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University Theatre travels the globe in 2018-19 season

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—The University Theatre at Western Michigan University announced its 2018-19 season featuring cowboys, drag queens, the best of Broadway, stage adaptations of movie favorites and more. This season’s performances star alumni from Kalamazoo to New York City, partnering with Education for the Arts and Millennium Restaurant Group.

Season passes are on sale now and offer significant savings. Single tickets for fall semester shows will go on sale Tuesday, Sept. 4. Tickets can be purchased online or by calling (269) 387-6222. Ticket prices vary. WMU faculty, staff and students enjoy discounts to WMU Theatre productions.

For more information, visit WMU Theatre. Most shows are presented in the Gilmore Theatre Complex on WMU's campus. "Tony N’ Tina's Wedding" will be held at Cityscape Events in downtown Kalamazoo.

2018-19 SEASON

"Almost, Maine," Sept. 21 through Oct. 7

In this heart-warming play by John Cariani, nine cleverly connected love stories are told by the residents of Almost—a whimsical, imaginary town situated somewhere under the Northern lights of Maine. Surprising, hilarious and charming, "Almost, Maine" is an intimate look at love, mending hearts and small-town America.

"Shakespeare in Love," Oct. 5-14

This production is based on the screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard and adapted for the stage by Lee Hall. A young William Shakespeare has writer's block, a deadline and no way out. That is until he lays eyes on the beautiful, but otherwise engaged, Viola. Inspired by the smash-hit film of the same name, "Shakespeare in Love" is a hilarious romp filled with mistaken identity and star-crossed lovers.

"Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown," Oct. 26 through Nov. 4

Based on the book by Jeffrey Lane with music and lyrics by David Yazbek, "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" is a zany new musical adapted from Pedro Almodóvar’s
beloved film by the same name. It's a story about women and the men who pursue them…finding them, losing them, needing them and rejecting them. Writers Lane and Yazbek, the team behind "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels," have taken Almodóvar’s tale and infused it with their own wry, comic style and an irresistible Spanish beat.

"The Lady in Question," Nov. 9-18

Written by Charles Busch and featuring WMU alumnus Sutton Lee Seymour, "The Lady is Question" is a free-wheeling satire of 1940’s thrillers. It tells the suspenseful tale of Gertrude Garnet, the most glamorous concert pianist on the international stage. On tour in 1940 Bavaria, her colossal self-absorption is challenged when a handsome American professor engages her aid in rescuing his mother from a Nazi prison.

"Next Stop, Broadway!" Nov. 29 through Dec. 1

The WMU music theatre class of 2019 will share the stage with Broadway's Brenda Braxton for the annual cabaret event. Within one year of graduating from the High School for the Performing Arts, Braxton was cast in the hit Broadway show "Guys and Dolls." Her performance in Broadway’s musical revue "Smokey Joe's Cafe" earned her a Tony Award nomination, the NAACP Theater Award, the city of Chicago's Jefferson Award and a Grammy Award for best cast album. Other Broadway credits include "Jelly's Last Jam" with Gregory Hines and Savion Glover, "Cats, Legs, Diamond," and the original production of "Dreamgirls" with Jennifer Holiday.

"The Wolves," Jan. 25 through Feb. 10

Atomic power drives this extraordinary new play by Sarah DaLappe about a girls indoor soccer team blasting its way through life. In this dizzying, tightly wound ensemble drama, a pack of adolescent warriors brave the challenges that have nothing to do with sports and everything to do with survival.

"The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," Feb. 8-17

Journey to the Wild West in this classic story of good versus evil, law versus the gun, one man versus Liberty Valance. Written by Jethro Compton and based on the short story by Dorothy M. Johnson, this gritty re-telling of the famous western film tells a tale of love, hope, politics and revenge set against a backdrop of a lawless society.

"The Dancing Granny," March 8-17

Ananse, the clever spider from West African folklore, tries to trick Granny Anika into dancing away from her beautiful garden so that he can steal her vegetables. This production, by Jiréh Breon Holder and based on the book by Ashley Bryan, will come alive with traditional African drumming and dance, creating infectious fun for the whole family.
"Tony N' Tina's Wedding," March 22 through April 2

Back by popular demand, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Vitale cordially invite you to Tony and Tina’s Wedding. With as many laughs as there are Italian stereotypes, this big, fat Italian wedding has the audience feeling like a member of the family.

"Guys and Dolls," April 5-14

Considered by many to be a perfect musical comedy, "Guys and Dolls" is a spectacularly fun song-and-dance show that's loaded with toe-tapping entertainment. The story follows big-time New York City gamblers Sky Masterson and Nathan Detroit, who can't resist making or taking a bet on anything. When a pretty missionary sets up shop in the neighborhood, Nathan stakes a grand that Sky can't get her to go on a date with him. But all bets are off when Sky falls madly in love in this timeless, romantic tale.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit WMU News online.

Meet Julio Foliaco

WMU alumni, Julio Foliaco, returned to campus in 2018 to reminisce on his college experience.

"If anyone asks me, 'what do you feel proud about?’ I feel proud to graduate from Western Michigan University,” said Julio Foliaco, a Western Michigan University Alumni, and Colombian native.

Foliaco graduated from Western Michigan University in 1988 with a master’s degree in development administration and is currently a faculty member at one of the top ten universities in Latin America, the National University of Colombia.

Foliaco, returned to campus in 2018 to reminisce on his college experience. Foliaco treasures his experience at WMU and uses his degree to set himself apart as a higher education
professional. Few Colombian professors have graduate degrees from the United States, said Foliaco, making his degree and experience from WMU unique.

Foliaco attended WMU as a graduate student from 1986 to 1988.

“My business card just says WMU. It’s the main topic,” said Foliaco.

Foliaco experienced U.S. American education as an educator as well as an international student, teaching human resources and administrative theory at WMU while taking classes. Foliaco was no stranger to teaching, serving as a professor at the National University of Colombia for 25 years before coming to WMU.

Foliaco’s journey at Western Michigan University started when he received a scholarship from the University of Colombia to obtain his second master's degree in the United States. Foliaco received his Master’s of Business Administration, his first master's degree, in 1980 from EAFIT University in Colombia.

Arriving on campus in 1986, Foliaco began his program in the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students (CELCIS), studying English vocabulary and grammar and meeting people from around the world.

“CELCIS was a good experience. I have to talk about Robert Dlouhy [my teacher] who was my reference point. You remember people, not buildings. You remember how you are treated and the relationships that you had.”
Being older than the majority of the students made it difficult for Foliaco to build connections with his fellow classmates. It was Foliaco's background as a professional soccer player in Colombia that allowed him to meet students he shared interests with. His skill in the sport, explained Foliaco, meant that everyone wanted him on their team, giving him a sense of belonging at WMU.

"Soccer saved my life! It was the way to make friends. " Foliaco said

Besides soccer, Foliaco got involved around campus and in the community by being a student employee at WMU as well as taking jobs off campus. Foliaco spent a lot of his time at WMU in the library and student center, only recently renamed the John T. Bernhard Center after the late WMU President.

Due to his background as an educator, Foliaco felt the most at home in Kalamazoo while teaching.

"The happiest day I had here was when my American classmates and I were waiting for the professor to come to class. A group of students came to me and asked me to explain the homework to them. I felt like a human being again, I was on the correct track, it made me very happy," Foliaco said.

Since graduating from Western Michigan University, Foliaco has been successful in his field, publishing over 20 articles, essays and reviews and working as an educator. During his time at Francisco de Paula Santander University, he served as director of virtual programs in local development, the dean of business sciences and in senior administrative and academic positions. In 2002, Foliaco was a visiting professor and conference attendee at the University of Nova Scotia. Foliaco received a Specialist degree in Management Systems at the Francisco de Paula Santander University in 2005. Also, from 2012 to 2017 Foliaco was a consultant for the Colombian Ministry of Education.