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AUGUST 2018 | 401OCEANSTATE.COM

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MAGAZINE

## THE GAMM THEATRE KICKS OFF A NEW SEASON IN NEW DIGS



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# Gamm Theatre Celebrates Upcoming Season— at a New Venue

BY NATALIE MILLER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER GOLDBERG



BELOW: PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S "AS YOU LIKE IT"

For many of us, the complexity of relationships is an all-too-familiar dance, especially in today's society. It's also the underlying theme that connects many of the productions scheduled to be performed during the upcoming season at The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Stories of forbidden and secret desires, conflict and solace, will all be brought to life by the theater, which is anticipating an exciting season both in terms of shows and logistics. It was announced last year; the theater will relocate 14.4 miles south to Warwick, Rhode Island and the 2018/19 season is slated to open in the new space.

Pawtucket has been home to The Gamm Theatre for the last 15 years, and during that time the theater has celebrated success both within the company's walls and out in the community. A presence in Rhode

Island in various forms and locations since the mid-80s, the organization eventually outgrew its 75-seat house in Providence and moved into a refurbished annex of the abandoned historic Pawtucket National Guard Armory in Pawtucket.

With a budding reputation as a small theater with a grand taste in productions, The Gamm has been a place for audiences to

gather for an up close and personal viewing of some of the biggest plays in the game including Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* as well as *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and many other Shakespeare productions.

The little theater has grown much over the years resulting in management searching for a bigger space; they found the perfect fit in Warwick, at the former Ocean State Theatre Company, which abruptly closed after five years.

It takes a lot to keep a theater going concerning fundraising, says Tony Estrella, artistic director at The Gamm Theatre. "Arts in America are not a priority. We are always trying to prove our importance to the community."

The theater will maintain its ties in Pawtucket even after the move south by continuing its successful Pawtucket Literacy and Arts for Youth (PLAY) program, which promotes literacy in schools. When education budgets slim down, the arts are typically the first to see cuts. "We are happy to use our expertise



to fill that gap," says Estrella.

While the new space in Warwick will be larger and seat 40 more people—with additional room for both the actors and the audience—it will keep the theater's intimate yet epic feel, says Estrella, which will be significant since the kick-off performance at the new location will be none other than Tennessee Williams' classic *The Night of the Iguana*.

For those unfamiliar with the title, it's a "beautiful, crazy, wonderful" play by the author of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, says Estrella. The production, set in the 1940s, follows a minister who finds himself at the end of this rope as he travels through Mexico leading a tourist group from a Baptist women's college.

It's a story about the complexity of human desire and intimate relationships, he adds.

The fairly new to the scene *Gloria* by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins is another production that focuses on relationships.

"It's destined to become an American classic," he says of the dramatic comedy. This razor-sharp comic drama follows a group of ruthless editorial assistants at a famous Manhattan magazine—all vying for their bosses' jobs and a book deal before they turn 30. When a typical workday of cubicles and coffee becomes anything but, the stakes for who will get to tell their story first become higher than ever.

Another 1940s play, *The Night Watch* will be performed in January. Slated as the U.S. premiere of Hattie Naylor's adaptation of British writer, Sarah Waters' second novel set in post-war London. It unfolds backward as three women, and a young man is bound by secret desires and regret.

The season will conclude with the New England premiere of *Escaped Alone* by Caryl Churchill, who is hailed by many as the most celebrated playwright alive, and *True West* by Sam Shepard. These plays explore the solace of community and the absurdity of archetypal America, respectively. Estrella adds that *True West*, is a play about two very opposite brothers, it's story depicting where we are as a society regarding the American identity and the fight between savagery and civility.

"I am excited about all of them," says Estrella of the five productions. "They all have something to say about the world we are living, and they each share part of the conversation." ★

For more information about the upcoming season, visit [gammtheatre.org](http://gammtheatre.org)



**UPDATE:**

The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre is pleased to offer ticket holders for Warren's recently closed 2nd Story Theatre a credit toward upcoming shows in its new Warwick home. The face value of tickets for 2nd Story's two remaining summer productions may be applied toward any show of The Gamm's 2018/19 Season, based on availability. Transactions must be completed in person starting September 4 at the Gamm Theatre Box Office, 1245 Jefferson Blvd., Warwick, RI. (Valid tickets must be presented to receive credit.)