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VSC's new season includes two premieres

NORFOLK

In a tough economy, when many arts groups are presenting well-known works, [Virginia Stage Company](#) [1] plans to surprise its patrons next season with two world premieres, one of them featuring music by Bruce Hornsby.

The Hornsby musical, titled "SCKBSTD," features new music, including cuts from his latest album, 2009's "Levitate." Opening next January, the full-scale musical will use Broadway talent for a story about a scary stranger in a small town.

The musical will be the third entry for the Stage Company's American Soil series of new plays with regional relevance.

Christopher Hanna, Virginia Stage's artistic director, has written another play for the Wells Theatre stage. It will be markedly different from last season's "Line in the Sand," his true-to-life story of Norfolk's school desegregation based partly on interviews with locals who were directly affected.

Hanna wrote "The New Pink: An Implausible Comedy" in the fall. It's about an older couple with suddenly reduced income that comes up with a new, wacky way of supporting themselves.

"So much of what is called funny now is mean-spirited," Hanna said. "I really wanted to write a play that is funny, is biting, but hopefully you like these people, and there's warmth and heart."

The season opens Sept. 21 with "The Diary of Anne Frank," the tale of the Jewish Frank family that hid from the Nazis for two years in the 1940s. The Stage Company will produce the 1997 Broadway revival version that was adapted by Wendy Kesselman.

"The Last 5 Years," a musical written and composed by Jason Robert Brown, has a fun device: A young New York couple's story plays out by going back and forth in time. The score features classical, jazz, pop, Latin and rock.

"They actually only sing one song together, when they get engaged. Otherwise they are trains passing in the night," Hanna said.

The season ends with "Radio Golf," the last of a renowned 10-play "Century Cycle" series by August Wilson that covers each decade of the 20th century from an African-American perspective. Wilson's "Radio Golf" premiered shortly before his death in 2005.

The tale of "Radio Golf" concerns real estate deals and development, and the loss of heritage in the pursuit of money.

Next year's season tickets cost \$5 more per show, said Keith Stava, managing director. "While we hate to do any price increases, the reality is we've been underpriced for so many years," he said.

Teresa Annas, (757) 446-2485, teresa.annas@pilotonline.com

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