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Spare Times for Children Listings for Nov. 4-10

By Laurel Graeber on November 3, 2016

A select guide to cultural events for children, teenagers and families.

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‘AMERICA TO ZANZIBAR: MUSLIM CULTURES NEAR AND FAR’(continuing) You have to look hard for positive representations of the Muslim world in popular culture, and even harder for a way to make it accessible to the youngest Americans. This exhibition, at the Children’s Museum of Manhattan, aims to teach visitors 10 and under about a variety of Muslim communities. Divided into five sections, the show includes a global marketplace, an exploration of trade routes, a courtyard area and an investigation of architecture through different mosque styles. The final section is devoted to an American home, represented by a living room filled with objects donated by Muslims in the United States. The Tisch Building, 212 West 83rd Street, 212-721-1223, cmom.org.

BINDLESTIFF CAVALCADE OF YOUTH (Sunday) If you’ve ever wondered what those daring young men (and women!) on the flying trapeze did before adulthood and professional success, see this show, whose spirited circus performers are all under 21. Presented by Bindlestiff Family Cirkus and Playful Productions, this showcase will feature young acrobats, jugglers, dancers and other talents, some of whom are already experienced stars. At 4 p.m., Coney Island USA, 1208 Surf Avenue, at West 12th Street, Coney Island, Brooklyn, playfulproductions.com, coneyisland.com.

‘CHOTTO DESH’ (Friday through Sunday) The choreographer Akram Khan is the product of two cultures: that of Britain, where he grew up, and that of Bangladesh, where his parents came from. This dance-theater piece at the New Victory Theater, his company’s first production for families, relates his own coming-of-age tale through text; gigantic props; classical Indian and modern movement; and fantastical, ghostly projections. (Don’t be surprised to see spectral elephants stride across the stage.) An adaptation of “Desh,” a longer work for adults, “Chotto Desh,” which means “small homeland” in Bengali, invites children 7 and older on Mr. Khan’s journey of self-discovery. (Through Nov. 13.) Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 7 p.m., Sundays at noon and 5 p.m., New Victory Theater, 209 West 42nd Street, Manhattan, 646-223-3010, newvictory.org.

FALL FIELD DAY FESTIVAL (Tuesday) This is one set of Election Day contests in which everyone will be a winner. To be held at Queensbridge Park in Queens, this free celebration from the Parks Department will invite children (and parents) to try both classic and newfangled outdoor games, including tug of war, three-legged races, bean bag musical chairs, pillow polo and gaga. The event will also include live music and, for those still obsessing about that other race, an old-fashioned voting booth in which the very young can pretend to cast ballots. From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Vernon Boulevard and 41st Avenue, Long Island City, Queens, nyc.gov/parks.

FALL FOREST WEEKEND (Saturday and Sunday) New York City has its own forest primeval: the Thain Family Forest at the New York Botanical Garden, the city's largest remaining tract of old-growth forest (meaning that it has developed without disturbance for many years). The garden is honoring this woodland treasure with special activities: guided hikes through the forest; canoe trips on the Bronx River; and, at 1 and 3 p.m., demonstrations with live birds of prey, during which visitors will encounter hawks, owls and falcons and learn about their adaptations. All day, young explorers can also go to the Everett Children's Adventure Garden for "Tree-rific Trees," a program in which they can observe sections of a giant sequoia and a white oak and learn how trees develop and age. (Also on Nov. 12 and 13.) From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road, Bedford Park, the Bronx, 718-817-8777, nybg.org.

FAMILY CONCERT: 'WHO IS COUNT BASIE?' (Saturday) Everybody, swing! That will be the mandate at this first family event of the season at Jazz at Lincoln Center, which will introduce Count Basie (1904-84) to young listeners. Born William James Basie, this towering bandleader was known for melding jazz and blues in a way that made swing a driving force in music. Wynton Marsalis will lead the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in this narrated, interactive hourlong exploration of Basie's work; young fans and musicians are invited to take their instruments and arrive 45 minutes early for preconcert workshops. At 1 and 3 p.m., Rose Theater, Frederick P. Rose Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, 60th Street and Broadway, 212-721-6500, jazz.org.

FIRST SATURDAY FAMILY WORKSHOP: CELEBRATE DIWALI(Saturday) Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, honors something that's worth celebrating all year long: the triumph of good over evil. This program at the Staten Island Museum will teach about the holiday as it investigates the museum's latest exhibition, "Infinite Compassion: Avalokiteshvara in Asian Art." (Avalokiteshvara is a prominent Buddhist deity.) After visiting the show, children will make art with Diwali themes. 1000 Richmond Terrace, Building A, Livingston, 718-727-1135, statenislandmuseum.org.

FIRST SATURDAYS FOR FAMILIES: 'HEAP OF COSTUMES'(Saturday) Halloween may be over, but that doesn't mean that you can't still have a lot of fun dressing up. This free program, part of the First Saturdays series at the New Museum, will encourage children 4 to 12 to explore the ideas in the exhibition "My Barbarian: The Audience Is Always Right," in which the three artists known collectively as My Barbarian use performance to investigate social issues. Families are asked to bring clean discarded Halloween costumes, which will be piled on the show's floor. Young participants will choose unmatched pieces from the heap to assemble into new and unfamiliar characters; accessories will be provided. Then some dramatic fun begins. From 10 a.m. to noon, 235 Bowery, at Prince Street, Lower East Side, 212-219-1222, newmuseum.org; space is limited, first come first served.

'FRANKENSTEIN' (Friday through Sunday) In this new musical, recommended for theatergoers 9 and older, a young explorer rescues a crazed and obsessive old man who turns out to be, yes, Victor Frankenstein. With a score by Michael Sgouros (played by a live chamber ensemble) and book and lyrics by Brenda Bell, this show from Be Bold Productions leads the audience through Frankenstein's memories of his dark experiment with human creation. (Through Nov. 13.) Fridays and Saturdays at 7 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m., Players Theater, 115 Macdougall Street, at Minetta Lane, Greenwich Village, 866-811-4111, monsteroffbroadway.com.

‘HANSEL & GRETEL’ (Saturday and Sunday) Yes, you know the story. But it’s been sweetened in this version by Nicolas Coppola, artistic director of Puppetworks. Based on the Brothers Grimm version and performed by marionettes, this adaptation stars a witch named Rosina Sweettooth, who’s more silly than menacing. The production, which includes folk songs from Humperdinck’s opera, gives Rosina her just deserts by transforming her into a dessert: a cookie. (Through Dec. 18.) At 12:30 and 2:30 p.m., Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Avenue, at Fourth Street, Park Slope, Brooklyn, 718-965-3391, puppetworks.org.

‘I APPROVE THIS MESSAGE’ (through Dec. 31) It will be a long time before young visitors to the Children’s Museum of Manhattan can vote — and even longer before they can run for office. But they can practice doing both at this new interactive exhibition, timed to coincide with the height of the presidential campaign. The show offers numerous historical documents signed by presidents (and some by first ladies), as well as a reproduction of a voting booth and a child-size Oval Office desk at which those aspiring to future leadership can pretend to sign papers. They can also design their own presidential seals and campaign buttons. The Tisch Building, 212 West 83rd Street, 212-721-1223, cmom.org.

‘THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE’ (Saturday) If the children of the Pevensie family could travel to the magical land of Narnia through something as simple as a wardrobe, why shouldn’t two hard-working actors be able to play them and all the characters found there? That’s what Jesse Corbin and Kelly Strandemo do in the Off Broadway Family Theater’s production of Le Clanché du Rand’s adaptation of C.S. Lewis’s classic novel. (The run is open-ended.) At 11 a.m., St. Luke’s Theater, 308 West 46th Street, Clinton, 212-239-6200, narniaoffbroadway.com.

‘MISSION TO SPACE’ (through Jan. 15) This season, Earth children won’t have to travel far to get a taste of worlds beyond our own. The Children’s Museum of the Arts has opened “Mission to Space,” a new exhibition of contemporary works by adult artists who’ve been inspired by the space program. The pieces include Nina Katchadourian’s “Asteroids,” actually magnified images of popcorn; Tom Sachs’s “Space Program,” incorporating models of Apollo mission artifacts; and David Bowie’s first music video, “Space Oddity.” 103 Charlton Street, between Hudson and Greenwich Streets, South Village, 212-274-0986, cmany.org.

‘MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING’ (Friday through Sunday) Romantic comedies have a venerable history: Witness this one, written by Shakespeare in the late 16th century. Teenage performers from the Pied Piper Children’s Theater will enact the story, which involves two couples and includes conspiracy, mistaken identity, a disrupted wedding, false accusations of infidelity and a faked death. And, of course, much ado about love. (Through Nov. 13.) Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 3 and 7 p.m., Sundays at 4 p.m., Holy Trinity Church, 20 Cumming Street, near Dyckman Street, Inwood, 212-544-2976, brownpapertickets.com/event/2641516; piedpipertheatre.com.

PRESERVATION DETECTIVES: ‘PRESIDENTS DON’T HAVE TO EAT VEGETABLES’ (Tuesday) Indeed they don’t. And at this program, children can find out which one famously hated broccoli, along with other intriguing facts about past commanders in chief. Part of the Preservation Detectives series at the Museum at Eldridge Street, a restored 1887 synagogue where many immigrants worshiped, this Election Day event will keep visitors ages 4 through 10 entertained while school is out, and the older generation is voting. It will include a reading of Judith St. George’s book “So You Want to Be President?,” a workshop in making patriotic crafts and a chance for young people to cast presidential ballots of their own. From 1 to 2:30 p.m.,

12 Eldridge Street, between Canal and Division Streets, Lower East Side, 212-219-0302, eldridgestreet.org/visit/family; reservations required.

'STINKYKIDS THE MUSICAL' (Saturday) Britt Menzies, author of the StinkyKids book series, based the stories' characters on her own children — not because they smelled bad but because, like a lot of little stinkers around the world, they tended to be mischievous. Vital Theater Company has revived Sammy Buck and Daniel S. Acquisto's musical adaptation, which closes on Saturday and centers on a wad of gum in the hair and a lot of other tangles. At 1 p.m., Theater at Blessed Sacrament, 152 West 71st Street, Manhattan, 212-579-0528, vitaltheatre.org.

'STONE SOUP' (Saturday and Sunday) In this old folk tale, a lot of cooks don't spoil the broth; they enrich it. Literally Alive Children's Theater has revived its version of the fable, which unfolds during the American Revolution, when a pair of hungry but wily soldiers persuade villagers to add ingredients to their odd but delectable recipe. The musical, by Michael Sgouros and Brenda Bell, is preceded by an hourlong arts workshop, in which children will help make quilts to be donated to Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals across the country. Continuing the theme of sharing, the production is also accepting donations of canned goods to be given to the charity City Harvest. (Through Nov. 13.) Saturday at 3 p.m.; Sunday at 11 a.m.; workshop one hour before curtain; Players Theater, 115 Macdougall Street, at Minetta Lane, Greenwich Village, 212-352-3101, literallyalive.com/shows/stonesoup.html.

'THAT PHYSICS SHOW' (Saturday and Sunday) Dave Maiullo doesn't use cards, sleight of hand or magic wands to achieve startling effects onstage; he just relies on Newton's laws. Mr. Maiullo, for years a physics support specialist at Rutgers University, is the wizard behind this 90-minute Off Broadway show, which includes segments on motion, momentum, vacuum, friction, density and sound. Expect lots of liquid nitrogen — and lots of surprises. (The run is open-ended.) At 3 p.m., Elektra Theater, 300 West 43rd Street, Clinton, 866-811-4111, thatphysicsshow.com.

'THE THREE BEARS HOLIDAY BASH' (Tuesday through Thursday) There's no word on whether Goldilocks is invited to this seasonal celebration, but Santa Claus definitely is. An annual production from the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, this puppet musical centers on a variety show put on by the Bears, in which Baby Bear asks Santa to star. The fun draws on Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, as well as on Christmas. (Through Dec. 30.) At 10:30 a.m. and noon, Swedish Cottage, 79th Street and the West Drive, Central Park, 212-988-9093, cityparksfoundation.org. Reservations required.

'WONDERS OF THE ARCTIC' (through March 2) Baby, it's cold up there. This new 3-D Imax film at the American Museum of Natural History explores the frozen beauty of the Arctic and how both animal species and humans have adapted to its wilderness. Directed by David Lickley, the documentary includes interviews with scientists and Inuit leaders and examines how, as climate change accelerates, this region has become as fragile as it is fierce. Hourly, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (the 11:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. showings are not in 3-D), Central Park West and 79th Street, 212-769-5200, amnh.org.

WORLD CULTURE FESTIVAL: EPIC STORIES (Saturday) A world culture festival is a tall order, but every society on earth has something in common with every other society: They all tell tales. Hence the theme of this new family festival at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which will offer global narratives in the form of performances, art workshops and demonstrations. The highlights range from dance celebrations of Diwali,

the Hindu Festival of Lights, to a presentation of Tom Stoppard's "The Fifteen Minute Hamlet." Attendees can also learn to write hieroglyphs like the Egyptians, weave like the makers of medieval tapestries and make pop-up books based on world myths. From noon to 5 p.m., 212-535-7710, metmuseum.org/culturefest.