

The Mintaur



ATHENIAN PLAYERS THEATRE Newsletter vol. XV iss. 3 November 2007

2007 OCTA CONFERENCE

submitted by Jim Parsons

The greatest theatrical bargain in the Midwest is the annual Ohio Community Theatre Association (OCTA) State Conference. This year's Conference was held August 31st through September 3rd at the Hilton Hotel in Cleveland. Eight members of Athenian Players Theatre went to the State Conference this year, received some recognition for good work, and had some wonderful experiences.

During Saturday and Sunday, Conference attendees were treated to 15 half-hour excerpts from the best Ohio community theater productions of the past year. Those who came on Friday saw two additional excerpts from top shows from the junior OCTA competition. Immediately after each performance three Responders gave independent critiques of the

excerpt and offered suggestions for improvement. Before the excerpts began each day, workshops were available on such topics as publicity and marketing, season selection, youth theater, stage combat, licensing and royalties, lighting, dancing, and improvisation.

OCTA includes more than 100 community theaters, divided into five regions. To be included in the OCTA State Conference, a production must have been judged one of the best in presentations at the Regional Conferences. This year, APT performed the one-act play *The Actor's Nightmare* at the Southeast Regional Conference in New Philadelphia on June 2nd and was selected to represent the Southeast Region at the State Conference. At the Regional Conference, Hayley Van Meter was cited for Excellence in Acting.

Members of the cast and crew of APT's production of *The Actor's Nightmare* are: David Bower (Director), Bruce Jones (George Spelvin), Linda Watkins (Meg), Ruth Borovicka (Sarah Siddons), Hayley Van Meter (Dame Ellen Terry), Joe Balding (Henry Irving), and Suzanne Ragg (Crew).

At the State Conference, Bruce Jones received a Merit in Acting award for his performance as George Spelvin. The first Responder praised APT's performance: "The Director showed a skilled hand with a skilled group of actors. George [Bruce Jones] gave a wonderfully understated

performance, and the other cast members were equally as strong. The pacing was exceptional: quick where it needed to be, but George was unafraid to be alone on stage." The second Responder noted that *The Actor's Nightmare* is "perhaps the darkest of the three [Christopher] Durang plays. These actors chose to take their characters even more into that than the author does. . . . George really listened to the other actors. . . . Everyone added layers upon layers to their characters." The third Responder praised "the brilliant entrances of the other [besides George] characters."

The State Conference also provides an opportunity for recognition of work in costuming, set design, and other technical efforts. This year, Celeste Parsons received a trophy for Outstanding Set Design for her set for *Once upon a Mattress*.

Steve Haskins, APT cofounder who died suddenly in 2006, was inducted into the OCTA Hall of Fame for his numerous contributions to community theater in Southeast Ohio and to the state.

APT donated a basket of items from Southeast Ohio crafters that was sold in a Chinese auction at the State Conference as a fund raiser for OCTA. Christine Neumann headed the project and donated many of the items in it. One of the APT attendees won a certificate for a \$1,000 discount from Music Theatre International (MTI), and donated it for use in our upcoming production of *The Boy Friend* in March 2008.

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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

It has been 10 years since Stuart's Opera House re-opened its doors to the public. Since that time, the opera house has established itself as a popular venue and is home to local, regional, national and internationally renowned performances. **We are pleased to have been part of reestablishing this historic venue which we call "home."**

Although major restoration of the theater and lobby was completed a decade ago, the full potential of the opera house has yet to be realized. The next step is to create office and box office space adjacent to the lobby. Thanks to a grant from the Baird Foundation, work on this next phase of renovation has begun. During the months of November and December, the space that has housed the opera house offices and the APT workshop will be remodeled to accommodate McFadden Insurance, and the former McFadden space will house the opera house offices and box office.

Of course, we are experiencing the squeeze of growing pains, because we will lose our workshop space. Working with the opera house staff, we have created a place on the stage to store flats and platforms. Thanks to the time and effort of Carol Ault, Joe Balding, Dean Barker, Lonny Frazee, Bruce Jones, Dave Bartlett, Bruce Keeney, Ryan Keeney, Celeste Parsons, Jim Parsons, David Whealey and the boys of Hocking Valley Community Residential Center, we have now vacated the former workshop space and we will never have to carry those flats and platforms upstairs again! HALLELUJAH!

It is our hope that, sometime in the not-to-distant future, funds will become available to establish a new workshop behind the stage.

OUR NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, November 28, 2007, 7 PM

Nelsonville Public Library

Come - and bring a friend!

"NEVER TOO 'LATE"

Opened to appreciative audiences on November 1. **For four** performances the actors kept the performance tight and the audiences responded with gales of laughter.

Carol Ault made her directing debut with this production and was fortunate to have the support of assistant director Sylvia Abbott and a talented cast. Audiences were treated to gifted performances by veterans Joe Balding, as Harry Lambert, and Lisa Keeney, as Edith Lambert. Hayley VanMeter, winner of an Excellence in Acting award at the 2007 OCTA regional conference, brought her considerable talent to the role of Kate; and Bruce Jones, winner of a Merit in Acting award at the OCTA state conference, provided a spark as Mayor Crane. Neil Nesbitt joined us for his third memorable performance in the role of building contractor Foley, and Miki Brooks was in good form as Grace Kimbrough. In addition to designing a fabulous set, Dean Barker brought life to the role of Dr. James Kimbrough. The cast was rounded out by two new-comers : Wes Allen played Charlie and Paul Rohrer joined us as the Policeman. We look forward to seeing them on stage in many more productions!

David Bower was responsible for lighting design, and Jim Parsons was sound engineer. Celeste Parsons served as lighting apprentice and single-handedly ran lights and sound for 3 performances; she was also responsible for the lovely leaf pattern on the livingroom walls. Lou Ann Jones was our ever-capable stage manager. Props manager Suzanne Ragg raided her mother's home for vintage items. Costume designer was Nellie Weger. **And special** recognition goes to Vera Baluz, who created a light-weight and sturdy bathtub out of newspaper, and glue.

As is common in community theater, the cast and crew helped with set-building and strike. **Some** members corralled friends and family to share in the fun. Dean Barker's father, Rick Barker, and Parsons'

"Never Too Late" cont.

friend Ronnie Jones pitched in. Bruce and Lou Ann Jones enticed German exchange student Bastien von Borstel to work on back stage crew and help with strike. Others involved were Karen Chan and Sandy Russell.

AUDITION WORKSHOP

An audition workshop "How to Prepare for and How to Do an Audition" will be held on Sunday, December 2, 2007 at Stuart's Opera House, on the square in Nelsonville. We will work from 12PM to 6PM, with breaks.

You will be reading lines and speeches from a variety of plays. To prepare, please familiarize yourself with: Shakespeare's *Macbeth*; *The Importance of Being Ernest* by Oscar Wilde; and *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

If you are considering auditioning for musicals, you will be asked to sing a prepared (memorized) song. If so, please bring sheet music or, preferably, a taped accompaniment.

Also, we strongly recommend that you purchase *Auditioning: an Actor-Friendly Guide* by Joanna Merlin. It is available in used copies from Amazon.com for a small cost.

There is a \$10 fee for the workshop for those who are not members of Athenian Players Theatre. The \$10 will also serve as membership dues for APT for the 2007-8 year. Make your check out to "APT", and mail it to Norman Cohn, 33 Graham Drive, Athens, OH 45701.

The workshop will be open to no more than 12 people. **Please apply no later than NOVEMBER 25.**

For more information contact:

Norman Cohn

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MISSING PERSONS UPDATE

In our last issue, we reported the disappearance of Miss Baby Monitor. You will be relieved to know that Baby returned, unharmed, just in time to participate in *Never Too Late*.



See more photos on the web at www.athenianplayerstheatre.org



Photos courtesy
of Jim Parsons.



Don't let this be your last copy of the Minotaur! Send your dues to:
Jim Parsons
15085 Wolfe-Bennett Rd.
Nelsonville, OH 45764

MORE THEATER COMING YOUR WAY!

Logan High School presents
The Ash Girl
November 15, 16, 18

River City Players
Hooray for Hollywood
November 16-17

Little Theater Tuscarawas Co.
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
November 28-December 8

Ohio Valley Summer Theater
Special Holiday Production
December 7-15

Zanesville Community Theatre
17th Annual Angel Tree Benefit
December 14-16

Athenian Players Theatre & Berean Community Players
The Boy Friend
February 29-March 1 and March 7-9
Harvey
May 8-11

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