

# The week ahead in L.A. theater, Nov. 26-Dec. 3: 'Pang!' at 24th Street Theatre and more

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By Matt  
Cooper

The week ahead in L.A. theater, Nov. 26-Dec. 3: 'Pang!' at 24th Street Theatre and more

The radio-style drama "Pang!" at 24th Street Theatre looks at families facing food insecurity. With Donna Simone Johnson. (Will O'Loughlin)

## THEATER

*Capsule reviews are by Philip Brandes (P.B.), F. Kathleen Foley (F.K.F.), Margaret Gray (M.G.), Charles McNulty (C.M.) and Daryl H. Miller (D.H.M.).*

### Openings

**Jersey Boys** Tony-winning bio-musical about Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. The Granada Theatre, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara. Mon.-Tue., 7:30 p.m. \$55-\$99. (805) 899-2222.

**The Lady With All the Answers** Staged reading of David Rambo's play about advice columnist Ann Landers. Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre. Mon., 7 p.m. Free; donations accepted. (626) 355-4318.

**Joy!** Members of the John Burroughs High School Vocal Music Association perform seasonal favorites. The Garry Marshall Theatre, 4252 Riverside Drive, Burbank. Tue., 6 and 8 p.m. \$35, \$45. (818) 955-8101.

**Astrid Hadad: (De)Constructing Mexicanidad** The performance artist reexamines iconic Mexican symbols in this solo work. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood. Wed., 7:30 p.m. Free. (310) 443-7000.

**A Very Die Hard Christmas** Theatre Unleashed reprises this send-up of the 1988 Bruce Willis action flick; in repertory with "It's a Wonderful Life: The Radio Play." The Belfry Stage, Upstairs at the Crown, 11031 Camarillo St., North Hollywood. Wed., Fri., next Sun., 8 p.m.; ends Dec. 17. \$20; \$30 for both shows. (818) 849-4039.

**A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder** Tony-winning musical comedy about a distant relative who seeks to eliminate his competition for the family fortune. Fred Kavli Theatre, Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza, 2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks. Thu., 7:30 p.m.; Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat., 2 and 8 p.m.; next Sun., 2 and 7:30 p.m.; ends Dec. 3. \$34-\$89. (800) 745-3000.

**It's a Wonderful Life: The Radio Play** Theatre Unleashed remounts this show based on Frank Capra's 1946 holiday fable; in repertory with "A Very Die Hard Christmas." The Belfry Stage, Upstairs at the Crown, 11031 Camarillo St., North Hollywood. Thu., Sat., 8 p.m.; next Sun., 3 p.m.; ends Dec. 17. \$20; \$30 for both shows. (818) 849-4039.

**Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley** Ensemble Theatre Company stages Margot Melcon and Lauren Gunderson's sequel to Jane Austen's classic novel "Pride and Prejudice." The New Vic, 33 W. Victoria St., Santa Barbara. Thu.-Sat., 8 p.m.; next Sun., 2 and 7 p.m.; ends Dec. 17. \$20-\$50. (805) 965-5400.

**Twas the Rush Before Christmas** Eight short plays inspired by classic holiday songs. Archway Studio/Theatre,

10509 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood. Thu.-next Sun., 8:30 p.m.; ends Dec. 3. \$20. (818) 980-7529.

**Blood Alley Christmas** All-new late-night holiday horror spectacular. Zombie Joe's Underground Theatre Group, 4850 Lankershim Blvd. North Hollywood. Fri.-Sat., 11 p.m.; ends Dec. 16. \$15. (818) 202-4120.

**A Christmas Carol** South Coast Rep's 38th annual presentation of the Dickens classic; children under 6 not admitted. South Coast Repertory, Segerstrom Stage, 655 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. Fri., 7:30 p.m.; Sat., 2:30 and 7:30 p.m.; next Sun., noon and 4 p.m.; ends Dec. 24. \$24 and up. (714) 708-5555.

**Jackie Beat: A Gay in the Manger** The veteran drag artist returns with an irreverent holiday show. Cavern Club Celebrity Theater, Casita Del Campo Restaurant, 1920 Hyperion Ave., Silver Lake. Thu., 8 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 8 and 10 p.m.; next Sun., 7 p.m.; ends Dec. 3. \$25. (800) 838-3006.

**The Groundings Holiday Show** All-new sketch show. Groundlings Theatre, 7307 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood. Dec. 1-23. Fri.-Sat., 8 and 10 p.m.; ends Dec. 23. \$25. (323) 934-4747.

**The Heart of Robin Hood** Icelandic theater company Vesturport puts its own spin on the tale of the bandit of Sherwood Forest; for all ages. Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Bram Goldsmith Theater, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills. Fri., 7:30 p.m.; Sat.-next Sun., 2 and 7:30 p.m.; ends Dec. 17. \$35-\$125. (310) 746-4000.

**Irving Berlin's White Christmas** Musical Theatre West presents this stage adaptation of the classic 1954 Bing Crosby-Danny Kaye film. Carpenter Performing Arts Center, 6200 Atherton St., Long Beach. Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat., 2 and 8 p.m.; next Sun., 1 and 6 p.m.; ends Dec. 10. \$20 and up. (562) 856-1999.

**Pacific Overtures** Stephen Sondheim's musical drama about two friends caught up in the westernization of Japan in the mid-19th century. Chromolume Theatre at the Attic, 5429 W. Washington Blvd., L.A. Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; next Sun., 2 and 7 p.m.; ends Dec. 17. \$30. (323) 205-1617.

**Santasia — A Holiday Comedy** Long-running show features musical parodies, stop-motion animated movies and more. Whitefire Theatre, 13500 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks. Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; ends Dec. 25. \$28, \$40. (818) 990-2324.

**Tomas Kubinek: Certified Lunatic and Master of the Impossible** The veteran vaudevillian performs; for ages 9 and up. Théâtre Raymond Kabbaz, Le Lycée Français de Los Angeles, 10361 W. Pico Blvd., L.A. Fri., 7:30 p.m. \$15, \$25. (310) 286-0553.

**All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914** Theater Latté Da's drama with music based on the true story of an unlikely holiday celebration on a WWI battlefield. Soka Performing Arts Center, 1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo. Sat., 8 p.m. \$32, \$40. (949) 480-4278.

**Antony and Cleopatra** Shakespeare's tragic tale of politics and passion in ancient Egypt and Rome. Gray Studios, 5250 Vineland Ave., North Hollywood. Sat., 8 p.m.; next Sun., 7:30 p.m.; ends Dec. 30. \$30; opening night only, \$50. (310) 366-5505.

**Jingle Bell Rock** The doo-wop *a cappella* group the Alley Cats perform a holiday show. CalTech's Beckman Auditorium, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Pasadena. Sat, 8 p.m. \$10-\$42. (626) 395-4652.

**Miracle on 34th Street** Family-friendly adaptation of the 1947 holiday movie. Lewis Family Playhouse, 12505 Cultural Center Drive, Rancho Cucamonga. Sat., 2 and 7:30 p.m.; next Sun., 2 p.m.; ends Dec. 10. \$16-\$22.50. (909) 477-2752.

**Now and Neverland** A grieving girl tries to find a way forward in the wake of her brother's death in April Morrow's new fantasy drama. Loft Ensemble Theater, 13442 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks. Sat., 8 p.m.; next Sun., 7 p.m.;

ends Jan. 28. \$20. (818) 616-3150.

**Pang!** Dan Froot and Company present a triptych of live radio plays about families facing food insecurity. 24th Street Theatre, 1117 West 24th St., L.A. Sat., 8 p.m.; next Sun., 3 p.m.; ends Dec. 3. \$10-\$24. (213) 745-6516.

**The Secret Garden — The Musical** A young British girl is sent to live with her reclusive uncle and his invalid son in this adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's beloved children's novel. Chance Theater, 5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim. Sat., 8 p.m. next Sun., 3 p.m.; ends Dec. 23. \$20-\$45. (888) 455-4212.

**Sheetlejuice** Bianca Del Rio, et al., star in Peaches Christ's drag-style makeover of the 1988 horror-comedy "Beetlejuice." The Montalban Theatre, 1615 N. Vine St., Hollywood. Sat., 7 p.m. \$30 and up. (866) 468-3399.

**Winter Solstice Pagan Holiday Show** Celebration of ancient myths and rituals features acrobats, magicians, clowns and musicians. The Actors' Gang Theatre, 9070 Venice Blvd., Culver City. Sat., 8 p.m.; ends Jan. 13. \$20-\$34.99. (310) 838-4264.

**Astroglyde 2017** Holiday production includes eight new mini-tales about terror and titillation; for ages 15 and up. Zombie Joe's Underground Theatre Group, 4850 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood. Next Sun., 7 p.m.; ends Dec. 17. \$15. (818) 202-4120.

**Disney's Choo-Choo Soul "With Genevieve!"** Kid-friendly show blends hip-hop, learning and fun. La Mirada Theatre, 14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada. Next Sun., 1 and 3:30 p.m. \$12. (562) 944-9801.

**First Look Festival** Five-play showcase continues with a staged reading of Wendy Graf's "Exit Wounds." Open Fist Theatre Company, Atwater Village Theatre, 3269 Casitas Ave., L.A. Next Sun.-Mon., 8 p.m. \$10 suggested donation. (323) 882-6912.

**Hansel & Gretel: A Wickedly Delicious Musical Treat** Family-friendly show based on the Brothers Grimm's classic fairy tale. Valley Performing Arts Center, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge. Next Sun., 3 p.m. \$23 and up. (818) 677-3000.

**IAMA Holiday Cabaret: Music from the Silver Screen** Company members and celebrity guests perform songs classic films. Rockwell Table and Stage, 1714 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz. Next Sun., 8 p.m. \$35-\$100; for and drink minimums apply. (323) 380-8843.

**Jewel's Handmade Holiday Tour** The singer and family members perform holiday favorites. Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 18000 Park Plaza Drive, Cerritos. Next Sun., 7 p.m. \$80-\$115. (562) 916-8500.

## Critics' Choices

**Bob's Holiday Office Party** Sporting its original creators and longtime cast members, this long-running yuletide parody of small town eccentricity thrives on the qualities that made it a staple of the L.A. theatre scene 22 years ago – it's irreverent, crude, and devastatingly funny. (P.B.) Atwater Village Theatre, 3269 Casitas Ave., L.A. Thu.-Sat., 8 p.m.; next Sun., 7 p.m.; ends Dec. 18. \$25, \$35. (800) 838-3006.

**Caught** A gallery talk by a Chinese dissident artist is the beginning of a plunge down a rabbit hole in this art installation/theater piece. Christopher Chen's wildly inventive play inspires further creativeness in director Ed Sylvanus Iskandar and L.A. presenters Firefly Theater & Films, VS. Theatre Company and Think Tank Gallery. Ever-shifting frames of reality leave you with more questions than answers, which is good because they're questions about perception and truth. (D.H.M.) Think Tank Gallery, 939 Maple Ave., L.A. Sun., Fri.-next Sun., 7:30 p.m.; ends Dec. 10. \$65-\$80. [www.thinktank.gallery](http://www.thinktank.gallery).

**A Christmas Carol** Amid many worthy area stagings of Charles Dickens' immortal classic, this deftly performed,

meta-theatrical edition stands out for fidelity to text, witty stagecraft and heartfelt embrace of message. There are fleeting oddities, but only a diehard humbug could remain unmoved by so charming a Yuletide treat. God bless us everyone. (David C. Nichols) *A Noise Within*, 3352 E. Foothill Blvd., Pasadena. Sat., 8 p.m.; next Sun., 2 p.m.; ends Dec. 23. \$25 and up; student rush, \$20. (626) 356-3100.

**I Am Not a Comedian... I'm Lenny Bruce** In this meticulously researched solo biography tracing the life and prosecution of the groundbreaking early 1960s comic provocateur, actor Ronnie Marmo and director Joe Mantegna offer subsequent generations not only a sense of who Bruce was, but more importantly why he mattered. (P.B.) Theatre 68, 5112 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood. Fri.-Sat., 10 p.m.; ends Dec. 31. \$35. (323) 960-5068.

**King Charles III** British playwright Mike Bartlett's "future history play" (nominated for a Tony Award last year) fills us in on the machinations of the Royal Family after the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Written in a buttery blank verse, the drama is more concerned with the theatrical charade of politics than the gossip that's regularly splashed on the cover of the Daily Mail. Michael Michetti's fine-grained staging doesn't oversell the drama. These larger-than-life figures are intimately approached. And Jim Abele, in one of the finest performances of the year, reveals the inner workings of Charles' conscience, which throws Britain's system of government into crisis. (C.M.) Pasadena Playhouse, 39 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena. Sun., 2 p.m.; Tue.-Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat., 2 and 8 p.m.; next Sun., 2 and 7 p.m.; ends Dec. 3. \$25-\$96. (626) 356-7529.

**The Latina Christmas Special** Under the direction of Geoffrey Rivas, the massively talented trio of Maria Russell, Diana Yanez and Sandra Valls, who all play themselves, hilariously and heart-wrenchingly recapitulate memories of Christmases past in this very special "Special" — which is most distinctively and most memorably a loving tribute to their feisty, funny Latina mothers. (F.K.F.) Los Angeles Theatre Center, 514 S. Spring St., L.A. Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat., 2 and 8 p.m.; next Sun., 3 p.m.; ends Jan. 7. \$32-\$37; discounts available. (866) 811-4111.

**Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play** Making spectacular use of Sacred Fools' triple-stage complex, Anne Washburn's dark futurist epic traces three phases in the 70-year post apocalyptic mutation of a pop culture artifact — "The Simpsons'" "Cape Feare" episode — from nostalgic amusement to structuring narrative for a rebuilt civilization. (P.B.) Sacred Fools Theatre Company, 1076 Lillian Way, Hollywood. Sun., next Sun., 7 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; ends Dec. 9. \$15. (323) 207-5605.

**Resolving Hedda** Hedda Gabler has a bone to pick with Henrik Ibsen. After 126 years of being backed into a corner and left with suicide as her only freedom, she's had enough. So she's trying to wrest control of "Hedda Gabler" and disrupt its plot. In Jon Klein's boisterous new comedy she is ferociously embodied by Kimberly Alexander. Maria Gobetti nimbly directs. Laughing audiences clearly are on Hedda's side. (D.H.M.) The Big Victory Theatre, 3326 W. Victory Blvd., Burbank. Sun., next Sun., 4 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; ends Dec. 3. \$24-\$34. (818) 841-5421.

**Rotterdam** A big change can knock any couple out of alignment. For Alice and Fiona, the change goes to the very core of their identities. In her late 20s and several years into the relationship, Fiona reveals that she feels she's a man. With insight and humor, British playwright Jon Brittain charts the pair's journey as they rediscover who they are in this Olivier Award-winning play. Michael A. Shepperd crisply directs a perceptive cast. (D.H.M.) Skylight Theatre, 1816 1/2 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz. Sun., next Sun., 2 p.m.; Mon., 8 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 8:30 p.m.; ends Dec. 11. \$25-\$41. (866) 811-4111.

**The Secret in the Wings** Playwright Mary Zimmerman ("Metamorphoses") offers up a richly horrific collection of little-known fairy tales, shuffling the stories so that we are left at the apogee of dread before the action "cuts away" to another story before eventually resuming — an ingenious device that requires a dizzying number of scene shifts and costume changes. Director Joseph V. Calarco handles the production's intricacies with a sure hand, interspersing the general grimness with drollery at welcome intervals, while the seamless Coeurage Theatre ensemble is a dream team so perfectly in tune with one another, they could be a single organism. (F.K.F.) Historic Lankershim Arts Center, 5108 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood. Thu.-Sat., 8 p.m.; ends Dec. 16. Pay what you want. (323) 944-2165.

