



# COMMUNITY PLAYERS

## CURTAIN CALLS

Vol. 6.2

July, 2010

### Inside this Issue

Smoky Joe's Café Auditions.....2  
 Board of Governors Elections .....2  
 Broadway and the Tonys .....3  
 End of Year Picnic.....4  
 Players receives grants .....4  
 Players at Shakespeare Festival .....4

## The Fantastic Mr. Fox is ... Marvelous! Stupendous! Dare I say, Phenomenal!

by Joel Shoemaker

That's right, folks! The next theatrical offering at Community Players is *The Fantastic Mr. Fox*. And, as the title would suggest, it's TERRIFIC.

Our show, based on the book by Roald Dahl and adapted by David Wood, follows the title character (**Nick McBurney**), his wife (fittingly portrayed by his actual wife, **Laura McBurney**), and their four adorable children (**Ashley Genung**, **Andrew McAllister**, **Vivian Johnson**, and **Mela Hauck**) as well as the rest of the animal ensemble (Badgers – **Zoë Mundy**, **Olivia Bratcher**, **Carys Lovell** and **Will Lovell**; Rabbits – **Wendi Fleming**, **Ethan Fleming**, **Kira Fleming**, **Abby Park**; Moles – **Chrissie Strong**, **Scarlett Strong**, **Sean Eagle**, **Elizabeth Marshall**, **Logan Gutschow**; Weasels – **James Martin**, **Rosie Hauck**, **Aaron Martin**, **Andrew Martin**, **Olivia Urquizo**, **Oskar Urquizo**) as they attempt to defend themselves

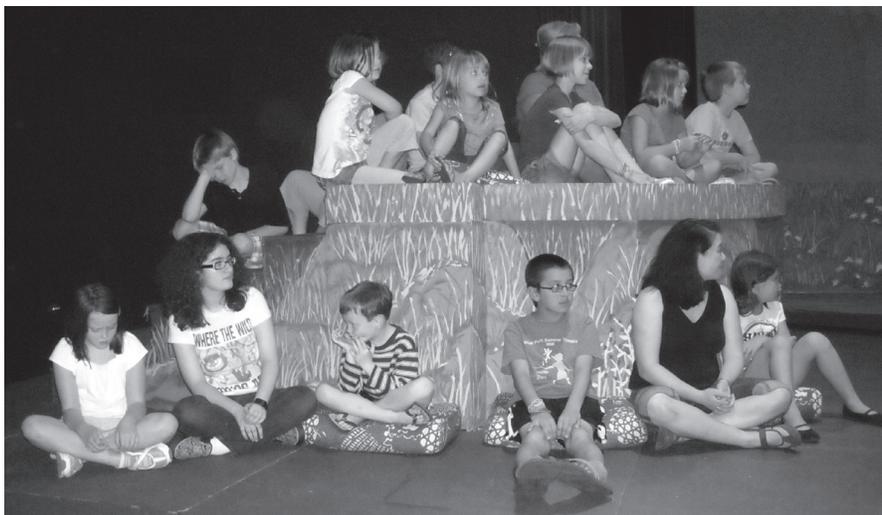
against the three evil farmers (Boggis – **Desiree Taylor**; Bunce – **Kiley Bronke**; Bean – **Thom Rakestraw**) and a lot of Rats (**Kyle Holliday**, **Eli Mundy**, **Hunter Bartram**, **Meredith King**).

Along the way, we also meet Bean's housekeeper, Mabel (**Laura Lehmkuhl**) and several villagers who appear to be first with and then against the farmers they work for (**Andersen Patty-G'Sell**, **CeCe Hill**, **Rachel Smith**). The story is narrated by Mr. Badger (**Joel Shoemaker**).



By the by, I don't know if I mentioned it, but *The Fantastic Mr. Fox* is absolutely GREAT. I mean, it truly is BRILLIANT.

The WONDERFUL production is directed by **Tom Smith**, with assistance from Thom Rakestraw and Zoë Mundy. It's produced by **Judy Stroh** and Joel Shoemaker, stage managed by the same Judy Stroh, and supplied with costumes by Laura McBurney, props by **Dorothy Mundy**, sound by **DJ Laroque** and Lights by **Herb Reichelt** and **Eric Reichelt**. Our Technical Intern is **Deb DuPuy**. And, one DELIGHTFUL set



Members of the Animal Chorus. Left to right, bottom row - Carys Lovell, Zoe Mundy, Will Lovell, Oskar Urquizo, Rosie Hauck, Olivia Urquizo. Top Row - Sean Eagle, Elizabeth Marshall, Scarlett Strong, Abby Park, Kira Fleming, Ethan Fleming.

... continued on page 4.

COMMUNITY PLAYERS  
Calendar

July - August 2010

**Board Meetings**

July 13, 6:00 p.m.  
Aug. 10, 6:00 p.m.  
Community Players Theatre

**Fantastic Mr. Fox**

Preview: July 8  
Shows: July 9-11, 15-18, 22-25

**Smokey Joe's Café**

Auditions: July 18-20  
Preview: Sept. 9  
Shows: Sept. 10-12, 16-19, 23-26



**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

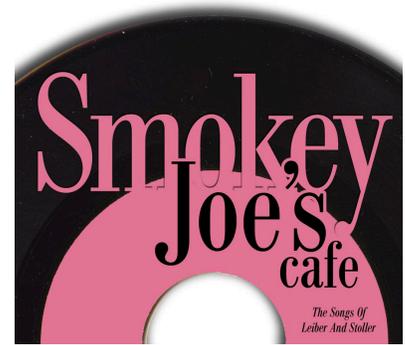
*Curtain Calls* is published six times a year for the voting members of Community Players.

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."

## Smokey Joe's Café Auditions

Auditions for *Smokey Joe's Café* will be Sunday through Tuesday, July 18-20, beginning at 7:00 PM. *Smokey Joe's* is a musical revue featuring nearly 40 songs written by Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller. With styles ranging from ballad to blues, from introspective to just plain silly, director **Brian Artman** is looking for about nine or ten versatile singers, ages 18 and up, who can sell a pop song with vocal interpretation and movement. There are numbers for soloists and numbers with wonderful harmonies, group songs for men, group songs for women and songs when the whole ensemble sings together. Some songs feature a very deep bass and others feature a powerful falsetto. Some of the "soul" numbers feature a female vocalist of the style of Aretha Franklin.



Being a musical revue, there is no script, so there will be no reading audition. There will be dance as well as singing auditions. Those auditioning will be asked to present two memorized songs, one ballad and one up-tempo piece, preferably of the era or genre. (This is one audition when a tune from a Broadway show would not be most appropriate, although it would suffice.) Each song should be less than 32 measures.

*Smokey Joe's Café* will open with a pay-what-you-can preview on September 9 with shows running September 10-12, 16-19, 23-26.

Questions about auditions can be directed to producer John Lieder at [lieder78@yahoo.com](mailto:lieder78@yahoo.com).



## Members Elect New Board of Governors Members

On May 11, 2010, Community Players hosted a very successful membership meeting.

At the meeting, the following members were elected to the Board of Governors:

House and Grounds: **Jay Hartzler**  
Membership: **Aimee Kerber**  
Play Reading: **Brian Artman**  
Theater Tech: **Tom Smith**  
Treasurer: **Joel Shoemaker**

The complete Board of Governors for the 2010/2011 season are as follows:

President - John Lieder  
Vice President - Cathy Sutliff  
Treasurer - Joel Shoemaker  
Secretary - Judy Stroh  
Membership - Aimee Kerber  
Play Reading - Brian Artman  
Theatre Tech - Tom Smith  
House and Grounds - Jay Hartzler  
Box Office - Kameron Cox  
Theatre Crafts - Carol Plotkin  
Marketing - Chris Strupek

# Broadway, Off-Broadway, and the 2010 Tony Awards

by Bob McLaughlin

The 2010 theater season in New York ended happily as our Community Players comrade **Mariano Tolentino** ran onstage at Radio City Music Hall to help accept the Tony Award for Best Musical for *Memphis*, a new show about a disk jockey who helps to popularize rock 'n' roll and fosters racial understanding at the same time. On the one hand, this wasn't a surprise—most people had anticipated *Memphis* would win. On the other hand, it was a bit startling, because *Memphis* bucks the trends that governed the 2009-2010 season. It was the only one of the nominees for Best Musical to have an original score—the conventional wisdom is that audiences are interested only in music they already know. And at a time when producers equate box-office success with film and TV stars, its leads are people few outside of New York have ever heard of. Thus in the trips **Sally Parry** and I made to New York this season, we found lots of revivals and movie stars, and we discovered that most of what's exciting and new was Off-Broadway.

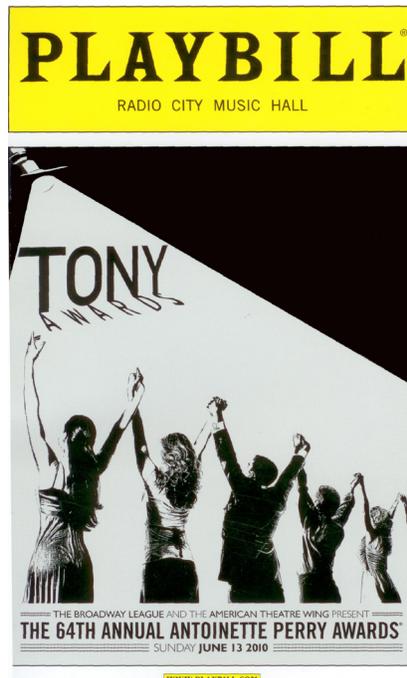
Our favorite revival, Noël Coward's *Present Laughter*, was inexplicably overlooked by the end-of-the-season awards. In a part originally played by Coward, Victor Garber played Gary Essendine, a histrionic and self-absorbed actor. The play takes place in Essendine's gorgeously art deco apartment over the few days before the actor leaves to tour a play in Africa. Will he straighten out his complicated love life before his ship sails? Yup. We saw even bigger stars, Liev Schreiber and Scarlett Johansson, in *A View from the Bridge*, Arthur Miller's classic about a longshoreman unable to deal with his inappropriate feelings for his niece. No happy ending here. In the revival of Stephen Sondheim's waltz musical, *A Little Night Music*, Catherine Zeta-Jones was luminescent as Desiree, the just-over-the-hill actress who tries to recapture a former, now married, lover, and Angela Lansbury, as her mother, was, as always, wonderful. The revival of the Burt Bacharach-Hal David-Neil Simon musical *Promises, Promises* was a mixed bag. Sean Hayes was funny but without depth as the

awkward and lonely young executive who hopes to get ahead by loaning his bachelor apartment to his bosses for their extramarital rendezvous. Kristin Chenoweth, as his unrequited love and, he discovers, his supervisor's tootsie, was seriously miscast—she's too much of a spark plug on stage to be convincing as a pushed around, beaten down, near-suicidal girl. One score for *Promises*: unlike *Night Music*, it had a full orchestra, increasingly rare on Broadway these days.

The most exciting new musicals we saw this season were Off-Broadway, but they're both scheduled to transfer to Broadway in the fall. *The Scottsboro Boys*, by John Kander and the late Fred Ebb, is based on the true story of nine young black men who were falsely accused of raping two white women in 1930s Alabama. The play is presented in the form of a minstrel show, with an Interlocutor (played by Broadway legend John Cullum) and a cast of twelve. Susan Stroman's staging is brilliant, the humor

is dark and pointed, the finale is startling. *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* is a rock musical in which a small cast tells the story of Andrew Jackson's life and presidency from a revisionist point of view, with an emphasis on his treatment of Native Americans. The show none too subtly connects the anti-intellectual and anti-elite populism that brought Jackson to power with current populist trends. At times overly reliant on crudeness and often not as smart as one wishes it were, it's nevertheless very entertaining with a terrifically talented and energetic cast. Also Off-Broadway was *The Grand Manner*, a new A. R. Gurney play, based on his memory of meeting the great stage actress Katharine Cornell. Funny and moving. Less perfect but more thought-provoking was *Equivocation*, a new play imagining Shakespeare's dilemma when King James insists on his writing a play to sanitize his government's response to the Gunpowder Plot.

It will be interesting to see if the stars-in-revivals trend continues on Broadway and what interesting new things will show up Off.



. . . *Fantastic Mr. Fox* preview continued from page 1.

is provided by **Bruce Parrish** and **Charles Maaks**, with scenic design by **Dave Fuller**.

It's a LOVELY show. You won't want to miss it.

The summer production has been seen in recent years as "Theatre for Young People.. While *The Fantastic Mr. Fox* would seem to continue this trend, we've placed a special emphasis on creating a production that is both by and for families this year. We would like to not only thank all of the families that are in the show together, but also show special, sincere gratitude to all of the parents who have helped along the way. This is truly one collaborative effort, and the process has been superb. Dare I say, FABULOUS.

Ok, fine. I lose the bet. Sure. Right. *The Fantastic Mr. Fox* is, in a word, FANTASTIC. I told myself I wouldn't do it; I almost didn't; but: it is what it is.

You can see this FANTASTIC show on any of the following dates: July 8 (Pay-What-You-Can Preview), July 9-11, 15-18 or 22-25. As is our custom, Thursday through Saturday evening performances are at 7:30 PM with Sunday performances beginning at 2:30 PM.



## Players at the Shakespeare Festival

On Thursday, July 8, Players regulars **Brian Artman** and **Bob McLaughlin**, along with accompanist **Sally Parry**, will perform Cole Porter's "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival. This year the Festival is using some of its pre-show Greenshow entertainments to reach out to other arts organizations in the area. The performance will take place at Ewing Manor around 6:30 pm. Thanks to **Cathy Sutliff** for organizing this event.

## End of Season Picnic

by Aimee Kerber

On June 5th, we held our first annual End of Season Picnic at Fairview Park. More than fifty of Community Players Theatre volunteers were in attendance. The festivities kicked off at 1 pm with the 2010 Phony Tony Awards Ceremony starting at 2 pm. The Phony Tony Awards are a collaboration of some of this past seasons finest moments such as "The Couple You Would Like to Double Date" which went to **Fred Render** and **Joel Shoemaker** for their performance in *The Producers*. The "Best Effort at Making Sure No One Ever Uses That Prop Again" which went to **Rae Disco** and her trumpet in *Side by Side by Sondheim*. Additional memorable awards include "The Lifetime in Learning Award" to **Bruce Parrish**, "The Players Picasso Award" to **Dave Fuller** and "The Universal Understudy Award" to **Whitney Spencer**.

Thanks to those in attendance and a special thanks to the volunteers who helped make this picnic possible... especially to our Grill Master **Rich Plotkin!**



## Players Receives Grants

Community Players was awarded two important grants for the 2010-2011 season. We have received \$1500 from the Illinois Prairie Foundation to purchase and install a Heating Assistance System for hard-of-hearing patrons. We have also received a \$600 Community Arts Access Grant from the McLean County Arts Center to support School Show performances of *Dracula*. Kudos to the Grants Committee—**Cathy Sutliff**, **Joel Shoemaker**, and **Bob McLaughlin**.

The Fox Family: Mr. Fox - Nick McBurney, Mrs. Fox - Laura McBurney, Fox Children - Ashley Genung, Andrew McAllister, Vivian Fox and Melea Hauck.

