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January, 2011

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Players Presents WWII Farce, *John Loves Mary*

by Bob McLaughlin

Community Players kicks off 2011 with the classic comedy *John Loves Mary*, by Norman Krasna. Set at the end of World War II, the play's plot involves soldiers' homecoming and is fueled by mistaken identity and good intentions gone wrong. As the curtain opens, Mary McKinley, a senator's daughter, awaits the return of John Lawrence, her fiancé, who has been fighting in Europe. John arrives, but with a secret: in order to help out his buddy Fred Taylor, who was demobed and sent home before he could cut through the red tape to marry his British girlfriend Lily Herbish, John has married Lily, planning to bring her to the States and divorce her so she can wed Fred. (Got that?) But the best laid plans . . . Fred, it turns out, figuring he'd never see Lily again, has married a hometown sweetheart who's about to have a baby. Can John put off his date with Mary at the altar long enough to get divorced? Can John and Fred keep Lily a secret from Mary and her parents? Can Lily find a new beau? Not before John and Fred make a deal with a loathed former officer and Senator McKinley starts throwing his weight around with the army.

John Loves Mary opened on Broadway in 1947 and ran for a year. It was produced by Rodgers and

Hammerstein, directed by Joshua Logan, and featured William Prince, Nina Foch, and Tom Ewell in the cast. At the time it was one of a number of plays that dealt humorously or alarmingly with the social anxieties connected with the servicemen's homecoming: How much will the war have changed these men? Will they be able to reintegrate into peacetime society? Will they chaotically upend traditional values? In 1949 *John Loves Mary* was made into a film starring Ronald Reagan, Patricia Neal, and Jack Carson.



For the Community Players production, Director **Dave Fuller** has assembled the following cast: **Hannah Kerns** as Mary; **Austin Travis** as John; **Joel Dwight Shoemaker** as Fred; **Jeremy Stiller** as Senator McKinley; **Nancy A. Nickerson** as Phyllis McKinley, the senator's wife; **Aimee Kerber** as Lily; **Herb Reichelt** as Lt. Victor O'Leary; **Allen Popowski** as Oscar Dugan; **Joey Knotts** as George Beechwood; and **Kevin Paul Wickart** as Harwood Biddle.



Joel Shoemaker, Austin Travis, Jeremy Stiller, Herb Reichelt, Nancy Nickerson, and Hannah Kerns rehearse a scene from *John Loves Mary*.

. . . continued on page 4.

Jan. - Feb. 2008

Board Meetings

Jan. 11 6:00 p.m.
Feb 8, 6:00 p.m.
Community Players Theatre

John Loves Mary

Preview: Jan. 13
Shows: Jan. 14-16, 20-23, 27-29

Solid Gold Cadillac

Auditions: Jan 17-18
Preview: Feb. 24
Shows: Feb. 25-27, March 3-6,
10-12



Community Players

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Newsletter Committee

Jim Kalmbach
Aimee Kerber
John Lieder
Bob McLaughlin
Sally Parry

We are always looking for writers, artists, designers and story ideas. Send comments and suggestions to kalmbach@ilstu.edu

Curtain Calls is published six times a year for the voting members of Community Players.

For information about joining us, please contact our membership chair, Aimee Kerber at cplayersmember@aol.com.

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

Solid Gold Cadillac Auditions

In a time of economic uncertainty, with so many unemployed, and when the deficit makes us all woozy, one wonders how did we get ourselves into this mess? In *The Solid Gold Cadillac* written by Howard Teichmann and George S. Kaufman in 1953, many of the questions about the world of finance are posed that are equally as puzzling to us today.



Laura Partridge, a small stockholder in General Products Corporation of America, asks the tough economic questions. She wants to know why the chairman of the board makes a whopping \$175,000 a year. "It seems such a lot of money...for just working ten hours." Mrs. Partridge's bold question makes the Board so nervous that they try to buy her silence with a job offer as "Director of Stockholder Relations." They hope to shut her up with a fat salary of \$150 a week, a commanding salary in the early 50's.

Amelia Shotgraven is assigned to Mrs. Partridge as her secretary and together they make a great team, writing friendly letters to the multitude of the Corporation's small stockholders. The boys on the Board are satisfied that they have successfully diverted Mrs. Partridge's attention away from their exorbitant paychecks, and decide to enlist her help in getting the previous Chairman of the Board, Ed McKeever—who now has a big job in Washington—to toss some big government contracts their way.

Mrs. Partridge goes to Washington and discovers that she and McKeever have more than scruples in common, and together they join forces to win back the company from the likes of "the four ugly corporation directors."

Auditions are Monday January 17 and Tuesday January 18 at 7:00 at Community Players. Needed are 11 men and 6 women ranging in age from early twenties to sixty and up. Actors will be asked to read from the script. The show previews February 24 with shows February 25-27, March 3-6, 10-12.

Here's hoping to see you at the auditions for this delightfully rich social satire/romantic comedy that possibly has even more zing in the 21st century than it did in the 20th.

Marcia Weiss - Director



2011/2012 Applications for Production Staff Positions

Community Players is now accepting applications for production staff positions for our 2011 – 2012 season! For full details on the season see the article on page 3 of the newsletter. To download a copy of our Staff Application Form, please visit the Community Players website at communityplayers.org

Of special interest this year is "An Evening of One Acts", an opportunity for new directors to gain experience directing a production at Community

Players. While all applications will be contemplated, special consideration will be given to those who have not directed a production before, or who have applied to direct in the past, but have been turned down.

If you have any questions about our 2010 – 2011 season or the application process, please email Community Players' Playreading Chair, Brian Artman at opiedote@hotmail.com

CP Announces 2011/2012 Season

Annie Get Your Gun–Summer Theater for Young People*

Music and lyrics by Irving Berlin; Book by Herbert and Dorothy Fields; Book revisions by Peter Stone (Musical-1946/1999)

Auditions: **May 23–25, 2011**

Preview: **July 7, 2011**

Performances: **July 8–10, 14–17, 21–24, 2011**

This Irving Berlin classic, originally staged in 1946 starring Ethel Merman, is a fictionalized account of the life of Annie Oakley and her husband Frank Butler. Revised for a hugely successful Broadway run in 1999 featuring Bernadette Peters and later Reba McEntire, this version – featuring new orchestrations and a revised book – is structured as a “show-within-a-show,” set within a Big Top traveling circus. With Broadway standards like “There’s No Business Like Show Business,” “Doin’ What Comes Natur’lly,” “You Can’t Get a Man with a Gun,” and “Anything You Can Do,” *Annie Get Your Gun* is sure to be a family favorite!

And Then There Were None

By Agatha Christie (Mystery-1943)

Auditions: **July 18 & 19, 2011**

Preview: **September 1, 2011**

Performances: **September 2–4, 8–11, 15–17, 2011**

From Agatha Christie, the master of the detective novel, comes *And Then There Were None*. In this staged version of the world’s best-selling mystery, ten people who have previously been involved in the deaths of others, but have escaped notice or punishment, are invited to a secluded mansion. Even though these ten guests are the only people on the island, they are all mysteriously murdered one by one, in a manner paralleling the old nursery rhyme, “Ten Little Sailors.”

Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?

Music and Lyrics by James Quinn and Alaric Jans;

Book by John R. Powers (Musical-1982)

Auditions: **September 11–13, 2011**

Preview: **November 3, 2011**

Performances: **November 4–6, 10–13, 17–20, 2011**

Adapted from the book of the same name, *Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?* is the charming story of late-bloomer Eddie Ryan. Breaking performance records during its Chicago and Philadelphia production runs, this coming of age musical involves the 1950s Catholic education of eight Chicago children, following them from the start of elementary school through their senior prom and beyond. Along the way it touches on such topics as first confession, popularity, teacher’s pets, sex education, growing up Catholic, and falling in love.

Murder at the Howard Johnson’s–Lab Theatre*

By Ron Clark and Sam Bobrick (Comedy-1979)

Auditions: **September 19 & 20, 2011**

Preview: NONE

Performances: December **1–4, 2011**

We continue our lab theatre program with the fast-paced hilarity of Ron Clark and Sam Bobrick. There is a love triangle taking place at the Howard Johnson’s Motor Inn between Arlene, her husband, Paul, and their dentist, Mitchell. During the first scene of the play Arlene and Mitchell conspire to kill Paul. In the second scene, the recently reconciled Arlene and Paul attempt to do away with the lingering Mitchell. And finally, the third scene finds Mitchell and Paul seeking final revenge against the apparent source of their problems, Arlene. This suspense-comedy is being offered for one weekend only!

Hauptmann

By John Logan (Drama-1999)

Auditions: **November 14 & 15, 2011**

Preview: **January 5, 2012**

Performances: **January 6–8, 12–15, 19–21, 2012**

From the writer of screen favorites *The Aviator*, *Any Given Sunday*, and *Gladiator*, as well as the dramatic masterpiece *Never the Sinner*, comes *Hauptmann*, the extraordinary tale of the German immigrant sentenced to death and executed for the abduction and murder of the Lindbergh baby. Facing a nation that has already declared his guilt, Bruno Hauptmann, with the help of the six guards watching his cell, tells his side of the “The Crime of the Century,” recreating the events leading up to his incarceration.

Blithe Spirit

By Noel Coward (Comedy-1941)

Auditions: **January 9 & 10, 2012**

Preview: **March 1, 2012**

Performances: **March 2–4, 8–11, 15–17, 2012**

This comic gem, from one of the theatre’s most versatile and revered personalities, concerns socialite and novelist Charles Condomine, who invites the eccentric medium, Madame Arcati to his house to conduct a séance, hoping to gather material for his next book. The scheme backfires when, following the séance, he is haunted by the ghost of his temperamental first wife, Elvira. Elvira makes continual attempts to disrupt Charles’s marriage to his second wife, Ruth, who cannot see or hear the ghost. Things get really complicated when Charles enlists Madame Arcati to exorcise Elvira!

Continued on page 4 . . .

... *John Loves Mary* preview continued from page 1.

Producer **Jay Hartzler** has enlisted the following outstanding staff: Costume Designer **Opal Virtue**; Property Masters **Dorothy Mundy** and **Carol Plotkin**; Lighting Designer **Tony Meizelis**; Sound Designer **D. J. LaRocque**; Set Designer **Dave Fuller**; Master Builders **Anita Corso** and **Jeremy Stiller**; Set Dresser **Kathy Parrish**; House Manager **Wendi Fleming**; and Stage Manager **Judy Stroh**.

John Loves Mary offers its Pay-What-You-Can Preview on Thursday, January 13. Regular performances are January 14-16, 20-23, 27-29. As usual, Thursday through Saturday evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday matinees begin at 2:30 p.m.



Presentation on WWII Popular Culture

In connection with Players' production of *John Loves Mary*, ISU English professors Sally Parry and Robert McLaughlin will offer a presentation, "The Returning Veteran in World War II Popular Culture." Parry and McLaughlin, the authors of *We'll Always Have the Movies: American Cinema during World War II*, will look at the ways mid-1940s fiction, drama, and film presented the homecoming servicemen and how these presentations reflected social anxieties about how these men might be changed by their wartime experiences and about how they might change the society they were returning to.

The presentation will take place Saturday, January 22, at 1:00 p.m. at Community Players Theater. It is free and open to everyone. An informal reception **with WWII-era treats** will follow.

... 2011/2012 Season continued from page 3.

An Evening of One Acts—Lab Theatre*

Auditions: **January 16 & 17, 2012**

Preview: NONE

Performances: **March 22–25, 2012**

Join Community Players for An Evening of One Acts; a series of one act plays in one evening, designed to showcase the very best of Community Players' talent! This special attraction will be offered for one weekend only! Don't miss out on this exciting, new event!

Hairspray

Music by Marc Shaiman; Lyrics by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman; Book by Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan (Musical-2002)

Auditions: **March 11–13, 2012**

Preview: **May 10, 2012**

Performances: **May 11–13, 17–20, 24–27, 2012**

Based on the 1988 John Water's film, *Hairspray* was the winner of eight 2003 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, Original Score, and three individual acting awards! In 1962 Baltimore, plump teenager Tracy Turnblad's dream is to dance on The Corny Collins Show, a local TV dance program. When Tracy wins a role on the show, she becomes a celebrity overnight and launches a campaign to integrate the show. With a mix of 1960s-style dance music and rhythm and blues, and hits like "Good Morning Baltimore," "Welcome to the 60s," and "You Can't Stop the Beat," *Hairspray* will have audiences dancing in the aisles!

* These shows are not a part of Community Players' Season Ticket package

All productions and/or dates are subject to change pending availability



Community Players Carol Uptown

Community Players and the Uptown Normal Business Association joined together to host a Candlelight Christmas Carol Sing-a-long in December.

Approximately fifty people gathered in the snow in the circle of Uptown to sing Christmas carols both new and traditional. Town council members and Rep. Dan Brady were present with family members to sing in the holiday. The UNBA provided song books and candles for all the carolers. All the singers were treated to hot chocolate from the Garlic Press right after the event. Plans are underway already for next year.