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COOL PICKS

THINGS TO DO
IN THE
UPCOMING
WEEK

FRIDAY

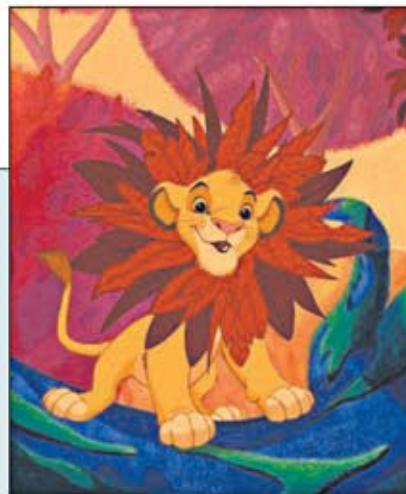
BATHS

The latest project of mercurial and adventurous Southern California musician Will Wiesenfeld is called 'Baths,' mixing organic music with electronic textures and beats, as offered on Baths' debut album 'Cerulean.' Wiesenfeld comes to the Kuumbwa Jazz Center with fellow music explorers DNTEL and Raleigh Moncrief. Showtime is 8 p.m. Friday. Details: www.kuumbwajazz.org.

SATURDAY

'THE LION KING'

Disney's landmark 1994 animation classic is being re-released in a special 3-D version and will be presented in the 500-seat Del Mar Theatre in Santa Cruz at 10 a.m. on Saturday as a benefit for Second Harvest Food Bank. Anyone bringing a nonperishable food item to donate gets in free. That's a win-win for everybody. Details: www.thenick.com



THIS WEEKEND

'13'

The performers at Mount Madonna High School's new musical '13' should know a thing or two about its subject matter. The hit play is about the joys and heartaches of turning 13, as told through the eyes of a young New Yorker in Indiana about to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah. The show plays for three performances Friday and Saturday night and Sunday afternoon at the beautiful Mount Madonna campus. Details: www.mountmadonnaschool.org.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 15, 2011

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JANA MARCUS/CONTRIBUTED

The vocal quartet the Plaids return in the holiday-themed sequel 'Plaid Tidings' at Cabrillo Stage through Dec. 30.

THEATER

Dreaming of a 'Plaid' Christmas

By WALLACE BAINE

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Broadway musicals generally aren't big on sequels. For the most part, that's a movie thing.

Which might explain that nagging, but false, feeling you might have that you've seen this year's holiday production at "Cabrillo Stage" before.

"Forever Plaid," the off-Broadway hit revue which tells the tale of the ill-fated clean-cut foursome the Plaids, was presented back in 2008 at Cabrillo Stage as its holiday production.

But "Forever" was popular enough to launch a sequel. And it's that sequel, "Plaid Tidings," which is this year's holiday offering, open-

ing officially at the Crocker Theater on the Cabrillo College campus on Friday.

If you saw the original "Plaid" play, you'll remember the story of the Plaids, a misfit 1950s-style vocal quartet, all of whom died in a car crash with a bus full of Catholic

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'PLAID'

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schoolgirls on their way to see the Beatles perform on "The Ed Sullivan Show."

Bad idea opening a play by killing off all your heroes? Not if you have them come back from the Afterlife for one final shot at pop stardom. That's exactly what happens to the Plaids in the first play.

"Plaid Tidings" revisits the four boys – Smudge, Frankie, Sparky and Jinx – again summoned from the Big Sleep by one-time pop star Rosemary Clooney to come back to the realm of the living for one more show, this one with a more holiday flavor.

"They don't really know why they're there," said director and choreographer Andrew Ceglio, "other than just to spread a little more cheer. The script never specifies the reason they come back other than a general kind of cosmic recertification."

Thus begins another adventure with

the endearingly goofy foursome, played at Cabrillo Stage by young singers and actors Tad Kistner, Max Bennett-Parker, Sean Gorski and Matt Dunn. Kistner and Bennett-Parker are veterans of Cabrillo Stage's 2008 production of "Forever Plaid," as are director Ceglio and musical director Drew Lewis.

Are there Christmas songs? As surely as plaid clashes with stripes. Among the holiday songs in the show are "Let

It Snow," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," "Cool Yule" and "The Christmas Song," aka "Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire." The production will even present a matinee performance on Dec. 24, Christmas Eve.

Also part of the show is a re-imagining of the "Night Before Christmas" tale, a calypso-flavored number or two and even bongos.

As in the original play, the Plaids are designed to evoke a distinct period in popular music, a pre-rock era when vocal harmonies were meant to bedazzle audiences and stage charisma often took the form of comedy. The Plaids each have their own distinctive personalities, from the "den mother" to the class clown to the frail nosebleeder.

Still, when they get together to sing, they find those harmonies that make their familiar songs alive again for their audiences.

"This show is a blast," said Ceglio. "The music is so great, with its intricacies, it's cool dynamics, tight jazzy arrangements. It's all there."

IF YOU GO

'PLAID TIDINGS'

PRESENTED BY: Cabrillo Stage

DIRECTED BY: Andrew Ceglio

WHEN: Opening Friday, through Dec. 30.
Preview show tonight 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Crocker Theater, on the campus of Cabrillo College

COST: \$16 to \$34 adults; \$16 to \$32 seniors; \$16 to \$28 children under 12.

DETAILS: www.cabrillostage.com