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Out and About: Summer theater season kicks off

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A lot of summer theater is kicking off across the Lehigh Valley this weekend, and there are colorful musicals, classical drama and children's production on tap all over the region.

The **Pennsylvania Playhouse** is bringing the family-friendly musical "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" to its Bethlehem stage Friday.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, "Joseph" was written early in Andrew Lloyd Weber's career and brings together various styles of music from country-western to calypso to rock and roll.

The story is based on the biblical Joseph of Genesis and his "coat of many colors." The youngest of 12 brothers, Joseph (Andrew Mark Schaffer) is a dreamer highly favored by his father, Jacob (Dean Tshudy). His father's favoritism, however, causes Joseph to be betrayed by his jealous brothers, igniting an adventure through Egypt with unlikely champions, wild dreams, and even a rock star Pharaoh (played by John Andreadis of the Freddy documentary, "Most Valuable Players"). As told by the narrator (Rebecca Pieper), Joseph chronicles a thrilling saga of deception, hope, and redemption through the use of an energetic and spellbinding score.

Composed by Weber ("Cats," "Phantom of the Opera,"), with lyrics by Tim Rice ("The Lion King," "Aida"), the duo takes audiences on a musical journey with catchy pop tunes and ballads through a range of styles.

The show is directed and choreographed by Colette Boudreaux, with musical direction by Adam Conti.

"Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," is at 7:30 p.m. May 31, June 1, 7-8 and 14-15; 6 p.m. June 2, 9 and 16, at the Pennsylvania Playhouse, 390 Illicks Mill Road, Bethlehem.

Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$22 students and seniors Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays.

For information, call 610-865-6665, or go to www.paplayhouse.org.

'In The Heights' at NCC Northampton Community College opens its third season of summer theater with the Tony Award-winning "In the Heights."

Lin-Manuel Miranda ("Hamilton") and Quiara Alegria Hudes' show is set in Washington Heights, the New York City neighborhood in which Miranda grew up. Opening on the hottest day of the year, it is narrated by Usnavi de la Vega, the owner of a small bodega. Over a three-day span, the neighbors experience a weather-related blackout, a winning lottery ticket, loss of family and livelihood, and dreams lost and compromised. The musical score includes freestyle rap, salsa and other genres, and most of the characters move between speaking Spanish and English.

Bill Mutimer, **NCC Summer Theatre**'s producing artistic director, has gathered a creative team and a professional company of actors, musicians, and crew to bring the show to vibrant life. Lucille Kincaid is as musical director, and Cristina Williams handles choreography duties. Brett Oliviera is the scenic and lighting designer.

Matias De La Flor, a Peruvian-born student from the University of North Carolina, takes on the role of Usnavi originated by Miranda. The neighborhood 'success story,' Nina Rosario, is played by Angelica Ramirez, a recent graduate of East Stroudsburg University. Her parents are played by Equity actor Robert Torres, who lives locally, and Raquel Lopez Clory, a professional actress originally from Florida.

"Abuela" Claudia is played by local professional actress Trish Kane Steele. The role of Usnavi's cousin, Sonny, is played by Alejandro Navarro, a California native attending Rider University. Daniel Melo, an NCC alum and recent graduate of University of the Arts, portrays Nina's love interest, Benny. Usnavi's love interest, Vanessa, is performed by Victoria Scovens, a recent DeSales University graduate.

Prior to each NCC performance, the college's Hispanic Caucus will offer a "street fair" in the theater lobby, with a Latin DJ, selling empanadas and piraguas (shaved ice), and information tables from community organizations.

The other shows for the NCC Summer Theatre are "Falsettos," a musical about a family as the son prepares for his Bar Mitzvah June 19-30; "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story," about the rock-and-roll star July 3-14; "A Perfect Dog" children's show July 10-August 3 and "Jesus Christ Superstar," Andrew Lloyd Webber's classic rock opera about the last days of Jesus' life July 24-August 4.

"In the Heights" will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays June 5-16, in Lipkin Theatre, Kopechek Hall, Northampton Community College, 3585 Green Pond Road, Bethlehem Township, Northampton County.

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'Robin Hood' opens Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival launches its 28th season with its children's production "The Adventures of Robin Hood and Maid Marian," which opens Friday in the Schubert Theatre at the Labuda Center for the Performing Arts on the Center Valley campus of DeSales University.

Join Robin Hood, Maid Marian, and a merry band of adventurers seeking freedom and vitality in the Sherwood Forest in this delightful tale for kids of all ages.

Children can get a front-row seat for the fun with on-stage carpet seating and everyone can meet the cast after the performance for autographs and pictures.

The Adventures of Robin Hood and Maid Marian will be performed by PSF's Young Company. Mark Yowakim will play Robin Hood and Mackenzie Moyer will play Maid Marian. Joining them in the cast are Taylor Congdon, Kailey Edwards, Megan Fry, Angela LaRose, Iykechi McCoy, Jayce Meredith, Gabe Moses, Alyssa Ramsey, Matt Smaldone, and Jhalil Younger.

The festival's Young Company, internships, and apprenticeships programs are among the Festival's longest educational traditions. The festival provides highly-coveted opportunities each year to DeSales University theater majors. An intensive, experience-based professional development program, these positions prepare students for a career in the theater industry. In addition to the children's production, Young Company members appear in all of PSF's mainstage performances throughout the summer and, in this production as well, benefit by working directly with PSF main stage professional directors and designers.

There will be a relaxed performance June 28 for patrons with sensory and communication differences, including individuals on the autism spectrum.

The July 27 performance will have audio description for patrons who are blind or visually impaired and American Sign Language interpretation for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The rest of the summer 2019 season includes "Crazy for You," June 12 to June 30; "Antony and Cleopatra," July 10 to August 4; "Private Lives," July 18 to August 4; and "Shakespeare for Kids," July 24 to August 3 on the Main Stage; and "The Mystery of Irma Vep," June 20 to July 14 and "Henry IV, Part 1" July 24 to August 4 in the Schubert Theatre.

"The Adventures of Robin Hood and Maid Marian" is presented 10 a.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, May 31 to August 3; 2 p.m. July 26, 30 and August 1, in Schubert Theatre, DeSales University, 2755 Station Avenue, Center Valley.

Tickets are \$13 children age 12 and under and \$17 adults.

For information, call 610-282-9455 or go to www.pashakespeare.org.

Pennsylvania Youth Ballet presents 'Coppelia' Dancers from Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and professional guest artists will present the classic ballet "Coppelia" on Friday in Zoellner Arts Center in Bethlehem.

The production features choreography by Artistic Director Karen Kroninger Knerr and includes the appearance of an original puppet created by Mock Turtle Marionette Theatre of Bethlehem.

One of the best-loved comedic ballets, "Coppelia" is an enchanting tale about a mad inventor and the life-like doll he creates. When a village boy who thinks it's a real girl, becomes infatuated with the doll, his fiancée becomes unhappy. The ensuing mix-ups and misunderstandings between the two young lovers sets the stage for plenty of hilarity. With colorful costumes and joyful dancing, this ballet is sure to delight both young and old.

"Coppelia" features the music of Leo Delibes, a French composer of the Romantic era, who specialized in ballets, operas, and other stage works. He influenced some of the greatest composers, among them Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns, Debussy, and Drigo.

The performance is 7 p.m. May 31 in Baker Hall, Zoellner Arts Center, 420 East Packer Avenue, Bethlehem.

Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$25 for seniors and children under age 18.

For information, call 610-758-2787 ext 0 or go to oellner.cas2.lehigh.edu/box-office.

Berks fiddle festival Join musicians and music fans from all over Berks County at the **Red Bridge Fiddle Festival** on Saturday.

This free event highlights bluegrass, Celtic, and folk music on stage and in the field at the Berks County Heritage Center from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. June 1.

The headline concert features Poor Man's Gambit at 5:30 p.m.

Other entertainment includes N.E.V., Matt Miskie, Judy Terwilliger and Matt Wlasniewski; Full Circle Music Society; guitar workshop with Butch Imhoff and a fiddle contest from 2:15-4:15 p.m.

There will be an old-fashioned cake walk, children's activities, a musical craft tent and a quick guitar workshop with Acoustic Road Show.

In addition, enjoy food trucks, craftspeople and farm market vendors.

Berks County Heritage Center is at 1102 Red Bridge Road, Bern Township.

For information call 610-374-2944 ext. 2611 or go to www.co.berks.pa.us/parks.

14th annual Hawk Mountain Arts Tour Visit 16 artist studios in the self-guided Hawk Mountain Arts Tour in Kempton and Lenhartsville, as well as in a satellite location featuring members of the Hamburg Area Arts Alliance along the river at the Etchberger Memorial Park in Hamburg from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. June 1.

In the Kempton area, stops include Hawk Mountain Visitor Center, 1700 Hawk Mountain Road; Kinder Hawk School House, 1093 Hawk Mountain Road; Willi Singleton Wood Fired Pottery, 843 Hawk Mountain Road; Angie Wagner Basketry and Weaving, The Country Seat, 1013 Old Philly Pike; Jeffrey Schucker Custom Wooden Products, 441 Mountain Road.;

Wanamaker's General Store, 8888 King's Highway; Albany Township Historical Society, 404 Old Philly Pike; Jonathan's Spoons, 3716 Route 737; Jonathan Bond Fine art Landscapes, 59 Kempton Road; Gene H. Allen Fine Art Landscapes, 5008 Golden Key Road; The Nesting Box, 230 Snyder Road, and Dan Christ Wildlife Art, 23 Spitzenberg Lane.

In the Lenhartsville area, stops are Mark Amery Hand-thrown Pottery, 189 Blue Rocks Road and Eric Claypoole Hexsign Artists, 227 Schock Road.

Artists in Hamburg include Anderson Wood Turning, Bee Silky Soap, Dire Brie: Photography by Robert Lanshe, Emma Ketterer Photography, Ken's Art, Martafact Studio, Martha Ressler, Pirjo Ceramic Creations, Rebecca Kunkleman, Ressler Art Studio, Scroll Saws, Susan's Ceramics and The Doily Lady.

A map can be downloaded at www.hamburgpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/arts-tour-map-2019.pdf.

Etchberger Memorial Park is at 2nd Street & Island Street, Hamburg.

For information, call 610-562-3106 or go to www.hamburgpa.org.

Hurricanes on Science on a Sphere in Easton Hurricane season begins June 1.

Learn what influences hurricanes and where and how frequently they occur with Easton's Science on a Sphere program "Keeping an Eye on Hurricanes" at 6 p.m. Thursday.

Revisit recent significant hurricanes and learn about future potential for more intense storms on the center's 6-foot suspended animated globe which displays high-resolution video about the earth and planetary science that reveal how different things affect atmosphere, climate, weather and even the balance of life on earth.

The science education center opened in 2011 to examine the environmental reasons behind flooding after Easton suffered its third major flood in a 22-month period.

The centerpiece of **Nurture Nature Center** is the Science on a Sphere program, one of a hundred in the world. The center occupies the second and third floors in a building that was one of Easton's first movie theaters located at 518 Northampton Street, Easton.

Every Saturday, the community can see a general sphere demonstration on the globe, described as a "reverse planetarium," which creates a 360-degree image of natural phenomena like the tsunami, earthquakes, solar flares and the path of the Gulf stream.

While there check out the art on display in the galleries.

The center is open 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. It is located at 518 Northampton Street, Easton.

For information, go to www.nurturenaturecenter.org.

Arts at St. John's presents Elysium String Quartet Arts at St. John's, in collaboration with the Allentown Symphony Orchestra, presents a concert in the Allentown church by Elysium String Quartet Friday.

The quartet features Julie Bougher and James Finegan on violin; Steve Heitlinger on viola and Andrea Weber on cello.

The Elysium Quartet has been playing together since 2008 and met while they were students at Temple University. Bougher, Finegan and Heitlinger are also members of the Allentown Symphony Orchestra where they have performed together for many years. As an ensemble, their first major performance was at the Kimmel Center for the Performance Arts before a concert given by Itzhak Perlman and since then, they have embarked on musical

journeys both individually and together. The quartet is engaged for more than 45 performances each year, including public performances at the Great Allentown Fair, recording sessions, and many private performances.

The program at 7:30 p.m. May 31 includes Haydn's "String Quartet in E flat major -The Joke;" Golijov's "Tenebrae" and Mendelssohn's "String Quartet No. 1."

The concert is at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 37 South Fifth Street, Allentown.

Programs are open to the public and free of charge. A free-will offering will be taken.

For information, call 610-435-1641 or go to www.stjohnsallentown.org.