

INSIDE THE



A Trend Towards More Theatre

By Caitlin McCabe

It is said that actors are always learning and striving to experience new things. Luckily, for actors in the Lehigh Valley, there is a growing number of performance and educational opportunities trending in the region. New and existing performing arts establishments in the area, such as After Words Actors Studio, Treasure House Theatre, and Touchstone Theatre, have begun to offer professional training for older teens and adults so that they can continue to hone their craft.

Recently, Touchstone Theatre announced a partnership with Moravian College to offer a Masters in Fine Arts (MFA) in Theatre, the first graduate theatre program to exist in the Lehigh Valley. It has been in development for the past four years and will be welcoming its first cohort of students this August.

Students enrolled in this full time, two-year program will be taught by a variety of professional and working theatre artists and will gain experience in performance, arts administration, production design, and teaching. The program is largely based in creating and producing original works, and according to Moravian Theatre Undergrad Director, Christopher Shorr, is focused in “giving emerging artists the tools they need to create a life as a performing artist.”



Throughout their first year, students will produce an original work, and during the following summer take it on the road to a festival abroad in Europe. This experience will allow them to learn the logistical aspects of taking a show on tour and prepare them for the world ahead.



In Allentown, Daniel Amenda is striving to bring professional theatre to the community. He started Treasure House Theatre (THT) around ten years ago in New York City, and within the last couple of years has expanded it to Allentown. Amenda grew up in a community similar to Allentown, and explains how as a child, the presence of professional theatre had a “profound effect” on him, and through THT, he hopes to have that same effect on others. THT offers 12-week sessions to students 16 and up where Amenda trains them in all forms of theatre utilizing the Meisner Method. Ultimately, the goal for these classes is for the students to all develop a common foundation and language of theatre that allows them to work easily with each other.



For actors looking for a creative and collaborative space in the Lehigh Valley, AfterWords Actors Studio (AWAS) offers both actor training for film, TV and stage, as well as access to rehearsal space. AWAS was founded by Kathy Patterson in October of 2017 and offers space for actors to come for self-tape auditions, coaching, classes, workshops, a rehearsal/audition space, and anything else they may need. Patterson says of the studio,



“AWAS truly is a space for actors; it really makes my heart happy when I see artists in my studio, working on their craft.” AWAS offers many different classes, and creates classes based on interest. Currently, the studio offers a class called ‘Acting, Drama, and Performance’ for actors 18 and up, and will soon be offering an introductory course to Film and Television for teens. All classes are taught by local instructors and instructors from New York City and Philadelphia.

(Theatre...continued from page 1)

Patterson often opens up her studio to Between the Lines Studio Theatre for them to hold rehearsals for their own productions. Between the Lines was founded by Eric Hersh and Rachel Williams two years ago with the intention to make theatre accessible and affordable to audience members and actors alike. In addition to running rehearsals for their shows, both Hersh and Williams occasionally teach classes at AWAS and have formed a sort of symbiotic relationship with the studio. At the studio, Between the Lines hosts staged readings of plays once or twice a month that are open to everyone and feature all kinds of works, even plays by local playwrights.



For any actor in the Lehigh Valley, whether they be seasoned or a beginner, there are places and opportunities popping up for them to express themselves, refine their skills, and continue to learn and grow. This trend began in the last few years and can prove to be beneficial to both the theatre community and the entire region. According to Hersh, “Art and arts education is important, it makes us better citizens of the world.”

Young at Art 2019



As summer nears, check out the availability of arts camps and classes in the *Arts Calendar*
Photograph by: Joe Bedics

Ensuring the Arts

The Zoellner Arts Center, Bethlehem Area School District and the City of Bethlehem have embarked on a new district- and community-wide initiative, *Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child* (AGC), creating a long-range arts education plan for the 14,000 students in grades K-8. AGC is a program of The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts that chose Bethlehem, Pennsylvania as the 24th site, and the first in the state. There has never been a long range arts education study in the Lehigh Valley. This undertaking offers the promise for a future Lehigh Valley case study on the impact of arts in education.

On Tuesday, May 7, 2019, at 9:00am, AGC Bethlehem will announce a strategic plan for arts in the schools at Nitschmann Middle School, 1002 West Union Blvd, in Bethlehem. This program has brought together 50 community leaders from over 25 organizations in the region to help shape the vision and the plan. According to Lehigh University’s Andrew Cassano, AGC’s Coordinator & Managing Partner, “the Program is designing a strategic plan to provide equitable access to arts resources in the classroom and outside of the classroom.” There is talk of a possible future expansion into the school districts in Allentown and Easton.

Learn for Free, Then Apply

The Arts Council will be hosting three identical workshops in May about applying for a PPA Project Stream grant of up to \$2,500. Attend one of these free grant writing workshops before you apply for this community impacting arts grant:

- Tuesday, May 7th from 4-5:30 pm at Anita Shapolsky Art Foundation in Jim Thorpe
- Thursday, May 9th from 4-5:30 pm at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Nazareth
- Wednesday, May 15th from 4-5:30 pm at Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center in Allentown

Please RSVP your intention to attend by contacting Zach Kleemeyer at ppa@lvartscouncil.org or 610-437-5915.

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Our Mission:
To promote the value of the arts, foster collaboration in the community, and encourage arts engagement for all people in the Lehigh Valley.

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THE INDSIDE TRACK

The Bach Choir of Bethlehem will be part of the 2020 BachFest “We Are Family,” held in Leipzig, Germany in June 2020. The Choir will also be performing in Dresden, Herrnhut and Prague.

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“Creativity is contagious, pass it on.”

~Albert Einstein

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“ I pronounce the annunciation:
I AM AN ARTIST of fibrous hues,
Winding yarn, clutching hook or bony
needles.
Frogging, ripping, tripping
Creating,
Never finishing?
Born to a daughter of a Ruski storyteller,
an immigrant spinner of colorful,

Yet bitter tales. Fables of my bubbie’s life: third
generation:
From shtetl to Brooklyn, on cryptonite I flew to
our beauteous grey valley.
Weaving hymnals, strands of thanks to Arts
Council, and for inspirational crows who caw
artful admiration. ”

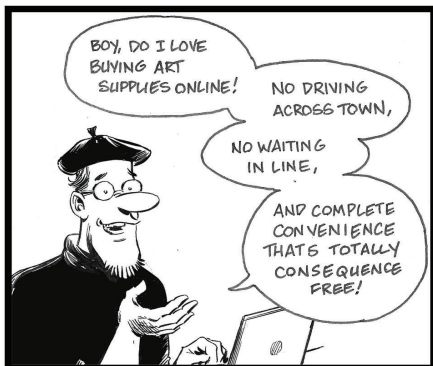
Deborah Hamsho, Whitehall, PA

ONE LAST THOUGHT

For this issue we introduced some developments in arts education in the region, from the emergence of new professional actor training programs to an update on the *Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child Program* in the Bethlehem School District.

In the twenty years that I have been with the Arts Council, I have witnessed a growing number of educational programs and the subsequent rise of increased personal engagement in the arts across multiple disciplines. Regardless of age or avocation, the rewards derived from arts education include improved social interaction and mental agility. Participating in the arts also connect us across generational lines. The arts keep us young.

Randall Forte



WORD SEARCH

How many words can you find?

FESTIVAL
