

Summit Playhouse Green Room Notes

April 2005

***A Delicate Balance* Is Last Offering of Season**

A *Delicate Balance*, a Pulitzer Prize drama by Edward Albee, will play from May 6 through May 21. According to Director Joann Scanlon, “it deals with a present day family’s denial of emotions, missed opportunities, and regrets over paths not taken.” The cast includes two of our members: Liz Messineo and Roy Pancirov. Returning to our stage are Diane Gilch and Jean Kuras, and making their Playhouse debut are James Broderick and Sally O’Neill.

The producer is Frank Hawrusik, while George Doherty and Linn Smith are stage managers. Poster, program, and sound designer is Bill Roome; set designer and painting chair is Rhoda Roper. Other committee chairs are: Ed Johnson (set construction), Lyn Mackie (costumes), Geraldine Zoccoli (props), Bob Murray (lighting), Alice Kosowski (make-up), and Jo Ray (set decoration). Syndi Szabo is assistant director. The Union Center National Bank is covering costs of the program.

Albee fans will want to share this opportunity to see this early (1966) play with their friends and neighbors. Have them call **(908) 273-2192** soon to order tickets or go online www.summitplayhouse.org. Prices are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students under 18 years of age.

Remember: (1) The Grand Summit Hotel is offering our ticket holders a generous **20% discount** on food in the Hunt Club, so consider dining next door before the show. (2) If you do not intend to use your tickets for *A Delicate Balance*, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can fill the seats with last-minute buyers.

2005—2006 Season of Tony Award Winners

Three Tony Award-winning shows will grace our stage next season. In the fall Kate Schlesinger will direct *The Miracle Worker* by William Gibson. It dramatizes Annie Sullivan’s success in reaching and teaching her student, Helen Keller. Joann Scanlon returns to direct *The Lion in Winter* as our winter production. James Goldman’s play concerns the relationship of Henry II of England, his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine, and their sons Richard, Geoffrey, and John. The spring play will be Wendy Wasserstein’s comedy *The Sisters Rosensweig*, which will be directed by Vincent J. Balzano whose last directing role was *The Imaginary Invalid* in 2004.

Auditions, Auditions

Kaleidoscope’s Theatre for Youth’s offering this summer will be *Dear Edwina – Junior* published by Music Theatre International. Liz Messineo, the director, will hold auditions Sunday and Monday, May 22 and 23, 6-8 p.m. She is looking for approximately 15 children, ages 7-15. They should be prepared to sing a song of their choice and should bring their music. The production dates will be July 22-24 and 29-31.

Auditions for the fall production of *The Miracle Worker* will take place Sunday, June 5, 3 p.m.; and Monday, June 6, 7 p.m. Director Kate Schlesinger wants auditions this early so the characters can have extra time to work together. The production dates, November 4-6, 11-13, and 17-19, include two matinee performances.

The State of New Jersey Recognizes our Playhouse

As reported in *The Independent Press* on March 2, 2005, the New Jersey Cultural Trust has qualified us to participate in its programs, and the New Jersey Historical Preservation Office has certified our eligibility to be listed on the State and National Registers of historic places. The Cultural Trust is a funding source for arts organizations, and the Playhouse has submitted its first grant application to the Trust for help with our restoration project. We are directing our attention now to the nomination process to get the actual listing on the State and National Registers as the oldest continually operating community theatre in New Jersey. It is the association with founder and long-time director Marjorie Cranstoun Jefferson that makes us eligible.

Thank You, Cathy Hawrusik, for Initiating the Defibrillator Project!

After a Playhouse member was stricken at a rehearsal in February and required the Summit First Aid Squad, Cathy Hawrusik initiated a project to raise funds to purchase a defibrillator for our building. She began by offering heart-shaped cookies and candy for donations from Playhouse members and patrons during the run of *Inspecting Carol*. Next, Cathy and her committee visited the Red Cross and selected a model that would be appropriate for us and learned about using the equipment. So far she has raised over \$1100 of the \$2500 needed. Money for training will be additional. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to this worthy cause, please send a check payable to “The Playhouse Association, Inc.” with “defibrillator” written on the memo line to: **Cathy Hawrusik, % Summit Playhouse, 10 New England Ave., Summit, NJ 07901.** [Editor’s note: P.T. Kizzia reported at the Board of Governors meeting on April 12 that Betty is now recuperating at home.]

Building and Grounds

Since our last newsletter the windows on the ground level have been repaired and reglazed. Those in the men's dressing room and scenery room now have obscure glass. In addition, rotten window frames have been replaced. The board room has a new floor, and water stains in the board room, the ladies' dressing room, and the auditorium have been covered by a fresh coat of paint.

Is Your Name on One of Our Playhouse Chairs Yet?

For a \$100 contribution to our Building Restoration Fund, you can become a "chairholder" and have your name permanently inscribed on a brass plaque on a chair in our theatre. John Bauer will be happy to discuss other giving opportunities with you (973-543-9570) wj.bauer@patmedia.net.

Development News

The promotional video for the Playhouse has been digitalized and is now available with sound and music on our web site www.summitplayhouse.org. The five-minute video was scripted and filmed by member Kendall Smith, produced by Nancy Boucher, and narrated by Rose Pancirov. Playhouse friend and donor Jerry Levitz helped arrange this new feature. • Still available is *New Jersey Women's Heritage Trail* (2004) as a bonus to donors of \$100 or more. • The Playhouse is now listed in the Union County Cultural Calendar www.unioncountynj.org/cultural/culcall and on Discover Jersey Arts Showcase Events www.JerseyArts.com • Diane Gallo placed an article in the April edition of *The Collection* entitled "Good News for The Summit Playhouse." • Since our last production the following people have accepted active membership: Penny Harter, Bill Higginson, Jim Mayfield, and Terri Sturtevant.

Updating of Job Descriptions

Believe it or not, there are at least twenty-seven leadership positions at our theatre for officers and committee chairs. Since January the Board of Governors has updated eighteen of the job descriptions. Nine more are still in committee. When they are complete, Bill Roome will put all of them in a "members only" section on the web site so that the job descriptions are always available for review by the members who may wish to stand for office or serve as a committee chair.

Playhouse Welcomes Youth Troupe

On March 18, Jim DeVivo, Education Director of Playwrights Theatre, brought the Playwrights Theatre Youth Troupe to our stage. About fifteen aspiring writers and actors presented their original play, "The Cave of Forgotten," which dealt with fictional characters whom children in the television and video age are unfamiliar with because they do not read. Many audience members were new to our theatre, but some familiar faces turned out to be Kaleidoscope "alumni."

News from the Tri-County Community Theatre Association

Rose Pancirov, Summit Playhouse Board Liaison to the TCCTA, has announced these productions: **Westfield Community Players**— *The Spitfire Grill* (musical), April 30, May 7, 14, 20, 21. Reservations: (908) 232-1221; **The Maplewood Strollers**— *Arsenic and Old Lace*. May 13, 14, 15, 20, 21. Reservations: (973) 761-8453. Playhouse members receive a \$2 discount on these plays with their I.D. card.

Implications of Our Historic Designation

Qualification by the Cultural Trust to participate in its programs and certification of eligibility by the Historic Preservation Office for listing on the State and National Registers of historic sites bring with them some new responsibilities. Our theatre is a public place and will need to be open to visitors other than patrons at performances. Building maintenance cannot be neglected for lack of funds as it has been in recent years. Our Playhouse President's pledge to restore the facility to its former glory will enter Phase 3 this summer. In addition to the restoration activities, we will need a Committee of Trustees to oversee preservation and to assist us in building an endowment. We need to improve our teamwork and the participation of all members in increasing subscriber, member, and donor lists. One Director of Development cannot do it alone. We need to develop new audiences. We are now physically accessible. Now we need to reach out to people who have visual and auditory impairments. We are already planning a performance of *The Miracle Worker* that will have audio description and signing. Finally, we have to get our message out that we are the oldest continuously operating community theatre in the State of New Jersey. We offer good theatre at affordable prices!

The Playhouse Association, Inc., 10 New England Ave., Summit, NJ 07901 (908) 273-2192

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