

Enduring legends of Bangor's own 'Lover's Leap'

Forbidden love. The ever-enduring plot-line traverses centuries and cultures, appearing in stories that help tell the story of a place and its people.

Bangor, Maine, is no exception. I had heard of Lover's Leap on the Kenduskeag Stream before. I meandered down the winding trail that hugs the banks of the stream last summer and brought home handfuls of wildflowers for my kitchen table, but I never stopped to think about the history behind an outcropping of rock on Valley Avenue.

As a new resident of Bangor, I've been finding things to do, places to discover and people to meet to make this city feel a bit more like home. A story about love and loss that probably is familiar to some Bangor residents seemed important for my quest.

The weather started to change this past week, with temperatures rising into the 60s, so I took another walk down the Kenduskeag Stream Trail with the intention of revisiting the tale of Lover's Leap, which my co-worker Meg Haskell reminded me I'd seen before.

On the trail system there are various information stops with stories about Bangor history, so that's where I began. Across from Lover's Leap is one of these information stops. It reads as follows:

"The cliff's name is born of the legend of how a beautiful Native American maiden fell in love with a handsome young settler, and after she was denied permission to marry him by her chieftain father, the couple leapt off the cliff hand-in-hand rather than live their lives apart."

I wondered if anything more could be said about this legend, so I talked to someone who knows Bangor — and knows it well. I contacted writer, historian and Bangor resident Richard Shaw, who told me a bit more about Lover's Leap.

"The story of star-crossed Penobscot Indian lovers who jumped to their deaths is pure fiction (even the names aren't Indian), but it's part of the city's folklore and lots of fun to read over," Shaw told me in an email exchange.

Shaw wrote a story himself in the Bangor Daily News in 1975 about the Lover's Leap legend and the tale of the chief's daughter Tahalta, also referred to as Tahiti in old postcards featuring the scene, and a young man named Shawano, who her father disapproved of.

The legend reminded me of the historically inaccurate movie adaption of the Pocahontas story — a young Native American woman who falls in love, but the union of which is met with disapproval by her chieftain father.

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SHELBY
HARTIN



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Members of the cast rehearse their parts for "La Boheme" at the Collins Center in Orono on Tuesday.

Live opera returns

Bangor Symphony, children's choir to perform 'La Boheme'

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

At a rehearsal for "La Boheme" on Tuesday evening, more than a dozen young singers waited in the wings for their cue to emerge. Conductor Lucas Richman stood back to the house, baton in hand, while adults on stage had their turn, singing their parts in the show at half-voice.

Suddenly, the children, all part of the larger Bangor Area Children's Choir, emerged, filled the space with the angelic sound of their voices.

The Bangor Symphony Orchestra is bringing Giacomo Puccini's "La Boheme," a four-act opera, to the Collins Center for the Arts for a special 120th anniversary performance. For the first time in recent memory, a live opera will be staged here.

"La Boheme" tells a story of bohemian life, love and loss in 19th century Paris. Tenor John Bellemer joins the cast as Rodolfo with Emily Birsan as Mimi and Bangor's own Eric Mihan as Colline.

The production also will feature several other faces and voices audience members may recognize: local performers Ira Kramer and Justin Zang, along with members of The University of Maine Singers, Oratorio Society and Bangor Area Children's Choir.

"It's our 120th anniversary, and when Lucas Richman, our music director, and myself were talking about this anniversary season, we wanted to do something big," Brian Hinrichs, executive director of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra, said.

"Live opera has not been done in [Greater Bangor] in



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Nathaniel Pettingale, 9, jokes around during rehearsal with members of the Bangor Area Children's Choir for "La Boheme" at the Collins Center.

a very long time," Hinrichs explained. "Regular patrons of the CCA enjoy screenings of performances by NT Live and the MET Opera, but this fully costumed show with projected scenery will be a first," Hinrichs said. "I think that there was a void for the real live thing here, locally produced."

Hinrichs said the planning of the production, which took more than a year, was a major endeavor for the BSO, and part of

what made it successful was the community partnerships it involved.

"This is where you march," director Loren Lester said as he stood in a row of the house, helping the choir as they got used to the stage and their positions on it.

Nathaniel Pettingale, age 9, shot to attention, lifting one foot after the other and raising his hand in a salute.

The girls beside him
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King adaptation to have Maine premiere

Emerge fest in Lewiston to show short story 'Suffer the Little Children'

BY JOEL CRABTREE
SPECIAL TO THE BDN

When adapting Stephen King's short story "Suffer the Little Children" for screen, Corey and Haley Norman — the Portland-based director-writer duo and married couple behind Bonfire Films — didn't let the name behind the source material serve as a burden. Instead, they saw it as a dream project where they could have fun making a film that stayed true to the spirit of the original story.

But what about showing the film to the horror master himself?

"I'm not gonna lie, I think that's where the pressure is," director Corey Norman said, noting that every time he gets ready to send it, he makes another minor tweak in an effort to get the film as close to perfection as possible. King hasn't seen it yet.

Recently coming off a long stretch of overnight shoots for an upcoming horror anthology called "The Witching," the Normans will get a bit of a breather to enjoy the Maine premiere of "Suffer the Little Children" at the Emerge Film Festival, scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, April 30, at the Franco Center Heritage Hall in Lewiston.



COURTESY OF COREY AND HALEY NORMAN

The film "Suffer the Little Children," adapted from Stephen King's short story by Corey and Haley Norman, will premiere in Maine at the 2016 Emerge Film Festival.

In "Suffer the Little Children," Corey and Haley introduce us to Ms. Sidley (Anne Bobby of "Nightbreed" fame), the kind of stern, rigid schoolteacher who probably still haunts your nightmares even as an adult. Sure, she's nasty, but that's really only the beginning of her problems, as she slowly begins to believe her pupils' bodies are becoming hosts for monsters. Is she onto something, or is she just losing her sanity?

As audiences have come to expect from Bonfire Films, "Suffer the Little Children" is every bit as dark and twisted as some of their previous efforts (the team's "ABCs of Death 2" See Emerge, Page C2

Documentary about the power of music to screen in Bangor

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

Extremists in Mali destroyed radio stations, burned instruments and threatened the lives of Mali's musicians, but a new documentary to be screened in Bangor tells another story as well — one of the power of music and the determination of the musicians who sang despite their fear.

"They arrived from all sides, from the river. My nephew was running to see his dad and they shot him," a man says, subtitles translating his haunting words in the trailer for "They Will Have to Kill Us First," a documentary film directed by award-winning filmmaker Johanna Schwartz.

The sound of incessant pops of gunfire mix with song. Images of Mali under

attack by Islamic extremists flash across the screen.

For Husson University's New England School of Communications, a school dedicated to teaching students about digital audio, sound mixing, set design and construction, lighting, acting and electronics, this film is important to show.

"I teach a class called 'Style and Structure of Music for Audio' and it's the first semester class for students. It's really important because it sets the foundation and tone for talking about diversity and exposing them to music they don't typically listen to," Wellington Gordon, assistant professor of audio at NESCom, said. "I realized that we needed more than just the class to cultivate a community within the students."

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watervillecreates.org
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Colby College Museum of Art • Maine Film Center
Waterville Public Library • Common Street Arts
Waterville Opera House • Waterville Main Street

April 24, 12:55 PM / Waterville Opera House
The Bolshoi Ballet: Don Quixote

April 26, 7:00 PM / Railroad Square Cinema
Solaris (a Science on Screen event)

April 27, 12:00 PM / Colby College Museum of Art
Noontime Art Talk: Dollar Trees in the American Landscape

April 29, 8:00 PM / Waterville Opera House
Shemekia Copeland

April 30, 5:30 PM / Common Street Arts
Voices of Waterville: POETRY Open Mic



Shemekia Copeland © Photo Joseph A. Rosen (1.8 Mo)