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Once upon a time, summer theater was dismissed for rarely taking risks. This year, race, immigration, and class issues all take center stage at Ogunquit Playhouse in Ragtime: The Musical, a story spanning 10 years of the early 20th century as the United States prepares to enter World War I. Three families, three different worlds, all-American.

To better understand our national uneasiness in 2017, “we must examine how our country came together,” says artistic director Brad Kenney. “Ragtime shows the struggle laid out bare on the stage.”

Based on the 1975 novel by E.L. Doctorow, the musical first premiered at the Ford Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto in 1996 before making its way to L.A. and finally to Broadway in 1998. The show is epic in its scope. Written by four-time Tony Award-winner and Pulitzer Prize-nominee Terrence McNally, Ragtime follows the lives of three central characters from three very different backgrounds: Mother, an upper-class WASP from New Rochelle; Coalhouse Walker Jr., a black Harlem musician; and Tetah, a Jewish immigrant from Eastern Europe. Their lives merge in a force, generating one sweeping, tragic, triumphant version of the American tale. The story was produced in cinematic form in 1981, garnering a slew of Academy Award nominations.

By Olivia Gunn
to feel more recent tensions and reverberations, Kenney is a deeper pattern-spotter. He's been mulling over the idea of presenting *Ragtime* in Maine “for over five years.”

Still, particularly this summer, “theater has a responsibility to give back to the community and culture,” says Kenney. “Members of my own immediate family feel very differently about current affairs.”

From the exploits of Harry Houdini to a functioning Ford Model T on stage, *Ragtime* isn’t a walk in the park production-wise. “It’s a lot to take on when you know you have foot the bill,” Kenney says. “But we knew that regardless of how people feel about it politically, we must examine how this country came together and what we are. The president is the lead story every single day of our lives in this country. Most of our conversations harken back to
these themes. I don’t think there is a better piece that shows it…and it’s done in a fantastic Broadway fashion.”

Last summer, the theater performed The Hunchback of Notre Dame, another epic undertaking. But it wasn’t just the striking visuals and performances that hit audiences at their core.

“Hunchback, though it was based on the Disney version, takes more from the Victor Hugo novel,” a much darker vision, explains Kenney. Charles Laughton’s stand-out performance as Quasimodo in the 1939 film comes to mind. “In Hunchback, one of the strongest themes is racial hatred.” When it was staged last summer, “we were headed toward the [presidential] election. Audiences were sitting there with tears in their eyes.” For all its distance and antiquity, Hunchback “shocked people. It was more than they expected.” Cue Ragtime. “The stakes don’t get higher for people trying to survive, live in a new country, or keep their family together.”
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Join award-winning artists in celebrating Cape Elizabeth’s natural beauty and ecological significance at a stunning venue overlooking Richmond Island in Cape Elizabeth. A catered reception, elegant music and a lively auction of “wet” artwork painted en plein air throughout the weekend make this an event not to be missed!

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THEATER GUIDE

For the past 85 seasons, Ogunquit Playhouse has brought works to its stage that expose audiences to a life beyond their own. In 2014, it was recognized for exceptional work with a listing on the National Register of Historic Places that touches on its cultural impact and role as one of the bastions of the small theater resurgence.

Is art catching up with real life, or is it the other way around? “People are gravitating out of the cities, L.A., Hollywood, and New York. Professional productions are moving into different regions.” This August, they’ll give us the stories of a Harlem musician, a Jewish immigrant, and a sheltered, upper-class housewife. Three varied American stories merge into one message of hope.

SUMMER THEATER PREVIEW


Cold Comfort Theater, see website for Belfast locations. Crimes of the Heart or One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, Jul. 6-9; The Mikado, Aug. 3-6. 930-7244

City Theater in Biddeford, 205 Main St. Steel Magnolias, May 12-21; Wizard of Oz, Jul. 21-Aug. 6. 282-0849

Deertrees Theater, 156 Deertrees Rd., Harrison. Last Train to Nibroc, Jul. 7-Aug. 18; Indoor/Outdoor, Jul. 15-Aug. 3. 583-6747


Freeport Community Players, 30 Freeport Performing Arts Center, Holbrook St., Freeport. Seussical, Jul. 20-30; The Servant of Two Masters, Sept. 14-Oct. 1. 865-2220

Good Theater & St. Lawrence Arts, 76 Congress St., Portland. Vivid Motion’s Hunchback of Notre Dame, May 12-14; The Meatball Chronicles, May 17-21. 885-5883

Hackmatack Playhouse, 538 Route 9, Berwick. She Loves Me, Jun. 16-Jul. 1; Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story, Jul. 5-22; Steel Magnolias, Jul. 26-Aug. 12; The Fantasticks, Aug. 16-Sept. 2. 698-1807
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Theater Guide


Gaslight Theater, Winthrop St., Hallowell. Noises Off, Jun. 16-25; Baskerville, Aug. 18-27. 626-3698

Lakewood Theater, 75 Theater Rd., Madison. Arsenic and Old Lace, May 25-Jun. 3; Some Sweet Day, Jun. 8-17; Shout! The Mod Musical, Jun. 22-Jul. 1; Those Crazy Ladies in the House on the Corner, Jul. 6-15; Avenue Q, Jul. 20-Jul. 29; The Savannah Sipping Society, Aug. 3-12; Bullets Over Broadway, Aug. 17-26; Baskerville, Sept. 1-9; A Comedy of Tenors, Sept. 14-23. 474-7176


Maine State Music Theatre, Pickard Theater, 1 Bath Rd., Brunswick. Always Patsy Cline, June 7-24; Sleeping Beauty, June 14-17; Guys and Dolls, Jun. 28-Jul. 15; Grease, Jul. 19-Aug. 5; Newsies, Aug. 9-26; Alice in Wonderland, Aug. 21. 725-8769

Merrill Auditorium, 20 Myrtle St., Portland. Pippin, May 13; Riverdance, May 31-Jun. 1. 842-0800

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207-288-0829
Ogunquit Playhouse, 10 Main St., Ogunquit. Mamma Mia!, May 17-Jul. 1; Bullets Over Broadway, Jul. 5-29; Ragtime, Aug. 2-26; Heartbreak Hotel, Aug. 30-Sept. 30, From Here to Eternity, Oct. 4-29. 646-5511

Penobscot Theatre Company, Bangor Opera House, 131 Main St. I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti, through May 14; The Full Monty, Jun. 15-Jul. 9. 942-3333

Portland Stage, 25 Forest Ave. Disgraced, May 2-21. 774-0465

Public Theatre, 31 Maple St., Lewiston. Ripped, May 5-14; Chickens and Crocodiles: Silly Stories for a Child's Imagination, May 21. 782-3200

Schoolhouse Arts Center, 16 Richville Rd., Standish. Disney's Mulan Jr., May 19-21; Billy Goes to War, Jun. 9-11; Peter Pan, Jul. 13-30; Disney Before Dark KIDS, Aug. 4-6; Once Upon This Island, Aug. 18-20; Dracula, Sept. 19-Oct. 15. 642-3743

Theater at Monmouth, 76 Main St., Monmouth. My Father's Dragon, Jun. 24-Aug. 17; Three Days of Rain, Jul. 1-Aug. 18; The Learned Ladies, Jul. 6-Aug. 20; Macbeth, Jul. 13-Aug. 18; Othello, Jul. 20-Aug. 19; Red Velvet, Jul. 27-Aug. 17; Peter and the Starcatcher, Sept. 14-24. 933-9999

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A Race to Remember
Maine’s oldest 26-miler, the Sugarloaf Marathon draws hundreds of runners to the Carrabassett Valley, this year including Olympic Gold Medalist Joan Benoit Samuelson. Tag along on May 21 to watch the race, spot moose along the course, and remember how you meant to get in shape this winter. 800-843-5623

Let’s go fly a kite.
Hosted by South Portland Historical Society, the Bug Light Park Kite Festival will feature local vendors, on-hand kite experts, and tours of the Bug Light Tower. Families can cast their own kites high into the sky or simply sit back and enjoy the spectacle between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 20. 767-7299

 Cheers!
Street Eats & Beats hits Thompson’s Point on May 20, bringing along a bevy of high-quality food trucks and a host of custom drinks. Bring friends (21+), soak up the live music, and don’t forget to hit the photo booth. 321-4246

Wine & Dine
Meet Portland’s hippest chefs at Toast on the Coast, a benefit event at the scenic Ocean Gateway on May 11. Learn about pairings, refine your palate, or simply enjoy the exquisite samples. Proceeds go to Veterans Count Maine. 828-0754

GALLERIES
Bates College Museum of Art, Olin Arts Center, 75 Russell St., Lewiston. Kate Gilmore: In Your Way, Jun. 9-Oct. 7. 786-6158
Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1 Bath Rd., Brunswick. Modern Medieval: Materiality and Spirituality in German Expressionism, through Jun. 4. 725-3275
Center for Maine Contemporary Arts, 21 Winter Street, Rockland. David Driskell, Renewal and Form, through May 11; Mark Wethli, Piper Club, through May 14; Sam Cady, Parts of the Whole, through May 21. 701-5005
Colby College Museum of Art, 5600 Mayflower Hill Dr., Waterville. No Limits: Zao Wou-Ki, through Jun. 4; Marsden Hartley’s Maine, through Nov. 12; Brand-New & Terrific: Alex Katz in the 1950s, through Aug. 6; Graphic Matters: George Bellows & World War I, through Sept. 3. 859-5600
Farnsworth Art Museum, 16 Museum St., Rockland. American Treasures From the Farnsworth, through Oct. 29; Celebrating Maine, Apr. 5-Oct. 29; Andrew Wyeth at 100, through Dec. 31. 596-6457

THEATER
City Theater, 205 Main St., Biddeford. Steel Magnolias, May 12-21; Wizard of Oz, Jul. 21-Aug. 6. 282-0849
Lyric Music Theater, 176 Sawyer St., South Portland. Catch Me If You Can, Jun 2-18. 799-1421
Mad Horse Theater, 24 Mosher St., South Portland. Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play, May 4-21. 747-4148
Portland Ballet, at Westbrook Performing Arts Center, 471 Stroudwater St., Westbrook. Swan Lake Act II, Apr. 28-29. 772-9671
Portland Ovations, 50 Monument Sq. Pippin Broadway National Tour, May 13. 842-0800
Portland Stage Company, 25 Forest ave. Play Me A Story, every Saturday; Disgraced by Ayad Akhtar, May 2-21. 774-0645
Public Theater, 31 Maple St., Lewiston. Ripcord by Norm Foster, May 5-24. 782-3200
Schoolhouse Arts Center, 16 Richville Rd., Standish. Disney’s Mulan Jr., May 19-21; Peter Pan, Jul. 13-30. 642-3743
Waterville Opera House, 93 Main St. 3rd Flr. Der Rosenkavalier, May 13. 873-7000

CHEERS!

A night with Lupè
Aura’s brand new venue will play host to one of hip-hop’s most irreverent and politically-minded stars, Lupè Fiasco, on May 14. Tickets are $40. 772-8274

Wine & Dine
Food Truck

A Charleston event hits Thompson’s Point on May 20, bringing along a bevy of high-quality food trucks and a host of custom drinks. Bring friends (21+), soak up the live music, and don’t forget to hit the photo booth. 321-4246

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She Sings
Mary Fahl, star of mid-90s alternative pop group, October Project, will captivate audiences at One Longfellow Square on May 19. Tickets are $28 in advance or $33 on the day. 761-1757

Greenhut Galleries, 146 Middle St., Portland. William Irvine and Nancy Morgan Barnes exhibition, May 4-27. 772-2693

Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress St. World War I and the Maine Experience, May 10; Longfellow’s Cocktail Party & Magical History Tour, May 12-13. 774-1822


Portland Museum of Art, 7 Congress Sq., Portland. The Mistress and the Muse, through June 4; Artist’s Choice: Photographs from the Judy Glickman Lauder collection, through May 29. 775-6148

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Maine Academy of Modern Music, 125 Pre-sumpscot St. The Kids are All Right ft. Namory Keita, May 6; 2017 MAMM Slam: Finals, May 13; All Roads Music Festival, May 20; 899-3433

Merrill Auditorium, 20 Myrtle St. Tony Bennett, May 11; Gordon Lightfoot, May 17; Riverdance, presented by Roberts Group Live. 842-0800

One Longfellow Square, 181 State St. John Craigie with Joel Thetford, May 7; Eric Bettencourt, May 12; Caroline Spence & Connor Jarvey, May 18; Kristin Andreassen, May 27. 761-1757

Tasty Delight
Fork Food Lab welcomes hungry foodies to meet its members and sample their wares at the May Market on May 13. Open 11 a.m.-3 p.m., there will be a cash bar and plenty of culinary inspiration for your summer meals. Free admission. 558-0881
Port City Music Hall, 504 Congress St. Jamestown Revival, May 5; Real Estate, May 7; The Record Company, May 16; The Wind and The Wave, May 19; Buffalo Tom, May 25; The Orwells, May 30. 956-6000

Portland House of Music and Entertainment, 57 Temple St. Old Salt Union, May 3; Pink Talking Fish, May 12 & 13; The London Souls, May 18; Live Music Mon. through Sat. 805-0134

Portland Symphony Orchestra, 20 Myrtle St. Tchaikovsky’s Pathetic, May 16. 842-0800

Portland Ovations, Merrill Auditorium 20 Myrtle St. Elephant & Piggie’s “We Are in a Play!”, May 7; “Pippin”, May 13. 842-0800

Space Gallery, 538 Congress Street. Get Ready Weekly, May 1; Screaming Females, May 6; Xasthur with Johanna Warren and Dwell in Moonblood, May 23. 828-5600

State Theatre, 609 Congress St. Kris Kristofferson, May 4; Twiddle, May 6; Ryan Adams, May 7; Mastodon with Eagles of Death Metal & Russian Circles, May 9; SuicideGirls: Blackheart Burlesque, May 19; Flogging Molly, May 27. 956-6000

Stone Mountain Arts Center, 695 Dug Way Rd. Del McCoury Band, May 5; The Wailin’ Jennys, May 9; Susan Werner, May 12; Alejandro Escovedo, May 19; The Rough & Tumble, May 26; Tom Snow Quartet, May 27; Chris Thomas King, May 28. 935-7292

Waterville Opera House, 93 Main St. 3rd Fr., Waterville. Biscuit, May 12; Blue Öyster Cult, May 25; The Met: Der Rosenkavalier, May 27. 873-7000

Insider Tip: With half-price wine and fresh oysters for only $1.55 Five Fifty Five on Congress Street is where locals do happy hour. Mon. to Fri., 4:30-6 p.m. 761-0555

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

Community Television Network, 516 Congress St. Portland Playback Theater, the first Friday of every month. 775-2900

Johnston Hall, 280 Water St., Gardiner. Maine Event Comedy, May 13. 582-7144

Lincolns, 36 Market St. Laugh Shack comedy every Thursday.

Somerset Abbey, 98 Main St., Madison. Mark Turcotte & Maine Event Comedy, May 12. 696-5800

State Theatre, 609 Congress St. John Mulaney: Kid Gorgeous, May 10. 956-6000


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

Browne Trading Market, Portland. Regular wine tastings, through June. 775-7560

Craft Beer Cellar, 111 Commercial St. Craft beer tasting every Fri. 956-7322

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

Otherside Delicatessen, 164 Veranda St. Monthly wine tastings. 761-9650

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

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Lobsters, Crabs & Clams unloaded fresh daily from our boats!
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Enjoy our Fresh Seafood from our indoor dining room or our outside picnic tables!
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Print: A Bookstore, 273 Congress St. Best-selling authors Jacqueline Sheehan, Randy Susan Meyers, and Ellen Meeropol present their latest works, May 16. 536-4778

Riverdance, Merrill Auditorium 20 Myrtle St. An innovative and exciting blend of Irish dance, music, and song, May 31. 842-0800

Sunday River, Sunday River Rd., Newry. Pond-A-Palooza, Apr. 8; The Great Tailgate, Apr. 15; Ski Maynia, May 1. 800-542-2754

-Compiled by Willis Kuelthau
To submit your own event listing, visit: portlandmonthly.com/portmag/submit-an-event/
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