

A2ct

ANN ARBOR CIVIC THEATRE

Spotlight

December, 2006



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Ann Arbor Civic Theatre

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06-07 season sponsors



Media Partner

Charity Begins at Civic

It's that time again—the now semi-annual Firefly A2CT benefit. Steppin' Out III: Charity Begins at Civic runs Wednesday and Thursday, December 20 & 21 at the Firefly Club.

Many of your favorite Civic crooners are busy dusting off their stocking caps and tuning up their pipes to sing you their favorite Broadway show tunes, including many holiday favorites from shows like *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *White Christmas*, and the cartoon *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

Guest performers will be on hand with a special preview of A2CT's upcoming production of *Sweet Charity*.

Charity Begins at Civic is being

continued on page 4

For a Good Time, See Charity

by Edmond Reynolds

Do you want to have fun? How's about a few laughs? Can we show you a good time? If you answered yes, then reserve your ticket for A2CT's *Sweet Charity*! The curtain goes up January 11, 12, 13 and 14, 2007 at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater.

Rehearsals are underway and progressing "sweetly" at the A2CT Rehearsal

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Jeff DiFranco (choreographer), Kathy Waugh (Charity Hope Valentine), and Edmond Reynolds (director) at work on *Sweet Charity*.

From our President and Co-Managing Directors



is the Season to celebrate...

...the wonderful season of shows already well underway at A2CT.

...the talent and energy of volunteers who make Civic one of the longest-running and highest-quality community theaters in the country

...the families of all the volunteers who patiently loan us their loved ones

...the behind-the-scenes efforts of our dedicated Board of Directors

...the hard work of this year's Play Selection Committee as they work on selecting a stellar 07-08 playbill

...our loyal audiences who attend our shows and cheer us on

...our donors and sponsors who make the operation of the A2CT possible.

This holiday season we wish you peace and happiness, and we look forward to a New Year with our A2CT family.

Tiff, Suzi, and Cassie ■

Oh, What a Night!



A2CT held its 2005-06 Season awards event Friday, October 6 and—as usual—a good time was had by all. For the first time in several years, there was no UM football game to contend with so getting there, staying there, and having fun were a piece of cake. Speaking of cake, there were delicious tidbits and tasty cocktails, beautiful decorations, and even more beautiful guests decked out in their finest to honor Civic's finest. The pre-show portion of the evening was organized by Tanya Dabney, Jean Leverich, and Linda Carrierre. The awards portion of the evening featured a show-opening musical send-up of the season written and performed by Glenn Bugala and Jon Elliott. Emcee'd by Curt Waugh, the show included musical numbers from the season's three musicals accompanied by Eric Walton, and lots of surprises and touching speeches. The awards show was directed by Glenn Bugala, and vote-tallying, program editing, and will-he-get-here suspense provided by Tiff Crutchfield.

And the awards went to:

Best Play

All My Sons

Best Musical

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Best Director of a Play

Thom Johnson

A Thousand Clowns

Best Director of a Musical

Edmond Reynolds

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Best Actor in a Play

Jimmy Dee Arnold as Murray

A Thousand Clowns

Best Actor in a Musical

Charles Sutherland as Ed

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Best Supporting Actor in a Play

Neal Kelly as Nick

A Thousand Clowns

Best Supporting Actor in a Musical

Erik Wright-Olsen as Nicely

Gyps and Dolls

Best Actress in a Play

Wendy Wright as Kate

All My Sons

Best Actress in a Musical

Annie Reinholz as Maria

West Side Story

Best Supporting Actress in a Play

Sandy Ryder as Sue

All My Sons

Best Supporting Actress in a Musical

Katherine Hoeg as Angel

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Best Set Design

Cathy Cassar

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Best Lighting Design

Nathaniel Madura

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Best Costume Design

Barb Wells & Cheryl Berteel

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Best Prop/Special Effect

Leo Babock, Cathy Cassar,

Nathaniel Madura & Edmond

Reynolds

See Through Bedroom

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Best Music Director for a Musical

Eric Walton

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Best Choreographer for a Musical

Tawna Dabney

West Side Story

John Rae Cameo Award

David Beaulieu as Hector

West Side Story

John Rae Cameo Award

January Provenzola as

Guadalupe

West Side Story

John Rae Cameo Award

Maggie Williams as Anybodys

West Side Story

John Rae Cameo Award

David Melcher as Emcee

Gyps and Dolls

John Rae Cameo Award

Scott Bartz as Leo Herman

(Chuckles the Chipmonk)

A Thousand Clowns

John Rae Cameo Award

Anne Kiser as Darla

Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

In Memoriam



When thinking about Ann Arbor Civic Theatre, many things come to mind: tradition, quality, opportunity, community, and—most of all—people.

When you think of Civic members, one person who immediately comes to mind is Barb Wells. On November 27, A2CT lost one of its most active, devoted, and long time members. The first show Barb worked on was *To Kill a Mockingbird* in 1990, and she has been a constant presence at Civic ever since. Over the years, Barb has built costumes and sets, found and created props, designed amazing displays for the Library and the 75th Gala, moved us from place, to place, to place...and attended just about every show and event. Anyone who worked behind the scenes knew Barb; her role in a production was often the one that saved the day. Barb's straight-shooting style and no-nonsense approach are legendary, and her attention to detail impeccable. Barb's passing is devastating to us all, perhaps most deeply felt by her "sidekick" Cheryl Bertel. Cheryl and Barb were a dynamic duo; their commitment and talent were in equal measure, and they worked together smoothly and efficiently. While "the show must go on," there will be many heavy hearts as we do so.

Here are some thoughts about Barb from members of Barb's Civic family:

The professionalism of Barb and Cheryl stood out for years in Civic Theatre productions. It was always such a pleasure and privilege to work with them and/or to see their work in productions in which one was only a member of the audience. Their cheerfulness, tirelessness was always an inspiration - how we shall miss Barb and mourn extra for Cheryl's loss of such a partner. — *Phyllis Wright*

Barb and I always got along well. I first got to know her while directing *A Little Night Music*. I must admit that I was intimidated by her at first. Once when I asked for a change to the set decoration, she said it couldn't be done, but later when I arrived for rehearsal, there it was. She was one of those people you could always rely on to get the job done. Of course, she was a creative and talented designer in all areas. I still remember how impressive and effective her set for *Noises Off* was. Kyle Marie was able to rotate this two story set virtually by herself! Amazing design! — *Glenn Bugala*

Best Little W'boro... was the most recent show I worked on with Barb. I can't even remember what was the first! I've known Cheryl for a longer time. She did costumes for *Bus Stop* in the Elks hall on Main. Barb was one of the constants through all the transitions from Elks to VFW, to our "permanent" home on Platt road, and to our current site. She weathered controversy, and adversity, and kept A2CT all together. She had taste, and ability, and nothing could stop her, but this. I will miss her. — *Charlie Sutherland*

I had the pleasure of working with Barb on a couple shows that I produced. But I never told her that because I was afraid of her as she was AACT's original ball-buster and did not take any guff from

anybody--which is part of why she did such a good job creating, sewing, and assembling costumes for A2CT. Her costumes were always creatively designed and were delivered on time and under budget. Wendy Sielaff and I will miss her contributions to our musicals and I'll always wonder just how Barb knew how to get tear-away G-strings for all the men in *The Full Monty*. I guess, heaven only knows. — *John W. Reiser*

Barb Wells 1950-2006



I've known Barb for about 11 years now. She was one of a kind. I've seen her laugh, I've seen her cry. At times, I've gotten into spats with her, and other times, I learned a great deal about the theatre from her. She was extremely talented in everything she did. She was a staunch supporter of A2CT, and was always there through thick and thin; she helped lay the groundwork for what Civic is today. All things aside, she touched my life in a very special way, and she will be dearly missed. — *Chuck Griffin*

Barb designed the set for a show I directed, and she and Cheryl did the set dressing. After the set was up and the initial set dressing done, Barb wasn't satisfied. Every evening of tech week she'd come in early and add a few more things—a painting, a cookie jar, a calendar (turned to the correct month, of course). Each night it was fun to find the new little detail. By opening night, the set was perfect. That was Barb—committed to perfection, and never giving up until it was attained. — *Cassie Mann*

I remember one time Barb was helping me carry a recently-painted flat outside to dry. On our way, Barb stumbled. As she was valiantly attempting to regain her balance, I yelled, "don't drop the flat, don't drop the flat!" In her effort to save the flat, she fell and broke her wrist. After that, whenever she'd see me, she'd wave her wrist at me as a reminder of her dedication to the "cause." But that was Barb—always involved, always dedicated. I will miss her very much. — *Bob Seeman*

Barb's death was awful news for us. It was always a joy to do a show that Barb and Cheryl were working on. I was grandpa in *You Can't Take It With You*. I remember the scene where I pretended that I was going to toss a dart at Barb while she was sleeping it off on the couch. At the last minute, I shake it off and throw it at the dart board. It got a good laugh in most performances, but in one of them, an audience member hissed me down for just considering it. Probably correctly. — *Dave Keren*

I had the pleasure of working with Barb Wells on several shows, the most recent being *The Full Monty*. I loved having her on the production staff. She was there from the audition process right to the final curtain call. She was such a supporter of all community theater. You would often see her and her friend Cheryl at other shows throughout the community.

I have a funny memory of her. On the last show (*Full Monty*), she and I would send web pages back and forth through email. You have to understand these web pages were full of scantily clad men, and we were looking for thongs or g strings for the men to wear. We always said we were emailing porn back and forth because some of these sites were pretty risqué. One day I shot off an email to her without warning her it was a website of men in mesh thongs on the front page. Barb opened it at work and BOING there were these naked men. We laughed about it often and she warned me to alert her when I was going to send her a web site that should not be opened at work. We love you Barb. — *Wendy Sielaff*

I cast her in a small role as the intoxicated actress in *You Can't Take It With You*. It was her only speaking role in all her years with A2CT and she was just thrilled. She had her blocking and lines immediately but took a very long time finding just the right hat. She wanted to make sure that everything looked just right for her first role.

One of the shows that I directed was called *The Death and Life of Sneaky Fitch* which was a comedy about an old western town. To give the town a realistic look of the Old West, I wanted a small pile of horse manure in the middle of the street. Since it was a three week run, having the real stuff seemed a bit too realistic, so the BBC--Barb (my set designer), Betty Waumbaugh (my props mistress) and Cheryl Bertel (my costumer)--got to work on it. They spent weeks coming up with the right combination of beans, sawdust, brown paint and some secret ingredients I never discovered to make the most realistic pile of droppings I've ever seen. We performed at our old venue on South Main (near the stadium) so the audience was on the same level as the stage. The show was in three acts and during every intermission audience members would gather around the pile and inspect it just to see if they could ascertain if it was the real McCoy.

That was the way Barb was in all things. She had a vision of the way it was supposed to be and worked tirelessly toward that goal. She was a part of virtually every show I directed at A2CT and I will miss her a great deal. — *Thom "TJ" Johnson*



Featured performers in *Charity Begins at Civic*: Steppin' Out 3 include Matt Steward and Kathy Waugh, who is *Charity in Sweet Charity*.

Charity Begins at Civic (continued)

produced by Anthony Provenzola, and features the irrepressible Curt Waugh as Emcee plus a talented cast including Kathy Waugh, Jeff Steinhauer, Leo Babcock, Anthony & January Provenzola, Matt Steward, Bob Skon, Tom Steppe, Linzi Bokor, Jean Leverich, Anne Bauman, Sara Rydzewski, and special guest, Firefly's own Susan Chastain.

The Firefly Club is located at 207 S. Ashley St. in downtown Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$15 each for general admission & \$25 for reserved seating. Tickets are available at the Ann Arbor Civic Theatre box office, 322 W. Ann St., by calling the office at 734-971-2228, or at the door of the Firefly before each performance. Doors open at 7pm and the show begins at 8pm. For more information, call the A2CT office or visit www.a2ct.org.

See you soon! ■

Tom Jones and Robin Hood Are the Big Heroes

Tom Jones Won the Day (and the girl)!

Tom Jones exploded onto the Towsley stage November 9-12 in a high-energy, rollicking burst of fun. A large and talented cast of Civic newcomers and old-timers brought 18th Century England to vibrant life for four performances and wowed 'em all. There were mad chases, sword fights, drunken reveling and lots of laughs as Tom Jones pursued his lady love to a sweet and romantic conclusion. Many thanks to director Jimmy Dee Arnold and his wonderful cast and crew for a jolly good time.

Robin Hood a Hit!

Junior Theatre's first show of the season, *The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood* was a rousing success. Directed by Val Wilkinson, this hilarious take on Robin Hood and his Merry Band played to sold out houses and delighted kids and parents alike. In addition to the six regular performances, *Robin Hood* held two extra performances during the school day for children from several area schools to enjoy. Proceeds from the sold-out Friday evening performance are being donated to Ozone House, continuing a Junior Theatre tradition of helping those in need. Congratulations to a talented and hard-working director, producer, cast, crew, and countless parents for a job well done.



Kent Klausner as Tom Jones woos Alaina Lovera as Sophia Western in Civic's recent production of *Tom Jones*.

Auditions

The Tempest

Auditions for Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, directed by David Andrews, take place Sunday, January 7, and Monday, January 8, 2007 at 7pm; callbacks take place Tuesday, January 9, 7pm at the A2CT Rehearsal Space (322 W. Ann Street, Ann Arbor) Production dates are March 15-18 at Towsley Auditorium.

The Tempest is the story of an exiled duke with magical powers and his daughter who are marooned on a remote island. A ship washes ashore with the duke's brother and son giving rise to romance, revenge, and redemption. Auditions will consist of cold readings from the script-- both monologues and dialogue scenes--as chosen by the director. Auditioners are welcome to study the text to prepare for auditions, but actors may end up reading a part of the script they did not expect to read, or a monologue from a character for which they are not (necessarily) being considered. No prepared material is required, although the director is willing to hear prepared material at the conclusion of the audition session. Anyone auditioning for the roles of Ariel, Caliban and Stephano, or who wants to be considered for featured roles in the ensemble (Iris, Ceres, Juno) will be asked to prepare 16 bars of a song to sing a cappella, and demonstrate the ability to move well on stage. Character descriptions can be found on the audition page at www.a2ct.org

Director's note: Shakespeare would undoubtedly have written more roles specifically for women if actresses had been allowed to appear in his original productions. In this production I face no such restriction, and am prepared to do gender-blind casting as the audition process warrants. This is not to say that any particular number of men or women will definitely be cast, or that non-traditional casting will be used for any particular role, but that casting will be done in the best interest of the project as a whole based on the pool of available candidates. I encourage every person with an interest in this material and this production to audition regardless of any personal attribute or distinction.

Cactus Flower

Auditions for the comedy, *Cactus Flower*, directed by Cassie Mann, take place Sunday, February 18 and Monday, February 19, at 7pm. Callbacks take place Tuesday, February 20. All auditions take place at A2CT's rehearsal studio at 322 W. Ann St. There will be a read-through of the play either Feb. 21 or 22, with regular rehearsals beginning March 4. Production dates are April 19-22 at Towsley auditorium.

Cactus Flower is a frothy, sixties-era comedy about a dentist's desire to avoid marriage and the complications that arise as a result. There are roles for 7-10 women ages 16-80, and 4-7 men ages 20-80. Auditions consist of cold readings from the script. Young women interested in playing go-go dancers should expect to dance at auditions. No pre-registration or preparation required. For more information and character descriptions, visit the audition page at www.a2ct.org ■

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"But mom, all you said was 'get all your stuff up off the floor!'"

Hope for the Shop

Please welcome our new shop supervisor, Amy Duffy. Amy has loads of technical theater experience as a graduate of UM, and is also currently the stage manager for Second City, Novi. Amy is already busy (with the input of the facilities committee) reorganizing the shop and cataloguing our set inventory. Amy held two work sessions on November 18 and 19, with the able assistance of the following volunteers: Thom Johnson, Cathy Cassar, Paul Bianchi, Dick Vail, Emily Rogers, Linda Lee Austin, and Sing-Yi Tzen. Next time you're at the A2CT studio, take a look at progress these fine folks made, and thank them when you see them.

Sweet Charity (continued)

Space. I'm delighted to be directing my second musical for this wonderful organization having recently directed *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* which won nine 2006 A2CT Awards, including Best Musical. This time around I have been blessed with a dream team of a production staff—a group of focused, committed individuals who lay the foundation for our stars to shine.

Sweet Charity is a dancer's showcase and we can't wait to wow you. Choreographer Jeff DiFranco has been putting the cast through their paces with his innovative Bob Fosse-inspired dance numbers, and while he pays homage to the great director-choreographer, he's making these pieces his own. Eric Walton, music director, is hard at work with a score that makes our talented cast sound great. And Nan Wirth has been very busy sewing together original designs that are guaranteed to dazzle our audiences.

Casting this show was a challenge due to the talented pool of actors and actresses who auditioned. Multi A2CT Award winner Kathy Waugh was chosen to play the part of Charity Hope Valentine, the dance hall hostess with the heart of gold. Other members of the cast include A2CT favorites January Provenzola and Katherine Hoeg as her best friends

Nickie and Helene, as well as FULL MONTY alumni Hank Naasko as Herman and David Velez-Felix as Big Daddy Johann Sebastian Brubeck.

A2CT performed this show once before in 1991 and two members of this cast also were in that production; Eric Wright-Olsen, who is playing Oscar Lindquist, Charity's boyfriend and Peter Kentes, who is reprising the part of Italian movie star Vittorio Vidal.

The cast of '91 had a wonderful time performing the show. Great friendships were formed and rumor has it that a reunion is planned for our Saturday night performance. Will history repeat itself with this cast? Judging by the way we've come together and bonded, I think it could. Rehearsals have been full of fun, laughs, good time. The performances will deliver the same. Guaranteed!

Sweet Charity runs from January 11-14, 2007 at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater. Performances are at 8pm Thursday through Saturday, and 2pm on Sunday. Tickets are \$15 on Thursday, and \$24 (\$21 for students and seniors) Friday through Sunday. Student only pay \$12 on Friday. Tickets are available online at a2ct.org, by phone or in person at the A2CT office, or at the door of the Mendelssohn 45 minutes before each performance. For additional show information, visit www.a2ct.org or call the box office at (734) 971-A2CT (2228).

A2CT Studio Preps for *Parallel Lives*

Parallel Lives, the second show in Ann Arbor Civic Theatre's new studio series, promises to delight audiences with its witty characters and a comedic portrayal of the trials of everyday life. *Parallel Lives* was written and performed by the well regarded comedic duo Mo Gaffney and Kathy Najimy. Two Supreme Beings open the show in the middle of a con-

versation about how they should create the world and how man and woman should be different. The battle between female and male begins and the audience is taken on a hilarious journey through the lives of everyday people and their idiosyncrasies.

Parallel Lives is a fast paced comedy that is character driven. It requires strong female leads that have comedic timing, can manage various accents and are able to create characters (including male characters) that have very different physical movements. We have many talented actresses in A2CT and I hope to showcase their skills by casting more than the minimum requirement of two female performers in the show.

The studio series is the perfect stage for *Parallel Lives* as the characters and their relationships keep the show moving forward. A minimal set, thus eliminating set changes, and only a few props are essential to keep the show moving at a fast pace. Instead of relying on the set to create the scene for the audience, the actors will create the scene through their movements and body language.

Parallel Lives has entertained audiences for many years by bringing humor to the eternal battle of the sexes. I hope you will also enjoy this comedic look at that ongoing battle.

-Emily Rogers, Director



Giving to A2CT

Looking to give a holiday gift to your favorite community theater this season? Give a gift that keeps on giving. For over 77 years A2CT has been dedicated to providing excellent, affordable performing arts productions and educational opportunities for members of our community.

There are a number of ways to make your contribution to A2CT:

Annual Appeal

You should soon be receiving our Annual Appeal, complete with reply card and envelope. We use the profits of the Appeal to fund our next season; we rely on these funds every year. Please remember A2CT when you're thinking of giving an end of the year donation to a non-profit organization this holiday season.



United Way

A2CT is a sponsored agency of the Washtenaw United Way.



When completing your United Way pledge form, please remember A2CT by requesting that a portion of your contribution go to the theatre. Simply write our name on your pledge form, or designate us by our agency number:5140. United Way forms are often available through your employers, or can be requested online at <http://www.wuway.org/>.

Corporate Matching Gifts

Wouldn't it be great if your employer made a contribution to Ann Arbor Civic Theatre every year? Chances are they will... if you give first. That's because many companies match their employee's charitable gifts. Many companies also match gifts made by spouses, retirees, and retirees' widows or widowers. Each year matching gifts provide valuable support to A2CT. Check with your employer's Community Relations or Human Resources office for information on your Corporate Matching Gift options.

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Amazon.com, L.L.Bean, J Jill, CDNow, Eddie Bauer, Barnes & Noble, Gap, and many more! These stores give up to 26% from every purchase you make to A2CT. Many of these contributions can be tax deductible for you.



Large or small, your donations (and membership dues!) make a difference.

Help us Update the Volunteer Database!

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre could not function without the help of our volunteers. They help keep things running smoothly and, well, running. We are currently updating contact information and areas of interest for our existing volunteers and of course looking for new volunteers. By filling out an A2CT participation form you will learn about volunteer opportunities in your areas of interest. When opportunities arise in your area of interest you will be contacted via email and asked if you would like to volunteer. If you haven't filled out a volunteer form in the last 6 months please visit www.a2ct.org and fill out a A2CT participation form. ■



Kids worked hard and had fun bringing The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood to audiences in November.



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ANN ARBOR CIVIC THEATRE



2006-2007 "FOOLING AROUND" SEASON

MAINSTAGE SEASON

the full monty
tom jones
sweet charity
the tempest
cactus flower
hair

STUDIO SERIES

wake up and smell the coffee
parallel lives
playing around: readings from new
works

JUNIOR THEATRE

the somewhat true tale of robin
hood
stone soup