

THE SECOND IN A SERIES ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN THEATER FESTIVAL



Margaret Ivey (from left), Melissa Monroe and Damian Thompson are shown in last summer's Contemporary American Theater Festival production, "The Wedding Girl." A new exhibition at a museum in Hagerstown, Md., will include CATF costumes from the play as well as "partnership" and "The Second Girl" — both from 2016 also — along with 2015's "Everything You Touch," "Uccanny Valley" in 2014, "Scott and Helen in the Garden of Allah" in 2013 and 1998's "Compliat Female Stage Beauty."

OVER THE TOP

Theater festival, Maryland museum partner up to showcase costumes that got their start in Shepherdstown

Story by
Beth Batdorf

You don't have to go to New York and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's costume gala to see "over the top" costumes. Shepherdstown's Contemporary American Theater Festival and the Museum of Fine Arts Washington County in Hagerstown, Md., are putting together "High Drama," an exhibition that will feature costumes, small properties ("props") and scenic pieces from prior CATF productions.

Costumes will be exhibited with small set designs from three of last year's plays — "The Wedding Girl," "Ten Translucents," "The Second Girl" — along with "Everything You Touch," "Groom 2015B," "Uccanny Valley" (2014), "Scott and Helen in the Garden of Allah" (2013) and 1999's "Compliat Female Stage Beauty." The installation also will include drawings, notes, fabric swatches, scale models, props, video and training shows.

The idea began with Susan Mills, a CATF board member who's also a member of museum's programs and is based in the Washington, Md., and South West in New York City for many years and loved going to all the fashion exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her initial thought was that CATF could perhaps display some of its costumes in the museum atrium for a few days.

But Rebecca Masler Lane, the director of the museum — a "think big" person, according to everyone I talked to — suggested expanding the idea to a summer exhibition. And the planning and work began. Susan remains very involved and she has gathered a group of community members from both institutions to make it all happen.

Typefile with Nancy Zain, consulting curator for the museum.
See COSTUMES Page B11

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS - WASHINGTON COUNTY

WANT TO GO? What: Opening reception for "High Drama" costume exhibition. When: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. June 10. Where: 401 Museum Drive in City Park in Hagerstown, Md. How much: Tickets cost \$39 (purchase at www.mfa-wc.org). What else: CATF founder Ed Herendeen and producing director Peggy Mackowen will be on hand for reception. The exhibit will be on display at the museum from June 3 to Aug. 6

HIGH DRAMA

COSTUMES FROM THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN THEATER FESTIVAL

KITTY SAVAGE

Giving empathy, not excuses

Recently, our oldest daughter was telling me about a peer she finds periodically annoying. I told her she should cut that kid some slack because I'm certain they have a lot of extra stuff to deal with at home. She asked, "Why do you always do that?"

What I hadn't said was that she's right. It's a fine line. One look at social media and you're regarding the opinions or health of someone else as if they were your own. I've seen friends who say they will me out to be so kind on those. They either have a friend/family member or someone or whatever. Why do you always do that?"

After some thought, I responded: "I just can't believe offering our opinions

There was debate on the best way to handle it. Essentially there were two arguments, either look the "looking up" light or reach out to the person. We collected a ton of food and one of the ways to take it to the homes of the unexpected person's home. His young son accompanied him. Although this son tagged along because it was an eye-opener for the boy, sometimes people make bad choices because they feel it's the only choice they

have. I love the saying, "Don't judge me because I'm different than you."
That's much easier said than done. I trust that reminder that only the one who is without sin should be the first to throw a stone. Do you think struggles are all people of color face in the arcadiums card? Of course not. But neither does it give a "let me judge, criticize and complain about you" card. Not everyone has the same situation as you. We don't have to give their bad behavior an excuse, but we should give them our empathy.





RIGHT: Next month's "High Drama," a first-ever costume exhibit featuring designers from the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, will feature the work of Christian Anderson's "penmanship" which featured (from left) Edward O'Brian and Margaret Ivey. **ABOVE:** Bianca Lawrence, Anne and Davison Thompson starred in "The Wedding Gift." Costumes used in the play by China Hazzard will be on display at the Museum of Fine Arts, Washington County in Hagerstown. **Mid,** starting June 3. A ticketed opening reception is set for June 10.

Costumes FROM PAGE B12

Nancy is enthusiastic about the exhibition. It may be the first time that the museum has had a costume show although costumes have always been in its permanent exhibitions such as the 2014 retrospective on the best-dressed Civil War's 150th anniversary. The celebrated Edith Head, who designed the costumes for the "top of hats" in that exhibition, are usually in demand because there has been so much opportunity for staff from both institutions to participate in the planning. Most of the installations will be handled by CATE staff.

But Kay Whitmer, collections and exhibitions manager at the museum, and Nancy Zinn will help in needed during the two-day installation. Peggy McKown, CATE's associate producer and director, is also excited about the new "costume show" which she says is a "great opportunity for many of her ladies at CATE are administrative in nature. Nancy Zinn talked about Peggy's incredible problem-solving skills for also looking "fantastic eye for how things are going to look." I see Peggy to the glue at CATE.

But Peggy is also a costume designer and I can't begin to list her accomplishments and the accolades she has received from theater reviewers. Part of the delight of this exhibition is that many of the costumes were designed by Peggy. Costume, scene, light and video designers who will also have to work in the show include Trevor Berman, Michael Berman, Michael Berman, D.M. Wood, Michael McKown, Michael Dempsey and Max Seidel as well as technical

designer Josh Franchester and graphic designer Jan Reckner.

According to Trent Krueger, the production manager at CATE, theater professionals rarely look back at what they have created, making this project really interesting to him. Trent says, "It's not like we're looking at the best of the best. I know I can always add when the CATE sets are being dismantled after the last performance but Ed Headman, the CATE founder who remains in producing director, is always ready to move on to the next season.

Chase Minkow, production supervisor for CATE, and Trent have both very involved in the planning of the exhibitions and the mapping of the space and building of platforms and score design. Trent thinks visitors will love taking a closer at the construction of the costumes and the "magic" of the creations. The exhibit does bring some things to life that have not been shown on its own without the ability to see what they take place on a theater set where things are more fluid and always changing.

Everyone I talked to seemed to agree that the set up over just a two-day period is somewhat daunting. Fortunately the costume shop and other CATE staff are arriving early and they are all well acquainted with the pressure of limited time.

Much of the work will be done before the installation including the refurbishment of the costumes and other parts of the exhibit and even treatment of some of the hats. I volunteered over a couple more sleep 12-hour days before preparing the exhibit for the public. I will be working with the ladies with an eye for use of the costumes in "Everything You Touch." But it all comes together



WANT TO GO? What: Contemporary American Theater Festival's **Whom?** Mainstage and evening performances Tuesdays to Sundays July 7 to July 30 **Where:** Three venues on the campus of Shepherd University **What else:** For tickets and other festival details, go to catf.org or call 803-966-5CATF

on opening night.

Leaders from both the museum and CATE hope that the exhibit will bring new visitors to the museum and that the exhibit also will bring new visitors to the theater festival — visitors who will find that they are, perhaps surprisingly, curious about the accolades CATE tells each season. There are plans for additional collaborations with the museum and CATE including possible play readings at the museum. The museum already collaborates frequently with the music and art departments of Shepherd University.

CATE's play will be in view from July 3 through July 10. The exhibit will be on view from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. with Hagerstown, McKown and Lane. Visit catf.org to purchase tickets, which cost \$50 in person.

McKown also give gallery talks at 10 a.m., July 12 and July 19. Call 301-735-5727 to reserve a space or e-mail education@wcrfa.org.

Peggy said she's thankful to the Shippensburg (Pa.) University Fashion Archives and Museum for lending dress forms and patterns and the Washington County (Md.) Historical Society which loaned mannequins for the exhibit. Peggy discovered a special special thanks you in Lane.

There is a great plan to bring the exhibit to a larger venue. She has visited and CATE looks forward to continuing the partnership with the museum.



—Peggy K. McKown is a retired costume designer and museum director at the CATE. A member of the CATE board, she writes byforbyfor.com. *Shepherdian*

Out&about
Our weekly entertainment calendar

Nature art exhibit | Through Tuesday

Photos and poetry produced by members of the Potomac Valley Master Naturalists are on display at the Fire Hall Gallery at 108 N. George St. in Charles Town. The show, put on by The Jefferson Arts Council, may be seen during the gallery's regular hours, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week.

Free films | June 3

See two movies — "Ozzy" at 11 a.m. and "La La Land" at 2 p.m. — at South Jefferson Public Library at 904 Church St. in Summit Hill. There is no admission charge to see the films and the library even offers a free popcorn and drink. For details, call the library at 304-725-6327.

"Moana" | June 2

The Jefferson County Parks and Recreation's free "Moana in the Park" series continues with "Moana" at dusk June 2 at Blue Ridge Primary School.

This 2016 computer animated musical fantasy-adventure film takes place in ancient Polynesia and tells the story of what happens when a teenage canoe instructor by the deranged Maui reaches an impetuous chief's daughter's island.

Other movies in the series will include "The Secret Life of Pets" June 16 at Sun Michael's Park, "Lego Batman" July 21 at Jefferson Memorial Park in Charles Town and "Book" on Aug. 18 at Sun Michael's Park.

Art exhibit | through June 30

"Love Me Dug": A fun series of canine portraits by Marlinburg artist Shelly Price are on display at South Jefferson Public Library. The display in the library at 904 Church St. in Summit Hill may be seen through June 30 during the library's regular hours — 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Thursday; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays; and 1 to 5 p.m., Sundays. The library is closed Fridays. A free public reception offering the chance to meet the artist is set



The South Jefferson Public Library's free films continue in June when anyone's welcome to come see "La La Land."

for 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., June 11 in the library's meeting room. Learn more about [Moana at Jefferson.com](http://MoanaatJefferson.com).

Theater fest | Coming July 7

Ticket sales have begun for the Contemporary American Theater Festival, the annual July favorite that brings professional actors and theatergoers to the campus of Shepherd University.

The festival's 27th season will offer matinee and evening performances Tuesdays through Saturdays from July 7 to July 30.

Besides the six plays, there are numerous "talk theater" events such as free lectures, discussions, staged readings and more. Ticket prices range from \$35 to \$66, with discounts for students, seniors, military, and for Shepherd residents performing. Packages also are available and range from \$120 to \$305.

To order tickets or get more information, call the festival box office at 800-999-2253 from noon to 5 p.m., weekdays or go to catf.org.

Jefferson County Museum | Tuesday through Saturday

Charles Town's Jefferson County Museum is open for the 2017 season with new exhibits on local African-American soldiers who served in World War I and the 150th anniversary of the founding of Harper's Ferry by abolitionist John Brown in 1859. The original South Street location was built in 1889. The museum is located at 901 Arch Street, South Street along with hundreds of other objects with the museum. Learn more on Facebook or go online to jeffcomuseumwv.org.

Museum | Ongoing

The Museum of the Shenandoah Valley in Winchester, Va., tells the story of art, history and culture in the valley, including exhibits in Virginia as well as Jefferson and Berkeley counties in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. The museum, located at 901 Arch Street, is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday.

—Send stories to Christine Snyder at editor@spvnewsjournal.com

Jefferson County Museum
Bringing the past to the present since 1965

Don't miss the new exhibit on **Storer College!**

OPEN
TUESDAY to SATURDAY
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

200 E. Washington St. in Charles Town 304-725-8628
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