



ALLEYWAY DIGITAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

Play Descriptions and Biographies

10/26/20

CONTACT: ROBYN HORN

rhorn@alleyway.com

716-852-2600 x202

THE PLAYS

GOAT SONG

by Matt Harmon

directed by Robyn Lee Horn

Winner of the 2020 Maxim Mazumdar New Play Competition

Starring Broadway's Brian Gallagher

What if your favorite musician didn't love their music the way you do? Once the face of the wallowing introspective indie music scene, singer-songwriter Michael is back with a new album of charming, upbeat tunes! As the reviews roll in, it is clear his audience wants the old Michael back. He reconciles the past and present in this heartbreaking and inspiring story of music, family and addiction.

This production will be performed live from the West Coast on Facebook Live and Instagram Live. For viewers without access to those platforms, an on-demand video will be made available following the livestream premieres. Ticket buyers will either receive instructions on how to join the live Facebook or Instagram streams, or a secure link that will give them access to watch the pre-recorded production anytime they choose, but only once per purchase.

BRIAN GALLAGHER is a singer/songwriter, musician, and actor, whose album, ALL THAT'S AHEAD, debuted at #1 on the iTunes blues charts to rave reviews. Last year, he released his second LP, BROWNSTONE, a gritty, bluesy, horror-inspired concept record about a haunted four "story" brownstone in Manhattan's East Village. His newest full-length concept album, THE GRIND SHOW, about a group of "prisoners" forced to re-live their own worst nightmares over and over again, was just released in October. Some acting credits include the Broadway Revival of JEKYLL & HYDE as well as the preceding US tour and the NYC debut of the rock musical, CHIX 6. He's also toured the world with such musicals as THE WHO'S TOMMY, THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL, CATS, SOUTH PACIFIC, and others.

BIG BREATH

by Elizabeth Gjelten

directed by Ansley Valentine

2020 Maxim Mazumdar New Play Competition Finalist

Starring Tony Award nominee Elizabeth Stanley

Deep in self-isolation and unable to leave her third-floor walkup, the Woman is trapped by fear and privilege as much as by her circumstances. Her only company comes from the other voices within her as she is goaded by her inner gym teacher to venture out into the world. This beautiful poetic one-woman play explores what it means to take action, find light, and breathe during quarantine.

This production will be available to stream on demand throughout the Festival. Ticket buyers will receive a secure link that will give them access to watch the production anytime they choose, but only once per purchase.

ELIZABETH STANLEY stars as 'Mary Jane Healy' in the Broadway production of **JAGGED LITTLE PILL** featuring the beloved music of Alanis Morissette, a book by Diablo Cody and orchestrations by Tom Kitt. For her performance she has earned a 2020 Drama Desk nomination and a 2020 Outer Critics Circle Award. Under the direction of Diane Paulus, she originated the role in its World Premiere at the American Repertory Theater in Boston. Ms. Stanley previously originated the roles of Dyanne in Million Dollar Quartet and Allison in Cry Baby. Additional Broadway credits include the revival of On the Town (Drama Desk Nomination) and the Tony Award-Winning revival of Company. She also appeared in the First National Tours of The Bridges of Madison County and Xanadu. Off-Broadway credits include Fucking A (Signature), Merrily We Roll Along (Encores! And PS Classics Cast Album) On television, Stanley can be seen in "NOS4A2," "FBI," "The Get Down", "The Affair," "Black Box," "Made in Jersey," "Fringe," "The Chappelle Show," and Company (PBS Great Performances).

LOL-OL

by Sheri Wilner

directed by Susan Drozd

2020 Maxim Mazumdar New Play Competition Finalist

Starring Debbie Pappas Sham, with Marta Aracelis, Bethany Burrows, Matt Gilbert, Jake Hayes, Sara Jo Kukulka, Bob Mazierski, Mike Starzynski, and Alexandria Watts

Dot has changed. Sheltering in place during the early days of COVID, she has moved her Laughter Yoga Studio classes online. What begins as an online dating event turns into a wacky free-for-all and a glimpse into the singular lives of her yoga students. Funny and heartwarming.

This production will be performed live over the internet for only three performances. Ticket buyers will receive a secure link to register for the performance in advance and then just click to watch at showtime.

SCREAMING INTO THE VOID

by Kira Mason

directed by Katie Horwitz

2020 Maxim Mazumdar New Play Competition Finalist

Starring Jen Horne, Caroline Huerta, Renee Landrigan, and Michelle Zink-Muñoz

Four very different one-dimensional female characters find themselves dropped into a strange abyss and left to rot in a void-like limbo. Soon, they become aware of each other's presence, and begin to question ... what separates them and what brings them together. Also, screaming and vandalism.

This production will be available to stream on demand throughout the Festival. Ticket buyers will receive a secure link that will give them access to watch the production anytime they choose, but only once per purchase.

BABUSHKA

improvised, created by and starring Todd Benzin and Don Gervasi

How do plays get made? How does sausage get made? Don Gervasi and Todd Benzin are Buffalo's greatest improv team. And now, for the first time ever, they're coming to your living room. Join Buffalo's master improvisers as they create an original play right in front of your eyes, using suggestions from the audience.

This production will be performed live over the internet for only two totally unique separate original performances. Ticket buyers will receive a secure link to register for the performance in advance and then just click to watch at showtime.

RED ALIEN by Jane B. Jones

THE MIGHTY MAISIE by Bella Poynton

2019 Maxim Mazumdar New Play Competition Finalists

Directed by Samantha Marchant

Starring Dominique Kempf, Brett Klaczyk, Sara Kow-Falcone, Smirna Mercedes-Perez, Jamie Nablo, Ember Tate, Niki Nowak Tolnay, and Emily Yancey

These plays are the full-length finalists in last year's Mazumdar Competition. Pointed, insightful, funny and irreverent, they will each receive a free playreading during the Festival. Each play will be directed by Alleyway's dramaturg Samantha Marchant, who will lead the casts through several rehearsals where the playwright can hear the play, ask questions, make changes, get feedback and then go make re-writes. This reading series is the beginning step in Alleyway's reimagined commitment to new play development.

Audience members will receive a link to register for the event and hear a brand new play as it continues on its path of development. This process is integral in how all plays and musicals are created, and you'll be able to say, "I saw that play first!"

SPECIAL EVENT

In a very special star-studded event, Alleyway audiences will be treated to a gala reading of the new play MYSTERY BOX by Tom Alan Robbins. Tom's play is a delightful look into the artist's experience, as a young painter questions his work, the

industry, his career, the critics, and the bureaucracy of it all. Four of Broadway's best performers will come together to read this play in a special one-night-only event on November 21 at 8pm EST. Proceeds from the benefit will support Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, the ECMC Immunodeficiency Clinic, and Alleyway's new play programming.

The playwright, Tom Alan Robbins, is best known as an actor, having appeared in eight Broadway shows, including *The Lion King* for which he created the role of Pumbaa. Other Broadway Shows: *Head Over Heels* (Dametas), *Newsies*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Jerome Robbins Broadway*, *Threepenny Opera*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, and *Is He Dead?*. He played Thenardier in the first national tour of *Les Misérables*.

Starring Mary Testa, Dakin Matthews, Wesley Taylor, and Helen Cespedes.

MARY TESTA is the recipient of the Legend of Off-Broadway Award, Three Tony nominations, two Lucille Lortel nominations, six Drama Desk nominations, two Drama League nominations, two Outer Critic's Circle nominations, and an Obie Award. In recognition of three decades of outstanding work on the New York stage, she was honored with the 2012 Drama Desk Award, which also singled out her bravura performance in Buffalo native Michael John LaChiusa's *Queen of the Mist*.

She most recently appeared on Broadway in a critically-acclaimed performance as Aunt Eller in *Oklahoma!* Her other Broadway credits include *Wicked*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Xanadu*, *Chicago*, *42nd Street*, *Marie Christine*, *On the Town*, *...Forum*, *The Rink*, *Marilyn* and *Barnum*.

Off-Broadway, Mary appeared in the St Ann's Warehouse production of *Oklahoma!*, *The Portuguese Kid*, *The Government Inspector*, *First Daughter Suite*, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Queen of the Mist*, *Love Loss and What I Wore A New Brain*, *See What I Wanna See*, and many more.

Dakin Matthews

Broadway: *Henry IV*, *A Man For All Seasons*, *The Best Man*, *Rocky*, *Waitress*, *The Audience*, *The Iceman Cometh*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Off-Broadway: *Freedomland*, *The Hostage*, *The School For Scandal*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*. Encores: *Where's Charley*, *Brigadoon*. Regional: over 230 stage productions. Film: 30 films, including *Bridge of Spies*, *Lincoln*, *True Grit*. TV: 250 appearances, including *Gilmore Girls*, *King of Queens*, *Desperate Housewives*.

Wesley Taylor

Theatre World Award Winner, Chita Rivera Award Winner, and Outer Critics Circle Nominee. Broadway: *Spongebob Squarepants* (original cast), *The Addams Family* (original cast), *Rock of Ages* (original cast). Denver Center: *An Act of God*. Signature Theatre: *Cabaret*. Second Stage: *Little Miss Sunshine*. American Conservatory Theater: *Tales of the City*. TV: "Smash," "The Good Wife," "The Tomorrow People," "One Life to Live," "Looking," "I'm Dying up Here," "Difficult People," and "The Spongebob Musical: Live on Stage."

Helen Cespedes

Broadway: *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. Off-Broadway: *Fefu and Her Friends* and *Timon of Athens* (TFANA), *Paul Swan is Dead and Gone* (Civilians), *The School For Scandal* (Red Bull), *A Picture of Autumn* (The Mint). Regional credits include Doug McGrath's world premiere adaptation of *The Age of Innocence* directed by Doug Hughes (McCarter/Hartford), *Taking Steps* (Barrington Stage Co.), *The Women of Padilla* (Two River), the world premiere of José Rivera's *Another Word for Beauty* (Goodman Theatre and NYSF), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Williamstown and The Old Globe). Film/TV: *The Way I Remember It*, *The Knick*. Helen trained at The Juilliard School where she received the John Houseman Prize.

BROADWAY MASTERCLASSES

Alleyway's education department, the Theatre School of WNY, also announces two very special Broadway Masterclasses. Jared Gertner and Ali Ewoldt will coach actors through songs or monologues in a unique one-on-one setting over Zoom. Both Gertner and Ewoldt are masters of their craft, having performed multiple times on Broadway and across the world. "Bringing these two to Buffalo is a coup! I wish I had the chance to study with them when I was in school. Their insights are incredible and their knowledge of what works and what doesn't is unmatched," says Handley.

Jared Gertner is best known for playing Elder Cunningham in *The Book of Mormon* on Broadway, on the first national tour and in London (Olivier Award nomination- Best Lead Actor). In New York, Jared has also been seen as William Barfee in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Broadway), Warren in the premiere of *Ordinary Days* (off-Broadway, Roundabout), and as one of the core cast of improvisors in *Don't Quit Your Night Job* (off-Broadway).

Ali Ewoldt has appeared as Christine Daaé in *The Phantom of the Opera* on Broadway, Cosette in *Les Misérables* (Broadway, National Tour), *The King and I* (Broadway, Tour, Lyric Opera of Chicago), Maria in *West Side Story* (National Tour, International Tour, PCLO, The Muny, MTWichita) and Luisa in *The Fantasticks* (Off-Broadway).

TICKETS, TIMES, AND DETAILS

Tickets are available for each performance individually, or a Festival Pass that includes a ticket to every show. All times are EST.

Tickets and full details are available online at www.alleyway.com or by calling the Alleyway Box Office at 716-852-2600 x0.

GOAT SONG

November 6 @ 8pm: live on Facebook

November 7 @ 10pm: live on Instagram

November 9-22: streaming on demand

MYSTERY BOX

(a special star-studded benefit not included in the Festival Pass)

November 21 @ 8pm: live on Zoom

RED ALIEN

BIG BREATH

November 7-22: streaming on demand

LOL-OL

November 13, 15, 19 @ 8pm: live on Zoom

SCREAMING INTO THE VOID

November 12-22: streaming on demand

BABUSHKA

November 14 and 20 @ 8pm: live on Zoom

November 10 @ 8pm: live on Zoom

THE MIGHTY MAISIE

November 17 @ 8pm: live on Zoom

ALI EWOLDT MASTERCLASS

January 19, 2021 @ 5pm on Zoom

JARED GERTNER MASTERCLASS

January 12, 2021 @ 5pm on Zoom