

# The Summit Playhouse Green Room Notes

Qualified by The New Jersey Cultural Trust

April 2006

## The Rosensweig Sisters to Visit Summit in May

**W**endy Wasserstein's *The Sisters Rosensweig* will open at the Playhouse on May 5 and run through May 20. Director **Vincent J. Balzano** intends his production of the comedy to be a tribute "to a wonderful playwright who was taken way too soon." (Wasserstein died on January 31 at age 55.) Vince sees "many parallels in the play to challenges Wendy faced in her own life" and says that "the themes and lessons in her work are universal."

The main character, Sara Goode, a successful American banker living in London, will be played by Joyce Slous. The role of her sister Pheni, described as "a peripatetic third world travel writer," will be taken by Joelle Bochner, while the other Rosensweig sister, Gorgeous (for which Madeline Kahn won a Tony in 1993), will be portrayed by **Beth Painter**. The three sisters have come together to celebrate Sara's 54th birthday. Completing the cast are Natalie Smith (Tess, Sara's daughter), and Joe Vierno (Mervyn), **David Claypoole** (Geoffrey), Hank Bruh (Nicholas), and Vincent Williams (Tom).

The Sunday performance at 2 pm on May 5 will be an **ACCESS** matinee with audio-description and large print programs for people who are blind or visually impaired and signing and assistive-listening for people who are deaf or hearing-impaired. The Summit Lions Club is underwriting the costs of the audio-describer (**Michael T. Mooney** of the Paper Mill) and the signer (**Dr. Carol A. Goodman** of Kean University). The New Jersey Theatre Alliance is supplying equipment. **PLEASE RESERVE SPACE EARLY AND REMEMBER TO ARRIVE EARLY for this special performance.** For tickets and space reservations, call (908) 273-2192 or go online [www.summitplayhouse.org](http://www.summitplayhouse.org): \$17 (adults); \$12 (students 18 and under).

## 2006-2007 Season Announced: *Children's Hour, Living Out, Forum*

**Our fall production will be the drama that catapulted Lillian Hellman to fame in 1934: *The Children's Hour*. Kate Schlesinger**, who gave us a fabulous *Miracle Worker* last fall, will direct. In the winter **Michael Driscoll** of Alliance Repertory will direct a recent comedy-drama, *Living Out*, Lisa Loomer's interesting take on Hispanic nannies in Los Angeles and the yuppie mothers who hire them. It has already received acclaimed productions in Los Angeles, New York, and Boston. The play addresses problems both groups of women face in today's society. (Mr. Driscoll last appeared at the Playhouse in *Light Up the Sky* in 1994.) The season will conclude with Stephen Sondheim's musical comedy, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, directed by Vince Balzano.

## Invitation to "Four Centuries in a Weekend . . . A Journey Through Union County's History"

**The Union County Cultural and Heritage Affairs Office** has invited us to participate in **Four Centuries in a Weekend** on October 21-22, 2006 and throughout the year. "The Playhouse is a unique addition to the roster of twenty-three historic house museums and sites that comprise the Heritage Festival. The Weekend showcases the sites to make the public aware of the development of the county and promotes the county as a destination for cultural and heritage tourism. . . . The Playhouse is included in the **Victorian Resorts and Suburbs Cluster** since it was built as a result of Summit's suburban expansion in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century."

We will need volunteers to greet visitors during designated hours and serve as guides. We will also need help in compiling material for the Playhouse's page in the descriptive booklet, writing lesson plans for schools, planning our page in a coloring book, and composing pages of activities, word games and brain teasers. If you would like to work on this project, please call John Bauer, Director of Development, who applied for this honor (908-273-2192, press 3). Our deadline for the booklet work is May 1.

Other Summit sites in **Four Centuries in a Weekend** are: The Carter House, the Reeves-Reed Arboretum, and Twin Maples.

## April — "Donate Life Month"

**April is "Donate Life Month" nationally.** Once again green ribbons will be tied around trees in 14 communities surrounding Overlook Hospital to promote the importance of organ and tissue donations. Today over 90,000 Americans are waiting for life-saving organs, 3,000 in New Jersey alone; 20 people die each day waiting. Please consider becoming a potential "life saver" by filling out a donor card; we need everyone. There are donor cards in the Board Room of the Playhouse. For additional information, call **Lenore Ford** (973-984-2174), or go to <http://www.organdonor.gov/>.

## Kaleidoscope Theatre for Youth to Do *Once on This Island, Jr.*

Producer **Abbe Moran** has announced that auditions for the Caribbean musical, *Once on This Island, Jr.*, will take place May 21 (2-5 pm) and May 22 (6-9 pm). Production dates: July 22-23; 28-30. For information, go online [www.summitplayhouse.org](http://www.summitplayhouse.org). **Ages 8-18!**

## Videotapes of Playhouse Productions Needed

**Bruce Wallace of Captiva Digital, LLC** of Millburn will digitalize videotapes of our productions at a bargain price. We have applied for a grant for this work. If you can lend us any of the following, please call Nancy Boucher (973-377-9058):

*Beau Jest* - f'95

*Brighton Beach Memoirs* - w2000

*Children* - f'90

*Design for Murder* - s'88

*The Dining Room* - f'87

*The Dresser* - s'89

*An Evening of English Comedy* - s2002

*Foxfire* - f'92

*Gypsy* - s'97

*The Imaginary Invalid* - w2004

*Later Life* - s'96

*Lettice and Lovage* - s'94

*Light Up the Sky* - f'94

*Monique* - w'90

*Murder by Misadventure* - s'94

*Murder in Mind* - f'90

*Play On* - w'89

*Prelude to a Kiss* - w '96

*Quartermain's Terms* - f'89

*Remembrance* - w'97

## Building Restoration Project

**President Nancy Boucher and Director of Development John Bauer have applied for another grant**, this one to begin Phase 3 of our building restoration: re-pointing of the stone and brick work of our historic building at a cost of \$26,000. Other areas to be addressed include replacement of the aluminum windows in the basement of the Marjorie Jefferson wing, repair of the Tulip Street porch and steps, new ceilings in two downstairs lavatories, correction of drainage problems in the window wells, and replacement of rotten wood and painting on the lower level. Providing we have the funding in place, work will begin next fall. All restoration work will be overseen by Fairwell Mills Gatsch of Princeton. (We hope to re-landscape the property next spring. That will be Phase 4.)

Nancy and John are currently working on the nomination of the Playhouse for the State and National Registers of Historic Sites for which they attended a workshop conducted by The New Jersey Historic Preservation Trust on April 12<sup>th</sup> in Jersey City. (Since grant applications for non-profits request information about an organization's strategic planning, John took a workshop on strategic planning that the Union County Cultural and Heritage Affairs Office held at the Arts Guild of Rahway on February 25.)

### The Leading Ladies Make the Rafters Ring in a Victorian Home in Summit

**Betty and Ed McColgan opened their lovely Edgewood Road residence** for a Playhouse fundraiser on April 2 from 2 to 5 pm, at which Kean University's Leading Ladies presented a smart and sassy medley of Broadway tunes. The program began with "I'm the Greatest Star" from *Funny Girl* and then continued with "What You Don't Know About Women" from *City of Angels*. Holly Logue, Chair of the Theatre Department, and Susan Speidel, Director of Education at the Paper Mill and Adjunct Professor of Theatre, delivered "Bosom Buddies" from *Mame*, while graduate students Kristen Bussiere and Jennifer Vaughan offered fetching renditions of "I'm Going Back" from *Bells Are Ringing* and "Blue Skies" from *The Jazz Singer*, respectively. Miss Speidel then belted out "Wherever He Ain't" from *Mack and Mabel*, and Miss Logue changed pace with "Mama, a Rainbow" from *Minnie's Boys*. The Leading Ladies' program ended with "I Am a Woman" from *Smoke Joe's Café* and an encore of "Greatest Star."

Guests at the benefit enjoyed scrumptious refreshments prepared in the kitchens of Nancy Boucher, John Bauer, and Geraldine Zoccoli that were served with wonderful Australian wines provided by the McColgans. Natale's Summit Bakery and the Grand Summit Hotel donated some delicious desserts.

City Council President Frank Macioce and Councilman Andy Lark praised the Playhouse leaders and the restoration work that they are doing on the historic building. Among other dignitaries who attended the benefit were Tom Getzendanner and Ellen Dickson, both members of the City Council, and Carole Shaffer-Koros, Dean, School of Visual & Performing Arts, Kean University.

### Thanks to the following who supported our benefit and donated nearly \$6000 to the restoration fund:

#### Members:

Brent Baab  
Lori & Vince Balzano  
John Bauer  
John Becker  
Nancy Boucher  
Bill & Mary Campbell  
Lois Hageman  
Pam & Howard Heller  
Ed & Joyce Johnson  
Betty Kaus  
Joyce & Mal Kitson  
Grace & Bert Lane  
Jim & Mary Lou Mayfield  
Dee Robertson  
Rhoda & Robert Roper

Kate & Michael Schlesinger  
Ben Solomon  
Michael & Kathy Tatlow  
Geraldine Zoccoli

#### Subscribers & Friends:

= Betty & Ed McColgan =  
= Kean's Leading Ladies =  
= Natale's Summit Bakery =  
= Grand Summit Hotel =  
Rene Bertrand  
Joan & Ed Borneman  
Lorraine & Paul Bowyer  
Paula Breen & Herb Shapiro  
Rosemary Butler  
Richard Callaghan

Bonnie & Bill Cater  
Robert & Nancy Cirasa  
Millie & Jack Cooper  
Dolores Croneberger  
Evelyn D'Alessandro  
Joe & Joan Daurio  
Ellen Dickson  
Bill Donnelly  
Joseph & Barbara Dugan  
Glenn Engel  
Florence & Ridley Enslow  
Lee Fanger  
Tyler & David Farrand  
Virginia Fox  
Diane Gallo  
Tom Getzendanner

Bernadine Gilroy  
Mary Hackman  
Dorothy & George Hennings  
Cynthia & William Kellogg  
Carole & Robert Koros  
Andy Lark  
Bernard & Maureen Leddy  
Darlene Lloyd  
Michael Lunga  
Frank & Helen Macioce  
Miles & Virginia MacMahon  
Henrietta Mahon  
Tom & Betsy Maliszewski  
Helene & Martin Oppenheimer  
Randy & Anne Parker  
Fran & Joseph Pisciotta

Betsy Potter  
Betty & Harry Sanfilippo  
Carole Schwartz  
Cynthia & William Kellogg  
Louise Smith  
Joan Thuebel  
Vicki & Forrest Trombore  
Michael Urbano  
Thomas Wallace  
Althea Weeks  
Mary Claire White  
Sherri Strauss Williamson  
Anne & Michael Zachara

**Donations are still welcome.**

## Innovations in the Past Two Years

**Operations and Artistic Matters:** (1) Introducing theme-based rather than director-driven seasons; (2) Introducing an application process for interested directors; (3) Affiliating with the Kean University Theatre Department and the Paper Mill; (4) Introducing ACCESS matinees funded by the Summit Lions Club; (5) Affiliating with the New Jersey Theatre Alliance; (6) Updating of all job descriptions; (7) Eliciting help from the City of Summit with our flooding and refuse problems. **Promotional Matters:** (1) Advertising and marketing campaign in the *Independent Press* and the *Suburban News* [14 ads]; (2) Offering members and subscribers discount coupons and giving bonuses to donors of \$100 or more; (3) Renaming the dress rehearsal as a "preview" with special free ticket distribution to advertise by word-of-mouth and build interest in future productions; (4) Using our theatre as a meeting place for government agencies and non-profit organizations; (5) Getting accepted to participate in Union County's "Four Centuries in a Weekend" Heritage Festival; (6) Introducing a summer *Green Room Notes*, for a total of four issues per year. **Fundraising:** (1) Qualifying with The New Jersey Cultural Trust to participate in their programs; (2) Receiving a grant from The Cultural Trust; (3) Receiving grants from the Summit Area Public Foundation and the Manley-Winsler Foundation; (4) Receiving a H.E.A.R.T. grant from Union County; (5) Receiving corporate support for program and production costs; (6) Holding fundraisers in the theatre and in a private home; (7) Attending workshops and applying for other grants; (8) Holding a Barnes & Noble Bookfair; (9) A 42% increase in the number of donors of \$100 or more! **Building History & Preservation:** (1) Restoring the theatre, Phases 1 & 2; (2) Having Fairwell Mills Gatsch from Princeton, experts in theatre restoration, oversee our work; (3) Writing nominations to be listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Sites; (4) Arranging to store our archives at the Summit Historical Society; (5) Digitalizing our videotapes of past productions.

**The Playhouse Association, Inc., 10 New England Ave., Summit, NJ 07901 (908) 273-2192**  
Nancy Boucher, President • Ed Johnson, Business Manager • John Bauer, Editor • [www.summitplayhouse.org](http://www.summitplayhouse.org)