



# COMMUNITY PLAYERS

## CURTAIN CALLS

Vol. 5.1

May, 2009

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## Tony-Winning Musical *Urinetown* Closes Players Season

by Bob McLaughlin

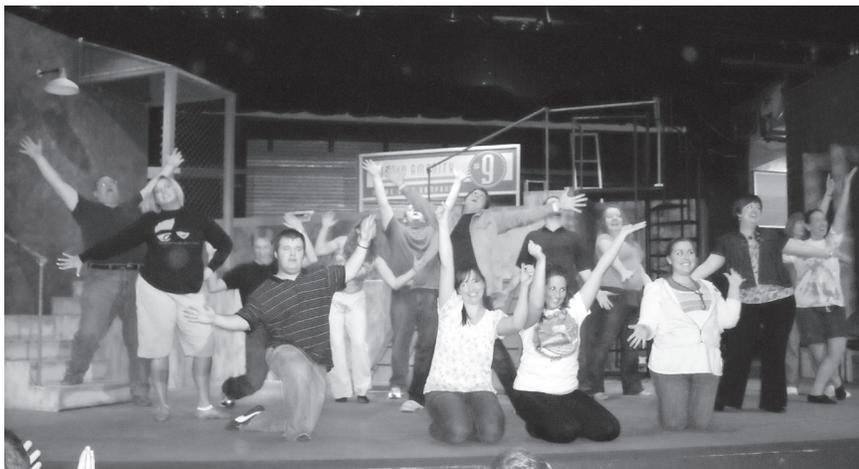
The Tony Award-winning *Urinetown* is the most daring musical Community Players has attempted in some time. It is also the funniest. With music and lyrics by Mark Hollmann and book and lyrics by Greg Kotis, *Urinetown* is set in a fictional future where a devastating drought has created a water shortage of such magnitude that private toilets have been outlawed and people need to take care of their private business at public amenities controlled by an enormous corporation, the Urine Good Company (UGC). In short, they have to pay to pee. On the one hand, this premise is absurd, as the show's narrators and hosts, Officer Lockstock, of the local constabulary, and Little Sally, an urchin, readily admit, and this absurdity leads to much of the show's humor. On the other hand, when we consider such recent items from the news as a European airline charging flyers to use their planes' restrooms, farmers in the U.S. southwest finding it more profitable to sell their water than to grow crops, and greedy corporate executives lining their pockets with public money, the world of the play doesn't seem quite so far away from our own. Despite the title, *Urinetown* is not a series of bathroom jokes; it is a (very funny) consideration of what happens to a society that

fails to husband its resources.

*Urinetown's* history is as unlikely as its story. It began life as the surprise hit of the New York International Fringe Festival in August 1999. Commercial producers provided money for some revising and recasting, and the show re-opened in an appropriately grungy Off-Off Broadway theater in May 2001. It then transferred to Henry Miller's Theater on Broadway, opening just after 9/11 and garnering rave reviews for its humor and its prescient response to the country's new state of terror-fed fear. Since then, it's become a favorite of regional and college theaters, and now it has come to Community Players on Robinhood Lane.



Director **Kathy Parrish** has gathered an outstanding cast and production staff, including a number of newcomers to Players (marked by \*). Officer Lockstock is played by **Zach Hoesly**, and Little Sally is played by **Wendy Clarenson**. **Adam Sitton\*** plays Bobby Strong, an amenity worker who, inspired by the idealism of Hope Cladwell, played by **Jessica Stiller**, rebels against his supervisor, Penelope Pennywise, played by **Cristen Susong\***. Among the oppressed characters are Hot Blades Harry (**Brian Artman**), Josephine Strong (**Rae Disco\***), Soupy Sue (**Wendi Fleming**), Tiny Tom (**Jay Hartzler**), Old Man Strong (**Chuck Palm**), Becky Two-Shoes (**Reena Rhoda**), Robby the Stockfish (**Joel Shoemaker**), Billy Boy Bill (**Jason Strunk**), and the poor and nameless, played by **Megan Clark**, **Aimee Kerber**,



The cast of *Urinetown* performs "Run, Freedom, Run."

... continued on page 4.

# COMMUNITY PLAYERS Calendar

May - June 2009

## Board Meetings

May 5, 7:00 p.m.  
June 9, 6:00 p.m.  
Community Players Theatre

## Urinetown

Preview: April 30  
Shows: May 1-3, 7-10, and 14-17

## Les Miz

Auditions: May 11-13  
Preview: July 9  
Shows: July 10-12, 16-19, 23-26

Tickets can be ordered online at  
[www.communityplayers.org](http://www.communityplayers.org).  
Click on "Online Ticket Sales."



## Community Players

201 Robinhood Lane  
Bloomington, IL 61701  
309-663-2121  
[www.communityplayers.org](http://www.communityplayers.org)

## Newsletter Committee

Jim Kalmbach  
Barb Lemmon  
John Lieder  
Bob McLaughlin

We are always looking for  
writers, artists, designers and  
story ideas. Send comments and  
suggestions to [lieder78@yahoo.com](mailto: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 our membership  
chair, Barb Lemmon at  
[barb.lemmon@comcast.net](mailto:barb.lemmon@comcast.net).

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

## Les Misérables Auditions

Community Players is excited to announce  
auditions for their summer musical *Les  
Misérables School Edition*, directed and co-  
produced by **Alan Wilson**, and musically  
directed by **Sally Hoffmann**.

The musical is based on the 1862 novel *Les  
Misérables* by Victor Hugo. Set in early 19th-  
century France, it follows the intertwining  
stories of a cast of characters as they struggle  
for redemption and revolution.

We are looking for 20-35 teens and young  
adults who are going into sixth grade through  
19 years of age (must be no older  
than the graduating class of 2009).  
Auditioners are expected to sing 16-24 bars of  
2 different numbers from the show and have  
their vocal ranges checked. One song can  
be for a character you would like to play, the other should be a song that shows off  
your voice. There will be no dance or reading audition. We are requesting those  
auditioning to bring a picture that the production staff will keep, and a completed  
audition form (available online).

Audition dates are as follows:

Monday May 11 entering 6th grade - 9th grade from 7-10 pm  
Tuesday May 12 entering 10th grade - graduating seniors from 7-10 pm  
Wednesday May 13 callbacks from 6:30-10 pm

Copies of music are available at the Community Players during *Urinetown*  
rehearsals. The *Les Miz* **audition packet** can be downloaded at

[http://www.communityplayers.org/shows\\_lesMisérables.html](http://www.communityplayers.org/shows_lesMisérables.html).

Any questions regarding auditions can be addressed via email to Alan Wilson  
([awilson@tri-valley.k12.il.us](mailto:awilson@tri-valley.k12.il.us)) or Sally Hoffmann ([sallyhoffmann@hotmail.com](mailto:sallyhoffmann@hotmail.com)).

Show Dates: **July 9-12, 16-19, 23-26, 2009**

We hope to see you at auditions!

## Membership Meeting

Community Players will be having our  
yearly members' meeting on Tuesday,  
May 5th at 6 p.m. All members are  
invited to attend, vote in the elections,  
and get caught up with the activities of  
the theatre.

The six positions on the Board that are  
up for election and the members who  
are running are as follows:



Vice President John Lieder  
Secretary Alan Wilson, Cris Embree  
Box Office Kameron Cox  
Theatre Craft Carol Plotkin  
Marketing Chris Strupek  
Playreading Deb Smith, Tom Smith

The position of Fund Development will  
not be voted on this year. The ad hoc  
Fund Development Committee will  
continue for one more year.

# New York: Old and New, On Broadway and Off

by Bob McLaughlin

Sally Parry and I have taken two trips to New York since the last time I wrote about the Big Apple theater scene, so I have room to write about only the highlights.

My favorite is *Road Show*, the revised version of the Stephen Sondheim-John Weidman musical formerly known as *Bounce*. It's about the Mizner brothers, Wilson and Addison, conmen and scalawags, who cut a swath through early twentieth-century America from the Alaska gold rush to the Florida land boom. It's hugely improved from *Bounce*. The plot has been stripped down, putting the focus more firmly on the brothers, and Michael Cerveris and Alexander Gemignani bring more of an edge and pathos to the characters. There's little completely new music, but everything has been reworked.

Another favorite (non-Sondheim division) is *Enter Laughing, the Musical*. *Enter Laughing* began as a novel by Carl Reiner, then became a play, written by Joseph Stein in 1963. Stein returned to the property in 1976 with composer Stan Daniels to write a musical version, *So Long 174<sup>th</sup> Street*, which was not very successful. Stein recently revised and renamed the musical, and it's been selling out Off-Broadway, starring the little known but hugely talented Josh Grisetti as a young man from the Bronx who wants to be an actor and, resisting the wishes of his parents, his girlfriend, and his boss, manages to make his stage debut. It's so funny that afterward parts of our faces hurt from laughing so hard.

*Heroes* is a French play translated by Tom Stoppard and starring John Cullum and Ron Holgate, at the Clurman Theater on Theater Row. It's set in 1959 and is about three World War I veterans who are planning an escape from their nursing home. Each has a mental or physical

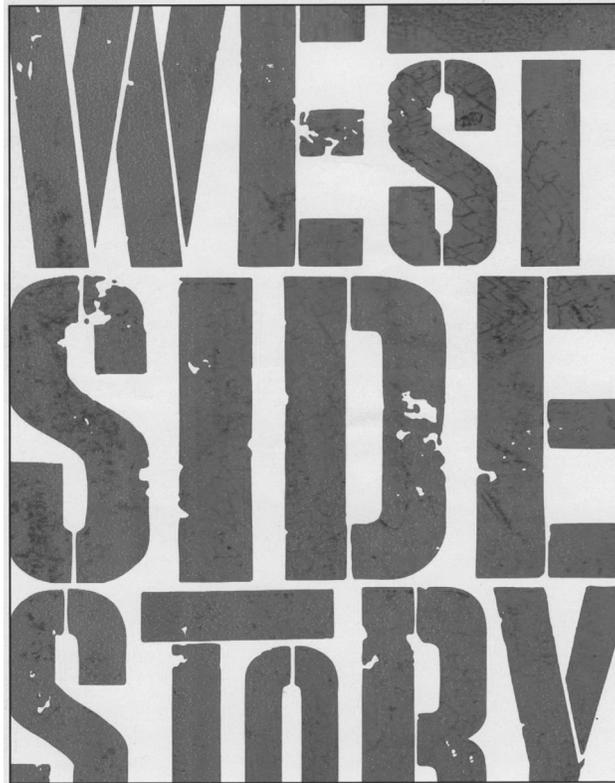
injury that impedes the plan. It's funny and bittersweet with terrific performances.

On Broadway, we love *13*, the new Jason Robert Brown musical about a New York City teen who has to move to a small town in Indiana and is desperate to make friends with the coolest kids in his school so he can invite them to his Bar Mitzvah. The harder he tries, the more he ends up with the geeks, misfits, and losers. The cast and band, all teenagers, are fantastic, the score has several really good songs, and the story is sweet.

We are privileged to see the revival of Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit*. This is about a writer, played by Rupert Everett, who invites a medium to come to a dinner party to get material for a book. Through some kind of psychic mischance, his late, first wife materializes, much to the consternation of his second wife, and hilarity

ensues. The show is quite good, but it is efficiently stolen by Angela Lansbury as the medium. The crowd goes wild at her entrance and gives her a hand at every exit. She is a treasure.

No trip to New York is complete without seeing a Mariano Tolentino production, and this time it's *West Side Story*. The Jerome Robbins choreography is exciting. The women playing Maria and Anita are phenomenal. And the interesting twist of this production is that the Sharks speak Spanish much of the time. This makes for some interesting tension between the Puerto Ricans who want to be more "American" and so speak English and those who want to retain their own culture and speak Spanish. Also interesting is that several of the songs, "I Feel Pretty," "A Boy Like That," and the Sharks' parts of the "Tonight" reprise, have been translated into Spanish. All and all a first-rate revival. More after the Tony Awards in June.



... *Urinetown* preview continued from page 1.

**Rebecca Peacock,\* Kelly Slater,** and **Laura Walsh.**

Among the privileged are Mr. McQueen (**Brett Cottone**), Dr. Billeaux (**Nick McBurney**), Executive Secretary (**Justin Palm**), Officer Barrel (**John Poling**), Mrs. Millennium (**Cris Embree**), Senator Fipp (**Kevin Paul Wickart**), and the head of UGC (and Hope's father), Caldwell B. Cladwell (**Bob McLaughlin**).

The outstanding staff include Producers **Sherry Bradshaw** and **Opal Virtue**, Music Director **Kyle Freesen,\*** Accompanist **Angie Schwab**, Choreographer **Sherise Kirvan**, Assistant Director **Sarah Mason,\*** Stage Manager **Elizabeth Parrish**, Set Designer **Gary Schwartz**, Master Builder **Bruce Parrish**, Lighting and Sound Effects Designer **Dan Virtue**, Sound Designer **Rich Plotkin**, Costume Designer **Cris Embree**, Property Masters **Carol Plotkin** and **Dorothy Mundy**, Marketing Directors **Chris Strupek** and **Joe Strupek**, and House Manager **Jean Lieder**.

*Urinetown's* Pay-What-You-Can Preview is Thursday, April 30. Thereafter, regular performances are May 1-3, May 7-10, and May 14-17. All evening performances begin at 7:30; Sunday matinees begin at 2:30.

### ***Urinetown* Sponsors**

Herb Reichelt, Joe Strupek, and the Development committee are happy to announce that Community Players' production of *Urinetown* is being sponsored by Mariano V. Tolentino Jr., M.D., Scott C. Morgan M.D. and Samuel A. Grampsas, M.D.

A reception honoring and thanking the sponsors will be May 2, 2009, immediately following that night's performance. The reception will include light refreshments, interaction among sponsors, invited guests, cast and crew, and door prizes. The Doctors have this to say about their sponsorship:

This production of *Urinetown The Musical* gives us an opportunity to demonstrate our support of Community Players Theatre and all the local talent, creativity, and dedication that goes into the quality productions performed right here in our community. Whether by way of drama, comedy, or musical, quality theatre will often shed light and bring new meaning on what is important to us. *Urinetown The Musical* does exactly that. We are proud to sponsor and support this production at Community Players Theatre.

—Mariano V. Tolentino Jr., M.D., Scott C. Morgan, M.D., and Samuel A. Grampsas, M.D.

### **Summer Theatre Workshops**

In conjunction with Heartland Community College, Community Players will host two theatre workshops this summer.

The first, **Auditions Workshop - Grades 6-12**, is geared to help middle and high school student sharpen their audition skills just in time for the summer theatre auditions. Students will learn about theatre etiquette, scene work and will practice "cold readings." There will be a mock-audition at the end of the class. Taught by Marcia Weiss, this class will be held on Saturdays May 2 and May 9.

The second offers high school students and adults a chance to learn the basics of the theatre. Held on Monday nights in July, **Welcome to the Theatre** will cover the basics of creating a show from directing to design. Each evening highlights a different aspect to of production starting with an overall introduction to the world of the theatre. Other nights will cover costume design, scenic design and directing. This class runs July 13, 20, 27 and Aug 3.

To sign up for either of these classes, contact Heartland Community College's Community Education program at 268-8160 or go to [www.heartland.edu/communityEd](http://www.heartland.edu/communityEd).

Look Marcia's other theatre classes this summer being held at Heartland.



### **Community Players at Prairie Thunder**

On February 21, 2009, 20 members of the CP family attended a Prairie Thunder Hockey game at the Bloomington Coliseum. The team is owned by a management group led by Bloomington attorney Tim Leighton. Tim is a season ticket holder and his law firm provides pro-bono legal advice to the Theatre. A splendid time was had by all.