

From fairy tales to a rock opera, OU's 2018-19 theatre season offers 'something for everyone'



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The Oakland University Department of Theatre will kick off its 2018-19 season on Thursday, Oct. 11 with Into the Woods, a “Once Upon a Time” tale that introduces the hopes and dreams of characters from some of our favorite fairy tales and explores the lengths we go to for our dreams — and the potentially high cost of getting what we want.

Guest directed by Scott Mikita with choreography by Rachel Constantino, Into the Woods is a musical with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by James Lapine. One of five MainStage productions this season, Into the Woods takes place in Varner Studio Theatre at 8 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 11; at 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 12; at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 13; at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 14; at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 17; at 8 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 18; at 8 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 19; at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 20; and at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 21.

Tickets are \$22 general admission or \$12 for students and the 10 a.m. matinee.

Also on the MainStage this season will be:

- Lysistrata Remix — Oh no! The men are at war; the women know the fighting has to stop. What can a mere woman do? Find out what happens when the play Lysistrata finds its way into a college dorm room and women from around “the world” make a pact to deny their men sex until the fighting stops. Directed by Karen Sheridan with choreography by Gregory Patterson, this new retelling of Aristophanes classic comedy proves that nothing is as potent as the germ of an idea. Recommended for viewers 17 or older due to mature humor. language and comic



relief, *Lysistrata Remix* will take place in the Varner Studio Theatre on Thursday, Nov. 15 at 8 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 16 at 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.; Saturday, Nov. 17 at 8 p.m.; Sunday, Nov. 18 at 2 p.m.; Thursday, Nov. 29 at 8 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 30 at 7 p.m. and 11 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 1 at 8 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 2 at 2 p.m. The 11 p.m. performance on Friday, Nov. 30 will be a late-night pajama party and audience members are encouraged to wear comfy clothes.

Tickets are \$15 general admission or \$8 for students and the 10 a.m. matinee.

- *Seagull* — A slice-of-life drama set in the Russian countryside at the end of the 19th century, the action revolves around the play's dissatisfied characters' romantic and artistic conflicts. Some desire love. Some desire success. Some desire artistic genius. No one, however, ever seems to attain happiness. Directed Lynnae Lehfeldt, *Seagull* is considered one of the 100 most important plays of all time and is the first of the four major plays of Anton Chekhov. Performances will take place in Varner Studio Theatre on Thursday, Feb. 7 at 8 p.m.; Friday, Feb. 8 at 8 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 9 at 8 p.m.; Sunday, Feb. 10 at 2 p.m.; Wednesday, Feb. 13 at 8 p.m.; Thursday, Feb. 14 at 8 p.m.; and Friday, Feb. 15 at 10 a.m.

Tickets are \$15 general admission or \$8 for students and the 10 a.m. matinee.

- *The Who's Tommy* — Winner of five Tony Awards, *The Who's Tommy* is a fast-paced, exhilarating rock opera featuring a thrilling score by the legendary British rock band The Who. Set over a period of 25 years, *Tommy* is a story about hope, healing and the human spirit, while also exploring issues of mental health, abuse, and celebrity.

"At its heart, *The Who's Tommy* is a theatrical rock concert," said David Gram, director. "My goal is to capture the rebellious spirit of the original concept album, the dramatic ingenuity of the musical and our own contemporary perspectives on hot button issues."

Based on the book by Pete Townsend and Des McAnuff, with lyrics by Townsend and choreography by Amanda Lehman, *The Who's Tommy* will be performed in Varner Studio Theatre on Thursday, March 21 at 8 p.m.; Friday, March 22 at 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.; Saturday, March 23 at 8 p.m.; Sunday, March 24 at 2 p.m.; Wednesday, March 27 at 8 p.m.; Thursday, March 28 at 8 p.m.; Friday, March 29 at 8 p.m.; and Saturday, March 30 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Each performance of Tommy will be shadow-signed for the Deaf by Synergy on Stage. Unlike other methods of accommodating Deaf viewers, including the use of an off-stage interpreter or captions on a screen above the stage, “shadow signing” allows ASL performers to follow or “shadow” the actors on stage while interpreting, which means the audience can easily pay attention to both the sign language and the actors in the theatre.

Tickets are \$22 general admission, and \$12 for students and the 10 a.m. matinee.

- **James and the Giant Peach** — James Henry Trotter cannot escape his mean aunts Spiker and Sponge; or can he? A magical peach may be his answer! Join James and the creatures that he meets on his incredible journey. Based on the fantastical tale by Roald Dahl and adapted by Richard R. George, James and the Giant Peach is directed by Lynnae Lehfeldt with performances in Varner Recital Hall on Friday, May 17 at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Sunday, May 19 at 2 p.m.; and Friday, June 7 at 7 p.m.; as well as Saturday, June 1 at 11 a.m. at the Flagstar Strand Theatre for the Performing Arts in Pontiac. Pajamas are welcome at the 7 p.m. performance, and the performances on June 7 will be shadow-signed for the Deaf by Synergy on Stage.

Tickets are \$10 general admission, \$6 for students and children (age 2 and under are free).

During the 2018-19 season, performances on the SecondStage will include:

- **Musical Theatre Workshop** — Join us for a unique musical experience as theatre students present an evening of entertainment that is bound to prove their “triple threat skills. The workshop will take place in Varner Studio Theatre on Monday, Dec. 3 at 8 p.m.; and Tuesday, Dec. 4 at noon and 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for all seats.

- **Orlando** — Playwright Sarah Ruhl’s genre-defying adaptation of Virginia Woolf’s infamous satiric romp through English history is at once magically poetic and grounded in the pragmatics of relationships. Ruhl (via Woolf) also engages deeply with many issues of contemporary life, including feminism and gender fluidity. Directed by Jake Hooker, performances will take place in Varner Studio Theatre on Thursday, Dec. 6 at 8 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 7 at 8 p.m.; and Saturday, Dec. 8 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

“Orlando is, first, a great love story,” Hooker said. “But in many ways it is also a kind of celebration of fluidity — of gender, of time, of space, of nationality, and even of aesthetics. Ruhl, working very directly from Woolf, historicizes and troubles gender norms and has a lot of fun doing it.”

Tickets are \$8 for all seats.

- **Nightclub Cabarets** — Students bring personal dialogue, song and story to the stage as part of a series of imaginative, honest and entertaining cabaret performances at the Flagstar Strand Theatre for the Performing Arts in Pontiac. These unique solo performances invite audience members to share the artists’ unique journeys through the creative process. Performances will take place at 12 N. Saginaw Street in Pontiac on Thursday, April 4 at 7 p.m.; Friday, April 5 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, April 6 at 7 p.m.; and Sunday, April 7 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10 at the door (\$5 with student ID). Cash only.

- **The Battles of Coxinga** — Directed and adapted by Kerro Knox 3, this Japanese play, originally written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon for puppet theatre, is reexamined through various style of traditional Asian theatre: Noh, Kabuki, Bunraku, shadow puppetry and the original Joruri. Chikamatsu is considered the “Japanese Shakespeare,” and this play is his best-known history play where puppets allow spectacular scenes of superhuman feats and mayhem. Performances will take place on Thursday, April 11 at 7:30 p.m.; Friday, April 12 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, April 13 at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, April 14 at 1:30 p.m. Tickets are \$8 for all seats.

“From a thought-provoking fairy tale musical to a classic rock opera; to the roots of realism to a twist on the Greeks, our MainStage and SecondStage seasons have something for everyone,” said Anthony Guest, associate professor of theatre and chair of the Department of Theatre at Oakland University.

Tickets are on sale now, without service fees, through Star Tickets at startickets.com and (800) 585-3737. Tickets purchased by phone or online will be held at will call, at no additional charge, at the venue. Advanced ticket purchase is recommended.

For more information, visit www.oakland.edu/smtd/theatre/productions.