

Theatre Newsletter

A publication for our vauled theatre patrons

Volume 3 , No. 5

Theatre USA's 2004- 2005 Season

THE ILLUSION

by Pierre Corneille and
freely adapted by Tony Kushner
September 30 - October 4, 2004

Freely adapted it is, in the best sense. *THE ILLUSION*'s story is a simple one about a rather flinty, regretful father who is trying to find the son he banished 15 years earlier. He enlists the help of a wizard - a chemist of emotions - and his sprite. Traveling to the cave where the wizard and his sprite live, he seeks the wizard's help.

The wizard shows the father a series of three visions of his son's life during that 15 year period. The wizard says "you can look at his life but you can't change it". Here he witnesses sword fights and sorcery, trysts and teases, as the characters change from scene to scene and there is a twist to the ending. *The Illusion* takes us into territory on which theatre thrives: fantasy, witchcraft, transcending time and place. It is a thorough delight.

THE LARAMIE PROJECT

by Moises Kaufman and
Tectonic Theater Project
Nov. 12 - 14 & 19 - 21, 2004

On October 7, 1998, a young gay man was discovered bound to a fence in the hills outside Laramie Wyoming, savagely beaten and left to die in an act of brutality and hate that shocked the nation. Matthew Shepard's death became a national symbol of intolerance, but for the people of Laramie the event became deeply personal, and it is their voices we hear in this stunningly effective

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BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS: LEFT TO RIGHT, DANIELL NORWOOD, NICOLE TELHIARD, JARED PEREGOY, NICHOLE DREW, & DAVID MIMS.

usual awards, Our special "Angel Award" was given to Mary Parker & Red Barn Antique Mall (419 Dauphin Island Parkway). Mary loaned us the furniture and many of the props for both *Brighton Beach Memoirs* & *A Raisin in the Sun*.

There was a tie for the Best Actor Award with awards going to Jared Peregoy (Senior) as Eugene Jerome in *Brighton Beach Memoirs* & Robert Wells III (Senior) as Walter Lee Younger in *Raisin in the Sun*.



THE RELUCTANT DRAGON: RIGHT TO LEFT, JAMEEL LEWIS, ROBERT TUCKER (BEHIND DAVID), DAVID MIMS, MEGHANE DUSTERHOFF, KATIE VICKERS, JAMIE ENGLEHART, JENNIFER BRONTRAGER (BEHIND JAMIE), MAURA ODOM (BEHIND THE DRAGON), & THE DRAGON (PAUL THOMAS)

THE 2003 - 2004 THEATRE USA AWARDS

Celebrating artistic achievements, the Dramatic Arts Department gathered this year at Crockmier's Restaurant for our annual Theatre USA Awards banquet. Special thanks go to Cinda Lou Freeman who helped arrange our banquet (and then waited tables as well) and did a great job.

The Best Actress was given to Natasha Tucker (Senior) for her portrayal of Ruth Younger in *Raisin in the Sun*.

Kenny Kudulis (Senior) received the Best Design Award for his scenic design for *The Reluctant Dragon*. (Kenny's *Reluctant Dragon* design also placed second at the Regional American College Festival this year completing against both undergraduates and graduate students from the major universities in the Southeast.)

Best Stage Manager went to David Mims (Senior). David's leadership and organizational skills kept *The Comedy of Errors* running error free.

The Best Costume Shop Award went to Jessica Allison (Senior) this year. Jessica spent

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Join us in London

Theatre USA, "across the pond, for a London Winter Program." (December 28, 2004 - Jan 8, 2005). We're offering a new theatre adventure to students and friends of our department. Our university is affiliated with the **Cooperative Center for Study Abroad** (a consortium of 23 colleges and universities with study-abroad programs and internships).

"I've put together a 10 day stay at a 4 star London hotel (The Washington Mayfair Hotel, overlooking Grosvenor's Square in the central part of the city), with an opportunity to see theatre productions there. The trip can either carry university credit, or be taken by "participants" from our community" Van Dyke Said.

The trip is called, "**Curtaains Up & Lights a'Glow.**" We will sample performances chosen for their ability to show London's theatrical depth and spark. The major emphasis will be on West End "commercial" theatre, but visits to national subsidized companies and major fringe theatres will also be included. Guest speakers from the industry will discuss their current projects. Visit "the Restored Glove" as one part of our classroom. The scripts for the plays seen will be our chosen "texts," and London itself will be our classroom.

The cost of the London Winter Program is \$2895. This includes health insurance, round-trip transportation from designated cities, accommodations, daily breakfast, program excursions, plays, airport transfers and London Travelcard (which gives subway and bus passes).

Contact Lee Van Dyke with questions about deadlines for reservations, and visit the consortium website @www.ccsa.cc.



Washington Mayfair Hotel

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the last four years working in the costume shop, her hard work and devotion contributed to her winning this award.

Bonnie Woolley (Senior) & April Ortiz (Senior) received the Best Scene Shop Award. Both spent many hours this years acquiring the numerous and sometimes hard to find props for all the shows during this past year. They also contributed by to helping build, paint and running our productions this past season.

With a 3.87 GPA Danielle Norwood (Senior) was the recipient of the Best Academics Award. We are very proud of her academic accomplishments.

The Danny Conway Award is given each year in memory of former student Danny Conway. This award goes to an upper level student who exhibits the same kind of acting talent and dedication to theatre that Danny had before his untimely death in a car accident in 1984. This year Jamie Englehart was the recipient of the award. Along with a plaque, Jamie received a check to assist her in her future endeavors. Jamie is working this summer at The Berkshire Theatre Festival in Stockbridge, MA. and then moving to Little Rock, Arkansas, to join the costume staff at Arkansas Repertory Theatre.

The Gerrells-Jackson Award is a cash award given to the student who has at least 2 semesters of studies at USA, is in the top 10 drama students by GPA, and has an outstanding list of achievements with the department. Receiving the Award this years was David Mims. Having graduated this spring, David is spending the summer working as a carpenter for Heritage Repertory in Virginia and then will be joining the construction staff of Arkansas Repertory Theatre in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Special Achievement Awards were given this year to Jean Parker (Senior) & Jameel Lewis (Senior) for their work as directors for our Studio Theatre Productions. Jean directed *How I Learned to Drive* while Jemeel directed *Like Moles Like Rats*. If you had the chance to see either or both of these shows, them you can appreciate the hard work and effort the they spent on creating excellent productions.

SPECIAL PREVIEW

MRS. SALLY GREEN, DAUGHTER OF JOHN W. LAIDLAW, HAS COMMISSIONED "CELEBRATING THE ARTS" A SCULPTOR CREATED BY ROSALIND COOK, (TULSA, OKLAHOMA) TO GRACE THE ENTRANCE OF THE JOHN W. LAIDLAW PERFORMING ACTS CENTER. THE STATUE TO BE FORMALLY DEDICATED THIS FALL.



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theater piece.

Moisés Kaufman and fellow members of the Tectonic Theater Project made six trips to Laramie over the course of a year and a half in the aftermath of the beating and conducted more than 200 interviews with people of the town. From these interviews as well as their own experiences, Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater members have constructed a deeply moving theatrical experience.

THE COVER OF LIFE by R.T. Robinson
February 17 - 21, 2004

Tood, Weetsie, and Sybill are brides in rural Louisiana in 1943; each married to a Cliffert brother. The men have gone off to war, and a local newspaper story about these brave young wives keeping the homefires burning comes to the attention of Henry Luce, the owner and editor of LIFE Magazine. He decides that their story belongs on the cover of LIFE. Kate Miller is assigned to write the story. Kate spends a week with the Cliffert women. This powerful play evokes the attitudes of those times in a fresh and daring manner.

BIG RIVER by Roger Miller
April 15 - 16 & 21 - 24, 2005.

This tale of adventure and self-discovery begins on a raft on the Mississippi River in the 1840s, where Huck, escaping from his drunken father, meets up with Jim, a runaway slave. The story of their journey downstream is an American classic that captures the rhythms, sounds and spirit of life on the big river.

The musical numbers include "Do You Want to Go To Heaven," "Waiting for the Light To Shine," "Hand for the Hog," "Muddy Water," "When the Sun Goes Down in the South" and "Worlds Apart."

Big River opened on Broadway at the Eugene O'Neill Theater on April 25, 1985. The show was a smash hit! It ran for 1,005 performances and won seven Tony awards. *Big River* was revised on Broadway this past year, adding two more Tony nominations to its original seven.



A RAISIN IN THE SUN: NATASHA TUCKER & ROBERT WELLS III

WATCH YOUR MAIL
for Season Subscription
Information and New
Bonus Features.

No Children's Show this years.

You may have noticed the lack of our annual children's production in the 2004 - 2005 season. No one regrets this change more than we do. Why the change? To put it simply, we have no place to perform. We need a theatre seating at least 800 and dates for at least 10 performances to accommodate the school children that attend. There are only 4 theaters in the area that meet these requirements, USA Wright's, closed indefinitely pending the sale of the property. The Saenger Theatre, will be closed till 2005 for needed renovations, The Civic Center, is not available and involves additional costs and Murphy High School proved unavailable at the times we needed. We regret the necessary "hiatus" for the current academic year and our Children's Production.



THE COMEDY OF ERRORS: LEFT TO RIGHT, JAMIE ENGLEHART, JAMIE LYNN BARBOUR, DAVID PEDEN, NICHOLAS YOHN, JEAN GALLOWAY, & JENIFER BORNTTRAGER.

2004 - 2005 Scholarship & Assistantship Announced

The Department of Dramatic Arts has awarded over \$20,000.00 in Scholarships and Assistantships to deserving students for the 2004 - 2005 academic year.

Scholarships ranging from \$500.00 to \$1000.00 per semester are made possible by the John W. Laidlaw Endowment. The scholarship is talent based and given to student who have auditioned and have at least a 3.0 GPA. Those receiving Laidlaw Acting Scholarships include: Zebulon Brown, Leah DeButts, Camryn Duff, Courtney Milligan, Michael Waldron & Crystal Williams.

Assistantships provided \$1000.00 per semester to each student in return for their work in either the scene shop or costume shop. To qualify a student must have at least a 2.5 GPA and be willing to work in one of the shops. Those receiving assistantships this year include: Sean Alexander, Lori Chavers, Nichole Drew, Camryn Duff, Robert Edmond, Mandy Murphy, Maura Odom, Rhett Wakeman & Michael Waldron.

In today's world of escalating expenses in higher education, Scholarships make it possible for many worthy students to achieve their goals. If you are interested in making a donation to our scholarship program or if you know a talented incoming student who may need financial aid please contact our office at 460-6305.





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