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Theater: The Best Shows of 2012

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If you're a fan of theater, you can imagine how lucky I feel to live in New York City and get a chance to see so many shows both on Broadway and off, plays and musicals, free Shakespeare in the Park, opera at Lincoln Center and once-in-a-lifetime events at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Believe me, I don't take it for granted. And yet, because I'm not a paid critic and more importantly because I also strive to stay on top of movies, music, TV, books and more, I can attend almost 150 theatrical events and still find I missed some of the key shows of the year that full-time critics covered. In some ways, I'm playing catch up, with *Clybourne Park* on my list here because I caught it for the first time on Broadway while most critics saw it in London or Off Broadway in 2011. Nonetheless, I saw virtually everything on Broadway (though not, mercifully, Mike Tyson) and a lot of the top draws elsewhere and these are the shows that stand out as among the best of 2012. You can see my list of every show I attended in 2012 at the bottom so you'll know whether I simply didn't see a particular piece or wasn't quite as enthusiastic as others (such as the strong *Death Of A Salesman* that didn't quite catch fire for me the night I attended). Last year I listed 18 shows and this year only 13 on my best list. Was it a bad year? No, I just didn't make it to London, where any avid theatergoer can see great shows at bargain prices. Thanks for reading, thanks again to the artists who created these works and thanks for the opportunity to see it all -- the good, the bad and the ugly. Here's my list of the best, some other highlights and finally an in-depth recap of why these are my favorite shows from 2012.

THE BEST SHOWS OF 2012

1. **EINSTEIN ON THE BEACH** AT BAM
2. **AS YOU LIKE IT** AT SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK
3. **TRIBES** AT BARROW STREET THEATRE
4. **GIANT** AT THE PUBLIC
5. **DANIEL KITSON'S IT'S ALWAYS RIGHT NOW, UNTIL IT'S LATER**
6. **THE GERSHWINS' (AND DUBOSE HEYWARD'S) PORGY & BESS**
7. **CLYBOURNE PARK**
8. **INDEPENDENTS** AT FRINGEFEST NYC
9. **THE PIANO LESSON** AT SIGNATURE THEATRE
10. **PIGPEN'S THE OLD MAN AND THE OLD MOON**
11. **MY NAME IS ASHER LEV**
12. **ONCE** ON BROADWAY
13. **BOB** FOR SITI COMPANY AT NEW YORK LIVE ARTS

OTHER STAND-OUT MOMENTS OF 2012

*Jeremy Jordan becoming a star in *Newsies* when it opened at the Papermill Playhouse, seeing him trapped in *Bonnie & Clyde* while *Newsies* planned its transfer to Broadway and then Jordan luckily getting to star in *Newsies* anyway after the gangster musical closed, making him the rare if not unique actor to create two original roles in Broadway musicals in the same season. Here's hoping TV's *Smash* and the movies don't keep him away from the theater for long.

*Christine Sajous tearing it up as Dusty Springfield's lover in *Forever Dusty*.

*James Earl Jones roaring with glee in *Gore Vidal's The Best Man*. I saw this revival twice and thank goodness. The first time, Jones was a bit shaky and out of sorts, not quite off book (though he worked his faltering into his performance since the character he played was an ailing President; Jones is nothing if not a pro). Still, it wasn't fun to see the great actor not up to his standard of excellence. So when I saw the show again, it was good to see Jones fully settled in and making the most of his barking, commanding role. A lion in winter, but not a toothless one.

*Nine-year-old Luke Spring tap-dancing with the sophistication of a seasoned pro and stopping the show in *A Christmas Story: The Musical* while my guest cursed under his breath in appreciation. Happy holidays!

*Justin Anselmi in *Storytime With Mr. Buttermen*. Actors love to improvise but few things make me as wary as walking into a theater and realizing an actor is going to "interact" with the audience as they file in for a show. But Anselmi -- playing a homeless man cadging food and money or just looking to strike up a conversation -- was funny, eccentric and endearingly awkward, scoring laughs without ever softening the edgy truth behind the intelligent but defensive character he had created. I actually looked forward to him doing the same thing at the intermission, especially after I saw him score again and again throughout the sketchy play he was acting in.

*Syessa Mercado was effortlessly sweet and beguiling in a charming revival of *Once On This Island* at Papermill Playhouse, proving yet again that people may mock it but *American Idol* has been a great launching pad for a lot of talent in the last 12 years.

*Cheyenne Jackson casually charming and funny as a dim but sweet porn star in the so-so comedy *The Performers*. Jackson has always been far, far better than the material he is offered. So when will he finally get a show worthy of his talent?

*Angela Meade in glorious voice at the Met in *Ernani*.

*Actress Hallie Foote delivering the words of Horton Foote in *Harrison, TX* with such conviction and surety that it's a shame to call it acting. As I wrote at the time, "You never want her to leave the stage."

*Bobby Steggert in *Broadway By The Year: 1950* at Town Hall, where he shined on the little known "There's A Building Going Up" (an ode to the UN), the romantic "It's A Lovely Day Today," and everything else he sang in the revue. Bobby Steggert in the generally uninteresting *Assistance*. Bobby Steggert reading a book as he made his entrance in *Giant*, where he anchors the next generation's story in Act Two of that excellent show. Bobby Steggert, essentially, in anything.

THE BEST SHOWS OF 2012 (click on the title to read my original review)

1. **EINSTEIN ON THE BEACH AT BAM** -- Philip Glass has been a touchstone throughout my life and career. Nothing would have stopped me from my first chance to see this show when it was revived in the 1990s. Now to see it again as the original innovators tour it around the world for one last bow was equally thrilling. I saw the show not once, but twice. It's absurd that works as iconic as Glass's portrait trilogies aren't revived as often as *La Boheme*. But those outside concerns melted away as soon as this

faultless production began; it remains as mesmerizing and rich as ever. I had an unexpected chance to see this five hour work again just a few days later and I couldn't resist even though I feared it might be too much, too soon. Ha! I began to finally appreciate the work as a whole, to grasp the shape of it and appreciate its many layers of meaning, the ways in which it is rooted in the downtown NYC scene of the 1970s but transcends that as well. It would be a mortal sin if this production weren't captured on film -- and not just a simple recording but a genuinely artistic rendering of the show though please, hold the 3-D. (This is most definitely a theatrical and not an immersive experience; the fad of 3-D is not for something as timeless as this.) Some day I expect to see high school and college productions of *Einstein On The Beach* and not just in a Wes Anderson film. And if they auction off the props that Robert Wilson doesn't keep, I'll be bidding on that god-like beam of light.

2. AS YOU LIKE IT AT SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK -- London is arguably an even greater city for live theater than New York, though the lucky few who get to sample both know that each is indispensable. But New York City is clearly superior in at least one respect: we have outdoor theater that is free and of the highest standards. Shakespeare in the Park is one of those institutions that we take for granted, even though year after year it offers solid productions sprinkled with stars that audiences flock to with pleasure. As Broadway becomes ever pricier, this essential service from the Public Theater becomes more and more important. Not every production soars, of course. But the experience is appreciated by the enthusiastic audiences that line up all day to score free tickets. (New Yorkers may never actually go to the Statue of Liberty or head up to the top of the Empire State Building just to meet a date, but if they don't go to Shakespeare in the Park, why bother living here?) And this *As You Like It* was brilliant in every respect from start to finish, led by the marvelous Lily Rabe and David Furr as besotted lovers.

3. TRIBES AT BARROW STREET THEATRE -- Other critics caught this show in London so it was on many lists as one of the best of 2011. But I saw it for the first time downtown at the Barrow Street Theatre in a wonderfully insightful production that my guest said was even better than the one in London. It's another triumph for director David Cromer and immediately makes Nina Raines a playwright to feverishly anticipate in the future. It is about a hearing-impaired young man in a hearing family. Like any great work of art it's far richer than a listing of plot can capture and far more universal than any agit prop could ever hope to be. *Tribes* is funny and sharp and painful and moving with the excellent casting of Mare Winningham turning a secondary role into the anchor of this family in turmoil. It's the show I sent people to again and again; they always came back delighted and thankful for the recommendation. Thank God it recouped its investment with a lengthy run so that serious, entertaining theater like this can make both business and artistic sense outside of Broadway.

4. GIANT AT THE PUBLIC -- Composer Michael John LaChiusa has been an acclaimed artist for 20 years. (One of my first interviews when working at *New York* magazine was with LaChiusa.) But that elusive world-beating hit that could bring him a much deserved wider audience has eluded LaChiusa, despite the foolishly under-appreciated Broadway musical *The Wild Party*, which will be a hit when it's revived some day. But now here comes *Giant*, a richly rewarding, vastly entertaining musical that doesn't sacrifice any of his ambition and sophistication but which offers the accessible melodies that mark the best of Stephen Sondheim. It was barely contained by the stage at the Public where this limited run was held. Kate Baldwin and Brian D'Arcy James proved stars of the first order, bringing great chemistry and acting chops to go along with their gorgeous singing. Trimmed from its four+ hours running time in earlier mountings, *Giant* will be refined and improved even more by the time it moves to Broadway where this show demands to be seen. No transfer has been announced yet -- it's hardly a slam dunk commercially though I believe strongly *Giant* will appeal to a wide audience. The name value alone shouldn't be ignored for touring productions around the world: the Edna Ferber novel and lumbering but memorable film starring Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean are serious calling cards. At least we can cross our fingers and wait for the cast album that's coming out in the spring. Bobby Steggert thrilled as always in a key supporting role, so now we can wait in anticipation for the Broadway arrivals of *Giant* and *Yank!* (a

starring vehicle for Steggert) so he can shine again. If I won the lottery, I would have invested. (And yes, that's exactly the sort of games theater lovers play. You never know....)

5. DANIEL KITSON'S IT'S ALWAYS RIGHT NOW, UNTIL IT'S LATER -- Two years in a row, this strikingly gifted artist has come to St. Ann's and delivered heartbreaking, extremely funny and memorable theatrical pieces. They're not monologues a la Spalding Gray but neither does Daniel Kitson "inhabit" numerous characters like Lily Tomlin. His own unique gift is to tell stories, getting inside characters and our minds with his inimitable, deceptively awkward but actually quite skilled delivery. The structure of the story is clever clever, with Kitson beginning with the death of one man and the birth of one woman and effortlessly jumping back and forth in their lives as the lives of these two people converge. I can still picture the simple set, which was filled with lightbulbs hanging at all sorts of heights around the stage, each one lighting up and sparking a new "memory" for Kitson as he told his story. Kitson is also a stand-up comic but I've missed his forays in that genre, unfortunately. I don't want him to rush but I must say January is looking a little bleak without a return visit from him to anticipate. At least I can enjoy his ramshackle, defiantly unprofessional emails until then. (You can sign up for emails on his website, which is spare and undemonstrative, just like Kitson. The title of the show, by the way, is simply *It's Always Right Now, Until It's Later* but I want to get the word out as much as possible and am not as shy as Kitson, who rushes off stage before the embarrassment of applause makes him blush. Yes, "Daniel Kitson's..." is a bit brash but branding, Daniel, branding!)

6. THE GERSHWINS' (AND DUBOSE HEYWARD'S) PORGY & BESS -- This gloriously sung and performed production ran on Broadway just about eight months, the same length of time it ran in the 1940s and again in the 1950s. A curious complaint to me was about this revival's re-imagining of the show as a musical instead of an opera. I fell in love with the Houston Grand Opera's definitive recording from the 1970s but the resistance to a more jazzy and blues-based rendition of this brilliant score just seems downright odd. It's not like it took any adjusting: we've all heard literally hundred of versions of the show's standards by some of the greatest popular singers of the 20th century. Are people really shocked or surprised by a down-home "It Ain't Necessarily So"? Besides, Audra McDonald's sweet spot is exactly that crossroads between opera and Broadway; no wonder she won another deserved Tony. The rest of the cast was right there with her, from Norm Lewis as Porgy to the hiss-able Philip Boykin and the strong work of David Alan Grier (a revelation to me). It's a triumph for Suzan-Lori Parks, Diedre L.Murray and Diane Paulus who at least ended at the right point: a modest refreshing of the book and a distinctive musical approach that can live alongside the more operatic productions that would be beyond the abilities of most communities. The only off note was the annoying insistence that the title be "The Gershwin's Porgy & Bess" when DuBose Heyward wrote the novel, co-adapted his own work into a play, then wrote the libretto and most of the lyrics -- including "Summertime" -- for the opera. Just saying.

7. CLYBOURNE PARK -- You know a play has got it when you wait two years to see it, hear nothing but praise until then and *still* the darn thing lives up to expectations. All credit to Steppenwolf for nurturing playwright Bruce Norris for years. This biting funny work trampolines off the classic *A Raisin In The Sun* to illuminate how race still divides and defines us today. Here's hoping they get to mount a new show by Norris soon.

8. INDEPENDENTS AT FRINGEFEST NYC -- This terrifically engaging musical was the highpoint of the 2012 FringeFest albeit a bittersweet one when I discovered during the intermission that one of the talents involved in creating it (book writer Marina Keegan) died unexpectedly before the show opened. I felt certain at the time this show would have a future life but whatever happens with it, I know that Keegan was an artist and that the songwriters Stephen Feigenbaum (music) and Mark Sonnenblick (lyrics) will find success of their own someday. The story of *Independents* is an offbeat one, following a group of mostly twenty-somethings who are out of college and living on a Colonial Era ship, pretending to do Revolutionary War reenactments but really selling a little marijuana and having fun. The songs are so strikingly good and tuneful that you're immediately aware this is a rich, complicated tale and not just a romp for good-looking actors to goof around.

Talent attracts talent so it's no surprise the cast was loaded with it. This is the sort of work that lets an event like the New York International Fringe Festival boast about launching it for years to come. Just wait for the names to emerge that will have made their first mark here.

9. THE PIANO LESSON AT SIGNATURE THEATRE -- Eight down; two to go. That was my happy first thought after seeing this excellent revival at Signature. I've seen eight of the ten shows in August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle, now that I've seen this one. It clearly ranks at or near the top of that brilliant lineup of ten plays, one for each decade of the 20th century. It's a pity Wilson isn't still writing today but how wonderful is it that he made the bold declaration of attempting this cycle and then succeeded so brilliantly? It's like Babe Ruth pointing to where he'd hit that home run. I'm eagerly anticipating *Gem Of The Ocean* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (the last two on my list), but also kind of happy to put the experience off a bit. With no more August Wilson plays to come, I'll be sad to see them all. But not really, since I've already seen some of them twice in excellent form. This strong production also marks a triumph for Signature. They opened in a new home with not one but three performance spaces in a handsome new venue. The Signature Theatre Company has been one of the most consistent sources of great shows and easily the best bargain in town, especially if you factor in the quality. Subsidized in part by Time Warner and numerous foundations, they charge subscribers only about \$25 a show for a season. I can only wish every theater company had corporate sponsors since Broadway has become so expensive and even Off Broadway's prices rise and rise and rise. After so many successful seasons in their former space, I worried that perhaps Signature had bitten off more than they could chew going from one show at a time to three. But the essential sturdiness of their work steadily asserted itself in various ways (a solid Fugard here, an intriguing Albee there) until this end of the year triumph that deserved every accolade it received. Mind you, they've had a special affinity for Wilson and if anyone was suited to mounting the entire cycle, it's Signature. What are they waiting for?

10. PIGPEN'S THE OLD MAN AND THE OLD MOON -- It's no secret I'm a huge fan of the PigPen Theatre Company. They met in college and embraced Americana music, folk tales and puppetry to create their own special brand of storytelling that draws on the rich history of the theater but feels quite contemporary at the same time. This is their biggest step forward to date but it won't be their last. *The Old Man And The Old Moon* is about two hours in length and tells the amusing, eccentric tale of an old woman who becomes bored with their lot in life -- she takes care of their home while he "fills up" the moon every day so that the leaking orb doesn't go out. When the old woman heads out in a boat for territories unknown, the old man follows behind and all hell breaks loose as the moon disappears from the sky. Filled with great original songs, the show has produced a spin-off CD by the group called *Bremen* that ranks among my favorite albums of the year. The show is still running through early January so if you can get to New York, make sure you catch these charmingly talented men while you can. But even if you are far away, *Bremen* and a forthcoming tour can bring a taste of PigPen to wherever you are.

11. MY NAME IS ASHER LEV -- I hadn't read the book or seen the play before (by Aaron Posner based on Chaim Potok's bestseller). But the story told here is very familiar: a young artist burns to explore his talent while his family and world are confused, disinterested or violently opposed to his dreams. In this case, Asher is rebelling against the Hasidic Jewish world of Brooklyn, New York in the 1950s. Rebelling may not be quite the word since Asher truly has no choice: he must paint or die. This pitch-perfect revival is beautifully cast but it's lead actor Ari Brand I'll remember best. With a less sympathetic production and a less skilled actor, this play could easily be a slog. Asher is constantly talking to the audience and indeed a good chunk of the show is just Asher facing us and baring his soul. Brand makes this theatrically gripping thanks to his excellent command of the stage and the text at hand. In that way, we get to see two artists being born: Asher Lev and Ari Brand.

12. ONCE ON BROADWAY -- When I saw *Once* Off Broadway in 2011, it immediately became my favorite musical of that year. I have to include it again because its transfer to Broadway (which made me a little nervous, I must admit) was handled so beautifully by

all involved. I know *Giant* will work tremendously well on a big Broadway stage but I was less certain about the intimate *Once*. However, the larger space and audience allows this show to embrace its power to move and entertain even more. I've seen "quiet" musicals before, such as *James Joyce's The Dead* and *Passion*, to name just two, shows that have you leaning forward in your seat in focused concentration. But I've never heard an audience so hushed on Broadway by a musical, so unwilling to break the spell of this work that they almost don't want to applaud at the end of certain numbers. It's a beautiful, bittersweet, romantic musical that improves on the movie in every way. I'm not one to go see a Broadway show again and again. First, who can afford it? Second, even if money were no object, the more I like a show the less I'd want to spoil the memory by seeing it repeatedly. But I've seen *Once* twice and am itching to go a third and fourth and fifth time. Whenever I see the TV commercial for it (they often air during Letterman) I have to stop fast-forwarding and watch the ad again.) It's that good.

13. **BOB FOR SITI COMPANY AT NEW YORK LIVE ARTS** -- When I saw this work about the director Robert Wilson in January, I knew it was the perfect early appetizer for the revival of *Einstein On The Beach* I'd be seeing in the fall. But this revival -- directed very well by Anne Bogart and starring Will Bond -- was much more than that. Its empathetic and discerning look at Wilson, his life and his creative process allowed me to approach the director's work with new insight. More to the point, it was wittily amusing and quietly moving as well.

NOTE: Check out my top picks for 2011. If you think a show is missing, it might be that I covered it last year (such as *Peter and the Starcatcher*).

THE THEATER SEASON 2012 (on a four star scale)

1. It's Always Right Now, Until It's Later -- Daniel Kitson *** 1/2
2. Bob (show about Robert Wilson) *** 1/2
3. Wit w Cynthia Nixon **
4. de Kooning Exhibit at MOMA ***
5. How The World began * 1/2
6. Sontag: Reborn *
7. Goodbar at Public * 1/2
8. Super Night Shot at Public (Gob Squad) ** 1/2
9. Samuel and Alasdair: A Personal History Of the Robot Wars ** 1/2
10. The Table (puppetry show at La MaMa) ** 1/2
11. Mission Drift * 1/2
12. Dedalus Lounge * 1/2
13. Leo (one-man circus act) ***
14. The Road To Mecca ** 1/2
15. Porgy and Bess (w Audra McDonald) *** 1/2
16. The Ugly One **
17. Ernani at Met w Angela Meade *** 1/2
18. Richard III at BAM w Kevin Spacey ***
19. Vivian Maier photo exhibit ***
20. Blood Knot at Signature **
21. Galileo w F. Murray Abraham **
22. Early Plays at St. Ann's (Eugene O'Neil) *
23. Songs From The Uproar **
24. Assistance (w Bobby Steggert) **
25. Carrie ** 1/2
26. Hurt Village at Sig ***
27. Painting Churches * 1/2
28. Tribes w Mare Winningham *** 1/2
29. The Lady From Dubuque at Sig w Jane Alexander ** 1/2
30. The Maids **
31. Damn Yankees at Papermill **

32. Once on Broadway ****
33. Death Of A Salesman w Philip Seymour Hoffman and Andrew Garfield ***
34. Broadway By The Year 1950 ** 1/2
35. No Place To Go by Ethan Lipton ** 1/2
36. Regrets * 1/2
37. Jesus Christ Superstar * 1/2
38. The Best Man ** 1/2
39. Now. Here. This. * 1/2
40. Newsies on Broadway ** 1/2
41. End Of The Rainbow *
42. Evita w Elena Roger * 1/2
43. Ninth and Joanie *
44. Clybourne Park *** 1/2
45. Peter and the Starcatcher on Broadway ***
46. One Man, Two Guvnors on Broadway ***
47. A Streetcar Named Desire (w Nicole Ari Parker) **
48. Nice Work If You Can Get It (w Matthew Broderick) **
49. Leap Of Faith (w Raul Esparza) **
50. The Lyons (w Linda Lavin) ** 1/2
51. Ghost: The Musical on Broadway * 1/2
52. A Midsummer Night's Dream (w Bebe Neuwirth) ** 1/2
53. Cock ** 1/2
54. My Children! My Africa! at Signature ***
55. Chimichangas and Zoloft *
56. Potted Potter in NYC *
57. Title And Deed at Signature ***
58. Once On This Island at Paper Mill Playhouse (w Syesha Mercado) ***
59. Storefront Church ** 1/2
60. Closer Than Ever ***
61. Harvey w Jim Parsons *
62. As You Like It w Lily Rabe ****
63. The Tallest Man On Earth at Town Hall *** 1/2
64. 4000 Miles ***
65. Picture Incomplete (NYMF) **
66. Flambe Dreams (NYMF) **
67. Rio (NYMF) **
68. The Two Month Rule (NYMF) *
69. Trouble (NYMF) ** 1/2
70. Stealing Time (NYMF) **
71. Requiem For A Lost Girl (NYMF) ** 1/2
72. Re-Animator: The Musical (NYMF) ***
73. Baby Case (NYMF) ***
74. How Deep Is The Ocean? (NYMF) ** 1/2
75. Central Avenue Breakdown (NYMF) ***
76. Foreverman (NYMF) * 1/2
77. Swing State (NYMF) * 1/2
78. Stand Tall: A Rock Musical (NYMF) * 1/2
79. Living With Henry (NYMF) *
80. A Letter To Harvey Milk (NYMF) ** 1/2
81. The Last Smoker In America **
82. Gore Vidal's The Best Man (w new cast) ***
83. Into The Woods at Delacorte ** 1/2
84. Bring It On: The Musical **
85. Bullet For Adolf *
86. Summer Shorts Series B: Paul Rudnick, Neil LaBute, etc. **
87. Harrison, TX: Three Plays By Horton Foote ***
88. Dark Hollow: An Appalachian "Woyzeck" (FringeNYC) * 1/2
89. Pink Milk (FringeNYC)* 1/2
90. Who Murdered Love (FringeNYC) no stars

91. Storytime With Mr. Buttermen (FringeNYC) **
92. #MormonInChief (FringeNYC) **
93. An Interrogation Primer (FringeNYC) ***
94. An Evening With Kirk Douglas (FringeNYC) *
95. Sheherizade (FringeNYC) **
96. The Great Pie Robbery (FringeNYC) ** 1/2
97. Independents (FringeNYC) *** 1/2
98. The Dick and The Rose (FringeNYC) **
99. Magdalen (FringeNYC) ***
100. Bombsheltered (FringeNYC) ** 1/2
101. Paper Plane (FringeNYC) ** 1/2
102. Rated M For Murder (FringeNYC) ** 1/2
103. Mallory/Valerie (FringeNYC) *
104. Non-Equity: The Musical! (FringeNYC) *
105. Blanche: The Bittersweet Life Of A Prairie Dame (FringeNYC) *** 1/2
106. City Of Shadows (FringeNYC) ***
107. The Murder Of Crows: Janet Cardiff at the Armory ** 1/2
108. Forty Part Motet: Janet Cardiff at PS1 *** 1/2
109. Forbidden Broadway: Alive and Kicking ***
110. Salamander Starts Over (FringeNYC) ***
111. Pieces (FringeNYC) *
112. The Train Driver at Signature***
113. Chaplin The Musical * 1/2
114. Detroit ** 1/2
115. Heartless at Signature **
116. Einstein On The Beach at BAM ****
117. Red-Handed Otter ** 1/2
118. Marry Me A Little **
119. An Enemy Of The People ** 1/2
120. The Old Man And The Old Moon *** 1/2
121. A Chorus Line at Papermill ***
122. Helen and Edgar ***
123. Grace w Paul Rudd * 1/2
124. Cyrano de Bergerac w Douglas Hodge **
125. Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf? w Tracy Letts and Amy Morton ***
126. Disgraced w Aasif Mandvi **
127. Annie ** 1/2
128. The Heiress w Jessica Chastain and David Strathairn **
129. Checkers w Anthony LaPaglia ** 1/2
130. Ivanov w Ethan Hawke ***
131. Golden Child at Signature ** 1/2
132. Giant at the Public *** 1/2
133. Scandalous * 1/2
134. Forever Dusty **
135. The Performers w Cheyanne Jackson **
136. The Piano Lesson at Signature *** 1/2
137. Un Ballo In Maschera at the Met *** 1/2 singing * for production so ** 1/2
138. A Christmas Story: Tbe Musical **
139. The Sound Of Music at Papermill ***
140. My Name Is Asher Lev w Ari Brand *** 1/2
141. Figaro (90210) staged reading ***
142. Golden Boy **
143. A Civil War Christmas ** 1/2
144. Dead Accounts **
145. The Anarchist *
146. Glengarry Glen Ross w Al Pacino **
147. Bare **
148. The Mystery Of Edwin Drood ** 1/2
149. The Great God Pan ** 1/2

For links to review of all these shows, you can check out the lists of shows at the bottom of these two reviews: *The Great God Pan* (which covers my theater-going from June to the end of the year) and Bebe Neuwirth's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Classic Stage Company, which covers the first half of the year. Oh the confusion when the theater "season" runs from summer to summer but the annual best-of must come in December!)

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of Showbiz Sandbox, a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's available for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his website and his daily blog. Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called Popsurfing and also available for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and gain access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

Note: *Michael Giltz is provided with free tickets to shows with the understanding that he will be writing a review. All productions are in New York City unless otherwise indicated.*

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