

Fall Theatre Guide

Temperatures may be falling, but things are heating up in the theater community with the start of a new season. Between musicals, straight plays and new works, there is something for any theater lover to enjoy among this fall's varied selections.

A new school year means the collegiate theater scene will soon be up and running. First up, **Rhode Island College** begins its season with *Radium Girls*, a true story of a miracle cure-turned-deadly and the fallout that ensued. Next up is the beloved rock musical about teenage angst and sexuality in a repressed society, *Spring Awakening*. **University of Rhode Island** will be presenting *Polaroid Stories*, a blending of myth and modernity based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Finally, **Roger Williams University** starts the year with a staple of community and school theaters, *Almost Maine*. They conclude the semester with *Orlando*, an adaptation of the Virginia Woolf novel about a young nobleman's affair with Queen Elizabeth I.

The professional theater circuit isn't shying away from heavy subject matter, with some hard-hitting season openers. **Trinity Rep** kicks things off with the critically acclaimed *The Inheritance*, an epic two-part play that weaves together three generations of gay men attempting to forge their future in the aftermath of the AIDS epidemic. In the capable hands of director **Joe Wilson Jr.**, this is sure to be a can't-miss production. Trinity Rep invites members of the community to make their own mark on this production by contributing the names of loved ones who have passed away from HIV/AIDS to appear in a soundscape memorial.

The Gamm begins its season with another epic, generation-spanning play, *Describe the Night*, which follows the stories of eight men and women interwoven through Russian history and conspiracy. Later on, they will be tackling *Sweat*, a Pulitzer Prize winning play that tackles race and class issues through the lens of the working class of Reading, Pennsylvania.

Wilbury is kicking off its season with the world premiere of *Silhouette of a Silhouette* by Rose Weaver, a play dealing with loss and heartbreak through music. Next up is the Rhode Island premiere of *The Humans* by Stephen Karam, a play centered on four generations of an Irish-American family gathered for Thanksgiving.

If you need something a little lighter between these heavy dramas, rest assured, there's comedy around this season, too, beginning with **The Community Players** production of the madcap comedy *Moon Over Buffalo*. Down in Westerly, **Granite** will be presenting Oscar Wilde's classic *The Importance of Being Earnest*. **The Arctic Players** has in store some much-needed levity with *Social Security* and *Noises Off*. Things will get extra noisy with another production of *Noises Off* presented by **Swamp Meadow** in Harrisville. Return to childhood with *Peter and the Starcatcher*, the prequel to *Peter Pan*, at **Attleboro Community Theatre**.

The recently launched **West Bay Community Theater** is planning a Halloween-themed musical showcase for its fall show. Auditions are pending as of this writing. Also pending is the rebirth of Kira Hawkrigde's **OutLoud** experimental theater, which is currently constructing a new space above Jordan's Jungle at 545 Pawtucket Ave, Pawtucket, coincidentally right next door to Motif's current offices. **The Players at the Barker Playhouse**, whose new (pre-COVID) space is right next door to

where Motif's offices used to be, will be showcasing *20th Century Blues*, a sweet-hearted comedy by Susan Miller about aging and art being directed by local theater veteran Lynne Collinson. The **Contemporary Theater Company** is focusing on humor this fall, hosting the Ocean State Black & Funny Improv Festival from Oct 6 - 8, featuring headliners, guest troupes, workshops, parties and other activities. They also have, in addition to their regular improv comedy nights, The Thanksgiving Play covering late October and early November, a madcap satire by Larissa FastHorse about a group of "woke" art teachers throwing a pageant to bridge the backstories of Native American Heritage Month and Turkey Day. **Mixed Magic** also tackles indigenous issues with their October show, to be announced, and are excited for their Holiday Celebration starting in November.

Of course, there are plenty of offerings in the musical department as well. First off, the national tours swinging through **PPAC** this fall include *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*, *Mean Girls*, *Tootsie*, and *Les Miserables*. For more homegrown talent, catch **Jamestown Community Theatre's** *Little Women*, **Stadium Theatre's** *Cinderella*, and **Rhode Island Stage Ensemble's** *Little Shop of Horrors*. Youth talent will be on full display as well with JDP's *Young Frankenstein*, Swamp Meadow's youth production of *Rock of Ages*, and *Matilda* at **Academy Players**. For a new take on an old classic, check out **The Assembly Theatre's** production of a new musical adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*.

Speaking of new works, we've got a few more of those in the pipeline. Local playwright Lenny Schwartz's *Bill Finger: Rise of the Bat*, the story of long-uncredited Batman co-creator Bill Finger, will be performed at RISE before taking New York City by storm for a one-weekend engagement. Following previews at **RISE** last spring and FringePVD over the summer, *Permanent Solutions* by Cass Caduto, a play about mental health and human connection, will get its full run at **AS220** in October. In addition to these new works, there is also a new female-founded theatre company on the rise in Barrington. **Until the Fat Lady Sings Theater** will be presenting the bard's *All's Well that Ends Well* as their first production this November.