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The Gershwins' *Crazy for You* Comes to Players

by John Lieder

Among the most popular productions that Community Players have produced have been those good old musicals with big production numbers, memorable tunes, and not necessarily too heavy of a plot. *42nd Street*, *Chicago* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* come immediately to mind. Throw in a couple proven crowd-pleasing performers in the lead roles, and you've got yourself a surefire hit.

Players' next production, *Crazy for You*, clearly meets all those criteria. It's a fun romp through the show business world and fabled American West of yesteryear. It's chock full of wonderful George and Ira Gershwin favorites like "Someone to Watch Over Me," "I Got Rhythm," "They Can't Take That Away from Me" and lesser known (mostly) Gershwin gems that are equally enjoyable.

The workhorses for this production are veterans **Kathy Taylor** as Polly Baker and **Gary Thompson** as Bobby Child. Taylor and Thompson are fun to watch as they sing and dance their way into each others' (and the audience's) hearts, with many bumps and a couple detours along the way. In supporting roles are **Jeremy Stiller** as Broadway producer Bela Zangler, **Elizabeth Aronson** as Irene Roth, **Becky Murphy** as Tess, **Allen Popowski** as Everett Baker (Polly's father), **Steven Fegert** as Lank Hawkins and **Ingrid Myska** as Mrs. Lottie Child (Bobby's mother).

Rounding out the cast is a wonderful host of singers and dancers: **Cathy Sikyta**, **Megan Clark**, **Vicky Kensek**, **Aimee Kerber**, **Lauren Themanson**, **Jessica Stiller**, **P. J. Learn**, **Jason Strunk** and **Mariano Tolentino**. **Charles Andrews**, **Kyle Holliday** and **Corey Pond** make up the

cowboy trio and **Jay Hartzler** is the cowboy Moose. **Bruce Parrish** and **Annelies McVoy** portray the renowned tour guide writers Eugene and Patricia Fodor.

Alan Wilson directs this craziness and is assisted by **Kelli Beal**. **Martha Taylor** (Kathy's mom) is choreographer. **Reggie Spears** is musical director for this very challenging score. **Eddy Arteman** is costumer, **Brett Cottone** is lighting designer and **Sherri Scott** is doing properties. **Ellen Hagen** is rehearsal accompanist. **Brian**



and **Nikki Aitken** are stage managers. **Dave Lemmon**, apparently a bit of a glutton for punishment, is not only learning the ropes as producer, but is also making his debut in the sound booth.

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Rehearsal pictures on page 4.

March - April 2008

Board Meetings

Mar. 11 6:00 p.m.
April 8, 6:00 p.m.
Community Players Theatre

Crazy for You

Preview: Feb. 28
Shows: Feb. 29-Mar. 2, 6-9, 3-16

Father of the Bride

Auditions: March 17-18
Preview: May 1
Shows: May 2-4, 8-11, 15-17

Tickets can be ordered online at
www.communityplayers.org.
Click on "Online Ticket Sales."



Community Players

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We are always looking for
writers, artists, designers and
story ideas. Send comments and
suggestions to lieder78@yahoo.com

Curtain Calls is published six
times a year for the voting mem-
bers of Community Players.

For information about joining us,
please contact the membership
chair, Roland Spies at roland.spies.gqt9@statefarm.com.

Back issues of *Curtain Calls*
are available on the Commu-
nity Players web site. Click on
"Newsletter Archive."

Father of the Bride Auditions

Auditions will be held on **Monday March 17** and **Tuesday March 18** at 7:00 p.m. at Community Players for our last show of the 2007 season, *Father of the Bride*.

Based on the popular novel by Edward Streeter, published in 1948, and the film starring Spencer Tracy and Elizabeth Taylor in 1950, *Father of the Bride* chronicles the misgivings of a bewildered dad, Stanley Banks, as his only daughter Kay prepares to "walk down the aisle." Stanley is initially upset because he doesn't know anything about Buckley,

Kay's fiancé. Once Stanley talks things over with Buckley, he is a bit more confident about his daughter's plans for a simple wedding without any "fuss

and feathers." Only things don't go quite as planned, and the simple wedding that was to include no more than fifty guests swells into a much more elaborate (and expensive) affair with more than two hundred close friends and relatives being invited.



Our version of *Father of the Bride* is based on the original story as written in the 1940s', and will therefore be staged a "period piece" reflecting the fashions and the social culture of that time. *Father of the Bride* is a heartwarming comedy exploring the bittersweet emotions felt by the entire family whenever a child leaves the nest, strikes out on their own and gets married.

A cast of at least twenty is required with parts for ten men and ten women ranging in ages from fifteen on up. Those auditioning will be asked to read from the script. *Father of the Bride* opens May 1 and closes on May 17th.



Board of Governors Announces 2008/09 Producers and Directors

The Community Players Board of Governors is proud to announce that the following people have accepted positions as directors and producers for our 2008-009 season:

Steel Magnolias

Director, Joann Yant
Producer, Tom Smith

Harvey

Director, John Lieder
Producer, Brett Cottone

Guys and Dolls

Director, Marcia Weiss
Producer, TBA

Squabbles

Director, Brian Artman
Producer, John Lieder

The Woman in Black

Director, Sally Parry
Producer, Dorothy Mundy

Urinetown

Director, Tricia Stiller
Producer, TBA

What's New, New York?

by Bob McLaughlin

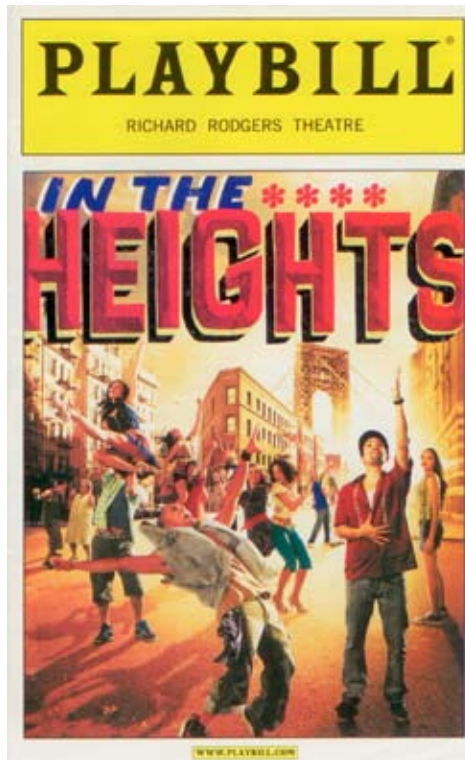
Sally Parry and I are just back from a midwinter's trip to New York. The impetus for our trip was a Stephen Sondheim conference at William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey, the highlight of which was an appearance by Sondheim himself, talking about his shows and answering questions. He was smart, funny, mostly gracious, occasionally prickly, and always interesting. The two-day conference, however, left us with plenty of time to catch up with the best of Broadway. We saw six plays (three musicals and three straight plays), four of which Community Players veteran Mariano Tolentino has invested in. I'll discuss them by genre and in the order in which we saw them.

Musicals

Xanadu: This small musical is a tongue-firmly-in-cheek adaptation of the famously awful Olivia Newton-John film of the same name. The songs from the film are augmented by a few others from the Electric Light Orchestra and Newton-John catalogs, and the clever and campy book is by playwright Douglas Carter Beane. The plot involves a Greek muse who comes to 1980s California to help a young artist open a roller disco (really!), and so much of the action takes place on roller skates. Kerry Butler is cute and delightful as the muse, and Cheyenne Jackson is hunky and dopey as the artist; Tony Roberts also appears as a businessman torn between money and art.

Sunday in the Park with George: This revival of Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's 1984 masterpiece is one of Mariano's shows. The first act tells the story of Georges Seurat creating his magnificent painting "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte"; the second act moves to the present to show another artist trying to find a way to make new, relevant art. The innovation for this production is the use of projections and animations, so that while Georges is working on his painting, we see it come to life on the walls of his studio.

The disappointment is that the small orchestra (only five pieces! On Broadway!!) and small cast can't create the sound needed for the play's big moments, especially the first-act finale.



In the Heights: Mariano has been involved with this show since it premiered Off-Broadway last season. Now it's moved to Broadway and is likely to be a major player at the Tony Awards in June. (You heard it here first.) Set in a Spanish neighborhood in upper Manhattan, the play looks at the lives and problems of the barrio denizens over one hot, Fourth of July holiday. One family wrestles with a decision to sell the family business so as to send their daughter to Stanford. Another tries to decide how best to spend their lottery jackpot. A young woman tries desperately to find a way out of the neighborhood. The exciting and moving score by Lin-Manuel Miranda (who also stars) tells these and other stories in such a way that we come to feel we're a part of this community. When we saw this, sitting in front of us was Debbie

Allen, who seemed to enjoy it too.

Plays

November: This is the latest David Mamet play, starring Nathan Lane as a corrupt and unpopular president about to be defeated in the upcoming election. Approached by the turkey industry about the traditional pardoning of a turkey before Thanksgiving, he demands \$200 million or he'll pardon all the turkeys in America. He plans to use the money to buy airtime for a speech that will be his legacy, but his writer, Laurie Metcalf, won't give him the speech until he agrees to marry her and her female partner on national TV. There's also an Indian running around who wants the president to give his tribe the island of Nantucket for a casino. This is not the deepest thing Mamet has ever written, but it may be the funniest, and Nathan Lane is a national treasure.

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. . . What's New, New York? continued from page 3

Is He Dead?: This newly discovered and previously unproduced play by Mark Twain, adapted by playwright David Ives, is about a debt-ridden artist (Norbert Leo Butz) in mid-nineteenth-century Paris, who discovers that a great way to create a market for his paintings is to spread the rumor that he is dying and then dead. To manage his estate, he disguises himself as his own twin sister. Hilarity ensues as the prices for the paintings soar higher and higher, as the authorities suspect that there is something fishy about the artist's death, and as suitors line up to court the now-wealthy sister. Also, what to do when the king of France shows up to view the body? This is another of Mariano's shows.

Rock 'n' Roll: Yet another of Mariano's shows, this is the latest offering from our greatest living playwright, Tom Stoppard. Like all of his plays, it demands a lot from the audience (there's even a crib sheet inserted in the *Playbill* to provide some much-needed background info), but the effort is well rewarded. Set in the years between 1968 and 1990, it contrasts two characters, a Cambridge academic, who's among the last true believers in communism in Great Britain, and one of his pupils, a Czech, who returns to his country to participate in the '68 revolution, only to be stuck there when the Soviet occupation begins. It's about much more—theory vs. practice, the mind-body split, and, of course, rock and roll—but you really need to see it.



. . . *Crazy for You* preview continued from page 1.

The set is a complex set of stage pieces, designed and built masterfully by **John Brittingham** and **Jeremy Stiller**. Although it was naturally still coming together at the time of this writing (about two weeks prior to opening), this set promises to add much magic to the production as it transports the audience from Broadway to Deadrock.

The “pay what you can” Preview performance is Thursday, February 28. Regular performances are Feb. 29 - March 2, March 6 - 9, and March 13 - 16. As usual, Thursday, Friday and Saturday performances begin at 7:30 and curtain is up on Sunday matinees at 2:30.

Crazy for You

Rehearsal Pictures



Gary Thompson, Kathy Taylor, and members of the cast rehearse a dance number (middle) while the cast is captured in two crowd scenes (top) and (bottom). Photos by John Lieder.

