



Célébrons nos communautés inclusives

Celebrating inclusive communities



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Local athletes make a splash in Antagonish

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Andrew Raymond Perez and Jessica Ipekian- Levitt at the Special Olympics Canada games in Antagonish, Nova Scotia. (Photo, Monique Levitt)





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By Alexandra Cohen

What's new in New York City? The Band's Visit, The Algonquin and the Lambs Club



The Algonquin.

NEW YORK - There are many reasons to travel to New York City, but one most unique to the city's soul is the extensive list of amazing Broadway musicals found at the heart of Times Square. Let me recommend, in particular, the 10-time Tony Award winning Best Musical, *The Band's Visit* (www.thebandsvisitmusical.com).

Playing at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre (243 West 47th Street), the production recently welcomed award-winning Israeli actor Sasson Gabay to the company in his Broadway debut. He is reprising the character he created in the 2007 film on which the musical is based.

Following the Tony Awards on June 10, 2018, *The Band's Visit* is now tied as the third most Tony Award-winning show in history and

is one of only three shows in Broadway history to have won the "Big Six" awards (Best Musical, Best Actor - Tony Shalhoub, Best Actress - Katrina Lenk, Direction, Book, and Score). Thus far, due to popular demand, the show has been extended through June 2019, with the potential to extend even more.

The Band's Visit opened on November 9. As the musical begins, a series of well-intentioned mistakes land an Egyptian Police Band in a sleepy and remote village in the middle of the Israeli desert, which its inhabitants label as boring and bland. One of the central characters, Dina (played with great magnetism by Lenk), describes the mood of her town best in the opening number, as "looking out into the distance even though you know the view is never going to change."

With no bus until morning and no hotel in sight, the band are taken in by the locals for one night that will in some way or another, change all of their lives. *The Band's Visit* celebrates the deeply human ways in which music, longing and laughter can connect us all.

Although I must say that I expected this show to be quite serious in nature, I was pleasantly surprised by the simultaneous comic undertones. One such moment was when although the Alexandria Ceremonial Police Orchestra are meant to perform at the Arabic cultural center in Petah Tikvah, Israel, a member of the band with poor English skills accidentally sends them to the similarly pronounced destination of Bet Hatikvah "with a B", eliciting many laughs from the audience.

Yes, quite often it is the creative and witty lyrics that allow for laughter, including a particular line of song in which the words awful and falafel were used in a rhyme. However, as the connections between the Israeli locals and Egyptian visitors are forged, the story becomes unexpectedly moving. Although they are different, as shown in certain moments by the characters speaking their respective languages rather than English, they are also in many ways the same, and if that is not a universal message that this world needs, then I do not know what is.

The North American Tour of *The Band's Visit* will launch in Providence, Rhode Island, in June 2019. Exact dates and additional cities will be announced at a later date.

A scene from *The Band's Visit*. (Photo, Matthew Murphy)

Seating is accessible to all parts of the Orchestra without steps. Wheelchair seating is located in the Orchestra only. Handrails are available at the end of every stepped row in the Mezzanine. There is one unisex wheelchair accessible restroom located on the main floor with no steps. The theatre does not have any elevators or escalators. The Barrymore Theatre provides at least 10 infrared assistive listening devices for every performance at the theatre. Beginning four weeks after a show's official opening night performance, at least 10 audio description devices are available for every performance at the theatre. In addition, there is unlimited access to downloadable audio description software for personal mobile devices, available beginning four weeks after a show's official opening night performance, which provides an automated detailed account of the visuals of the production, free of charge, for blind or partially sighted patrons. The theatre also offers hand-held devices and software that provide captioning for deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons, available beginning four weeks after a show's official opening night performance. Additional devices can be available with at least 24 hours' notice by contacting Shubert Audience Services at (212) 944-3700 or audienceservices@shubertorg.com. There is also a representative at the Shubert Audience Services kiosk at every performance to assist any patron with the audio description devices, software, or captioning devices.

WHERE TO STAY: I absolutely love the historic Algonquin Hotel (www.algonquin.com). There was simply no other option when I booked this trip many months ago. Located in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, this jewel of historic New York hotels commands 44th Street near 6th Avenue, just a short walk of

a block and a half away from Times Square. The Algonquin first opened its doors in 1902. Today, it is part of the Marriott chain's Autograph Collection, an evolving ensemble of strikingly independent hotels. Each of the 181 rooms and 25 suites features a comfortable well-lit work desk, as well as complimentary Wi-Fi.

When you enter the hotel, you come face-to-face with the casual Lobby Lounge, along with The Round Table Restaurant. Just to the left is the hotel's trendy bar, aptly named The Blue Bar. As a cat lover, I was of course excited to see Hamlet VIII, the two-year-old orange cat who calls The Algonquin his home. According to hotel executive assistant Alice De Almeida, he was originally a feral cat found in Long Island and brought to the Bide-a-wee shelter (the oldest shelter in the Big Apple), where the Algonquin then adopted him as their own. He came to the hotel in July 2017 after their former cat, Matilda III, retired. "He is so friendly and loveable that people who never liked cats love him," Alice says proudly. "He has great purrrsonality!"

The Algonquin, its bar and restaurant, have easy access for wheelchairs from the street. There is valet parking. The hotel has six ADA rooms and one ADA suite. There are two elevators. The staff is very helpful and friendly.

WHERE TO DINE: Over the past year, I have been fortunate to experience the extraordinary cuisine of master chef Geoffrey Zakarian at two of his restaurants: Georgie at the Montage Beverly Hills, and Point Royal at the Diplomat Resort in Hollywood, Florida. When looking for a place to dine near Times

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Square, I was pleasantly surprised to find another one of his restaurants, The Lambs Club, only a block away from our hotel.

Located at 132 West 44th Street, The Lambs Club offers Zakarian's modern approach to American cuisine with distinct ingredients, highly seasonal menus, and a signature approach to hospitality.

Zakarian and his talented culinary team marry their passion for food with their classical training to deliver exceptional dining experiences, whether it is a casual burger in The Bar or the sought-after Delmonico steak in the main dining room. A team of skilled chefs put forth daily breakfast, lunch, and dinner, offering guests dishes composed with the most seasonal and highest quality ingredients. Wine Director A.J. Ojeda-Pons oversees a wine list that has secured Wine Spectator's coveted "Two Glasses" distinction in their Restaurant Awards, where the restaurant is highlighted as one of the na-

tion's best. The World of Fine Wine quickly followed suit, presenting the restaurant with "Two Stars" in their World's Best Wine List. On the cocktail list, guests will find both classic and innovative cocktails, created with fresh ingredients and house-made infusions - a true revival of the craft of cocktail.

Inside The Lambs Club, guests are transported from the hustle and bustle of Broadway to the welcoming oasis of the restaurant's many one-of-a-kind spaces. The distinguished history that connects the landmark building to the Great White Way is prominently displayed in the main dining room, which boasts an enormous 18th century fireplace, a gift from Architect Stanford White.

We very much enjoyed our meal at the 90-seat restaurant. From a house-smoked pastrami sandwich for lunch and a Creekstone 28-day, dry-aged Delmonico steak at supper, the menus here touch all bases. Situated just a block from Times Square, the Lambs Club

provides the perfect setting for a pre- or post-theater bite, or even just an escape from the hustle and bustle.

For reservations call (212) 997-5262 or email reservations@thelambsclub.com. The restaurant is wheelchair accessible. ♿



The Lambs Club dining room.



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