

Behind the Scene

Volume 10, Issue 1
**Winter
2005**

Serving the Washington area since 1992

The Theatre Lab Gets A Home

It's a production thirteen years in the making and it's finally here! The Theatre Lab is thrilled to announce that in summer 2005 we will move all our classes, programs, and administrative offices to a centralized location for the first time in our history—to a space right in the heart of downtown DC, a half-block from the Gallery Place Metro and just steps from the MCI Center. The Theatre Lab has struck a wonderful deal with the Calvary Church to lease and build out permanent space in



their newly renovated facility at 8th and G Streets, NW. The facility has a 500-seat auditorio-

rium, classrooms big and small, music rooms, even a gym with a climbing wall, and is smack dab in

Creating a Musical Role Returns!

Coming off the success of our recent SRO production of *Ragtime*, The Theatre Lab is once again offering *Creating a Musical Role*, our learn-by-doing course on all aspects of musical theatre performance. The course, taught by Theatre Lab Directors Deb Gottesman and Buzz Mauro, starts in January and will culminate in early April with six public performances of *A Man of No Importance*, the latest musical by *Ragtime* creators Terrence McNally, Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens.

If you've never heard of

A Man of No Importance, there's a good reason for that: It's never been produced in this area. The Theatre Lab is proud to be presenting the Washington premiere of this new work from one of Broadway's most beloved musical teams.

McNally, Flaherty and Ahrens are known for great stories, characters you care about, beautiful and exciting music, and witty and poignant lyrics – and their work on *A Man of No Importance* is no exception. Where *Ragtime* concerned nothing less than the story of America's crises of race

and ethnicity in the early 20th century, *A Man of No Importance* takes a much smaller focus—the tragicomic tribulations of a 1960s Dublin neighborhood and its amateur theatrical troupe. Based on the movie of the same name, it's the story of Alfie Byrne, a middle-aged bus conductor who lives with his sister and venerates Oscar Wilde. Alfie is determined to stage a version of *Salome* at his church despite the objections of church authorities. In the process of fighting for the play, Alfie is finally forced to confront his own sexual-

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the middle of Washington's hottest theatre and entertainment district. Our neighbors will include The Shakespeare Theatre and the new

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**Register
online
today for
classes!**

ity and take a stand in the world.

Plan to come see it in April – or better yet, take the course and join the cast! The many great roles and the large chorus will provide opportunities for students at all levels of singing and acting experience. (*Ragtime* featured people at all levels from Never-Set-Foot-on-a-Stage-Before to Making-

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New Space

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Woolly Mammoth (opening spring 2005) as well as a slew of the area's finest restaurants like Zatinya, Jaleo, the District Chophouse, and all the terrific establishments Chinatown has to offer. Easy Metro access, a place for students and faculty to meet and gather, opportunities for larger and more frequent performance classes...what more could we possibly wish for?

Special thanks to Vernon Knarr and Julie Rayfield from Studley Real Estate; Jim Kelly, Jerry Oshinsky and Howard Vine from Dickstein, Shapiro, Morin and Oshinsky; Pastor Amy Butler, David Mein, John Mein and Al Nielsen from Calvary Church; the Gottesman Family; and Amy Austin, Laura Einstein and our terrific Board for helping to make this dream come true.

To support the build-out, move, and expansion of programs that will go along with our relocation, The Theatre Lab has launched a \$150,000 "Fund for the Future" campaign. We've come out of the gate strong and are already partway toward reaching our goal. If you'd like to learn more, call Theatre Lab Co-Director Deb Gottesman at (202) 588-8113. Ω



Combined Federal Campaign

We've made it easier for you to give to one of your favorite non-profits!

Support The Theatre Lab through the Combined Federal Campaign
Designate #7837

Auditions for Creating a Musical Role will be held on **Sunday, December 12** and **Tuesday, December 21** starting at **7pm**. All students in the class will be cast in a full production of *A Man of No Importance* (see pg 1).

Email
buzz@theatrelab.org
or call 202-588-8113 to reserve your audition!

CAMR

(Continued from page 1)

a-Living-as-a-Professional.) Casting of the larger roles will be by audition. Auditions will be held Sunday, December 12 and Tuesday, December 21 starting at 7pm. To take part as a member of the ensemble, playing one or more small roles and being part of a chorus that is integral to the story—no experience or audition is necessary. All we ask is that you be able to match pitches and carry a tune. To sign up as a member of the ensemble, you'll need to show up for a "non-audition" slot (where we can informally listen to your vocal range) on one of the audition nights.

Auditionees will need to prepare a song of any style and acquire the sheet music in the key you'd like to sing it in. Non-auditionees don't need to prepare anything (we'll probably ask you to sing a few bars of Mary Had a Little Lamb or Happy Birthday). Email buzz@theatrelab.org to sign up for a five-minute slot on either the 12th or the 21st of December. Auditions will be held at the Wesley UMC, 5312 Connecticut Avenue, NW.

All types and ethnicities are encour-

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aged to take part—and no Irish accent is required! The characters will eventually speak with a certain Gaelic lilt, but everyone will work on that together with a dialogue coach. Far from something to be afraid of, it's an added benefit: You're sure to leave the course with proficiency in a highly usable accent—even if your current brogue is non-existent or picked up from Lucky Charms commercials.

Class meets every Monday and Tuesday, from January 10 through the end of March. Performances will be April 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, and 10 (Saturday through Tuesday, and the following Saturday and Sunday), with mandatory dress rehearsals on Fridays April 1 and 8. Students will also be asked to rehearse together outside of class time for up to six hours per week, and to work alone to learn music and memorize lines. Tuition for this intensive, double-session course is \$550 (\$495 for Theatre Lab Members—so a \$50 annual membership more than pays for itself). Ω

Read Washington City Paper!

Upcoming Classes

Critiquing Theatre **with Trey Graham**

Starting in January, The Theatre Lab will offer its first course on what critics do and how they do it—valuable info for any actor or theatre lover! *Critiquing Theatre* will offer lots of hands-on reviewing experience and will be taught by Trey Graham, one of the most influential critics in Washington. Trey is one of two lead theatre critics at the Washington City Paper, a regular panelist on WETA's *Around Town*, and author of the theatre chapter in the newest Time Out Guide to the nation's capital. A former editor on the entertainment staff at USA TODAY, he's also written about books, travel, and the arts for a variety of publications, including The Washington Post, so he draws from vast experience in teaching this course. Students will read and discuss a variety of theatre criticism, then go out and start reviewing plays. The class will critique each other's work and student reviews will be published (if the author wishes) on the Theatre Lab website. Class meets Tuesdays, 7 - 9pm, Jan. 11 - Feb. 15. Give us a call for more information or to sign up.

Courses to Watch For in Early Spring

In addition to our usual diverse lineup of acting classes, several special offerings are on the roster starting around the beginning of March. **Comedy Improv Performance** (Tuesdays, Mar. 1 - Apr. 5) will be our first comic improv class to culminate in a show with an audience. Renee Cacciarco will train students in all the skills necessary for creating on-the-spot comedy at a performance level. (Renee's regular Comedy Improv class, offered in January, would be great preparation—in addition to being tons of fun.) **Mastering the Craft** (Saturdays, Feb. 26 - Apr. 9), with Washington favorite Craig Wallace, is

(Continued on page 4)

Summer Youth Programs Expand!

For Kids....

Due to popular demand, The Theatre Lab will expand its Summer Acting Camp for Kids in 2005 to include sessions for 6-8 year-olds as well as continuing its acclaimed program for 9-13 year-olds. Now even very young artists can take part in a summer experience that's designed to ignite the imagination through performing improv, exploring scene work, creating characters, and acting with masks, mime and much more! All in an atmosphere that's incredibly fun and supportive. All sessions are two weeks long (9am-3pm) and culminate in a public performance. Before and aftercare available.

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| Session 1: | June 27-July 8 |
| Session 2: | July 11-July 22 |
| Session 3: | July 25-Aug. 5 |
| Session 4: | Aug. 8-Aug. 19 |

For Teens...

Our **Summer Acting Institute for Teens** will be back with intensive training in auditioning, improvisation, scene study, voice, movement, and a variety of special workshops all taught by the area's best theatre professionals under the direction of Theatre Lab Directors Deb Gottesman and Buzz Mauro. Designed for students looking for an exciting summer challenge, admission is by essay and interview. Sessions are four weeks long, Mondays-Fridays, 1-6pm.

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| Session 1: | June 27-July 22 |
| Session 2: | July 25-Aug. 19 |

Application Deadline: May 15

Early Application Deadline: March 15 (admission is rolling, so early applicants have greater chance of acceptance)

The Musical Theatre Institute for Teens will also return under

the inimitable direction of Helen Hayes nominated actress Jane Pesci-Townsend (Chair of the Musical Theatre Department of Catholic University). This year the institute will focus on the musicals of Stephen Schwartz (*Godspell, Pippin, Children of Eden, Wicked*) and will culminate in a professionally produced revue. The institute is four weeks long (dates TBA); admission is by essay only.

Coming this Summer...
the area's first-ever
Magic Camp for Kids!

Magic...

And now for something completely different: the area's first-ever **Magic Camp** for 9-14 year-olds! Come learn the secrets of magic from professional magicians—sleight of hand, close-up magic, misdirection, comedy magic, and much more. This one-week program gives students the magic and presentation skills they need to please crowds of all ages. Camp culminates in student performances for senior centers and children's hospitals.

August 22-August 26, 9am-3pm
(before and aftercare available). Ω

Need-based scholarships available for all youth programs!

Log on to www.theatrelab.org for more information.

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Where Are They Now?

Everywhere!

Here's a quick look at what Theatre Lab students and alumni have been up to:

Karen Beriss appeared in Didactic Theatre Company's *Stop Kiss* this fall; **Andy Brownstein** and **Chris Holbert** were in the cast of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* at Port

Read how our students are putting their Theatre Lab training to good use.

City Playhouse; **Janice Dionne** and **Howard Vine** appeared in *The Heidi Chronicles* with the St. Mark's Players; **Ashley Edmiston** was in the Mt. Vernon Players' production of the operetta *The Student Prince*; **Joe Fiorillo** continues his long run in *Tony and Tina's Wedding* at Dave and Busters; **Julia Frank** appeared in *Lady Windermere's Fan* at the Publick Playhouse; **Kim Ha** took part in the film "mockumentary" *Felt: Tearing the Fabric of America*; **Stephanie Hammel** appeared in the comedy *Fuddy Meers* with Dominion Stage; **Alani Kravitz** was in her high school production of *You Can't Take It With You*; **Louis Levy** appeared in four movies and television programs this year—*Something the Lord Made*, *The Wedding Crashers*, *Syriana*, and *The Wire*—but his

Where are YOU now?
Contact us about your theatre exploits and we'll include you in the next *Behind the Scene*.

biggest production was his marriage to fellow Theatre Lab student **Wilma Probst** (congratulations, you two!); **Jane Petkofsky** appeared in *Thumbs* with the Elden Street Players; **Kelly Rubin** played the title role in *Kiss Me Kate* at Holton-Arms School in Bethesda, MD; **L.A. Phipps** appeared in Vienna Theatre Company's *Pack of Lies*; **Manolo Santalla** appeared in *Checkpoint* with Spooky Action Theatre, *Mexico: Noches Bohemias* with GALA Hispanic Theatre, and is currently in *Paradise Lost* at American Century Theater; **Hugh Staples** is understudying the role of Dr. Urpar in Signature Theatre's *The Highest Yellow*; and actor **Cleo Pizana**, who played Coalhouse Walker in Theatre Lab's production of *Ragtime* last spring, has landed a regular role as Chief of Staff on the HBO series *The Wire* (you can also catch Theatre Lab faculty member **Brandy Burre** on the show!). Ω



New Grant Awards

The Theatre Lab has received a \$10,000 grant award from the Gary Rosenthal Collection Foundation to support the creation of a magic program that trains elementary and middle-schoolers to perform magic for seniors and for children in area hospitals. The program, which will be led by professional magicians, consists of a summer camp (see article, page x), an after school magic program starting fall 2005, and a paid youth performing troupe that brings magic to senior centers and children's hospitals throughout the Metro area. The grant award will be used to fund numerous

Classes

(Continued from page 3)

a great course to follow up Beginning Scene Study or any other scene study class. Craig concentrates on the *craft* of acting—building up reliable physical and psychological skills that can be called upon as needed in a wide variety of acting situations. In the **New Play Workshop** (Mondays, Feb. 28 – May 23), actors will get a chance to work on a brand new script by award-winning playwright Paul Donnelly, under the expert tutelage of actor and director Michael Kramer, building monologue and character development skills on the way to the premiere public reading of the play at the end of the course. And finally, Helen Hayes Award-winning actor Rick Foucheux returns with **Great Ideas in Acting** (Saturdays, Feb. 26 - Apr. 9), a truly unique course in which students will read the works of such great acting theorists as Stanislavsky and Mamet, compare approaches, and try out some of the techniques if they like. Take it as a practical acting course or as a fascinating theoretical inquiry—or both! For more info on any of these courses, go to www.theatrelab.org or give us a call at 202-588-8113. Ω

scholarships to disadvantaged youth who work with The Theatre Lab's partner organizations, including the Latin-American Youth Center, Martha's Table and House of Ruth, as well as to assist with program start-up costs... In other grant news, The Theatre Lab has been chosen by COMPASS, a *pro bono* consulting group composed of MBA alumni from Harvard Business School, Stanford School of Business, Wharton Business School, and Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business, as one of 15 local non-profits to receive expert business and marketing consulting services in 2005. Ω

Cabaret Breaks \$100K!



Jim Vance making opening remarks at this year's Cabaret Extravaganza held at the Wyndham Hotel.

The Theatre Lab's 10th annual *Cabaret Extravaganza* lived up to its name once again—delivering great food and entertainment and raising over \$100,000 for our education and outreach programs. The sold-out event, held November 8 at the elegant Washington Wyndham Hotel, featured our biggest auction ever, along with a brand new cabaret act from The Theatre Lab's very own *Mood Swings* — Deb Gottesman, Buzz Mauro and Michael Rodgers.



Deb, Michael & Buzz (a.k.a. The Mood Swings) performing *Triplets*.

Many thanks to **Event Co-Chairs Sandy Oshinsky and Evelyn Perkins** and our **Event Underwriter — The Gary Rosenthal Collection Foundation** and our **Event Sponsors—Dickstein, Shapiro, Morin and Oshinsky, the Lillian Kamen Fund, and Studley Commercial Real Estate Advisors.**

We would also like to thank this year's Table Hosts: **Beech Street Foundation, Development Finance International, Inc., Food & Friends, the Gottesman Family, Lent Scrivner & Roth, LLP, Jerry and Sandy Oshinsky, Pilates for Golf, Potomac Communications Group, Sanford & Doris Slavin Foundation, Washington City Paper, and Washington Theater Review.**

Thanks also to our featured speaker and News4 Anchor Jim Vance; the cast of *Ragtime*; and our terrific emcee/auctioneer Barbara Klein.

Of course we couldn't have done this without our amazing Host Committee of friends and students that made it all possible: Heather and Richard Cass, Sarah Christensen, George and Phyllis Cohen, Steve Daigler, Lisa Dickey, Jill Dixon,

Thalia Doukas, John Estep, James and Sandra Fitzpatrick, Grayson Fowler, Jeanne Goldberg, Michael Gottesman, Sandra Jerez, Bob Kapler, Cathie Kempf, Barbara Klein and Dorothy Neumann, Marcia Kuntz, Irving Lachow, Harv Lester, Helene Madonick, JoAnn Mangione, Carl Menninger, Richard & Lois Meyer, Jerry Oshinsky, Bill Perkins, Jane Petkofsky, Mary Reed, Alan Roth, Tom Sherwood, Jeffrey Slavin and Doug Miller, Neil Sturomski, and Howard Vine. Ω

Wanted: Full-Time Program Administrator

We are seeking a qualified candidate for the position of Program Administrator. This position serves as an integral part of our team by providing administrative support to the Directors, serving as registrar, overseeing the Membership program, and helping to implement marketing strategies and development research. Qualifications include 1-3 yrs administrative experience with a college degree preferred.

Individual should have a strong work ethic; be a motivated self-starter; be proficient in all Microsoft programs and have some experience with QuickBooks;

be extremely organized and detail oriented; **and** have great communications skills -- especially on the phone. Start at \$22K w/ great health benefits. For more information, send a letter of inquiry w/ your resume to Program Administrator, The Theatre Lab, Inc., PO Box 21400, WDC 20009 or email to contact@theatrelab.org

No phone calls please.

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Staff:

Deb Gottesman, Director
Buzz Mauro, Director
Michael Rodgers, Managing Director
Could this be you? Program Administrator

*For information on
advertising in Behind the
Scene, please contact our
office and ask for
Michael Rodgers.*

We're on the Web!
www.theatrelab.org



**PO Box 21400
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Our sincerest thanks to...



The Gary Rosenthal
Collection
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Seeking musicians for our production of *A Man of No Importance*. We need a flutist, a percussionist, and a classical guitarist. Six performances in early April plus several rehearsals. Fun opportunity to play for a theatrical premiere in a friendly setting. Small stipends available.
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