

NETC News

volume 14 number 3 summer 2005

A Quarterly
Publication of the
New England Theater
Conference, Inc.

Vanya in Vermont: A Classic Adapted to the Community

by Kathryn Blume

Artistic Associate, Vermont Stage Company

"It deeply reverberates within my own well of being and rubs up against all the doubt, uncertainty, deep cynicism and, intermittent, hope."

—Audience respondent

In March, 2005, Vermont Stage Company presented the world premiere of *Vanya/Vermont*, my adaptation of Anton Chekhov's classic play *Uncle Vanya*, updated and set in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

Vanya/Vermont came about when my longtime friend and collaborator Jason Jacobs called me with an idea. He was in the directing program at Columbia, and they'd just finished a big section on Chekhov. He'd been struck by how much the characters in *Uncle Vanya* and their passions and circumstances reminded him of what he'd seen on his visits to Vermont, and thought it might be interesting to do some kind of Vermont-based adaptation of the play.

We discussed the idea of using a pre-existing translation and just creating a Vermont-themed design, but then we started talking about what I've come to call a "cultural translation." We would keep the basic framework of the play intact—the characters, the actions, the storyline—but update the text so that it would specifically reflect life in modern day Vermont. We felt that a cultural translation would be more relevant to VSC's

continues on page 2

Barbara Horrigan, 1915–2005 NETC College of Fellows

Mid blossoms and vernal greenery, with the sound of poetry and birdsong, Barbara Horrigan, member of the NETC College of Fellows and 72-year veteran of Arlington Friends of the Drama, was laid to rest on Saturday, May 14, at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, MA.



Barbara Horrigan

This dynamic and perpetually glamorous colleague lost her long battle with cancer on Monday, May 9, at VNA Hospice House in Reading. A lifelong resident of Arlington, in March she celebrated her 90th birthday in the company of over 50 friends and relatives.

Following the simple graveside ceremony at Mount Auburn, many of Barbara's friends, relatives and associates had the opportunity to exchange memories at lunch at AFD. We at NETC all remember her many workshops on stage makeup, and, most of all, her constant presence as a welcoming hostess at the registration desks for conventions and auditions.

To those who were not able to attend the service, as we go to press, NETC NEWS invites you to share anecdotes and photos of this remarkable presence in our lives. We shall devote a generous section of the next issue to the publications of tributes. Please send comments (Word attachment) and photographs (jpeg) to ashea@worchester.edu.

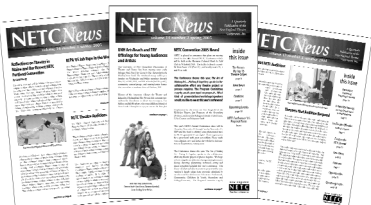
inside this issue

The Forum:
The Stage is
A Holy Place
page 6

Opportunities
page 3

Ovations
page 4

Upcoming Events
page 8



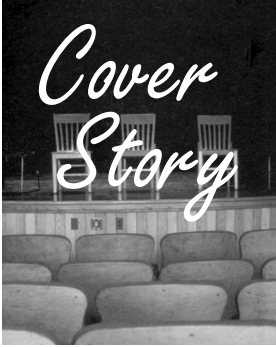
NETC NEWS: CALL FOR ARTICLES!

We are seeking fun, informative, and insightful articles about recent or upcoming events in the New England theatre community.

Contact Ann Marie Shea at ashea@worchester.edu, call 617-424-9275, or visit us on the web at www.NETCOnline.org!

Deadline for upcoming issue: August 1, 2005

new england
NETC
theatre conference



Vanya in Vermont

continued from page 1

audiences, and speak directly to a number of issues currently facing the Vermont community.

We started imagining who Chekhov's characters would be in the 21st century. For example, we decided that Vanya, now John Peterson (but nicknamed "Vanya" by his brother-in-law), would be a back-to-the-lander running an organic farm built from what was once his family's vacation property.



Waffles (Bob Nuner) joking around with Sonya (Kathryn Blume)

John lives with his political activist mother, Marina (a combination of the mother and the nurse from the original play), and his niece Sonya, who chose to come work on the farm after her mother died.

Astrov, now Mike Astor, is still a country doctor with a passion for environmentalism, but instead of planting trees, he runs a non-profit dedicated to preserving open space and the family farm.

It didn't work to keep Serebriakov a professor, since academics rarely receive the kind of fame and notoriety (particularly coupled with his astonishing lack of talent and intellect) that they did in the 19th century. So, he morphed into Richard Alexander, a fiction writer with a couple serious novels in his past, and a load of paperback bodice-rippers dragging down his once-lofty reputation. His wife, Ellen, is a former singer who has chosen a life as a trophy wife (and part-time nursemaid) over pursuing her own career. They come to live on the farm after his career takes a nose-dive, and they lose their rent-controlled apartment in New York.

To round out the cast, we kept Waffles nicknamed Waffles ("It's all I'd eat 'til I was eight), but turned him from a Russian peasant into George Giroux, an old-time Vermonter whose aunt sold the farm to the Peterson family before high-tailing it to Florida with her cats.



Marina (Carolyn Gordon) listens to Michael's story of losing a patient

Once we had all the characters in place, we went back to the play to look at the arc of the story, and tried consciously to nail down what we thought were the major dramatic events. This was important, because in spite of some improvisational writing on my part, we weren't trying to change the play, just remodel it, and we wanted to keep the fundamental structure intact.

The process was a great deal of fun for me, particularly figuring out what the modern cultural parallels would be. Vodka became Otter Creek beer, Tolstoy became Vermont novelist Chris Bohjalian (whose best-selling novel *Midwives* was adapted into a play by Vermont Stage Company playwright Dana Yeaton). Vanya's talk of mermaids and river gods turned into *Star Trek* references.

The most powerful parallels for me came out of Astor's environmentalism. In the original play, Astrov talks about his work fighting ecological damage from deforestation and the subsequent cultural decline. Vermont is facing very similar issues as once-numerous family farms gives way to population growth, strip malls, housing developments, and rising land prices. People are very concerned about maintaining the small, community-based character of the state, and we thought these themes would resonate with particular strength.

Specific as the Vermont references were, though, we felt that they really just provided a backdrop for the larger story of people looking for love, for happiness, for meaning in their lives. After all, John started the farm with a purpose:

JOHN: I came up running on passion and anger, a giant screw you to modern industrial everything. My whole act of living was gonna be enough to...

ELLEN: Change the world?

JOHN: Something like that.

Richard is trying to recover the life he'd built:

RICHARD: One works, hard. Word after word. Page upon page. Story upon story. One publishes and makes appearances and becomes a part of

Meeting House Theatre Lab Seeks New Works

by Pauline Angione

Meeting House Theater Lab (MHTL), a program of Schoodic Arts For All, is soliciting new works by New England playwrights for informal and staged readings, as well as possible full production at Hammond Hall in Winter Harbor, Maine.

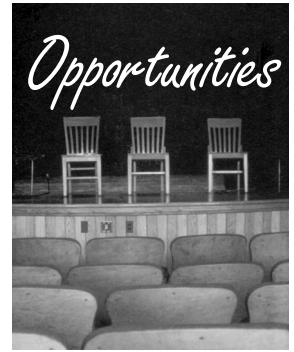
MHTL is a small ensemble interested in a collaborative way of producing performance art, with a strong desire to bring new voices and new works to Downeast audiences. Plays can be of any length, on any subject and will all be read, critiqued (if the author wishes) and returned in original condition.

Information regarding previous performances can be found at: www.schoodicarts.org. Click on Meetinghouse Theatre Lab.

Written submission may be:

- Mailed to: Mellie Anderson, P.O. Box 95
Gouldsboro, ME 04607
- Or emailed (Microsoft Word or HTML only, please) to: mhtl@schoodicarts.org

For questions contact: mellie@schoodicarts.org



Vanya in Vermont

continued from previous page

something, creates something, a life, bigger than oneself. A public life. One is known. And read. Known.

Even Astor struggles with the choices he's made:

MICHAEL: What have I accomplished? All that work, everything I do... it does provide a sense of... purpose, certainly. And structure. So, my life—in and of itself—is... it's fine. But structure—even purpose—they're not... joy.

The articulation of those struggles, I think, is where this production found its power.

Jason read an essay by a Russian director asking why anyone would produce *Uncle Vanya* anymore. His answer was that every night, someone in the audience is contemplating suicide. And that's why we do the play. To save that person's life.

I know many people who have cocooned themselves these days, in reaction to a grim and divisive political and economic climate. Many others have given up on—or at least grown bitter in—the pursuit of their craft, their passions. We couldn't give them solutions with *Vanya/Vermont*, but we could at least let them know they're not alone, and give them some sense that what they choose to do with their lives has inherent value in the doing.

JOHN: What am I doing? Why am I doing this?

SONYA: Oh, John. I'm sorry. What can we do? I don't know what we can do but... accept. This is our life. Long days. A lot of hard work. Lonely nights. We can stop fighting it. Wishing

it were different. Because it isn't. I think this is it. I don't think we get to win any awards for our vision, our contributions. It's just what we do. It's who we are. The crops. The animals. The work. The land. Being a part of all this. That's the award...

One doesn't often get to learn the effect one's work has had on an audience (especially when you're trying to save their lives), but after *Vanya/Vermont* opened, we were graced with a letter from an architect who talked about how much the play had touched him:

"It deeply reverberates within my own well of being and rubs up against all the doubt, uncertainty, deep cynicism and, intermittent, hope."

He felt that the piece was a "communication that shows us our situation is not unique or a failure; it is actually the human condition and it is the continual striving that creates meaning, place and soul."

On a final note, I should add that we also tried to make the play as funny as possible.

JOHN: I mean most of the eligible women around here look like ol' Waffles after a bender.

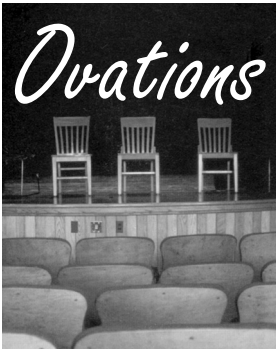
WAFFLES: Ha. You got that right. Doc, you ever heard the best pick-up line around here?

MICHAEL: No.

WAFFLES: Nice tooth.

MICHAEL: I think I've used that.

Stanislavski, Chekhov's first director, interpreted the plays as heavy dramas, and from these early productions comes a lasting cliché of angst-ridden Russians. Chekhov saw his plays as comedies, and I think he would be happy to see us reclaim the comic spirit of his work.



First Improv-O-Rama a Big Success!

by Linda Potter, NETC Secondary Chair

On March 19th, 2005, 62 high school students and their teachers from throughout Massachusetts gathered at Acton-Boxborough High Regional School in Acton, MA for the first high school Improv-o-Rama. The goal of Improv-O-Rama was to introduce high school students to the techniques of improvisation in theater. This event was the brainchild of Secondary Division Chair Linda Potter, Children's Division Board Member Ron Jones, and graphic designer and producer Susan Williams. Jeanie Furlan, Children's Division board member, was also active in organizing the day.

Students arrived at 9:30 a.m. The day began with a spectacular performance by the instructors: Ron Jones, Mat Gagne, and Matt McLaughlin, nationally known professional actors and teachers of improvisation. Beginning and advanced classes were held throughout the morning and afternoon. The beginning level instruction included introduction to improvisation, scene study, characterization, short form improvisation, and games. Advanced classes included long form improvisation and musical improvisation. The workshop concluded at 5:00 p.m. with a showcase from each class. The students were upbeat and supportive of one another as they took their turns on stage.

Feedback on the event was extremely positive. Students and teachers who attended the session rated the sessions

both verbally and more formally in written format as extremely valuable and relevant to their performance and teaching situations. A majority of the participants would like to attend another event like this.

The Boston Globe covered the Impro-O-Rama with a feature article and photo in the Northwest Weekly.

The expenses for the event were covered by the \$25 participation fee from each student. NETC sponsored the event by providing a mailing list and the initial seed money to market the program, and garnered a small profit from it as well.

The chairs of the first Improv-O-Rama believe that this event could be expanded into an annual gathering with the possibility of creating a league with a competition similar to the annual Drama Guild competition. If there is sufficient interest, a similar event and a teacher-training workshop could be offered at the annual NETC convention in November.

If you have any interest in participating in such an event either at the conference or as a mini conference during the year, or would be willing to help organize such an event, please e-mail Secondary Division Chair Linda Potter PotterLL@aol.com.

Message from the President

by Tom Mikotowicz, President, NETC Board of Directors

The business activity of NETC is heating up for the summertime! First of all, we are working on the November convention that will be held in Wakefield, MA, at the Sheridan Hotel. Our co-chairs Maryann Swift, Tim Fitzgerald, and Celia Couture are busy sorting through budgets, proposals, and all of the other many bits of organizational bits that are required. Nevertheless, they seem to be creating an exciting and full schedule of workshops, panels, and presentations that will offer the most to conference attendees. Additionally, there will be several famous theatrical personages offering workshops and panels to our membership. So, don't miss out on our convention, it will have a lot to offer.

Another bit of business that has occurred is that we are in the process of hiring a new office manager! Hank Zappala announced his resignation so that he can redirect his energies to other parts of his life, understandably. Hank will stay on as a volunteer so that we do not lose his expertise entirely. Although we deeply regret losing Hank, who did an outstanding job of organizing the office and keeping NETC on track financially, this change will be a new phase in NETC's long history. We

look forward to finding the talented person who will be our manager, promoter, and contact person, among other things. Our executive committee will interview prospective candidates in late May and early June.

Finally, we are happy to announce that we are adding a couple of new board members. Burgess Clark, Education Director at the North Shore Music Theatre will be joining the Professional Division, and Pamela DiPasquale, Artistic Director of the Children's Theatre of Maine will be joining the Youth and Children's Division. We are also adding to the rest of the board as the weeks continue. In addition, we are preparing the slate of officers for the election of the new board this summer.

There are always vacancies on the board. So, if you or anyone you know wants to get involved, please contact our main office. We can always use new volunteers, and, I might add, we have lots of fun doing what we do.

In closing, let me express the sentiments of NETC toward the passing of one our own distinguished members, Barbara Horrigan. Barbara was a longtime NETC volunteer, who recently helped out at the conventions and auditions at the front desk. She was a true theatre person, one with a generous heart, a quick wit, and dry sense of humor. She will be dearly missed by all of us.

STAGE *directions*®

magazine

www.stage-directions.com

Whether you are a producer, house manager, lighting technician or set designer, this is one magazine you need to be reading every month.

EACH ISSUE BRINGS YOU:

LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT

popular lighting trends, hot lighting products, theater case studies and interviews with top lighting designers

MUSICAL STAGES

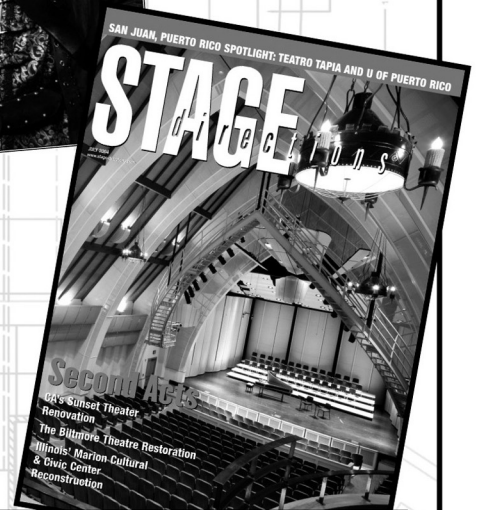
information on music in theater, from background music to finding lesser known musicals to produce

OFF THE SHELF

book, CD and video reviews

SCENE SHOP

interviews with designers and technicians on their sets in different performances

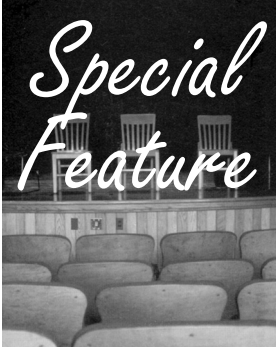


YES! start my subscription NOW!

send me a full year [12 great issues] of

STAGE DIRECTIONS® for only **\$19.95.**

Subscribe online at www.stage-directions.com.



“The Forum” Eleventh Edition:

by *Suzanne M. Ramczyk, Ph.D.*

Professor of Theatre Arts, Bridgewater State College and NETC Executive Secretary

This time around, I am thrilled to feature some very special observations about life in the art of theatre as expressed by Sally Nutt, President of the New Hampshire Community Theatre Association. Sally so eloquently expresses the magic and wonder that brought her to the stage and that has kept her involved in theatre throughout her life—sentiment that so many of us will realize we share if we take the time to stop and really reflect on what it is that has made us commit our

lives to this art form. Additionally, her recognition that theatre is indeed “holy” is a message in constant need of reaffirmation, with Jerzy Grotowski (for one) no longer with us. And how much could all theatre practitioners (Educational through Community and Professional) gain from time well spent in the wonderful inspirational writings of Peter Brook, particularly those focused on “The Holy Theatre.”

*In this edition of
the Forum*

“The Stage is a Holy Place”

by *Sally Nutt*

President, New Hampshire Community Theatre Association

The stage is a holy place for me.

I’ve sensed this for a long time, but have rarely given the feeling words. I feared that people might think I’m a little flaky, roll their eyes, or even laugh. It’s much more acceptable to speak of being “bitten by the theatre bug.” That’s how my family explains—and so they reluctantly accept—why I spend much of my free waking life involved with a show. And to my friends and acquaintances, I explain why I do what I do without a pause, easily ticking off theatre’s life-enhancing qualities and waxing poetic about stage magic. But holy? Oh please.

My reluctance to speak about the sacred sense of the stage was also because I couldn’t explain it. I didn’t understand it. I just knew I felt it, and had since my childhood.

My first stage experience was in 1963 when my third-grade teacher, Mrs. Rittman, cast me as the star of the school Arbor Day play. I loved that play. I loved my costume (a new blue, smocked dress) and pretending with my friends (on official school time no less.) I loved having the first line (“Oh Mother, I can’t think of a thing to write”) and being the center of attention. But it was awe that struck me when during our one, 20-minute performance I noticed something: quiet. My rowdy schoolmates—seated on hard benches in our echoing, multi-purpose room watching a less-than-exciting play about trees—were quiet. For a flash in time, everyone in the room was really paying attention to us on stage. And it was much cooler than simply being the center of attention.

Since that Arbor Day long ago, awe has overcome me in many theatres, no matter what my role: actor, part of the crew, or member of the audience. It happens whenever the audience laughs. Cries. Gasps. Breaks into spontaneous applause during the course of the action on stage. And most affecting of all, shares an intense quiet.

It happens when the members of an audience commune for a moment in time because the action on stage draws them in together.

This communion among strangers grows more amazing to me as I grow older and continue to learn how difficult it is to reach others. If I’ve grown wiser in my middle age, it’s realizing that the only person I can count on changing is myself. Despite our best intentions, it is so difficult to change anyone, even superficially. It’s tough to touch even the most open-minded of people in any profound way. So how extraordinary that a diverse group of strangers can be transported together to a common place in time via a group of actors sharing a story on a stage.

What’s funny to me is that after years of trying to understand this, and feeling a little odd about expressing it, I’m discovering that I’m not alone in this feeling. While recently exploring the website of the American Association of Community Theatre (AACT), I stumbled onto a page of quotes. I found others expressing my awe, my sense of the sacred, but much more eloquently than I ever could:

The Theatre Cooperative Presents *Forget Herostratus!*

by Cheryl Singleton

On July 21, 356 BCE a young man named Herostratus, in order to secure his immortal fame, burned down the great temple of Artemis at Ephesus. Completed in about 550 BCE, the Temple was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, along with the likes of the Pyramids. It was constructed mostly of marble and was twice as large as the Parthenon in Athens. For two centuries, the Temple had drawn tourists and pilgrims to Ephesus. Far from trying to conceal his crime, Herostratus claimed credit. He hungered for fame and believed that only an act of such destructive proportions would ensure that his name would never be forgotten. The authorities tried to sentence the vain young man to a life of obscurity by threatening to execute anyone who spoke his name.

On May 20, 2005 CE, The Theatre Cooperative opened its production of *Forget Herostratus!*, a satirical tragicomedy written by Grigory Gorin in Soviet Russia, and adapted for the Coop by director Vladimir Zelevinsky. The play follows the machinations of Herostratus as he sells his memoirs, wins over the appreciation of the mob, and even seduces the Lady of Ephesus. Meanwhile, the upright Judge and an onlooker from the future engage in a seemingly vain attempt at justice—to erase Herostratus' name from history.

Playwright Grigory Gorin was born in Moscow in 1940. He graduated from a medical institute and worked as an ambulance doctor before turning to writing. Due to their biting satire, his plays had to fight their way to the Soviet stage, and several did not appear in the Russian theatre at all until the end of the Soviet regime, when they adorned the repertoire of leading Russian theatres. He died in Moscow in June 2000.

Vladimir Zelevinsky studied playwriting at MIT. Upon graduation he directed the acclaimed production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*. He has worked as a freelance art critic for the *New York Times* and covered the Boston-area theatre scene for the *Boston Globe*. His original plays and adaptations have been staged throughout Massachusetts as well as in New Jersey.

The cast features Kortney Adams (Chorus), Peter Brown (Tissaphernes), Dan Cozzens (Herostratus), Susan Gross (Clementina), Dan Liston (Cleon), Thomas Martin (Barber), John McClain (Chryssippus and Stonecutter), and Paul Shafer (Jailer).

The production runs through June 11, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm., Sunday, June 5, at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$20.00, general admission, with a 50% discount for military personnel. On May 21, May 29 and June 5 the company offers a special "Pay-What-You-Can" admission policy. Buy discounted tickets online at www.theatrecoop.org, or make reservations by calling the theatre at 617-625-1300.



The Stage is a Holy Place

continued from previous page

"It is not theatre that is indispensable, but something quite different: to cross the frontiers between you and me."

—Polish director Jerry Grotowski

"The theater is a communal event, church. The playwright constructs a mass to be performed for a lot of people. She writes a prayer, which is just the longings of one heart."

—1983 Pulitzer Prizewinning playwright
Marsha Norman

"You can throw away the privilege of acting, but that would be such a shame. The tribe has elected you to tell its story. You are the shaman/healer, that's what the storyteller is, and I think it's important for actors to appreciate that. Too often actors think it's all about them, when in reality it's all about the audience being able to recognize themselves in you."

—Actor Ben Kingsley

"I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being."

—Oscar Wilde

"God comes to us in theater [in] the way we communicate with each other, whether it be a symphony orchestra, or a wonderful ballet, or a beautiful painting, or a play. It's a way of expressing our humanity."

—Actor Julie Harris

So now I understand better why I revere the theatre. Why it is that when my foot hits a stage, for a nanosecond my body gasps. Why I'm annoyed when a person in the audience disrespectfully puts his feet up on the seat in front of him. Why a response from the audience is so meaningful and such a high. The stage can be anywhere an actor and audience make themselves vulnerable to each other, willing to suspend their disbelief, and come together emotionally or intellectually in a moment. Even if only for a moment, I think that is a profoundly good thing. Mystical and sacred.

Holy.



North Shore Music Theatre Celebrates 50 Years

by Mike Ceceri

North Shore Music Theatre in Beverly, MA. celebrated 50 exceptional years with special presentations prior to Opening Night of *Thoroughly Modern Millie* on Thursday, April 28th. Patrice Tierney, wife of Congressman John Tierney, read an excerpt from a Congressional Record which recognized the “half-century milestone for the North Shore Music Theatre, which has become one of the anchors of arts and culture in our region.” Beverly City Council President Paul Guanci presented a Proclamation on behalf of Mayor William Scanlon to NSMT Executive Producer and Artistic Director Jon Kimbell proclaiming 2005 as the Year of North Shore Music Theatre.

On May 31, the company opened its run of *Fame*, the musical. Running through June 19, this production was conceived and designed for NSMT’s unique in-the-round stage, and features a talented cast of 32 performers including 12 local young artists.

Fame began as an Academy Award-winning movie. Then it became an Emmy Award-winning TV series and finally, an international musical theater sensation created by David De Silva (Originator), Jose Fernandez (Book), Jacque Levy (Lyrics) and Steve Margoshes (Music). With its high-octane blend of youthful energy, hope and passion, *Fame* follows a group of gifted students through four grueling, exhilarating years at New York’s renowned High School for the Performing Arts.

“*Fame* captures America’s fascination with the creative spark,” explained NSMT Artistic Director and Executive Producer Jon Kimbell. “By looking at the creative process through the eyes of students, we all catch a glimpse of the sacrifices these young performers make in order to chase their dream. Together we will see what it takes to make great artists.”

The students of *Fame* will be played by Eric Anthony (Tyron), Julie Craig (Ensemble), Warren Freeman (Goody), Jenna Gavigan (Serena Katz), Jonathan Groff (Nick Piazza), Eric Hatch (Ensemble), Garrett Hawe (Ensemble), Kristie Kerwin (Ensemble), Nicole Mangi (Ensemble), Lynnette Marrero (Carmen Diaz), Dennis Moench (Schlomo Metzenbaum), Kathleen Nanni (Iris), Krystle N. Pyram (Mabel Washington), Vincent Rodriguez III (Ensemble), Ambere Rogers



Photo by Paul Lyden

Eleven young performers from the North Shore help bring *FAME* to life at North Shore Music Theatre May 31–June 19. Above: Alex DeLeo (North Reading), Chris Martel (Salem), Amanda Rodhe (Manchester), Molly Gachignard (Salem) Middle (l-r): Ashley Alexandra Fichera (Lawrence), Amy Sabean (Danvers), Melody Oleson (Marblehead) Alison Sabean (Danvers) Below (l-r): Peter Romagna (Burlington), Presilah Nuñez (Lynn), Kelly Buck (North Andover).

(Grace “Lambchops” Lamb) and Gerard Salvador (Joe Vegas).

Also featured in the cast will be Inga Ballard (Miss Sherman), Michael Brian Dunn (Mr. Meyers), Rosemary Loar (Miss Bell) and Rex Hays (Mr. Sheinkopf).

The 32 member ensemble will also showcase twelve local young artists representing ten North Shore communities; Kelly Buck (North Andover), Alex DeLeo (North Reading), Ashley Alexandra Fichera (Lawrence), Molly Gachignard (Salem), Jacob Liberman (Needham), Chris Martel (Salem), Presilah Nunez (Lynn), Melody Oleson (Marblehead), Amanda Rodhe (Manchester), Peter Romagna (Burlington), Alison Sabean (Danvers) and Amy Sabean (Danvers).

Fame marks the return of Director and Choreographer Richard Stafford. Mr. Stafford was the Director and Choreographer of NSMT’s smash hit productions of *Swing!* and *Cats*. His work has been seen around the country and around the world in directing and/or

continues on next page

North Shore Music Theatre

continued from previous page

choreographing productions of *Cats* along with *The Full Monty*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Oliver!*, *The Who's Tommy*, *Phantom*, *Evita*, *Oklahoma!*, *On the Town*, *Camelot*, *My Fair Lady*, *Sweeney Todd*, *She Loves Me*, *Grand Hotel* and *The Goodbye Girl*.

The creative team for *Fame* will be Andrew Graham (Musical Director), Jonathan Stahl (Associate Choreographer), Howard C. Jones (Scenic Design), Joanna E. Murphy (Costume Design), David Neville (Lighting Design), John A. Stone (Sound Design), Gerard Kelly (Hair & Wig Design), Bethany Ford (Production Stage Manager), Matt Schreiber (Casting).

Tickets for *Fame* are priced from \$63 to \$30. Performances are Tuesdays through Sundays. For show times, tickets and information log onto www.nsmt.org, call 978-232-7200, or visit the Box Office in person at 62 Dunham Rd. Beverly, MA 01915.

NSMT also offers related free events.

- On June 7, after the 7 p.m. performance, *Meet the Theatre*, a post show audience discussion with the artists;
- June 12: *Spotlight on History*, a free pre-show discussion focusing on historical issues related to the performance;
- June 16: *Out at the North Shore*, an evening for the Gay and Lesbian Community with a post show reception;
- June 18: *Meet the Theatre* after the 2pm performance, post-show audience discussion with the artists.

The 2005 musical season is sponsored by Comcast.

The summer children's series begins on June 25, 2005 (10am & 1pm) when the Pushcart Players present *Little Red Riding Hood and Other Stories*. NSMT's very own Youth Performance Academy presents Disney's *Mulan Junior* on June 1, 2005 (10am & 1pm).

The Russian/American Kids Circus On Stage will be presented July 15, 2005 (10am & 1pm). Hailing from Brooklyn, New York, this talented performance group gives a whole new meaning to the word "teamwork," whether flying through the air or leaping across a tightrope.

On July 22, 2005 (10am & 1pm) NSMT's Youth Performance Academy will take the stage again to present *Rapunzel*. *The Super Scientific Circus* rolls into town on July 29, 2005 (10am & 1pm) bringing boomerangs, bubbles, beach balls, bull whips, and magic to introduce the principles of science in a fun and interesting way.

Rounding out the series on Aug. 12, 2005 (10am & 1pm) will be the ever popular *Peter and the Wolf* presented by the Pushcart Players.

Single tickets are \$17, \$14 and \$11 (group rates available). There also 2 subscription packages available, four shows for \$55, \$45 and \$35; and six shows for \$78, \$60, and \$42. Tickets can be purchased via the website at www.nsmt.org, by calling the Box Office at 978-232-7200 or in person at 62 Dunham Road, Beverly, MA.



Redfeather Returns to Worcester Park for *Tempest*

Redfeather Theatre Company will stage its second season of Shakespeare at Green Hill Park in Worcester, MA, with a production of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, opening August 3. Performances are scheduled Wednesdays through Sundays, until August 14, with rain dates scheduled for Wednesday through Sunday the following week.

Under the direction of Redfeather Artistic Director Tim Smith, the cast includes Ann Marie Shea as Prospero, and Zofia Goszczynska from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts as Miranda. Whitney Cohen plays Ariel. Foothills favorite, Bill Taylor, will play Trinculo to Lindsay Flathers' Stephano. Caliban will be played by Anthony Cascio. Both Flathers and

Cascio are Fitchburg State College students, and both played the leads in *Subjects*, a one-act play by San Francisco writer Jody Handley, which premiered as part of the bill *A New Pair of Shorts* in May 19-29 at Redfeather's Second Stage venue at Foothills Theatre. (Shea's one-act play, *The M-Pill*, also debuted on that program.)

Redfeather Theatre Company is a group of artists dedicated to providing daring professional summer theatre to the Central Massachusetts region.

For further information call 508-675-2388, or go to redfeatherco@hotmail.com. Directions to Worcester's Green Hill Park may be found at www.redfeatherco.org.



KOFEST Announces Summer Season

by Sabrina Hamilton

Now in its 14th year in Amherst, MA, KOFEST has scheduled summer workshops on the theme of alternate existences, tradition vs. new identities. The workshops will be complemented by performances culminating in "World Puppet Week." All performances are accompanied by displays and post-performance discussions.

July 11–16: Biographical Theater, with Kathy Randels of Artspot Productions and Katie Pearl. Find the theatrical potential in the secret life of the person you have always wanted to perform, and explore your relationship to that person. Using techniques of the Obie Award winning *Nita & Zita* (see performance listing) creative team, participants will work in theatrical and visual arts mediums to create a biographical sketch of their favorite subject.

July 18–23: Storytelling, with Egyptian writer and storyteller Nora Amin. This workshop will concentrate on storytelling drawn from literary sources.

July 25–30: Clown, with Mark McKenna of Touchstone Theatre, will be an intense exploration of the sense of play, courage and skill needed to create a theatrical clown character. Mark McKenna is a graduate of the LeCoq School in Paris and is the Artistic Director of Touchstone Theatre in Bethlehem, PA.

August 1–6: Shadow Puppetry, bringing shadows into the light with Arlyn Award winner Wendy Morton. This workshop explores dramatic storytelling through shadows and light projections. Workshop participants should bring a poem or song containing shadow imagery. Wendy Morton, a master puppeteer based in San Francisco whose work has been funded by the Jim Henson Foundation, has been a frequent collaborator with Larry Reed's ShadowLight Productions.

Workshops will be held on the Amherst College and UMASS campuses and cost \$350. There is a \$40.00 materials fee for the Shadow Puppetry workshop. Optional room and board are available on the Amherst College campus for an additional fee. For further information, or to register, visit www.kofest.com, e-mail info@kofest.com, or call 413-427-6147.

The performance schedule opens with *Nita and Zita*, Friday through Sunday, July 15–17 at 8 p.m. Written and directed by Lisa D'Amour, *Nita and Zita* an intimate extravaganza about two visionary showgirls, sisters from the Jewish town of Baia Maire, Romania, who traveled through this country and beyond as "Nita and Zita, International Dancers." Featuring Katie Pearl as Zita and Kathy Randels as Nita, the show has a live original score by New Orleans jazz pianist Tom McDermott and DJ mixes by Greg Wildz, costumes by

Olivia Wildz, set design and assemblage by Shawn Hall, and video design by Maria Cataldo.

The multidisciplinary performance piece *Remains of Shadow* runs Friday through Sunday, July 22–24 at 8 p.m. Conceived/directed/choreographed by Naoko Maeshiba, and featuring Tatsuya Aoyagi, the performance illuminates the memory and history ingrained in the body that bridges two cultures: Japan and America.

From Cairo, Egypt, Nora Amin brings her multimedia production *Arab*, Friday through Sunday, July 29–31 at 8 p.m. The artist describes the piece as "an attempt to question definitions, break the rules and taboos, shift the borders between cultures and genres, and finally re-create the cultural identity of the artist through its live and artistic performance."

All of these performances will be held in Amherst College's Holden Theater.

Tickets are \$15 General Admission, and \$12 for Students and Seniors. A very limited number of \$6 Special Rush Tickets will be available 1 hour prior to curtain

World Puppet Week kicks off Friday, August 5th at 8 p.m. with a one-night performance of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* by Bertolt Brecht, performed by Ralph Lee's Mettawee River Company of New York. The production will incorporate masks, puppetry and costumes, with a live original musical score composed by Neal Kirkwood. Ralph Lee will design and direct the production, with costumes by Casey Compton.

Billed as an all-ages event, the performance will take place outdoors on the Amherst College Observatory Lawn off of Snell Street. No pets allowed. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for children. No reservations necessary.

On Saturday and Sunday, August 6 and 7 at 1 p.m. and 3p.m., *Boy in the Barrel* will be staged at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. Devised and directed by Miguel Romero, and freely based on Alexander Pushkin's Russian fairy tale *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*, the plot encompasses a swan with magic powers, a vengeful bumblebee, a golden hero, and a lady pirate. The production features table-top, rod, and shadow puppets in colorful Russian costumes and will be accompanied by rousing music and mock Russian sea chanties. Tickets for adults are \$7, for children \$5.

The box office for all productions opens July 11. Call 413-542-2277. For information prior to the opening of the box office call 413-427-6147, or visit www.kofest.com.

Vermont Theatre Announces Summer Offerings

by Ruth Ann Pattee

The musical, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, by Rupert Holmes, will open the summer 2005 season for Valley Players Theater of Waitsfield, VT. This wildly warm-hearted theatrical experience kicks off when the Music Hall Royale (a hilariously loony Victorian musical troupe) “puts on” its flamboyant rendition of an unfinished Dickens mystery. The story itself deals with John Jasper, a Jekyll-and-Hyde choirmaster who is quite madly in love with his music student, the fair Miss Rosa Bud. Miss Bud is, in turn, engaged to Jasper’s nephew, young Edwin Drood. Our title character disappears mysteriously one stormy Christmas Eve—but has Edwin Drood been murdered? And if so, then who dunnit? The giddy playfulness of this play-within-a-play draws the audience toward one of *Drood*’s most talked-about features, which allows the audience to vote on the solution as prelude to the most unusual and hilarious finale!

Running from June 24–26, July 1–3, 8 and 9 at 8 pm; and July 10 at 2 pm., the musical will be staged at the Valley Players Theater, Rte. 100, Waitsfield. Tickets are \$16 in advance; \$18 at the door. For reservations, call 802-583-1674; or e-mail valleyplayers@madriver.com. The company’s website is: www.valleyplayers.com. Please note: This show is rated PG-13. For more information, call Ruth Ann Pattee at 802-496-6318.

August 13 at 7:30 to 10 p.m. the Valley Players will sponsor a concert/dance featuring Jenni Johnson and the Jazz Junketeers, performing the best of blues, jazz,

funk pop and R&B. Both contemporary and old favorites like Norah Jones, Roberta Flack, Billie, Nat and Dinah are guaranteed to have you tapping your toes and dancing the night away. Tickets are \$22 in advance; \$25 at the door. Last year’s event was a sell-out, and even fewer tickets are available this year in order to provide more room for dancing, so early reservations are advised. For reservations, call 802-583-1674, or e-mail valleyplayers@madriver.com. For further information call Henry Erickson 802-496-4558.

Plans are already underway for Labor Day Weekend, Saturday, September 3, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, September 4, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. (rain or shine), at Kenyon’s Field, Rte 100, Waitsfield. The public is invited to enjoy the beautiful Mad River Valley and one of the best and oldest craft fairs in Vermont, celebrating its 34th Anniversary. This intimate Craft Fair boasts a great variety of juried crafts exhibited under a tent and in the open, wonderful food, live music by Yarina, a personal shopping service and free children’s activities. The fair is owned and operated by The Valley Players and your ticket is good for a discount on any Valley Players’ production. Cost: \$3 Admission good for both days and door prizes. Children under 12 are free.

For information, call Sugarbush Chamber of Commerce at 802-496-7907 or www.madrivercraftfair.com.



Nonsense at Harwich Junior Theatre

by Nina Schuessler

Harwich Winter Theatre, the Adult Resident Company at Harwich Junior Theatre, presents *Nonsense* May 19 through June 12, Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 PM, Sundays at 4 p.m. *Nonsense* is written by Dan Goggin, with music by Robert Wilder. Suzette Hutchinson directs and choreographs.

The zany premise is that Sister Julia Child of God unwittingly served some tainted vichyssoise soup. As a result the Little Sisters of Hoboken must stage a talent show to raise money for the burials of the remaining four dead sisters who are in the deep freeze at the convent. It may sound like a rather morbid premise but the result is an uplifting, heavenly wee slice of musical comedy.

Nonsense stars well known comediennes Jean Bates, Keely Sorenson, Kristen Martone, Bridget Williams and features Masa Dexter in her debut. Tickets are \$16 adult, \$14 senior citizens, and \$12 for under 21, and can be purchased at the box office at 508-432-2002 ext. 4 or at www.capetix.com or at TheaterMania at 866-811-4111.

Harwich Junior Theatre is located at 105 Division Street in West Harwich MA 02671. Further background on the company can be found at www.hjtcapecod.org.

Who's Who at NETC

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tom Mikotowicz, President, *University of Maine, Orono*
Russell Swift, Executive Vice President, *The Groton School*
Jim Quinn, Vice President for Administration and
Finance and Clerk of the Corporation, *Bridgewater
State College*
David Frieze, Vice President for Communication
and Development, *freelance writer, director, critic*
Suzanne Ramczyk, Executive Secretary,
Bridgewater State College
Hank Zappala, NETC Management, *Emerson College*
Linda Murphy Sutherland, Immediate Past President,
Huntington Theatre Company

DIVISION DIRECTORS

College/University Theatre Division

Dorisa Boggs, *Roger Williams University*
Ann Marie Shea, Chair, *Worcester State College, emerita*
Luke Sutherland, *Community College of Rhode Island*

Secondary School Theatre Division

Maureen Doucette, *Hopkinton Middle High School, NH*
Linda Potter, Chair, *Acton-Boxborough Regional Jr. & Sr.
High Schools*
Jeffrey Watts, *Lawrence High School*

Youth Theatre Division

Jeanie Furlan, *Acton-Boxborough Regional Jr. & Sr. High
Schools*
Ron Jones, *freelance actor/director*
Carol Korty, *playwright*

Professional Theatre Division

Robert Libbey, *The Grand, Ellsworth, ME*
Kevin Russell, *Arts Boston*

Community Theatre Division

Charles Emmons, *New Hampshire Community
Theatre Association*
Jennifer Howard, Chair, *Burlington Players, Inc.*
Sharon A. Wilcox, *Thomaston Opera House, CT*

Directors-At-Large

Tim Fitzgerald, *Wellesley Players*
Donna O'Bryant, *Actorsingers of Nashua, NH*

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Summer Theatre Auditions

Joseph Juliano, Jr., *Hamden Public Schools*

2005 Convention Planners

Maryann Swift, Chair, *Arlington Friends of the
Drama*
Celia Couture, *Arlington Friends of the Drama*
Jim Ferguson
Tim Fitzgerald, *Wellesley Players*

NETC/New England Theatre Journal

Stuart Hecht, *Boston College*

Long Range Strategic Plan

Kevin Russell, *Arts, Boston, Boston Theatre Works*

College of Fellows, Dean

Sigurd Jensen, *Southern CT State University,
retired*

Annual Excellence in Theatre Awards

Tim Fitzgerald, *Wellesley Players*

Moss Hart Awards

Maureen Doucette, *Hopkinton Middle High
School, NH*

John Gassner Memorial Playwriting Award

Steven Capra

Aurand Harris Memorial Playwriting Award

Jay DiPrima

Marie Phillips Service to NETC Award

Bevie Lord

Leonidas A. Nickole Theatre Educator of the Year Award

Ann Marie Shea, *Worcester State College, emerita*

Constitution and By-Laws

Sigurd Jensen, *Southern CT State University,
retired*

Nominating Chair

Russell Swift, *The Groton School*

NETC Newsletter

Ann Marie Shea, *Worcester State College, emerita*

AACT Liaison

Patricia White

KCACTF Region 1 Liaison

Wil Kilroy, *University of Southern Maine*

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT NO.
51259

NETC
PMB 502
198 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02116-4750
theatre conference
Return service requested

