

STEPPING OUT



“All hands ready!” Dr. Patti (Lisa Rudin) and her eager young paleontology assistants work together to solve this great dinosaur mystery.

Photos courtesy LICM



Roar: Green dinosaur arms burst out, amazing Dr. Patti and actor Yashaun Harris.

Unleash a **dino** Adventure

Jump in to solve a prehistoric ‘mystery’

By Abbey Salvemini

Long Island Children's Museum goes prehistoric this summer, bringing dinosaurs to life both in the exhibit space and on stage! Budding paleontologists have been digging into the exhibit “Dinosaurs: Fossils Exposed,” where they uncover ancient secrets through real fossils and life-size skeletal replicas.

That prehistoric excitement leaps to the stage in the form of the museum's latest original production. Newly installed theater co-directors Lisa Rudin and Austin Costello share visitors' dino-fever and welcome everyone to “Unbox A Saurus For Us!”

Using the exhibit as its starting point, everyone enjoys what Costello describes as “a chaotic, interactive half hour of dinosaur comedy.”

For those who have yet to experience it, now's the time, as show will soon be extinct — it closes Aug. 27!

The escapades actually begin within the exhibit area itself, where Rudin and Costello discuss the production and educate families about the fossil display.

“We wanted to do something fun, lighthearted and really interactive. We decided to start the show in the exhibit. We do about 10-15 minutes where we talk to kids and tell them about the show. When they come in, they get to go through the process of “un-boxing our saurus.” If they don't come to the exhibit, that's okay too, it's not like you have to have one to understand the other,” Rudin explains.

The original storyline is based on the fictional eccentric Dr. Patricia Osiris, who works for the organization Dinorama. She's set to uncrate a huge dinosaur she “discovered” for the museum, but misplaced her keys to the crate. She then calls out for help get the creature out of the box, encouraging everyone to use their imaginations. Each audience essentially carries out the remainder of what unfolds on stage by becoming problem solvers to assist scatterbrained Dr. Patti.

“The children have the power in that the show will not continue if they don't play along,” Costello adds.

It involves some creative improvisation, which gives each staging a special twist, depending upon the involvement of the audience.

“We do have a point in the show where we ask the kids to help us name the dinosaur. We also have a



- Aug. 20 and 27, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; Aug. 24, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- \$5 with museum admission, \$4 members, \$10 theater only
- Tickets can be purchased at licm.org/theater or at the box office
- Museum Row, Garden City

moment where they get to ask the dinosaur questions, and of course, Austin [Costello], who is in the dinosaur costume, comes up with some really good answers,” Rudin says.

One thing is for certain: the “Saurus” will always be unboxed one way or another.

“My favorite moment is when the dinosaur is finally revealed because people really don't know what to expect. They don't know if it's going to be a puppet or a costume and we do our best in not giving it away until the moment so that's a really fun bit. A lot of excited, happy screaming,” Costello shares.

Rudin, who also a teaching artist when not involved with her museum theater duties explains that she specifically chooses comedy — and material — that young children respond to effectively.

“I like to bring a lot of joy to our audiences. They leave the show having had a lot of fun and the parents have had the joy and the pride in seeing their child participate. It's just a joyful, fun, happy experience,” Rudin says.

And there's even more to look forward to — the museum is already planning a series of original stage productions inspired by its upcoming exhibits, bringing hands-on learning to life in new and exciting ways.

Also don't miss “Beezy County Fair: A Bee Tale,” a delightful stage adaptation of Gay

Thomas's heartwarming book, on Aug. 16. The story celebrates the power of working together toward a shared goal — all wrapped in a fun, fact-filled adventure buzzing with bee-related tidbits. The one-day-only performance is part of the museum's annual sweet summer celebration, Honey Hoopla.

Rudin and Costello bring an energetic mix of comedy and imagination with an educational component to their productions, which introduce young audiences to live theater. The duo cultivates a joyful and engaging environment that encourages curiosity, creativity and laughter — leaving children and adults with lasting memories.

“Who wants to help uncover a dinosaur?” Yashaun Harris rallies young “paleontologists” for hands-on dinosaur fun during a pre-performance introduction inside the Dinosaurs: Fossils Exposed exhibit.



The Midtown Men

Former stars of the award-winning jukebox musical “Jersey Boys,” reunited as The Midtown Men, are back with their ‘60s vibe at Eisenhower Park. During their time in the mega-hit, Tony Award winner Christian Hoff, Michael Longoria, Daniel Reichard and Tony nominee J. Robert Spencer shared the stage for over 1,000 performances. These Broadway veterans, with their powerhouse band, are realizing the dream they brought to life as the iconic Four Seasons. The Midtown Men is the next chapter for these accomplished entertainers, making them the first vocal group ever formed by the principal cast of a high-profile Broadway show. Not only have they continued to win over audiences of all ages in nearly 2,000 live shows, their self-titled debut album, “The Midtown Men: Sixties Hits” was met with critical acclaim and garnered five star album reviews across iTunes and was followed by their first radio single “All Alone On Christmas.”

Saturday, Aug. 16, 7 p.m. Harry Chapin Lakeside Theatre, Eisenhower Park, East Meadow. Contact nassaucountry.gov for info and updates.



Monster Truck madness

UBS Arena explodes with the raw power of epic machines at Hot Wheels Monster Trucks Live. “Kids” of all ages can watch their favorite Hot Wheels trucks come to life in Glow-N-Fire action. Everyone will enjoy the added fiery twist: pyrotechnic effects light up the arena. To make this show even more special, get ready an adrenaline-fueled birthday party as the original monster truck that started it all, Bigfoot, marks its 50th year of entertaining fans. Of course, there's so much more to grab your attention. Check out Mega Wrex, Tiger Shark, HW 5-Alarm, Bone Shaker, Gunkster, and the newest entry, Skelesaurus, the giant that unleashes his fossil fury. Fans can also witness a special appearance from a transforming robot, plus the high-flyers of the Hot Wheels Monster Trucks freestyle motocross team.

Saturday, Aug. 16, 12:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Aug. 17, 2:30 p.m. UBS Arena, 2400 Hempstead Turnpike, Elmont. Tickets available at hotwheelsmonstertruckslive.com or ticketmaster.com.