Time, love and loss in Penobscot Theatre's "The Last Five Years"

BY EMILY BURNHAM OF THE WEEKLY STAFF

The two characters that make up the whole of the story of "The Last Five Years." Jason Robert Brown's popular contemporary musical, interconnect like the intricate gears in a pocket watch. As budding writer Jamie finds himself rising up, rejoicing over new love, struggling actress Cathy plunges down into despair. And in the middle, they meet, before reversing their roles

That's the joy — and the challenge — of realizing the complicated, beautiful love story at the center of "The Last Five Years," which Penobscot Theatre Company will stage March 10 through March 27 at the Bangor Opera House.

Jamie and Cathy, played by PTC standbys Dominick Varney and Brianne Beck, have appeared in many shows together, from "The Rocky Horror Show" to

"Boeing Boeing." They also happen to be close friends in real life, so the trust and comfort they have with each other onstage is easily had.

"It's fun to feel something as Jamie, and then see Brianne having the same feelings later on the show with the same intensity and excitement," said "The moment Varney. where these two characters see each other in the show for the first time, there's just such a sense of safety for the two of us. We feel so comfortable with each other.'

Director Michele Colvin, who has directed splashier, more upbeat shows with PTC including "The Wizard of Oz" and "Ring of Fire," has trained her focus on the two moving particles at the center of the show. She puts Jamie and Cathy on a set, designed by Tricia Hobbs, that references the divergent timelines of the two characters with looming, ghostly watch gears and

spare, hanging Edison lamps, lit by Scout Hough.

"As a choreographer, it's movement that I'm really drawn to," said Colvin. "And there's so much movement in this show. Jamie and Cathy are constantly moving, each in a different direction. I think movement is inherent in every part of this show.

The show is almost entirely music, with very little dialogue in between songs. It's a major workout for both performers, who carry the whole show on their backs, and for music director Ben McNaboe, who is making his PTC main stage debut. It's also a workout for the audience, who live through every twist and turn Jamie and Cathy's relationship takes. A film version, starring fellow Maine actress Anna Kendrick as Cathy, was released in 2015, boosting the little musical's profile and garnering it a new legion of young fans.
"The beautiful

thing

Dominick Varney and Brianne Beck star in Penobscot Theatre's "The Last Five Years."

about this show, however, is that I think anyone that's ever been in love and anyone that's ever had their heart broken can empathize with it," said Varney.

"You'll know what it feels like to really fly high, and also to be crushed. It's really powerful."

"The Last Five Years" is set for March 10-13, March 16-20 and March 23-27 at the Bangor Opera House. For tickets, visit penobscotheatre.org, call 942-3333 or visit the Bangor Opera House box

Developer purchases Brewer's old police station

Someone interested in opening a new restaurant and retail shop on the South Main Street lot where the city's old public safety building once stood has purchased the vacant parcel.

"The economic development office has been working on a development project for this site and has found a business desiring to construct a building for a new retail and restaurant business," the Brewer City Council order authorizing the sale states

The land that was home to the police and fire departments between 1958 and 2008 was purchased for \$23,000 by WOLO Inc., the order states.

D'arcy Main-Boyington, the city's economic development director, said after the meeting that she was not yet able to unveil the business planned, but said the development is great news for the city.

Mason's Brewery, another new restaurant and gathering place about a block

away at 15 Hardy St., got its local malt, spirituous and vinous licenses and an amusement license during Monday's council meeting, which enables it to have live music at indoor events in the restaurant.

The 20-barrel brewhouse, which is still under construction, is scheduled to open at the end of April.

Mason's is located at the former Brewer Public Works garage, which was built in 1952 and removed in early 2004.

During the meeting, councilors also:

- Recognized third grade teacher Cherrie MacInnes and her class at Brewer Community School for winning a national writing contest with their children's book "Classroom Pets." The book recently was illustrated and Kathy Kinney -- who stars as a Webbased character known as Mrs. P and also is known for her role as Mimi on " The Drew Carey Show" -- posted a video of her reading the book recently on YouTube, Several students were in attendance at the meeting and had their picture taken with the council.

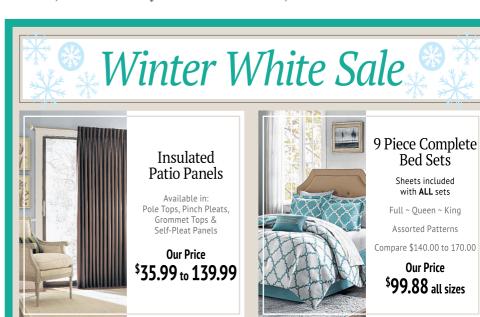
-- Honored Bruce "Pretty Boy" Boyington, a Brewer mixed martial arts fighter, who this year was honored as the most improved and breakthrough fighter of the year by the New England MMA and on Feb. 6 earned a New England Fights lightweight title.

-- Recognized the partnership between Brewer School Department and Penobscot Community Health Care, who a decade ago opened the area's first school-based health care clinic.

-- Purchased a sweep cleaner for \$171,500 to replace a 2001 one that will be traded in for \$25,000.

-- Agreed to allow Tracey Marceron, owner of Next Generation Theater and Between Friends, to use to landfill for demolition debris from 53 Center St. at no charge.

-- Authorized repaving a portion of Parkway South at a cost of \$90,000 for the city, and heard from City Manager Steve Bost that the state is repaying Interstate 395 between Odlin Road and Route 1A this











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EDITORIAL

weekly@bangordailynews.com

Aimee Thibodeau, Editor 990-8130 Fax 1-207-941-0885

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ADVERTISING

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