



"Our State On Stage Third Quarter

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"BOARD HAPPENINGS"

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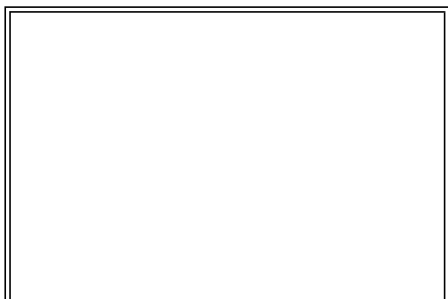
MLT DREAMS COME TRUE

Your board of directors held its annual retreat in August at Pauls Valley. The purpose of the retreat is to welcome new board members (Rita Boyle of Tulsa this time), set up committees, and look to plans for the future.

The retreat was hosted by the Pauls Valley Arts Council and the Toy and Action Figure Museum. Activities included two days of meetings, with time outs for meals together. A special treat was a conducted tour of the Toy and Action Figure Museum. Any of you who grew up, or have children who grew up, in the Star Wars era should make the pilgrimage. They have over 10,000 items on display, and will be happy to show you around. They even have an interactive area for children. You can visit their website at http://www.actionfiguremuseum.com/main_page.htm. The board meeting on the second day took place in the Bat Cave at the museum. The board also visited the high school auditorium, which is the venue for productions of the Pauls Valley Arts Council, and offered ideas for updating the facility to better serve for theater productions. Pauls Valley is "Not Your Ordinary Small Town."

The focus of the retreat was planning to better serve the member theatres, increase OCTA's visibility across the State, and use OCTA's resources to improve the quality of community theatre in Oklahoma.

PAST PRODUCTIONS



"ON THE ROAD WITH A THEATRE JUNKIE"



If you read the last newsletter, you may recall that I made a pledge to attend a production at all of the member theatres during my two-year tenure. I hope to use this medium to let you know the progress I'm making toward fulfilling that pledge, and to let you know about what some of your "sister" theatres are doing. I also want to challenge each of you to visit each other – it could be that you've been thinking about doing a certain play for a few years, and would like to see it on stage. The OCTA website maintains a calendar of what's going on at all the member theatres during the season. You can check out who's doing what and plan a road trip for the play selection committee. Many plays out there "play" much better than they read, and seeing a production can give you ideas.



(above) In this fun rehearsal picture from the Ponca Playhouse production of *Driving Miss Daisy*, Daisy (Ruslyn Hermanson) takes over the wheel, as Hoke (Claude Bradley) and Boolie (John Dalton) hang on for dear life.

"THE OKLAHOMA ARTS COUNCIL'S 2008 STATEWIDE ARTS CONFERENCE"

The Oklahoma Arts Council's 2008 Statewide Arts Conference will be held in Enid, November 12-14. It will focus on success stories fueled by personal experiences right here in Oklahoma. "The conference is an opportunity for participants to share their strategies for advancing the arts in our state", said Executive Director Suzanne Tate. Fundraising, community cultural development and a forum for new and emerging arts leaders are just a few of the topics that will be presented during the three-day conference. Tate added that she hopes arts and community leaders, elected officials, and artists and educators will join us for the annual conference. Registration, lodging, conference schedule and scholarship information is available online on the Oklahoma Arts Council's web at www.arts.ok.gov or call 405-521-2024.

DINOSAURS TRAMPLED THE PLAYMAKER STAGE

For those of you searching for a relatively small cast youth play, the Grove Playmakers highly recommend "The Dinosaur Musical." It's by Robert & Willie Reade, authors of Broadway's recent hit, "A Year with Frog and Toad."

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, my first road trip was to see *Arsenic and Old Lace* at the brand new Sand Springs Community Theatre. The play is a reliable audience favorite, and was a wonderful choice for a new theatre building its audience base. To top it off, it was a great production!

In mid-July I headed north to Owasso for a look at *The Fantasticks*. Again, this show is a perennial audience favorite, and owes a lot to Shakespeare for plot devices. The thing about "audience favorites" is that they have lasted for a reason: they rely on themes that are universal and appealing to a broad audience. Owasso Community Theatre Company is another fairly new theatre, and is upholding the Oklahoma community theatre tradition of local talent featured in quality productions which appeal to a wide audience. Like Sand Springs, Owasso partners with the local public schools for a production venue. Great work!

After recovering from festival, I went to see *The Chosen* from Heller Theatre, produced at the Liddy Doenges Theatre at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center. This is a beautiful script, and the minimal sets and creative lighting Heller used gave it even more impact. It's always rewarding to see young actors alongside seasoned actors; as community theatres, I think we become more successful by "raising our own."

Next was *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at Red Carpet Theatre in Elk City. (Thanks, Shonda Currell (OCTA's faithful treasurer) and family, for putting me up!) Believe it or not, I had never seen a live production of this show, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Creative casting (what community theatre has enough men to cast in all the brothers' roles?) and costuming really enhanced the experience. Shonda's daughter, Tiphani Currell-Haraughty, directed, and designed and made the coat. If anybody's planning a production and would like to save themselves some work and/or money on the coat, give Shonda a call.

Last, but not least, I saw *Same Time Next Year* at the Broken Arrow Community Playhouse last weekend. This show is a favorite of mine, and was certainly a favorite with the audience the night I was there. It's amazing how we can forget, in the presence of a poignant and funny script and likeable characters, that it's actually about long-term adultery! Broken Arrow is fairly unique in that it has a partnership with the city for their venue. It just goes to show that there are as many ways of mounting community theatre as there are communities.

See you soon!

"SAND SPRINGS COMMUNITY THEATRE PRESENTED "1940's RADIO HOUR"

Some reviewers think it's better! The music was not too difficult for their cast, ages seven through 14. Two 10 yr. old girls nailed one of the hardest songs in the show. The cast loves walking and dancing as dinosaurs might have, and it had humor for both adults as well as kids. And the Grove Playmakers have 12 dinosaur tails and headdresses to loan!!!

SUPPORT OCTA!

There is a new page on the website entitled "Support OCTA." It describes the regular donation process as well as the new John Kirkpatrick Centennial Endowment Challenge through the OKC Community Foundation, in which OCTA has two endowments. If donors contribute to one or both of these endowments by December 31, 2008, up to \$5000 of the donations in each fund will be matched dollar for dollar. Go to the website to read more about the purpose of the OCTA endowments. These endowments need to grow to help OCTA help you. Help Us Meet the Challenge!

WEBSITE STATISTICS

Fun Fact

www.oktheatre.org had 88,550 hits last month alone. The most popular day of the week was Tuesday with 15,400 hits and the busiest time of day was from 10pm to 11pm with 6,264 hits

Busiest pages were:
Library= 51,641
Calendar= 8,756
Newsletter= 3,735
Links= 548

Best Referring Websites were
www.theatretulsa.org, www.tacta.net,
Yahoo Search, Google, and MSN.

**TAKE A MINUTE TO
VISIT
OUR WEB PAGE AT
WWW.OKTHEATRE.ORG**

There you'll find lots of interesting stuff



Sand Springs Community Theatre presented to enthusiastic audiences, August 21-23, "1940's Radio Hour." This was the most attended production for SSCT, and the first musical for the group. The production was a first for many of our talented actors/singers. Loren Stephenson was our first musical director, while returning director, Andrea Campfield, brought back her expertise for bringing a group of individuals together as an incredible comedy/musical ensemble. First timers, Andy Spoon and Leigh Skidmore brought down the house with their comedic antics, as did the songs by 16 year old, Hannah, and her mother, MaryJane Halley, Janet Rutland, (first time on our stage), Mark Seay, and Scott Gaffen, (also a first timer on OUR stage.) Troy Dixon and Lisa Seay, returning to the stage after our last production, "Arsenic & Old Lace" in May, did a great job rounding out the ensemble. High school junior, Ryan Smith, made his debut playing the trumpet, a must for Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy. Also making his acting debut as Pops, was Connie Fisher, singing his impromptu version of "Wish Upon A Star" while testing the microphones as the show starts. Bringing a realistic touch to the production was the "house" orchestra made up of drums played by cast members Andy Spoon and Mark Seay, the piano played by Tracie Marshall, the trombone and a well concealed synthesizer was played by music director, Loren Stephenson. Adding to that realistic touch of the time was the sound effects table manned by Brian Walker.

Our, still new, theatre group is so fortunate to have the support of so many in our community, including our school district that allows us to use one of the school auditoriums for our performances.

We invite you to look at our new website at www.pageplayers.com

THEATRE TULSA'S' NEW PRESIDENT DAVID VIRILI COMMENTS

As recently instated President of the Theatre Tulsa Board of Directors, David Virili's first order of business was to steer the organization back to its 1922 vision as expressed in Theatre Tulsa's Mission Statement--To produce quality entertainment, to provide the opportunity to all segments of the community to participate, to be a leader in the community in the presentation of theatre arts."

One of Theatre Tulsa's (www.theatretulsa.org) 2008-2009 Season productions includes "Master Class" by Terrance McNally about opera's most revered diva, Maria Callas, which presented one problem for Virili; who would be best to direct the Tony winning show?

David shared an observation believed to be held amongst many, "that there exists this silent condescending ideology on behalf of audiences of "professional arts" as in Opera, and those on the other side of the performing spectrum, "amateur arts" which one experiences with Community Theatre. The ideology that opera venues dote the merits of operating on lavish endowments, contracting renowned artists and being housed in luxuriant venues while community theater seemingly exist on schools of acting, exploiting local talent for little to no pay; operating in renovated urban storefronts. So there exists this line of dividedness of assessments with the Opera camp on one side and Community Theatre on the other.

Yet, when Virili was faced with the task of contracting a director for Master Class, a show filled with operatic nuances, he found himself realizing the only way Theatre Tulsa could pull off doing Master Class was to cross the line of divergency

such as information on membership and programs.

We have also added a slide show of the many pictures from our member theatres. If you have any pictures to add to the slide show, please send them to the webmaster at tacta@tacta.net. Send them today.

All programs and services of the Oklahoma Community Theatre Association are funded in part through the generosity of the Oklahoma Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.



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and seek assistance from the camp who understood opera. The place Virili eventually had his sight on was none other than Tulsa Opera. He was ecstatic to hear back from Dr. Don Armstrong, Director of Educational Music Programs & Artistic Administrator, who indicated that he would love to direct Master Class on behalf of Theatre Tulsa. The camps of both sides will have no choice but to form a truce as both the Opera and Community theatre communities unite. "Master Class" runs November 7th - 9th & 13th - 15th at the Liddy Doenges Theatre at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center. Tickets range from \$10-\$20 and reservations can be made at 587-8402, 596-7111 or at www.myticketoffice.com

A principle of the Learning Organization, which Virili hopes Theatre Tulsa will adopt, spells it out clearly, "A shared vision is a force of impressive power when people share a desire to be connected in an important undertaking" ...as Theatre Tulsa will have produced a quality production, providing an opportunity for community involvement and becoming a leader in the community in the presentation of theatre arts and hopefully both camps will go away with a degree of understanding of what we all must go through for arts sake—which is more than a coincidence, as this is also the message of Terrence McNally's Master Class.

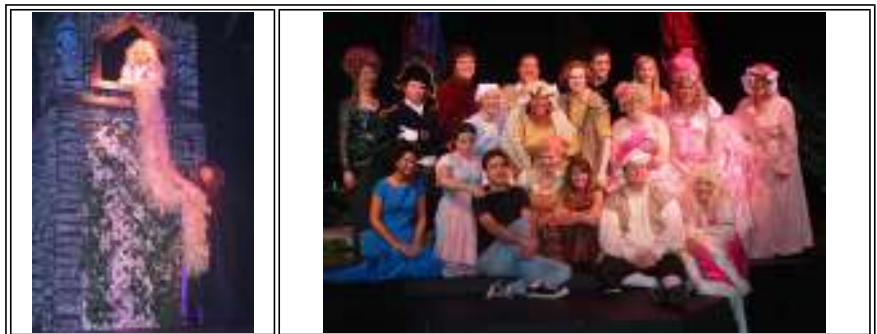
While this is not a joint production between Theatre Tulsa and Tulsa Opera, the cross-over of talent between the opera and community theatre subcultures in Tulsa is an important step in strengthening the arts in our great community: whether you are on the side of Opera or Community Theatre or anywhere in between.

Theatre Tulsa is a proud member of the Tulsa Area Community Theatre Alliance, the Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa, and the Oklahoma Community Theatre Association.

This production made possible by grants from the Tulsa Performing Arts Center Trust, the Oklahoma Arts Council, the Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa, The George Kaiser Family Foundation and all the proud sponsors of Theatre Tulsa.

OCTA AND NEW DIRECTORS MAKE M.L.T. DREAMS COME TRUE

By Coni Wetz, Executive Director of Muskogee Little Theatre



Last February, I was forwarded an e-mail from Martha Cherbini. It was an e-mail that Suzanne Boles had forwarded to Martha from Clayton Guiltner who had contacted OCTA to see if they could assist him in lining up a summer "gig" directing a production. Martha knew that Muskogee Little Theatre was in the process of director selection and so she forwarded the e-mail to me. The prospect of a young, energetic, professional director for our challenging summer production of "Into The Woods" was intriguing. After receiving Clay's resume and a few phone and e-mail conversations, M.L.T.'s board of directors decided to hire him. At about the same time, I was contacted by Curtis Timmons a music director who lived in Broken Arrow. Curt had done music direction for "Into The Woods" a couple of times in the past and, as it is one of his favorite musicals, was interested in it again. We immediately added Curt to the production team.

As with most community theatres, our summer musical is not only our season opener, but the largest production of the year. Any fears that MLT had about the

unknown of a new director quickly vanished as production began. Cast and crew gave the newcomers rave reviews and MLT volunteers were able to learn many new set building and lighting techniques. Clay not only served as director, but was the set designer and lighting designer. He worked every morning on the set and enlisted his lovely wife, Erin, as costume designer. Erin went to our costume closet and took various costume pieces and magically turned them into wonderful period pieces for this show. The show was a huge hit! Six sold-out performances and rave reviews from our audiences.

So, thanks, OCTA for your wonderful lead and thanks to the MLT board for taking a chance on some new directors. Sometimes wishes come true and don't have negative consequences as they do in "Into The Woods".
