

'Next Fall' Reaches Out to LGBT Teens in Charity Event

GABRIELLE PEDRO
Asst. Layout Editor

"The play 'Next Fall,' I've turned it into a cause piece," said Daniel Ellis, director and organizer of Longwood Theater's production of "Next Fall," a play written by Geoffrey Nauffts. "It centers around two gay men," Ellis continued. He went to give a brief synopsis of the play, which centers on two gay men who fall in love and eventually enter a crisis when one falls into a coma. The play then explores how the other, as an Atheist, copes with the tragedy and how his family and friends, despite their religions, aid him in this difficult time.

Last year, Ellis directed "The Vagina Monologues" and donated those proceeds to a domestic violence group in Powhatan. "It was something that I felt really passionate about," Ellis said. After "The Vagina Monologues," Ellis sought to do another charity fundraising event. This year, he chose to do a piece for the LGBT community. Ellis then went to Dr. Carl Riden, associate professor of sociology; someone he knew was active with the LGBT community on campus, who, in turn, brought him to "Next Fall." "I looked into it and I fell in love with play the first time I read it," said Ellis.

All proceeds of "Next Fall" will be donated to the It Gets Better Project, an international movement that seeks to support and inspire hope for LGBT teens who face bullying and other negative aspects of their life. The project, which originated as a single YouTube video with the simple message to LGBT teens that "it gets better," has grown to encompass over 30,000 more videos featuring people from many different walks of life, including various celebrities.

Ellis was inspired to help the LGBT community after hearing about several suicides of LGBT teens last year and being introduced to the It Gets Better Project.

ter project. "I've heard a lot of people say, 'Oh, they're just making videos, it's a cop-out,' and I think, 'What else can they do?' Not everyone can sit at a hotline phone, you know? But it was moving to me to see all these people, celebrities, ban together and say, 'it's gonna be okay. I don't know you, but I support you, whoever you are,'" Ellis added. "No one should be made to feel this way. And I think, honestly, now that I say it out loud, I think that's the message of the play. It gets better."

Ellis believes that the focus of the play should not be on the fact that the leads are homosexual males. "When I first came to [the faculty] about the play, someone asked, 'Why do gay plays always address the same issues?' and I said, 'First of all, it's not a gay play, it's a play about people who are gay. They happen to be gay, these issues are in every one's lives and they appear with everyone. Being gay happens to throw an extra dynamic into the mix.'"

In regards to the cast, the leads, James Early and Tim Davis, the biggest issue for them was not enforcing stereotypes. "I didn't want just be some kind of canon gay character that appeared in a show as comic relief," said Early. "A lot of it involved transferring my fiancé onto Tim and treating him as I would treat my actual significant other."

Davis added, "It's been a joyful experience. The easiest part was interacting with other characters, the actors, stage managers and directors. The atmosphere has been very professional and very friendly." Early continued, "The hardest part for me is portraying a character that's in a new relationship ... it was just the idea of flirting. I haven't had to flirt in God knows how long with someone of the opposite sex, much less somebody of the same sex."

In addition to homosexuality, religion is thrown into the mix, as the leads, though both gay men, are Christian and Atheist. "The script is genius in

the fact that it gives respect to each perspective equally," Ellis added. Ellis went to say that he did not believe the play was about love or realizing a sense of self. He believes that the play centers on acceptance and "being able to let go of judgments for just that little bit of time and give respect to one another."

Are Davis and Early concerned about backlash since their play touches on several sensitive subjects? "I feel if people know what the show is about, then we're not going to get any negative reactions," Davis began. "But I think if there's anybody that doesn't know what side to take on the issue, if they're curious and see the play, it'll definitely open their eyes a little more."

Early, on the other hand, is prepared and in some respect, hoping for negativity. "I'm slightly hoping there will be backlash because I feel like if it's people who already agree with it, then it's just going to be white noise. I'd rather have somebody who doesn't agree with come see it and at least be open to that perspective. Also, just having the lead characters, who are Christian, homosexual men, it's not the typical image that you'd see, and I like that it's that violation of expectation. I'm hoping there will be some people who aren't the typical audience coming to see this," he said.

"The only thing I would like to come out of this is a philanthropy piece every year for the Longwood Theater department," Ellis stated. "For us to do a piece that speaks to current issues, that speaks to a minority, that speaks to a majority, that speaks to something, something with a message where we can raise money and give it to a charity."

"Next Fall" opens tonight, Feb. 8, at 7 p.m. in the Lab Theater and will run until Feb. 12. Tickets are available at the box office and can be pre-ordered online at www.etix.com.

Super Bowl Performances from 2000 to Now

KATIE REILLY
A&E Editor



A&E COLUMN

There are many reasons people tune in to their televisions on the first Sunday of February to watch the Super Bowl between two of the best NFL teams. The first reason is that it is considered un-American if you do not. Football fan or not, there is a pretty good chance you are going to be sitting there watching two teams play off against one another for the long awaited epic finale of the season.

The second reason why people watch the Super Bowl is the commercials. There are billions of dollars being spent on them, so they are most likely going to be pretty entertaining — or at least they should be. Finally, the most accepted third reason to be sitting on a couch for four hours instead of doing homework is for the halftime show.

For the better part of a decade, marching bands originally took to the field as a form of entertainment. It was only a few decades later that popular musicians started winning the time for their own performances. Some have been good choices, others have been a bit too memorable and others have simply shown the country a good time, bringing live music and epic performances to keep those eyes glued to the television.

Let's go back about 10 years to 2000. Performing that year were Phil Collins, Toni Braxton, Christina Aguilera, Edward James Olmos, Enrique Iglesias and an 80-person choir. The halftime show was produced by Disney, allowing for a Disney-esque theme throughout, including the song "Two Worlds" by Phil Collins, which also appears in the Disney classic "Tarzan."

The 2002 theme was for 9/11 victims and only starred one performer, U2. This was a change-up for the halftime show, as over the years the halftime show became more of an ensemble performance rather than a singular group performing.

The 2004 Super Bowl brought with it a memorable mishap that didn't leave the minds of thousands for a very long time. Janet Jackson was performing with Justin Timberlake and experienced what was later dubbed a wardrobe malfunction. Ironically, this occurred during the song "Rock Your Body." It is sufficient to say Janet rocked hers a little too hard.

Paul McCartney took the stage famously in 2005 for a memorable and moving performance, which included the song "Live and Let Die." 2006 followed in his famous footsteps with a performance by The Rolling Stones.

Most of the Super Bowls after that had a mixed array of new and old and it wasn't until 2011 when Usher, The Black Eyed Peas and Slash brought a full sweep in for the new. They performed a total of eight songs, which is a large amount when compared to other performances in the past. They also did a great job with it, keeping the party going with one of their most well-known songs, "I Gotta Feeling."

Personally, I think some of the choices in music haven't been as strong as they could have been. Some performers in the past gave weak performances or chose songs that failed to rally a full stadium of Super Bowl fans. However, this year didn't follow those failed footsteps.

This year's performance brought both new and old names together. These famous names included Madonna, Cirque du Soleil, Nicki Minaj, M.I.A., LMFAO and Cee Lo Green. The high school bands performing included Avon, Center Grove, Fishers and Franklin Central. The halftime show started off with a large army of Roman-like warriors moving across the stage. Madonna did a great job opening the show, bringing full attention to herself as an army of golden clad warriors walked the field.

Madonna was then revealed in the middle of it all dressed in a completely golden outfit with an extravagant crown on her head, singing the song "Vogue," which casually changed to into the song "Music" with LMFAO joining her on stage. They combined LMFAO's "Party Rock Anthem" with Madonna's song, making for an energized and crazy performance. Next to take the stage was Nicki Minaj with a group of chanting cheerleaders. She and Madonna performed "Give Me All Your Luvin'" together and were then joined by M.I.A. It was then that the drumlines mounted the stage, beating to the song "Like a Prayer" with both Madonna and Cee Lo Green.

Madonna ended her combined performance by disappearing in a cloud of smoke, the words "World Peace" glittering in gold on the ground. She gave a great performance, despite the fact that she had earlier claimed that she was the "most nervous she had ever been." Performing in front of millions can do that to you.

Poetry Corner: Cosmic Exam

JENNIFER CRAIG
Contributor

The sky is swirling above my head.
There's an aching in my chest.
Anti-gravity day.
A heavy calm in my bones to contrast the
frantic racing of my thoughts.
What is that sound?
Songs on my playlist offer no comfort. I
switch between them faster than the
shuffling allows.
They sweep me off my feet then leave me
spinning, tumbling.

Falling.
I keep waiting to be a crater in the ground.
Nothing left but a hole and a memory that
will fade over time.
What do you do when you're too afraid to
fall/ to fail,
and can't touch the ground?
What if I disappear? Does it matter? Will they
notice?
But it's not happening. Not yet, not yet.
I don't know why, but I'm smiling.
Music fades.

I'm randomly smiling, and laughing, and
then it's quiet.
And in the quiet, there's a vague wonder-
ment, a sense of hope,
I think.
There's a chill in the air, and breathing is a
little easier now.
Just look at the stars, they're still
burning bright.
I hope that one day I'll learn how
to shine as well.

Events Calendar

Wed. 8, 7 p.m.-10 p.m.

"L'Illusioniste (The Illusionist)" - Fourth Annual French Film Festival
Where: Molnar Recital Hall in Wygal

Thurs. 9, 7:30 p.m.-10 p.m.

Piano duo recital by Dr. James Kidd and Dr. Lisa Kinzer
Where: Molnar Recital Hall in Wygal

Fri. 10, 7 p.m.-10 p.m.

"Next Fall" by Geoffrey Nauffts, presented by Longwood Theatre
Where: LAB Theatre, Center for Communication Studies & Theatre

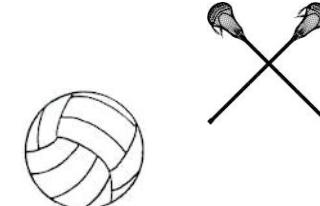
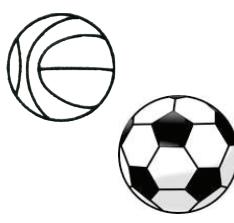
Fri. 10, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Valentine Time: The Valentine-Making Workshop
Where: Longwood Center for the Visual Arts (lower level)

Upcoming Intramural Sports

Sports Offered	Format	Sign-Up Deadline	*Captains Meeting	Play Dates	Fees
5 vs. 5 basketball	Full Season	Feb. 8	Feb. 9 @ 5pm	Feb 12- March 8	\$30
7 vs. 7 Ultimate Frisbee	Double Elimination Tournament	March 21	March 22 @ 5pm	March 25- April 5	\$10
Softball League	Short Season	April 4	April 5 @ 5pm	April 10- April 26	\$20

Beginning in the fall, the Intramural Department has begun to implement online sign-ups for all of IM Sports. You can register at IMLeagues.com using your Longwood E-Mail address.



Upcoming Club Sports Schedule

February 11 th	Wrestling Match	12:00 pm	Rec Center
February 18 th	Women's Volleyball	9:00 am – 7:00 pm	Rec Center
February 18 th	Men's Lacrosse	1:00 pm	Lancer Park
February 25 th	Todd Miller Rugby Tournament	TBD	Lancer Park
March 3 rd	Women's Soccer	12:00 pm	Lancer Park
March 4 th	Field Hockey	10:00 am	Lancer Park

If looking to start up a club sport or for more information on intramurals see our website www.longwood.edu/recreation or they can contact Marissa Musumeci, Coordinator of Sports Programs at musumecimj@longwood.edu or 434-395-2316

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*** This editorial is an opinion stated by the writer and does not represent the views of The Rotunda or Longwood University.