

PTC

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relationships," Beck said. "The scenes where Jamie is talking about supporting Cathy and vice versa — that's what friends do for each other and what we have done for each other."

Varney expressed that the directing of the performance, done by Michele Colvin, has been important in fostering the already-established relationship between he and Beck and letting it bring Jamie and Cathy to life.

"The challenge for me was to make sure I put myself in each of their shoes before I did their scenes. Because their scenes are separate, it's very easy for me, as a woman, to fall into her story. You can't just be Cathy; you have to be Jamie, too. As a director you have to flip back and forth and be involved with both of the characters sincerely," Colvin said.

"The stories are told separately, and I think that what could happen in directing this show and with people who don't necessarily know each other is that their songs, since they're so separate, just become about Jamie singing to Cathy. I think what works with this is that you know I'm singing about Brienne. There's never a thought when you would think I'm 'acting.' And that's because we have an amazing relationship," Varney said.

Varney and Beck will bring their own experiences to their roles, but they expect the same from the audience.

"The musical is written

very minimalistically, and the stories are very separate. You're guided by the emotions of these characters as they go through their lives backward and forward," Varney said. "Seeing it live, you draw on your own experiences. The pictures you're imagining and the conversations you're imagining and the face Jamie is singing to — you're imagining what that face looks like because you've experienced that before, and it becomes really personal."

"It's something that we all relate to on one level or another," Colvin added.

Beck and Varney are in their 30s and playing the role of 20-somethings. Varney had some reservations at first.

"When we first got offered these roles, we first thought, 'Wait, aren't we a little too old for this?'" Varney said. "But we looked up the original cast and the original Broadway performance of the show, and they were in their 30s when they did the show." Varney, Beck and Colvin all thought that was important.

"Possibly, you can't be living it while you're playing it. You have to be able to look back and say 'I remember this,'" Colvin said.

The musical already lends itself to looking back because of its unique timeline, which works backward from one perspective and forward from another simultaneously. The set, designed by Tricia Hobbs, reflects that view of time as well, with a giant clock sitting in the background, reminding audiences of time, even as it becomes fluid and changes throughout the show.

"I think it's a musical written like a puzzle," Var-



MAGNUS STARK | PENOBSCOT THEATRE COMPANY

From March 10 to 27, Penobscot Theatre Company will stage "The Last Five Years," a musical written by Jason Robert Brown that explores a five-year relationship between characters Jamie, a successful novelist, and Cathy, a struggling actress.

ney said. "The audience has to put the pieces together. And in the shades of gray moments, they can decide whether their actions were just and necessary or were driven by selfishness and jealousy. It's up to the audience to decide."

In a way, Beck and Varney won't be alone on stage, even when they're standing up there on their own.

They'll have some backup from live musicians under the direction of music director Ben McNaboe.

"The music carries part of the story and part of the emotion, as well. They're a character in the play just like them," Colvin said.

Varney and Beck have been doing vocal training with Tina and Philip Burns of Burns Vocal Arts Music

Studio since December, working on technique, stamina and perfecting their vocal abilities. As the only two characters in the story, which has minimal dialogue, "the songs tell the story," as Beck said.

"One of our favorite kinds of work is this work — with actors," Tina Burns said of she and her husband's time with Varney and Beck.

"They really dig in with everything they've got."

"One of the things I found really interesting is that everything that you will ever have to do as a musical theatre artist presents itself in these roles," Burns said. "All of the technical requirements that are hard to navigate are there." From head voice to chest voice to mixed voice and more, the demands of the role were varied and intricate.

"I think of Jason Robert Brown's music and the requirements of this role being like the Mozart of musical theatre," Burns said. Burns also complimented the work of Colvin as a director and her special attention to the choreography of the show.

"The movement she's created for this stage highlights and compliments how these singers use these voices," Burns said of Colvin. "It's so sensitive to what's required of the role technically."

Through working on voice with the two for this show, Burns also was reminded of her own journey with her husband and believes everyone in the audience will relate to one point or another.

"There are moments in the show where there's going to be a line, whether it's sung or said, that will resonate with every single person in the audience," she said.

"The Last Five Years" will feature March 10-27 at the Bangor Opera House. For tickets, visit boxoffice.printtixusa.com/penobscot/eventcalendar, call 942-3333 or visit the box office at the Bangor Opera House.

Pulling back the curtain on Kagame's Rwanda

BY DIANA NELSON JONES
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

BAD NEWS: LAST JOURNALIST IN A DICTATORSHIP by Anjan Sundaram; Doubleday Books (208 pages, \$25.95)

In the early 1990s, the world watched in horror as Hutus and Tutsis slaughtered each other in Rwanda. When it ended, Paul Kagame was heralded as one of the leaders of forces that ended the bloodshed.

As president since 2000, President Kagame has fooled much of the world into thinking his country is a happy democracy and has received tons of international funding because on the surface Rwanda shines as an example of stability. The capital is clean, it has modern roads and lighting, malls — all the trappings that look good to the Western eye — and many of his measures have improved people's lives, from a reduced mor-

tality rate to an expanding economy and national health insurance.

But author Anjan Sundaram tells a different story, one so chilling and painful that it should encourage international eyes on elections there. Sundaram, a mathematician by training, published "Stringer: A Reporter's Journey Into the Congo" in 2014. In his latest book, "Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship," Sundaram tells of his years as a mentor in an internationally funded program to train young journalists in the fledgling democracy.

He had eager young students and people who had worked as journalists who wanted to wear the title more respectfully. Increasingly, as they set out to do the serious work of watchdogs, they came under surveillance. One reporter in particular, Gibson, is a heartbreaking soul, a young man with integrity, talent and tenacity. He had bought

a couch as a symbol of the serenity he craved but ended up selling it to pay for his escape to Uganda.

A paper that took on the authorities had to close. Sundaram's charges began turning, joining the reporting corps that fawned over the president and ran flattering, congratulatory articles about his work. One by one, students left the program. The author approached foreign visitors with clout for help, and they scoffed, telling him they knew of the repression but to give it time.

Kagame has received the accolades of Bill and Melinda Gates, former President Bill Clinton and many other world leaders. Paul Kagame was a victim of trauma himself as a refugee to Uganda when he was a child, and his people, the Tutsis, were killed in such numbers in Rwanda that the violence was referred to as genocide.

He is meticulous, learned and savvy, but he has carried his promising leadership into

the trap that catches so many who get power, especially when their countries are poor and rocked by destruction.

There is residual messiness and anxiety when countries emerge from trauma, and many leaders respond with dominance to maintain quiet. That just leads to disquiet. Discontent — even mild criticism — is treated as a threat. This is the way dictators seal the fate of their nations. As they clamp down, the initial pushback makes them clamp down harder, making docile people paranoid as they themselves get more paranoid, until nobody trusts anybody.

"Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship" reveals this scenario on a person-to-person level, leading the reader to a heightened recognition of how fear can be used to seep into any society, subtly at first, and then malignantly transformative. President Kagame's rule is supposed to end in 2017, but the term limits now in place are expected to be overturned.

Hartley

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But why is it important in the first place?

"Hartley was a significant artist in America, and he was Mainer," Covell said.

"Since I went back to Maine and have drawn power of Maine's force and grandeur to me I have taken another spurt and my glory has become localized which delights me beyond words," Hartley wrote to Norma Berger on April 16, 1940, as referenced in Kornhauser's text. "— as everyone knows of me in Maine now and is so kind and welcoming — the State of Maine itself having sent me a letter of 'official' recognition as Maine's #1 artist — and I am so proud of all that."

In addition, Hartley was an important figure in the history of the Bangor Art Society. He taught classes to members of the group and referred to it in a letter he wrote to a friend, which also is referenced in Kornhauser's text.

"My model last year at the

art school in Bangor and who posed for me privately God what a magnificent corps [sic] — is a Madawasca [sic] boy of Acadian descent ... a prize-fighter ... and is such a sweet lad — 22," Hartley wrote. According to Covell, the school he refers to is the group of members of the Bangor Art Society whom he taught.

In a letter reference in Kornhauser's text to Adelaide Kuntz on Feb. 2, 1940, he wrote, "I have for the first time since 1922 a real live model a magnificent young feller a light heavy weight French Canadian..."

Hartley's work throughout the years consisted of landscapes, still lifes and figures, and this painting was done in later life.

Covell has reached out to different organizations, including the Bangor Daily News, on her search for articles about his potential boxing accolades back in the '40s. No information has surfaced in that respect, but she has continued picking the brains of members of the Bangor Art Society and other friends and family to attempt to identify the unknown man.

rising to its feet and cheering in gratitude and appreciation for the respite the concert offered from the mud season and the political one.

The BSO will next perform the opera "La Bohème" at 3 p.m. Thursday, April 24, at the Collins Center for the Arts. For information, call 942-5555 or visit bangorsymphony.org.

"[My contact at the MET] looked at the census in Madawaska and he thinks [the model] was orphaned," Covell said. Covell also believes the painting's subject trained and lived at the Bangor Y.

Covell has done some searching and found several obituaries online for Albert Daigle and Norman Albert, but the ages have been off by 10 or more years.

Hartley indicated he was 22 in 1940, so if the man were alive today, he would be about 98 years old. Covell is holding out hope that someone somewhere might remember a boxer from Madawaska who posed for a paint-

ing, so she is not stopping her search yet.

"I'm hoping in the next couple of weeks to go up to Madawaska and talk to some people in nursing homes," she said.

Until then, she asks those who may have known him to reach out. Who was Albert Daigle? What did his boxing career in Maine look like? In 1965, Muhammad Ali knocked out Sonny Liston in Lewiston. Was Daigle there to see it? And how did he come to model for the painting that Covell says will feature at the MET?

Visit bangordailynews.com to find a link to the painting.



COURTESY OF MB COMMUNICATIONS

"Therese Makes a Tapestry" is a new book by Bangor author Alexandra S. D. Hinrichs.

Book

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Having a strong, female lead character was important to Hinrichs.

"I wanted to see some of the challenges young women faced and young women in particular faced," said Hinrichs. "She reaches out and finds people to cooperate with her and help her along."

The publishing of this book is a fulfillment of a life dream for Hinrichs.

"My passion really is chil-

dren's literature with a special place in the heart for historical fiction," said Hinrichs.

There will be a book launch from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 12, at The Briar Patch on Central Street in Bangor. Beginning at 1 p.m., visitors can help create a "work of many hands" using a journey loom that will later be displayed at the Maine Discovery Museum. Hinrichs will be reading from her book beginning at 2 p.m., and she will give a talk about the writing process. She also will sign books.

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THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERY LOVE STORY

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seemed lackluster. The strings, in particular, seemed to lack definition and sounded at times like the season — muddy.

That did not prevent members of the audience, a bit smaller than usual, from