

# Two more events in Touchstone's Festival UnBound 2020

The Bethlehem Gadfly Arts, the, Touchstone Theater October 5, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on Touchstone Theatre* 

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*"Touchstone Theatre is a Bethlehem Treasure"*

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### **Touchstone's *Festival UnBound 2020* Final Performances**

Series concludes with "Tales of Hope and Resistance" and "Dictators 4 Dummies... and more!"

BETHLEHEM, PA – Touchstone Theatre will wrap up its COVID-friendly, social-distance-safe *Festival UnBound 2020* with two artistic offerings— *Tales of Hope and Resistance*, a collection of stories from around the world, presented in music and shadow puppetry (October 9); and *Dictators 4 Dummies... and more!*, a retrospective of Touchstone's musical political satires of years past and a film premiere (October 16).

After last year's *Festival UnBound*, a ten-day festival of arts and community dialogue in October 2019, Touchstone decided that for 2020, the second year of the festival would take the form of outdoor events, parties, forums, and performances, available for socially distanced outdoor viewing in Touchstone's back parking lot and many also via livestream, to accommodate the safety needs of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The festival opened with a block party for the South Side's Latinx community, followed by a storytelling performance by local medical workers, and a series of events around nature and sustainability in our community.

The final two events of *Festival UnBound 2020* feature the artists within the Touchstone company more prominently. *Tales of Hope and Resistance*, directed by Touchstone artistic director Jp Jordan, shares retellings of classic stories from around the world, centering on themes of overcoming evil and adversity. The evening of October 9th opens with Irish balladeer Seamus Kennedy, a longtime familiar face at Celtic Classic, regaling the audience with songs and tales of Ireland's storied past; if *Tales* goes into its rain date performances (October 10th, 11th), local musical treasure and Godfrey Daniels icon Dave Fry will entertain audiences with familiar songs of revolution. The second half of the evening features shadow puppet renditions of traditional stories from Greece, Kenya, Japan, Brazil, and more. Puppets are created in collaboration with Mock Turtle Marionette Theater and performed by Touchstone and Moravian College's current cohort of MFA in Performance Creation students. Original music backing the stories is created by Jordan and popular local musician Neil Grover.

"Mythology is such a central part of our collective histories," says Jordan. "At transitional moments in history, like the one we are presumably living through at this very minute, it can serve us well to rediscover what we once knew."

The final show of the festival, *Dictators 4 Dummies... and more!*, directed by Touchstone ensemble member Christopher Shorr, takes a look back at the original, political, satirical musicals that Touchstone has created over the last decade, performed live as a cabaret by members of the Touchstone company. The evening concludes with Shorr's original 2018 musical *Dictator 4 Dummies*, now reimaged as a feature-length movie with an action figure cast.

"Something that I love about Touchstone is that it steps up during election years and deals directly with the issues of the day," says Shorr. "For this night of musical satire, we will look at the perils of competition, the buffoonery we often see in Washington (no matter who is in charge), and the danger of complacency. As a society, we need to stay engaged and alert now more than ever. We're trying to do our part—yes, with musical comedy—to help that effort."

Funding for Festival UnBound is ongoing, but to date, Festival sponsors and supporters include: Air Products, CADC Bethlehem, Discover Lehigh Valley, FIG Bethlehem, Freestone Productions, Kira Willey Productions LLC, PBS39, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, PNC Bank, The Morning Call, RCN, R.K.Laros Foundation, UGI, WDIY, Webfoot Digital, and Working Dog Press.

*Tales of Hope and Resistance* performs Friday, October 9 (rain dates October 10 and 11) at 8p; *Dictators 4 Dummies... and more!* performs Friday, October 16 (rain dates October 17 and 18) at 7p. Ticketing is by table— \$40 for a 4-person table, \$30 for a 2-person table. Performances take place in the parking lot behind Touchstone Theatre at 321 E. 4th Street; masks and social distancing are required for all events. Access to the livestream for both events can be found on the theatre's website. More information at [touchstone.org](https://www.touchstone.org)

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