

THE MIX



UTAH OPERA » Egyptian headdresses will animate the upcoming production of Verdi's "Aida." » D2



Colors, colors, colors

Exhibit » Pop Art icon Peter Max shines his cosmic light on Park City.

By **KATHY STEPHENSON**
The Salt Lake Tribune

Few artists have captured the colorful counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s like Peter Max.

The German-born illustrator and graphic artist, known for his use of psychedelic shapes and bright colors, is considered "one of the greatest pop artists in history along with Andy Warhol, Steve Kaufman and LeRoy Neiman," said Colby Larsen, owner of Old Towne Gallery in Park City.

"When you look at artists that play with color and push the envelope and are creative and loose at



Courtesy images

Peter Max is known for using bold, vibrant colors and fanciful subjects. An exhibit of his work is coming to Park City.



© Peter Max 2014

Maxing out at Old Towne Gallery

Meet and see the works of legendary pop artist Peter Max.
When » Exhibition Saturday through March 20, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; artist reception March 19, 6 to 9 p.m.; and March 20, 2 to 4 p.m.
Where » Old Towne Gallery, 580 Main St., Park City; 435-655-3910
Tickets » Exhibit and reception are free, but an RSVP to the gallery is requested.
Details » oldtownegallery.com



Courtesy images

Peter Max's "Cosmic Park City" will be among the works available for sale starting Saturday at Old Towne Gallery in Park City.

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PIONEER THEATRE COMPANY

ZAP IS YOU SALT LAKE COUNTY SL

From a biblical parable to the King of Pop

'Shut Up & Dance'

» Odyssey Dance Theatre features new works by two prominent Utah choreographers.

By KATHY ADAMS

Special to The Tribune

Odyssey Dance Theatre finds artistic inspiration in two very different places — stylizing classic stories and synthesizing pop music into spectacular dance montages. ODT continues this blueprint as it rounds out its 21st season with two premieres, “Prodigals” and “MJ,” part of its annual spring “Shut Up & Dance” series.

ODT’s artistic staff often takes a team approach to choreography, but this time artistic director Derryl Yeager commissioned rising star Garrett Smith to wrestle the parable of the prodigal son

'Shut Up & Dance'

» Odyssey Dance Theatre’s annual spring series includes three rotating shows.

When » “Romeo + Juliet,” Wednesday and March 15 and 18, 7:30 p.m., and Saturday, 2 p.m.; “Carmen,” Thursday, Saturday and March 16, 7:30 p.m., and March 19, 2 p.m.; “The Prodigals/MJ,” Friday and March 14, 17 and 19, 7:30 p.m.

Where » Kingsbury Hall, 1395 E. Presidents Circle, Salt Lake City

Tickets » \$20-\$40; tickets.utah.edu, odysseydance.com

to the stage. For the second half of the program, he asked Emmy Award winner Bonnie Story to put her spin on a celebration of pop icon Michael Jackson.

Both choreographers are Utah natives whose careers are taking them across the globe amassing sky miles as quickly as dance steps.

Story’s reputation is in film, video and large-scale live productions. Her recent and upcoming jobs include a haute couture Redken show in Barcelona, the 100th anniversary of the Indianapolis 500 and Alex Boyé’s Christmas show.

Yeager asked Story to choreograph the three most significant sections in “MJ” because of her longtime professional relationship with Jackson. In addition to other shows, she danced in Jackson’s “Smooth Criminal,” the music video that won multiple awards in 1989.

When Story reflects on Jackson’s character, it is not conjecture; when she choreographs to his music, it is not imitative. Story asked Vincent Paterson for permission to use his iconic moves from “Smooth Criminal,” and Michael Peters to use his

material from the celebrated “Beat It.” She edited them into one piece honoring the two revered choreographers who she said “forever changed the youth culture and the dance and music industry.”

In addition to that compilation for the Jackson tribute, Story created choreography to the up-tempo “The Way You Make Me Feel” and the socially conscious “Earth Song.” For the first, she said she crafted a piece in the style of dance legend Fred Astaire because “Michael studied and admired Astaire and other innovators like Gene Kelly.” Next, she took on “Earth Song” using 26 dancers, because it “was very special to Michael.”

Smith’s professional life has taken him on a different path. He trained at Utah Regional Ballet in Lindon and then Houston Ballet Academy. He began choreographing for Houston Ballet II while still a student and has continued making dances for

such contemporary and classical ballet companies as New York City Ballet, Norwegian National Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, Ballet West and Houston Ballet. He donates a significant amount of time to the Draper-based SALT Contemporary Dance and is under a professional contract with Norwegian National Ballet.

This is his first time choreographing a story ballet, complete with a must-follow narrative and characters from the well-known lost-son parable. The major issue in choreographing a narrative is how to reveal something new about the story that has not already been achieved.

“Unlike many Romantic-era classical ballets, this story is something that can happen in life and is very relatable,” Smith said. “The story of making life decisions that bring difficult challenges is real and hopefully you meet someone along the way that helps you through.”

Smith’s two additional

characters in “Prodigals” bring a modern-day perspective to the biblical parable (Luke 15:11-32) and differentiate it from other versions, such as George Balanchine’s “The Prodigal Son” (1929).

The role of the family cook, who finds the main character down on his luck and helps him find his way home, lends a modern-day twist — you don’t have to continue to suffer to be forgiven.

“I added the family cook/housekeeper to represent that friend or person who goes out of their way for you,” Smith said. “The character is complex and helps tie everything together.”

Smith has drawn on his experience as a dancer and as an audience member to appeal to viewers.

“I try to imagine how the audience is going to see it,” he said. “My goal is to emotionally connect with people. There is no point in choreographing unless there is someone to experience and to share with.”

Exhibit

» Continued from D1

expressing themselves — Peter Max is the father of them all,” he said.

Old Towne Gallery will host an exhibit of Max’s original works March 12-20. Guests can meet the 78-year-old artist during receptions March 19 and 20. (See box for details.)

Some Utahns may not be familiar with Max by name, but they likely have seen his work, which is recognizable for its bold, vibrant colors and fanciful subjects such as the “Cosmic Runner” and the “Umbrella Man.”

“People might look at his work and think it is childlike, but he was one of the first artists to break rules with color,” said Larsen.

The iconic style seemed to come naturally.

“It’s not like I tried to develop it. It just came,” Max said during a recent interview from his home in New York City. “I always liked bright colors and enjoyed working with them.”

That love has never waned. “One of the precious things I do each day is play with colors,” he said.

Over five decades, Max has painted portraits of six U.S. presidents as well as



Courtesy photo

Pop artist Peter Max will be at the Old Towne Gallery in Park City for a reception March 19-20. His work is on exhibit March 12-20.

some of history’s most influential political figures, from Mikhail Gorbachev and Margaret Thatcher to the Dalai Lama. His art is on display in presidential libraries and in U.S. embassies. “I’ve painted Clinton, Reagan, Obama and loved them all,” he said. “Each one of them was so unique.”

When asked which current presidential candidate he

would like to paint, Max demurred. “We’ll see what happens,” he said. “I’ll paint the right person when the time comes.”

Popular musicians have

been another favorite subject for Max, with portraits of artists including Mick Jagger, Ringo Starr, Jimi Hendrix and David Bowie. More recently, Taylor Swift has been a favorite muse.

“I’ve gotten to know them all,” he said. “I went to dinner with them, went to their concerts, been in their homes.”

Max’s reach extends into the sports world as well. He was the official artist of the 2006 U.S. Olympic Team at the Winter Games in Turin, Italy. He has also been official artist of five Super Bowls, World Cup USA, the World Series, the U.S. Open, the Indy 500, the NYC Marathon and The Kentucky Derby.

He has painted the Statue of Liberty annually since America’s Bicentennial, and in 2000, a collage of his Liberties adorned some 145 million Verizon phone books.

As a child, Max lived in Shanghai and studied in Israel with an Austrian expressionist professor, who introduced his student to the colorful world of Fauvism and the paintings and drawings of Henri Matisse, Maurice

Vlaminck, Max Beckmann and Alexej von Jawlensky.

After moving to New York and graduating from high school, Max began his formal art studies at the Art Students League in Manhattan under the tutelage of Frank Reilly, a realistic painter and a classmate of another American icon — Norman Rockwell.

It was there that Max said his work gained attention. Timing was part of his success, as the print industry was expanding with the four-color web press. “Lucky for me, media was exploding,” he said.

With the changes in printing, Max could turn his original art works into posters and share them with the youth of America. Millions of his posters were hung in college dorms across America. Followers say his posters were to the 1960s what MTV was to the early 1980s — radical and revolutionary.

Max said it’s difficult to pick a favorite poster, as he has done more than 600 in his career.

But his work always has been influenced by his love

of astronomy. Celestial elements often appear in his works, especially his art of the late 1960s — a period appropriately dubbed “The Cosmic ’60s.”

Today, his work is available at his Park West Gallery in New York City. Park West also maintains on-board art galleries and produces thousands of live art auctions every year on more than 100 cruise ships around the world.

For the Park City exhibit, Larsen said he is clearing out the gallery so that guests can view more than 150 pieces of Max’s work, including original paintings, serigraphs and personalized sports pieces involving the University of Utah and Brigham Young University. Prices will range from \$600 to \$120,000.

Since Max is the last surviving pop artist of his era, Larsen is happy the iconic artist is still able to share his work with Utahns.

“I love the color and excitement that his work brings,” he said. “It is uplifting and has great energy to it.”

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