

Headline: **Theater Latté Da Announces 2017 NEXT Festival**

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## Theater Latté Da Announces 2017 NEXT Festival

*Three new works will be developed this summer at the Minnesota theatre.*

### **BY AMERICAN THEATRE EDITORS**

**MINNEAPOLIS:** [Theater Latté Da](#) (TLD) has announced the lineup for its NEXT Festival. Three new works have been selected to receive workshops and public readings this summer. The festival is part of TLD's NEXT 20/20, an initiative launched in 2015 that aims to develop 20 new musicals or plays with music by the year 2020.

The first musical will be *Goddess* (July 22 and 24), with music by Michael Thurber and lyrics by Mkhululi Z. Mabija, Thurber, Jocelyn Bioh, and Saheem Ali. The musical, which was conceived by Ali and Mabija, is a contemporary spin on the ancient folk tale about the deity of music, set in a jazz club at the East African port of Mombasa. The reading will feature Nathan Barlow, Gabrielle Dominique, Ashawnti Ford, Karan Kendrick, Thomasina Petrus, Jon-Michael Reese, Mikell Sapp, Joe Thomas, and Nimeme Wuren. Sanford Moore will provide music direction, and Ali will direct.

Next up will be *Five Points* (July 27 and 29), with a book by Harrison David Rivers, music by Ethan D. Pakchar and Douglas Lyons, and lyrics by Lyons. The musical follows a young black performer and an Irish immigrant as they chase the American Dream in 1863 in New York City. The cast for the reading will include Matt Bailey, Nathan Barlow, Jody Briskey, Ivory Doublette, Daniel Grecco, Michael Gruber, Aeysha Kinnunen, Joel Liestman, Riley McNutt, Thomasina Petrus, Jon-Michael Reese, Andre Shoals, Kendall Anne Thompson, and Alejandro Vega. Denise Prosek will provide music direction, and Peter Rothstein will direct. *Five Points* will receive its world premiere at TLD in the spring of 2018.

The third piece in the festival, wrapping up TLD's 2016-17 season, will be Glen Berger's *Underneath the Lintel* (Aug. 4 and 7), about a Dutch librarian's adventure to find the person who anonymously returned a travel guide 113 years past its due date. The piece, which premiered in 2002, will be reimagined as a play with music and will feature a score by Frank London. The cast will include Sally Wingert, Natalie Nowytski, and Dan Chouinard. Chouinard will provide music direction, and Rothstein will direct.

## Headline: **Minnesota Jewish Theatre's new season; a big night at Open Book**

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## **Minnesota Jewish Theatre's new season; a big night at Open Book**

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By Pamela Espeland | 07/21/17

Courtesy of Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company

An image from the Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company's 2008 production of "Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins."

Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company's 2017-18 season – its 23rd – starts soon and strong, with a one-man play starring Robert Dorfman and directed by Raye Birk. The other four productions include a comedy about politics (how refreshing!), the return of an Ivey-winning holiday show, a play by Pulitzer Prize winner Donald Margulies and a world premiere.

Aug. 19-27: David Hare's "Via Dolorosa" is the British playwright's personal story of traveling to Israel at 50 and exploring what it's like to live in the heart of the Israeli-Arab conflict. At first, Hare performed the play himself on stage (and in the film version seen on PBS). We'll get the wonderful actor Robert Dorfman, with fellow actor Raye Birk making his Twin Cities directorial debut.

Oct. 21-Nov. 12: Jason Odell Williams' "Church and State" tells of a Republican senator up for re-election in North Carolina who has a sudden change of thinking about God and the Second Amendment. Charlie Whitmore's wife is a conservative Christian; a New York staffer is a liberal Jew. One fights to keep religion in their marriage, and the other to keep the campaign on track.

Dec. 8-Dec. 21: Shari Aronson's "Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins" was first presented at MJTC in 2008, then again in 2009. Adapted from Caldecott Honor book by Eric Kimmel, it's a holiday tale of a village where goblins keep Hanukkah from happening, and a man who saves the day. Chris Griffith's goblin puppets won a 2009 Ivey Award.

Feb. 24-March 18, 2018: Donald Margulies' "Collected Stories" asks a question often asked today: Can a person from one culture tell the story of someone from another culture? Ruth Steiner is a teacher and prominent writer of short stories; Lisa Morrison is her student and protégée turned confidante and eventually competitor. When Lisa writes a novel based on Ruth's past, their friendship is compromised. Margulies won a Pulitzer for the play he wrote just before this one, "Dinner with Friends."

April 21-May 13: Deborah Stein's "Natasha and the Coat" brings together two 20-somethings with very different lives: Natasha, a fashion intern in a Brooklyn atelier, and Yossi, a Hasidic Jew who works as a dry cleaner. This will be the world premiere of a play by the two-time Jerome fellow and McKnight Advancement Grant recipient.

All performances are in the theater of Highland Park Community Center. FMI.

The MJTC was founded in 1994 by former New Yorker Barbara Brooks, who continues to serve as producing artistic director. Since 1995, the theater has produced more than 70 plays and musicals including several commissions, world premieres and Ivey winners.

A musical at the Fetus

We're used to seeing bands play at the Electric Fetus, but an actual musical? We're putting a note on our g-cal now so we don't miss Minneapolis Music Theatre's limited-run production of "High Fidelity," to be staged inside the record store. It makes perfect sense; that's where much of Nick Hornsby's novel (and the 2000 movie starring John Cusack and Jack Black) takes place. But we're eager to see how it actually happens.

"When we decided on 'High Fidelity,' we began to brainstorm what we could do to bring the setting to life," MMT artistic director Christian Unser said in a statement. "Almost immediately, we wondered if it would be possible to actually do the show in a record store. Obviously, our first choice was the Electric Fetus. Luckily, they were just as excited about the opportunity as we were."

With a book by David Lindsay-Abaire ("Shrek The Musical") and music by Tom Kitt (a Pulitzer and Tony winner for "Next to Normal"), "High Fidelity" will close MMT's 2017-18 season on May 5-20, 2018. The season will begin Oct. 6-28 at the Bryant-Lake Bowl with "Tick Tick ... Boom!" Jonathan Larson's three-person rock musical, written prior to "Rent," is his semi-autobiographical story of his time as an aspiring composer in New York. On Feb. 2-25, 2018, at the Phoenix, MMT will present "The Toxic Avenger," a musical version of the classic horror-comedy film written by Bon Jovi band member David Bryan with Joe DiPietro, the team behind "Memphis."

If you're sensing a theme, MMT's niche is "Rare Musicals Well Done" – musicals created by artists before they make it big. Season tickets (and singles to "Tick, Tick ... Boom!") are available now.

The picks

Tonight (Friday, July 21) at Open Book: Book Art Biennial Exhibitions Reception. As part of the 2017 Book Art Biennial, the Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA) is hosting seven exhibitions, and you can see them all at Friday's reception. Thanks to Detroit-based printer and MCBA printer-in-residence Amos Paul Kennedy Jr.'s collaborative project "Open Book Takeover," more than 5,000 community-made prints will be spread throughout the 55,000-square-foot Open Book Building. The Twin Cities Zine Fest has an interactive zine-reading lounge, "Free for All." Guest curator Heid Erdrich has gathered Native American voices in an exhibition called "[About that] Water Is Life." "Reader's Art: Control/Alt/Shift" is a juried exhibition of artists' books. "End of Times 2" is a portfolio of broadsides by 41 letterpress printers, organized by Mary Bruno. "Stamp of Disapproval" showcases counterculture work from MCBA's Helmes and W. Gaglione Rubber Stamp Archive. Find new work by Alyssa Baguss in her "Meander" show. And oh, by the way, five of the best new artist books in the world – by Ellen Knudson, Hanna Batsel, Ines von Ketelhodt, Nader Koochaki, and Tim Hopkins – are also on display. Click the links for close-up looks. One will win the 2017 MCBA Prize at a gala on Saturday night. Be kind and RSVP to the reception on Facebook.

Friday night: Open Book hosts its Book Art Biennial Exhibitions Reception

Tonight at the Lake Harriet Bandshell: Minnesota Sinfonia: Dvorák 8! Begun in 1989 and still led by conductor Jay Fishman, the Sinfonia performs up to 80 concerts every year, all free and family-friendly, many featuring national and international guest soloists. For their final summer classical concert, the Sinfonia will play Dvorak's Symphony No. 8 with the young musicians of this year's Youth Outreach Week, an annual Sinfonia program. 7:30 p.m. If it looks like rain, they'll move to the Basilica and the concert will be at 8:30 p.m. The decision will be made no later than 5 p.m. Check this page for updates.

Tonight at the Minnesota Music Café: Clint Hoover & Papa John Kolstad. Blues and jazz, chromatic and diatonic harmonica player Hoover – formerly of the Twin Cities, now of Pittsburgh – is back in town for the Midwest Harmonica Workshop. He'll take time away from jamming and teaching to join his old friend, folk blues legend Papa John Kolstad, for a reunion concert at the Café. 8 p.m. \$7 donation. Open harmonica jam after the show. Here's a track from an album they recorded live at the Gingko in the mid-2000s.

Tonight and Saturday in Mears Park: 4th Annual Lowertown Funk & Blues Festival. Friday night is funk, Saturday is blues. Music on two stages, with the Average White Band, Mick Sterling and the Stud Brothers, Tommy Castro and the Painkillers, Shannon Curfman and more. Free and open to the public, all ages; VIP seating available. Friday 4:30-10 p.m., Saturday noon-10 p.m. Schedule and free Metro Transit passes here.

Saturday at Concordia University: Puppet Fun for Everyone. The Puppeteers of America's National (actually International) Puppetry Festival ends its weeklong stay at Concordia with a free community celebration of puppet shows, music, exhibits, a store and a puppet parade. At 12:30, 2 and 3:30 p.m., Open Eye Figure Theatre will perform "Molly and the Magic Boot," its current Driveway Tour production. At 1:15 and 2:45 p.m., Parasol Puppets of Missouri and Mousetrap Puppets of Indiana will present dueling "Punch and Judy" shows. The parade takes place at 4 p.m. Bring a puppet and join in. If you and the kids are up for a longer day, Mesner Puppet Theater of Kansas City will present "The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales" at 11 a.m., and tickets are \$5. Puppet Fun events are noon-5 p.m. and free



Courtesy of the artist

DJ Rekha

Saturday at the Cedar: DJ Rekha. For the third year in a row, Ragamala Dance Company has invited the "ambassador of Bhangra music" to Minneapolis for an all-out dance party. This will also be a celebration of Ragamala's 25th anniversary. Starting with Indian music, the New York-based Rekha pulls in world music and contemporary electronic dance music, drawing diverse crowds and bringing people together. Doors at 7, show at 8, with opener DJ Chamun. Standing show with open floor. All ages. FMI and tickets (\$18 advance/\$20 day of show).

Starts Saturday: Theater Latté Da's 2017 Next Festival. Three new works, six public readings. July 22 and 24 at the Ritz Theater: "Goddess," a contemporary spin on an ancient folk tale set in a jazz club in Mombasa. Music by Michael Thurber, book by Jocelyn Bioh, directed by Saheem Ali. July 27 and 29 at the Ritz: "Five Points," about two young men – one black, one white – in New York City during the Civil War. Book by Harrison David Rivers, music by Ethan D. Pakchar and Douglas Lyons, directed by Peter Rothstein. Aug 4 and 7 at the Playwrights' Center: "Underneath the Lintel," Glen Berger's celebrated play about a Dutch librarian on a quest, has been reimaged as

a play with music by Berger and Frank London. Rothstein will direct. Both “Five Points” and “Underneath the Lintel” are part of Latté Da’s 2017-18 season. FMI and tickets (\$15 singles, \$30 3-show passes).

Monday night at the Heights: “A Hard Day’s Night.” Richard Lester’s 1964 film was conceived as a quickie B movie to cash in on the Fab Four’s growing fame. We all know how that turned out. This is the 50th anniversary 4K restoration. 7:30 p.m. FMI and tickets (\$8).

**Headline: Here’s what’s ‘Next’ for Latte Da: New works festival**

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Here’s what’s ‘Next’ for Latte Da: New works festival

Director Peter Rothstein and actor Sally Wingert in rehearsal for "Six Degrees of Separation," which Theater Latte Da presented last season.



(Emilee Elofson/Theater Latte Da)

Peter Rothstein (left) directed Sally Wingert (right) in “Six Degrees of Separation” last season for Theater Latte Da. They’ll fill the same roles in the Next Festival’s “Underneath the Lintel.” (Emilee Elofson/Theater Latte Da)

By CHRIS HEWITT | Pioneer Press

June 30, 2017 at 4:21 pm

Theater Latte Da is workshopping three new plays, including two that will have full productions in its upcoming season, in its Next Festival.

Tickets go on sale June 28 for the three shows, concluding with a play-with-music from next season: Glen Berger and Frank London's "Underneath the Lintel," directed by Latte Da artistic director Peter Rothstein and with music from Dan Chouinard. "Lintel" will be at The Playwrights' Center on Aug. 7 and Sally Wingert, who will appear in the full production next year, will star.

The other work included in Latte Da's next season is "Five Points," set in the same New York City neighborhood and the same year (1863) as the Martin Scorsese movie "Gangs of New York." The musical drama, written by Harrison David Rivers, Ethan D. Pakchar and Douglas Lyons, contrasts the journeys of two men, one white and one black. Helmed by Rothstein and musical director Denise Prosek, "Five Points" will be performed July 27 and 29 at the Ritz Theater.

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Next Festival opens with "Goddess." A contemporary take on an ancient folk tale, the show is set in an East African jazz club. "Goddess" is by Michael Thurber, Jocelyn Bioh, Mkhululi Z. Mabija and Saheem Ali. Ali will direct. Sanford Moore is music director for the show, which will be performed July 22 and 24 at Ritz Theater.

All performances are at 7:30 p.m. For tickets, which are \$13 apiece or \$30 for all three, call 612-339-3003 or visit [latteda.org](http://latteda.org).