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Justin Guarini to the rescue: He takes the lead in 'New World' at Bucks County Playhouse

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JOAN MARCUS

Justin Guarini as Santuit and Jillian Gottlieb as Susanna Standish in the world-premiere of “The New World,” through Dec. 2 at Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope.

[Justin Guarini](#), the Doylestown-raised singer who went from runner-up in the very first *American Idol* in 2002 to a career in recordings, Broadway, and regional theater, has agreed to take over the starring role in *The New World*, [a world-premiere musical running Dec. 2 at the Bucks](#)

[County Playhouse in New Hope](#). Stepping in for the injured Julius Thomas III, Guarini will play the lead for the entire run.

The New World is a musical comedy about the first Thanksgiving, which, lore has it, brought together the indigenous tribes with the Pilgrims in the year 1621. The lead role of Santuit was originally meant for Broadway vet Thomas (*Porgy and Bess*; *Motown the Musical*). But he suffered an injury during rehearsals, minor but enough to sideline him. So the call went out to Guarini, who is on the theater's board of directors and has starred there in productions such as *Company* and *Cake Off*. With only two days before previews, he agreed to step in, made the tight turnaround, and was ready by opening night on Nov. 7.

It now appears Thomas will not be available for the rest of the run, and Guarini, mostly recently seen on Broadway in *In Transit*, will be Santuit through Dec. 2. His co-lead as Susanna Standish (daughter of Miles) is Jillian Gottlieb of Linwood, N.J.