



COMMUNITY PLAYERS

CURTAIN CALLS

Vol. 9.5

March, 2014

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Fabulous Females Featured in *9 to 5, the Musical*

by John Lieder

Decades before there was the movie *Office Space* and the TV sitcom *The Office*, there was the 1980 movie *9 to 5*. Starring Lily Tomlin, Jane Fonda and Dolly Parton, the movie, in hilarious fashion, took aim against the male-dominated office politics of the day. This March, Community Players brings Parton's 2009 musical adaptation of *9 to 5* to its stage, featuring rock solid performances by **Wendi Fleming**, **Aimee Kerber** and **Kallie Bundy** in the three lead roles. It has been a privilege as the producer to watch their characterizations grow during rehearsals.

Fleming plays Violet Newstead, the frequently put-upon, widowed senior supervisor of "Consolidated." She has to kowtow to Franklin Hart (**Mark Robinson**), the pompous, chauvinist office manager. A married man (his wife, Missy, is played by **Sara Schramm**), Hart has his sexual sights set on Doralee Rhodes (Kallie Bundy), the good-hearted, misunderstood "simple country girl." New to the office is the recently single Judy Bernly (Aimee Kerber), who brings a can-do attitude but few office skills and becomes Violet's "project." It doesn't take Judy long

to also become victim to the sexist attitude of Hart. Violet, Doralee and Judy become allies as they fantasize how they are going to wreak their vengeance upon the "sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot." Hart is accidentally given a cup of tainted coffee. In the aftermath, the ladies get their chance and grab hold of it hard.



In contrast, Hart's administrative assistant and office snoop, Roz Keith (**Wendi Baugh**) has her heart set on a romantic conquest of her boss. Her musical fantasy, "Heart to Hart," is seductively choreographed by Chris Terven and alluringly performed by Baugh. It is sure be a show highlight—one of many, I predict.

Strong supporting performances are given by **Jake Rathman** as Violet's younger admirer, Joe, **Austin Travis** as Doralee's husband, Dwayne, **Chris Stanford** as Violet's pot-smoking son, Josh, and **John D. Poling** as Judy's ex, Dick. **Nathan Bottorff** is similarly splendid as Consolidated corporate executive Russell Tinsworthy.

9 to 5, the Musical includes some catchy tunes, including, of course, the title song, and some very challenging rhythms and harmonies for the ensemble. Fortunately, this production has an ensemble, under the expert leadership of vocal director **Eugene Phillips, Jr.**, that is up to the task. In



Kallie Bundy, Wendi Fleming and Aimee Kerber (in the front row) strike a final pose in the finale of *9 to 5, the Musical*.

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March - April 2014

Board Meetings

March 11 6:00 p.m.
April 15, 6:00 p.m.
Community Players Theatre

9 to 5 The Musical

Preview: March 20, 2014
Performances: March 21- 23rd,
27-30, and April 3-6, 2014

The Odd Couple

Auditions: March 31
and April 1, 2014
Preview: May 15, 2014
Performances: May 16-18 and
22-25, 2014



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

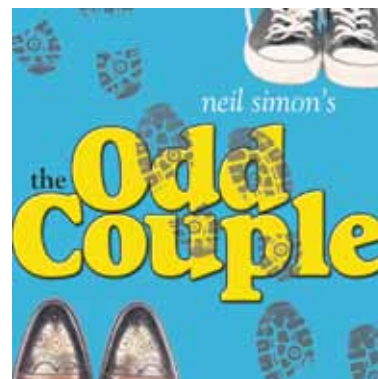
Curtain Calls is published six times a year for the voting members of Community Players.

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

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

The Odd Couple Auditions

This classic Neil Simon comedy opens with a group of men gathering for a "poker night" in the apartment of Oscar Madison, a divorced sports writer. With the pervasive and perpetual mess that Oscar lives in, it's not really a shock that his wife has left him. Late to the party is Felix Unger, who has also just been kicked to the curb by his wife. Felix, Oscar's polar opposite, is a depressed and desperate neat freak who becomes suicidal over his separation and circumstance. As the story unfolds, however, Oscar is the one who's driven to murder as he and Felix decide to become roommates. With the hilarious clash of wills that ensues, it's no wonder that the original production ran for 964 performances on Broadway and garnered four Tony Awards.



Director **Jeremy Stiller** claims the casting requirements will consist of "...92 men and 37 women, no wait it's only 6 men and 2 women! Who can tell in all this clutter?!?" Apparently our director is already a little too in synch with the Oscar character. With the 6 men and 2 women cast, Jeremy asks the men to bring as much "bromance" chemistry as possible to auditions and for the women to "...get their giggle on!" when auditioning for the ever so wacky upstairs neighbors, the Pigeon sisters – a pair of British sister (a divorcée and a widow) on the prowl. This production is guaranteed to be a fun romp through the ins and outs of every type of relationship!

Auditions will be held at Community Players Theatre on March 31 and April 1, 2014 at 7:00 pm. Auditioners will be asked to read excerpts from the script. If you have any questions prior to auditions you may contact the Director (Jeremy Stiller - jrgumbie50@msn.com) or the Producer (Chris Terven – chris@terven.net).



...9 to 5 The Musical Preview continued from page 1

addition to several of those already mentioned above, the ensemble includes **Rachel Phillips, Bridgette Richard, Nancy Nickerson, Allen Popowski, Cris Embree, Dava Bennett, Reena Artman, Tamera Turner, Alex Lovel, Chris Terven, John Lieder** and newcomers **Maryssa Litherland, Shelby Miller, Scout Nord** and **David Ghantous**.

Brett Cottone is *9 to 5's* director. In addition to Terven as choreographer and Phillips as vocal director, the creative staff includes **Alan Wilson** as costumer, **Dan Virtue** as lighting designer and **Rich Plotkin** as sound designer. **Judy Stroh** is stage manager with assistance from newcomer **Jerry Caldwell**. **Carol Plotkin** and **Dorothy Mundy** are in charge of properties. In addition to his role as Dwayne, **Austin Travis** is assistant

director. **Eli Mundy** is assistant sound technician and **Annie Weaver** is house manager.

The set, based on a concept by Cottone, is designed and built by **Jeremy Stiller** and **Hannah Kerns**. It features portable set pieces including specially built office desks and functioning elevator doors. There is no pit orchestra for this production. Recorded music is provided through arrangement with The MT Pit L.L.C.

9 to 5, the Musical contains some mildly offensive language and sexual situations and is not intended for pre-teens. The pay-what-you-can preview performance is Thursday, March 20 with regular performances March 21-23, 27-30 and April 3-6.

90 Years of Theater: The History of Community Players (Part 10)

by Bruce Parrish and Bob McLaughlin

As part of the celebration of Community Players' 90th Anniversary Season, the Newsletter has offered the history of the organization. Part 9 ended with the summer 2007 revival of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Part 10 completes our history.

The 85th Season featured an unusual fundraiser. On October 6, 2007, Las Vegas Magician Gary Carson and his wife and assistant Kelsey brought an amazing display of magic, animals, and laughter to Players' stage. The evening raised \$1,300. For the last show of the season, *Father of the Bride* (first done by Players in 1951), director Marcia Weiss and Sherise Kirvan choreographed the scene changes, which were performed by the cast in full view of the audience.

During the October 2008 revival of *Guys and Dolls* (previously done in 1964 and 1993), Players held a food drive. Donated items were on display in the lobby. Over 415 items and cash were donated to the Salvation Army Food pantry at the close of the show. The November Lab show, *Woman in Black*, put the audience on the stage to draw them into the frightening world of this thriller. Director Sally Parry and lighting and sound-effects designer Dan Virtue created a truly creepy experience.

The summer 2009 Theater for Young People production was the popular Tony Award-winning *Les Misérables* School Edition. Intermission raffles raised \$1,100. Closing out the 87th Season was *The Producers*, based on Mel Brooks's 1968 film. The show won a record-breaking 12 Tony Awards in 2001. This politically incorrect musical had audiences laughing and applauding all night long.

In January 2011 Players presented Norman Krasna's comedy *John Loves Mary* (first performed at Players in 1949), about a returning-serviceman, his war bride, and his State-side fiancée. Before one performance, Illinois State University professors Robert McLaughlin and Sally Parry offered a presentation on the returning veteran and popular culture in World War II. The last show of the 88th Season was Peter Stone and Maury Yeston's *Titanic: The Musical*, a titanic undertaking for the large cast of singing actors, the orchestra, and the designers. Tears and sniffles could be heard from the audience every night. A special

abridged matinee performance was given for people with special needs, thanks to a generous grant from the McLean County Arts Center.

Players' 89th Season offered an interesting bit of trivia: we presented plays with two of the longest titles we have ever staged. The musical *Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?* was a nostalgic look at growing up Catholic in the 1950s. A Lab show, *You Know I Can't Hear You When the Water's Running*, by Robert Anderson, consists of four unrelated one-act plays, which offered the opportunity for four first-time directors—Dorothy Mundy, Joel Dwight Shoemaker, Brett Cottone and Sherry Bradshaw—the chance to develop their art.



To Kill a Mockingbird from the 2012-2013 season.

Community Plays' 90th Season was celebrated with a full slate of activities, including a kick-off picnic in Fairview Park, a tailgating party at a Normal Cornbelters baseball game, and a lecture by Julie Hedgepeth Williams, author of *A Rare Titanic Family*, the story of her great uncle Albert Caldwell and his family. *Titanic*-survivor Sylvia Caldwell eventually moved to Bloomington and joined Community Players. Players Historian Bruce Parrish helped Dr. Williams with her research. The event was bracketed by two songs from the musical *Titanic*.

In December 2012 Players celebrated the holidays with Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*, the first time since 2004 we had performed a Christmas show. At one performance, one of the principal performers became ill and was not able to perform. The box office staff was able to accommodate all of the audience requests for the remaining performances.

On March 6, 2013 Players' first show, *Overtures*, a one-act comedy by Alice Gerstenberg, was performed for the Chamber of Commerce, Past Presidents, and the community at large at a 90th Season Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Cristan Embree, Wendi Fleming, Sally Parry, and Opal Virtue performed the special reading about two proper ladies and their not-so-proper alter egos. In April we presented *Broadway in Bloomington*, a musical revue that traced the history of Players and featured performers re-creating songs from favorite roles.

History Part 10 continued on page 4 . . .

In Memorium: Phil Shaw

Phil Shaw passed away on the 19th of February. His family and friends had gathered to be with Phil at the end, many recalling their experiences with him. Phil was well known throughout the community for his vocal performances, acting, directing and as a founder of several theatre companies.

Phil's started with Community Players back in 1967 playing the part of Father Kelleher in the comedy, *Catch Me If You Can*. Phil continued performing in other venues returning to Players in 1980's *Inherit the Wind*, as Matthew Harrison Brady opposite Ron Zielinski as Henry Drummond. He then went on to direct the first production of *West Side Story* in the same year.

Helping his former teacher, Larry Connolly, Phil was the Vocal Director for the musical *Applause* in 1981. Phil directed the 1987 production of *Hello Dolly!* and also voiced the role of Mr. Bentley in the original presentation of Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine*.

Phil returned to Players to direct *The Heiress* for the 75th Anniversary of Community Players. For the 2000 production of *Jesus Christ, Superstar* Phil directed and also created the video design and the scenic design for the show. He lent his beautiful voice to the pit choir in the revival of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. In 2003, Phil directed the circus-themed musical, *Barnum*.

Phil's final directing job came with the second revival of *Fiddler on the Roof* in 2007. Phil's final appearance on the Players' stage was as the Reverend Hooker in 2010's *Dearly Departed*.

Phil was a memorable actor and performer, and he formed long relationships with many of the people he worked with. It is interesting to note that in his first and last shows with Players, his roles were as spiritual men. I think this is fitting because those who worked with and knew Phil will always keep his spirit alive in their hearts.

My favorite memory of Phil occurred at a party at Joe Penrod's house over a decade ago. Phil, Joe Penrod, and Gary Schwartz stood around the piano and sang, "They Call The Wind Maria" from *Paint Your Wagon*. The beauty of the blending voices of these three men gave me chills, and I shall forever keep their voices singing together in my memory.

—Bruce Parrish, Historian



Phil Shaw and Jim Keeran from the Players' 1967 production of *Catch Me If You Can*.



. . . 90 Years of Theatre Part 10 continued from page 3.

During the 90th Season, we lost two longtime members. Jack Ingold, a Past President, board member, producer, Trustee, actor and Board Member Emeritus, passed away on November 15, 2012. Jack was in the first play performed in the Robinhood Lane theatre, *Death of a Salesman*. Don Freese, a board member from 1957 through 1964 and member of the Executive Board as Recording Secretary, passed away on January 23, 2013. Don first appeared in a Players show, *Big-Hearted Herbert*, in 1935.

The current generation of Community Players are keenly aware that our organization exists only through the efforts of the many dedicated people who founded it, built it, expanded it, and preserve it. We strive to follow their example and help Community Players continue to grow. Here's to the next 90 years!

Historian's Corner

For the production of Philip Barry's *Holiday*, the curtains were left open at the Majestic Theatre to allow patrons to see the changing of the set. This was done to help acquaint patrons to "set work."

It was the first time that Community Players patrons were schooled in who worked on sets and what was required to change them.

—Bruce Parrish, Historian