

Film Clips

# Sail the Titanic, laugh out loud and enjoy sleight-of-hand at Lamorinda Theatres

By Derek Zemrak



There are several special events coming to the Lamorinda theaters in the next few weeks beginning with “Titanic” at the **Orinda’s Thursday Free Movie Night, 7 p.m. July 13.** The story of the Titanic begins in the present, 2.5 miles under water where a fortune hunter (Bill Paxton) is looking for treasure amongst the ruins of the broken ship. From this point the film morphs into the past and the launching of the ill-fated ship and the love story of artist Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Rose DeWitt (Kate Winslet). Titanic won 11 Oscars in 1998.

**7 p.m. Saturday, July 15, at the Rheem Theatre,** Derek Zemrak will present a history of the Life of Marilyn Monroe. She was famous for playing the “dumb blonde” and became the one of the most popular sex symbols of all time. Come and learn more about her fascinating life

through Zemrak’s lecture, rare movie clips and live music from her movies performed by Patti Leidecker. Marilyn Wines from Cine Cuvée will be sold at this event. Admission is \$15

**2 p.m. Wednesday, July 19, at the Rheem Theatre – Moraga Movers Movie with Larry Swindell.** “Yankee Doodle Dandy” starring James Cagney, Joan Leslie, and Walter Huston, is the biographical musical about the life of renowned playwright, composer, actor, dancer and singer George M. Cohan. Admission is \$7.

**8 p.m. Thursday, July 20, is Comedy Night at the Orinda Theatre with comedian Johnny Steele.** He is a comedian, talk show host, writer, humorist, political satirist, actor and all-around loudmouth commentator. Admission is \$20.

**6 and 8 p.m., Saturday, July 22, is the return by popular demand of Illusionist Timothy James.** After sold-out shows on May 20 and June 3, James has agreed to return on July 22 for two additional shows – 6 p.m. for kids and 8 p.m. for the PG13 show. Get ready for a night of amazing sleight-of-hand, hilarious audience interaction and the grand finales. These shows are fun for all ages and for all generations! Pianist Patti Leidecker will accompany him on the baby grand piano. Admission: Kids’ Show, \$10 under 18; \$15 18 and over. Admission to the PG13 show is \$15.

# A realistic and raw version of ‘The Glass Menagerie’ at CalShakes

By Sophie Braccini



Raphael Jordan and Phoebe Fico.

It starts slowly, almost softly like a sweet song on an old record player. Tennessee Williams’ “The Glass Menagerie” is a play about memory, yes, but painful memories. The kind that tore you apart growing up and that can only be looked at with a nostalgic feeling of understanding and forgiveness many years later. Director Lisa Portes made the choice of realism by choosing to portray Laura as a young woman with a real handicap. Why highlight the physical difference of one actor? Because it creates a different vision of Williams’ work that affects the entire play. In Portes’ “Menagerie,” Laura is not a slightly limping young woman whose handicap is more in her head than in reality; it is a true challenge, and the traits, and the words of the characters around her become more real and raw. The mother’s unrelenting expectations for her daughter seem even more unrealistic, the impending treason of the son to escape is even more

unforgivable. This version of “The Glass Menagerie” is harsh and poignant, a modern take on a masterpiece definitely worth getting tickets.

The production is led by Portes’ vision, and it is executed with great deftness by a cast of four actors. Karen Aldridge shines as the mother, Amanda. Portes gave the role of the anxious and socially humbled former southern “belle” to an African-American actress, explaining that there were indeed black debutantes in the South at the turn of the 20th Century. But ethnicity is irrelevant here. Aldridge is a superb actress who portrays Amanda with energy and passion, charm and vulnerability. At times overbearing, she is very touching in her desperate attempt to create a family and a future as her children are drifting away.

Sean San José is Tom Aldridge, the son and narrator of the story. The actor is very strong and assured, physically moving furniture,

jumping on and out of stage, with untrammelled energy, displaying physically his impatience at leaving the suffocating nest.

In the middle of the battle between a mother wanting to control and a son wanting to escape, there is a fragile angel of purity, Laura, the daughter who escapes reality in the world of her glass menagerie. The character played by Phoebe Fico is heartbreaking and casting it a young woman who is indeed disabled shows Portes’ determination to anchor the text in reality. When her character struggles to sit on the floor, the actress does so indeed, and to this writer the most moving scene is certainly when she dances with Jim, her “gentleman caller.”

Raphael Jordan plays Jim, the former high school hero and classmate who comes to visit for a night. Jordan has the right vibe and jolliness to portray here the image of the American dream, the young man momentarily socially set back, but who deals with reality with determination and has a realistic and positive plan to make it. He also expresses with sensitivity his affection for Laura. For a few minutes, one might believe that something is possible between the two.

The staging, the costumes, the lights, and of course the marvelous natural setting of the Bruns Amphitheater add to the experience of the spectator.

“The Glass Menagerie” will play until July 30. For tickets go to [www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org).

Photo provided

## Lamorinda Weekly

is an independent publication, produced by and for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, CA  
26,600 printed copies, delivered to homes & businesses in Lamorinda.

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**diablo ballet**  
Larrea Jucas, Artistic Director

**ANNUAL DANCE ON FILM SERIES**

Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation with Diablo Ballet, The San Francisco Dance Film Festival and the Lamorinda Weekly present

Highlights from the 2016 Dance Film Festival including award-winning screen dance shorts and the documentary film “Kick Ball Change”, which offers a window into the creative and inspiring mind of Maxim Kozhevnikov, five-time professional world champion in ballroom dance.

**July 23, 4:00-6:00 pm**

Lafayette Library and Learning Center Community Hall

\$10 Admission and Refreshments.

For event and ticket information, visit:  
[www.lafayettelib.org](http://www.lafayettelib.org) or call (925) 283.6513 x 102  
Diablo Ballet: 925.943.1775 | [www.diabloballet.org](http://www.diabloballet.org)

## Service Clubs Announcements

**LAMORINDA Sunrise Rotary**  
Friends, Fun, Service Above Self

We meet Friday mornings at 7:00 am at The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. For more info, please email us at [lamorindasunrise@gmail.com](mailto:lamorindasunrise@gmail.com)

<b>July 14</b> Adjunct Professor Doug Paxton, Saint Mary’s College, on Values in Action, Leadership and Organizational Change	<b>July 21</b> Learn about the Families Without Borders projects in Sierra Leone from the first, highly successful graduate, Ibrahim Kalokah.
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Whoever would have thought the 2017 June/July AARP edition would feature “older buyers trying to simplify travel desires” by scaling back to “head-turning” Teardrop Trailers? We did!

**Lafayette Rotary Club**

**Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting.**  
Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

**July 13: Bob Shusta -More police stories**

**Tribute to the Troops**  
Honoring our Veterans and Saluting our Troops  
**Saturday July 15, 5 PM to Twilight**  
**Lafayette Reservoir**  
**FREE to the public and all military**

## Free concerts to rock Lamorinda this summer

**Lafayette**  
July 15, 5 pm to Twilight Tribute to the Troops  
Free concert, bring your picnic

**Moraga**  
Thursday evenings at the Commons are for relaxing with friends and enjoying the bands. Bring a blanket or lawn chairs to the grassy hillside in front of the band shell. The volunteers of MPF will cook dinner for you with the Snack Bar opening at 6 p.m.

July 13 Foreverland -Tribute to Michael Jackson  
July 20 Beatles Flashback - Tribute the Beatles  
July 27 Mixed Nuts - Jazz, soul, blues and rock  
August 3 House Rockers - Rock and soul  
August 10 Apple Z - Rock and roll  
August 17 Fundamentals - Red-hot rockin’ soul

The County Food Bank will have collection bins near parking lots each Thursday. Concerts start at 6:30 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m.

**Orinda**  
It’s time to sit back and unwind at the free summer concerts at the park series on Tuesday nights.

July 18 Lamorinda Idol  
Food Truck: Pia’s Pizza  
July 23, Opera in the Park, 5-7 p.m.  
July 25, Bruce Gunn & Big Rain — Soulful Rock Country  
Food Truck: El Ranchero (taco truck)  
August 1, JetBlacq — Jazz  
Food Truck: Rebel Dog Hotdogs  
August 8, West Grand Blvd — Motown  
Food Truck: An the Go (Asian Fusion)  
August 15, Big Band Jazz  
Food Truck: Kenny’s Heart & Soul (Soul Food)

The concerts run 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Also coming up in Orinda this summer:  
The Orinda Village Starlight Players have three plays at the Orinda Community Park this summer:  
Malcolm Cowler’s adaptation of L. Frank Baum’s “The Wizard of Oz” runs July 21 through Aug. 12  
Robert Merrill’s “Five-Door Farce,” Sept. 1 through Sept. 30