

BALTIMORE



The Play's the Thing

CHESAPEAKE SHAKESPEARE COMPANY THEATER MAY BE CLASSICAL, BUT IT'S ANYTHING BUT TRADITIONAL

THE CHESAPEAKE SHAKESPEARE COMPANY THEATER is the newest stage to premiere on Baltimore's burgeoning independent theater scene. Two blocks from the Inner Harbor in a gorgeously restored 1885 landmark building, the 260-seat "modern Globe" stage launched its inaugural season last fall.

This is Shakespeare like you've never experienced. At Chesapeake, featuring the city's only "thrust" stage, productions replicate the way Shakespeare intended his plays to be seen. There are 3-D views, courtesy of three-sided seating and two mezzanines, and cushy, lumbar-support seating. House lights often stay on or are dimmed, permitting "direct address" between the performers and the audience. Productions include live music, a revolutionary addition

to traditional Shakespeare plays. Actors sometimes "double," playing more than one role, and switch genders.

Ian Gallanar, the company's founding artistic director, says the experience at the theater is "not about showing up at 7:55 for an 8 p.m. performance." Before and after the show, and during intermission, audiences are treated to appearances by local musicians and poets, variety routines, and a speaker series featuring experts on Shakespearean topics. Sunday is Family Day, with child-oriented activities correlating to the play. A family room filled with Victorian costumes for dress-up features TV monitors so parents don't miss the entertainment onstage. 410-244-8570, chesapeakeshakespeare.com



A Midsummer Night's Dream, directed by Ian Gallanar at the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company Theater.



The Blast, seen here battling the Milwaukee Wave (in white), plays regular season games to March 1.

Baltimore's Winningest Team

Looking for high-energy, family-friendly indoor action? Try a Baltimore Blast soccer game. Often called Baltimore's "winningest team," the seven-time U.S. champions have joined the newly formed Major Arena Soccer League. With fewer players on the field than in outdoor soccer, the indoor version is a faster, higher-scoring game. Balls can't go out of bounds because a retaining wall surrounds the field. Players strategically use that wall to bounce the ball past defenders. There are no "offsides" areas, enabling shooters to take shots on goal from anywhere. Blast players appear on the field before and after games to greet fans and sign autographs. Reasonably priced tickets (\$16-\$40), friendly players and perpetual action make Royal Farms Arena (formerly Baltimore Arena) an ideal venue for experiencing this fast-growing sport.

410-732-5278; baltimoreblast.com

For additional event, attraction, restaurant and hotel information, visit baltimore.org



SAVE the DATE

INNER HARBOR

NATIONAL AQUARIUM VETERINARIAN TOURS

Fridays and Saturdays

Join veterinarians on their rounds. Take a frog's pulse, observe surgery on a sea turtle, and see a sea-snake anesthetized. 410-576-3800; aqua.org

CHARLES VILLAGE

KRAUTFEST

Jan. 9-10

Gertrude's Restaurant transforms into a polka dance palace and beer garden in the annual tribute to all things sauerkraut. 410-889-3399; gertrudesbaltimore.com

INNER HARBOR

BALTIMORE ORIOLES' FANFEST

Jan. 31

Celebrate the 2014 American League East champs with clinics, games and appearances by Orioles players and coaches at the Baltimore Convention Center. 888-848-BIRD; orioles.com/fanfest

INNER HARBOR

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

February

At the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African-American History, exhibits, tours, lectures and entertainment celebrate the people and events that shaped African-American heritage. 443-263-1800; rflewismuseum.org

INNER HARBOR

GETTING CRAFTY

Feb. 20-22

At the American Craft Council's 39th annual Crafts Fair, 650 top artisans exhibit the newest trends in glass, metal, woodworks and fiber, fabricated into jewelry, housewares, clothing and furniture. 410-649-7000; craftcouncil.org/baltimore