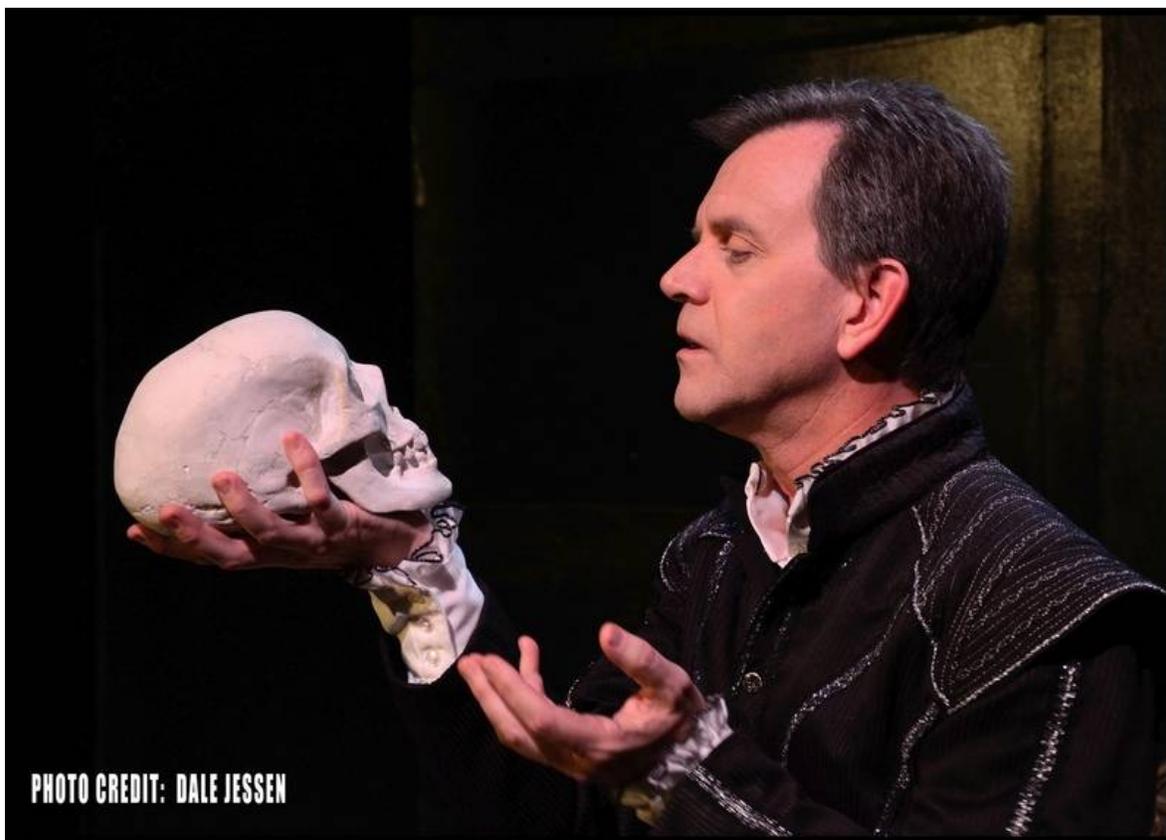


Theater events: Mooney does 'Shakespeare on demand' in 'Breakneck Hamlet'

Barbara Vitello



- Writer/director Tim Mooney stars in "Breakneck Hamlet" at Clockwise Theatre in Waukegan. COURTESY OF DALE JESSEN/CLOCKWISE THEATRE

Fast-paced 'Hamlet'

Clockwise Theatre presents the world premiere of "Breakneck Hamlet," writer/actor Tim Mooney's accelerated version of William Shakespeare's longest plays. Having introduced the melancholy Dane in Act 1, Mooney takes audience requests for the Bard's most famous speeches in the second act, which he dubs "Shakespeare on demand." Opens at 8 p.m. Friday, May 29, at 221 N. Genesee St., Waukegan. \$20. (847) 775-1500 or clockwisetheatre.org.

Standup showcase

Standup comedians including Jordan Holmes and Peter Daniel perform as part of Comedy Shrine's monthly showcase of its favorite Midwest comedians. 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, May 29-30, at 4034 Fox Valley Center

Drive, Aurora. \$20. (630) 585-0300 or comedyshrine.com.

Playing his songs

Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre salutes the late composer Marvin Hamlisch as part of its summer showcase. "A Marvin Hamlisch Songbook" features standards like "The Way We Were" along with tunes from the musicals "A Chorus Line," "Sweet Smell of Success" and "They're Playing Our Song." Aaron Benham serves as musical director and arranger. Previews begin at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 4, at No Exit Cafe, 6970 N. Glenwood Ave., Chicago. The show opens June 6. \$20-\$34. (800) 595-4849 or theo-u.org.

Other theater events

- Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave., Chicago, presents the world premiere musical adaptation of Austin Grossman's novel "Soon I Will Be Invincible," about a group of superheroes who must rescue a fallen comrade and combat their arch-nemesis, the evil Doctor Impossible. Ensemble member Christopher M. Walsh adapted the novel and Christopher Kriz composed the music and lyrics. Ensemble member Paul S. Holmquist directs. Previews begin Friday, May 29. The show opens June 7. (773) 761-4477 or lifelinetheatre.com.
- Rogue Theater returns after an eight-year hiatus to revive George Bernard Shaw's "Don Juan in Hell." Dan Foss and Kerstin Broockmann direct the play about a not-so-bad hell whose residents enjoy art, culture and each other's society. Performances begin Friday, May 29, at The Side Project Theatre, 1439 W. Jarvis St., Chicago. For tickets, see brownpapertickets.com.
- The Actors Gymnasium offers yet another sneak peek at new works of circus arts as part of its "Circus in Progress: An Evening of Daring New Work" at 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 30, at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes St., Evanston. Trapeze artists, magicians, acrobats, aerialists and puppeteers are among the performers scheduled to appear. (847) 328-2795 or actorsgymnasium.org.
- Previews begin Sunday, May 31, for Haven Theatre Company's Chicago-area premiere of "Don't Go Gentle," a drama by Cody Estle about a retired judge who volunteers to assist a single mom and her troubled son while trying to repair fractured relationships with his own children. Code Estle directs the production, which opens June 5 at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. (773) 975-8150 or haventheatrechicago.com.
- Writer/actress Leslie Ayvazian performs a public reading of her new play, "15/15," at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, May 31, at Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St., Chicago. A black comedy, "15/15" is the story of an Armenian-American family whose members confront the long-denied Armenian Genocide. Co-artistic director JoAnn Montemurro directs the reading, one of several events held at the theater in observance of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. (773) 338-2177 or raventheatre.com.
- The Chicago Inclusion Project launches on Monday, June 1, with a staged reading of William Saroyan's "The Time of Your Life" in partnership with Victory Gardens Theater and the League of Chicago Theatres. Founded by actress Emjoy Gavino, The Chicago Inclusion Project will present contemporary classics performed by actors of diverse ethnicities, physical abilities and gender identities. "Our hope is to inspire theater leaders to abandon what has become 'default casting' and look beyond people and their boxes," said Gavino in a prepared statement. VGT artistic director Chay Yew directs the reading at 7:30 p.m. at 2433 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago. (773) 871-3000 or victorygardens.org.
- Black Ensemble Theater hosts its first International Cultural Festival incorporating theater, music, film and dance from Monday, June 1-6, at 4450 N. Clark St., Chicago. Japanese drumming ensemble Tsukasa Taiko and Muntu Dance Theatre are among the groups performing. A performance of Juan Villa's play "Empanada for a Dream," a portrait of family life on New York City's Lower East Side, takes place at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 2. Tickets range from \$10 to \$25. (773) 769-4451 or blackensemble.org.

- Performances begin Tuesday, June 2, at the Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph St., Chicago, for the pre-Broadway world premiere of "On Your Feet!" The bio-musical is inspired by the life of Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter Gloria Estefan and her award-winning producer-musician husband Emilio Estefan. Jerry Mitchell ("Kinky Boots," "Hairspray") directs the show, which has a book by Alexander Dinelaris and songs by the Estefans including hits like "Conga" and "Rhythm is Gonna Get You" as well as new music. (800) 775-2000 or broadwayinchicago.com or onyourfeetmusical.com.
- Barrel of Monkeys, in cooperation with the University of Chicago Department of Theatre and Performance Studies, hosts a Celebration of Student Authors at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 2, at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, 915 E. 60th St., Chicago. The free event features performances of the stories created by the children attending BOM's after school programs in its 11 partner schools. Also, Barrel of Monkeys' executive director Amanda Farrar will step down this month after serving nearly six years. Company member Gwen Tulin will take over as interim director until a replacement is found. (312) 409-1954 or barrelofmonkeys.org.
- WildClaw Theatre premieres "Motel 666," an anthology of short horror plays by Glen Ellyn native Christopher Hainsworth, Brett Neveu and Scott T. Barsotti among others, all of them set in a dingy motel room on a forgotten Midwestern highway. Previews begin Wednesday, June 3, at the Storefront Theater, 66 E. Randolph St., Chicago. The show opens June 5. See wildclawtheatre.com or cityofchicago.com.
- Previews begin Thursday, June 4, for Cor Theatre's revival of the controversial, adults-only thriller "Love and Humar Remains," Brad Fraser's new take on his play, "Unidentified Human Remains and the Nature of True Love," which had its U.S. premiere in Chicago in 1991. Ernie Nolan directs Fraser's play about Chicago thirtysomethings looking for love and sex while a serial killer preys on them. The show, which contains explicit sex and violence, opens June 7 at Rivendell Theatre, 5779 N. Ridge Ave., Chicago. (866) 811-4111 or cortheatre.org.
- "Good Times With Awful People," a variety show featuring sketch comedy, music and "general mayhem" continues through June 25 at The Annoyance Theatre, 851 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. Also at the Annoyance is "Crowd Pleaser," a sketch comedy show comprised of the worst ideas from the audience the week before. (773) 697-9693 or theannoyance.com.
- Piven Theatre Workshop has extended its production of Sarah Ruhl's "Melancholy Play: a chamber musical." The play, which premiered at Piven in 2002, centers on a bank teller whose melancholy causes every stranger she meets to fall in love with her. After her mood lightens, her happiness wreaks havoc on the lives of those who love her. Performances continue through June 21 at 927 Noyes St., Evanston. Also, Ruhl will host post-show talks on June 18 and 21. (847) 866-8049 or piventheatre.org.
- Pride Films & Plays has named "Safe," a drama by Donna Hoke ("The Couple Next Door") about the tragedy that results after gay teens are bullied, as the winner of its 2015 Great Gay Play Contest.
- Naperville's BrightSide Theatre has announced its 2015-2016 season -- dubbed a season of farce. It begins Oct. 30 with Michael Frayn's superb "Noises Off," a backstage romp about a hapless touring theater company stumbling their way through rehearsals to closing night. That's followed by "Not Now, Darling" (Feb. 19-March 6, 2016), a comedy about husbands, mistresses and mink coats set in a London fur salon, by Ray Cooney and John Chapman. The season concludes with "Monty Python's "Spamalot" (June 3-19, 2016), a sendup of Arthurian legends inspired by the film "Monty Python and the Holy Grail." Subscriptions are available. Single tickets, which begin at \$20, go on sale in July. Performances take place at the Theatre at Meiley-Swallow Hall at North Central College, 31 S. Ellsworth Ave., Naperville. See brightsidetheatre.com.
- MadKap Productions opens its 2015-2016 season Sept. 11 with Brian Yorkey and Tom Kitt's Pulitzer Prize-winning musical "Next to Normal," about the impact a woman's bipolar disorder has on her family. That's followed on Nov. 6 by James Goldman's domestic drama "The Lion in Winter," about King Henry II and Queen Eleanor's battle over the royal succession. The season continues with James Sherman's "Beau Jest" (Feb. 5-21, 2016), about a young Jewish

woman who invents a fictional Jewish doctor boyfriend and hires a male escort to play him during a family gathering. The season concludes with Jay Presson Allen's "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" (April 22-May 8, 2016), about a teacher at a Scottish boarding school whose liberal attitudes and unconventional teaching methods draw admiration from her students and ire from the headmistress and staff. Performances take place at the Skokie Theatre, 7924 Lincoln Ave., Skokie. Season subscriptions begin at \$97, \$84 for seniors and \$65 for students. Patrons who subscribe by June 1 receive a \$25 theater gift card. (847) 677-7761 or skokietheatre.org.

- Steppenwolf Theatre's 2015-2016 young adults series launches Oct. 21 with "George Orwell's 1984," adapted by Andrew White of Lookingglass Theatre Company. In this dystopian drama set in a nation where dissent is not tolerated, a worker for the Ministry of Truth's illegal affair with a co-worker forces them to confront the regime's dangerous decrees. The season concludes with "The Compass" (Feb. 24-March 12, 2016). Conceived and directed by Northwestern University instructor Michael Rohd, this interactive performance centers on a new app aimed at young people that does their thinking for them. Single tickets will be available beginning June 5 at (312) 335-1650 or steppenwolf.org. School groups seeking tickets should contact education and community programs coordinator Lauren Sivak at (312) 654-5643.