How do you land the role of a lifetime before you’ve even passed a quarter century? If you’re Sam Bagala, you start young. At 13, the precocious musician from Gray had his first paid gig playing keys for Lyric Theater’s production of Beauty and the Beast. By 17, he was thrown before a cast of Broadway stars as the teenage Musical Director at Maine State Music Theater. Less than a decade later, he was “riding a tour bus somewhere through the Midwest” when a voicemail across the airwaves delivered the news he’d been waiting for: Bagala had won his spot on Hamilton—the Broadway Box-office-smashing hip hop musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda that tells the all-singing, all-dancing, all-rapping story of the birth of our nation through a culturally diverse lens.

A graduate of the Boston Conservatory and USM’s Early Study program, Sam Bagala is now on the road with the Hamilton troupe for the play’s first excursion beyond Broadway. This month alone, he’ll bounce from California to Georgia and on to Nevada. After that? “I’ve lost track,” he says. Bagala is the show’s full-time musical associate, splitting his talent between the orchestra pit and backstage. “I love the diversity of my job,” he says. “Once a week, I’ll conduct the entire evening performance.” With his back to the vast audience, Bagala’s baton steers the 10-piece orchestra and cues the singers through the play’s 46 soaring musical numbers. On other days, “I play first or second keys.” Outside of performances, he “might lead music rehearsals with new cast members, teaching them the scores and lyrics.” Five months into the role, Bagala knows the Hamilton playbook like a first language. Behind the scenes, he’s been every character on the cast. “I play five to six dance rehearsals a week, performing the number for the dancers to follow.” The genre-bending Hamilton score features a musical spectrum that ranges from show tunes to hip hop. A one-man rendition takes vocal gymnastics to a new level. “I can be playing the piano while simultaneously rapping three different parts. Watching as I play the keys and cover the three-part female harmony and rap in ‘The Schuyler Sisters’ is particularly funny to experience.”

EARLY INSPIRATIONS
Childhood in Maine sounds like “Marley, Springsteen, Buena Vista Social Club—and plenty of world music,” Bagala says. “My parents aren’t musicians [he outstripped his mother’s piano tutelage at five], but our
family loves music. I remember plunking away on my grandma’s piano in Rumford every Christmas. I actually played the Hamilton score on her out-of-tune keys last holidays after I learned I’d landed the job!” Homeschooled until 13, Bagala’s cacophony of influences left its mark on both himself and his brother, Marcus—a score-writer for TV and film. A classically trained pianist, Bagala was regularly playing paid gigs at community theaters, and later professional theaters like MSMT and Ogunquit Playhouse, throughout his young years. “It was a great feeling to be a teenager and get paid for playing the piano. I realized I wanted to make a career out of this.” During this time, the limelight called out for a moment—“I starred in the ensemble at the Lyric, Portland Stage, and Hackmatack”—but Bagala ultimately decided his destiny would be below the footlights. Unlike Anna Kendrick, his Maine musical theater peer, Bagala didn’t shoot off to New York and LA at a young age. By his twenties, he’d become a seasoned veteran of summer stock theater across the state. “I feel so lucky to grow up in such a small and supportive community where I had so many opportunities to learn,” he says when asked if he felt he grew up far from stage school. Bagala’s personal bio ballparks around 800 performances with Maine State Music Theater between high school and his early twenties from 2009 to 2015.

On the snatched moments he’s not on the road with Hamilton or the shows that preceded it, Rent and Elf: The Musical, Bagala lives in New York City. He tries to escape to Maine whenever he can. “The Hamilton tour comes to Boston in September. I’m hoping to get a week off to come back and see my family in Gray and visit Ogunquit Playhouse and Maine State Music Theater.” Then it’s back on the highway bound for North Carolina and a new state every week thereafter. Can he conjure a dream beyond touring with the world’s musical-of-the-moment? “It’s funny, someone on the cast said that the other day: ‘What do you do after you’ve done Hamilton?’ It could tour for another 20 years. I’d love to write my own shows and work with other musicians. I spend most of my time at the piano composing. It’s the most rewarding and organic process, and I want to continue to be as creative as I can.”
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SUMMER THEATER PREVIEW


Celebration Barn Theater, 190 Stock Farm Rd., South Paris. Work Bash Weekend, May. 19 & 20; Bouffon, Jun. 4-9; Retreat with the Show Doctor, Jun. 11-16. 743-8452

Cold Comfort Theater, The Crosby Center, Belfast. The Boys Next Door, Jun. 7-16; The Tempest, Jul. 20-29; Love Letters, Aug. 29. 930-7244

Enchanted April, May 4-20; The Producers, Jul. 20-Aug. 5. 282-0849


Deetrees Theater, 156 Deetrees Rd., Harrison. A Betrothal and The Universal Language, Jul. 12 & 20 & 27; The Amazing Adventures of Louis de Rougemont (As Told By Himself), Jul. 14 & 19 & 27 & Aug. 4; The Turn of the Screw, Aug. 9. 583-6747

Fenix Theatre Company, at Deering Oaks Park, Portland. Three Sisters, Jul. 13-

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SUMMER THEATER PREVIEW

Portland Stage

JUNE 6 - 23


FREEPORT COMMUNITY PLAYERS, 30 Freeport Performing Arts Center, Holbrook St., Freeport. One-Act Showcase, Jul. 12-29; I’ll Be Back Before Midnight, Sept. 13-30; 865-2220

GOOD THEATER & ST. LAWRENCE ARTS, 76 Congress St., Portland. Opera Maine presents Three Decembers, Jul. 13. 885-5883

HACKMATACK PLAYHOUSE, 538 Route 9, Berwick. Lend Me a Tenor, Jun. 15-30; All Shook Up, Jul. 4-21; The Bridges of Madison County, Jul. 25-Aug. 11; Dial M for Murder, Aug. 15-Sept. 1. 698-1807

HEARTWOOD REGIONAL THEATER COMPANY, Lincoln Academy, Newcastle. Bloomsday; May 11 & 12; Down Along the Cove, Jun. 29-30 & Jul. 1 & 6-7; 563-1373


Lyric Music Theater, 176 Sawyer St., South Portland. The Foreigner, Jun. 8-17. 799-1421

Lewiston-Auburn Little Theatre, 30 Academy St., Auburn. 12 Angry Men, Jun. 8-17; Young Frankenstein, Aug. 10-19. 799-1421

Mad Horse Theatre, 24 Mosher St., South Portland. The Explorer’s Club, May 3-20. 747-4148


Maine State Music Theatre, Pickard Theater, 1 Bath Rd., Brunswick. Million Dollar Quartet, Jun. 6-23; Beauty and the Beast, Jun. 27-Jul. 14; Saturday Night Fever, Jul. 18-Aug. 4; Singin’ in the Rain, Aug. 8-25. 725-8769

Mayo Street Arts, 10 Mayo Street, Portland. Harry Jameson-Piemian Theater Co., through May 20; Bellatrix with Einstein, Little Homunculus, Jun. 8. 879-4629

Nasson Little Theatre, 457 Main St., Springvale. NYT presents Princess and the Pea, May 11-20; The Edwards Twins, Jun. 2; Jon Stetson, Jun. 8; Good Theater presents Underwater Guy Jun. 23-24. 842-0800

Merrill Auditorium, 20 Myrtle St., Portland. Dirty Dancing, Jun. 18-19; The Marriage of Figaro, Jul. 25 & 27. 842-0800

Ogunquit Playhouse, 10 Main St., Ogunquit. Smokey Joe’s Cafe, May 16-Jun 9; Oklahoma! Jun. 13-Jul. 7; An American in Paris, Jul. 11-Aug 4;
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**EXPERIENCE**

646-5511

**Penobscot Theatre Company**, Bangor Opera House, 131 Main St.
**The Spitfire Grill**, through May
13. 942-3333

**Portland Fringe Festival**, downtown Portland.

Over 125 performances throughout downtown Portland, June 16-23.

**Titanic**, May 18 - June
3. 799-7337

774-0465

**Public Theatre**, 31 Maple St., Lewiston. The Midvale High School 50th Reunion, May 4-13; Everybody Loves Pirates! May 20.
782-3200

**Saco River Theater**, 29 Salmon Falls Rd., Buxton.

**Schoolhouse Arts Center**, 16 Richville Rd., Standish.

**Theater at Monmouth**,
796 Main St., Monmouth. Season 49: **ROAR! The Year of the Woman**. 933-9999

**Center for Maine Contemporary Art**, 21 Winter St., Rockland. Jacob Hessler + Richard Blanco: Boundaries, through May 27; **Screen**: Adam Lampion: Museums, through May 27; **KJ Shows**: Portrait of an Artist, through June 3; **John Moore**: Resonance, through June 17.
701-5005

**Colby College Museum of Art**, Olin Arts Center, 75 Russell St., Lewiston. City of Ambition, through Aug. 26; 859-5600

**Bowdoin College Museum of Art**, 245 Maine St., Brunswick. Art from the Northern Plains, through July 8; **AEGYPTUS**: Egypt in the Greco-Roman World, through July 15.
725-3275

**Farnsworth Art Museum**, 16 Museum st., Rockland. Andrew Wyeth: Temperas and Studies from the Wyeth Collection, through Oct. 21; **Ai Weiwei**: Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads, Mar. 24 - Dec. 30; Andrew Wyeth in Rockland, Apr. 7 - Nov. 4; **Maine: The Farnsworth Collection**, opens May 12. 596-6457

**First Friday Art Walk**, downtown Portland. Visit local galleries, studios, and museums. May 4; June 1.

**Greenhut Galleries**, 146 Middle St. Two Person Exhibition: Matt Blackwell and Kathi Smith, through June 2; **John Whalley**, Jun. 7-30; **David Driskell Solo Exhibition**, Jul. 5 - 28. 772-2693

**Maine Historical Society**, 489 Congress St., Longfellow’s Cocktail Party & Magical History Tour, May 11-12; Beer in Portland’s seventh annual **Fringe Festival** will flood the Art’s Districts with entertainment from June 16-23, with over 125 “genre-defying performances” by 35 talented artists. Venues include Portland Stage Studio (25A Forest Av.), Bright Star World Dance (108 High St.), SPACE Gallery (538 Congress St.), and Mechanics Hall (519 Congress St.). Tickets start at $10.

**PORTLAND Fringe Festival**

**Fringes Benefits**

**ART**

**Bates College Museum of Art**, Olin Arts Center, 75 Russell St., Lewiston.

**Senior Thesis Exhibition 2018**, through May 27; 786-6158

**Bowdoin College Museum of Art**, 245 Maine St., Brunswick. Art from the Northern Plains, through July 8; **AEGYPTUS**: Egypt in the Greco-Roman World, through July 15.
725-3275

**Center for Maine Contemporary Art**, 21 Winter St., Rockland. Jacob Hessler + Richard Blanco: Boundaries, through May 27; **Screen**: Adam Lampion: Museums, through May 27; **KJ Shows**: Portrait of an Artist, through June 3; **John Moore**: Resonance, through June 17. 701-5005

**Colby College Museum of Art**, 5600 Mayflower Hill Dr., Waterville. City of Ambition, through Aug. 26; 859-5600

**Farnsworth Art Museum**, 16 Museum St., Rockland. Andrew Wyeth: Temperas and Studies from the Wyeth Collection, through Oct. 21; **Ai Weiwei**: Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads, Mar. 24 - Dec. 30; Andrew Wyeth in Rockland, Apr. 7 - Nov. 4; **Maine: The Farnsworth Collection**, opens May 12. 596-6457

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**MUSIC**

**Aurora**, 121 Center St. Jonathan Davis, May 11; 1964: The Tribute, May 17; Third World, May 18; Rising Appalachia, May 22; Andrew McMahon and Friends, Jun. 08; AwoNabon, Jun. 20; Sara Evans, Jun. 30; Voyage: A Journey Tribute, Jul. 06. 772-8274

**Blue**, 650 Congress St. Irish Nights, every Wed.; The Happy Hour, every Thurs.; Jazz at Blue, every Sat.; Rexy Dinosaur, May 17; Dark Hollow Brewing Co., May 20; The Ghosts of Johnson City and Sassquatch, May 25; The Middle Eastern Jazz Project, May 26. 774-4111

**Darling’s Waterfront Pavilion**, 1 Railroad St., Bangor. Jason Aldean, May 27; Imagine Dragons, Jun. 8; Logic, Jun. 9; Foreigner, Jun. 15; Paramore, Jun. 21. 358-9327

**Empire**, 575 Congress St. Rich Vos, May 18; Jahrrife & JAH-N-I-Roots Band, Jun. 8; Southern Culture on the Skids, Jun. 27. 747-5063


**Maine Academy of Modern Music**, 125 Presumpscot St. May 6; 2017 MAMM Slam: Finals, May 12; The MAMM stage at the Old Port Festival, Jun.10; MAMM Presents: The Kids Are Alright Series- Dustin LeVasseur & Andrew Hodgkins Jun. 10. 899-3433

**Merrill Auditorium**, 20 Myrtle St. STOMP, May 17-18; Darci Lynne, Jun. 24; Lindsey Stirling, Aug. 2. 842-0800

**One Longfellow Square**, 181 State St. Matthew Logan Vasquez, May 15; THE BAND Band, May 18; Louis Apollon, May 23; The Sea The Sea, May 30; Caroline Cotter, Jun. 6; Eric Bettencourt, Jun. 7; Dar Williams, Jun. 10. 761-1757

**Port City Music Hall**, 504 Congress St. Fleetmac Wood Presents Rumours Rave, May 11; Citizen, May 24; Parquet Courts, May 25; Alvvays, May 29; Hop Along, Jun. 1; David Wax Museum, Jun. 2; Typhoon, Jun. 3; Lez Zep-

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**EXPERIENCE**

- **Portland Symphony Orchestra**, 20 Myrtle St. The Return of Norman Huynh, May 21-22; 842-0800

- **Space Gallery**, 538 Congress Street. Broken Shadows, May 17; Amy Reid, May 25; La Luz with Gymshorts, Jun. 5. 828-5600

- **State Theatre**, 609 Congress St. Mister-Wives, May 16; Tixie Mattel, May 18; Apocaliptica, May 25; Tash Sultana, May 30; Belle and Sebastian, May 5; The Decemberists, Jun. 10. 956-6000

- **Stone Mountain Arts Center**, 695 Dug Way Rd. Séan McCann, May 18; John Gorka, May 19; Keb’Mo’ Band, May 23; DuoDuo Quartet, May 25; Harry Manx, May 26; Rodney Crowell, May 27; Alejandro Escovedo, Jun. 2; Rose Cousins and Mark Ereli, Jun. 8. 935-7292

- **Waterville Opera House**, 93 Main St. 3rd Flr., Waterville. Seussical, Jun.15-17 & 22-24; The Bolshoi Ballet: Coppelia, Jul.1, 873-7000

**COMEDY**

- **Andy’s Old Port Pub**, 94 Commercial St. Nick Crowley, Kevin Neales, & Krystal Kamenides, May 5. 874-ANDY

- **Blue**, 650 Congress St. Portland Comedy Co-Op Presents Worst Day of the Week, every Mon. 774-4111

- **Bull Feeney’s**, 375 Fore St. Portland Comedy Showcase, every Wed. 773-7210

- **Empire**, 575 Congress St. First Friday Comedy, first Fri. of every month; Sunday Night Stand Up!, every Sun.; 558-2279

- **Lincoln’s**, 36 Market St. Laugh Shack Comedy, every Thurs.

- **Jonathan’s Ogunquit**, 92 Bournes Ln., Ogunquit. “Nick is Right” Comedy with Nick DiPaolo, May 4. 646-4526

- **Johnson Hall**, 280 Water St., Gardiner. Capital City Improv, Apr. 28; Maine Event Comedy, May 19. 582-7144

- **One Longfellow Square**, 181 State St. Bob Marley, May 19. 761-1757

- **Somerset Abbey**, 98 Main St., Madison. Maine Event Comedy: Stand Up, May. 11. 696-5800

- **Space Gallery**, 538 Congress Street. Gina Yashere, May 18. 828-5600

- **Stone Mountain Arts Center**, 695 Dug Way Rd. Bob Marley, May 17. 935-7292

**TASTY EVENTS**

- **Aurora Provisions**, 64 Pine St. Two to three free tastings each month on Tuesdays. 871-9060

- **Gourmet Gala**, Ocean Gateway. A celebration of food featuring samples from local producers.

Leroux Kitchen, Portland. Free wine tastings on the 2nd Saturday of each month, 1-3 p.m. 553-7665

Local Sprouts, 649 Congress St., Portland. Music Brunch with Sean Mencher and friends, every Sun.

Lolita Vinoteca + Asador, 90 Congress St., Portland. Tapas Mondays, every Mon. 3:30-10:30; wines paired with small plates. 775-5652

Rosemont Markets, Portland and Yarmouth. Two to three free tastings each month on Fridays. 774-8129

Sweetgrass Farm Old Port Tasting Room, 32 Fore St. Whiskey Wednesday, weekly. 761-8GIN


FILM

Portland Museum of Art, 7 Congress Sq. RBG, May 18-20. 775-6148

LITERARY EVENTS

LFK, 188 State St. Word Portland, a monthly reading series featuring original writing from authors on the first Mon. of every month. 899-3277

Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress St. Portland Monthly First Friday Fiction, May 4; Jun. 4. 774-1822

Print: A Bookstore, 273 Congress St. Bestselling authors Jacqueline Sheehan, Randy Susan Meyers, and Ellen Meeropol present their latest works, May 16; Owen Laukkanen presents Gale Force, May 17; Tommy Pico on JUNK and Joseph Osmundson, Inside/Out, May 21; Ada Calhoun presents Wedding Toasts I’ll Never Give, May 21; Julie Falatko presents Two Dogs in a Trench Coat Go to School, May 29; Alan Lightman presents Searching for Stars on an Island in Maine, May 30. 536-4778

DON’T MISS

Annual May Day Festival, Downtown Kennebunk. Craft markets, live music, climbing wall, and a parade to celebrate spring, May 5. 604-1341

Bug Light Kite Festival, 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland. Presented by the South
Portland Historical Society, this annual festival features live music, a fundraising barbeque, demonstrations, and an impressive kite-flying spectacle, May 19. 767-7299

**Damariscotta Oyster Celebration**, Downtown Damariscotta. Tour and taste the best of the region’s oysters, Jun. 14-16

**Hard Cider Run**, “Dash through the Eastern Promenade in pursuit of hard cider,” a 5K presented by Urban Farm Fermentory, May 12. 773-8331

**Mother’s Day Garden & Tea Open House**, Nezinscot Farm, Turner. Enjoy tea, explore the greenhouses and gardens, and indulge in brunch and lunch specials, May 12-13. 225-3231


**Stand Up Paddleboard Sunset Tour**, Portland Paddle, East End Beach. Take a leisurely paddle along the Portland waterfront, topped off with a panoramic view of the sun setting over the city, starting May 25. 370-9730

-Compiled by Sarah Moore and Mira McKenney. To submit your own event listing, visit: portlandmonthly.com/portmag/submit-an-event/
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