



Jackie Demaline: What's Hot at Local Theatres in October

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There's theater for almost every night of the week on Greater Cincinnati's October stage calendar.

Here's my 'don't miss' list, including Northern Kentucky University's frothy musical romance *The Wedding Singer*.

I'll be back at Ensemble Theatre this month for my Number One Pick: *An Iliad*, both for rave reviews from New York for this area premiere, and for its star, the wonderful Bruce Cromer. He is theatrical magic in a one-man show about an epic adventure.

For Halloween, another area premiere, *The Birds* at Cincinnati Shakespeare. We know the plot best from Alfred Hitchcock's film version – hundreds of nasty, pecking, bloodthirsty gulls and crows and such attack a seaside village. Terrific Sherman Fracher is one of the folks being terrorized in the play by Conor McPherson, contemporary stage master of things-that-go-bump-in-the-night.

There are a couple of deliciously off-the-wall titles this month – John Waters? In a one-man show? – and it may sound heretical, but London theater is all over area screens these days. The superb Helen McCrory in *Medea* is a don't-miss for anyone who loves great actors in great plays. It's way up north (Springdale) -- but if you can't afford a trip to London – it's a so-small price to pay (\$18.)

The plays are listed in chronological order. There's also a list of what's playing in Northern Kentucky.

Moby Dick, Oct. 8-Nov. 8, Know Theatre, 1120 Jackson St., Over-the-Rhine. Tickets \$20. 513-300-5669 and [here](#)

Traditional sea-faring songs sung by an eight-man cast weave together a tight script about the ill-fated whaling crew of the *Pequod* on their final, fateful voyage, led by Captain Ahab. If you read your Melville in school, you know Ahab is mad and obsessed with hunting down mythical white whale Moby Dick, who took his leg as a souvenir the last time they met.

It's co-directed by Know artistic director Andrew Hungerford and Michael Burnham, a legend in Cincy alternative theater for decades.

This Filthy World, 8 p.m. Oct. 11, FotoFocus Biennial 2014, Memorial Hall, 1225 Elm St., Over-the-Rhine. [Tickets here](#) (see details below) and 413-400-4027.

Filmmaker John Waters (cult icon since *Pink Flamingoes* and *Hairspray*) performs an updated version of his one-man show. He'll talk about his life before *Divine*, fondest and least-fond career memories, pop culture and more. Reserved seats available with \$125-\$150 Focus passport ticket. General admission seats available with \$25 Flash and \$50 Zoom passport tickets. Doors open at 6:30.



John Waters

An Iliad, Oct 15-Nov. 2, Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati, 1127 Vine St., Over the Rhine.

Tickets: \$18-\$44; 513-421-3555 and [here](#).

Mark this: DON'T MISS. The region's best actor, Bruce Cromer, stars in a solo performance, a modern-day retelling of Homer's classic of the Trojan War.

The New York Times had one of many rave reviews: "Spellbinding... 'An Iliad' relates an age-old story that resonates with tragic meaning today... As he talks about ruined civilizations and how blind rage can overwhelm people whether they are on a battlefield or merely cut off by a car on the highway, the poet asks viewers, 'Do you see?' Indeed we do."



Bruce Cromer

The Birds, Oct. 17-Nov. 8, Cincinnati Shakespeare, 719 Race St., Downtown. Tickets: \$14-\$35. 513-381-2273 and [here](#).

For Halloween, a play adapted from Daphne du Maurier (short story) and Alfred Hitchcock (film.) The title characters are heard and not seen but the residents of a seaside town are terrorized as masses of them attack at high tide. Playwright Conor McPherson told MPR news (that's 'M' for Minnesota) "This play, it sort of in a way tries to blend Genesis and the apocalypse all at once." Top Cincinnati actress Sherman Fracher is among the folks taking refuge in an abandoned cottage.



Safe House, Oct. 18-Nov. 15, Playhouse in the Park, Eden Park. Tickets: \$35-\$85; 513-421-3888 or [here](#).

Area audiences first became acquainted with premiere *Safe House* when Ensemble Theatre held a staged reading in collaboration with Taft Museum of Art a few years ago when playwright Keith Josef Adkins' was a Duncanson Artist-in-Residence. The drama, inspired by Adkins' own family history, is about two brothers who are free men of color in Kentucky in the 1840s – a dangerous time and place for free men of color. One is a cobbler who wants to have a business, the other is committed to the Underground Railroad.



Keith Josef Adkins (Tracy Collins)

The Wedding Singer, Oct. 23-Nov. 2, Corbett Theatre, Fine Arts Center, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights. Tickets: \$14, seniors \$11, students \$8. 859-572-5464 and boxoffice@nku.edu

It's 1985 and hair was big, greed was good, collars were up, and rock-star wannabe Robbie Hart is New Jersey's favorite wedding singer. Then his fiancée leaves him at the altar and shot through the heart, Robbie makes every wedding as disastrous as his own. Enter winsome waitress Julia, a winsome waitress to be married to a Wall Street shark.

Director Michael Hatton says, "It's a musical that speaks to the heart and touches upon what all humans seek... connection with another person. Underneath all of the neon colors, rock music, and 1980s camp, we get to see two people find each other despite all odds. This pair of star-crossed lovers find out what's truly important in life when their "true loves" turn out to be anything but their soul mates. A bit sappy, yes, but couldn't we all use a little sappy in a world which constantly reminds us of the negatives in life?"

"A recent study indicated that about fifty percent of all Americans are single. If we follow Robbie, Julia, and Holly's example and open ourselves up to new possibilities, maybe, just maybe we can change that statistic for the better."

University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music will also be producing a musical comedy based on a movie hit on the same dates:

Legally Blonde, Oct. 23-Nov. 2. Tickets: \$30. 513-556-4183 weekdays 12-4 p.m. and boxoff@uc.edu. They're both top programs – see both shows!

Baden-Baden 1927, Oct. 24-26. Cohen Studio Theatre, College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati, 513-556-4183. Opera Cabaret Lab. FREE.

You won't see anything like CCM's Studio series anywhere else in Cincinnati – with a price this right, shows sell out fast. CCM Opera presents a mini-recreation of the legendary Baden-Baden Festival of Contemporary Music performance of July 17, 1927 with two one-acts: Kurt Weill's *Mahagonny-Songspiel* and Paul Hindemith's *Hin und zuruck (There and Back)*. Piano accompaniment. *You must reserve tickets, which become available the week of each production – and you need to call when the box office (513-556-4183) as soon as it opens at 12 p.m. Monday. Limit two tickets.

TRY THE LONDON STAGE ON SCREEN

Medea, 7 p.m. Oct. 5. National Theatre Live, Cinema de Lux, 12064 Springdale Pike, Springdale, Oct. 5. Tickets \$19, \$15 seniors and students.

Look for area theater pros in the audience. A contemporary take on the timeless tragedy by one of the world's great theaters. Medea has accepted exile for love of Jason (of Argonauts fame.) Then he abandons her and plans to take his sons with him to a new life. Hell hath no fury.

Reviews: "Extraordinary: Helen McCrory ascends to greatness."; "Thrilling and merciless"; "Quakes with female rage and powerlessness." For everything you could possibly want to know, find videos (including a trailer) and [podcasts here](#).

From Here to Eternity, 7 p.m. Oct. 28 & 9. Newport on the Levee 20. Tickets \$18, \$15 seniors and students.

Tim Rice is part of the creative team for a musical epic I, based on the bestseller set in Hawaii in the months leading to Pearl Harbor. I'm not saying it's good, but if you're a fan...

[Check it out here](#).

The Taming of the Shrew, 7 p.m. Oct. 14, Esquire Theatre, Clifton; and "The Tempest," 7 p.m. Oct. 28, Kenwood Theatre. Tickets \$12. Both entries from Shakespeare's Globe on Screen. [Click Here](#)

Frankenstein, 7 p.m. Oct. 29 and Nov. 2, National Theatre Live, Springdale Cinema de Lux. Tickets \$19, seniors and students \$15.

OMG. If you didn't see it last year – don't miss it this year. If you did see it last year, you'll probably want to see it again. An extraordinary production stars everyone's favorite Sherlocks, Benedict Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller, who took turns in the London hit playing the Doctor and his Creature in an extraordinary journey across a No Man's Land. Cumberbatch is the Creature on Oct. 29; Miller is the Creature on Nov. 2.

NORTHERN KENTUCKY ON STAGE

That Darn Plot, through Oct. 6 (opened Sept. 28), The Village Players, 8 N. Fort Thomas Ave., Fort Thomas. Tickets \$10-\$28. [Click Here](#) and 859-392-0500.

A celebrated playwright must create a play in one night or lose everything. Half asleep and half drunk, he hastily places well-known theatrical personalities into a simple comedy about putting on a play. Then his estranged son appears as a character and the play takes on a life of its own...

Little Shop of Horrors, Oct. 9-25, Footlighters, 802 York St., Newport. Tickets \$20 (plus \$1 fee.) FootlightersTickets@gmail.com and 859-652-3849.

A musical favorite, Seymour, nebbish assistant at a skid row florist shop, becomes an overnight sensation when he nurtures a mysterious plant. Too bad it has a craving for human blood. And just grows and grows and grows until it has a hypnotic mind of its own. In no time, "Audrey II" is talking, singing and rocking its way to global domination.

The Faculty Lounge, Oct. 9-11. The Carnegie, 1028 Scott Blvd., Covington. Tickets \$15.

[Click Here](#)

Retired teacher Teri Foltz is self-producing her new play about five teachers who stand-in for every teacher across the U.S., saying what they never say in the classroom. Foltz says, "It's funny – until it's not." Want a closer look? [Here's her Kickstarter video.](#)

(She beat her goal, by the way.)

Varekai, Oct. 16-19, Cirque du Soleil, Bank of Kentucky Center, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights. Tickets: \$45.20-\$164.95. 800-745-3000 and www.ticketmaster.com.

If it's Cirque, it's spectacle. Circus acts featuring exotic creatures and costumes are framed by a loose plot that references the ancient Greek myth of Icarus. (Here he doesn't drown, he lands near a volcano.) According to the website, 'varekai' translates to 'wherever' "in the Romany language of the gypsies, the universal wanderers." Don't think about what gypsies have to do with Icarus, the stunning success of Cirque is all about the dazzle.

The Woman in Black, Oct. 17-Nov. 1, Falcon Theatre, Monmouth Theatre, 636 Monmouth St., Newport. Tickets 18, \$15 seniors and students. [Click Here](#) and 513-479-6783.

For Halloween, a classic ghost story. A lawyer hires an actor recreate the events of a dark and stormy night when the lawyer visited a village and saw a woman in black. She's said to haunt the neighborhood where her illegitimate child was accidentally killed. Anyone who sees her dies!

-Jackie Demaline, RCN Arts