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THE MORNING LINE

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FROM: Emily Meagher, Michelle Farabaugh

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The New York Times



January 10, 2015

‘If/Then’ to Close on Broadway

By Patrick Healy

The Broadway musical “If/Then,” a star vehicle for the Tony Award winner Idina Menzel that portrays the implications of career and romantic choices on a modern-day New Yorker, will close on March 22 at the conclusion of Ms. Menzel’s run in the show, the producers announced on Friday.

The musical opened in March to mixed reviews but had strong ticket sales through the spring and summer, in part thanks to Ms. Menzel’s popularity from her hit song “Let It Go” in the movie “Frozen” and from her past Broadway outings (“Wicked,” “Rent”).

“If/Then” also stood out as the only Broadway musical last spring with an original score and story; the music is by Tom Kitt and the lyrics and book by Brian Yorkey, the Tony-winning creators of the Broadway hit “Next to Normal.” “If/Then” ended up nominated for only two Tonys, for best score and best actress for Ms. Menzel. The show proved to be neither a durable hit from the 2013-14 season – like “Aladdin” and “Beautiful: The Carole King Musical” – nor a flop like “Rocky” and “Bullets Over Broadway.” The musical will partially recoup its \$10 million capitalization.

Total Daily Circulation – 1,897,890
Total Sunday Circulation – 2,391,986
Monthly Online Readership – 30,000,000

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The New York Times



ArtsBeat The Culture at Large

January 12, 2015

By Patrick Healy

A new Tony Award will be given annually to a theater teacher who has made a “monumental impact” on the lives of students, executives who oversee the Tonys and officials at Carnegie Mellon University announced on Sunday. The honor is intended to reflect the appreciation that many Tony winners — actors, writers, directors — have expressed for drama teachers who guided or inspired them. The award is the first new Tony since 2009. Through March 31, anyone can nominate a teacher for the new Excellence in Theater Education Award. Nominees must be current teachers at an accredited elementary, middle or high school or community theater organization in the United States. (College professors and retired teachers are not eligible.) A panel of judges comprising members of the American Theater Wing and the Broadway League, which oversee the Tonys, and Carnegie Mellon officials and theater industry executives will choose the winner, who will receive the award onstage at the annual Tonys ceremony in June.

The New York Times

January 12, 2015

A Bruising Love Throbs Anew 'Kansas City Choir Boy,' With Courtney Love and Todd Almond

By Charles Isherwood

A glamorously tarnished rock goddess, Courtney Love, plays an elusive muse named after the deity Athena in “Kansas City Choir Boy,” a music-theater piece by Todd Almond being presented as part of the Prototype festival of new opera and musical theater. Ms. Love, looking trim and intense, her long blond hair caught in a tangled ponytail, portrays the onetime love of a dream-bound musician in Mr. Almond’s dramatically blurry but musically inviting work, which is being presented in a small underground space at HERE Arts Center.

Mr. Almond, who wrote the music and lyrics (there is no traditional “book” to speak of), plays the other primary character, a broody composer looking back on his turbulent relationship with Ms. Love’s Athena, whose presence flits in and out of his imagination as he sits alone in Kansas City attempting to compose music, presumably in her tribute.

As the show opens, we find this unnamed character — he’s referred to by a titular epithet in the text — noodling away on his computer, headphones clamped on, the world around him banished. Suddenly he’s distracted by an image on the old television buzzing in the room. “Local Girl Found Dead” runs the headline, accompanied by a photo of Ms. Love.

Stunned, he flashes back to his tempestuous youthful relationship with Athena, which began when they were teenagers and ended abruptly, leaving him with scalding memories and a wound in his heart that’s reopened when he learns of her mysterious death in faraway New York. The story — what little there is of it — comes through only in crude outline; Mr. Almond’s songs, which range from electronic pseudo-disco to moody, graceful guitar-driven ballads and duets, carry the weight of the slender narrative, or at least provide enough minimal detail for us to follow the basic contours: the time-tested boy-loves-girl, boy-loses-girl thing.

Ms. Love, whose résumé as a rock performer, famous young widow, occasional actress and frequent tabloid fixture I probably don’t need to rehash, has a surprisingly soft-edged and bewitching presence. Although her face sometimes has that smooth mask-like quality of someone who’s spent a little too much quality time with her dermatologist, her eyes have a transfixing quality and she moves with a slinky sexual tread. Her voice, never the most supple or rangy of instruments, retains the singular sound that made her an electrifying front woman for the band Hole: a single sustained note can seem to simultaneously contain a plea, a wound and a threat.

Ms. Love performs the song “All I Ever Wanted” from “Kansas City Choir Boy,” with the show’s composer, Todd Almond, on piano, and Eric Allen on cello. The show is at Here Arts Center from Jan. 8-17.

Her voice is arguably even darker in timbre now, recalling the dirty-whiskey-glass sound of Marianne Faithfull or Nico. True, Ms. Love is often wayward of pitch, but always tightly connected to the emotion she’s channeling. Athena pledges her affections in the agreeably charging duet “Baby, Make Me Your Constellation,” seductively singing that she’s going to get a tattoo “in the shape of your mouth.” (Ms. Love’s own tattoos are on

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ample display: she appears mostly in scruffy jeans and a tank top, although at one point she swans onstage in a luscious black Zac Posen red carpet number.)

A song or two later finds the couple impulsively marrying — signaled merely by his donning of a ready-made bow-tie and her suddenly flinging a veil over her snarl of curls. Then, boom! The newlyweds have grown apart. (Narrative transitions are more or less nonexistent.) “I wanna blame them fireworks,” Athena sings in a moody ballad of separation, and Ms. Love is at her bewitching best when her character’s restless emotions flit from intoxication to resentment and frustration. Soon Athena’s moving on, trailing a suitcase and vague ambitions, heading out for a brighter future in the big city.

The boy she leaves behind tries to lose himself in indiscriminate partying. He wanders a club with a wild eye, grasping after one woman, then another. These are portrayed by the six-woman chorus, who add backing vocals on several songs and perform most of Sam Pinkleton’s somewhat “Vogue”-ish choreography clad in all-black leather and lace outfits by Paul Carey. They also accompany Ms. Love on songs she sings as the spirit of the lost Athena, when they are referred to in the text as “missing girls.”

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Mr. Almond, whose works include “On the Levee” and songs for the Public Theater’s productions of “The Tempest” and “The Winter’s Tale” in Central Park, holds his own against the formidable charisma of his co-star. (He’s also a performer, having appeared in those Public Theater productions.) He sings with an urgency to match Ms. Love’s in a firm pop-rock croon that, appropriately enough for the material, shows a bit less wear than Ms. Love’s voice.

“Kansas City Choir Boy,” directed by Kevin Newbury, who adds necessary dynamism by weaving the action around the audience seated on three sides of the stage, would need more dramatic elucidation to become a fully satisfying work. Mr. Almond’s lyrics can be banal or prosaic: “Hey, I had a dream last night/You went away/But you came back to me/You see? It’s all right.” On the other hand the music, played by Mr. Almond on keyboards and guitar, and a string quartet halved and planted amid the audience, is more alluring, at its best in the shimmering ballads in which the two characters meet in some netherworld and revisit what might have been.

It is never exactly clear what brought these two together and tore them apart, but the casting of Ms. Love (celebrity) and Mr. Almond (little-known composer-performer) niftily intimates what the text leaves unsaid. Athena’s heart, hopes, ambitions are too big for the town where they met, whereas Mr. Almond’s scruffy-bearded but wholesome-seeming character humbly sings: “Kansas City wants me, or I want Kansas City.”

Kansas City Choir Boy

Music and lyrics by Todd Almond; directed by Kevin Newbury; choreography by Sam Pinkleton; music direction by David Bloom; sets by Vita Tzykun and Clark Parkan; lighting by D. M. Wood; video by Darrel Maloney; costumes by Paul Carey, Ms. Love’s goddess dress by Zac Posen; sound by Brandon Wolcott; hair and makeup design by David Bova; line producer, Amy Ashton; stage manager, Marisa Levy; associate producers, Dan Shaheen and Jamie deRoy. Presented by Beth Morrison Projects, Jane Gullong, chairwoman; and HERE, Kristin Marting, artistic director; as part of the Prototype Festival. At HERE Arts Center, 45 Avenue of the Americas, at Dominick Street, South Village; prototypefestival.org. Through Saturday. Running time: 1 hour.

WITH: Todd Almond (Kansas City Choir Boy), Courtney Love (Athena) and Kate Douglas, Angel Lin, Molly McAdoo, Barrie McLain, Angela Sclafani and Sylver Wallace (Sirens).

The New York Times

January 12, 2015

When Ordinary Words Sprout Wings and Fly 'Reread Another' Celebrates Gertrude Stein's Babble

By Ben Brantley

Words seem to be plucked from the air, with great care and wonder, in "Reread Another," a charming palate-teaser of an opener for the Target Margin Theater's season devoted to the writings of Gertrude Stein at the Bushwick Starr in Brooklyn. They are simple words, said with savor and, occasionally, apprehension.

There's probably not one you haven't heard before. If you listen with half an ear, they sound in combination like the ordinary sentences you overhear every day.

Listen more carefully, though, as these words are assembled into the exacting forms of declensions and syllogisms, or quaint questions and answers that suggest foreign language phrase books for travelers. Why, it's all gobbledygook.

Except that something kind of wonderful has happened. These very pedestrian words seem to have sprouted wings, and resonate with surprising novelty. No wonder that the three people speaking them seem so delighted and perplexed. It's as if they've been born again as speakers of English.

Staged by the Target Margin artistic director David Herskovits, a man celebrated for bringing cobwebbed theatrical arcana into the light, "Reread Another," seen over the weekend, was the perfect curtain raiser for a month of works by or inspired by Stein. This modernist American writer, who presided over one of the great avant-garde salons of all time in early 20th-century Paris, has rarely been anyone's idea of light entertainment.

But this 40-minute play from 1921, seldom seen or read outside academia, has an exhilarating air of discovery that finds the fun — and the sense — in Stein's seeming nonsense. Its full title, "Reread Another A Play to Be Played Indoors or Out I Wish to Be a School," offers an accurate idea of what to expect.

It is performed with tripping grace by Clare Barron, Purva Bedi and Ugo Chukwu (and a participatory sound man, Jesse Freedman), who wear kimonos and sailor stripes, suggesting extras from some hybrid Gilbert & Sullivan operetta. Using kitschy objects like white plastic globes and shiny party hats as visual aids, they speak in cryptic fragments of mountains and men and mothers and colorblind house painters.

"And who is your cousin?" they say repeatedly. And: "She is dirigible." The talk occurs amid a Richard Foremanesque set (designed by Ásta Bennie Hostetter) littered with colored tissue paper and many lamps. The effect is of the morning after a New Year's Eve party, when revelers regroup to face another long block of days.

What better time, after all, to resolve to listen, really listen, to sounds and words you take for granted?

Reread Another

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Based on “Reread Another A Play To Be Played Indoors or Out Wish to Be a School” by Gertrude Stein; directed by David Herskovits; scenographer, Ásta Bennie Hostetter; lighting by Jennifer Reiser; sound by Mr. Herskovits; stage manager, Flora Vassar; assistant director, Emilyn Kowaleski; production manager, Ann Marie Dorr; technical director, Sara Morgan. Presented by the Bushwick Starr, Noel Joseph Allain, artistic director; and Sue Kessler, executive director; and Target Margin Theater, Mr. Herskovits, artistic director; John Del Gaudio, artistic producer; as part of the TMT Stein Lab: When This You See Remember Me. At the Bushwick Starr, 207 Starr Street, Brooklyn, 866-811-4111, thebushwickstarr.org. Running time: 50 minutes.

WITH: Clare Barron, Purva Bedi, Ugo Chukwu and Jesse Freedman (Sound Demon).

The New York Times

January 12, 2015

‘Hereeeee’s Ikechukwu!’ (Complete With Sidekick and Fake Cityscape) ‘Ike at Night’ at the Public Theater

By Charles Isherwood

Maybe some things that happen in Brooklyn should stay in Brooklyn. And before you assail me for my highfalutin Manhattan attitude, admit that we now have a reverse-snobbery situation, where Brooklyn dwellers sniff in umbrage at the interlopers who clog the L train in a frantic clamor to visit the latest white-hot restaurant in Williamsburg.

In any case, “Ike at Night,” a gentle sendup of an old-school late-night talk show, hosted by Ikechukwu Ufomadu, strikes me as an entertainment better suited to its original home, the Jack performing arts space in Clinton Hill, than it is to the Public Theater, where it has been imported as part of the Under the Radar festival. It left the British woman sitting beside me befuddled. “Perhaps it’s a cultural thing,” she said during one of the fake commercial breaks.

Well, probably. You would need to be familiar with chat shows like “The Tonight Show” of Johnny Carson vintage to recognize the format that Mr. Ufomadu is paying amiable, tongue-just-grazing-cheek homage to. The set winks at tradition: plain wooden desk, microphone, cheesy curtains through which guests arrive, fake cityscape in the background, an Ed McMahon figure sitting like a potted plant. (This character is credited as Sidekick, and played with a sheepish smile, a ready nod-and-chuckle and minimal speech by B. Brian Argotsinger.)

The applause sign above the set flashes when guests arrive or we return from a “commercial break.” It’s all cutely gimcrack, however, and a D.J. spinning vintage vinyl (“A Lot of Livin’ To Do,” from “Bye Bye Birdie”) must stand in for the live band. Still, the only major appurtenances missing are cameras.

Mr. Ufomado, in a neat suit and Brooklyn-bearded, began with a monologue, naturally, although his style is so subdued, his manner so coolly understated, that he didn’t work up to much in the way of actual jokes. Playing with his recalcitrant mike cord, he let on that he’s originally from Texas, where he attended the rodeo “every weekday night.” That’s about as close to a knee-slapper as he came, and when he began on current affairs he quickly pivoted away: “I don’t want to get into that right now,” he demurred.

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After a break, during which host, sidekick and producer types fake-chatted and fake-conferred, on came the guests. At the performance I attended Mr. Ufomado talked New York politics with a charismatic state assembly member from Brooklyn, Walter T. Mosley (“What’s the buzz in Albany?”); mourned the changing face of Flatbush with the fiery but friendly “anti-gentrification activist” Imani Henry; and exchanged courtly banter with the musical guest, the teddy bearish comic John Hodgman (of “The Daily Show” and a veteran of this festival), who concluded by sweetly singing two of his songs and strumming his banjo.

Unlike Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert — to say nothing of Zach Galifianakis, who hilariously takes down the celebrity-chat format in his web series “Between Two Ferns” — Mr. Ufomadu was wholly sincere and laid-back, letting his guests do most of the talking, much in the way that Carson used to cede the spotlight to Phyllis

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Diller or David Brenner. Of course the twist resides in Mr. Ufomadu's race — African-Americans in this role are still rare in mainstream television. Unusual, too, is the emphasis on politics and multicultural issues: next weekend's guests include the Brooklyn borough president, Eric Adams; the Arab-American activist Linda Sarsour; and the "sustainable food guru" Bun Lai.

The effect was rather like attending a live taping of a cable access television show back in the 1980s. As such it had a scruffy appeal, although it seemed an odd fit for an experimental theater festival. Still, "Ike at Night" boasts a fringe benefit that Robin Byrd probably didn't offer, and I bet none of today's real late-night chatfests do either: free beer for everyone in the audience! If there's more of that going on in Brooklyn, book me a guest shot, please.

Ike at Night

Hosted by Ikechukwu Ufomadu; sidekick, B. Brian Argotsinger; bandleader, Jonathan E. Jacobs a.k.a. the Vintage D.J.; lighting by Amith A. Chandrasher; sets by Amy Rubin; theme music by Grady Tesch; creative producer, Alec Duffy; production/stage manager, Paloma Wake; executive producer, the performing arts space Jack. Presented by the Public Theater, Oskar Eustis, artistic director; Patrick Willingham, executive director; Mark Russell and Meiyin Wang, festival co-directors, as part of the Under the Radar Festival. At the Public Theater, 425 Lafayette Street, at Astor Place, East Village, 212-967-7555, underthefest.com. Through Jan. 18. Running time: 1 hour 20 minutes.

The New York Times

January 10, 2015

Cocktails, Karaoke and Occasional Cringing 'The Blind Date Project' Brings a Web Meeting to Life

By Charles Isherwood

Schadenfreude is perhaps a natural reaction to “The Blind Date Project,” an improvisational theater piece presented as part of this year’s Coil festival that allows you to be a voyeur at the first meeting between two strangers. Admit that there’s something sneakily appealing in the prospect of watching other people navigate the jittery horrors of that initial encounter, a grueling rite of passage pretty much everyone has endured, and often regretted.

This clever show, created by the Australian actress Bojana Novakovic, who plays one-half of the couple at each performance, and Mark Winter, takes place in the back room of an actual bar, the funky Parkside Lounge, on the border between the East Village and the Lower East Side. (The Parkside is a presenter of the show, which is a production of the Ride On Theater company, co-founded by Ms. Novakovic.) The audience sits at tightly arranged cocktail tables — nice to know there are still \$8 drinks available somewhere in Manhattan — and watches Ms. Novakovic and another performer enact the prickly ritual of the title at a small bar in the corner of the room.

In an attempt to recreate at least some of the variables involved in an actual blind date, Ms. Novakovic apparently does not know which of the actors signed up to play her partner will be performing on any given night. (The participants include Pablo Schreiber, Laverne Cox, Reggie Watts and Anson Mount, among others.) On the night I saw the show, Frederick Weller (recently on Broadway in “Mothers and Sons”) darted into the bar with a bouquet of flowers — several minutes after Ms. Novakovic had arrived — brimming with apologies for being late.

What unfolds each night is mostly improvised, although recourse will be made at some point to the karaoke machine that sits off to one side. (A blind date with the added anxiety of karaoke? Horrors.) At the performance I saw, the characters, Anna and Harry, moved from white wine (hers) and beer (his) to vodka as they bumped through eager but awkward early chatter (“I really liked your profile”). Each keeps a cellphone within easy reach, as if it were a child’s comforting toy, or maybe a weapon at the ready.

Anna has a kooky streak — prominently figuring in that profile was a mention of her love for polynomials and prime numbers — and tends to take the reins of the conversation. She suggests they play the game in which you choose one celebrity you’d like to kill, one to marry and one to sleep with, but the variation they end up playing involves herbs you’d like to kill, marry or sleep with. Harry admits to having the hots for cilantro.

Harry, who’s 44 and recently divorced after 12 years, keeps getting calls on his phone and, to Anna’s thinly veiled irritation, answers them more often than not. At one point, when he’s on the phone with one of his kids, she grabs the phone and offers to send the boy off with a bedtime tale; this does not go well.

Also potentially embarrassing: Anna’s flirty inquiry into Harry’s taste in pornography. He sheepishly confesses to having a (predictable) thing for “girl-girl” action.

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Since every night is a new one at “The Blind Date Project,” which is directed by Scott Rodgers, you may not get a chance to hear Ms. Novakovic warble her way through Bonnie Tyler’s immortal “Total Eclipse of the Heart,” or her date do the same with the disco staple “I Will Survive.” At this particular performance, once a rapport between Harry and Anna had been established, they rose to the intimacy of sharing a duet on “You’re the One That I Want,” from “Grease.” (Audience members, too, can volunteer to sing; a karaoke “menu” sits on each table.)

As for actual drama, I can’t say that Harry and Anna ultimately provided much. No shocking confessions; no sudden lurches into tears or mad laughter, suggesting bipolar disorder; no excessive drunkenness. It was, in other words, a fairly convincing facsimile of a real date, ending on a tentative but possibly hopeful note. Harry expressed an ardent desire to see Anna again, at least.

But what’s going on inside the anxious hearts of the participants remained opaque, which is probably appropriate, too. In actual life, a blind date is a performance, after all, in which both parties generally keep a mask of friendliness firmly in place. This explains why the one who seemed to find you so smashing doesn’t return emails, and the one to whom you gave the “Gee-I-had-a-great-time-too” brushoff won’t leave you in peace.

The Blind Date Project

Created by Bojana Novakovic and Mark Winter; collaborators, Tanya Goldberg and Thomas Henning; directed by Scott Rodgers; designed by David Mauer; produced by Andrew Carlberg. A Ride-On Theater production, presented as part of the PS 122 Coil 2015 Festival by PS 122 and Parkside Lounge. At the Parkside Lounge, 317 East Houston Street, East Village; 212-352-3101, ps122.org. Through next Saturday. Running time: 1 hour.

The New York Times

January 10, 2015

Cameras and the Tricks They Play 'Cineastas' and 'O Jardim' at Under the Radar

By Ben Brantley

Though it's not for want of trying, we can never fit real life into a frame. That's the premise, both sobering and invigorating, that animates two affectingly inventive works from South America at the Under the Radar festival of experimental theater this weekend, ruefully sentimental plays about the deceptions of sentimental journeys.

Both "Cineastas," a jaunty portrait of four moviemakers from the Argentine director Mariano Pensotti, and "O Jardim," a three-generation family album of a play from Brazil's Companhia Hiato, consider the unbridgeable gulf between images and essences, between frozen moments and the unceasing flow of time. Cameras — how we look through them and what they show us — figure prominently in both works. And cameras, it seems, can't help being liars.

These are cautionary tales for the era of Snapchat and YouTube, in which the living and recording of existence are so often simultaneous it's as if the camera lens has become part of the human anatomy. It feels only just that the theater, a transient art that changes from performance to performance and lives on only in memory, should address the hubris of pretending that time can ever be fully pinned down.

Both productions willfully divide and addle their audiences' attention. Each occurs on different levels at once, so that your focus splits and blurs. No matter where you're looking, you're aware that something else, equally important, is happening just out of the corner your eye.

And then, of course, there's the matter of attending to the projected English supertitles, if you aren't fluent in Portuguese — for "O Jardim," at La MaMa — or Spanish — "Cineastas," at the Public Theater. ("O Jardim" features three sets of supertitles going simultaneously, though it turns out you need to follow only one of them at a time.) This somehow feeds your general suspicion that you're never quite going to get the full picture, which is as it should be.

Mr. Pensotti, whose "The Past Is a Grotesque Animal" was a hit for Under the Radar three years ago, was a screenwriter before becoming one of Argentina's leading theater auteurs. And an affectionate and enlivening cynicism about the industry he once served infuses "Cineastas," in which we watch four directors assembling four highly personal movies.

On the ground level of Mariana Tirante's two-tiered set, we observe the everyday lives of this foursome, all suffering from some form of existential crisis that they hope to resolve on film. The upper level is where those movies are acted out, suggesting animated thought bubbles from cartoons. A constant dialogue percolates between above and below, allowing us to assess just what is lost in the translation from real to reel.

Make that four dialogues. And then throw in the voice of an omniscient narrator, who annotates the action in the manner of an on-the-spot news reporter, filling in biographical details of the lives of the artists. The five cast members take turns assuming this role.

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Otherwise, they are variously engaged in portraying the directors, the characters in those directors' films and a staggering assortment of people in their professional and personal lives. Mr. Pensotti and his cast miraculously manage to keep the narrative lines clear and compelling, even as the characters become increasingly confused and despairing.

The films within the play are a motley lot, each a self-portrait of sorts. (My personal favorite is a revenge fantasy in which a man is kidnapped by terrorists, fed a diet of cold McDonald's hamburgers and humiliatingly forced to dress up as Ronald McDonald, though the documentary about Soviet musicals is kind of divine, too.)

The most successful of the moviemakers is Gabriel, a middle-aged man who is told he has only months to live; his film will be his final testament. He finds himself photographing every object of personal significance. But later, looking at what he's shot, he thinks unhappily of "how different a represented life and a real one are, of how art modifies all that he tries to portray."

That conclusion is multiplied by four in "Cineastas," which would be kind of depressing if Mr. Pensotti's production weren't so spirited. There may be nothing terribly original in the insights at which his play arrives, but the road to revelation is a marvel of theatrical wit and ingenuity.

The same is true of "O Jardim," written and directed by Leonardo Moreira, in which three generations of a family ardently contemplate how they want to remember themselves, and be remembered by others. They exist within what is effectively a city of memories — towers of cardboard boxes packed with the detritus of their lives. (Marisa Bentivegna is the inspired set designer.)

Those boxes are arranged into three separate playing areas by the cast of seven. And the audience members, seated in three sections, can see only one set of characters at a time, though they can hear the voices of the actors on the other sides of the boxes.

Each section of the play — which takes place in a different year in the garden room of an increasingly less grand Brazilian estate — is performed three times, though the sequence in which you see the scenes depends on where you're seated. (In this sense, the production recalls Ivo van Hove's haunting echo chamber of a production of "Scenes From a Marriage" at New York Theater Workshop.)

In the earliest sequence, set in 1938, an estranged husband and wife sort through boxes of photographs and memorabilia before separating forever.

In another, in 1979, that man (played by a different actor) is now old and senile; two of his grown daughters are giving him a little birthday celebration before moving him into a hospice. They tape-record themselves for posterity.

In the third section, in the present, one of his granddaughters and a household servant are taking another kind of inventory. The family has now lost the house, and the hapless granddaughter is making a video of what remains of its contents.

Each scene is acted with exquisite, characterful detail. And they are steeped in a wistfulness about time passing into oblivion. Presented as a traditional chronological play, "O Jardim" might seem little more than secondhand Chekhov. But as with "Cineastas," form enriches content here. When past, present and future all converge in the final scene, the parallel patterns of loss, hope and human shortsightedness meld into one heartbreaking swirl of a party.

“You survive in the thing that remains,” the granddaughter says in the contemporary sequence, as she sets up a video camera. “It’s a way to forever.” She’s wrong, of course; the evidence of the lives that preceded her, which we have the chance to witness firsthand, have already been distorted beyond recognition.

As befits works about the challenges of capturing time, both “Cineastas” and “O Jardim” feel far longer and shorter than their official running times, each 100 intermissionless minutes. Catch both in the same day, as I did, and you may feel you’ve lived through several lifetimes in a few hours. I look forward to remembering them both, however imperfectly.

Cineastas

Text and direction by Mariano Pensotti; sets and costumes by Mariana Tirante; music and sound by Diego Vainer; lighting by Alejandro Le Roux; production by Florencia Wasser; stage manager, Leandro Orellano. Presented by the Public Theater, Oskar Eustis, artistic director; Patrick Willingham, executive director; Mark Russell and Meiyin Wang, festival co-directors, as part of Under the Radar. At the Public Theater, 425 Lafayette Street, at Astor Place, East Village, 212-967-7555, underthearadarfestival.com. Performed in Spanish with English supertitles. Through Sunday. Running time: 1 hour 40 minutes.

WITH: Horacio Acosta, Javier Lorenzo, Vanesa Maja, Juliana Muras and Marcelo Subiotto.

O Jardim

Written and directed by Leonardo Moreira; produced by/management by Aura Cunha; sets and lighting by Marisa Bentivegna; music by Marcelo Pellegrini; costumes by Theodoro Cochrane; translation by Fernanda Sampaio. A Companhia Hiato production, presented by the Public Theater, Oskar Eustis, artistic director; Patrick Willingham, executive director; Mark Russell and Meiyin Wang, festival co-directors, and by La MaMa, Mia Yoo, artistic director; Beverly Petty, producing director; Mary Fulham, managing director; as part of Under the Radar. In Portuguese with English supertitles. At La MaMa, 66 East 4th Street, East Village, 212-967-7555, underthearadarfestival.com. Through Sunday. Running time: 1 hour 40 minutes.

WITH: Aline Filócomo, Edison Simão, Fernanda Stefanski, Luciana Paes, Mariah Amélia Farah, Paula Picarelli and Thiago Amaral.

January 9, 2015

Vanessa Hudgens, star of 'High School Musical,' graduates to 'Gigi'

By Geoff Edgars



Actress Vanessa Hudgens sits for a portrait in New York. Ms. Hudgens will star in the musical "Gigi," playing at the Kennedy Center this winter. (Jesse Dittmar/For The Washington Post)

NEW YORK — The star, burgundy sweater knotted around her tiny waist, raises arm to mouth and hacks out a phlegmy cough.

Vanessa Hudgens never thought about calling in sick on Day One of rehearsals for the pre-Broadway revival of "Gigi."

"You can't miss the first day of school," she says with a smile.

It's a clever analogy considering that Hudgens made her name as Gabriella Montez, the brainiac with the booming voice in Disney's "[High School Musical](#)" franchise.

Since the [third installment in 2008](#), Hudgens has been busy. She has recorded albums, acted in nine films and stoked her social-media standing thanks, in part, to her onetime relationship with Zac Efron and a steady stream of posts with such BFFs as Ashley Tisdale and Selena Gomez. But like the rest of East High, Hudgens has struggled to match her Disney stardom after graduation.



Vanessa Hudgens rehearses with the cast and creators of "Gigi" at the New 42nd Street Studios in New York. (Jesse Dittmar/For The Washington Post)

"Gigi" is a new start. At just 26, Hudgens has a chance to reinvent herself as a Broadway triple threat. To do so, she'll have to convincingly play a giggly teenager in Paris, circa 1900, being groomed as a mistress for a wealthy suitor, Gaston. The actress will also have to hope other factors fall into place.

Producer Jenna Segal has television development experience at MTV and Nickelodeon, worked for years to bring the musical to the stage and takes care of her cast like a den mother. Still, she has never produced a musical. "Gigi" itself has a spotty history. Audrey Hepburn wowed audiences in [the original production, in 1951](#), and Leslie Caron helped [the 1958 film version](#) to an Oscar. But a return to Broadway in 1973 stiffed, and the team behind this revival, which includes Signature Theatre Artistic Director [Eric Schaeffer](#), hopes to distance itself from that failure.

"Gigi" also doesn't yet have dates on Broadway and will open on Jan. 16 at the Kennedy Center.

That's the big picture. On Day One, the more pressing issue is the star's head cold. Segal, naturally, scrambled out to a drugstore and returned with a bottle of Delsym. Hudgens quickly cracks it open and sucks down a cup of the cough syrup. Within minutes, she's out on the floor of the studio, twirling a parasol and testing out a Michael Jacksonesque double spin.

"That's it," says associate choreographer Alison Solomon as she pulls it off.

'Sweetest person in the world'

Hudgens is, in person, approachable. She doesn't sulk or ask for special treatment. It is hard to distinguish the playful laughter she delivers while in character at rehearsals from the giggle she offers in conversation.

"Vanessa's just a ball of happiness," says actress Laura New, a close friend. "I've never seen her grumpy."

"She is literally the warmest, sweetest person in the world," adds Victoria Clark, the stage vet who plays Gigi's grandmother in the production.

Of course, being bubbly sweet isn't a prerequisite to earning back a \$12 million Broadway investment. What's impressed Clark most about Hudgens is what she sees when rehearsal starts.

"She comes in, knows her lines and remembers her blocking better than I do, and this is my 13th Broadway show," she says. "She's a true triple threat. When Vanessa dances, she really dances. She's doing all the hard choreography that the ensemble's doing. And it's not easy."

In an interview during a rehearsal break, Hudgens nurses a peanut butter acai bowl, a lunch staple, as she fields questions. She's unguarded, open to answering anything and passes on phone numbers her publicists have been guarding dearly. What she's not willing to do is talk about her career strategy. What could a successful Broadway run do for her? How much pressure does she feel to deliver?

"It's not all on me. It's such an ensemble," Hudgens says, reeling off the names — and praise — for the production's set designer, costume designer and director. "It's about the overall show and how it's going to make the audience feel."

Hudgens knows how "Gigi" makes her feel. After years focused on movies, she's thrilled to be returning to the stage. The most surprising part of the experience, she says, is how much it reminds her of playing Cindy Lou Who, in 1998 at the age of 9, in "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" at the [Old Globe in San Diego](#).

"I keep thinking of making hot chocolate at break time and just the giddy feeling of excitement because of what we are doing and how comfortable I feel in this space doing a musical," she says. "I was surprised by how familiar that feeling felt to me."



Actress Audrey Hepburn poses in character in her Broadway debut "Gigi," on November 28, 1951, in New York City. (Associated Press)



Leslie Caron and Louis Jordan in "Gigi." The film version of the production won nine Academy Awards. (MGM/via AP)



At 26, Vanessa Hudgens has a chance to reinvent herself as a Broadway triple threat with "Gigi." To do so, she'll have to convincingly play a giggly teenager in Paris, circa 1900, being groomed as a mistress for a wealthy suitor, Gaston. (Jesse Dittmar/For The Washington Post)

Reel-world education

Hudgens started early. She grew up mainly in California, the daughter of Gina, a native of the Philippines, and Greg, a firefighter from Illinois and the son of a jazz trumpeter. Greg and Gina met by becoming pen pals, with Greg eventually flying to Southeast Asia to marry her. They returned to California together. Vanessa was their first child. Stella arrived seven years later.

Gina, who is Catholic, made sure the family went to church every Sunday. The couple also worked hard to get Vanessa proper dance and voice lessons. They say they first saw signs of her being a poised performer as a preschooler in a Christmas pageant.

As a girl, Vanessa would sometimes talk of becoming a pediatrician. Then she began performing. The Old Globe production of "Grinch" led to other shows and eventually roles in films, including [2003's coming-of-age drama "Thirteen"](#) and 2004's big-budget [sci-fi adventure "Thunderbirds."](#)

"I was leery from the beginning," Greg Hudgens admits, adding that his parents divorced when he was a boy largely because of his father's packed concert schedule. "As she got more immersed, we made a pact. As long as she still applied herself to school and kept her head out of the clouds, we would continue to help her."

The star of "High School Musical" would, in fact, never deal with gym class, lunch-table politics or mean girls. She was home-schooled, getting her GED at age 15, she says.

"High School Musical," which came out in 2006, just weeks after her 17th birthday, made Hudgens a household name. Disney's TV movie spawned two sequels and changed her life forever. She dated co-star Efron, toured arenas and watched movie offers flow in. She also learned that every latte run would be documented by TMZ, [JustJared](#) and KPopStarz.



Vanessa Hudgens in a December rehearsal. (Jesse Dittmar/For The Washington Post)



Costume designs and story boards for "Gigi." (Jesse Dittmar/For The Washington Post)

15 million 'likes' on Facebook

Buzz is the blessing and curse of being Vanessa. A stroll through Central Park isn't a chance to decompress. It's a spontaneous fan event, with Sharpees and cellphones drawn. Hudgens also has had to apologize for a pair of embarrassing incidents involving nude photos leaked onto the Internet.

The buzz, though, maintains her market. It's why she pays a Beverly Hills firm, Digital Media Management, to run her public sites on Facebook (15,401,799 likes), Twitter (4.8 million followers) and Instagram (6.1 million). Her social media influence is significant.

"Did we just get 15K Instagram followers today?" producer Segal texted during a rehearsal just after Christmas.

"Yes," her assistant replied. "Vanessa posted 2 pics this morning mentioning gigi."

On Christmas Day, boyfriend Austin Butler took a picture of Hudgens standing by her tree wearing "nothing but a festive red jumper," according to the Daily Mail in London.

Brian Ogilvie, a member of the "Gigi" ensemble, saw the post on Instagram. The bearded performer, in New Jersey with his family, promptly dropped his pants to create his own version of the shot. [Hudgens, amused, had it retweeted.](#)

"I had 250 followers on Christmas Day and now I have 2,000," Ogilvie laughed.

Jokes aside, the Hudgens brand is another tool for a production trying to sell tickets in a competitive market.

"It brings in people to come see a show that might not have gone to see the show before," says Segal. "Her reach is pretty unbelievable, and a lot of these people don't go to see live theater, and they're buying tickets because they want to see her. For a long time there's only been 'Wicked' for that teen, tween audience."



(Jesse Dittmar/For The Washington Post)

Filmed in 1-D

The only time Hudgens seems to get down is when she talks about her film career. It has been spotty. She long ago left her Disney image behind, playing the potty-mouthed party girl in Harmony Kormine's debaucherous "[Spring Breakers](#)," a prostitute in "The Frozen Ground" and a pregnant runaway in "[Gimme Shelter](#)." Only Kormine's movie brought both critical acclaim — though many hated the film, other critics praised it — and box office. And the scripts that began to roll in were, she felt, one-dimensional. At one point, she talked of feeling liberated by the roles and told Marie Claire she longed to model herself after Meryl Streep. Now, she says, she just wants to be herself.

"You're only as good as your last project, so people project that onto you and come to you with that," Hudgens says. "They see me playing a stripper, drug addict and prostitute, and then I get a bunch of offers to play a prostitute or a stripper."

She first heard about "Gigi," she admits, during a low point. Hudgens was at [Coachella](#), one of her favorite festivals. She and her friends could barely move around. Everybody wanted a picture. Everybody wanted an autograph. She had been hoping to relax and listen to Arcade Fire.

Evan Hailey, her manager, called to tell her about a new Broadway production of "Gigi." He had arranged for her to audition.

Hudgens read the script, watched the 1958 film and listened to the score.

"I called him back and was like, 'Evan, do you really think I should go do this? I don't see how they see me as a teen in Paris in the late 1800s. I'm Filipino.' He said, 'No, they're interested.' "

Segal and director Schaeffer were as surprised as Hudgens to make a match.

"I always said, 'Let's make someone a star,'" says Schaeffer. "Let's find this kid just out of college and make her a star.' It was just one of those things when Vanessa came in. She was Gigi. None of us thought this was ever going to happen."

As soon as Hudgens had left her audition, Segal e-mailed her.

"I just want you to know we're offering you this role, but we're not offering it to you because you're Vanessa Hudgens," she wrote. "We're offering it to you because you were the best Gigi who walked in this room."

With opening night approaching, Hudgens says she's just working to do her best. She's found the comparisons to Hepburn, the girlish, wide-eyed beauty who would become a movie icon, flattering and amusing. But they don't change the task in front of her.

"Pressure?" she repeats when asked again about whether she feels it. "I feel pressure from myself when I don't get it right. Not from anyone else but just for myself to be satisfied and feel like I've got it. To be really proud of what I'm doing. From an external standpoint and a future standpoint, I'm not thinking about it at all."

She pauses for another bite from her acai bowl.

"I'm just trying to do my best."

http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/vanessa-hudgens-star-of-high-school-musical-graduates-to-gigi/2015/01/09/26e00308-94f0-11e4-aabd-d0b93ff613d5_story.html

January 9, 2015

'Midwife' writer and rookie producer deliver new 'Gigi' to Kennedy Center

By Nelson Pressley



This scene shows Louis Jourdan, Leslie Caron, and Maurice Chevalier in the 1958 film "Gigi." (AP Photo/MGM) (MGM/via Associated Press)

The refashioned "Gigi" bounding into the Kennedy Center this week with a Broadway glint in its eye is a passion project from two women — both new to musicals — who have long adored the 1958 movie.

"I've wanted to see 'Gigi' on stage since I was 6," says Jenna Segal, lead producer of the ambitious show.

Writer Heidi Thomas, riding high on the success of her 1950s-era drama ["Call the Midwife"](#) for the BBC, says, "There is an argument that I would not be on this Earth if not for the film." Her parents' first date: a night out seeing the [Vincente Minnelli picture](#), with its romantic songs and Parisian scenery.

Ah yes! They remember it well. But that doesn't mean that Jersey girl Segal and Liverpudlian Thomas aren't giving "Gigi" a

major makeover, because for all its screen success — namely its nine Oscars and a reputation as the last true smash in MGM's lavish history with musicals — it still has no real stage pedigree. Lyricist and librettist Alan Jay Lerner and composer Frederic Loewe wrote "Gigi" for Hollywood just after their 1956 London stage hit with another Cinderella fable, "My Fair Lady" (which wouldn't become a movie until 1964).

A 1973-74 Broadway "Gigi" closed in three short months, although Lerner and Loewe won a Tony for their expanded score. Neither a 1980s U.S. tour nor a 1985 London production converted "Gigi" into an evergreen property.

"They understood it was falling into obscurity," Segal says by phone from New York of the lawyers for the Lerner and Loewe estate. The lawyers granted Segal license to work with all the adaptations of "Gigi" they controlled since it first appeared as a novella by the French writer Colette in 1944.

Segal is certainly out to revive the show in style. The project, which she says is budgeted at \$12 million, features Broadway vets Victoria Clark, Dee Hoty and Howard McGillin. [Eric Schaeffer](#), head of Arlington's Signature Theatre and whose 2011 ["Follies"](#) made the leap from the Kennedy Center to Broadway, is directing. As the lively girl who rises above her Belle Epoque courtesan surroundings, Segal has "High School Musical" star [Vanessa Hudgens](#).



Figure 1 "Gigi" writer Heidi Thomas. (Courtesy Kennedy Center)

But it has been Thomas's job to retool the over-adapted tale that had lost its way from the smart novella by Colette, in which an innocent 15-year-old does better with the rich playboy Gaston Lachaille than her wily courtesan aunt and grandmother ever hoped. Colette knew plenty about Gigi's world of savvy courtesans and wealthy bachelors: a lifelong contrarian, she married and divorced several times, had female lovers, and in the early 1900s gained a reputation for her racy "Claudine" stories. Onstage she appeared in "La Chair (The Flesh)," a music hall pantomime and a literal bodice ripper that scandalously featured her exposed breast; at one point a young Maurice Chevalier — who sings "Thank Heaven for Little Girls" in the "Gigi" movie — was another act on the same bill.

By the time Colette wrote "Gigi," she was 70. In 1951, she was in a wheelchair, various ailments overtaking her, when she spotted a striking young dancer during a film shoot at her hotel in Monte Carlo.

"That's our Gigi for America," Colette said, looking at a then-unknown Audrey Hepburn.

Hepburn made her Broadway debut in the 1951 "Gigi" adaptation by "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" author Anita Loos. The play is broadly comic, featuring two meddling servants and a drunk scene for Gigi's mother, a music hall chanteuse whose bad singing is the butt of more jokes. That script hasn't been much use to Thomas, whose chief sources have been

Colette's book and the Lerner and Loewe movie.

In fact, Thomas says it's in her contract to "capture the spirit of that movie, the romance, the sweep, the comedy. I thought that was marvelous, because it gave me a kind of mission statement."

Her changes began with putting in more of Paris than the "drawing room-y" stage versions had managed, and also more of Gigi, whose role kept shrinking with each retelling, Thomas felt. She also repurposed the movie's famous opener, "Thank Heaven for Little Girls," as warbled by Honore, uncle of the sugar magnate Gaston. Segal has always heard the tune with her innocent 6-year-old ears; it surprised her that modern generations are unnerved by the older gentleman's paean to pubescent pulchritude.

"Heidi really felt like it wasn't the right way to open it," Segal says. They've given the song — arguably the most recognized in the score, along with "I Remember It Well" — to Gigi's aunt and grandmother, while taking a number from the 1973 "Gigi," "Paris Is Paris Again," as the opener.

"That's minor in its way," Thomas says from Manhattan. "But it takes away a major stumbling block."

Thomas and Segal were particularly uncomfortable with the age disparity between the Gigi who is still 15 in Colette's book and a Gaston who, at 33, is more than twice as old. Now Gigi is 18 (thank heaven) and played by the 26-year-old Hudgens. Gaston, played by 24-year-old Corey Cott, is only slightly older.

Segal, a George Washington University alum who worked on political talk shows and with MTV before "retiring" to start a family, goes on at length about why "Gigi" continues to speak to women. She points out that Belle Epoque courtesans were among the most independent women of their age; the contracts guaranteeing their support were sometimes, in her words,

"pretty spectacular." And in terms of the battle of the sexes, Segal prefers the male-female dynamic in "Gigi" over "My Fair Lady."

"He's not rescuing her," Segal says. "She's rescuing him."

"Gigi is a heroine that you really embrace in the way we embrace Holly Golightly in 'Breakfast at Tiffany's,'" says Thomas, whose period dramas for British television include a "Madame Bovary" adaptation, the "Cranford" series based on Elizabeth Gaskell's 19th-century novellas, and the 2010 "Upstairs, Downstairs." "She's a spirited woman who kicks against the trend."

Still, none of that is why Segal has been working on "Gigi" for seven years. "It's about how glorious the movie is," she says, "how romantic the love story is, how I cry each time I hear 'I Remember It Well.' "

The Kennedy Center run is billed as pre-Broadway, but as Washington audiences are learning with more frequency lately, that's all just talk until a hopeful production edges out the competition and actually books one of those hard-to-get Manhattan theaters.

"Look, there are four theater owners, and it's just not in my control," Segal says. (Most of Broadway's 40 theaters are owned by the Shubert Organization, the Nederlander Organization, or Jujamcyn Theaters; almost none are independent.) "We have every reason to believe we're high on their list."

"Everybody's waiting for everybody else's dreams to crash and burn," says Thomas, whose early British playwriting efforts have almost entirely been supplanted by BBC TV work. "It makes me feel icky to think about it."

Meantime, Thomas — who not only writes "Call the Midwife" but is also its creator and an executive producer — has been getting a kick out of learning to solve story problems with songs. During one "Gigi" workshop rehearsal, she scratched her head over an especially thorny sequence.

"The music director told me, 'We'll cover it with a dance break,' " Thomas says. "I thought, 'God, I wish I could do that in television.' "

"Gigi," new book adaptation by Heidi Thomas, lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, music by Frederick Loewe. Jan. 16-Feb. 12 at the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theatre. Tickets \$45-\$145, subject to change. Call 202-467-4600 or visit www.kennedy-center.org.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/midwife-writer-and-rookie-producer-deliver-new-gigi-to-kennedy-center/2015/01/08/5031ad32-9294-11e4-a900-9960214d4cd7_story.html

The Record

01.11.15

AFTER HIS ACCLAIMED DEBUT IN 'CHAPLIN,' NEW MILFORD'S ROB McCLURE IS BACK ON BROADWAY IN 'VEGAS' MUSICAL

SECOND HONEYMOON



KEVIN R. WEXLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

SECOND H



ROBERT FELDBERG

ONSTAGE

You might think establishing yourself as a Broadway headliner is the hard part. With the next job, you get to exhale a bit and enjoy the ride.

Not so, says New Milford native Rob McClure, who leapt from near-obscure to acclaim — and a 2013 Tony Award nomination for best actor — with a widely praised performance in the title role of the musical “Chaplin.”

“That production was ‘introducing Rob McClure,’” he said the other day. “Now, people

have something of an expectation. You hope that you’ll still be able to surprise them.”

The dark-haired, wiry 32-year-old actor was sitting in an empty Nederlander Theatre, where he’d go onstage several hours later in a preview performance of “Honeymoon in Vegas,” the musical comedy in which he stars alongside TV veteran Tony Danza. The show opens on Thursday night.

Total Daily Circulation — 144,897
Total Sunday Circulation — 176,985
Monthly Online Circulation — 1,700,000

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JOAN MARCUS

"I enjoy being onstage, and I'm willing to take risks," said Rob McClure, a New Milford native who is starring on Broadway in "Honeymoon in Vegas," at left.

"I make a neat entrance, through a trap door, and the audience seems to recognize me," said McClure. "Tony Danza told me, 'If you've got the goods, you'll be all right.' And I'm confident in the show; I really think it's terrific."

You can't see inside someone else, but outwardly, and in his achievements, McClure doesn't convey doubt. He comes across as a disciplined, determined, joyful performer.

After graduating from New Milford High School, where he had begun performing – and still returns to help out with student productions, including doing the lighting a year ago for a rock "Romeo and Juliet" – and attending Montclair State University, McClure did the usual start-out routine of regional productions and tours and performed on Broadway as a replacement in "Avenue Q."

He emerged in 2011 in the Encores! concert series' production of "Where's Charley?," taking on the challenge of a role forever

identified with Ray Bolger, who created it on Broadway in 1948 and can be seen in the 1952 movie version of the musical.

With "Chaplin," McClure had the daunting job of re-creating the film persona and comedy routines of one of the most famous performers in history.

"I enjoy being onstage, and I'm willing to take risks," he said then, describing a preparation regimen that included mastering roller skating and tightrope walking and learning to play the violin. (To warm up before his current show, he runs through the vacant theater, including the balcony, an hour before a performance starts.)

In "Honeymoon," which book writer Andrew Bergman based on his loopy 1992 film comedy – the musical's score is by Tony winner Jason Robert Brown ("The Bridges of Madison County") –

McClure is following in the foot-

steps of a somewhat less iconic performer, the movie's Nicolas Cage.

He plays Jack Singer, a young man traumatized by a promise to his mother on her deathbed that he would never marry.

Struggling to overcome his psychological roadblock, he brings his girlfriend (Brynn O'Malley) to Nevada with the intention of marriage, only to find himself competing for her hand with a wealthy and very persistent gambler, played by Danza.

"There's a whole lot more of me in Jack than in Chaplin," said McClure. "He's a bit of a neurotic mess."

"Playing Chaplin, I had a sense of accountability. You needed to pay homage, be respectful, honor his fan base. With this character, I'm free to do new things, introduce twists. I can take the audience on an adventure. It's fun."

The production also enabled McClure to spend more time with his wife of five years, actress Maggie Lakis, who appeared in an off-Broadway revival of "Allegro" in November and December. Like many show-business couples, they're often separated by the need to go where the work is.

"I think this was the first time we've been on the same schedule [in the same city]," in years, he said. "It's been nice." Their home is in Philadelphia, although McClure has rented an apartment in New York for the run of "Honeymoon in Vegas."

The production, which was

presented at the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn in 2013, has been doing so-so business during its long preview period.

McClure suggested that, with reviews not yet out, there might be bewilderment about what it is.

"I know some people have confused the show with 'Leaving Las Vegas,'" he said, referring to the very dark 1995 film drama that also starred Cage, in an Oscar-winning performance.

One thing that those who saw the "Honeymoon in Vegas" film will certainly remember are the indelible Flying Elvises, a group of Elvis impersonators – with whom Jack finds himself unwillingly embedded – who parachute en masse into Las Vegas.

The Elvises will be in the show, although McClure was coy about how they'll descend. "It's magical," he said. "I can assure audiences they won't be disappointed."

INSIDE

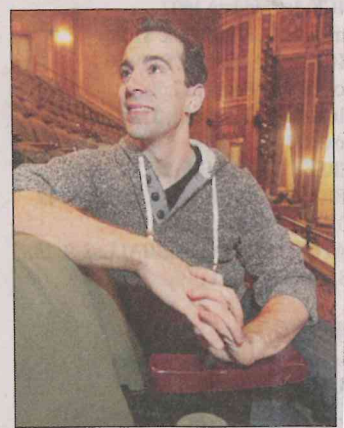
Expecting big things on Broadway

Bergen County native Rob McClure leapt from near-obscurity to acclaim – and a 2013 Tony Award nomination for best actor – with a widely praised performance in the title role of the musical "Chaplin."

"That production was 'introducing Rob McClure,'" he said the other day. "Now, people have something of an expectation. You hope that you'll still be able to surprise them."

His new show, "Honeymoon in Vegas," opens on Thursday.

— Feldberg column on BL-1



THE NEW YORKER

JANUARY 19, 2015

THE THEATRE

NOW PLAYING

Dying for It

Moira Buffini's 2007 adaptation of Nikolai Erdman's 1928 play "The Suicide"—it was never produced in Stalinist Russia, and the author was exiled to Siberia—begins on a dark, cold night more than a decade after the Revolution. Semyon (Joey Slotnik, a comically bewildered, buffeted, and blustery Everyman) is guilty, angry, defensive, and desperate because of his inability to provide for his family. His vain talk of ending it all catches the attention of neighbors and acquaintances, each of whom—the intellectual, the priest, the wheeler-dealer, the writer, the whore—has a personal and ideological agenda in encouraging Semyon's suicide. Neil Pepe directs the large, skilled company with aplomb, finding appropriate levels of foolishness and hysteria for each character. But there's more than just farce; there's also suspense, pathos, warmth, and nobility. A party scene that opens the second act, which includes terrific music by a violinist and an accordionist, is particularly fluid, by turns boisterous, uplifting, and sobering. (Atlantic Theatre Company, 336 W. 20th St. 866-811-4111. Through Jan. 18.)

Total Weekly Circulation – 1,055,542
Monthly Online Readership – 11,984,989

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Entertainment WEEKLY

January 16, 2015

WEEK OF JAN. 12-JAN. 18

The Cheat Sheet

YOUR DAY-TO-DAY GUIDE TO EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW IN POP CULTURE. BY RAY RAHMAN

TUESDAY 1/13

 **Constellations**

STAGE | BROADWAY

A play about a beekeeper (Jake Gyllenhaal) and a theoretical physicist (Ruth Wilson), who'll hopefully answer life's big question: Why is my bottle of honey always so sticky? I haven't even opened it yet.



Total Weekly Circulation – 1,771,907
Monthly Online Readership – 8,800,000

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BONEAU/BRYAN-BROWN

DAILY NEWS

January 11, 2015

CONFIDENTIAL

with Molly Friedman



JAKE'S NO NIGHT SHIVERER

● **Jake Gyllenhaal** looks like a pro when it comes to bundling up. The "Nightcrawler" actor (above), in New York for the Broadway play "Constellations" with **Ruth Wilson**, took his handsome German shepherd Atticus for a stroll around the city so he could do his business.

Total Daily Circulation – 516,165
Total Sunday Circulation – 644,879
Monthly Online Readership – 16,793,000

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BONEAU/BRYAN-BROWN

NEW YORK POST

January 11, 2015



Richard Johnson
The man who knows New York
 rjohnson@nypost.com @HeadlineJohnson

Quick hits

IN Broadway's "Honeymoon in Vegas," a gangster's moll tries to seduce the hero, played by **Rob McClure**.



Desperate to resist, he conjures up unsexy thoughts, including iron lungs, before screaming out, "**Bruce Jenner** [in-set]!" That seems to do the trick ...

Total Daily Circulation – 576,711
 Monthly Online Readership – 12,000,000

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Newsday

JANUARY 11, 2015



THEATER

I'M GONNA PRAY FOR YOU SO HARD Halley Feiffer's incendiary two-character drama centers on the efforts of a young playwright to please her famous playwright father. Since Feiffer is an actress and playwright and, not incidentally in this case, daughter of famous author Jules Feiffer, special resonance may be surmised. Betty Gilpin and the ever-provocative Reed Birney portray the daughter and father on a boozy night while waiting for reviews of her Off-Broadway play. In previews before a Jan. 20 opening at the Atlantic Theater Company Stage 2, 330 W. 16th St. Tickets are \$45. Call 866-811-4111 or visit atlantictheater.org

— LINDA WINER

Total Daily Circulation – 437,000
 Total Sunday Circulation – 495,000
 Monthly Online Readership – 2,553,000

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NEW YORK

JANUARY 12-25, 2015

To

The CULTURE PAGES

Do

TWENTY-FIVE
THINGS TO SEE,
HEAR, WATCH,
AND READ.

JANUARY 14-28

THEATER/FILM

24. See **Treasure Island**

It was a dark and stormy night.

See ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk for schedule;
opens locally January 22.

A classic adventure novel gets a gender twist in Bryony Lavery's adaptation of Stevenson's tale of pirates, parrots, and peg legs. Catch the drama, a hit at London's National Theatre, at this screening. J.G.

Total Weekly Circulation – 408,000
Monthly Online Readership – 3,213,000

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NEW YORK POST

January 11, 2015

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

THIS WEEK'S GUESTS

KELLY & MICHAEL

► 9 a.m., Ch. 7

Thursday: Bradley Cooper, Olivia Munn

Total Daily Circulation – 576,711
Monthly Online Readership – 12,000,000

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BONEAU/BRYAN-BROWN