

NOVEMBER 15, 2017–FEBRUARY 7, 2018 ISSUE 2
TIMEOUT.COM/PHILADELPHIA

TimeOut

PHILADELPHIA

We explore five
of the city's top
on-the-rise areas.
Do you live in one
of them?

THE NEW HIPPEST 'HOODS



NOT FOR RETAIL SALE

Theater &

Three-part harmony



Lydie Breeze

Thanks to Philly's EgoPo, legendary playwright John Guare finally sees all three parts of his epic *Lydie Breeze* staged together. By David Fox

JOHN GUARE IS one of our great playwrights—but also one of the hardest to categorize. If you know him from *The House of Blue Leaves* or *Six Degrees of Separation* (which became a film starring Philly boy Will Smith in 1993), you'll have a sense of his brilliantly idiosyncratic structures, the wit and pith of his dialogue and his ability to bring characters to life. But he wrote many other plays, covering a wide range of styles and topics, that are not produced nearly as often as they should be.

So, hats off to EgoPo, which is pulling off the theatrical coup of the Philly theater

season: mounting Guare's *Lydie Breeze* trilogy, a fascinating historical panorama of an American utopian society. Even better, Guare will be working with the company as they remount and revise these works, which he began 35 years ago and has never seen staged all together. Distinguished composer Cynthia Hopkins is also involved.

Director Lane Savadove



Guare

says he was drawn to *Lydie Breeze* because the three-part production is different in scale from anything he'd read in American theater. "[The plays are] also different from Guare's other works. They're epic, but also personal. There's a real lyricism to them. We see an evolution of American history on multiple levels."

And how did it come to be that Guare is involved? "I worked with him nearly 20 years ago at the Guthrie Theater [in Minneapolis], and at that time I read everything of his I could find. When I expressed an interest in doing the trilogy together, he said, 'If you can make it happen, they're yours.' We've been committed to it ever since. It just took 16 years to get the funding!"

Guare, responding by email, is obviously excited about the project, too. "I never thought I'd

see my three *Lydie Breeze* plays performed together in one fell swoop as always intended, but then I hadn't counted on the bravado, skill and daring of EgoPo and Lane Savadove. For me to reexamine these plays tracing the lives of a group of young dreamers from 1865 to 1895 in the light of today is a playwright's dream. Having seen Lane's gorgeous production of *The Seagull*, I know *Lydie Breeze* is in the best of hands."

Lydie Breeze will be presented in three parts over the span of five months, with the first taking place January 31 through February 11. You can see them piece by piece or take in the whole shebang during a string of marathons in April and May.

→ The *Lydie Breeze* trilogy is at Christ Church Neighborhood House (20 N American St; 267-273-1414, egopo.org) Jan 31–May 6. \$25–\$32.

DISCOVER!

Find more theater news at timeout.com/philadelphia/theater.

TO SEE

The shows to watch out for this season

NOVEMBER

My Fair Lady

This small company has done some fine, often very imaginative work in its home base, a wonderfully atmospheric former movie theater. They specialize in classical theater—so *My Fair Lady* is both in their wheelhouse and an intriguing stretch. They'll use the charming two-piano version that was a big Chicago hit not long ago, so expect the production to be full of interesting touches.

→ Quintessence Theatre, 7137 Germantown Ave (215-987-4450, quintessencetheatre.org). Through Dec 17: Wed–Fri at 7:30pm; Sat 2, 7:30pm; Sun at 3pm. \$18–\$40.

Philadelphia Chamber Music Society

PCMS is always a great bet—and an amazing bargain! This season pay special attention to their vocal recitalists, an out-of-the-box group including Barbara Hannigan, a sensational contemporary music specialist heard here in the music of Berg, Wolf, Zemlinsky and more (Nov 21). Bel canto diva of the day Angela Meade belts out arias and songs from Handel to Beethoven to Mahler (Jan 7).

→ Kimmel Center, 300 S Broad St (215-569-8080, pcmsconcerts.org). Various dates and times; \$25–\$30.

Eugene Onegin

Tchaikovsky's most-celebrated opera has had some stellar international productions in major houses in recent years. But it's rare and special to have the

chance to see and hear it—with an orchestra—in an intimate setting like the Prince Theater.

→ Prince Theater, 1412 Chestnut St (215-893-5252, curtis.edu). Nov 16–19: Thu–Sat at 7:30pm, Sun at 2:30pm; \$25–\$50.

Haydn's Seasons

It's always an event when the Philadelphia Orchestra's adored music director, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, takes to the podium. But the maestro has a special affinity for large-scale choral works, which he has consistently conducted with great success. This year it's *Haydn's Seasons*, a glorious spring-to-winter survey, about which Nézet-Séguin says: "Haydn put everything he had into that score."

→ Kimmel Center, 300 S Broad St (215-893-1999, philorch.org). Nov 16–18: Thu at 7:30pm, Fri at 2pm, Sat at 8pm; \$56–\$101.

A Christmas Carol

One reason to see this is, of course, the show—a family favorite that's been a perennial hit for Hedgerow for two decades. But the other big selling point is the venue: You'd be hard-pressed to find a more charming theater than this tiny jewel-box space, brimming with history. An enchanting little garden is also on the property. If all of that isn't a great way to jump-start your Christmas spirit, maybe nothing will.

→ Hedgerow Theatre, 64 Rose Valley Rd (610-565-4211, hedgerowtheatre.org). Nov 24–Dec 24 at various times; \$20–\$35.

This Is the Week That Is

Can we laugh at politics? What choice do we have? For 12 years, *TITWTI* has been a holiday crowd-pleaser. And

though details about the show are sketchy at press time (it capitalizes on up-to-the-minute topicality) you're sure to be in good hands with the funny folks of 1812 Production's ensemble—including company doyenne Jennifer Childs, whose character Patsy always brings down the house.

→ Plays & Players Theatre, 1714 Delancey Pl (215-592-9560, 1812productions.org). Nov 24-Dec 31 at various times; \$28-\$45.

DECEMBER

Company
Every year, 11th Hour does one fully staged production, but the company is equally celebrated for its vibrant concert performances, which regularly feature some of Philadelphia's up-and-coming singer-actors. This time it's Stephen Sondheim's *Company*, a breathtakingly sleek study of couples in New York at the dawn

of the 1970s—one of the defining theater works of its time.

→ The Drake, 302 S Hicks St (267-987-9865, 11thhourtheatrecompany.org). Dec 1-3: Fri, Sat at 8pm; Sun at 3pm. \$15-\$30.

George Balanchine's The Nutcracker
What's Christmas without Tchaikovsky's glorious ballet? Many choreographers and companies have tackled it, but the grandest and most celebrated remains George Balanchine's version, which he did for New York City Ballet. Our own Pennsylvania Ballet has many ties to Balanchine, and its version is terrific: Multiple dancers are featured during the run, but no matter which cast you get, you'll see a fine performance.

→ Academy of Music, 240 S Broad St (215-893-1999, paballet.org). Dec 8-31 at various times; \$20-\$109.

An Evening of Russian Romances
A concert program of Russian romances is recommendation

enough—it's a marvelous repertoire, likely to include gorgeous songs by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff and others. But as loyal followers of the Academy of Vocal Arts know, this conservatory has an exceptional track record of producing some major opera stars—its alums include Joyce DiDonato, Stephen Costello and Angela Meade, so chances are good that you'll catch a rising star.

→ Academy of Vocal Arts, 1920 Spruce St (215-735-1685, avaoopera.org). Dec 12, 14 at 7:30pm; \$10-\$25.

Bad Dates
Theresa Rebeck has a knack for combining contemporary issues, a sassy pop sensibility and a touch of mordent social satire. She won many fans for life as the creator of NBC's *Smash*, but more than that, she's an accomplished and prolific playwright. Surely just the title of this single-character work will resonate with many women. Also in the plus column? The beleaguered but buoyant heroine is played here by the very funny Karen Peakes.

→ Act II Playhouse, 56 E Butler Ave (215-654-0200, act2.org). Dec 12-31 at various times; \$27-\$38.

Rodewald and Annie Dorsen. The piece was an immediate cult hit, but probably deserved a longer run on Broadway. Its edgy sensibility, abstract construction and international feel should ideally suit the Wilma, where it receives its first major revival, helmed by director Tea Alagić.

→ The Wilma Theater, 265 S Broad St (215-546-7824, wilmatheater.org). Jan 10-Feb 18 at various times; \$10-\$30.

Copenhagen
"Why did he come to Copenhagen?" This seemingly innocent question launches Michael Frayn's cerebral and nail-bitingly tense three-character historical drama. The stakes could hardly be higher, as atomic physicists Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg meet to potentially determine the future of the world. Lantern's intimate setting is ideal for this conversation-driven piece, and the theater has a fine company on hand: Charles McMahon, Sally Mercer and Paul L. Nolan, under Kittson O'Neill's direction.

→ Lantern Theater, 923 Ludlow St (215-829-0395, lanterntheater.org). Jan 11-Feb 11 at various times; \$15-\$39.

A Doll's House
In theater history terms, the shutting door at the end of *A Doll's House* was the sound heard around the world in 1879. Henrik Ibsen's classic play about a marriage tested by a sudden crisis still feels relevant, even radical. (Indeed, earlier this year, playwright Lucas Hnath had a big hit with his "sequel" on Broadway.) Arden's production features a promising cast, including Akeem Davis, Joilet Harris and Scott Greer.

→ Arden Theatre, 40 N 2nd St (215-922-1122, ardentheatre.org). Jan 11-Feb 25 at various times; \$15-\$52.

L.A. Dance Project
The University of Pennsylvania's performing arts center has new management and an invigorated mission. Prominent this season is a visit from the L.A. Dance Project, a five-year-old collective company already making major waves in the dance world. The



JANUARY

Morning's at Seven
Paul Osborn's lovely slice-of-American-family-life play is a time-tested audience favorite. It takes two things to make it work—a true ensemble and four wonderful, mature actors for the leading roles. It should have both at People's Light. The company is a real acting collective, and Carla Belver, Alda Cortese, Janis Dardaris and Marcia Saunders are a sensational team of principals.

→ People's Light, 39 Conestoga Rd (610-644-3500, peopleslight.org). Jan 10-Feb 4 at various times. \$34-54.

Passing Strange
A decade ago, singer-songwriter Stew created this odd work: a loose autobiography told through music in collaboration with Heidi



Beautiful Decay

BalletX is a Philadelphia phenomenon, having put on 60 world premieres by major choreographers that blend classical ballet with contemporary dance. Their fall series brings back this fave, a hypnotic meditation on aging by choreographer Nicolo Fonte.

→ The Wilma Theater, 265 S Broad St (215-546-7824, balletx.org). Nov 29–Dec 10: Wed–Fri at 8pm; Sat 2, 8pm; Sun at 2pm. \$25–\$50.

program at Annenberg includes works by two of the hottest choreographers around: Justin Peck (*Murder Ballades*) and LADP cofounder Benjamin Millepied (*Sarabande*).

→ Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 3680 Walnut St (215-898-3900, annenbergcenter.org). Jan 12, 13 Fri at 8pm, Sat at 2pm; \$30–\$57.

The Humans

Stephen Karam's gorgeous play—a family drama with supernatural overtones—won the 2016 Tony and was a Pulitzer finalist as well as a major New York hit. This show demands virtuoso stagecraft (there's action

occurring simultaneously on two floors of an apartment) and great acting. Walnut Street has the necessary scenic resources and an extraordinary cast with some of Philly's best actors, including Mary Martello and Greg Wood.

→ Walnut Street Theatre, 825 Walnut St (215-574-3550, walnutstreettheatre.org). Jan 16–Mar 4 at various times; \$20–\$87.

FEBRUARY

The Revolutionists

Within the past couple of years, Theatre Horizon has put itself

high on the list of significant local companies. One hallmark is the company's focus on social and political activism; another is its commitment to support local writers, directors and actors. *The Revolutionists*, a new piece that focuses on four women in the French Revolution—with resonance for our own troubled times—should be right up Theatre Horizon's alley.

→ Theatre Horizon, 401 DeKalb St (610-283-2230, theatrehorizon.org). Feb 1–25 at various times; \$25–\$35.

Time Remembered

The small, humorously named

and often delightful Idiopathic Ridiculopathy Consortium has made a specialty of producing important works that few others will touch. Artistic director Tina Brock has a particular knack with 20th-century French plays of the symbolist/absurdist/oddball variety. Jean Anouilh's *Time Remembered*—performed 60 years ago on Broadway—is a perfumy, evocative adult fairy tale with a poignant message. It should be a great fit for this imaginative group.

→ Walnut Street Theatre Studio 5, 825 Walnut St (idiopathicridiculopathyconsortium.org). Feb 6–Mar 4 at various times; \$15.



Process and Practice: 40 Years of Experimentation

December 15, 2017–March 25, 2018

To celebrate four decades of contemporary art and innovation, The Fabric Workshop and Museum presents the first major survey of its collection of Artist Boxes, paired with finished works from the permanent collection.



The Fabric Workshop and Museum
1214 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107

www.fabricworkshopandmuseum.org f t i @fabricworkshop

Image credit: Do-Ho Suh, Artist Box contents: prototypes and fabric samples for *Paratrooper II* installation, 2005. Monofilament, resin, nylon, poly organza, stainless steel armature. Photo by Carlos Avendaño, 2017.