Contemporary American Theater Festival artists converge on Shepherdstown

By CHRISTINE SYNDER
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SHEPHERDSTOWN — You need to spend time at the Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University this summer.

That’s the advice of no less an authority than the arts writers at the New York Times, who included events on its list of “30 Essential Summer Festivals,” right up there with Chicago’s Lollapaloozas, the Newport Jazz Festival and the Lincoln Center Festival in Manhattan.

Preparation for the 20th-annual festival got underway earlier this month, with a kickoff picnic for this year’s 150-member company on the grounds just outside the Frank Center and the start of four weeks of world-class theater.


This year’s acting troupe includes Betty Adams, Jason Bobinsky, Rachel Bokoumoff, Ben Chace, Brian D. Cotts, Frankie Stewart Doss, Kathryn Geary, Margaret Irey, Tal Koch, Natalie Monsen, Alexander Niel, Edward O’Brien, Ivey Parsons, Carolyn Michelle Smith, Mary Sills, Dennis Thompson, Colby Wink and Jessica Worthington.

Five students from Virginia Commonwealth University — Misty LaPorte Kielar, Tyler John Fauvemoney-Artus, Claire Monique McMillan, and Vincent Ramirez — also are in Shepherdstown, to serve in ensemble pieces and as understudies.

Shepherd actor Teri Hedley also will be the CATF acting team.

Besides festival founder Ed Herndon — who is directing “The Second Girl” and “20th Century Blues” — other directors for the 20th season will include Courtney Safe (“Not Meddy”), Moy Adams (“The Wedding Gift”) and Lucie Theiberg (“you’re mine”).

Theater lovers can reserve spots now to see the plays and make plans to enjoy festival events such as free-street readings, post-performance discussions, the “CAT in Concert” lecture series offered live through funding from the West Virginia Humanities Council, workshops, classes, art exhibitions, films and more.

For those who don’t want to wait for the festival’s official start (or who want a night of theater on a budget), CATF offers its Pay-What-You-Can-Pay series July 3 to 7. Seating for these three exhibitions are available first-come, first-served.

Details are available at catofig.org or by calling 800-999-CATF.

Contemporary American Theater Festival actors Jason Bobinsky, Margaret Irey and Damian Thompson read from Chisa Hutchinson’s play, “The Wedding Gift.”

WANT TO GO? What: Contemporary American Theater Festival’s 20th season
When: July 8 to 31
Where: On the campus of Shepherd University
To reserve tickets or learn more: Go to catofig.org or call 800-999-CATF

Ed Herndon

WANT TO GO? What: 15th annual Jefferson County Farm Day with self-guided tours of Grazing Racing Stable in Summerville and the farm in Kearneysville — Taylor’s Ranch, Mushen Hill Farm and Evensweet Apiaries
When: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday How much: Free

Getting the lay of the land

Saturday’s free Farm Day gives visitors insights into farm life

By ZACH CUMBERLAND
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CHARLES TOWN — Jane Tall formed the idea for Jefferson County Farm Day years ago amid discussions over land development in an area when farming once was the major occupation.

LEFT: Kearneysville’s Evensweet Apiaries is one of four stops on this weekend’s free, self-guided Jefferson County Farm Day tour.

She thought it would be a good idea that we all learn how to be good neighbors to one another and appreciate our farm land,” said Tall, a farmer herself and a member of the Jefferson County Commission. “That’s why I started it.”

The 15th annual event happens from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. Visitors can take free, self-guided tours of four farms — Taylor’s Ranch, Mushen Hill Farm and Evensweet Apiaries, all in

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1st Annual WV Fest
June 18 • Down Town Charles Town

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