



COMMUNITY PLAYERS
CURTAIN CALLS

Vol. 4.4

November, 2008

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Guys and Dolls Three-peats at Community Players

by John Lieder

"When you see a guy reach for the stars in the sky, you can bet that he's doing it for some doll." So begin the lyrics of the title song from *Guys and Dolls*, the Frank Loesser jewel which comes to the Players' stage for the third time. (Previous Players' productions of *Guys and Dolls* were in the 1964-65 and 1993-94 seasons.) The lyrics touch upon the show's two main themes: love of dolls and love of gambling. There are interesting consequences as the two loves battle for supremacy in the lives of Nathan Detroit and Sky Masterson. Based on a compilation of Damon Runyon characters and Runyon's short story, "The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown", *Guys and Dolls* is chock full of delightful songs from the silly ("Bushel and a Peck", "If I Were a Bell", "Sit Down You're Rockin' the Boat") to the romantic ("I'll Know", "I've Never Been in Love Before") to the inspirational ("Follow the Fold", "More I Cannot Wish You").

The two lead guys in the current production are newcomer **John Curcuru** as promoter extraordinaire Nathan Detroit and Players and The Barn II stalwart **Chad Kirvan** as high stakes gambler Sky Masterson. Nathan's love interest is his fiancé of 14 years, Miss Adelaide, lead singer at the Hot Box nightclub, portrayed by Players'

veteran **Chrissie Strong**. On a bet with Nathan, Sky pursues and then falls in love with "mission doll" Sergeant Sarah Brown, played by **Liesl Miller**.

The relationship between Nathan and Adelaides provides the show with some of its most comic moments and the relationship between Sky and Sarah provides the show with its more romantic moments.



Many of the gamblers have wonderful nicknames such as Nicely-Nicely Johnson (**Bob McLaughlin**), Benny Southstreet (**Brian Artman**), Harry the Horse (**Justin Palm**), Big Julie (**Dave Lemmon**), Charlie the Horse (**John Lieder**) and Angie the Ox (**Jay Hartzler**). Their adversary is Lt. Brannigan, played by **Joe Strupek**. Joining Adelaide at the Hot Box are the Hot Box Girls, played by **Sherise Kirvan**, **Gayle Hess**, **Catherine Sikyta**, **Laura Walsh**, **Victoria Kensek** and **Kelly Slater**,

and the Master of Ceremonies, played by **Bruce Parrish**. (Bruce also gets in on the fun as a drunk, ventriloquist and newspaperman.) Arvide Abernathy (**Chuck Stuckey**) and General Matilda B. Cartwright (**Christy Valella**) join Sarah in the

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Nicely Nicely Johnson (Bob McLaughlin) and the cast sing "Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat."

COMMUNITY PLAYERS

Calendar

Nov. - Dec. 2008

Board Meetings
Nov. 11 6:00 p.m.
Dec. 9, 6:00 p.m.
Community Players Theatre

Guys and Dolls

Preview: Oct. 23
Shows: Oct. 24-26, Oct. 30-Nov.
2, Nov. 6 - 9.

Woman in Black

Auditions: Oct. 27 & 28
Shows: Nov. 20-22, 2008

Harvey

Auditions: Dec. 1 & 2, 2008
Preview: Jan. 15, 2009
Performances: Jan. 16-18, 22-25,
29-31, 2009

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



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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

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.

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

Auditions for *Harvey* — Director Insights

By John Lieder

I fell in love with the play *Harvey* at the age of 11 when my older brother portrayed the male lead, Elwood P. Dowd, in his senior class play. That was over 40 years ago, but Mary Chase's Pulitzer Prize winning play about Elwood and his invisible friend -- a "pooka" in the form of a 6 foot tall rabbit -- remains charming and great fun. *Harvey* is a comedy that lightly addresses the issues of belief, love, trust, loyalty, acceptance and responsibility. I was absolutely elated when the Play Reading Committee invited me to direct it.

Harvey

There are marvelous characters in this play such as the perpetually pleasant and persistent Elwood, who's favorite hobbies are collecting friends and visiting drinking establishments (often combining the two); his ditzy older sister, Veta, a socialite wannabe whose social climbing is inhibited by Elwood's eccentric behavior; Veta's man-hungry daughter, Myrtle Mae; and so forth. There a total of 12 characters -- 6 male and 6 female -- with ages that can range from 22 to 82. Each character is impacted by Harvey (or the concept of Harvey) in a unique way and through the rehearsal process we will explore why some characters become believers in Harvey and others do not.

Auditions begin at 7:00 on Monday and Tuesday, December 1 and 2. Please arrive 10 - 15 minutes early to complete the audition form. Actors will be asked to read from the script. Those auditioning for the role of Elwood will be asked to perform a very simple miming exercise. Performance dates are January 16-18, 22-25, 29-31, 2009, with the Preview performance on January 15.

If you cannot make either audition night but would still like to audition, or if you need more information, email me at lieder78@yahoo.com.



Sergeant Sarah Brown (Liesl Miller) and Sky Materson (Chad Kirvan) do something, but what?????

Woman in Black to Appear at Community Players

by Sally Parry

Like a good ghost story? Then Community Players' next production, *The Woman in Black*, should prove very appealing. This play, by Stephen Mallatratt, is a classic ghostly tale, where the horror is not what you see, but what your own mind helps to create. The story is a relatively simple one. A lawyer has been so affected by a case from his past that he asks an actor to help him try to make sense of what he has seen and heard. Soon this acting "exercise" takes on a life of its own—a very scary one.

The Woman in Black will run only three performances, November 20-22, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. Because the audience will be on stage for this production, it will have limited seating so order your tickets early. The price is only \$5 per ticket.

This show has been running in London for many years and provides an excellent opportunity for two fine male actors, one in his later 20s or early 30s, and one who is ten to twenty years older. If you fit one of these categories, or know someone who does, please audition. Auditions are Monday, October 27th, and Tuesday, October, 28th, at 7 p.m. at Community Players. Actors will be asked to read from the script and play a variety of parts. Although the play is a British mystery, accents will not be a focus of the casting process. Because the play is being rehearsed while *Guys and Dolls* is in production, there will be fewer rehearsals than for a regular season show. So focus and good memorization is a must.

The Woman in Black is the second lab show that Community Players has done in recent years, the first being *Don Juan in Hell* last fall. The production staff includes **Dorothy Mundy**, Producer and Props; **Sally Parry**, Director; **Cathy Sutliff**, Set Designer and Dramaturge; **Dan Virtue**, Sound and Light Design; **Chris Embree**, Costumes; **Judy Stroh**, Stage Manager; and **Jean Lieder**, **House Manager**.

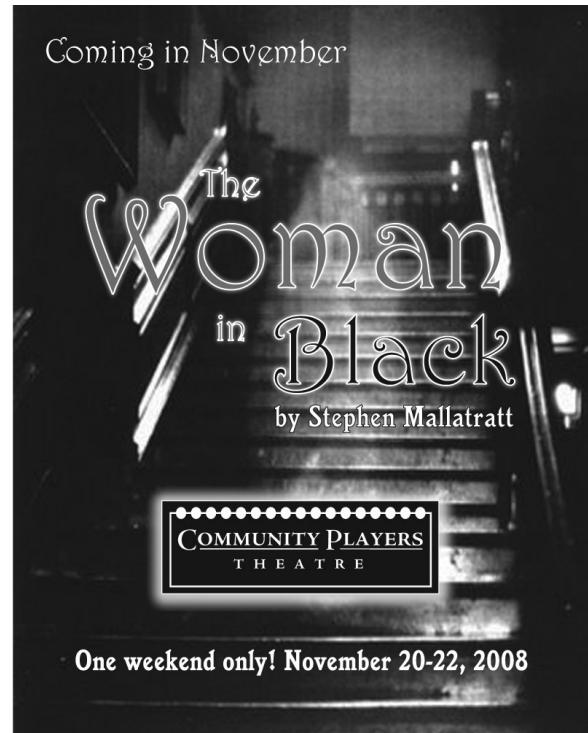


... *Guys and Dolls* Three-Peat continued from page 1

mission and there are nearly 20 others filling various roles as gamblers, mission folk and other natives of "Runyonland".

Designed and built by John Brittingham, the set consists of six swing panels which can be rotated to display either the New York City skyline or the NYC sewer, and a roll-on platform which is used for the exterior and interior of the mission. The orchestra is placed on a platform upstage center.

The mayor of our Runyonland (a.k.a. Director) is Marcia Weiss. Her staff, along with Brittingham includes **Jean**



Lieder (Producer), **Melody Palm** (Music Director) **Sherise Kirvan** (Choreographer), **Mark Wright** (Lighting), **Opal Virtue** (Costumes), **Dorothy Mundy** (Properties), **Rich Plotkin** (Sound), **Judy Stroh** (Stage Manager) and **Wendi Fleming** (House Manager). **John Lieder** is helping out as vocal coach and **Sherry Bradshaw** and **Jaron Meyers** are helping with costumes.

The pay-what-you-can preview performance is Thursday, October 23. Regular performances are October 24-26, October 30 – November 2 and November 6-9. As usual, Thursday – Saturday performances begin at 7:30 and Sunday matinees are at 2:30.

New Volunteers at Community Players

by Cathy Sutcliff

Last summer's fund raiser, *High School Musical*, was successful on so many levels. Beyond raising over \$24,000 for the theatre, it brought in hundreds of people who had never been to the theatre before, it introduced theatre to a young new audience, and it was a great experience for the cast and crew. Most of the cast was brand new to Community Players stage, and there were new faces backstage as well. Some were parents who came along for the ride and stayed to help; others were looking to get involved in the theatre itself. I was pleased to be able to interview a few of these new volunteers: Betsy McDaniels, Karen Robson, and Vie Anglin-Jones and her husband, George Jones.

Betsy McDaniels has lived most of her life in Colfax, IL. She grew up knowing about Community Players because her parents had season tickets. So Betsy was already familiar with Community Players when her son Dakota, 12, was looking for a summer program and lighted on *High School Musical*. She and Dakota have been involved in theatre with the St. John's Players in Anchor since Dakota was in third grade, but what made the *HSM* experience different for Dakota was that it was a cast of kids his age, not a cast of adults with kids that come along in tow. Betsy decided to audition as well since she would be driving back and forth from Colfax anyway. While she didn't get cast, she did find a niche backstage working with Stage Manager **Katie Klemp**. "It was really neat to see it from the backstage perspective," said Betsy, "A whole different experience and I learned a whole lot."

While always learning new things, sound veteran **Karen Robson** called the show "an adrenaline rush!" Karen has been working with sound and sound boards for churches for over 25 years. After moving with her husband's ministry work for many years, Karen and Kent have been settled in El Paso for 13 years now with their six children. While she's been in the area for a while, Karen's first experience with Community Players came just last year when a friend gave her tickets for *The Mousetrap*. "We just totally loved it," said Karen. After the show, she met **Rich Plotkin** who was running sound for the show and inquired about volunteering. Karen said what she liked about *HSM* was the complexity. "The challenge to make it all work—you have 24 mics to control and having the right ones on at the right time, getting a good sound—I loved it." With Karen we get a great "two-for-one" deal as her daughter **Kia** came along to help.

Not planning on spending their summer at Community Players, **Vie Anglin-Jones** and her husband, **George Jones**, kind of stumbled into various roles for *HSM*. Their daughter **Marissa** wanted to audition for the show, and Vie thought she would come along and audition "just to keep up on my auditioning skills." Vie has her performance degree from Eastern Illinois University and has performed in small theatres in the Chicago area. Little did she know that she would cast in one of only two adult roles in the show. Often the only adult backstage during rehearsal, she became a "child wrangler," counselor, and surrogate mother at times. "This was the first time I worked with a younger cast," said Vie. "It was neat to see the kids who had never had that experience before. To see it click in their eyes." During one of the first work weekends for the set construction, Vie's husband was promoted from

"I had so much fun. I'm looking for a family experience."

—Betsy McDaniels, new CP Volunteer

volunteer to Master Builder. George is no stranger to the stage either; he received his BA in vocal performance from Illinois Wesleyan University. But after five weeks at an internship at the Metropolitan Opera, he decided it wasn't for him and returned to central Illinois to farm with his father. He has never regretted his decision. When he has the time, he performs with the St. John's Players in Anchor, which he helped to co-found. Unbeknownst to most, George had never been in charge of building a set before. "It was a different side—I've never been in charge before. Did what I was told before," said George. "It was fun and new experience."

It was long hard summer, but did it have its rewards? said Betsy, "because of the drive every day. It was so much fun meeting everyone." As for Vie and George: "We made some really good friendships. We met some people we would have not met otherwise." "I want to come on back," said Karen. "Not just for musicals, though. I would like to do straight plays as well. I just like to enhance the sound so everyone can enjoy it."

Community Players always welcomes newcomers. If you or someone you know would like to get involved, contact membership chair Barb Lemmon at barb.lemmon@comcast.net.