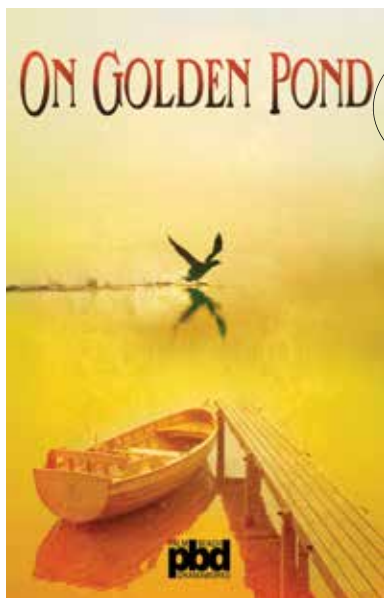


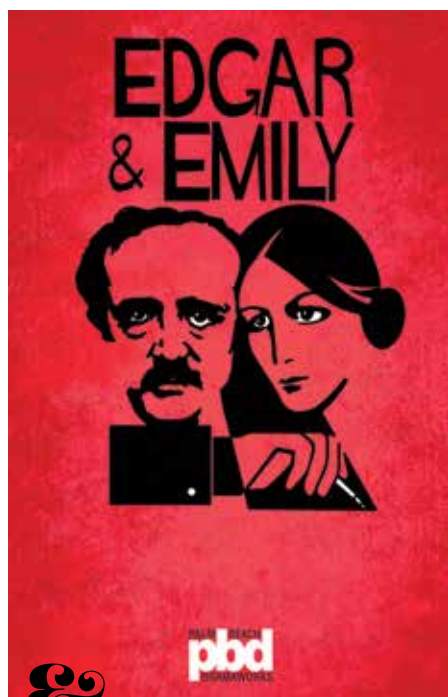
Theater



Palm Beach Dramaworks

Downtown West Palm Beach's premier repertory theater has balanced its 2017-18 offerings with a mix of tried-and-true plays and world premieres. The established works include Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* (to November 12), Ernest Thompson's *On Golden Pond* (January 31 to February 25), and Peter Shaffer's *Equus* (May 16 to June 10). Intermixed are two new plays by Terry Teachout and Joseph McDonough. An

acclaimed author and theater critic, Teachout explores the real-life friendship between playwrights Tennessee Williams and William Inge in *Billy & Me* (December 6-31). Conversely, McDonough builds an imaginary scenario between writers Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson for *Edgar & Emily* (March 28 to April 22). The year is 1864, and, unlike the real Poe who passed away in 1849, this fictional Poe is on the run from a would-be assassin when he encounters the meek wannabe poet. Here, McDonough chats with *PBI* about *Edgar & Emily* and the task of bringing two of history's greatest scribes to life. (561-514-4042, palmbeachdramaworks.org)



MCDONOUGH SHARES HOW EDGAR & EMILY CAME TO PALM BEACH DRAMAWORKS AT PALMBEACHILLUSTRATED.COM/EDGARANDEMILY

THEATRE LAB

In addition to its annual New Play Festival scheduled for January 3-7, Theatre Lab, Florida Atlantic University's professional resident company, will stage a trio of new works as part of its 2017-18 season. First up is the world premiere of Peter Sagal's *Most Wanted*, which we highlight in detail on page 151. Two Florida premieres follow, with *The Revolutionists* by Lauren Gunderson slated for February 8-25 and *Be Here Now* by Deborah Zoe Laufer taking place April 5-22. (561-297-4784, fau.edu/theatrelab)

PBI: What was the genesis of the idea for this play?

McDonough: I was always interested in the two literary figures of Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson. They have, I think, different personas in the public's consciousness. Poe was ghoulish and mysterious, and Dickinson has this spinster perception because she was kind of a recluse. About two years ago, I thought, "What if I put them together in the same room? I think I could have fun with that."

How did your familiarity with their writing styles impact their dialogue and how they speak?

I felt like I slipped into their speaking styles pretty quickly and easily. He's a little more flamboyant. She's a little more prim and proper, but she also has a real spunky side. I've actually found in my research that she wasn't this humorless, dour, sad person at all. She had a lot of vitality and life to her, which appealed to me and will be brought out in the play with the brilliant actors we have.

Did you weave any of their poetry and prose into the dialogue?

Yes, actually. She quotes from her poetry quite a bit and he makes some references, as well. [In the play,] she's unknown as a poet, and, well, he's dead, but he's very well known. She has him read some of her poetry and give a critique, which she's very nervous about. He's not particularly kind and there's a lot of comedy that goes with that. Then she critiques some of his writing, which he can't stand.

Do you feel like this is a play for writers or a play for readers? What kind of audience did you imagine?

A smart audience. It's certainly a play for writers, for readers, for people who obviously enjoy theater. My Emily and my Edgar are very theatrical. Poe was actually the child of two actors, and he has a very flamboyant sense to him. I want people to [think] the play is much funnier than they were anticipating but [also] gives them a lot to think about as they drive home.



RIVERSIDE THEATRE

VERO BEACH'S RIVERSIDE THEATRE BOASTS TWO STAGES THAT WILL PRODUCE A TOTAL OF SEVEN THEATRICAL EXPERIENCES. ON THE STARK STAGE, ATTEND *HANK WILLIAMS: LOST HIGHWAY* (TO NOVEMBER 12), *MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET* (JANUARY 2-21), *LOMBARDI* (JANUARY 30 TO FEBRUARY 18), *GYPSY* (MARCH 6-25), AND *MAMMA MIA!* (APRIL 10-29). THE MORE MODEST WAXLAX STAGE MOUNTS *THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD*, INSPIRED BY AN UNFINISHED CHARLES DICKENS STORY, FROM

JANUARY 16 TO FEBRUARY 4, AS WELL AS *BUYER & CELLAR*, AN AVANT-GARDE COMEDY ABOUT AN ASPIRING ACTOR WHO FINDS HIMSELF WORKING IN A DIVA'S PERSONAL SHOPPING MALL—YES, YOU READ THAT RIGHT—ONSTAGE MARCH 20 TO APRIL 8. (772-231-6990, RIVERSIDETHEATRE.COM)