater events: 'Defending the Caveman' turns 25

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- Ben Tedder stars in "Defending the Caveman" at the Skokie Theatre this weekend. Courtesy of MadKap Productions

'Cave man' at 25

The 25th anniversary tour of "Defending the Caveman" returns to the Skokie Theatre for a brief run courtesy of MadKap and Theater Mogul productions. Ben Tedder stars in Rob Becker's comic examination of gender wars and the male-female dynamic. 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 14; 5 and 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 15; and 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 16, at 7924 Lincoln Ave., Skokie. \$40. (847) 677-7761 or SkokieTheatre.org.

Mystery benefit

The Prairie Center Arts Foundation presents "Binge," a comedy whodunit inspired by how some people watch their favorite television shows. It's part of the annual mystery theater fundraiser benefiting the foundation, which champions cultural arts in Schaumburg by securing grants and corporate sponsorships to support local arts organizations and Prairie Center youth programs. 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 14-15, at 201 Schaumburg Court, Schaumburg. \$20. (847) 895-3600 or prairiecenter.org.

'East Texas Hot Links'

It's 1955 and the Ku Klux Klan is on the rise in East Texas, where young African-American men have gone missing and several have turned up dead. But at the Top 'o The Hill Cafe, a few regulars have created a haven until a betrayal threatens their safety in Eugene Lee's "East Texas Hot Links." Ron OJ Parson helms Writers Theatre's revival. Parson first directed the dramedy in 1995 for the Onyx Theatre Ensemble, which he founded with "East Texas" cast member Alfred H. Wilson. Previews begin at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 19, at 325 Tudor Court, Glencoe. The show opens Oct. 26. \$35-\$80. (847) 242-6000 or writerstheatre.org.

Other theater events

- A book club is really cover for one couple's preparations for a zombie uprising in "Zombie Broads" by Corbette Pasko and Sara Seigny. The Factory Theater opens its second season with the world premiere of the ghoulish comedy. Previews begin Friday, Oct. 14, at 1621 W. Howard St., Chicago. The show opens Oct. 21. See thefactorytheater.com.
- The eclectic vocal ensemble VOX 3 presents "The Squeeze," an original musical about how the middle class copes with stagnant wages and an increased workload. The show, by composer/lyricist Amos Gillespie, runs Friday, Oct. 14, at Dank Haus, 4740 N. Western Ave., Chicago, and Tuesday, Oct. 18, at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. See vox3.org.
- Stage Left Theatre presents the world premiere of "The Bottle Tree," Beth Kander's drama examining the debate over gun control. It centers on a young adult woman still trying to come to terms with a high school shooting her brother committed when they were both teenagers. Previews begin Saturday, Oct. 15, at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. The show, directed by ensemble member Amy Szerlong, opens Oct. 21. (773) 975-8150 or TheaterWit.org or stagelefttheatre.com.
- Chicago Children's Theatre welcomes guest ensemble Thodos Dance Chicago for the family-friendly "A Light in the Dark: The Story of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan." Co-directed by Thodos artistic director Melissa Thodos and Broadway veteran Ann Reinking, the performance tells through modern dance the story of Helen Keller who overcame severe disabilities with help from her teacher, Anne Sullivan. For theatergoers with disabilities, Chicago Children's Theatre offers ASL interpreted performances and preshow touch tours of the set, props and costumes on select days. Performances begin Saturday, Oct. 15, at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St., Chicago. (872) 222-9555 or chicagochildrenstheatre.org.
- Monologist Mike Daisey performs his one-man show, "The Trump Card," inspired by current events, on Saturday, Oct. 15, at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago. Beginning Tuesday, Oct. 18, the show moves to Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. It will run there through Nov. 8 with Chicago actors Joe Foust, Elizabeth Ledo and Steven Strafford each performing the monologue for one week. (773) 935-6875 or TheaterWit.org.
- GayCo Productions, a gay sketch comedy ensemble, celebrates its 20th anniversary with an alumni show on Saturday, Oct. 15, at UP Comedy Club, 230 W. North Ave., Chicago. Alumni returning for "GayCo XX: Gay for Play" include Martin Garcia ("Blackish") and Celeste Pechous ("Hot in Cleveland"). The show will include a tribute to the company's late founder Judy Fabjance. See gayco.com.
- The Shanghai Acrobats bring their latest show, "Shanghai Nights," about a boy befriended by a fairy phoenix, to the McAninch Arts Center at the College of DuPage. Performances take place at 2 and 6 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 16, at 425 Fawell Blvd., Glen Ellyn. (630) 942-4000 or AtTheMac.org.
- Steppenwolf Theatre ensemble member James Vincent Meredith speaks to audience members following the Sunday, Oct. 16, matinee of "Red Velvet" at Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St., Chicago. Meredith is one of several

theater artists participating in Raven's periodic audience engagement events. "Red Velvet" tells the true story of Ira Aldridge, an African-American actor who in 1833 became the first black man to play Othello onstage. (773) 338-2177 or raventheatre.com.

- Hell in a Handbag Productions hosts its annual fundraiser "Showgirls! The Benefit" from 5 to 10 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 16, at the Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 1650 W. Foster Ave., Chicago. The event includes food, entertainment, a silent auction and raffle that includes tickets to "Hamilton" and a trip to Las Vegas. (800) 838-3006 or handbagproductions.org.
- Chicago Dramatists Theatre; Black Lives, Black Words International Project; and the Artistic Directors of the Future present "Beyond the Canon" on Sunday, Oct. 16, at 1105 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago. The performance showcases speeches for actors of color penned by playwrights Kristoffer Diaz, Marcus Gardley and Mona Mansour among others. See chicagodramatists.org.
- Theatre Y continues its 10th anniversary season with William Shakespeare's "Macbeth," opening Wednesday, Oct. 19, at Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division St., Chicago. The tale of the war hero whose ambition leads to a bloody end is directed by French director Georges Bigot. See chopintheatre.com or theatre-y.com.
- 16th Street Theater concludes its ninth season with two one-man shows written and performed by Sean Christopher Lewis. "Killadelphia" chronicles Philadelphia's 2008 homicide spike in 2008 and "Dogs of Rwanda" is a memoir of traveling to the country in 1994, the year members of the ruling Hutu majority murdered 800,000 Tutsis. The plays will run in repertory at 6420 16th St., Berwyn. (708) 795-6704 or 16thstreettheater.org.
- Previews begin Thursday, Oct. 20, for Collaboraction's world premiere of "The Mars Assignment," an examination of depression written by Ronan Marra and co-created by Elsa Hiltner. The play examines the impact of depression on a young student, an advertising executive and a comedian. It opens Oct. 25 at the Flat Iron Arts Building, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago. (312) 226-9633 or collaboraction.org.
- Rasaka and Vitalist theaters, in cooperation with the International Voices Project, present the U.S. premiere of "Multitudes." John Hollingworth's dramedy about identity and nationality imagines Britain's future in turmoil where a British Muslim man runs for Parliament, while his girlfriend converts to Islam and her mother rants about the "decline of her cherished England." Previews begin Thursday, Oct. 20, at the Victory Gardens Biograph Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago. (773) 871-3000 or victorygardens.org or rasakatheatre.com or vitalisttheatre.org.
- Performances continue through Oct. 29 for Windy City Music Theatre's production of "Seussical the Musical," made up of Dr. Seuss' stories. Performances take place at the Jefferson Playhouse, 4766 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago. See windycityperforms.org.
- Lifeline Theatre has extended its premiere of "Miss Holmes," a new take on Arthur Conan Doyle's stories by Christopher M. Walsh that casts the famed detective as a woman criticized for failing to behave as a "respectable lady." Performances continue through Nov. 27 at 6912 N. Glenwood Ave., Chicago. (773) 761-4477 or lifelinetheatre.com.
- Philip Dawkins' autobiographical one-man show "The Happiest Place on Earth," about how his family coped with the sudden loss of his grandfather when Dawkins was a child, has been extended. Sideshow Theatre Company's world premiere runs through Oct. 30 at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago. (773) 404-7336 or greenhousetheater.org or sideshowtheatre.org.
- Porchlight Music Theatre has extended for the second time its revival of Lin-Manuel Miranda's "In The Heights." The musical about the residents of New York City's Washington Heights neighborhood runs through Nov. 19 at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. (773) 327-5252 or PorchlightMusicTheatre.org.
- The Joseph Jefferson Award Committee will recognize Writers Theatre artistic director Michael Halberstam's

outstanding achievement in theater during its ceremony Monday, Oct. 17, at Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook Terrace. A native of England and a University of Illinois graduate, Halberstam founded the Glencoe Theatre in 1992. He has directed more than 35 productions for Writers, including its current show, "Julius Caesar" as well as several New York remounts including "Crime and Punishment" and "A Minister's Wife." For information on the Jeff Awards, see jeffawards.org.

- The Actors Gymnasium in Evanston announced its first artistic associates. Making up this newly created artistic ensemble is: lighting designer Justine Brock; director/performers David Catlin, Dean Evans, Lindsey Noel Whiting and Chris Mathews and rigging designer Isaac Schoepp. See actorsgymnasium.org.
- The Chicago Shakespeare Theater has named Deborah Vandergrift to the newly created position of general manager. In this capacity she will oversee the theater's operational systems and capital developments. "As we embark on our 30th season," said executive director Criss Henderson in a prepared statement, "her experience and leadership will be an invaluable addition to our team."
- Second City announced the creation of The Second City Creative Collective. Composed of eight current performers and alumni, the collective will function as the company's artistic director. In that capacity, the collective will help develop new video and theatrical projects. Additionally, Steve Johnston has been promoted to president and Bob Knuth has been promoted to creative director of marketing.
- Goodman Theatre announced that its "Wonderful Town" season opening benefit held last month raised \$225,000. The money will go toward Goodman productions and educational programs.