



COMMUNITY PLAYERS

CURTAIN CALLS

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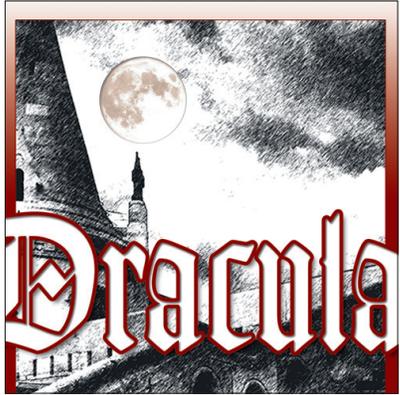
Players Sinks Its Teeth into *Dracula*

by Bob McLaughlin

Before *Twilight* . . . before *Buffy* . . . before *Lestat* . . . before Count Chocula . . . there was . . . *Dracula!* Bram Stoker, a successful theatrical manager, drew on his research in eastern European folk tales as well as local stories from his vacation haunt, Whitby, to write his 1897 novel, which introduced Count Dracula, the king of vampires, to the world. And the world answered, fascinated by this creature, un-dead, who sleeps in his coffin by day and feasts on the blood of the living by night, who can take the form of a bat or a wolf, and who makes his victims his slaves. Stoker's story spoke to many fears of the late-Victorian era: the fear of the strange lands beyond the borders of the British empire; the fear of women's sexuality; the fear of things science and reason cannot explain. But even more disturbing, he tapped into the psychological process by which we find ourselves drawn toward those things we fear, the shocking realization that we have an erotically charged attraction to our deaths!

Community Players will celebrate the Halloween season with its production of the stage version of *Dracula*. The play's long history mirrors our culture's ongoing

fascination with all things vampire. Actor and playwright Hamilton Deane, under the supervision of Stoker's widow, first adapted the novel for the London stage in 1924. When producer Horace Liveright brought the play to New York in 1927, he hired John Balderson to substantially revise the script. It was this Broadway production that introduced Bela Lugosi as the cultured but blood-thirsty count and that was the basis for Universal's classic 1931 film. In 1977 the Deane and Balderson script was revived on Broadway, with Frank Langella as Dracula; this hit production was the basis for yet another movie, in 1979.



Harker, Lucy, and Van Helsing confront the mandman Renfield as Dr. Seward looks on.

Set in the 1920s, the play begins a few weeks after the mysterious Count Dracula has emigrated from Transylvania to the ruined Carfax Abbey, some twenty miles from London. At Doctor Seward's neighboring sanatorium, a young woman has grown pale and weak and then died. Now Seward's daughter Lucy is exhibiting the same symptoms. Further,

Continued on page 4 . . .

COMMUNITY PLAYERS
Calendar

November-December
2010

Board Meetings

Nov. 9, 6:00 p.m.
Dec. 14, 6:00 p.m.
Community Players Theatre

Dracula

Preview: Oct. 28
Shows: Oct. 29-Nov. 31,
Nov. 4-7, 11-13

Art

Shows: Nov. 18-21

John Loves Mary

Auditions: Nov. 29-30
Preview: Jan. 13
Shows: Jan. 14-16, 20-23, 27-29



Community Players

201 Robinhood Lane
Bloomington, IL 61701
309-663-2121
www.communityplayers.org

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."

John Loves Mary Auditions

The best laid plans... In this farce, John returns home from the war with an English bride. The trouble, though, is that she is not his sweetheart – she is the fiancée of a buddy who saved John's life in battle. Since the girl is English, marrying her was the only way to get her into the country promptly. John's real love is Mary, but they can't get married until he divorces his English bride. Rather than simply tell the true story, John piles lie upon lie, each one further complicating matters. The play was made into a 1949 movie starring Ronald Reagan, Jack Carson, and Patricia Neal.



Director **Dave Fuller** is looking for energetic actors (7 men and 3 women) to portray characters ranging in age from 20 to 65.

Auditions will be at the theatre November 29 & 30 at 7:00.

The preview performance of *John Loves Mary* will be Thursday, January 13 and regular performance dates will be January 14-16, 20-23 and 27-29, 2011.

Anyone auditioning who like more information can contact producer **Jay Hartzler** at cphousegrounds@aol.com.



Community Players Participating in Community Events

Community Players is hitting the road and participating in a couple of community events.

On October 30, look for us on the circle in the annual **Uptown Normal Treat Feast**. Over 1400 little ghouls and goblins will be parading their finest through the streets of uptown in search of candy. We will be there from 5 pm to 6:30 pm handing out treats, and perhaps a few tricks!

We will be back on the circle again in December for the Community Sing! On December 22, Community Players will be leading a **community Christmas Carol sing-a-long** in the green space in the traffic circle. Lyrics and candles will be provided.

So bundle your family up tight, grab a cup of hot cocoa from one of the coffee shops and join us for joyful time.

CP Lab Show Wonders: What is *Art*?

by John Leider



The lab show for the 2010-11 season, *Art*, is a three-person play by the French writer Yasmina Reza. The three characters are Marc (**Andy Cary**), Serge (**Brett Cottone**) and Yvan (**Ben Hackett**). The plot turns on the surprise purchase of an expensive piece

of modern art by Serge that sends his friends reeling. Although the title of the play would lead one to think that this play is about art or art appreciation, it is actually speaks about the dynamics of friendship.

Translated by Christopher Hampton, *Art* is the winner of the 1998 Tony and New York Drama Critic's Circle Awards for Best Play, as well as the Laurence Olivier, Molière, and Evening Standard Awards for Best Comedy. The Broadway production featured Alan Alda as Marc and Victor Garber as Serge. No slouch of a comedy, this.

Cathy Sutliff directs our production. Since this is a lab show and rehearsals are going on simultaneously with *Dracula*, Sutliff has had to scrounge for rehearsal space. She was able to find adequate space for the three actors and herself in the basement of The Coffeehouse in beautiful uptown Normal.

The staff has a trio of volunteers doing double duty: Sutliff is also costumer, **Dorothy Mundy** is producer and properties designer, and **Dan Virtue** is doing both lights and sound. Rounding out the staff are **Aimee Kerber** as stage manager, **Wendi Fleming** as house manager and **Jeremy Stiller** as set designer. The set will be minimal: As with *Woman in Black*, the audience will be seated on stage for this production.

There is no Preview Performance for this one weekend show. Performances are Thursday, November 18 through Sunday, November 21. Please note that *Art* contains language which some may find offensive.



Brett Cottone awaits "off stage" as **Andy Cary** (left) and **Ben Hackett** (right) rehearse a scene from *Art* in the basement of The Coffeehouse in uptown Normal.

... *Dracula* preview continued from page 1.

Renfield a previously harmless madman has become agitated, continually escaping from his cell (much to the consternation of the sanatorium's attendant and maid), and speaking in ways that might be nonsense or might offer important clues. Professor Van Helsing, learned in the ways of the supernatural, has been sent for, and he, Seward, and Lucy's fiancé John Harker seek to save Lucy's life and her soul. But can anyone overcome Dracula?

For the Players production, co-producers and co-directors **Kathleen Parrish** and **Bruce Parrish** have "dug up" the following cast: **Paul Vellella** as Dracula; **Joe Strupek** as Professor Van Helsing; **Brian Artman** as the madman Renfield; **Kristi Zimmerman** as Dracula's target, Lucy; Players newcomer **Gerald Price** as Harker; **Bob McLaughlin** as Dr. Seward; **Leah Pryor** as Wells, the maid; and **Jeff Ready** as Butterworth, the attendant.

In addition, the following staff will be haunting the theater: Assistant Director **Dave Lemmon**; Stage Manager **Elizabeth Parrish**; Costume Designer **Opal Virtue**; Scenic Designer Bruce Parrish; Lighting and Sound Effects Designer **Dan Virtue**; Sound Designer **Rich Plotkin**; Properties Wranglers **Dorothy Mundy** and **Carol Plotkin**; House Managers **Christie Vellella** and **Reena Rhoda**.

Audiences can drink in *Dracula* beginning with a Pay-What-You-Can Preview Performance on Thursday, Oct. 28. Subsequent performances will be Oct. 29-31, Nov. 4-7, and Nov. 11-13. All Thursday through Saturday evening performances begin at 7:30. Sunday performances begin at 2:30.

Our production of *Dracula* is being sponsored by the Law Office of **Frank L. Hoffman**. Frank is a long time Community Players season ticket holder, and we thank him for his generosity.



Dracula (Paul Vellella) hypnotizes Wells, the maid (Leah Pryor).

Players Introduces Hearing-Assistance System

Community Players' upcoming production of *Dracula* will introduce the theater's new Hearing-Assistance System. **Rich Plotkin**, our sound guru, has installed a Listentech Performance FM System, which will allow hard-of-hearing patrons to better hear and understand the dialogue and music of our productions. Patrons will be loaned a small receiver, about the size of a transistor radio or a mic pack, and an earpiece. A transmitter works through the theater's sound board to deliver the actors' voices to the patron's ear, bypassing background noises and other interference.



The installation of this system marks an example of Players' ongoing commitment to community outreach and improving the theatergoing experience for all our audience members. It is also another step in the ongoing improvement of the physical space of the theater.

We currently have four receiver/earpiece units. Patrons wishing to use one should see the House Manager before the performance. They may be asked to let the House Manager hold a piece of identification—we need to make sure the units are returned!

The Hearing-Assistance System was purchased by means of a generous grant from the Illinois Prairie Foundation, to whom we are most grateful. The grant was prepared by **Bob McLaughlin**, **Joel Shoemaker**, and **Cathy Sutliff**. We are also grateful to Rich for his work in installing the system.



Sound man extraordinaire, Rich Plotkin, models the new Listentech Listening Assistance ear piece.