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ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE

Thespians Wanted

This week's issue has a
review and upcoming
seasons of the local
theaters.

THEATER

Fall Theater Preview

MetroStage and Little Theater both have an eclectic season ahead.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

For Alexandria theater managers, deciding which plays to put on the docket for a given season is a sort of black magic. Part of it is dictated by ticket sales, of course, with local theatergoers having a particular affinity for musicals. But it's also about offering the widest possible variety for season-ticket holders, whose needs need to be met if they are to return next year. It's also about serving the need of the arts community, a wide-ranging coalition of creators with interests ranging from Victorian comedies to avant garde dramas.

"A season is kind of like a body of work."

— Carolyn Griffin, producing artistic director at MetroStage

"A season is kind of like a body of work," said Carolyn Griffin, producing artistic director at MetroStage. "My goal is always to present the most diverse season I can."

Griffin said that musicals and performances with lots of music have been popular in recent years at MetroStage, located in north Old Town. Last week saw the culmination of a "rock opera" known as "Rooms." Later in the season, MetroStage will welcome Roz White back to MetroStage after her wildly successful run performing as Alberta Hunter in a play called "Bricktop." This fall, White will be performing as jazz legend Pearl Bailey with a five-piece band in a performance called "Pearl Bailey, By Request."

"We've leaned toward musicals in

recent years," says Griffin, who receives about 500 unsolicited manuscripts each year. "But we like to do plays that nobody's seen or even heard of before."

OVER AT THE Little Theater of Alexandria, coming to a final list of plays for the upcoming season is no less a daunting task. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the community theater in south Old Town, which kicked off the season with run of its signature show, the musical known as "1776." According to Rachel Alberts, publicist for the community theater, living up to their mandate requires they have something to offer everyone.

"It seems we've had more comedies this year," said Alberts. "Maybe we all need it. It's been a heavy year."

During the Christmas season, Little Theater will be trying a new experiment — offering two shows simultaneously. Audiences can come at 7:30 p.m. to see the family-friendly musical "Scrooge" or the late-night adult comedy "The Eight: Reindeer Monologues," which will start at 10 p.m. Although the theater has never tried to offer two shows on the same night, Alberts said she was confident that the logistics would not present a problem.

"Think of how easy it will be to find a parking space in Old Town at that hour," she said.

The Little Theater will also be offering four performances for students at Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy, the public elementary school located one block from the theater. Following on last year's performances for the children, actors have volunteered their time to bring the kids into the theater for a lesson that has been designed around the Virginia Standards of Learning.

"Many of these kids have never been in a theater before," said Alberts. "We could not believe how well they went last year, so we wanted to do the performances again this year. This is our future audience, after all."

MetroStage

❖ "Pearl Bailey, By Request" from Oct. 16 to Nov. 9: Audiences at MetroStage will remember Roz White's brilliant depiction of Alberta Hunter in the wildly popular "Bricktop." Now White is back to interpret Pearl Bailey in a 1940s-era nightclub with an accompanying four-piece band. White tells anecdotes, performs monologues and sings in a musical evening that includes ballads, standards and swing numbers.

❖ "Isn't It Romantic" from Nov. 20 to Dec. 21: MetroStage favorite Jimi Ray Malar returns after past hit shows "Ellington: The Life and Music of The Duke" and "Nat King Cole: King of Cool." This tribute features the songs that epitomize romance from some of the mid-20th century's most prolific and enduring songwriters.

Little Theatre of Alexandria

❖ "Picnic" from Sept. 20 to Oct. 11: What starts as another ordinary Labor Day picnic to celebrate the end of another ordinary summer turns into a life-changing event for a group of women in a small, Midwestern town as Madge, the local beauty, must decide between two men: Allen, who offers wealth and security, or Hal, who offers love and uncertainty. This summertime romance won the 1953 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

❖ "Scrooge! The Musical" from Nov. 22 to Dec. 21: Ebenezer Scrooge and the entire Cratchit family are recast in this fanciful musical retelling of the Dickens's classic. The musical is Victorian England for Christmas Eve visits by the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future who transform the miserly, heartless Scrooge.

❖ "The Eight: Reindeer Monologues" from Nov. 28 to Dec. 20: After years of silent repression, Santa's reindeers are ready to break their silence in this late-night adult

❖ "Cool Papa's Party" from Jan. 29 to March 8: A 20th century musical odyssey through the eyes of the "last great American hipster." Mr. Cool Papa's life stands on the world stage as a testament to the traveler, the survivor, the conqueror. And what a life defined by artistry, underscored by excellence and distinguished always by style. It is to Sammy Davis Jr. and Nat King Cole what "Dreamgirls" was to the Supremes, Barry Gordy and Motown.

❖ "Heroes" from April 22 to May 17: Three soldiers in a Parisian veterans home pass the time with tales that are at once achingly funny and piercingly sad. With his rapier wit and dazzling use of language, Tom Stoppard offers a brilliant new translation that mixes comic curmudgeonry, camaraderie and nostalgia.

comedy. Scandalous details emerge about life with St. Nick, Rudolph's treatment of the team and other salaciousness that rocks Christmas Town.

❖ "Greater Tuna" from Jan. 10 to Jan. 31: Welcome to Greater Tuna, the third smallest town in Texas, where the Lion's Club is too liberal and Patsy Cline never dies. In this hilarious send up of small town life, two actors create the entire population of Tuna in a *tour de farce* of quick changes and of comic characterizations.

❖ "Leading Ladies" from Feb. 21 to March 14: Jack and Leo, two down-on-their-luck Shakespearean actors, are reduced to playing Moose lodges in the Amish country of Pennsylvania. Things look up for the pair when a local heiress dies leaving all her money to two distant English relatives. The two thespians plan to deceive the estate and play the long-lost heirs, but to get the money, Jack and Leo must give the performances of a lifetime.

❖ "Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde" from April 18 to May 9: Within three short months, Oscar Wilde went from being the toast of Victorian society to the defendant in the crime of the century. This edge-of-the-seat legal thriller is based on the actual trials of Oscar Wilde.

❖ "It Runs in the Family" from June 6 to June 27: As the staff of a London hospital prepare for the annual Christmas show, Dr. Mortimore prepares a lecture that is sure to guarantee him knighthood and much needed funds. All goes well until a nurse, with whom the doctor had an affair 18 years ago, shows up with a present of her own.

FOOD

Crazy for Cupcakes

Lavender Moon rides the cupcake trend into Old Town.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

Suddenly, cupcakes are everywhere. Whether it's a commentary on the sluggish economy or a nod to fans of cupcake-loving characters on "Sex and the City," recent months have seen a proliferation of neighborhood cupcake bakeries in Dupont Circle and Georgetown. Now Old Town has its own cupcake specialty retailer: Lavender Moon on South Royal Street. Husband-and-wife team Peter and Tammy Durkin say their cupcakes are already so popular they had to close early on Sunday because they ran out of products to sell.

"It's a comfort food," said Tammy Durkin, who runs the store. "Our idea from the be-

ginning was to cut the sugar and cut the fat but still keep them flavorful by using fresh ingredients."

The upscale cupcakes include varieties with names like Summer Peach and Basil, Chocolate Lavender and Roasted Black Mission Figs with Fennel. Tammy comes up with the ideas to carefully layer flavors, and Peter hashes it out in the kitchen to concoct a recipe that works. Individual cupcakes sell for \$3, with a dozen going for \$30.

"If you go into any ice-cream shop in Old Town, you'll end up paying \$3 for a flavor that's pretty standard," said Peter Durkin, who is also the general manager of Chadwick's Restaurant. "Why not spend the same amount for something uncommon?"



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE PACKET
Cupcake from Lavender Moon

PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/
GAZETTE PACKET

ON THE COVER: Herrick Goldman, New York City lighting designer, runs through a show sequence at MetroStage.

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THEATER

Local Theater With Local Talent

Area live theater companies offer a varied 2008/2009 season.

BY CHUCK HAGEE
GAZETTE

For lovers of live theater there's no need to make the journey to New York City or to pay New York prices or even venture into DC to enjoy a good play or musical. That can be accomplished right here on the Virginia side of the Potomac.

Two local thespian enterprises — Port City Playhouse and Aldersgate Church Community Theater — are offering a wide range of stage productions for the 2008-2009 season that has something for every audience's taste and preference. And, ticket prices don't require liquidating the family bank account.

This will be the 31st season for Alexandria's Port City Playhouse which performs at the Nannie Lee Recreation Center, 1108 Jefferson St. They are offering four outstanding productions to give audiences an exciting theater experience.

"We feel our season's lineup of plays will offer our audiences an especially good year of theater. Our goal is to present a season of challenging plays which meets the needs of a diverse audience. We select plays that are either premieres, or have not been produced in the area in five years," said Playhouse producers in their season announcement.

Kicking off this season's playbill Friday, October 31, is "An American Daughter" by Wendy Wasserstein and directed by Barra Khan. Set in Washington, DC, it focuses on the struggles of Dr. Lyssa Dent Hughes, a 40 something health care professional and daughter of a U.S. Senator, who is seeking a cabinet post. This comedy-drama encompasses all the Washington ingredients — scandal, politics and personal ambition.

Khan, a self described "actor's director," fills the bill as an actor, producer, and choreographer. Her resume includes extensive experience at DC's National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts.

In addition to opening night, the play will be performed Friday and Saturday nights of Nov. 1, 7, 8, 14, and 15, plus Tuesday Nov. 11. Curtain time for all Port City Playhouse shows is 8 p.m.

The season's second offering, "Veronica's Room," opens Friday, Jan. 23, 2009. That is followed by performances on Jan. 24, 30, 31, and Feb. 6 and 7. Written by Ira Levin and directed by Roy Hammond it leads the audience into an intellectual dualism of mind over matter. Or is it the other way around?

By intertwining fantasy and reality, the prime character, Susan, becomes caught up

in the life of the long dead Veronica Brabissant to whom she bears a striking resemblance. Upon visiting the Brabissant mansion in Ireland she finds her self locked in Veronica's room wearing Veronica's clothes. Or is she actually Veronica pretending to be Susan in a room that is as important to the plot as the characters.

Opening Friday March 27, Port City audiences will experience "Doubt, A Parable" by John Patrick Shanley and directed by Frank Pasqualino. Performances are also scheduled for Friday and Saturday nights of March 28, April 3, 4, 10, and 11 plus Tuesday, April 14.

Set in the Bronx, N.Y., in 1964, the play centers on the conflict between Sister Aloysius, a traditional, no nonsense nun who presides over a Catholic school, and a younger, more laid back parish priest, Father Flynn. The controversy focuses on what the sister considers Father Flynn's inappropriate behavior toward one of the school's new students.

Finally, comes "The Curious Savage." The warm-hearted tale of Mrs. Ethel Savage, a wealthy and energetic widow who wants to dispose of much of the family wealth. It opens on Friday, May 29, with weekend performances on May 30, and June 5, 6, 12 and 13 as well as on Tuesday June 9.

In order to plug this financial leak in the family coffers, Ethel's greedy stepchildren have her committed to a sanitarium where she meets an array of endearing and entertaining characters. It is the spinning of this tale by John Patrick coupled with the direction of J. Arthur Rodgers that gives "The Curious Savage" its poignancy.

Ticket prices for Port City Playhouse performances are \$16 general admission; \$14 seniors, 60 and over, and juniors, 18 and under; and \$12 for groups of 10 or more. Seating is unreserved with cash and checks accepted at the door. Credit card are only accepted for online purchases which can be made by visiting their ticket Web site at www.PortCityInfo@aol.com.

Subscriptions for the 2008/2009 season are also now on sale. A regular subscription is \$45 with senior and junior subscriptions priced at \$35. They offer four shows for the price of three, according to Port City Playhouse. Reservations and additional information, including membership data, can be made by calling 703-838-2880 or visiting the Web site.

Founded in 1977, Port City Playhouse has regularly won awards from area theater

organizations for the artistic and technical excellence of its productions. They celebrated their 25th Anniversary in September 2002.

ALDERSGATE CHURCH COMMUNITY THEATER (ACCT) performs in Fellowship Hall of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road. They are offering three shows for the 2008/2009 season plus a children's show in January 2009.

Formed in 1990 as a fund raiser for the church, ACCT is now a separate entity. The church, as a sponsor, supplies the venue, according to Shirley Bolsted, an ACCT founder and chair of the group's Producers' Council. "We enjoyed performing so much we just kept it going," she said.

"Over the years we have earned enough money to buy lighting and curtains for the stage and pay for all the other costs that go into our productions," Bolstad said. The costs for the shows average \$8,000 to \$10,000 for musicals and \$5,000 to \$6,000 for plays, according to Bolstad.

"This year we are in the process of purchasing new padded chairs for the audience. They won't have to sit on the hard metal chairs anymore," said Bailey Center, ACCT secretary/treasurer and member of the Producers Council.

Center also serves as Chairman of the Washington Area Theater Community Honors (WATCH). That organization judges non-professional community theater productions throughout the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area and presents awards at the end of each season.

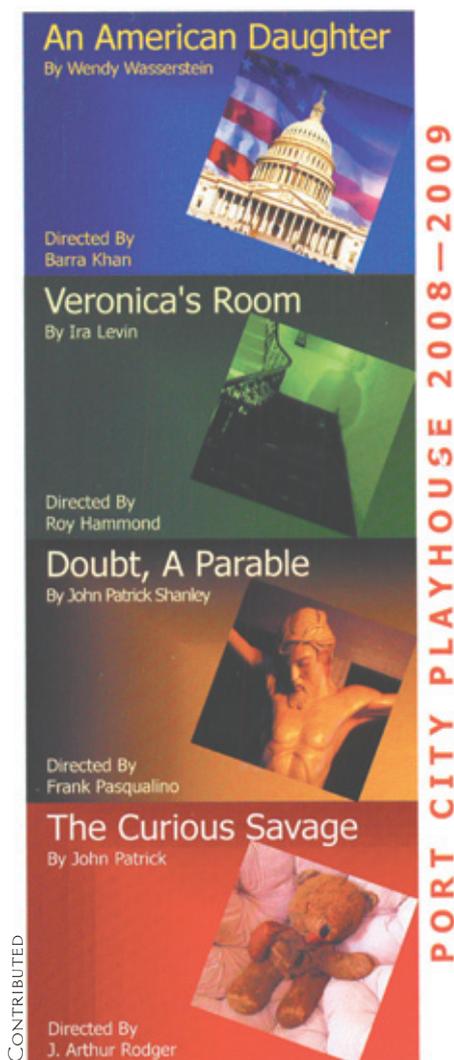
"WATCH is like a local version of the Academy Awards. ACCT has been nominated for awards several times although we've never actually won an award — yet," Bolsted said.

Each ACCT production consists of performances over three weekends not including the January 2009 children's presentation of Walt Disney's "Aladdin, Jr.," a family presentation."By producing this show we hope to encourage young people who have an interest in theater to follow the arts," said Center.

The season opens Oct. 17 with "Dearly Beloved" by David Bottrell and Jessie Jones. Set somewhere in a hardscrabble section of the southern U.S., it tells the story of a not so pleasant father named Bud Turpin and the impressions he left on friends and relatives throughout his "not so God fearing life."

This comedy highlights Bud's extended family's myriad responses to his passing. His wife, Raynelle, describes her recently departed spouse as "mean and surly," when asked by the preacher who is to give the eulogy.

In February, ACCT will present the 1957 classic legal drama "Twelve Angry Men" written by Reginald Rose. To be directed by Roland Branford Gomez, it deals with the conflicts 12 male jurors face in the jury room while attempting to decide the fate of a youth accused of killing his father. It not only explores the concepts of guilt or



"We believe community theater give residents the ability to see quality theater at affordable prices."

—Aldersgate Church Community Theater

innocence of the defendant but also the inner human conflicts of each juror.

On June 26 its back to the lighter side with "The Fantastics" which is scheduled to run through July 11. The story of two fathers who attempt to keep their son and daughter from falling in love, it will be directed by Drew and Mim Vander Linden. Jeff Taylor, former director of the U.S. Navy Jazz Band, The Commodores, will serve as music director for this small cast musical.

ACCT prices ranges are: Musicals- \$18 regular admission and \$15 for students and seniors; Plays - \$15 regular admission and \$12 for students and seniors. Reservations can also be made by calling 703-660-2611.

Additional information is available at the ACCT Web site www.ACCTonline.org.

"We get a lot of walk-ins that just come to the box office the night of the performance. We usually get 50 to 70 people attending our plays and about 100 plus to the musicals," Bolstad said.

"The other big advantage we have is the parking. The church has a large parking lot which makes it very convenient for those coming to our shows. Our ministers are very supportive of our efforts," she said.

All those who participate in ACCT productions are volunteers — from the actors, to stage hands, to makeup and ushers. "The only people who receive any pay are the directors, the musical director and the choreographer," Bolstad said.

CALENDAR

E-mail announcements to the Gazette, gazette@connectionnews.com. Photos and artwork are encouraged. Deadline is Thursday at noon for the following week's paper. Call Rebecca Halik at 703-917-6407 with questions.

THURSDAY/ SEPT. 11

Stroll and Tea. Take a relaxing stroll through the gardens and tea at The Historic House with The Green Spring Garden's Garden Stroll and Tea which will be at 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. From 1 to 3 p.m. Individuals and Groups are welcome. \$12/ individuals. Form more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

Bugs! Bugs! Bugs! 10:30 a.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children ages 2-3 can enjoy stories and activities. Free. 703-971-0010.

Music Together. 10:30 a.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children up to age 5 can enjoy music and movement. Free. 703-765-3645.

Opening Reception. 6-8 p.m., see "Aftermath" at Target Gallery in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. through Oct. 12. Art describes the effects that traumatic events that disasters had on the artists. Free. Visit www.torpedofactory.org for more.

Second Thursday Art Night. 6-9 p.m. at Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. Enjoy talks, receptions and more. Free. 703-838-4565 or visit(www.torpedofactory.org).

FRIDAY/ SEPT. 12

Ornamental Grasses. Learn about Ornamental Grasses with The Green Springs Garden located at 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. The event,

Basic Gardening Series: Introduction to Ornamental Grasses, will show gardeners how to select, plant, and maintain the best ornamental grasses available. \$12/ adults. For more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

Latin American Harp Festival. 7:30 p.m. at Rosslyn Spectrum, 1611 N. Kent St. Hear harpists from Venezuela, Colombia and Paraguay. \$30/adult; \$25/student/senior. Visit www.teatrodela luna.org or 703-548-3092.

Music Performance. 8 p.m. at Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. The United States Air Force Concert band will perform a free concert. Visit www.usafband.af.mil or 202-767-5658.

Lunch Bunch. Noon at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children up to age 5 can bring lunch and enjoy stories. Free. 703-971-0010.

Chickens, Ducks and Geese. 10:30 a.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Children ages 2-5 can enjoy stories, activities and more. Free. 703-768-6700.

Web Ones Story Time. 10:30 a.m. at Hooray for Books!, 1555 King St. For children 2 and under. Free. Enjoy stories and songs. 703-548-4092 or visit www.hooray4books.com.

Art. 10 a.m. at 300 King St. Watch as animal sculptures get hoisted onto Market Square. Free. Part of Festival of the Arts.

Gallery Reception. 5-8 p.m. at Arts Afire Glass Gallery, 1117 King St. Kaleidoscope Show, featuring internationally acclaimed kaleidoscope artists and a silent auction. Free. 703-838-9785.

SATURDAY/ SEPT. 13

Workshop. Learn to Garden with Perennials and woody plants at Green Spring Gardens located at 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$18/ adults. For more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

Garden Treasure. The Green Spring Garden, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria will be having Propagation Series Part 2: Saving Your Treasure - Tender Perennials from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. You will learn simple and successful propagation techniques from horticulturist, Nancy Olney. \$22/ adults. For more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

Yard Sale. The Alexandria Jaycees will hold a yard sale from 7 a.m.-2 p.m. at Anthony T. Lane Elementary School, 7137 Beulah St. Free. Browse a variety of items. Vendors may register online at www.alexjaycees.org/yardsales.htm. For updated rain date information call 703-866-7171.

Gardening Workshop. The Green Spring Gardens located at 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria will be having Workshop: Casting Concrete Leaves from 1 to 3 p.m. with local artist Judy Murrett who will demonstrate the proper steps to making good leaf castings and assists participants in taking one home. \$50/ adults. For more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

Opening Reception. 1-3 p.m. see "Ah! THAT Jack and Jill! Parents Empowering African-American Children" at the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. from Sept. 13 through Nov. 15. Exhibit explores the family organization. Free. Visit www.alexblackhistory.org or 703-838-4356.

Alexandria Festival of the Arts. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. on King Street. Browse through local and national artists,

featuring sculptures, earrings, paintings and more. Free. Visit www.artfestival.com.

18th Century Craft Fair. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Mount Vernon Estate. See chocolate making, entertainment, music and more. \$13/adult; \$6/child. Visit www.mountvernon.org or 703-780-2000.

Art Activated. Torpedo Factory artist James Dean will talk about his experience as the founding director of the NASA Art Program at the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. Visit www.torpedofactory.org for more.

Latin American Harp Festival. 7:30 p.m. at Rosslyn Spectrum, 1611 N. Kent St. Hear harpists from Venezuela, Colombia and Paraguay. \$30/adult; \$25/student/senior. Visit www.teatrodela luna.org or 703-548-3092.

Author Discussion. 5:30 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church, 118 N. Washington St. Meet Debby Applegate, author of "The Most Famous Man in America," a book that won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize. \$20/person.

Puppetopia Presents. 11 a.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. All ages can enjoy "You Can Do It." Free. 703-971-0010.

Flea Market. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Creekside Village Apartments, 7986 Janna Lee Ave. Free. 703-760-9001.

Hawaiian Luau. 4-9 p.m. at Hope United Church of Christ, 630 Old Telegraph Road. Features music, food and entertainment. \$35/adult; \$20/child in advance or \$40. \$25 the day of the event. Visit www.hopeucc.org or 703-960-8772.

Sweets Story Time. 11 a.m. at Hooray for Books!, 1555 King St. For children 2 and under. Free. Enjoy stories about everything sweet. 703-548-4092 or visit www.hooray4books.com.

Model Soldier Show. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at



Eilen Jewell will perform at Iota on Sept. 12. To read about her and her music, visit arlingtonconnection.com.

NoVa Community College, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Browse through model soldiers by U.S. and international artists. \$7/adult, children under 12 free. 703-938-6361.

Car Wash. 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Aldersgate United Methodist Church. Benefits the Carl Sandburg Middle

School chorus.

Gallery Reception. 4-7 p.m. at Arts Afire Glass Gallery, 1117 King St. Kaleidoscope Show, featuring internationally acclaimed kaleidoscope artists and a silent auction. Free. 703-838-9785.

SUNDAY/ SEPT. 14

Garden Help. The Green Spring Gardens located at 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria will be featuring Freeze! (Preserving your fall harvest tea program). Learn methods on how to freeze your garden harvest and which fruits and vegetables you can freeze while enjoying tea. For more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

Alexandria Festival of the Arts. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on King Street. Browse through local and national artists, featuring sculptures, earrings, paintings and more. Free. Visit www.artfestival.com.

18th Century Craft Fair. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Mount Vernon Estate. See chocolate making, entertainment, music and more. \$13/adult; \$6/child. Visit www.mountvernon.org or 703-780-2000.

Bridge Club. 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Beginners and advanced players age 12 and up. Free. 703-765-3645.

Olde Towne Dogge Walke. 9 a.m. at the Olde Towne School for Dogs, 529 Oronoco St. Benefits the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. \$25/ person includes t-shirt and dog bandana. 703-836-7643.

Homecoming Talk. 11 a.m. at Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church, 606A S. Washington St. Guest speaker Rev. Dr. Youtha Hardman Cromwell. Free. 703-836-7332.

Ice Cream Social and Open House. 7-9 p.m. at Agudas Achim Congregation, 2908 Valley Drive. Drop by for relaxed conversation and more. Free. 703-998-6460.

Gallery Reception. 1-5 p.m. at Arts Afire Glass Gallery, 1117 King St. Kaleidoscope Show, featuring internationally acclaimed kaleidoscope artists and a silent auction. Free. 703-838-9785.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 16

Mother-Daughter Book Discussion. 7 p.m. at John Marshall

Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Age 10-12 with adult. Call for title. 703-971-0010.

Peek-A-Boo. 10:30 a.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre. Children ages 13-23 months can enjoy songs and activities. Free. 703-339-4610.

Jewelry Sale. 7 a.m.-4 p.m. at Inova Mount Vernon, 2501 Parkers Lane. Browse through watches, rings, necklaces and more. Free. Proceeds benefit Mount Vernon Hospital. 703-664-7269.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 17

Lecture. 7:30 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park Visitors' Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Get an update on Dyke Marsh and more. Free. Visit www.fodm.org or 703-768-2525.

Small Wonders. 10:30 a.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children ages 13-23 months can enjoy stories, fingerplays and more. Free. 703-971-0010.

Book Discussion. 7:15 p.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Adults call for title. Free. 703-971-0010.

Natural Wonders of Autumn. 10:30 a.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Children ages 3-5 can enjoy stories, activities and more. Free. 703-768-6700.

Jewelry Sale. 7 a.m.-4 p.m. at Inova Mount Vernon, 2501 Parkers Lane. Browse through watches, rings, necklaces and more. Free. Proceeds benefit Mount Vernon Hospital. 703-664-7269.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 18

Just Twos. 10:30 a.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Children ages 24-35 months can enjoy stories and activities. Free. 703-768-6700.

Poetry Group. 7 p.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Poems by Gwendolyn Brooks. Free. 703-768-6700.

President Lecture. Alexandrian Dr. David M. Abshire, President of the Center for the Study of the Presidency, will discuss his seventh book, "A Call to Greatness: Challenging Our Next President." 7:30 p.m. at the Lyceum, 201 South Washington St. Free. No reservations

needed. Information at www.alexandriahistorical.org or 703-683-2636.

Author Reading. 7 p.m. at Hooray for Books, 1555 King St. All ages can meet Graeme Base. Free. www.hooray4books.com or 703-548-4092.

Author Signing. 7 p.m. at the home of Bryan and Sandy Bourne. Craig Shirley will talk about his book, \$20/ person or \$30/couple. Includes one book. E-mail info@mvrv.org for reservations.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 19

Lunch Bunch. Noon at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children up to age 5 can bring lunch and enjoy stories. Free. 703-971-0010.

S is for September. 10:30 a.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children ages 2-5 can enjoy alphabet fun and stories. Free. 703-765-3645.

Opening Reception. 6:30-9 p.m., see "Trompe L'oeil" at Principle Gallery, 208 King St. Features works by Jorge Alberto and more. Visit www.principlegallery.com or 703-739-9326.

SATURDAY/ SEPT 20

Tea Party. The Green Spring Gardens will be having a Tea-Tasting Party from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Participants will taste various black teas and discover the nuances of taste while learning flavors, strengths, and provenance of each. \$20/ individual tasting. For more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

A Night of Fun. The American Horticultural Society is holding their 2008 annual Gala at River Farm. The event, Local Harvest, Bountiful Earth, will include a night of casual dining, special entertainment, and a vintage couture auction. \$145/ members and \$185/ non-members. For more information call 703-768-5700 ext. 114.

Fete at the Fort. 6-8:30 p.m. at Fort Ward, 4301 W. Braddock Road. Enjoy music, ceremonies and more. Free. 703-838-4848 for reservations.

Food Festival. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Landmark Plaza, Beauford Street and Little River Turnpike. Sample cuisine from China, Egypt, Italy and more, while enjoying music, activities and more. Free.

Odyssey 2008. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at NoVa Alexandria Campus, 3001 N. Beauford Street. Learn about alternative fuel transportation. Free. 703-323-2357.

Harambee Readers. 10:30 a.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Washington Hall Lane. Discuss "The Other Side of Womanhood" by Charnika Hayes. Free. 703-765-3645.

Doggie Massage Class. 1-2:30 p.m. at Tails of Olde Towne, 1509-B Leslie Ave. Bring your pooch and spend quality time learning basic massage techniques to keep him in top shape. To register call 703-768-0500 or visit www.tailsfoldtotowne.com for more info. The cost of the class is \$45 per owner/dog pair.

Fall Festival. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, 3001 N. Beauford Street. Enjoy music, activities, food and more. Free. 703-933-5076.

Craft and Fun Fair. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Fort Hunt Road. Includes rides, food and more. Free. 703-417-9219 for more.

Fashion Show. 3-5 p.m. at The Church of the Resurrection Episcopal Church, 2280 North Beauford Street. It's an old fashioned tea and fashion show! The cost of the Tea is \$20 per person. Proceeds will benefit Alexandria's ALIVE! House. 703-998-0888 for tickets.

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- July 14 Moonraker (1979)
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- July 28 Octopussy (1982)
- Aug 4 A View to a Kill (1985)
- Aug 11 The Living Daylights (1987)
- Aug 18 Licence to Kill (1989)
- Aug 25 GoldenEye (1995)
- Sept 1 Tomorrow Never Dies (1997)
- Sept 8 The World Is Not Enough (1999)
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THEATER

All The County's a Stage

New dramas, musicals are coming to Arlington.

BY DAVID SCHULTZ
GAZETTE PACKET

Summer is almost over and that means that Arlington's vibrant theater scene is rolling out its new season of comedies, dramas and musicals.

Three of the most high-profile theater companies in the Washington area - Signature Theater, Synetic Theater and Arena Stage - are based out of Arlington. Their offerings for the 2008-2009 season run the gamut from flashy, Broadway-style revues to tragic portrayals of war's futility to straightforward one-woman shows.

THE THEME for this year's offerings from Signature Theater, based in Arlington's Shirlington Village area, is "Departing Broadway: Arriving D.C." The nearly 20 year old theater is focusing on big musicals that would be right at home on 42nd Street in Manhattan.

Its first show of the season is ACE, a story set in the 1950's about a young boy who is trying to find the truth about what really happened to his father and grandfather during the World Wars of the twentieth century.

"It's truly incredible," Signature's Maggie Boland said. "It's really got all of the qualities of a great big old Broadway musical ... [Also] It is really family friendly."

Later in the season, Signature will be featuring Giant, a musical set in Texas that spans generations and tells the story of how oil became king.

"It's epic," Boland said. "Audiences will be transported. I learned a lot about Texas history that I didn't know."

Boland also said that Signature will be announcing another late addition to its 2008-2009 season later this month. "It's a blockbuster musical running through the holiday season," she said. "We're looking forward to letting that cat out of the bag."

SIGNATURE hosted an open house event earlier this summer to preview its upcoming season. Signature's loyal patrons came from far and wide to catch a glimpse of the shows that will be playing throughout the year and also to see Signature's new facilities in Shirlington.

"We haven't been to the new theater yet," said Brad Miles, a Signature fan from Falls Church. "It's beautiful. It's really nice."

Judy Karo, a regular theatergoer, drove to Arlington from Silver Spring for the open house. She described herself as a longtime fan of Signature. "It's their reputation," she said.

Signature's new building has garnered international attention in theater circles. And its production of Glory Days, a musical about four high school friends reuniting after graduation, was staged in New York City.

While it's Broadway run was brief, Boland said that Glory Days is an example of Signature's artistic philosophy. "We take risks," she said. "It's a huge part of who we are. When we fail, we fail big. But it was a great opportunity for us."

WHILE SIGNATURE tends to stage Broadway-style musicals, Synetic Theater goes in the opposite di-

Plays

- ❖ ACE - Signature Theater - Now to Sept. 28
- ❖ The Lieutenant of Inishmore - Signature Theater - Sept. 23 to Nov. 16
- ❖ The Little Dog Laughed - Signature Theater - Jan. 13 to Mar. 8
- ❖ Giant - Signature Theater - Signature Theater - April 28 to May 31
- ❖ See What I Wanna See - Signature Theater - April 7 to May 31
- ❖ Host And Guest - Synetic Theater - Sept. 26 to Nov. 9
- ❖ Dante's Divine Comedy - Synetic Theater - Feb. 6 to March 21
- ❖ Lysistrata - Synetic Theater - April 9 to April 26
- ❖ A Midsummer Night's Dream - Synetic Theater - May 28 to June 15
- ❖ Wishful Drinking - Arena Stage - Sept. 5 to Sept. 28
- ❖ Resurrection - Arena Stage - Aug. 29 to Oct. 5
- ❖ Next To Normal - Arena Stage - Nov. 21 to Jan. 18
- ❖ Irving Berlin's I Love A Piano - Arena Stage - Jan. 29 to Feb. 15
- ❖ A Delicate Balance - Arena Stage - Feb. 6 to March 15
- ❖ Crowns - Arena Stage - March 27 to April 26
- ❖ Legacy of Light - Arena Stage - May 8 to June 14
- ❖ Sweet Bird Of Youth - Arena Stage - May 29 to June 28

Note: Wishful Drinking, Irving Berlin's I Love A Piano, Crowns and Sweet Bird of Youth are being performed at the Lincoln Theater in Washington D.C. A Midsummer Night's Dream is being performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

rection with its productions. Run by Georgian immigrants Paata and Irina Tsikurishvili out of the Rosslyn Spectrum, Synetic's plays are often tragic classic dramas that focus on mood and movement rather than words to tell the story.

"We do consider ourselves good at comedy but there's a lot of heavy drama in these shows," Synetic's director of development Ben Cunis said. "Paata likes to say that tragedy is the same to everybody whereas comedy differs between cultures."

Tragedy also entered into the Tsikurishvilis' personal lives when, several weeks ago, Russian troops invaded their home country. In response to this crisis, Synetic cancelled its planned showing of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari and instead remounted its version of Host And Guest, a play based on an epic Georgian poem.

"It's about the uselessness of violence and the archaic regional clashes," Cunis said. "It's very old but it has a lot of contemporary applications."

Synetic will also be taking on Dante's Divine Comedy during this year's season. The theater company will attempt to condense the Renaissance master's epic work into a 90-minute performance, Cunis said. "It almost sounds ludicrous to some people," he said. "It's a mammoth undertaking we're dealing with."

NORMALLY, Arena Stage is based in Washington D.C. But Arena has moved to Arlington while its new home, The Mead Center in Southwest D.C., is being constructed.

Arena's temporary home is in Crystal City and Arena spokesperson Laura Broom said that the group is "really enjoying it. It's interesting to have a different mix of audiences."

One of Arena's highlights for this season is Wishful Drinking, a one-woman show by actress and novelist Carrie Fisher that takes a humorous look at her struggles with addiction and mental illness. "It's a really funny story," Broom said, "And she has a fantastic self-deprecating humor."

To celebrate Fisher's arrival in Arlington, Arena stage is holding a Princess Leia look-alike contest on its Web site www.arenastage.org.

Arena is also featuring Resurrection, a play by Daniel Beaty that features an all-African American cast and examines the issue of race in America.

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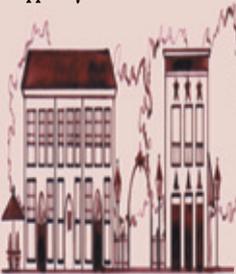


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THEATER

Ancient Anti-War Comedy Updated

Aristophanes' "Peace" inspires local playwright.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY
GAZETTE PACKET

The Washington Shakespeare Company has just opened a very funny anti-war comedy at the Clark Street Playhouse. It makes all the points you would expect of a piece decrying the horrors of war and praising the virtues of peace, but it does so with a long-range view of history. How long? Well, say about twenty-four centuries.

The play is "Peace" by a local playwright who has recently moved to New York City to broaden her reach. She's Callie Kimball and her last play to appear at the Clark Street was her stage adaptation of Shakespeare's epic poem "The Rape of Lucrece." Again this time, she takes a work of the long-ago past and attempts to make it accessible for today's audiences. This time it is with a flippant wit that ridicules human foibles.

Playwrights have been using humor to drive home opinions on such touchy topics as war and peace for millennia. Take Aristophanes, whose lampooning comedy came in second in the Dionysian Festival of Athens at the height of the Peloponnesian War. His play envisioned a farmer flying to the home of the Gods at the peak of Mount Olympus where he hoped to convince them to return the goddess Peace to Earth.

He called his play "Peace." So does Kimball whose own "Peace" was commissioned by the Washington Shakespeare Company and is being given a premiere that features some highly literate readings of low comedy, providing a number of belly laughs as well as an evening's worth of knowing nods and appreciative chuckles.

She retains the concept of a mortal off to petition the Gods but switches the mode of transportation from Aristophanes' flying dung beetle to a hot air balloon - one powered by methane in a politically

correct nod to fighting global warming. The cast makes great hay out of such details.

Brandon McCoy and Matt "Slice" Hicks team up as a pair of farm hands whose conversations cover a wide range of topics with the sharp barbs of Ms. Kimball. At one point McCoy questions how Cain could have been held accountable for Abel's death if he'd never been exposed to the concept of death in the paradise that was the Garden of Eden. At another

point, Hicks holds forth in an abortion policy debate saying that "I don't want no government telling my women what they can and can't do with their bodies. That's my job!"

Sara Barker doubles on the roles of the mortal's trusting spouse and "the administrative assistant to the Gods" who breaks the news to the mortal that the Gods don't

happen to be in residence upon his arrival. No matter, however, for Peace isn't available to come down to earth having been declared an enemy combatant and locked up.

Peace, played by a nearly silent Anastasia Wilson, has her own ideas about how to improve the future, ideas that include the marriage of her daughter. The ceremony may be a bit strained since the bride-groom is a married man, but the reception following is a kick presided over by DJ Joe Brack whose patter is a pastiche of all the clichés you can think of.

Through it all, John Geoffrion is an earnest mortal who keeps his goal of world peace in mind.

The foolishness runs its course and the cast milks all the puns and gags with a sense of energetic enthusiasm.

Brad Hathaway reviews theater in Virginia, Washington and Maryland as well as Broadway, and edits Potomac Stages, a Web site covering theater in the region (www.PotomacStages.com). He can be reached at Brad@PotomacStages.com.

Where and When:

The Washington Shakespeare Company's production of "Peace" plays through Sept. 28 at the Clark Street Playhouse, 601 South Clark St., just north of Crystal City. Performances are Thursday - Saturday at 8 p.m. and Saturday - Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 - \$35. Call 800-494-8497 or log on to www.washingtonshakespeare.org.

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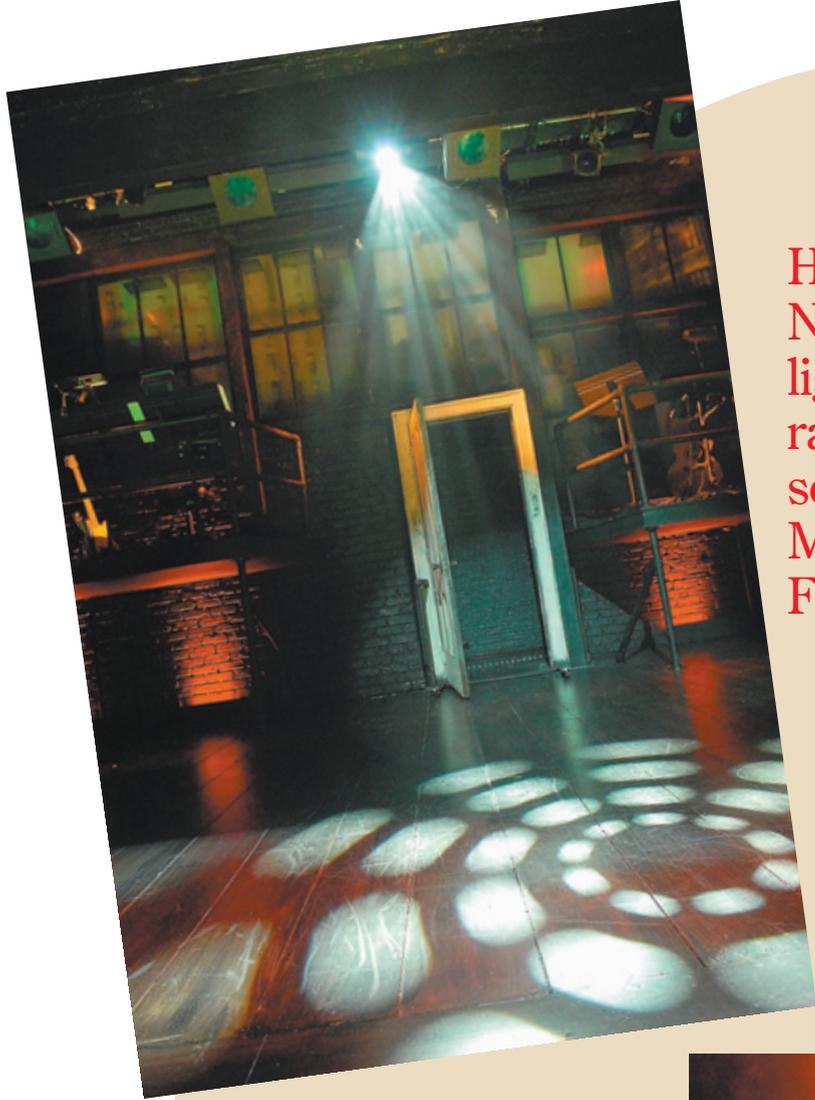
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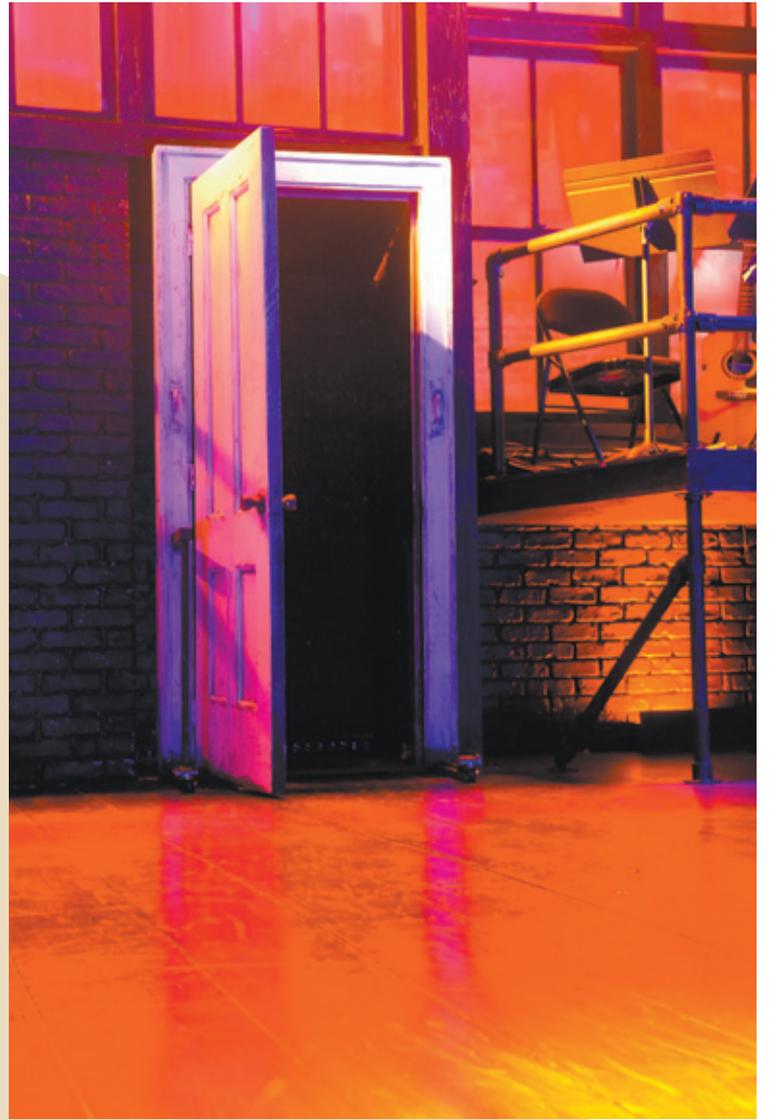
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End Note

Light Up The Stage



Herrick Goldman, New York City lighting designer, ran through a show sequence at MetroStage last Friday.



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/
GAZETTE PACKET

