

TAGLines

The Newsletter of the Theatre Arts Guild, Inc. – May 2010

Jim Martin, President Cathy Hirsch, Chair/Editor www.theatreartsguild.com

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NEW MEMBERS

Mark Manhart
Bonnie Gill
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TAG Scholarships Announced

Due to the popularity and support of this year's TAG Nights Out, the Theatre Arts Guild Board of Directors is proud to announce that they will be awarding not two, but four scholarships to local high school seniors planning to pursue their post high school education in theatre arts. \$1000 scholarships will be awarded to Lillian Steckman and Kathleen Porter of Omaha North. \$500 scholarships will also be awarded to Elizabeth Liebermann of Skutt Catholic High School and David Kalis of Millard North High School.

The scholarships will be awarded at TAG's annual Awards Night on August 15th. The TAG Board would like to thank those who have supported the TNO program, the judges for this year's auditions, as well as the teachers, family, friends, and mentors who have helped mold these individuals into excellent thespians.

Thinking about the TAG Awards

By Mary Kelly

TMI or "too much information" - some of us have heard that from our children or BFFs, and I expect to be hearing that from many of you after you've read this article! Actually, something I've heard a lot over the years has been, "why didn't so-and-so get nominated for an award"? Usually this is spoken with a firm tone of indignation. When I respond, "Well, I nominated so-and-so, did you?" I am often met with an awkward silence and a mumbled, "Yeah, I don't fill those out..." So, folks, here's what you need to know about filling out a nominations ballot this year. We hope you'll do it. The best indicator of the importance of this TAG function is the number of members who participate.

In June, TAG members will have an opportunity to recognize this season's outstanding achievements in community theatre by completing their nominations ballots for the upcoming TAG Award Night. The Awards Co-Chairs, with the assistance of the Board of Directors and Awards Steering Committee, have done some "tweaking" of the ballot format and the nominations process in an effort to make things easier and to increase participation. Please review your ballot carefully when you receive it and complete it as thoroughly as possible. Ballots will be mailed on June 5th and must be returned by June 22nd. Ballots will be weighted by number of venues plus number of productions seen. The weighting process will take a bit more time, so it is extremely important that we have ALL ballots returned by the due date.

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On Stage News

Nebraska Wesleyan University Theatre presents *Rent*

Through May 8

Rent, written in 1995 by Jonathan Larson, is the ground-breaking contemporary musical that tells the story of eight friends who are trying to live their lives in New York City. The story is based on the opera *La Boheme*. Nebraska Wesleyan is one of the first universities in the country to receive permission to do this landmark musical. This stirring story, although it can be seen by patrons as young as 13, is best suited for those high school age and older. Show dates are April 29- May 1; May 6-8 at 7:30 PM as well as May 2; 9 at 2:00 PM at the McDonald Theatre. Tickets: Adults, \$15; Seniors, \$10.00; Students, \$7.50.

The Shelterbelt Theatre presents *Warpaint*

Through May 9

The original drama *Warpaint* by Michael Oatman and Benjamin Graber will have its world premier this spring at the Shelterbelt Theatre, 3225 California, Omaha. This taut psychological drama centers around a professor and his student, dealing with dark obsession and sexual tension. *Warpaint* was featured in a play lab reading at the 2009 Great Plains Theatre Conference.

Directed by Gary Planck, the cast includes John Hatcher, Ruseaa Smith, Sara Planck, McClain Smouse, Devel Crisp and Kristin Soloman. Lighting design by Sandy Hatcher, sound design by Dan Baye, costume design by Megan Whitaker. \$8 single and 2-for-\$15 tickets opening weekend, and \$10 Thursdays April 22, April 29, and May 6. General admission is \$15 for adults, and \$12 for students, seniors and TAG members.

The John Beasley Theater presents *Of Mice and Men*

Through May 9

The JBT presents John Steinbeck's classic American story of struggling migrant workers facing prejudice and isolation. George and Lenny dream of saving up enough of "a stake" to buy a little place of their own (and lots of rabbits), but as the title warns -- "The best laid plans of mice and men, oft go awry."

Performances run from Thursdays to Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sundays at 3:00pm and will be held at the John Beasley Theater at South 30th and Q Streets. Tickets are \$27 (for adults), \$22 (for students, seniors and TAG members), \$16 (for everyone on Thursdays). Special group rates are available. All prices include sales tax. Book tickets at www.johnbeasleytheater.org or call (402) 502-5767.

The Omaha Playhouse presents *Mister Roberts*

Through May 9

This humorous yet poignant tale centers on the crew of an American Navy cargo ship in the Pacific in the final months of World War Two. The officers and sailors are frustrated, unhappy, and bored. Adding to their misery is an autocratic Skipper oblivious to the men's

restlessness. The play portrays a realistic but often forgotten side of the war as the cargo vessel's crew carries out its necessary but unglamorous mission and fights boredom rather than the enemy. Susan Baer Collins directs; Military Advisor is CDR John Kennedy USN. Lara Marsh is Stage Manager, assisted by Suzanne Withem and Jacob Holt. Rehearsal Assistant is Scott Kroeker and Fight Director is Gregg Jaxies. The cast features Michael McCandless as LTJG Doug Roberts, Jonathan Purcell as Ensign Pulver, Ron Chvala as Doc, and Doug Blackburn as the Captain. Others in the cast include Matt Allen, Richard Borg, John Carlson, Ben Chrystak, Jeff Dahms, Chris Elston, Don Harris, Joel Herdzina, Jay Huse, Frank Insolera Jr., Mark Kocsis, Michael Marsden, Tim McCandless, Patrick McCaslin, John L. Morgan, Beth Paprocki, Chad Singleton, and Daniel Sukup.

Performances run Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30 PM and Sundays at 2:00 PM and 6:30 PM. On Sunday, May 9, there will be NO evening performance. Tickets are \$32.00 for adults and \$21.00 for students. Mention that you're a TAG member for a \$10 discount; membership card must be shown when picking up your ticket. Twilight (half-priced) tickets are sold beginning at noon on each performance day (subject to availability and valid for that day's show only); sales are done at the window, cash or check. For questions or reservations, call 553-0800; or visit the OCP web site at www.omahaplayhouse.org.

Brigit St. Brigit presents *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

Through May 15

Directed by Cathy Kurz, starring Charleen Willoughby and Ashley Spessard. Vivie Warren, a product of exclusive 19th-century boarding schools, with a newly-minted Cambridge degree in actuarial science, is ready to earn a living on her own brisk terms as one of the "new women." She isn't, however, ready to encounter her frequently-absent mother, the underwriter of this expensive education. The no-nonsense daughter is soon to learn that Mrs. Warren is also a businesswoman, with a profession of her own. One that doesn't require a Cambridge education. The collision of these "two very different, terribly similar women bursts into crackly, provocative life" in Shaw's "darkly delightful, radiantly scandalous" satire. Visit www.bsbtheatre.com for more information.

Bellevue Little Theatre presents *The Odd Couple (female version)*

May 7 – 23

"The Odd Couple", the female version, the final production of the Bellevue Little Theatre's 2009--2010 season, will open on Friday May 7 and run for three week-ends, closing on Sunday May 23. The theatre is located at 203 W.Mission, in Olde Towne Bellevue. Showtimes are 8 pm on Friday and Saturday evenings and 2 pm on Sunday. Reservations are recommended and may be made by calling 291-1554 between 10 am and 4:30 pm Monday thru Saturday. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$13 for seniors, and \$7.50 for students. Doug Marr will direct this female version of the Neil Simon comedy which brings us a female Unger and Madison in the personage of

(Continued)

On Stage News

(Odd Couple, Continued)

Florence and Olive. The laughs remain as these two totally different personalities strive to co-exist in a small apartment.

The poker game has been replaced by Trivial Pursuit, and the Pidgeon sisters by the Constanzuela brothers, but the laughs in this classic comedy remain.

Connie Lee will portray Olive, and Deb Kelly, Florence. In addition, Jaye McCoy will be Vera; Karin Hogston, Mickey; Anna Peace, Rene; Janet Macklin, Sylvie; Jerry Onik, Manolo, and Randall Vest, Jesus.

Doug Marr will direct this production, with Joey Lorincz serving as producer. Jane Keller is stage manager. Ted Weir is in charge of lighting and sound design, and Jack Hogston is set designer.

Costumes will be done by Ralston Costume Shop.

There will be a TAG Night Out on Thurs. May 6 at 8 p.m.

The Omaha Playhouse presents

The Awesome 80s Prom

Through May 30

It's 1989 and senior prom time at Wanaget High. Interact with your favorite characters from classic 80s teen movies: the captain of the football team; the head cheerleader; the foreign exchange students; the class officers; the geeks; the bad boys; the "Heathers"-style mean girls. The audience votes on who will be Prom King and Prom Queen. It's a one-of-a-kind evening of mullets and big hair, leg warmers and Members Only jackets, and the unique music that defined The 80s. Join the fun! And this time you don't have a curfew! Carl Beck directs with Jeanne Shelton as Stage Manager. The cast includes Kaitlyn Bain, Dennis Collins, Kelsey Dawson, Trevor Denholm, Noah Diaz, Colin Ferguson, Jon Flower, Bill Grennan, Nick Hartnett, Cathy Hirsch, Gordon Krentz, Sarah Liken, Jennifer McGill, Brandon Rohe, Theresa Sindelar, Erin Stoll, Jodi Taylor, and Logan Vamosi.

Performances run Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 PM and Sundays at 2:00 PM only. Tickets for this non-musical production are \$32.00 for adults and \$21.00 for students. Mention that you're a TAG member for a \$10 discount; membership card must be shown when picking up your ticket. Twilight (half-priced) tickets are sold beginning at noon on each performance day (subject to availability and valid for that day's show only); sales are done at the window, cash or check. Call 553-0800 for reservations or information. Also check the OCP web site at www.omahaplayhouse.com.

Chanticleer Theatre presents

Footloose

May 14-30

Chanticleer announces the opening of "Footloose". The production will begin May 14 and run through May 30, 2010 with performances on Friday and Saturday nights at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m.

The production is Directed and Musical Directed by Todd Brooks. Other staff members include Wai Yim/Choreographer; Richard Boyd/Stage Manager; Bob Putman/Scenic Designer; Dave Podendorf/Sound Design, Darrin Golden/Light Design, Rhonda Hall/Properties Designer and Costumes by Ibsen Costume Gallery.

Cast members include: Stephen Shelton as Ren; Lindsay Borowiak as Ariel; Kori Williamson as Rusty; Lindsay Van Horn as Urleen; Ariel Ibsen as Wendy Jo; John Jones as Chuck; Jason DeLong as Lyle; Brian Williams as Travis; Tom Miller as Willard; Tim Daugherty as Reverend Moore; Denise Putman as Vi Moore and Danielle Smith as Ethel McCormack. Other cast members include: Kate Kasher, Ken Walker, Christi Burkey, Jason Fry, Darren Gray, Mary Trecek, Mary McCandless, Dara Rosenberg, Kate Simmons and Jason Wegner. Ticket prices are: Adults \$ 17.00, Seniors \$ 14.00 and Children/Students - \$ 9.00. For more information and reservations, contact the box office at 712-323-9955 or email manager@chanticleertheater.com

There will be a TAG night out on Thursday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m

Snap Productions presents

Loose Knit

May 27 – June 20

Loose Knit is playwright Theresa Rebeck's clever, comic tale of relationships, expectations, disappointments and betrayal, with a bit of mayhem thrown in for good measure.

The play revolves around a group of New York professionals who labor under the mistaken impression that knitting is a relaxing pastime for stressed out lifestyles. Things begin to unravel quickly and humorously as all the relationships become a tangled mess and each individual confronts his or her own life questions--what is it to be an American, to be black, wealthy, poor, faithful, closeted, etc. in the never ending human quest for fulfillment.

M. Michele Phillips will direct this romp and is very fortunate to have assembled a cast that includes SNAP! veterans Matt Allen, Emily J. Thompson, David Mainelli, Shannon Jaxies and Ashley Spessard as well as talented and professional newcomers to the SNAP! stage - Laura Leininger and Chelsea Long.

SNAP! is pleased to have on its production staff Adam Nathan (Set Design), Brian Callaghan (Lights & Sound Operator/Props), Homero Vela (Lighting Design), Gina Wagner (Stage Manager/Props), Nancy Ross (Costumes) and Liz Heim (Costume Design).

The show will run from May 27 – June 20, 2010 at 3225 California Street. Curtain times are 8:00 pm, Thursday, Friday and Saturday; 6:00 pm on Sundays. The Sunday, June 20th show will start at 2:00 pm. There will be a special signed performance for the hearing impaired on June 6, 2010.

There will be a Tag Night Out on Thursday, May 27 at 8 p.m.

Omaha Community Playhouse presents

Fiddler on the Roof

May 28 – June 27

A timeless classic of the musical theatre, Fiddler on the Roof centers on events in an impoverished Jewish village in Czarist Russia at the beginning of the 20th century. Tevye is a poor milkman, the father of five daughters, attempting to maintain his family and religious traditions in the face of great social upheaval all around him. The play includes such well-known musical numbers as "Tradition," "Sunrise, Sunset," "If I Were a Rich Man," and "Matchmaker, Matchmaker." Susan Baer Collins directs, with Steve Priesman as Stage Manager.

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On Stage News/The Green Room

(Fiddler, Continued)

Mark Thornburg plays Tevye and Sally Neumann Scamfer is Golde. The cast includes Tim Abou-Nasr, Gary Bosanek, Dawn Buller-Kirke, Daniel Caligiuri, Scot Caniglia, Leanne Carlson-Hill, Elizabeth Doty, Ryan Eberhart, Ryan Fuller, Gary Gibbons, Kent Hanon, Ian Hill, Dianne Jones, Connor Ketcham, Patrick Kilcoyne, Steve Krambeck, Megan McGuire, Andrew Miner, Zoey Newman, Jenny Priesman, Marion Priesman, Judy Radcliff, Maddie Radcliff, Isaac Reilly, Tyler Roberts, Christina Rohling, Marie Rohling, Paul Schneider, Michael Shelton, Emilio Sotelo, Courtney Stein, Ashton Taylor, Marty Wolff, and Joseph Wright.

Performances run Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30 PM and Sundays at 2:00 PM and 6:30 PM. There is no evening performance on Sunday, June 27th. Tickets are \$38.00 for adults and \$24.00 for students. Mention that you're a TAG member for a \$10 discount; membership card must be shown when picking up your ticket. Seven Buck Sunday is May 30th; all seats for the 6:30 PM show will be sold for \$7, going on sale at 4 PM – cash or check only, in person at the Box Office. Twilight (half-priced) tickets are sold beginning at noon on each performance day (subject to availability and valid for that day's show only); sales are done at the window, cash or check. Playhouse subscribers may start making reservations on May 4th; tickets go on sale to the public starting May 11th. Call the Box Office ticket line at 402-553-0800 (toll free 888-782-4338); or visit the OCP web site at www.omahaplayhouse.com.

The Green Room

TAG Nights Out

By Denny Maddux

Thanks to the FEW, the PROUD, the TAG members who continue to support Tag Nights Out (and all 12 out of 400+ members know who you are) the Board was able to present four scholarships to local high school students. There is still time to be able to back your applause with a donation to the Scholarship fund by attending the final TNO's of the year. Bellevue Little Theatre will close their season with *The Odd Couple: The Female Version* on May 6th at 8 pm. Rumor has it that this will be your last chance to catch *The Odd Couple* until next season at the Playhouse! I am trying to convince SNAP! to do a transgender version: *The Odd Couple: The Chastity Bono Story*. Negotiations are not going as well as I had hoped so mark your calendar to see Connie Lee, Deb Kelly, and company in Doug Marr's interpretation of this audience favorite.. Music will fill the air at Chanticleer when Footloose dances onto the stage on May 13th at 7:30. Finally, SNAP! is proud to announce that M. Michele Philips will remount *Loose Knit*, which was showcased at last year's Great Plains Theatre Festival, on Thursday May 27th at 8:00. And the Florentine Players will host the donation box at their melodrama *In the Shadow of Betrayal* May 6th at 7:30. So there are four chances to save some money, support our local theatres, and contribute to the Scholarship Fund. Remember you also may send in a donation with your TAG Membership renewal. Renew today so you can vote for your favorite play!!!

TAG Awards (Continued from page 1)

It is important to complete the checklist in the front of the ballot

indicating the productions you have seen. If this section is not complete, your ballot cannot be "weighted" with an assigned numerical value. An incompletely filled out ballot is, therefore, unusable, and a waste of your time and energy. There were a significant number of these "wasted" ballots last year. This year, a member of the Awards Committee will act as "keymaster" for both nominations and final ballots. If a received ballot has not been completed to the extent that it is usable, the keymaster will contact the voter and send them a duplicate blank checklist with their assigned ballot number on it so that it can be returned in time to tabulate votes. The confidentiality of the actual ballot will be maintained, as the keymaster will never actually see the ballot. A couple of notes about award categories. Here is the revised definition of Special Event: "Outstanding Special Event: This category is intended to allow recognition of productions that do not fit into the standard play/musical categories. Special Events include but are not limited to Cabarets, Improvisational Acts, Variety Acts, or any production with a limited run as determined by the Award Committee."

And here is the definition, with revised rules for counting nominations, for the Ensemble category. "This award is designed to recognize an outstanding scene in a play or musical OR outstanding work by a group of actors or technicians. The emphasis of the award is on the effective and imaginative integration of several roles with respect to the nominated scene or group of actors or technicians. This award cannot be awarded to an entire production or to the entire cast of a production unless the entire cast is involved in a nominated scene or musical number." A voter may list up to five (5) nominees from a single production; however, in the case of multiple nominees from a single production, only the nominee from that production with the highest number of total votes will advance to the final ballot. It is worth noting that, although many musical numbers are characterized by fine ensemble work, fine ensemble work may also be found in non-musical performances and in technical theatrical work. Examples include the sisters in *DANCING AT LUGHNASA*, the curtain call in *LEND ME A TENOR*, or the fight scene in *ROMEO AND JULIET*. These are the primary changes to awards categories this year. We hope this year's ballot will be easier to read and to complete. Please review all category definitions thoroughly before completing your ballot. The March TAGLines interview with Bill Van Deest and Paul Pape illuminated aspects of scenic design that may be useful to voters and may be viewed online in the newsletter posted at the TAG website. We hope that the TAGLines articles this month and in the June issue on technical categories will also be helpful. And for those of you who may have lost your programs, this year, information found in those programs will be posted at www.theatreartsguild.com. So, if you can't identify the actor, director, or technical designer involved in a production, you'll be able to go to the website and look them up. This information will be posted on the website by June 5th, the date nominations ballots are mailed.

So, you've done a super job of filling out ALL sections of the ballot and returning it by the deadline date. What's next? On Sunday, July 11th, at 7:30 pm, we'll gather at PS Collective, 6056 Maple Street, for Nominations Night. We will have three surprise emcees of the female persuasion. Nominees will be announced with much fanfare and hoopla. Bring your own hoopla. Then, invitations will go in the mail for

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The Green Room

(TAG Awards, Continued)

Awards Night. This year, the gala will be held on Sunday, August 15th at the Omaha Hilton, across the street from the Qwest Center. Our emcee for the evening is Dave Wingert. It promises to be a swanky event, again filled with gaiety and, if you will, hoopla. Tickets are \$20 in advance for members, \$25 at the door and for non-members. Your ticket includes the program and pre-show hors d'oeuvres. The Hilton does have a restaurant for those who would like to enjoy dinner on their own prior to the event. The hotel parking garage is available to all attending Awards Night. TAG members will receive their invitations to the Awards gala following Nominations Night and may reply via snail mail or online at www.theatreartsguild.com.

Be part of the TAG Awards process. Nominate, vote, and party with us!

The Florentine Players presents

In the Shadow of Betrayal

May 7-16

A volunteer (and penniless?) Sheriff Ruff Ashlar patrols the 1890's city of Florence, Nebraska, with his faithful companion Gage DuGarde in the 2010 Spring Melodrama entitled "In the Shadow of Betrayal". The handsome and vertically challenged Sheriff has caught the eye, and the hearts, of the towering Temperance O'Shay Kraus and her best friend Narcissus Falls. The audience soon finds out that when two women love the same man ... no fire rages hotter than the fire that burns in the broken, coal-black heart of the woman that feels betrayed. In exchange for the deed to the Kraus ranch, Mortimer Cain (owner of the Stronzo Hotel de Florence) agrees to help hatch a dastardly and heinous plot designed to win back the heart of Sheriff Ruff Ashlar ... and tons of gold!!! The show is full of exciting action, acting, dancing, singing, magic, suspense and laugh-out-loud jokes written by Milton Berle, W.C. Fields, Mae West and others! Come see the old-worldly Athol & Francisca O'Shay and the iron-willed Ida Kraus! Enjoy TWO Olio's (the first starring Waldorf & Statler and the second featuring a magic act)! Come to the show and you'll find out that "She had one that loved her, one that betrayed her and one that will marry her ... or else!"

The show runs May 7th, 8th, 15th and 16th (Fridays and Saturdays) Curtain at 7:30PM, doors open at 6:30PM at the Florence City Hall, 29th and State Street. Tickets are \$10.00 with \$2:00 discount for TAG members. Visit www.florentineplayers.com for more information.

There will be a TAG Night Out on Thursday, May 6th at 7:30 p.m.

Great Plains Evening Performances

There will be seven exciting evening performances at venues across the city at the Great Plains Theatre Conference this year. They range from highly avant-garde performance from downtown NYC, to Pulitzer Prize winners. Each night the playwright will be on hand to talk about the work, and the performers range from wonderful Omaha actors to top New York City folks. It will be a great chance to see some new work, meet some wonderful theatre artists, and get inspired. The tickets are free if you're involved in a project for the conference. If you're not involved in the conference this year they are just \$10, or \$15 dollars, depending on the night that you attend.

Please go to - www.mccneb.edu/theatreconference for full descriptions and information.

Crime or Emergency : A wild and wondrous, aesthetic holocaust.

Saturday May 29th at UNO Weber Fine Arts Bldg.

Waaxe's Law: The moving story of the trial of Chief Standing Bear.

Sunday May 30th at Fort Omaha - Neihardt Sacred Hoop Prayer Garden

Mountain Head: An Avant-garde bouquet by two of America's top playwrights. At KANEKO – 11th and Jones Street

Turpentine Jake: A rich, soul shaking journey into the turpentine camps of the South. At the Omaha Community Playhouse

The Writer's Voice: Three of America's greatest playwrights read their own work. At the Omaha Community Playhouse

Fuddy Meers: A night of side splitting hilarity. At Creighton University's Lied Center

Rabbit Hole: A Pulitzer Prize winning exploration of love and loss. At Creighton University's Lied Center

And waiting in the wings ...

Broadstreet Theatre presents

Little Women

June 18-July 3

Bluebarn Theatre presents

Rabbit Hole

June 10 – July 3

Auditions & More Auditions

May 3 and 4th: *Brick: A Ben Folds Acapella Musical*, **SkullDuggery Theatre**, 7 p.m. Monday and Tuesday at the theater, 222 S. 19th St., Suite 320. The original musical will run July 8-31. Information: 317-7893. Auditions 7pm-10pm. Sign up for a slot by calling or texting 402.317.7893.

The **Lofte Community Theatre** in Manley announces that it will be holding auditions for their summer musical, *Guys & Dolls* on May 9 and 10 at 7pm. There are several parts available including featured parts and ensemble. Men and women ages 16 and up are welcome. Those planning to audition should bring a prepared piece of music. An accompanist is provided. Readings will consist of cuttings from the show's script.

Performance dates are July 16-18, 22-25, 29-31 and August 1.

There are two performances on July 18 and 25. Director for the production is Kevin Colbert. Musical Director is Betty Colbert.

Complete details can be found on the Lofte's website, www.Lofte.com. Questions may be addressed to Kevin Colbert by calling the Lofte's Box Office at (402) 234-2553.

The **Mills Masquers** of Glenwood, IA will hold auditions for *Cheaper by the Dozen* on Sunday, May 16 and Monday, May 17. Auditions will begin at 7:00 PM both evenings and will be held at the Barton Theater 1 mile north of Glenwood on old US highway 275 (56543

(Continued)

The GreenRoom

(Cheaper auditions, Continued)

221st Street, Glenwood, IA). *Cheaper by the Dozen* is dramatized by Christopher Sergel, from the book by Frank B. Gilbreth, Jr. and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey. Frank and Ernestine tell the story of their father's efforts to implement his scientific management techniques in their home. With 12 children, Dad stresses efficiency and time-saving techniques as they go about their daily chores. Set in the 1920's, this comedy recounts the "happiest days" in the Gilbreth household.

The show will be directed by Nancy Wright, with weekend performances scheduled for July 22 through August 1. The cast includes 10 children ages 17 and younger (4 female, 7 male). Also needed are 3 adult women and 2 adult men, ages 30 and older. Persons who audition will be asked to read from the script. Auditions are open to all. Call the theater box office and leave a message if you need more information, or check the website: www.millsmasquers.org.

Papillion-LaVista Community Theatre will be holding auditions for their summer musical production of *The Sound of Music*. Auditions will be held at Papillion-LaVista High School (10799 Highway 370). Auditions for children ages 5-14 will be held on Sunday, May 23rd from 3-6 pm. All of the children will be singing the same song and may be asked to do some readings from the script. You can download the music at www.plvcommtheatre.com. There is a music clip that you can also listen to. Adult auditions will be held on Sunday, May 23rd and Monday, May 24th between 7-9 pm. Please prepare a SHORT song; an accompanist will be provided. We will also be doing some readings from the script. Performance dates will be July 8-11 and July 15-17. The performances will once again be in the great outdoors at the Sumtur Amphitheatre. Please call 612-2022, email us at plvcommtheatre@yahoo.com or visit our website for more information.

& Other Good Stuff

Q & A Discussion Series: Sound Design

By Jennifer Gilg

TAG continues its series on the TAG Awards' technical categories with a Q & A Discussion with sound designers Molly Welsh ("MW") and John Gibilisco ("JG"). Molly Welsh has designed sound for SNAP! Productions, the Shelterbelt Theatre, BlueBarn's Witching Hour, and Creighton University. She won the TAG Award in Sound Design for her work on I Am My Own Wife at SNAP! Productions. John Gibilisco is Master Electrician and Resident Sound Designer for the Omaha Community Playhouse. He has won TAG Awards in Sound Design for Ragtime, South Pacific, and Starkweather, all at the Omaha Community Playhouse. Here are some thoughts from Molly and John as we close in on nominations for the 2009-2010 season.

Q: What are the components that make up "sound design" for a production? Sound effects like ringing phones seem obvious, but what other things fall under the umbrella of "sound design?"

MW: To me, everything the audience hears from the time they walk into the theater until they walk out is part of the sound design. This

could include: Pre-show music, pre-show announcements, sound effects that happen in real time (doorbells, phones ringing, etc.), sound effects that comment on the moment (double take cartoon noises, a ting when someone has an idea, etc.), music/sound that underscores scenes to heighten the mood for the audience, music during intermission, ambient noise to tell the audience where we are in space and time (wind, rain, applause, zoo animals, in a noisy bar, etc.) transition music to drive the play forward between scenes, any microphones on stage and off stage, and any speaker placement. JG: Sound design includes a combination of elements. Thinking back on the season at the Playhouse, I have recorded scores of voice work and live musicians and have created live Foley effects and period radio broadcasts (both created and actual radio archive). Crash boxes, canned effects and wireless mic reinforcements and micing effects are also part of sound design. I utilized the beautiful music from the original production of *Almost Maine* and re-mastered Alex North's original music from the 1949 Broadway production of *Death of a Salesman*. Antiquated recordings are not always suitable for production, but with a little luck and some digital magic the restored tracks add wonderfully affordable character and charm to a production. Speaking of phone rings, I have a live phone ring generator from the old North Western Bell Co. along with a collection of old phone bells. But I also have gathered a number of recorded rings that range from the antique to a modern cell. I hope some day to use a rain stick and good old fashioned thunder sheet. There is a ton more that goes on behind the scenes as well, like paper work, research, operator training, equipment, budgets etc.

Q: The TAG Awards category for sound design does not distinguish between musical and non-musical productions. Does your work as a sound designer change when you design for a musical rather than a straight play?

MW: A sound design for a play is very different from a musical. In my experience with musicals there is a director, a music director, a choreographer and one audio technician/sound board operator who tries to make all three of those folks happy and add any recorded sound effects that the orchestra can't generate.

JB: Yes, very much so. For musicals, we break sound into 2 separate items. Part 1, "reinforcement" of the production with boundary mics, wireless body mics, and orchestra mics. Part 2 is sound effects/ environmental ambiance/ transition and underscore music. In this setting I have partnered with guest designer Tim Burkhart for the past 22 years. Tim is responsible for the overall design and engineering of a musical production, while I create whatever effects are required. In both plays and musicals I rely heavily on our directors and stage managers for input as I do not have the luxury of being part of the rehearsal process until tech.

Q: For a non-musical production, the addition of music is generally discretionary. What are some of the things you consider when deciding whether to add music to a production and where to include it? Is that your call or the call of the director?

MW: The decision of whether or not to have transitional music or underscoring fits in with the bigger picture. Sound has to have a function. It has to fit in with the overall concept of the show. The overall concept is usually decided early in production meetings with all designers and the director present. Adding any sound at all to a production has to mean something to the show and it has to be "on

purpose,” just like any move an actor makes or line he utters has to be “on purpose.” If the choice has been made to underscore scenes or use transitional music as part of the sound design, then a sound designer gets to figure out how a particular piece of music affects the rhythm of the scene/transition/concept/etc. We ask ourselves things like: Does this piece of music fight the actor’s rhythm? Make the audience hold their breath? Allow the audience to laugh? Let the audience relax? Cause them to lean forward in their seat? Drive the scene or transition forward? Let the audience take a breath before we move forward?

JG: When adding music to a show I always give careful consideration because music has the power to transport you someplace else instantly. It’s tricky business. You don’t want to move the audience to the wrong place! The period of a play tends to influence choices in mood, styles, instruments, tempos, countries, atmospheres and the familiar. Of course, the decision on where and when music is used is always a collaborative effort with the director. In most cases (but not always) the instrumentation and the composition need to be harmonious with the on-stage character. An example of that is the solo french horn passage used at the top of Mr. Roberts as Roberts stands watch on the ship’s bridge, alone in the night. For the play *Driving Miss Daisy*, a playful composition of a cello and a bass for transitions is a perfect reflection of Miss Daisy and Hoke’s characters. Sometimes casting choices influence my music decisions. Some actors hear underscore and naturally blend with its timing and energy. However that is not always the case, and then, even a perfect piece of music competes and becomes noise pollution. With only 4 days of tech it’s not always a good idea or fair to drop music underscore on an actor’s scene work. In general, I hate hate preshow and intermission music. I’ll create it if need be but I prefer to be left alone with my thoughts. Ditto on curtain speeches and recorded announcements. I understand the need but I don’t have to like it! My dream on the subject of music is to employ local musicians to compose original music for our productions.

Q: What are some of the things you think TAG voters should consider when judging the success of a sound design?

MW: Consider what role sound played in the production. Did it take away from the show? Was it distracting? Was it specific? Did it confuse you? Was it memorable? The hardest part about the answers to those questions is that sometimes you don’t know what the designer’s intentions were. Maybe the music was supposed to be distracting. Sometimes the goal of a sound design is to blend in and not be remembered. Sometimes the goal is to slap the audience in the face and make them pay attention. My advice to TAG voters is to think big and outside the box. Ask questions like: Did it move you? Did it empower you? Did you get something out of it? Did you like what you got?

JG: That’s a tough question. Sound is so ephemeral. Its difficult look at it the way you might observe the texture and color of a costume, or set piece, or even lighting. So I guess: does the work collaboratively support what occurs on the stage? Also: creativity, composition of design and execution.

Q&A Discussion Series: Properties Design

By Jim Martin

Our series of articles focusing on TAG Awards’ technical categories continues with Properties Design and features two well-known “props goddesses” in Omaha. Rhonda Hall (RH) has won or shared the TAG Award four times (I Am My Own Wife; Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean; Visiting Mr. Green; and Splendor). Amy Reiner (AR) has been

on staff at the Omaha Community Playhouse since 2000, doing properties design for over 60 productions. She received the TAG Award for Backstage Excellence in 2009.

Q: What IS a “stage property?” and why should an audience member care?

Both: A stage prop is anything used on stage by an actor. It can also mean the furniture and set dressing, depending on the facility. Properties help establish the tone, the mood, and the time frame for a show.

Q: Props design is much more than simply finding or buying items and placing them on the stage. The job must include research, phone and computer searches, and plain old footwork. How do you approach the task?

RH: Before the computer, I did a lot more leg work. I would spend time with many of the local antique dealers in town and do research at the library, as well as visiting with family and friends. Now I spend a lot of time on the computer.

AR: The computer is vital. I also visit local museums and stores like Army Navy Surplus. Retro style stores can give you quite a bit of insight.

Q: Choosing and placing props on a stage in a relatively large auditorium must differ from a small, close-to-the-audience stage area. A prop could lose its effectiveness if the audience could not see it or recognize what it is. How do you deal with that?

RH: I went to a college with a black box and have worked in several small spaces like the Norton and SNAP. I’ve learned that you have to be especially authentic in small spaces. (You can read the titles on the books!) Then I worked for Opera Omaha, the Playhouse, and the Symphony (Holiday Fanfare) and found out about the other extreme. I learned to go to the various sections of the theatre to watch and get an idea what something looks like from the balcony. And I’ve done mid-size venues like Chanticleer which is somewhere in the middle.

AR: I have both a black box and a proscenium theatre at the Playhouse which gives me both arenas to work in. I do find myself at times on a large scale show making certain props more realistic, not for the audience but for the actor so that they can really get into character on each level.

Q: A script drives some prop needs, either explicitly (telephone calls are made during the play) or by context (books for a library; dishes for a kitchen; groceries for a convenience store). Beyond those minimums, how does your own experience/expertise blend with the collective vision of the director and the rest of the technical staff?

AR: I have quite a bit of creativity once the initial decisions have been made. Discussions with the director on how the prop is used by the actor and with the scenic designer on how the prop needs to look are first on my list. After I know those two things, I am mostly on my own for decision-making. Many props end up being what I call a “crossover” prop – that’s when it involves other departments like our shop, lighting or costumes. I always ok the final look and things can often change after that, but if a prop master has done the research, it usually comes out ok!

RH: It is a collective vision with some productions; with others, I just use my own judgment. You must consider the requirements of the technical staff and the ease of the prop for the actors. Production meetings at the time of the read through is the ideal situation; then all the technical staff can work together and know if there are special requirements, e.g., the phone ringer needs to work from the phone; set lamps must really work; some props need to blend into the color scheme of the costumer.

(Continued)

Q: Stage properties are built, borrowed, bought, or pulled from

stock. What has been the most unusual or difficult item you've had to come up with for a show and how did you do it?

RH: Well, I have to say the iron lung for *City of Angels*. I found one at St Joseph Hospital Museum and then an actor worked at Creighton and so I had a connection to start with. That production was difficult because it was a play about the filming of a movie in the 30's. The movie was done in black and white. It made me realize that it was not only black and white but many shades of gray.

As a freshman in college, I was challenged by an upper classman to get the Catholic Bishop's ring for his character of Cardinal Wolsey in *Anne of a Thousand Days*. It was an excellent lesson in "if you don't ask, you won't get it." Either the Bishop saw the fear in my eyes or he liked my telling him how lovely his new furniture was and what a joy *St Mary's of the Plains* was to attend. I will never forget his words when I walked out with the ring: "It's Priceless!!"

AR: My favorite was for a show called *You Should Be So Lucky*. I had to build a piece of artwork by Alberto Giacometti that was mistaken for an ashtray and then ended up as a swivel chair by the end of the show. It took a while to complete, but ended up working perfectly! It's often hard to mimic an artist's ideas and make them work for a production.

Q: When you are able to see productions at theatres in Omaha or elsewhere, you probably notice the props and their use more than most of us. What makes a property design stand out in your eyes?

AR: It stands out for me when I am NOT noticing it -- when it really takes me to the location or time period of the story unfolding on the stage.

RH: What makes a good prop design is when it does not stand out or take you out of the moment ... although I am intrigued when I see a prop that is very unique and wonder where did they find it or how it was made.

Workshops Offered at the Great Plains Theatre Conference

During this year's conference, May 29th to June 5th, top theatre professionals from all over the country will present fun and insightful workshops for actors and directors. Each class will be taught in Building 10 of Metro's Fort Omaha Campus.

The first workshop will be held on Saturday, May 29th, at 10:30 am and will include "Auditioning for Musical Theatre", "Movement/Improv" and "Grant Writing Insight".

On Memorial Day, Monday, May 31st, at 11:00 am the workshops continue with "Auditioning for Musical Theatre" and "Discovering a Playable Action".

On Wednesday, Jun 2nd, at 11:30 am the third set of workshops will be presented: "Improv in Rehearsal" and "Psychology-Free

Performing: Got Room?"

Finally, on Friday, June 4th, at 11:30 am the last two workshops will be offered: "Discovering a Playable Action" and "Locating the Tone: Directing and acting "adventurous" contemporary plays".

More information on the workshops and bios of the leaders can be found online at <http://www.mccneb.edu/theatreconference/index.asp>. Actors and directors participating in conference readings or productions may attend these workshops free of charge. Non-participating artists may attend any scheduled workshop for a \$15 fee, payable at the registration desk. Please contact Scott Working (saworking@mccneb.edu) with the workshops you'd like to attend. Space is limited.

TICKETS NOW ON SALE

**The Omaha Community Playhouse Presents
TWO Special Summer Events in the Howard Drew Theatre
*Rock Legends: People's Choice (June 23-30)***

Billy McGuigan is familiar to Omaha audiences from the 2002 smash hit *The Buddy Holly Story*, five annual presentations of *Rave On!* (a tribute to the music of Buddy Holly), and three years (so far) of *Yesterday and Today: An Interactive Beatles Experience*. Now, Billy is returning with the show he introduced at The Playhouse last year, *Rock Legends: People's Choice*, featuring the music of audience-chosen rock legends. Classic musical favorites from the top vote-getters will be performed for that show's audience, thus each show is unique. Choices include Elton John; Billy Joel; Paul McCartney; Tom Petty; The Doors; Buddy Holly; Pink Floyd; and The Rolling Stones. The show performs Wed – Thu – Fri - Sat at 7:30 PM; Sun at 2:00 PM and 6:30 PM. All seats are reserved and cost \$38 (includes tax).

Defending the Caveman (July 7 – Aug 1)

Defending the Caveman is the longest running solo play in Broadway history. It's a hilariously insightful examination of the ways men and women relate. Besides its amusing catalog of instantly recognizable traits that differentiate the sexes, the underlying message is that out of these differences springs the potential for bridge building rather than perpetual warfare. One critic wrote of the writer Rob Becker, "His affection for women, in tandem with his light-hearted defense of men, puts him in a win-win situation. In his hands, the fireworks of the sexual revolution have been melted into friendly fire."

This production performs Wed – Thu – Fri at 8 PM; Sat at 5 & 8 PM; and Sun at 3 PM. All seats are reserved and cost \$35.00 (includes tax).

Call the Playhouse Box Office at (402) 553-0800 or toll-free (888) 782-4338 or visit the web site at www.omahaplayhouse.com.

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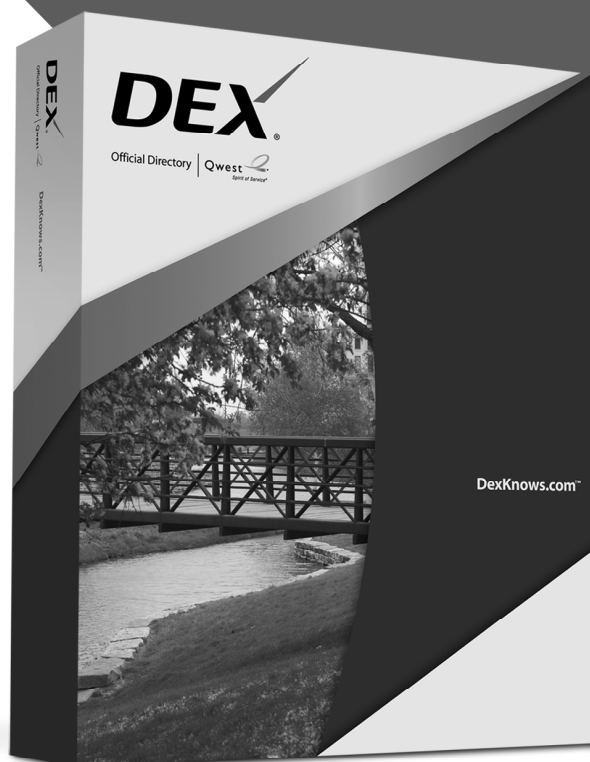
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Theatre Planning	S	Su	M	Tu	W	Tr	F	S	Su	M	Tu	W	Tr	F	S	Su	M	Tu	W	Tr	F	S	Su	M	Tu	W	Tr	F	S	Su	M
May-2010	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
On Stage																															
NEW - Rent																															
ST - Warpaint																															
JBT - Of Mice and Men																															
OCP - Mister Roberts																															
BSB - Mrs. Warren's Profession																															
FP - Shadow of Betrayal																															
BLT - The Odd Couple																															
OCP - Awesome 80's Prom																															
CT - Footloose																															
SNAP - Loose Knit																															
OCP - Fiddler On The Roof																															
Auditions																															
SD - Brick																															
LCT - Guys & Dolls																															
MM - Cheaper By the Dozen																															
TNO=TAG Night Out																															
Black Box=Closing Performance																															



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May 2010

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Teen Reps: Cali Neuberger and Bailey Newman

- The next Board of Directors' meeting will be held Saturday, May 15, 10 a.m., at the Omaha Community Playhouse Guiou Room (second floor). All TAG Members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Call Jim Martin at (402) 933-6259.
- The final DEADLINE for items, articles and advertisements for the June Newsletter is Thursday, May 20.
- To submit newsletter information/articles, send via e-mail to taglines@cox.net (preferred) or mail to TAG, Attn: Cathy Hirsch, Box 24008, Omaha, NE 68124.
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