

Arts Calendar

THEATER



"Pamela's First Musical" (Nov. 3-Nov. 27)

Pulitzer Prize winning author Wendy Wasserstein's new musical, "Pamela's First Musical," with music by Cy Coleman and lyrics by David Zippel. Goodspeed Opera House, The Norma Terris Theatre, 33 North Main St., Chester, CT. 860-873-8668 or visit www.goodspeed.org.

"Parade" (Nov. 6)

Musical about the frightening but true, lurid court trial and lynching of Jewish pencil factory owner Leo Frank, set in the deep south of the early 20th century. 2 p.m. matinee. Tufts Balch Arena Theater. Call 617-627-3493. Tufts University, 200 Boston Ave., Medford.

"The Value of Names"

(Nov. 12 - Dec. 11)

Jeffery Sweet's intimate play about friendship and family, the pain of betrayal, and the forces that turn people into reluctant villains — or heroes. Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. Sundays, Nov. 21 and Dec. 5 at 3 p.m. No performances Thanksgiving weekend. The Theatre Cooperative. 277 Broadway, Somerville 617-625-1300, www.theatrecoop.org



LECTURE

American Jewish Film Festivals Discussion of Jewish Identity Around the Globe (Nov. 7)

Moderated by Professor James Ross, Northeastern University, BJFF guest artists and Jewish Film Festival directors from around the world. Free and open to the public. 2:30-4:30 p.m., Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Ave, Boston. For more information about the festival please visit the website www.bjff.org or email info@bjff.org

MUSIC

Temple Israel's 150th Anniversary Gala Weekend (Nov. 6th and 7)

My People: A Musical Comedy Starring Hershey Felder. Saturday evening gala, Nov. 6, 8 p.m. Reserved seating: \$50-\$100; includes performance and dessert reception. Birthday bash, Sunday, Nov. 7, 1:30p.m. Open seating. Adults: \$18; Children (under 17) \$7 Open to public. Temple Israel, 477 Longwood Ave., Boston. For more information call 617-566-3960



Safam (Nov. 20)

Popular Jewish music group appearing at Temple Emunah. 9 Piper Rd., Lexington. \$24 for adults and \$18 for students. For more information email SafamEmunah@yahoo.com

SHOPPING

Shop Israel (Nov. 7)

Art, jewelry, kippot & tallitot, silk scarves and much, much more. \$5 donation per person. Children Free. 100 percent of sales go to vendor. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Congregation Mishkan Tefila, 300 Hammond Pond Parkway, Chestnut Hill. 617-332-7770.

BOOKS (Nov. 7-Dec. 10)

Boston Jewish Book Fair

The bookstore will feature children's books, new fiction, cookbooks and more. Lectures will include Jews in American Pop Culture and Jewish Women from Muslim Societies. For ticket information call 617-965-5226. Tickets cost \$8. Leventhal-Sidman JCC, 333 Nahant St., Newton.

Jewish Book Month 2004 (Nov.)

Featuring top Jewish authors. Presented by the JCCNS and Grosvenor Park Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. For more information, call Susan Steigman 781-631-8330 ext.114. JCCNS, 4 Community Rd., Marblehead.

Arts

Cuban-American-Jewish odyssey

A new play at a new theater provides great drama

BY JULES BECKER
ADVOCATE THEATER CRITIC

WHAT BETTER WAY to open a new theater than with a new play — and what a play!

Gifted actress Melinda Lopez conceived, wrote and refined "Sonia Flew," her touching exploration of the costs of childhood and citizenship, during a Huntington Playwriting Fellows residency.

"Sonia Flew"

Huntington Theatre Company,
Virginia Wimberly Theatre,
Stanford Calderwood Pavilion,
Boston Center for the Arts,
Through Nov. 28
Tickets: \$14-\$50; call 617-266-0800.

Now the company is staging her provocative drama with tremendous heart at its handsome new Virginia Wimberly Theatre.

Thanks in part to Huntington artistic director Nicholas Martin's inspired staging, a first-rate cast brings vivid expression to Lopez's well-structured musings.

"Sonia Flew" begins where the lead female character ends up — namely the Midwest. An immigrant Cuban teenager, she is married to a very caring Jewish man named Daniel.

Lopez' crisp expository writing



Carman Roman plays the lead role in "Sonia Flew."

suggests that Sonia has paid more attention to lox, bagels, dreydl, menorahs and Shabbos (the Jewish sabbath) than she does to Catholic symbols and images.

Even the family's Christmas tree is topped by a Jewish star.

Credit designer Adam Stockhausen's strikingly detailed middle-class set for the first act, with a contrasting Havana circa 1961 counterpart for the second act.

The recent drama "Kindertransport" chronicled the pre-Holocaust rescue of many Jewish children from the looming Holocaust but also examined the effect of their separation from their families.

"Sonia Flew" does the same for the Cold War-era heroine and the impact of her flight to Florida and finally to the Midwest.

There is talk of no forgiveness for her parents' sending her to America in the early 1960s 'Pedro Pan' flight of 14,000 children to Miami to escape Fidel Castro's Communism.

Yet there is also grownup Sonia's immediate opposition to her son Zach's readiness post-

Sept. 11 to volunteer for military service in Afghanistan.

Lopez skillfully establishes both the parallels and differences between the Cuban and American families.

If Zach's decision about military service seems an unusually hasty one, it never jeopardizes the play's heart and craftsmanship.

Carman Roman is commandingly vulnerable yet tenacious as the adult Sonia trying to balance her love for her family and her complex feelings about Mother Cuba and America, her adopted country.

"Carman Roman is commandingly vulnerable yet tenacious as the adult Sonia trying to balance her love for her family and her complex feelings about Mother Cuba and America, her adopted country."

Jeremiah Kissel brings pathos and fire to the role of Daniel, her sometimes understanding, sometimes frustrated Jewish husband.

Will Lebow is a standout as Sam, who identifies both with his heritage and Zach's viewpoint on American intervention. Amelia Alvarez is a true find as Zach's skeptical sister Jen.

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www.comedyconnectionboston.com

From BRAVO's "Celebrity Poker"!
THIS WEEKEND!
Host of MTV's "Carson Daly BASH" and Comedy Central's "Friars Club Roast"
JEFFREY ROSS

NEXT WEEKEND!
Plays "Jeff Greene" on HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm" and co-star in the movie "Daddy Day Care"
JEFF GARLIN




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