

EVENTS

‘BFG’ just part of Roald Dahl’s really big year

BY RAFER GUZMAN
NEWSDAY (TNS)

Roald Dahl, the British author whose stories of outsize peaches, telekinetic school-girls and imperious chocolate moguls have become singularly strange classics of children’s literature, would have turned 100 this September. Although he died in 1990, he’s the subject of an ongoing centenary celebration involving special exhibits at England’s Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre, the publication of the brand-new Roald Dahl Oxford Dictionary — including the author’s favorite real and invented words — and even the unveiling of a peach-colored Roald Dahl English rose.

“If people want to teach their children more about Roald Dahl,” says Kris Howard, whose website Roald-DahlFans.com launched in 1996 and still receives roughly 4,000 visitors per day, “this is the year to do it.”

One place to start might be with Steven Spielberg’s adaptation of Dahl’s 1982 novel “The BFG,” due in theaters July 1. The film’s title role — a Big Friendly Giant — goes to Mark Rylance, who earned a supporting actor Oscar in Spielberg’s “Bridge of Spies” and is playing his first-ever motion-capture role. Jemaine Clement plays the hulking villain, Fleshlumppeater, while newcomer Ruby Barnhill plays a precocious orphan named Sophie. The screenplay

comes from Melissa Mathison, the Oscar-nominated writer of Spielberg’s “E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial,” who died last November after filming was completed.

Mathison, who began working on the film even before Spielberg was announced as director in 2014, was a constant presence on the set, according to Rylance. He says studios initially balked at a movie about child-eating giants and suggested several dismaying changes, including an action-sequence in which the giants attack London, but Mathison pushed to include as much of Dahl’s original content in the film as possible.

“She was very enamored of the book,” Rylance says. “She loved her children very deeply. The love of children comes to my mind as something that was moving to her.”

Dahl has been connecting with children and parents alike since at least 1961, when he scored his first major success with “James and the Giant Peach.” A string of hits followed, including “The Fantastic Mr. Fox” (1970), “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” (1965), “Danny, the Champion of the World” (a 1975 book that first introduced the BFG character) and “Matilda” (1988). All those titles became films, and some have become Broadway musicals.

For inspiration, Dahl seemed to draw from his own childhood, which in his memoirs he recalled with a

mix of fondness and bitterness. Born Sept. 13, 1916, in Wales, Dahl was merely a toddler when his older sister died of appendicitis and his father of pneumonia. He attended Repton, a punishment-driven boarding school that left the young Dahl with at least a few emotional scars. Still, Repton may have helped inspire “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” since students there often served as taste-tasters for the candy company Cadbury.

“Roald Dahl was able to walk the line between light humor and darkness, and that’s a tricky line,” says Matia Burnett, assistant editor for children’s books at Publisher’s Weekly. “There’s an awareness in his writing about injustice and powerlessness, about class issues. It’s anchored in these hard realities.”

Over the years, Dahl stirred his share of controversy. “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” drew so much criticism for depicting its Oompa Loompa as imported Pygmies that Dahl changed them to fictitious creatures in subsequent editions. Dahl’s antipathy toward Israel finally turned him “anti-Semitic,” he said in an interview with The Independent not long before his death. As recently as 2014, the Australian supermarket chain Aldi pulled Dahl’s 1982 book “Revoltin’ Rhymes” from shelves, citing a line that referred to Cinderella as a “dirty slut.”

“You don’t want to pass along these ideas to children, but at the same time there are so many wonderful things about his books that you don’t want to miss,” says Lynn Lobash, manager of readers services at the New York Public Library. She adds that Herge’s “Tintin” comics and Jean de Brunhoff’s “Babar” books have come under similar criticism for their outdated mores. “It’s a balance. You have to read to children, and be alert about it.”

(Spielberg, asked about Dahl’s anti-Semitic comments at a May news conference for the premiere of “The BFG” at Cannes, said he “wasn’t aware of any of Roald Dahl’s personal stories” and called his own film adaptation “a story about embracing our differences.”)

Fans of the book may be particularly pleased to hear that “The BFG” relies heavily on Dahl’s use of wordplay. The giants speak Gobblefunk, a language that includes fanciful words like “glumptious” (meaning tasty), “skumping” (worried) and “whizzpopper” (flatulence). Rylance says he and Mathison worked hard to incorporate as much of Dahl’s made-up lexicon as they could.

Rylance, a former artistic director at Shakespeare’s Globe theater in London, compares Dahl’s creative language to that of the Bard, who is often credited with coining — or at least giving new meaning to — such

now-common words as lonely, zany and dauntless.

“Language is such a beautiful sound that humans make,” says Rylance. “Not just the heart of it, but what I call the limbs — the arms and legs of it that reach out. And Roald Dahl’s speech — he’s just got incredible arms and legs, doesn’t he?”

Other big guys

Moviegoers love large creatures. We all know the gargantuan Godzilla, the colossal King Kong and the outsize alien in “Cloverfield.” Human giants are a slightly rarer breed on-screen, but here are a few notable examples.

ATTACK OF THE 50-FOOT WOMAN (1958) “Incredibly huge! With huge desires!” This sci-fi flick has become synonymous with camp, but don’t underestimate it. With its none-too-veiled overtones of sexual hysteria and emasculating wrath, it’s not as dumb as it looks. Four years later, when Federico Fellini put a giant woman in “Boccaccio ’70,” everyone called it art.

“Village of the Giants” (1965) This youth flick — based on H.G. Wells’ “Food of the Gods” — is a Z-grade treat. Little Ronny Howard, before he became the prominent director Ron, plays a boy genius whose growth-activating goo falls into the hands of some teenage punks. The special effects aren’t (always) bad, and Beau Bridges is memorable as Fred, a literally colossal

jerk. Musical appearances by Freddy Cannon and the Beau Brummels.

“The Princess Bride” (1987) Andre the Giant, the late wrestler whose massive 7-foot-4-inch frame was the result of the medical condition gigantism, found his best film role in this delightfully fractured fairy tale. Andre played Fezzik, a big bruiser with a kind heart — a fair description of the man himself, according to screenwriter William Goldman. Andre died in 1993 of heart failure, at the age of 46.

“Gulliver’s Travels” (2010) Has any movie successfully adapted Jonathan Swift’s satirical novel? In this attempt, Jack Black plays a modern-day Lemuel Gulliver who lands in Lilliput and becomes, in relative terms, a giant. Despite an excellent cast (Jason Segel, James Corden, Emily Blunt) and expensive special effects, the film became a Christmas Day bomb at the box-office.

“Gods of Egypt” (2016) Alex Proyas’ fantasy film, released in February, tells the story of Egyptian gods (Gerard Butler, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) who tower 9 feet tall over mere mortals (Brenton Thwaites, Courtney Eaton). The visual effects — which involved forced perspective — ended up looking odd, as if some actors were merely standing closer to the camera than others. Critics weren’t impressed. The Hollywood Reporter began its review with: “Oh, dear.”

Things to Do

AUGUSTA — Author Douglas Rooks talking about his new book, “Statesman: George Mitchell and the Art of the Possible,” 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday, June 30, Gardiner Public Library, 152 Water St. Books available for purchase. Free and open to all.

BANGOR — River City Cinema presents “Summer of Love” outdoor summer movie series, sundown Fridays in July, Pickering Square: “Breakfast at Tiffany’s,” July 1; “Harold and Maude,” July 8; “The Princess Bride,” July 15; “Say Anything,” July 22; “You’ve Got Mail,” July 29; rain date Aug. 5. Free.

BANGOR — Downtown Bangor Partnership’s 11th annual Cool Sounds Summer Concert Series and Fresh Air Market presented by Emera Maine and Beal College, 5-8 p.m. Thursdays, July and August, West Market Square and along Merchants Plaza. Free. Juke Rockets Blues Band, July 7; Trendy Robots, July 14; to be announced, July 21; William Joseph Jordan, July 28; Broadway Rocks Bangor, Aug. 4; The Rotating Taps, Aug. 11; RetroRockerz, Aug. 18; Jon King, Aug. 25.

BANGOR — Penobscot Theatre Company Dramatic Academy youth production, “School of Rock,” 7 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, July 14-16; 2 p.m. Saturday, July 16; 3 p.m. Sunday, July 17, 131 Main St. 626-674-0942 or penobscot-theatre.org.

BANGOR — Maine Army National Guard 195th Army Band concert, 7 p.m. Thursday, June 30, Bangor Waterfront. Free.

BELFAST — “Conscious Falling,” original collaborative adventure in performance with Barbara Maria, Kathryn Robyn and Beverly Mann, 7:30 p.m. Friday through Sunday, July 8-10, Playhouse, 107 Church St. \$10 at the door. Seating limited. Reservations, Mary Weaver, Playhouse, 338-5777.

BLUE HILL — Flash in the Pans street dance, 7:30-9 p.m. Monday, July 4, Blue Hill Town Park. Benefits Blue Hill Historical Society and Peace

Ridge Sanctuary. Flash-inthepans.org.

BREWER — Bangor Singles Club dances, 8 p.m.-midnight Fridays, Brewer Eagles Club, 22 Atlantic Ave.: Mainely Country, July 1; Honky Tonk, July 8; Allison Ames, July 15; Bushwhack, July 22; New Society, July 29. Marilyn, 827-5751.

BREWER — “The Little Mermaid Jr.,” 6-8:30 p.m. Friday through Sunday, July 8-10, Next Generation Theatre, 39 Center St. \$7, \$4 students under 17. 989-7100 or nextgentheatre@gmail.com.

DEER ISLE — “Imaging the Sea” exhibit featuring photographs taken by members of Deer Isle’s fishing community, through July 17, Kingman Gallery, 117 Center District Crossroad. Benefits Island Fishermen’s Wives Association. Gallery hours, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; 1-5 p.m. Sunday. 348-9333.

DOVER-FOXCROFT — Summer Program Series for children, 11 a.m. Wednesdays, through Aug. 3, Thompson Free Library. 564-3350 or email df@thompson.lib.me.us.

EASTPORT — The Eastport Moonlight Movies, 8 p.m. Fridays, Sutherland Amphitheater, 80 Water St.: “Jaws,” July 1; “The King and I,” July 8; “Edward Scissorhands,” July 15; “The Second Best Marigold Hotel,” July 22; “Frozen,” July 30. 214-0040 or lolly@sweetiesdowneast.com.

ELLSWORTH — Baked bean and casserole supper, 4:30-6 p.m. Saturday, July 2, Union Congregational Church, North Street, Ellsworth Falls. Baked beans, salads, casseroles, hot dogs, rolls, pies and beverages. \$8, \$4 children, free to children under 5. 667-8425.

ELLSWORTH — Christian rock band Unspoken, 7 p.m. Saturday, July 2, The Grand. Reserved seating only, \$20; \$25 VIP seating in the first five rows, includes a pre-show question and session with band. 667-9500 or grandonline.org.

ELLSWORTH — Summer Waterfront Concert series, 6 p.m. Fridays: Em and Company, July 1; violinist Gus LaCasse, July 8;

Ellacapella, July 15, Union River Harbor Park. Free.

ELLSWORTH — Six-wicket golf croquet, 2-4 p.m. Tuesdays, June-October, Woodlawn Museum, Gardens & Park, 19 Black House Drive, Route 172. \$10 per week for noncroquet members. Equipment provided if needed. No experience necessary. 667-8671 or woodlawnmuseum.com.

GREAT CRANBERRY ISLAND — Meet the Artists, 4:30-6 p.m. Saturday, July 2, and Tuesday, July 12, Cranberry House, 251 Great Cranberry Road. Painters Susanah Howland of Lincoln, Massachusetts, and Tom Fitzharris of New York, printmaker Gene Shaw of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and sculpture/ceramic artist Linda Casbon of Brooklyn, New York, are fellows-in-residence June 30-July 24 at The Heliker-LaHotan Foundation. Free.

MACHIAS — Machias Bay Chamber of Commerce offers free outdoor movies, sunset every other Saturday, box car next to Station 1898, across from Helen’s Restaurant. “The Good Dinosaur,” July 2; “HOME,” July 16; “Mr. Peabody and Sherman,” July 30; “Pan,” Aug. 13; “Zootopia,” Aug. 27. 255-4402.

MONMOUTH — “Puss in Boots,” 1 p.m. Saturday, July 2, 9, 16 and 23, Theater at Monmouth. Ticket information, 933-9999, boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org or theateratmonmouth.org.

MOUNT DESERT — Acadia Repertory Theatre Children’s Program performing “The Princess and the Pauper,” 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays, through Aug. 27, Acadia Repertory Theatre, 1154 Main St. Tickets available 10 a.m. day of production. \$9, \$6 children. 244-7260 or art@acadiarep.com.

ORONO — Church of Universal Fellowship Music with a Mission Series: An Evening of Classical Music, 7 p.m. Friday, July 1, at the church. \$10. Benefits Alzheimer’s Association.

PORTLAND — “TITANIC: The Artifact Exhibition,” through Oct. 14, Portland Science Center, 68 Commercial St. Prices \$17-\$19.50. 888-718-4253, Info@PortlandScienceCenter.com or www.port-

landsciencecenter.com.

SEARSMONT — Animal portraits in oil with elements of collage by Maine artist Sara Gagan, through July 6, Searsmont Public Library, Main Street North.

SOUTHWEST HARBOR — Caroline Homer, accompanied by Ben Haney, singing German Arts songs by Brahms, Schubert, Schumann and Wolf, 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, July 5, St

John’s Church, 315 Main St. Ben Haney’s solo performance will include works by Chopin, Copland and others. \$10. Benefits food pantry. 244-8061 or scovino@prexar.com.

SOUTHWEST HARBOR — Family Concert Series, beginning 6:30 p.m. Thursday, June 30, Southwest Harbor Public. Original music about Acadia National Park, featuring performers from the library’s Summer Story

Camp. 244-7065.

THOMASTON — “The Music Man” directed by Daryl Hahn, 7 p.m. July 2, 3, 8 and 9, Watts Hall. No reserved seating. Tickets \$12 adults, \$6 children, \$35 maximum families at the door 6-7 p.m. each performance night. Reserve tickets at 354-0615.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.

Thursday prime time

		7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM
BROADCAST	2	NBC 207	Inside Ed.	U.S. Olympic Trials		Spartan-Team Challenge		Aquarius (N) (HD)		News
	4	CBC Newfoundland at Armageddon (N)		The National (N)				CBC Coronation		Blackstone
	5	CBS Big Bang	Broke Girl	Big Bang	Life in	Big Brother (N)		(9:59) Code Black (HD)		News
	52	CW Family Guy	Family Guy	DC's Legends		Beauty and the Beast (N)		News Seinfeld		Cougar
	6	NBC 207	Inside Ed.	U.S. Olympic Trials		Spartan-Team Challenge		Aquarius (N) (HD)		News
	7	ABC Wheel	Jeopardy!	BattleBots (N) (HD)		Greatest Hits (N) (HD)		Match Game (HD)		News
	WAGM	FOX The Insider	Ent. Tonight	Bones (HD)		Home Free (N) (HD)		News Big Bang		Big Bang
	8	ABC Wheel	Jeopardy!	BattleBots (N) (HD)		Greatest Hits (N) (HD)		Match Game (HD)		News
	MPBN	PBS PBS NewsHour (N) (HD)		Doctor Blake Mysteries		Death in Paradise		Creating Gardiner		C. Rose
	9	IND Goldbergs	Cleveland	Big Bang	Big Bang	Criminal Minds		News-Lisa CTV News		Daily Show
KIDS	13	CBS Ent. Tonight	The Insider	Big Bang	Life in	Big Brother (N)		(9:59) Code Black (HD)		News
	22	FOX Mod Fam	Mod Fam	Bones (HD)		Home Free (N) (HD)		FOX 22 News at 10 (N)		Mentalist
	33	IND M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	Andy Griffith	Andy Griffith	Happy Days Gilligan Isle		Hogan Hero Hogan Hero		C. Burnett
	38	IND Big Bang	Big Bang	The Mentalist (HD)		The Mentalist (HD)		WBZ News (N) (HD)		Seinfeld
	NICK	Thunder	Thunder	*** The Parent Trap (1998, Comedy) Lindsay Lohan, Dennis Quaid. (PG)				Friends		
	DISN	Best Fr.	K.C. Under.	Bizaardvark	Stuck	Girl Meets	Liv-Mad.	Stuck	Liv-Mad.	Backstage
	FREE	(6:45) ** Failure to Launch		(2006) (ESP) (PG-13)		Dead of Summer		Pretty Little Liars		700 Club
	HIST	Pawn Stars	Pawn Stars	Alone: A Deeper Cut (N)		Alone (N)		(:03) Mountain Men (N)		Mnt. Men
	DISC	Sharks Among Us		Tiger Beach: Sharkopedia		Nuclear Sharks (N)		Jungle Shark (N)		Shark Dark
	LEARN	TLC	My 600-Lb. Life				Extreme Weight Loss		Skin Tight: Transformed	
A&E		The First 48		The First 48		The First 48 (N)		(:01) The First 48		The First 48
ANPL		Last Alaskans: Remote		Last Alaskans: Remote		(:01) North Woods Law		(:02) Lone Star Law (N)		North-Law
CSNE		SportsNite	Early	Cannons	On, Water	Golf/World	State-Revs	Sports	SportsNet	Sports
ESPN		SportsCenter (N) (L)	30 for 30					Obstacle: BattleFrog Ch.	SportsCenter (N) (L)	
ESPN2		CFL Football Ottawa Redblacks at Montreal Alouettes. (N) (L)						CFL Football: Argonauts at Roughriders		
NBCSP		U.S. Olympic Trials		NASCAR Racing		NASCAR Racing		NASCAR Racing		NASCAR
NESN		Minor League Baseball Columbus Clippers at Pawtucket Red Sox. (N) (L)						Sports	Sports	Sports
CNBC		Jay Leno's Garage		American Greed		American Greed		American Greed (N)		Greed
CNN		Erin Burnett OutFront (N)		Anderson Cooper 360		The Eighties (N)		CNN Tonight		Tonight
NEWS	FNC	Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor (N)		The Kelly File (N)		Hannity (N)		O'Reilly
	MSNBC	Hardball Chris Matthews		All In With Chris Hayes		Rachel Maddow Show		The Last Word		All In With
	AMC	(6:30) *** Bad Boys (1995)	Martin Lawrence. (R)	Preacher An inside look at the first episodes. (N) (ESP)						
	BRV	Million Dollar Listing		Million Dollar Listing		Housewives/OC		Happens		
	CMT	Last Man Last Man	Last Man	Last Man	Dude	Steve Austin's		Last Man		Last Man
	COM	Futurama	Futurama	Jim Gaffigan	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	Daily Show
	E!	El! News (N)		The Kardashians		The Kardashians		WAGS		El! News
	FOOD	Chopped		Chopped		Chopped		Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby	Beat Bobby
	FX	** The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014, Action) Andrew Garfield. (PG-13)				Sex &		Sex &		Sex &
	VARIETY	GAC	Lakefront	Lakefront	Lakefront	Lakefront	Lakefront	Lakefront	Lakefront	
HALL		Last Man Last Man	Last Man	Last Man	The Middle	The Middle	The Middle	The Middle		Golden Girls
HGTV		Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Hunters	Hunters Int'l	Hunters
LIFE		My Crazy Ex		My Crazy Ex		My Crazy Ex (N)		I Love You... But I Lied		Arranged
MTV		Ridiculous. Ridiculous.		Ridiculous. Ridiculous.		Ridiculous. Ridiculous.		Ridiculous. Ridiculous.		Ladylike
OXY		Ice Princess	** How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days (2003)	Kate Hudson. (PG-13)				(:10) How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days		
SPIKE		(6:30) * Wrath of the Titans (2012, Fantasy) (PG-13)		Lip Sync		Lip Sync		Lip Sync		Lip Sync
SYFY		* Friday the 13th (2009, Horror) Jared Padalecki. (R)		** Resident Evil: Apocalypse (2004, Horror) (R)				Warm Bod		
TBN		Drive	Potters	Trinity	Joel Osteen	Prince	Hillsong TV	Praise the Lord		
TBS		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Broke Girl	Broke Girl	Big Bang	Big Bang	Broke Girl	Broke Girl	Conan (N)
STARZ	TCM	(6:15) Cabin in the Sky		*** Cabaret (1972, Musical) Liza Minnelli. (PG)		Liza Minnelli. (PG)		(:15) **** Hair (1979, Musical) (PG)		
	TMC	(5:30) Mr. Holland's Opus		** Pride (2007, Drama) Terrence Howard. (PG)		*** St. Vincent (2014) Bill Murray.				
	TNT	Castle (Part 2 of 2)		** Oz the Great and Powerful (2013) James Franco. (PG)				Oz the Great		
	TRAVEL	Mysteries at the Museum		Mysteries at the Museum		Mysteries at the Museum		Mysteries at the Museum		Mysteries at
	TRU	Imp. Jokers	Imp. Jokers	Adam Ruins	Adam Ruins	Adam Ruins	Adam Ruins	Imp. Jokers		Imp. Jokers
	TVL	Andy Griffith	Andy Griffith	George	George	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond		King
	USA	Mod Fam	Mod Fam	WWE SmackDown! (N)				Queen of the South (N)		Law-SVU
VH1	(5:00) *** Selena (PG)		Dating Naked		*** Selena (1997, Biography) Jennifer Lopez, Jon Seda. (PG)					
WGN-A	Elementary		Elementary		Elementary		Elementary		How I Met	
PREMIUM	HBO	(5:30) *** Independence Day (1996) (PG-13)		REAL Sports With Bryant Gumbel (ESP)		Any Given Wednesday (ESP)		** Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials (2015, Science Fiction) (ESP) Dylan O'Brien. (PG-13)		
	MAX	(:05) ** Run All Night (2015, Action) (ESP) Liam Neeson, Ed Harris, Joel Kinnaman. (R)				Outcast (ESP)		*** American Sniper (2014, War) (ESP) Bradley Cooper, Sienna Miller. (R)		
	SHOW	** Woman in Gold (2015) Helen Mirren, Maria Altman warns the government to recover stolen artwork.				Ray Donovan		Roadies A financial adviser suddenly arrives (ESP)		Gigolos (ESP)
	STARZ	** I, Robot (2004) (ESP) Will Smith. A homicide detective tracks a dangerous robot in 2035. (PG-13)				*** Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story (2004) Vince Vaughn. (PG-13)		(35) *** Ant-Man (2015) Paul Rudd. (PG-13)		
STZCNC	(6:00) * Me, Myself & Irene (2000) Jim Carrey. (R)		(:03) Spartacus: Blood and Sand (ESP)		Power Ghost is warned against going legit. (ESP)		** Lake Placid (1999, Horror) (ESP) Bill Pullman, Bridget Fonda. (R)			