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CABRILLO STAGE | GUIDE, D1  
**A SUMMER FULL OF MOVIE-INSPIRED HITS**

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Santa Cruz Sentinel

# GUIDE

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## COOL PICKS

THINGS TO DO IN THE UPCOMING WEEK

TONIGHT

### TANNERY LECTURE SERIES

The Tannery's 2010-11 lecture series closes tonight with a presentation from the Santa Cruz Council of All Beings, featuring artists Cathleen O'Connell, Stephen Lynch, Dustin Wright and Lucy Martin, on the question of how the world might be different if native plants and animals had a say in the decisions of how we live. Join the conversation at 7 p.m. at the Tannery's Community Room 117. You can catch it live at [www.livestream.com/tannerylectureseries](http://www.livestream.com/tannerylectureseries).

FRIDAY

### STARSHIP

OK, so it's not going to equal last month's epic James Durbin show, but the reliable summer free concert series at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk strikes up again Friday with two shows of Starship, featuring Mickey Thomas, and goes every Friday through Labor Day. Two free shows on the Boardwalk's bandstand begin at 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. Bring blankets and get there early. Details: [www.beachboardwalk.com](http://www.beachboardwalk.com).

SATURDAY

### JAPANESE CULTURAL FAIR

For the 25th year, the Santa Cruz Japanese Cultural Fair will celebrate all things Japan at the Mission Plaza Park, in front of Holy Cross Church. The fair features a wide variety of activities, from taiko performances to storytelling to the art of Japanese tea ceremonies and shakuhachi, the Japanese bamboo flute. It all takes place Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Details: [www.jfcsantacruz.org](http://www.jfcsantacruz.org).



THURSDAY JUNE 16, 2011

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# A 'Full' Summer



Cabrillo Stage marks its 30th year with a showstopping new season, highlighted by inspired-by-the-movies hits 'The Full Monty' and 'Hairspray'

By WALLACE BAINE

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If you're a lover of top-flight musical theater, and you can't find worthwhile live entertainment this summer in Santa Cruz County, well, it's your own fault.

Certainly, the folks at Cabrillo Stage, the professional music theater group that sets up house at Cabrillo College each summer, are living up to their end of the bargain.

To mark its 30th year entertaining the masses, Cabrillo Stage is presenting three new productions, including two grand showstoppers. The first of those showstoppers is "The Full Monty," Terrence McNally's popular comedy based on the famous British film.

"Monty" begins the big Cabrillo Stage summer on June 24. It's followed by the two-person one-act musical revue "The Last Five Years," an ingenious song cycle between a couple as they fall in and out of love, opening July 8. And, finally, the summer reaches a crescendo with the high-energy, dance-heavy "Hairspray," winner of eight Tony Awards, which, like "The Full Monty," is inspired by the film of the same name. "Hairspray" opens July 22.

What's more, in commemoration of that big round-numbered anniversary, the company is welcoming back its founding artistic director, the legendary Lile Cruse to lead



ABOVE: The cast of Cabrillo Stage's dare-to-bare comedy 'The Full Monty' includes, from left, Darin Daily, Dan Housek, Kyle Payne, Kevin High, Jarrod Washington and Andrew Willis-Woodward.

LEFT: Cabrillo Stage's artistic director Jon Nordgren has programmed an ambitious schedule, including three summer productions and the return of the company's iconic former leader Lile Cruse.

SEE 'MONTY' ON D2

JANA MARCUS/CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



JANA MARCUS/CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'The Full Monty,' which tells the story of a group of working-class American men who become a risqué dance troupe after losing their jobs, was a hit on Broadway for two years after its 2000 debut. It's based on the popular 1997 British film of the same name.

## 'MONTY'

Continued from D1

the band for "Hairspray." Cruse will team up with another Cabrillo Stage veteran, director Janie Scott. The two are responsible for many of the company's most well-remembered productions, from "Peter Pan" to "Some Like it Hot."

"Lile was one of my mentors," said current artistic director Jon Nordgren. "I've known him forever and, as far as him coming back goes, I had only one condition: that he put me in the band."

The season kicks off with "The Full Monty," which shot to pop-culture fame following the release of the 1997 indie film. The musical, which debuted in San Diego in 2000 and played on Broadway for two years, retains much of the film's plot — suddenly unemployed working-class guys decide to become strippers to earn back a bit of attention from their wives as well as self-respect.

What's different is the story's orientation — it's been Americanized with the men being steel workers from Buffalo — and the addition of music, featuring such songs as "Michael Jordan's Ball" and "Let it Go."

"The show is inherently funny," said "Monty" director Dustin Leonard. "It's one of those shows that can be a lot of things. For instance, it

## IF YOU GO

'THE FULL MONTY'

**PRESENTED BY:** Cabrillo Stage  
**DIRECTED BY:** Dustin Leonard  
**WHEN:** Opening June 24. Playing Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Through Aug. 14.  
**WHERE:** The Crocker Theater, on the campus of Cabrillo College  
**COST:** \$16 to \$28 adult; \$16 to \$30 seniors; \$16 to \$26 kids 6 to 12  
**DETAILS:** [www.cabrillostage.com](http://www.cabrillostage.com)

can be a circus of slapstick on stage. That's not where I'm going with it. I'm focusing on the situations and the characters and the challenges they face, with a focus on the underlying insecurities of the men. But it's still very funny. You just can't get away from the humor."

You also can't get away from the nudity. As every savvy pop-culture observer has known for years, the play's title is a British slang-ism for going fully nude. But Leonard is quick to add that the nudity in "The Full Monty" is in no way sexualized. It's more a compelling symbol for the characters' confronting their fears and coming to terms with their true selves.

"There's nudity and there's

sexuality, but those are totally different animals," said Leonard. "(The nudity) is not meant to be sexual or arousing at all. It's about men looking at themselves in a freeing way. Pieces like this allow us to hold up a mirror to our ideas about who we are."

"It's definitely for mature audiences," said Nordgren of "Monty." "People think that a young audience might be more attracted to it, and they couldn't imagine older audiences wanting to see this. Older folks are more enlightened about these things than you think. I'm not worried about people complaining. People have complained about every show we've done. You should have heard them about 'Cabaret' (last year's production)."

Indeed, the characters of "The Full Monty" are not the chiseled bodies of sexualized daydreams. They come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, many of which have been deemed something less than attractive in contemporary culture. One of the characters is typically played by a demonstrably overweight actor to bring out the show's body-acceptance themes.

"These are guys everybody can identify with," said Leonard. "And they're wrestling with the questions that a lot of men are dealing with. 'Am I a good husband?' 'Am I a good father?' 'Am I still attractive?' I love pulling that out of the show."

Being staged later in the summer, "The Last Five Years" is a show focused on the pitfalls of modern

romance. It features Andrew Ceglie and Ariel Buck, who were both involved in the Cabrillo Stage production of "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change," the last two years. Ceglie's role finds him singing songs about the beginning of an exciting relationship while his female counterpart sings about the relationship in reverse, with the songs about the breakup first.

"Hairspray," based on the famous movie by John Waters, is a huge crowd-pleaser that focuses on the famously rotund heroine Tracy Turnblad and her efforts to integrate the 1960s-era TV show on which she becomes a dance champion. The show was performed more than 2,500 times on Broadway.

Cabrillo Stage also announced that it will have a new holiday production called "Plaid Offings" in December, a spin-off of the popular musical "Forever Plaid." This ambitious new season comes on the heels of severe cutbacks at Cabrillo College, which provides a small fraction of Cabrillo Stage's operating budget plus, more importantly, the world-class facility at the Crocker Theater and other valuable in-kind considerations.

"It's hard to talk about because the decisions have not been made," said Nordgren of the precarious state of the college's support for Cabrillo Stage. "We don't want to lose anything of what we have. But I'm confident we'll continue on."