



Rock of Ages is the final Penobscot Theatre Company show of the 2015-2016 season.

MAGNUS STARK

Joe Elliott of Def Leppard talks what has kept band strong

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

For almost 40 years, Def Leppard has graced stages around the world. The band has sold millions upon millions of records worldwide and has had numerous hit singles. The group's name and sound have become synonymous with the word "rock," and its power over audiences transcends generations.

For Joe Elliott, lead singer of Def Leppard, that power is something he has never underestimated.

"If I knew the answer to that, I would bottle it and sell it," Elliott said when asked what it is about Def Leppard that appeals to all ages.

"If you catch people at a certain age and don't mess up, you can keep them forever. Like Bowie had me forever. Mott the Hoople had me forever. Queen, T. Rex — all these bands that I caught when I was 12 or 13. You know, they were my bands. And all you can hope for is that we were the same for the generation down from us and that we were one of the bands that they clinged on to," Elliott said.



KAZUYO HORIE

Def Leppard will take the stage at the Darling's Waterfront Pavilion in Bangor on June 24 where they will be joined by REO Speedwagon and Tesla.

Def Leppard will take the stage as part of the Machias Savings Bank Concert Series on Friday, June 24, at the Darling's Waterfront Pavilion in Bangor, and Elliott said that audiences can expect to have a great time.

"For those who have never been, they can expect a highly visual, highly aural show. We like to put on a show where people go, 'Wow, that's the best show I've seen all year.' We play all the songs that everybody expects to hear, we play songs they won't expect to hear, and with our new album out, we'll play some new songs," Elliott said, referencing Def Leppard's newest self-titled album, which was released in October 2015.

Elliott and Def Leppard last played in Bangor in 2012 with Poison and Lita Ford, but this time, the band is touring with REO Speedwagon and Tesla.

Elliott, who was battling illness in January
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'Rock' party

Fine cast helps rollicking musical sing

BY JUDY HARRISON
BDN STAFF

I walked into the Bangor Opera House on Friday night fully prepared to dislike Penobscot Theatre Company's production of "Rock of Ages." But, then, Andrew Crowe lurched onto the stage in pleather pants, a fake fur coat and charisma that could not be contained. I was gone.

Gone back to Sept. 8, 1967, when I watched Jim Morrison in real leather pants perform with The Doors, light a dollar bill on fire and do things with a microphone I would not appreciate until I was deep into middle-age.

But that's the point of "Rock of Ages," a trifle of a story strewn together between the rock 'n' roll hits of the 1980s, about two decades past my era. The show depicts that moment in theatergoers' lives when one song blaring late at night on the radio perfectly captured what was happening in their lives and expressed feelings they didn't know they had.

Writer Chris D'Arienzo and arranger/orchestrator Ethan Popp capture that time with humor and a jaded eye, aged by experience. Director and choreographer Michele Colvin wrings every ounce of absurdity and insanity from the script while paying homage to the music of Styx, Journey, Bon Jovi, Pat Benatar, Twisted Sister, Poison and Whitesnake.

Our guide on this trek back to the Sunset Strip of 1987 is Lonnie, who narrates the story and conjures up plot twists. He is played by Dominick Varney, who has not been turned loose on a role like this since he played Frank 'N' Furter two years ago in Penobscot Theatre Company's "The Rocky Horror Show."

Varney's Lonnie reels the audience into the Bourbon Room, where rock 'n' roll changes lives and romances spark and die, like a skilled barker at a carnival. Varney's over-the-top performance and his infectious energy keep the show moving, and when he's not onstage, it often drags, especially in the weak second act.

Ira Kramer and Christie Robinson

portray star-crossed lovers Drew and Sherrie, who come to the Sunset Strip chasing their dreams. Both give strong performances in stereotypical roles. Their voices are especially well suited for the love songs.

Kramer, who starred in "Grease" two years ago at the University of Maine, can hold an audience in the palm of his hand but doesn't do that for "Rock of Ages." There was something unnaturally tentative about Kramer's performance Friday night. Rather than holding Kramer back so that his Drew is a guy with less talent than direction, a better choice for the director would have been to let Kramer release his inner Danny Zuko and own the stage. Drew chooses lasting love over a rock star's lascivious lifestyle anyway.

The role of Sherrie is underwritten and a bit too 1950s naive for the mid- to late-1980s age of AIDS. But Robinson gives the girl a survivor's spine and a soul full of stamina. Her Sherrie isn't overwhelmed by the sleaze of the Sunset Strip, she just grows tired of men not
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THEATER REVIEW

New shop full of Maine-made treasures

Father's Day always falls right around my dad's birthday on June 14. I'm not the kind of person to lump together birthdays and holidays when they fall close together. I prefer instead to treat them separately and give my dad something for each.

Thankfully a new gift shop recently opened in Bangor, and I knew I would be able to find something he would enjoy.

My dad appreciates the hard work people put into the things they make. In fact, he's quite the craftsman himself. He can make practically anything, so I think he would appreciate The Not So Empty Nest, which is owned by Melinda Frost.

When I stepped through

the doors of the new shop, I didn't know where to look first. From floor to ceiling, the space at 624 Hammond St. was filled with Maine-made treasures.

About 75 percent of the products at The Nest, as Melinda and her mother, Winni, like to call it, are made in Maine. In a unique concept, the artisan and the shop benefit because the items are sold on consignment. The shop also has some wholesale items, which Melinda order to complement the products in the store.

Melinda, who has 35 years of retail management experience in big-box stores, dreamed of opening a shop like The Nest for quite some time.

"This was the empty-nesting plan," she told me. Melinda, the mother of three children over the age of 20, said the shop's name actually came about as a joke.

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SHELBY HARTIN | BDN

Owner Melinda Frost and her mother, Winni Murray, stand behind the counter at The Not So Empty Nest, a new gift shop in Bangor.

Writer pens 3rd mystery featuring Aroostook agent

BY PAULA BREWER
PRESQUE ISLE STAR-HERALD

Somewhere in Aroostook County, a young boy emerges from the trees and approaches a Border Patrol agent. Wary, the agent attempts conversation. When the boy finally speaks, his Ukrainian accent seizes her attention.

So begins "Destiny's Pawn," the latest novel by D.A. Keeley in his series focusing on Aroostook County resident, single mom and U.S. Border Patrol agent Peyton Cote, in a story weaving together aspects of the crisis in Ukraine and a famously unsolved American art theft.

D.A. Keeley is a pen name of John R. Corrigan, a former Presque Isle resident who taught at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics and then at Northern Maine Community College. He has also

written under K.A. Delaney. Both pen names were inspired by his daughters, Delaney, Audrey and Keeley.

Corrigan, his wife and family now live in Gill, Massachusetts, where he is a teacher and department head at the Northfield Mount Hermon boarding school.

"Destiny's Pawn" was published June 8, and Corrigan calls it his most plot-driven book of the series.

"I see the series as three very different books," he said recently at his home. "I like that the publisher lets me do that. 'Bitter Crossing' is pretty much your classic third-person detective story, really, and 'Fallen Sparrow' is more about Peyton Cote's past. And then 'Destiny's Pawn' is told from several different points of view."

The novel involves the
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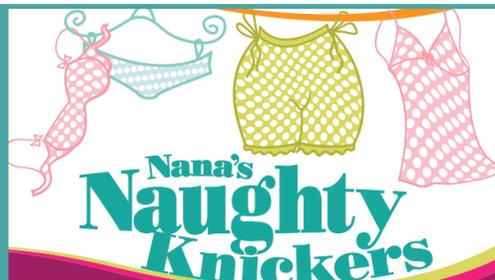
June 22, 7:15 PM / Railroad Square Cinema

The Messenger - an engaging, visually stunning, three-act emotional journey, one that mixes its elegiac message with hopeful notes and unique glances into the influence of songbirds on our own expressions of the soul.

June 25, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM / Inland Hospital

LET'S GO! Hike & Bike

Inland Hospital is sponsoring a Hike & Bike event at the East Kennebec Trail on Benton Avenue, Winslow. Bring your boots or your bikes—or borrow equipment from Inland Hospital—to explore this family-friendly trail that follows along the Kennebec River. For more information visit: inlandhospital.org



June 17, 18 at 7:30 PM; June 19 at 2 PM
For tickets: 873-7000 or www.operahouse.org