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Entertainment & Life

HBO's Studio coming to Provincetown, Williams fest and more

By Kathi Scrizzi Driscoll

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Also: 'SnagglePuss Chronicles' among Williams fest offerings.

This summer, HBO will open the Studio, a seven-week pop-up entertainment space in Provincetown that is described as “a creative experience celebrating the LGBTQ+ community.”

From July 2 to Aug. 19, at 331 Commercial St., the Studio will partner with largely local companies to offer “a wide selection of inclusive events ranging from workshops and art exhibits to intimate talks and screenings dedicated to celebrating the diversity of the community,” according to studiobyhbo.com.

The schedule on the website so far shows “in conversation” events, panel discussions and live podcasts hosted by various organizations; “Love Out Loud” concerts; cocktail, dance and ice cream parties; HBO screeners; Queer/Art exhibits; “Meditation and Mimosas” and yoga classes; drag queen trivia and story hours; and various photo ops, including with “Sesame Street” characters.

Information and schedule: studiobyhobo.com.

Williams fest: premieres, unusual theater

The Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival has a “Wishful Thinking” theme and a full program set for the Sept. 27-30 event, which includes a never-before-published or performed one-act by Williams that will be directed by four-time Oscar-nominated actress Marsha Mason.

There also will be unusual theater experiences, including a mashup of Saturday-morning cartoons and Williams, as well as audience members lying in a dark room for one event and moving around characters in five ghost stories for another.

The theme, announced at the festival gala last weekend with guest star Amanda Plummer, is based on the idea of “anticipation” and includes works by Williams and other writers performed by companies from around the country.

The premiere to be directed by Mason (“The Goodbye Girl,” “Cinderella Liberty”) is Williams’ “Talisman Roses,” which he wrote as a college student and based on his own sister Rose being taken to a state asylum after a mental collapse and doctors wanting to give her shock therapy. The play will be produced by the Collective NY along with several other world-premiere short plays on the theme of waiting by Charlene A. Donaghy and festival newcomer Joseph Paprzycki.

Among the other shows and experiences, according to festival information:

- “The Rose Tattoo,” a Williams romantic comedy about a Sicilian widow and her daughter, starring Irene Glezos and produced by Moon Lake Productions from New York City.
- “Dona Rosita the Spinster,” by Federico Garcia Lorca, a “poetic drama” about a woman waiting for her fiance to return, produced with an ensemble of children and adults from Lubbock, Texas, and including songs and dances with a harpist and guitarist playing classical Spanish music.
- A new translation of Chekhov’s “Uncle Vanya” by Moscow Arts critic John Freedman, and produced by Arb Arts from Ann Arbor, Michigan, as “environmental theater,” with live music.
- Samuel Beckett’s “Company,” adapted as a sound rather than sight experience by Lane Savadove and presented by Egopo Classic Theater from Philadelphia. Audience members will be asked to become collectively the story’s body lying in the dark by doing so themselves and listening to live violin music, among other thing.

– “The SnagglePuss Chronicles,” a staged reading by Philadelphia company Die-Cast of Mark Russell’s “Exit Stage Left” comic-book miniseries, released by DC Entertainment this year. The idea began with Russell sending tweets as Snagglepuss in the voice of Tennessee Williams, and the series reimagines Hanna-Barbera’s classic Saturday-morning cartoon character – a pink mountain lion – as a discreetly gay playwright under attack by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Celebrity guest stars are due to appear in cameos as Huckleberry Hound, Marilyn Monroe, Lillian Hellman, Dorothy Parker and the Rosenbergs.

– The premiere of a “first draft” of “Menageries of Angels,” a site-specific interweaving of ghost stories created by Brenna Geffers and presented by Die-Cast. The show will invite audience members to follow five tales featuring figures “that might be out of Tennessee Williams’ dreams” and who are all stuck between life and death. Audience members will be able to physically roam to follow characters that interest them in any order, or simply remain in one location and watch who passes through.

– Williams’ ghost story “Will Mr. Merriwether Return From Memphis?” by Pensacola Little Theater from Florida, is about a landlady who misses her star boarder and fears him dead, so she conducts a seance and conjures various ghosts, including that of Vincent Van Gogh.

– Williams’ “Some Problems for the Moose Lodge,” about parents whose son moves in with them along with his pregnant, holy-roller fiancée; paired with “Steps Must Be Gentle,” a fantasia about poet Hart Crane, both presented by Collective NY.

Academy, New Classics announce seasons

Two Cape theater companies have announced their full summer seasons, and one begins this week:

– The Academy of Performing Arts will stage three shows through September at the Academy Playhouse at 120 Main St., Orleans. Opening Thursday will be the musical “Cabaret,” set around a Berlin nightclub as Nazi power is rising, which runs through July 14.

Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance" will run July 18-Aug. 18, followed by Oscar Wilde's comedy about love and social obligations "The Importance of Being Earnest," Aug. 22-Sept. 23. All shows are at 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. Information: www.apacape.org.

-- The New Classics Company will present a fifth summer season at the Guyer Barn in Hyannis that will combine original theater, improv, more "Star Wars," the July 7 return of its 24-hour play festival and the Aug. 17-18 world premiere of a work by the New Hampshire-based Weather Makers Dance Theater.

The theater season will kick off June 21-30 with "#CryWolf," a middle-school-set adaptation of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," related to "fake news" for a student Instagram account, by Justin Gray, Michael Pantone, Angela Polite and Leore Riven, and directed by Chelsea Hedderig. The July 12-21 show will be the next chapter of a continuing "Star Wars" comedy series, with this one titled "The Last Return of the Fuzzballs."

The season will close out Aug. 2-11 with "Feathers and Teeth," a combination of comedy and horror written by Charise Castro Smith and directed by Emily Tullock. It's about a 13-year-old girl who is convinced her stepmother is evil and finds a mysterious creature that may help to solve the problem.

The company is moving beyond the Guyer Barn July 27-29 to present Justin Jay Gray's 2016 production of "Songbird" at Sandwich Town Hall in collaboration with the Sandwich Arts Alliance.

Information on the season: newclassicscompany.org.

JFK Museum honors Pak, exhibits at hospital

The JFK Hyannis Museum had two community announcements last week, honoring a local arts leader and extending its historic collection farther into the community.

– The museum's foundation announced the choice of Jung-Ho Pak, artistic director and conductor of Cape Cod Symphony for the past decade, to receive its Founders Community Leadership Award. It will be presented Wednesday at a

luncheon at the Hyannisport Club, with Eileen McNamara, Pulitzer Prize-winning former Boston Globe columnist and author of “Eunice: The Kennedy Who Changed the World,” as keynote speaker.

“The Founders Community Leadership Award recognizes individual or organizational excellence in leadership as demonstrated by outstanding initiative, impact of work, and inspiration of others,” according to museum executive director John Allen in the announcement. Pak “has made significant contributions to improving the quality of life on the Cape and Islands through the arts, which was a prominent part of President Kennedy’s vision.”

Tickets (\$60) and information: Jennifer@jfkhyannismuseum.org or 508-790-3077 ext. 3.

– An exhibit of photographs from the Kennedy museum will be on display through November in the Main Lobby Gallery at Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis. The photos depict President Kennedy and his family on Cape Cod, including him and his wife, Jacqueline, walking on the beach in Hyannisport, and he and his parents and siblings on the beach.

“The artwork will bring great pleasure to our patients, visitors and employees, and give them a glimpse into the life of President Kennedy’s life on Cape Cod,” said Michael Lauf, Cape Cod Healthcare president and CEO, in announcing the exhibit.

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