

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre

Act
75
years
1929-2004

Spotlight

March, 2005



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Ann Arbor Civic Theatre

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04-05 season sponsors



Media Partner

From the Managing Director and the Program Director

What volunteers!

As we sat down to talk about topics for our article, we realized how often our letter is a request for support. Usually, we're asking for financial support. This time, however, we want to let you know about all the support we get from members that has nothing to do with money. Many of our volunteers pitch in to help us in areas outside their normal area of interest, and we could not possibly keep this place running without them.

When we were inundated with ticket orders for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, several Board members volunteered to take

Our Town Memories

by Glenn Bugala

When I was looking at straight dramas to direct this season, I looked at scores of scripts old and new, but none resonated with me like *Our Town*. Written in 1938, this Pulitzer Prize winner is at once groundbreaking in its style and charming in substance. Although it tells the story of a small town in New England and delights in the residents of this town, it has the scope and universality of a Greek play. Also, although it is a serious drama, it isn't a tragedy. If anything, it gives a message of hope, which we can use these days.

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(from l to rt) Amanda Akins as Emily, John Boonin as George, and Thom (TJ) Johnson as the Stage Manager are in *Our Town*, playing March 10-13 at Towsley Auditorium at WCC.

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From the Managing Director and the Program Director (continued)

time out of their busy days to come in and help fill orders: Kim Perlman, Ellen Woodman, Anne Bauman, and Catherine Lilly. Kim even braved the throngs of patrons at the Mendelssohn box office to cheerfully dispense hundreds of tickets. Valerie Wilkinson is our office helper extraordinaire. We can call Val to fill in (when our kids are sick, an aging parent is in need, an offsite workshop beckons) and she will hop in her car and be here in minutes. A recent Ann Arbor resident, Maggie Campbell, checked out our website and called to see if she could help us with grant applications. We immediately took her up on it and, with her help, filed for a MCACA mini-grant. When we mentioned to our treasurer, Fred Patterson, that we needed to put up some signs around our space, Fred offered to take them home to laminate. (Fred has his own laminator and loves to use it, so if you have any A2CT laminating needs....)

When our faithful program editor, Anthony Provenzola agreed to assistant direct *Our Town*, Tiff Crutchfield agreed to edit the *Our Town* program so Anthony could devote his energies to A.D.ing. When Curt Waugh heard that former A2CT member Brynn O'Malley got a gig on Broadway, Curt offered to contact Brynn and write an article for the Spotlight (see the next issue for that article). When we need to find out about obscure Postal regulations or make a change to the program less than a day before opening, Samantha Peer from Huron Valley Printing just smiles, nods

(as far as we can tell over the phone) and says, "sure." When Andy Hoag showed up one fall weekend to help with the *Inherit the Wind* set and found the work day had been cancelled, he stayed and worked for two hours on sorting and organizing costumes. The members of the Play Selection Committee-Brian Harcourt, Joyce Casale, Ellen Woodman, Anthony Provenzola, Cassie Mann, Kathy Waugh, Karl

Kaschiske, Nathaniel Madura, and Rachel Francisco--spent countless hours this fall and winter meeting, reading, e-mailing, and agonizing over a bumper crop of submissions to arrive at a stellar 05-06 season. When Cheryl Berteel carefully and thoroughly returned *Joseph* costumes to their rightful

places, she picked-up and organized stray costumes



along the way. Whenever we are called to the theatre at odd times for one crisis or another, our kids Emma Steppe, Anika Steppe, Sasha Lazare, and Jeremy Lazare find their own rides, make their own meals, and even do their homework un-prodded. Even as I write this, Dick Vail is perched precariously on a ladder in the scene storage area to fix an ancient fluorescent light fixture so people can actually see the props shelves.

I'm sure there is support from members we haven't covered here--if you know of someone we forgot, let us know and we'll mention them in the next Spotlight.

If you've ever wondered how you can support A2CT, take inspiration from these invaluable volunteers. We will ALWAYS find something for you to do!

Suzi & Cassie ■

More Workshops!

This spring we continue our series of tech workshops. Next up is Sound Design & Operation, taught by our sound designer extraordinaire, Bob Skon. The workshop will take place Saturday, May 21, from 10am-1pm at Civic's Studio on West Ann. This workshop will help prepare participant to design and run sound for theater. Topics include the basics of PA setup, microphone techniques, and more. Participants are encouraged to attend move-in for *Cabaret* June 5 for real, hands-on experience.

Our final workshop of the season is Lighting Design & Installation, taught by master lighting designer Don Smith. The workshop will take place Saturday, June 4, from 1-4pm, also at the A2CT Studio. Don will discuss ways to create a design, how to work with a director to create a vision, how to turn the vision into reality, and other practical lighting design and setup issues. Part of this workshop includes a practical, hands-on session the following day as Don hangs and focuses lights for A2CT's production of *Cabaret* at Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre. Workshop attendees will get to assist in the process--what better way to learn!

Both workshops are free to A2CT members, or just \$10 for non-members which includes a Civic membership. To register, visit www.a2ct.org or call the office during business hours. ■

Never Underestimate the Power of a Woman

Lysistrata -- An Ancient Play with a Modern Message

The 20th century feminist admonition, "Never Underestimate the Power of a Woman," captures the spirit of Aristophanes' 2500-year-old *Lysistrata*, which A2CT will present on April 14-17, 2005 at Towsley Auditorium at Washtenaw Community College.

As the play opens, the men of Athens, Sparta and the other city-states have entertained themselves for years with continuous warfare that depletes the treasury and leaves the women managing the home front. The ongoing war threatens the principles of democracy that make the Greek city-states unique in the ancient world.

Sound familiar?

The play's relevance to modern times first attracted director Catherine Zudak, who plans to stage it with contemporary costumes and settings, "The play is dated in some ways. Today women serve in the military and in leadership positions in government, and we even have househusbands. But Aristophanes' premise -- that peace is a worthy goal --remains true."

Despite its serious underlying theme, *Lysistrata* is rollicking comedy, a bawdy battle between the sexes. The title character, Lysistrata, convinces the women of Greece to boycott sex with their husbands until the men make peace. To further limit the men's ability to make war, a Chorus of Old Women, on Lysistrata's orders, captures the treasury. The women barricade themselves inside the Acropolis with the war chest and wait for the men to yield.

The outcome of the gender war is no means assured as the Chorus of Old Men lay siege to the women in the Acropolis,

Lysistrata battles an irate Magistrate and his archers, and the women rebel, missing sex every bit as much as the men. The battle comes to a head as a desperate husband, Cinesias, lures his wavering wife, Myrrhine, out from the Acropolis. Who will triumph?

Of course, modern theater audiences have an advantage over those of Ancient Greece. We live in a world with Hillary Rodham Clinton and Condoleezza Rice; we know better than to underestimate the power of a woman. ■

Lysistrata runs Thursday April 14-Sunday April 17, at Towsley Auditorium in the Morris Lawrence Building of Washtenaw Community College. Showtimes are Thurs.-Sat. 8pm, with a matinee Sun at 2pm. Tickets are \$13 on Thursday; Fri.-Sun. adults \$19, students/seniors \$17. For more information, as always, visit us at www.a2ct.org or call us at (734)971-2228. **Lysistrata's** special show sponsors include Paesano's and WCC.



Tiffany Mitchenor as Lysistrata taunts Kevin Stacy as Cinesias in the Ann Arbor Civic Theatre production coming this April.

Sleeping Beauty Auditions

This Junior Theatre production, directed by Adrienne Clark has show dates of May 19-22, 2005 at WCC's College Theatre.

Audition info:

Auditions will take place on March 19 (Sat.) and March 20 (Sun.) from 2-5 pm; those auditioning need only come to one of those days. Callbacks, if needed, will be on March 21 (Mon.) from 4-6 pm. All auditions will be held at the A2CT

Rehearsal Studio, 322 W. Ann St.

There are approximately 16-20 roles available, and all roles are open to kids in grade 4-12. All who are auditioning will need to have a full list of conflicts for April and May and will need to know if they will be in town for Ann Arbor Schools Spring Break (Mar. 25-Apr.3). All auditioning should prepare a 1-2 minute comedic monologue, poem, or short story. We will also do cold readings from the script and theatre games. Rehearsals will be on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4-6 pm and on Saturdays from 1-4 pm.

Synopsis:

This fun-filled twist to the ageless classic follows the antics that surround a kingdom whose Prince is put under a curse that can only be broken by the kiss of a Princess. Will the Prince's people be able to open their minds to the idea that a girl can save a boy before it's too late?



President's Corner

Next Season!

Dear A2CT members,
I am pleased to

announce the 2005-2006 Ann Arbor Civic Theatre season!

<u>Opening Night</u>	<u>Director</u>	<u>Show</u>	<u>Venue</u>
9/15/2005	Wendy Sielaff	West Side Story	Mendelssohn
11/10/2005	Jeff Meyers	All My Sons	Towsley
1/12/2006	Brian Buckner	Guys and Dolls	Mendelssohn
3/2/2006	Thom Johnson	1000 Clowns	Towsley
4/6/2006	Andrew Ballnik	The Nerd	Towsley
6/8/2006	Chris O'Brien	Best Little Whorehouse in Texas	Mendelssohn

I'd like to thank the play selection committee for their efforts. It was a difficult process this year because there were so many wonderful options to choose from. We're very excited by the resulting season.

We kick off the season with the intensely moving *West Side Story*; *Romeo and Juliet* retold by Sondheim and Bernstein. It's sure to be a fantastic production. Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* is the season's first straight show. Written shortly after WWII this tale of war and capitalism has become quite relevant. Stepping a few years further back to the 1930's, Damon Runyon's New York comes to life in *Guys and Dolls*. Another classic musical that is sure to please. Our second straight show is *A Thousand Clowns*. This classic comedy is a journey of self discovery that will warm your heart. The straight shows end with *The Nerd*. You'll be rolling in the aisles with this slapstick comedy of mistaken identities. We close the season with another blockbuster musical; *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. This tongue-in-cheek peek at the world's oldest profession will bring a smile to your face and send you home humming.

Many of you have sent me email suggesting various titles you'd like to see at the Civic. Thanks to all of you and keep those suggestions coming! We may not be able to stage everything you suggest but it gives us a lot of information as to what you like. We can use that.

Let me know what you think of the 2005-2006 season!

Brian Harcourt
A2CT Board President ■

Cabaret Auditions in March

Show Information: *Cabaret* is directed by Chris O'Brien and produced by Tiff Crutchfield. The show dates will be June 9-12, 2005 at Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre.

Audition Location: Ann Arbor Civic Theatre, 322 W. Ann Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Adult auditions:

Sunday and Monday, March 20 and 21.

(Please arrive slightly early to complete audition registration.)

Dance auditions start promptly at 6:30 pm

Vocal and reading auditions begin at 7:45 pm (until 11 pm)

Callbacks will take place Wednesday, March 23 from 6:30-11 pm

Adults interested in the following roles need to attend the dance, vocal and reading portions of the audition:

Emcee, Sally Bowles, Fraulein Kost, Kat Kat Klub Girls (6) and Kit Kat Klub Boys (4). Adults interested in the following roles only



Publicity photo from Season brochure.
Actress shown will not necessarily appear in the part depicted.

need to attend the vocal and reading portions of the audition:
Clifford Bradshaw, Fraulein Schneider, Herr Schultz, Ernst Ludwig, Max and all other company roles.

For adult vocal auditions, please prepare 16-32 bars and bring sheet music. Song selection is open with no restrictions. An accompanist will be provided. Those dancing should dress appropriately. Reading will be from the script, and a prepared monologue is not required. Adults auditioning should plan to attend only one of the two basic audition evenings.

Youth auditions:

Saturday, March 19, from 11:30 am - 1 pm

We will be casting 10 Hitler Youth (males and females who can appear as between 10-17 yrs. of age on stage requiring limited involvement and rehearsal time) as well as a featured, recorded role for a boy or girl soprano. These roles will involve stage performance and house interaction, which will require developing and maintaining character. All of the youth auditions require a short vocal audition and a few minutes of discussion with the director. Please prepare 16 bars of a song and bring sheet music. (possibility exists of multiple-role casting).

Our Town (continued)

Our Town tells the story of Grover's Corners, NH between 1899 and 1913. In particular it follows the lives of George Gibbs (John Boonin) and Emily Webb (Amanda Akins) who live next door to each other, grow up, marry and ultimately face life's greatest questions together. Their parents (featuring Kathleen Beardmore, Jon Elliott, Patrice Pederson and Ed Reynolds) play a big part in their lives as well. Throughout the show, a Stage Manager (Thom Johnson) speaks directly to the audience--setting the scenes and sharing his heartwarming philosophies of life. Plus, the townspeople (including Anne Bauman, Karl Kasischke, Ted Thrasher, and many others) give us endless amounts of 'local color.' Although the moments are real, the style of presentation in this show is very theatrical.



Thom 'TJ' Johnson, assuming the role of the Minister, looks on as Emily (Amanda Akins) and George (John Boonin) seal their marriage vows with a kiss in **Our Town**.

From the auditions through the rehearsals, I think all of us have been filled with 'warm fuzzies' about this project. It has been a joy for me to come to rehearsals. The cast has done a terrific job not only working with the miming of everyday activities (the show has no sets or props) but also learning the New Hampshire accent from movies and each other. Assistant Director/SM Anthony Provenzola has also had the opportunity to lead weekly rehearsals on his own. That and other touches have made the experience more organic for the performers.

This production will present a fairly traditional view of *Our Town*, but in the area of sound, we have a few tricks up our sleeve. The cast, who never exits the stage during the entire production, will be performing all of the sound effects live as accompaniment to the mimed actions onstage. Also, using the original film as our guide, *Our Town* features 80 minutes of Aaron Copland-composed underscoring.

The set (sans walls) was designed entirely by the cast, who not only determined the layout of the town and the homes but also pulled the physical items we will use on the stage. Lighting is being designed by Nathaniel Madura, who did such a fantastic job with *On the Town* earlier this season. A spectacular newcomer named Nan Wirth is handling the biggest design budget area--costumes. Nan has designed costumes for Greenhills School prior to coming to us. After extensive research, she is preparing a beautiful palette of warm-toned outfits that wonderfully convey the period.

Seldom have I experienced a more delightful or easygoing production than *Our Town*, and I hope to see you all there!

For this production, A2CT is offering a special pricing for educators. Furthermore, there are extensive educational resources available for *Our Town*. To find out more about educational pricing and read our education items visit the *Our Town* show page on www.a2ct.org. ■

Our Town runs Thursday March 10-Sunday March 13, at Towsley Auditorium in the Morris Lawrence Building of Washtenaw Community College. Showtimes are Thurs.-Sat. 8pm, with a matinee Sun at 2pm. Tickets are \$13 on Thursday; Fri.-Sun. adults \$19, students/seniors \$17. For more information, as always, visit us at www.a2ct.org or call us at (734)971-2228. **Our Town's** special show sponsors include Paesano's and WCC.

Pal Joey

We are saddened to announce that Civic member and actor Joey Newhouse has passed away. Joey appeared in last season's *Fiddler on the Roof* and was known to all of us here for having boundless enthusiasm and a good spirit. Burial and memorial/shiva will take place in his hometown of Washington DC. He will be missed. ■

Go to www.a2ct.org for all of the latest news on shows, auditions, volunteering and events. New this year: online, secure ticket ordering!



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ANN ARBOR CIVIC THEATRE



BRINGING DRAMA TO ANN ARBOR FOR 75 YEARS, AND IT SHOWS.

04-05 'world tour' season

- 09/04 On the Town
- 11/04 Inherit the Wind
- 11/04 (Jr.) Emperor's New Clothes
- 01/05 Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
- 03/05 Our Town
- 04/05 Lysistrata
- 05/05 (Jr.) Sleeping Beauty
- 06/05 Cabaret