



Denny Paschali, Brandy Norwood and Michael Scirrotto in "Chicago"

Photos by Jeremy Daniel

CURTAIN CALL

BY JYOTI "JO" PESWANI

Get The Scoop On This Season's Must-See Broadway Shows



STEP AWAY FROM THE SMARTPHONES, TABLETS AND PHABLETS. NIX THE NETFLIX BINGING AND BID YOUTUBE ADIEU.

Because it's time for some good old-fashioned entertainment – Broadway style. What better way to unplug than by soaking in the music, talent and spontaneity of the onstage experience? There's a reason this rhapsodic genre of theater has been around since the 1800s. So whether you're making a dash for New York City or sticking it out in South Florida, we've got a list of must-sees for you.

If you haven't been to Broadway in a New York minute, you're due for a catch-up visit. The genre has become more experimental in recent years and even cross-pollinates with Hollywood, with many plays inspiring big-ticket Hollywood productions and vice versa. Think "Spider-Man: Turn Off The Dark," "Chicago" and the like.

"Broadway just gets better and better," says movie producer and screenwriter David Jay Lasky. "The shows are all terrific lately. I love that big stars like Bradley Cooper are gracing the Broadway stage."

Although there was a time when the introduction of technical sound and lighting effects threatened the very existence of Broadway, some believe the experience is all the better for it. Either way, Broadway remains dear to the hearts of its many connoisseurs.

"People are hungry for live experiences," says Julie James, program director and host of SiriusXM's "On Broadway" channel. "Everything is on the line in that moment. There is nothing artificial about it."

South Florida has its own shows lined up for the 2015-2016 season, including the very popular "Kinky Boots," "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical" and "The Book of Mormon," among others.

James adds that touring Broadway productions are great for audiences across the country to catch up on some of the theater action in the Big Apple. And the timing couldn't be any riper: The 69th Annual Tony Awards are just around the corner, airing live on CBS June 7.

"The Tonys are all about America's chance to see what's going on on Broadway," James says. "Broadway connects to national consciousness on this one big night."

So mark your calendars and reserve your tickets pronto, because this Broadway season is going to be one for the ages.

CLASSICS

CHICAGO

Get ready for "All that Jazz" as this classic tale of corruption in the criminal justice system and the "celebrity criminal" phenomenon unfolds on stage before your eyes. You really can't go wrong with "Chicago," the second-longest-running musical on Broadway. The best part of the production is its paradox – minimalist costumes and flamboyant performances – a contrast that keeps the music and the story fresh and relevant.



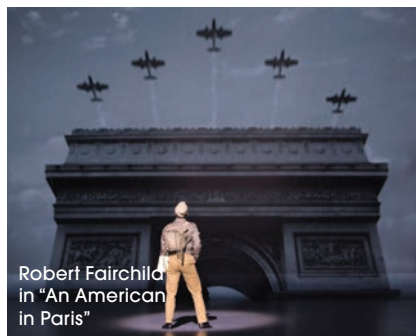
Set in The Roaring Twenties, this is the story of two merry murderesses, Velma and Roxie, who paint quite the media portrayal of themselves with the help of the prison matron and their



Amra-Faye Wright with cast in "Chicago"



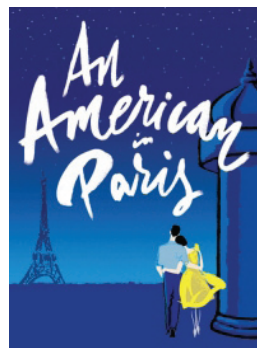
Robert Fairchild, Brandon Uranowitz and Max von Essen with cast in "An American in Paris"



Robert Fairchild in "An American in Paris"



The company in "An American in Paris"



AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

This love story features a book by two-time Tony nominee and Pulitzer Prize finalist Craig Lucas. Set in the City

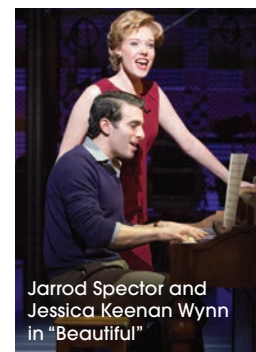
lawyer. "Chicago" has it all, with themes like murder, adultery and fame, working up to an exciting finish. "Chicago" is still playing in New York and came to Fort Lauderdale in 2013.

of Light, "An American in Paris" is as romantic as it gets, building up to a crescendo with new beginnings that both protagonists so eagerly seek. Directed and choreographed by Tony nominee Christopher Wheeldon and with music by George and Ira Gershwin, this old-world Broadway delight is sure to charm. It opened in New York in April to rave reviews. "We are excited that we are going to see 'An American in Paris' in June..." says New York and Connecticut resident Ella T. Newman, image consultant at Ella In Style and stylist at Doncaster.com. "The tickets are harder and harder to get and cost more and more with each opening. ... Broadway theater is not for those who don't have the budget for it anymore."

"An American in Paris" photos by Matthew Murphy



The original cast of "Beautiful - The Carole King Musical"



Jarrod Spector and Jessica Keenan Wynn in "Beautiful"



"Beautiful" cast



Chilina Kennedy in "Beautiful"



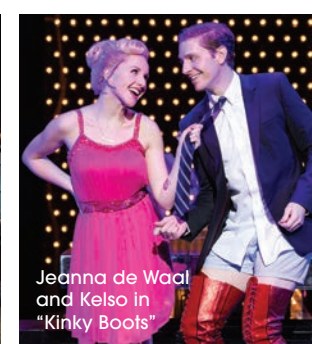
The original cast of "Kinky Boots"



Billy Porter and Daniel Stewart Sherman in "Kinky Boots"



Andy Kelso and Porter in "Kinky Boots"



Jeanna de Waal and Kelso in "Kinky Boots"

KINKY BOOTS

If you're looking for a feel-good, dreams-do-come-true kind of deal, the shoe definitely fits with "Kinky Boots." It's based on a true story and backed by a Tony Award-winning crew – including Harvey Fierstein, Jerry Mitchell and Cyndi Lauper.

The story is about Charlie Price, who wants to save his family business, a shoe factory that needs a lot of nurturing. His collaboration with Lola, a drag queen and cabaret star, changes the destiny of the business.

An inspirational tale and foot-tapping success story, "Kinky Boots" has been playing in New York since 2013 and will play in Fort Lauderdale in March.

Margaret Luce, Broadway producer of the upcoming comedy "Nerds," says of "Kinky Boots," "[It's a] colorful story with an emphasis on fashion and deals with the issue of homosexuality and



transgender topics in an open manner.

"It portrays the hardships and pains that often come along with making a lifestyle choice to live transgender."

INSPIRATIONAL MEMOIRS

ON YOUR FEET! THE STORY OF EMILIO & GLORIA ESTEFAN

You might have noticed the hashtag #ReachGloria floating around in your social media feeds lately. That was part of the casting call for Gloria and Emilio Estefan's biographical musical; the Miami open casting audition was held in September.

Previews will begin showing in New York in October. The play is a musical chronicle of the Estefans' journey



of love and success. It's being directed by two-time Tony Award winner Jerry Mitchell (of "Kinky Boots") and choreographed by four-time Drama Desk nominee Sergio Trujillo, with an original book by Academy Award winner Alexander Dinelaris (of "Birdman").

With seven Grammys and more than 100 million records sold – and counting – Gloria Estefan is truly the crossover artist of our time.

"It is a great privilege to be able to bring our story to Broadway. I hope that each night at 'On Your Feet,' we make that audience laugh, we make them cry and we make them dance," she says of the production.

Adds Emilio: "This is a real story about two immigrants who came to the U.S. in pur-

suit of the American Dream – there are so many universal things about this story – at the center, there is a love story, a very real one. There's the 'against all odds' story, because we really fought hard for our musical ideas."

BEAUTIFUL — THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL

Carole King fans, this is your dream come true. This



musical drama tells the powerful story of King's transformation from a shy girl in Brooklyn to a chart-topping legend and solo sensation. The musical documents King's journey in the record business as a teen, her relationships and the challenges she endured.

With two Tony Awards, three Drama Desk Awards and one Grammy, "Beautiful" is a must-see.

Chilina Kennedy (Carole King), Scott J. Campbell, Jessica Keenan Wynn and Jarrod Spector are some of the talented cast members in this story of success and triumph. Officially playing in New York since January 2014, "Beautiful" is scheduled to play in South Florida in May for a limited time only.

Estefan photo by Bruce Glikas



Emilio Estefan, Gloria Estefan, Ana Villafane and Josh Segarra



Brad Oscar and Brian d'Arcy James in "Something Rotten!"



Brooks Ashmanskas and Kate Reinders in "Something Rotten!"



John Cariani and Reinders in "Something Rotten!"



Sierra Boggess and David Burke in "It Shoulda Been You"



Nick Soongler and Montego Glover in "It Shoulda Been You"



Chip Zien, Anne Nathan, Josh Grisetti, Tyne Daly and Adam Heller in "It Shoulda Been You"



Nathan, Edward Hibbert, Heller and Lisa Howard in "It Shoulda Been You"

Photos by Joan Marcus

MUSICAL COMEDY

SOMETHING ROTTEN!

Your jazz hands just might make an appearance during this new crowd-pleaser. "Something Rotten!" is set in the late 1500s and features the Bottom Brothers, who want to produce a hit play

but are stuck in the shadow of The Bard. Along comes a soothsayer who prophesizes that song, dance and acting combined will be the new hallmark of theater – and inspiration strikes! The brothers work toward producing the world's first musical. From then through opening night, amidst sharp comedy

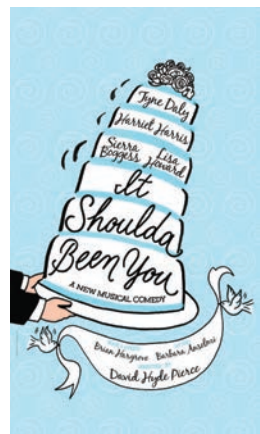
and satire, their journey becomes one of self-realization. "Something Rotten!" is nominated for 10 Tony Awards, including Best Musical. Directed by Casey Nicholaw (of "The Drowsy Chaperone" and "The Book of Mormon"), "Something Rotten!" opened in New York in April.

"My niece, a NYU Tisch [School of the Arts] student, had seen it and insisted my family see 'Something Rotten!' on a recent New York trip," says Boca Raton resident Kim Moed, a realtor and an ardent Broadway fan who has substantial experience in musical theater. "I have my favorites as far as

Broadway shows, but 'Something Rotten!' blew me away! Absolutely the most cleverly written, fun show I've seen yet!"

IT SHOULD A BEEN YOU

Every wedding planner imagines the next big day as hassle-free and smooth sailing – but reality is far from it. "It Shoulda Been You" centers on all the factors that make weddings nerve-wracking but oh-so-worth-it. Plot twists spring up in the form of unexpected guests, awkward brides and grooms, moody mothers and all the neces-



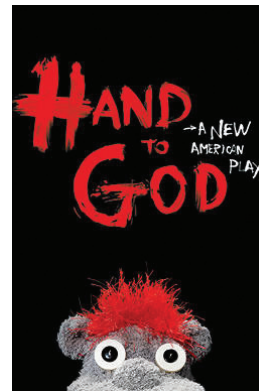
sary dramatic turns.

Directed by Emmy and Tony winner David Hyde Pierce – and starring Tyne Daly and Harriet Harris (both Tony-winning actresses) – "It Shoulda Been You" brings wedding drama to life with this uproarious comedy. It opened in New York in April.

RELIGIOUS COMEDY

HAND TO GOD

Nominated for five Tony Awards this year, "Hand to God" is set in the small town of Cypress, Texas, and stars a possessed hand puppet at a Christian ministry. (Yes, you read that right.) The duality of themes makes this dark comedy so hilarious: On one hand, there are Biblical teachings that congregants are expected to follow, and on the other hand, there's a renegade sock puppet mouthing out obscen-



ities and breaking the rules.

Irreverent and endearing, this is a product of the MCC Theater by Robert Askins, featuring cast members Steven Boyer, Geneva Carr, Marc Kudisch and Sarah Stiles. "Hand to God" opened in New York in April.

THE BOOK OF MORMON

Religion, sex, race and poverty are some of the themes of this popular parody. The story follows young missionaries Elder Price and Elder Cunningham to Uganda. These naïve and optimistic protagonists set out with zeal but begin to realize that their mission isn't all it's cracked up to be.



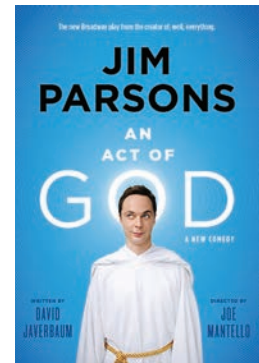
"The Book of Mormon" was written and composed by "South Park" creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone, as well as Robert Lopez. It's directed by Parker and Casey Nicholaw (also the choreographer). Running for four years, the show's greatest strength lies in successfully fusing traditional Broadway-style music with serious societal problems. "The Book of Mormon" will play in Fort Lauderdale next January and February.

Gary Ross, a New Yorker who travels to South Florida often, says that the show is "as good as advertised. ... It's worth spending the money to see 'Book of Mormon.'"

AN ACT OF GOD

Who doesn't love Sheldon from "The Big Bang Theory?" Watch actor Jim Parsons (multiple Emmy and Golden Globe winner) at his finest in yet another biblical comedy. In just 90 minutes, God and his angels tackle some of mankind's most puzzling questions about life – and the Almighty ain't holding back.

The show is directed by Joe Mantello of "Wicked" fame and is written by 13-time Emmy winner David

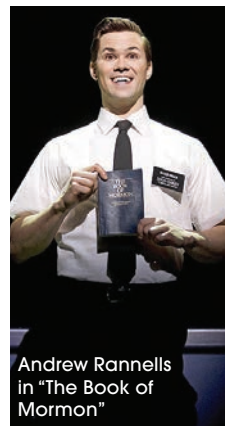


Javerbaum. "An Act of God" is based on Javerbaum's popular book "The Last Testament: A Memoir by God" – and his Twitter account, @TheTweetofGod.

The play has a very limited engagement, running now through August at Studio 54 in New York City only.



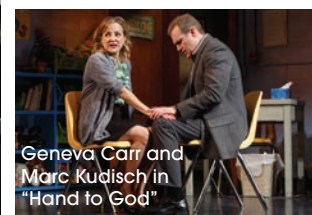
Steven Boyer in "Hand to God"



Andrew Rannells in "The Book of Mormon"



Jim Parsons in "An Act of God"



Geneva Carr and Marc Kudisch in "Hand to God"



Boyer and Sarah Stiles in "Hand to God"

MUSICAL DRAMA

THE VISIT

Legendary director John Doyle (of "Sweeney Todd" and "Company") brings "The Visit" to Broadway with none other than Chita Rivera as the star. She plays a wealthy

woman – rather, the richest woman in the world – who returns to her poor hometown in Europe and is greeted by the town folk with both hope and greed. The town could surely use her help, but she commands a price, and a

heavy one at that – the life of her teenage lover, whose betrayal led to her exile.

Glamorous, unyielding and powerful, "The Visit" features the legendary Rivera in all her glory. It opened in New York in April. ○



Chita Rivera with cast in "The Visit"