

COMPANY NEWS continued from page 6

books: *Mostly Harmless* and *So Long and Thanks for All the Fish*.

Larry Keith is currently playing in Tony Kushner's *Caroline, or Change* at The Public Theater directed by George C. Wolfe. Industry scuttlebutt has it that the production may be moving to Broadway. Before it does, join the **TACT Theatre Party** on January 29th and see the show and speak with the cast while it's still in the intimate Newman Theatre at the Public. (For more info see page 3).

Jack Koenig recently shot an episode of everybody's favorite NY show, *Law & Order*.

Darrie Lawrence is at the Repertory Theater of St. Louis playing Emily Brent in *Ten Little Indians*. Although she turns out not to be the one who did it, word is Darrie (a.k.a. the "hideous Emily Brent") gets lots of votes at the informal intermission audience vote, making her **TACT** family very proud!

Greg McFadden spent the holidays with his new bride, choreographer Shannon Hummel, with family in Houston.

Eve Michelson took a little break after her memorable performance in **TACT's** season opener, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*. She described a quiet week at home this way: "I'm not doing

anything ... just throwing a 3 year old's birthday party, Hanukkah dinner for the whole family, AND Christmas Eve and Christmas day also for the whole family." Go home and kiss your Moms, folks!

James Murtaugh and his wife, Alice, graciously hosted **TACT's** annual Holiday Shindig. A good time was had by all! James recently shot an episode of *Hope and Faith* on ABC starring Kelly Ripa and Faith Ford. He played Faith's father-in-law. Check your local listings...

Margaret Nichols returns from San Francisco, where she has been performing the role of Petra in *A Little Night Music* at the Post Street Theatre to much acclaim. She'll be back in town in time to playing a leading role in *The Good Soup* for **TACT** in January.

James Prendergast continues to travel the globe doing business theatre industrials.

John Plumpis continues to play Timon the Meercat in the National Tour of *The Lion King*. The tour will be in Pittsburgh 1/9-2/15, Indianapolis 2/20-3/28, and Detroit 4/2-5/30. Stop by and tell John how much we miss him here at **TACT** if he's in a city near you.

Scott Schafer played Adolf Hitler on an episode of *Dave Chapelle's Show* on Comedy Central. It

will air in January. He spent the holidays with 2 parents, 2 siblings, their mates, 2 nieces, 2 dogs...in his parents 2 bedroom condo on Ft. Myers Beach. All they were missing was the partridge in the pear tree!

Jonathan Smith continues to play the Broadway hit, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.

David Staller played Higgins again in *My Fair Lady* which broke box office records at The Fulton in PA. David's also been doing "lots of voice overs for incredibly obscure organizations". He portrayed the evil villain with the heart of tarnished gold in *The Streets of New York* at the Westport Playhouse under the winning direction of Charlotte Moore. He wore a beard. After years of playing Nazis David finally got the chance to play a Jew, a strict sectarian Hasidic Rebbe in Jeremy Keraken's new play *Farblondjet* for the Epic Repertory Theatre Company, at the DR2 Theatre on 15th Street. He wore a beard in this one, too. David recently completed shooting the film *Missed Opportunities* in which he plays a NY psychiatrist...without a beard. He will soon shoot a new film called *5 Up 2 Down* in which he plays a Soho gallery owner. He's still waiting for decision on a beard. David was in **TACT's** recent *Fathers and Sons* playing Pavel, complete with fez. His Abyssinian cat, Pywacket, send regards to everyone.

Administrative Offices
161 Sixth Avenue, 14th Fl
New York, NY 10013
212 645-TACT(8228)
212 255-2053(fax)
www.TACTnyc.org
info@TACTnyc.org

TACTICS is published
twice yearly

tact

TheACTORS COMPANY THEATRE

Scott Alan Evans, Cynthia Harris &
Simon Jones Co-Artistic Directors

COMPANY

Sean Arbuckle, Mary Bacon, Jamie Bennett, Simon Billig, Nora Chester, Cynthia Darlow, Francesca Di Mauro, Kyle Fabel, Richard Ferrone, Delphi Harrington, Larry Keith, Jack Koenig, Darrie Lawrence, Greg McFadden, Eve Michelson, James Murtaugh, Margaret Nichols, Nancy Opel, John Plumpis, James Prendergast, Gregory Salata, Scott Schafer, David Staller, Jenn Thompson, Lynn Wright

EMERITUS

Ryan Bowker, Maia Danziger, Paul Hecht, Jo-Ann Salata,

ADJUNCT COMPANY

Francys O. Burch, Dawn Dunlop, Jonathan Fairman, Mary Louise Geiger, David Macdonald, Yuzuru Sadashige, Jonathan Smith, David Toser, Joseph Trapasso

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Stephen Lindenmuth, *Chairman*, Joel Benenson, Patricia Dugan, Laurily Epstein, Holly Etlin, Joseph Gitto, Norman Kantor, Gail Levenstein, Melissa Mulrooney, Susan Mindel, Joan Blackett Schlank, Sandy Sojka, David Wilson

GENERAL MANAGER

Kate Ross

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Scott Alan Evans

PRESS REPRESENTATIVES

Origlio PR

DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Jennifer Clarke

ATTORNEY

Debevoise & Plimpton
Nicole Soffin

TACT is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and a member of the **Alliance of Resident Theatres /New York**



NYSCA

tact

1. *takt*; 2. *tact*, *n.* dedicated to presenting neglected or rarely produced plays of literary merit with an emphasis on creating theatre from its essence: the text and the actor's ability to bring it to life.

Neglected or rarely produced: *adj. phrase.* not seen in a first-class production in NYC within the last 15 years.

Literary merit: *n.* laudable language of particular interest, uniqueness, or representative of a specific period or era.

Concert Performances: *n.* fully rehearsed, minimally staged presentations that allow you and your imagination to be a part of the creative event. With original incidental musical scores commissioned exclusively for our production through a unique partnership with **The Manhattan School of Music**.

tact tactics

TheACTORS COMPANY THEATRE NEWSLETTER
Vol. 11 No.2
Winter 2003/04

Coming in January!

The Good Soup
[La bonne soupe]

Sat. Jan 24 @ 7:30
Sun. Jan 25 @ 2:00
Mon. Jan 26 @ 7:30

by Felicien Marceau
Adapted by Garson Kanin
at the Florence Gould Hall
55 East 59th St

The Good Soup is the story of Marie-Paule, a woman of uncommon ability. We first encounter her by the roulette wheel of a Monte Carlo casino, recounting her long, illustrious (if slightly immoral) career. As she reminisces, she quite literally brings her past to life - her younger self (Marie-Paule II) appears and we watch the unique evolution of this woman from poor shop girl to courtesan to prosperous businesswoman to respectable wife... well, almost respectable. There are steady stream of lovers, husbands, and dupes who both foot the bill and create obstacles for her desires. And what does she desire? Love? Sex? Money? No. Just that most elusive jackpot: **The Good Soup**...

Felicien Marceau's play takes all the hilarity of French bedroom farce and roots it in the tough world of realism with a bittersweet tone and a slightly sad mischievousness that is all so very very French. Marceau, whose real name was Louis Carette, was Belgian born, but became a French citizen and later a member of the renowned French Academy. Originally a novelist and essayist, Marceau was in his forties before he began writing for the stage. One of his earliest plays, *The Egg* (1956), was a huge success in Paris. It was quickly followed by **The Good Soup** in 1957 in a production starring Jeanne Moreau and Marie Bell.

TACT is presenting, for the first time since its original production on Broadway in 1960, an adaptation of the play by Garson Kanin. Mr. Kanin is, of course, the gifted playwright and director who applied his talents to both the stage and the screen (*Born Yesterday*, *Adam's Rib*). Kanin also directed the New York production of **The Good Soup**, which starred his wife, Ruth

TACT SEASON continued on page 7

Company News



Melissa Mulrooney

New Board Member: The Board of Directors of **TACT** is extremely pleased to announce the addition of **Melissa Hitchens Mulrooney** to the **TACT** Board. Melissa is a highly accomplished cultural arts and communications professional with expertise in marketing, fundraising, and administrations. Of course, she has a great love of theater in general and of **TACT** in particular. She has run capital campaigns and other fundraising and marketing projects for the Museum of Arts and Design, Chess-In-The-Schools, the International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum and the Delaware Art Museum. In addition, she teaches in the Masters Program for Visual Arts Administration at New York University. We are thrilled to welcome her to the company.

Sean Arbuckle finished his second season with the Stratford Festival in Ontario and then stayed on in Canada to play *The Man in a two-person adaptation of The Turn of the Screw* at the Grand Theatre in London, Ontario before returning Stateside and moving into his new apartment. Sean was also in the film *Anything But Love*, which was released mid-Nov.

Mary Bacon is at the Dallas Theatre Center through February 2, doing a world premier translation of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* by Dario Fo. But, she did get to spend the holidays with family in Denver.

Francys Burch is currently in rehearsal for *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*, opening Jan. 9 at City Center and running for 3 weeks. Then she

COMPANY NEWS continues on page 6

See the rest of the TACT season and SAVE!
SPECIAL 3 PLAY SUBSCRIPTION OFFER INSIDE

Winter News 2003/04

1 0 0 1

N E W Y O R K , N Y

1 4 T H F L O O R

1 6 1 S I X T H A V E N U E

THEATRE

THE ACTORS

COMPANY

tact

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
New Rochelle, NY
Permit No. 1484



The Triangle Fire Project

TACT's Extended Production in May 2004

The 2003-04 season marks an exciting creative departure for TACT. In addition to four Concert Performance productions, TACT is offering our audiences a fully staged production of a new work created by playwright Christopher Piehler in collaboration with director Scott Alan Evans and members of the company. The play explores the historic, political and social factors surrounding the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911, which took the lives of 146 workers, most of whom were young women immigrants. The deplorable working conditions in the garment industry, the stubborn refusal of the factory owners to allow unionization, and the volatile social and cultural climate of the period provide the ground-work of the piece. The fire galvanized a fractious city. The expressions of grief were unprecedented and unlikely factions found themselves joining forces to express their outrage. The story of the fire itself, told in the play through first person accounts of witnesses and survivors, is horrifying and brutal. Its aftermath is even more shocking as politicians, union organizers, and a concerned and horrified public look to lay blame and hold those responsible to account.

Research for this project began in April 2001. Developmental workshops, which involve the playwright, director, composer, and members of the TACT acting company, began in September 2003. The foundation of the script comes from extant first person accounts of the fire, headlines from the many newspapers of the period, trial testimony, articles, advertisements and other period ephemera. The decision to develop and produce this new work came from our interest in using historic materials and important texts to create contemporary theatre, and from our deep belief in making theatre out of little more than the word and the actor's craft.

The Triangle Fire Project will feature a company of nine actors, with costumes by David Toser, lighting by Mary Louise Geiger, music by Jonathan Fairman and direction by Scott Alan Evans. The play will be presented at the Beckett Theatre, at TheatreRow, 410 West 42nd Street, May 8 thru May 29. There will be sixteen performances only. For more information about this special production, please call Kate Ross at the TACT office 212/645-8228.



The Asch Building New York City



Policemen tagging the bodies



Harris and Blanck, Triangle factory owners

Save the Date:
Monday
March
29th!

TACT GALA

Here is your chance not only to enjoy the glamour and excitement of a **one-night-only musical celebration featuring some of the most sought-after talents of the Broadway stage**, but to become part of the scene itself. Put on your most glamorous duds and sit at the same tables where Broadway legends celebrated opening night triumphs with champagne or drowned their sorrows in double martinis after reading what Brooks Atkinson or Walter Winchell or Frank Rich had to say. Soak up the ambience of this famous showbiz hang-out and experience the thrill of seeing your own caricature - drawn on the spot - join that exclusive club of New York luminaries whose caricatures cover the walls. Rub shoulders with the hottest Broadway singers around, trade gossip and quips with your favorite TACT performers, enjoy fabulous food and wine, an unforgettable musical entertainment and savor the knowledge that your attendance is securing the future of a New York treasure - The TACT experience!

For more information or to be sure you're on the invite list, call the TACT office today!

MAY 2004

16 Performances only!

May 8-29, 2004
Beckett Theatre
West 42nd Street

TACT SUBSCRIBERS, PLEASE NOTE: this production is a part of your season subscription. To select the date you'd like to attend, call or email the TACT office

For more information call
212/645-TACT
(8228)

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						8 EVE
9 MAT	10 EVE	11 no show	12 no show	13 EVE	14 EVE	15 EVE
16 MAT	17 Opening PARTY*	18 no show	19 no show	20 EVE	21 EVE	22 EVE
23 MAT	24 EVE	25 no show	26 no show	27 EVE	28 EVE	29 EVE

*call TACT office for details

TACT Season continued from front page

Gordon, in the leading role. We are very grateful to Martha Wilson and the Kanin Estate for bringing this script to our attention and for granting us permission to present this delightful work.

The **Good Soup** will be directed by company member, Kyle Fable and feature Delphi Harrington as Marie-Paule I; Margaret Nichols as Marie-Paule II, and Gregory Salata as the Croupier (a role originally played by Zero Mostel). The rest of the 37 characters in the play will be created by company members Sean Arbuckle, Nora Chester, Francesca Di Mauro, Simon Jones, Jack Koenig, Darrie Lawrence, Greg McFadden, James Prendergast, Scott Schafer and guest artists Kelly Hutchinson and Joel Jones. The original music will be by Marcus Paus.

The play was considered *avant garde* for Broadway in 1960, and not a few sensibilities were shaken by the "occupation" of the central character (*The Daily News* called it the "story of a tart"). Still not all critics were affronted. Writing in *The Village Voice*, Gilbert Seldes chastised his fellow reviewers for "failing to recognize the sheer play of the intellect, the total dramatic nicety and gaiety and magic of *The Good Soup*." We can't help but agree with Mr. Seldes. We admire, as he did, its "bright pyrotechnic display, the dazzling virtuosity." We think you will too.

And in March...

The Chalk Garden
by Enid Bagnold

Sat. Mar 13 @ 7:30
Sun. Mar 14 @ 2:00
Mon. Mar 15 @ 7:30

Enid Bagnold's **The Chalk Garden** is a zany, poetic detective story. Into an eccentric English household ruled over by the domineering Mrs. St. Maugham, her unruly granddaughter, and their peculiar ex-con butler comes Miss Madrigal - an enigmatic governess who turns their world on its ear. Miss Madrigal begins by coaxing the flowers to grow in the chalky garden of the title that Mrs. St. Maugham

attempts to keep, and proceeds to help the young granddaughter bloom as well.

The most recent Broadway production of **The Chalk Garden** was in 1982, featuring Irene Worth as Miss Madrigal. Writing for the *New York Post*, Clive Barnes said, "The play itself is difficult to pin down. It is obviously a comedy, but a comedy with a difference, even a purpose. It is part mystery... and clearly symbolic, rather in the manner of the French writer Giradoux." Frank Rich for *The New York Times* said, "**The Chalk Garden** is extraordinarily modern for a high comedy set in the drawing room of a stuffy Sussex manor house: its plot and structure are elliptical; its witty lines aren't brittle but are instead redolent with what the author calls 'the shape and shadow of life.'"

A summary of Enid Bagnold's life sounds like a description of one of her eccentric characters. She was the granddaughter of a general in British India, the daughter of a colonel, a runaway from a prestigious Swiss "finishing school," an artist who befriended the prominent sculptor Henri Gaudier and author Katherine Mansfield, a suffragist, a hospital aide in World War I, a driver with the French Army, and a noted English hostess. In addition to **The Chalk Garden**, she also wrote many popular plays and novels, including *National Velvet* and *Serena Blandish*.

TACT's Chalk Garden will be directed by J. Christopher Jones with music by John Slover and a cast featuring company members Cynthia Harris, Simon Jones and Larry Kieth.

TACT THEATRE PARTY

Caroline, Or Change

Book and Lyrics by Tony Kushner, Music by Jeanine Tesori
Directed by George C. Wolfe

Come with us to see TACT Company Member, **LARRY KEITH** in this acclaimed new musical, before it moves to Broadway! And meet the cast after the show!

Thursday, January 29th @ 8:00pm

Public Theatre
425 Lafayette St. New York City

Tickets \$80*

Tickets are extremely limited.

Call 212/645-8228 NOW to make your reservation.

Distributed on a first-come/first serve basis.

*\$35 to benefit TACT

3 Play Subscription

Don't miss out on the rest of our exciting season!
To sign up, call 212/645-TACT (8228), or cut out and mail in the form below TODAY!

The ACTORS COMPANY THEATRE 2003/2004 3Play Subscription!

Please fill out this form and mail to TACT, 161 Sixth Avenue, 14th FL, New York, NY 10013. You will pick up your tickets at the Florence Gould Hall Box Office at your first performance in January.

NAME _____ # of Subscriptions x \$55 each = _____

ADDRESS _____ Tax Deductible Contribution = _____

CITY/STATE _____ ZIP _____ Handling Fee = _____

PHONE _____ GRAND TOTAL = _____

E-MAIL _____

OCCUPATION _____

SELECT PREFERRED PERFORMANCE DAY

SATURDAY EVENINGS @ 7:30pm Jan. 24 '04, Mar. 13, & May ...

SUNDAY MATINEES (includes TALK-BACK with cast) @ 2:00pm Jan. 25 '04, Mar. 14, & May ...

MONDAY EVENINGS @ 7:30pm Jan. 26 '04, Mar. 15, & May ...

Enclosed is my check made payable to TACT.

AmEx/Visa/MasterCard Expiration Date

Signature: _____

SELECT SEATING PREFERENCE

Please check one

Orchestra

Lower Level

Florence Gould Hall
55 East 59th St.

ORCHESTRA

LOWER LEVEL

STAGE

Send to: TACT/The Actors Company Theatre 161 Sixth Avenue, 14th FL New York, NY 10013



and guest **Ashley West**. Although the performance is certainly the centerpiece of the weekend, the event continues to grow. This year, in addition to the show, there was a stroll down Market Street in Lewisburg with local merchants offering special discounts to **TACT** patrons; a house & garden tour; a golf tournament; a gala reception and a spectacular brunch. AND for the first time a very special auction.

The remarkable **Simon Jones** served as auctioneer for five very impressive lots: day or weekend packages each built around the five **TACT** productions in New York City this season. Excitement was high and though the bidding started off somewhat hesitantly, Simon managed to whip up the frenzy to the tune of \$5,400!

Jim and Yvonne Morgan were the high bidders for the first package – an autumn weekend in New York! The weekend began on Friday, October 17th when they checked in for two nights at the elegant **Lowell Hotel** on East 63rd Street. Saturday was a whirlwind tour of New York's finest establishments – lunch at **Jean-Georges**, a personal viewing of the jewelry collection at **David Yurman** on Madison Avenue, afternoon tea at **The Pembroke Room** at the Lowell, and, most importantly, the **TACT** performance of *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*. The evening continued with an after-theatre dinner at **La Goulue**, a neighborhood bistro. Then back to the Lowell for a romantic evening full of memories of a wonderful day.

The second package centered around **TACT's** November production. Polly Rallis and three guests were chauffeured from Pennsylvania to New York, courtesy of **Susquehanna Valley Limousine** on Sunday, November 23rd. Waiting in the car was a care package full of amenities from **Kitchen Kaboodle**, lunch from **Elizabeth's Bistro**, wine direct from the personal wine cellar of **TACT** supporters **Kay and Roger Lyons**, and candy from **Purity Candy Company**. They were driven right to Florence Gould Hall for the matinee production of *Fathers and Sons*. After the show, and the talk-back with the cast – the limo brought them for an early supper at the charming **Café Luxembourg** on the Upper West Side, and then back to Pennsylvania at the end of a full day of pampering.

In January, Nicholas Hughes and Michelle Hendricks, the high bidders, will stay in a spectacular apartment on the fashionable UWS, enjoy a French meal at **Aix en Provence**, with their own personal sommelier, have brunch at **Isabella's** and then it's off to the **TACT** matinee of *The Good Soup*. C'est magnifique! It will be an early spring for Larry and Xana Winans, who were the top bidders for the March package. It includes two nights at the **Waldorf Astoria**, lunch at **Fleur de Sel**; tickets to the Sunday matinee of *The Chalk Garden* and dinner after the show at **Bistro 60!** And finally, in May, Raven & Marv Rudnitsky will experience an unforgettable mother's day. It begins with a limousine ride for four from PA to NYC, brunch, champagne and all the amenities included. Tickets to the very special **TACT** May production, *The Triangle Factory Fire Project* at the Beckett Theatre on West 42nd Street, after theatre dinner, with candy and flowers for mom!

To all those who helped make the auction and the weekend in PA such a delightful success, we thank you! In addition to those mentioned above our most heartfelt thanks goes to, **Ruth and Cliff Melberger, Arpiné Stein, Liz Furia, Kate Daws, Ryan Bowker, Michael Brody** and the entire **PA Committee**, whose generosity and hard work throughout the year make this summer event a truly memorable experience.

If you want to make sure you don't miss all the festivities this summer – not to mention the **TACT** performance – mark your calendars for **Saturday, July 17, 2004**. That's the date when we return to PA for another summer weekend of fun! For more information about our weekend in PA, please contact the **TACT** office at **212/645-8228**.

COMPANY NEWS continued from page 1

will be touring all 3 throughout the South and Midwest during March and April.

Nora Chester returned from slaying vampires as Van Helsing in *Dracula* at The Delaware Theatre Company in time to appear in *Fathers and Sons* with **TACT**. It was then went off to spend Christmas and New Years with her extended family in Oregon and Washington. She'll be back in time to appear in *The Good Soup*.

Cynthia Darlow is at the Cleveland Playhouse doing Neil Simon's *The Dinner Party*. It opened January 9 and closes Feb 1. Her husband, and fellow **TACT** member, Richard Ferrone spent the Holidays with her there.

Dawn Dunlop served as Production Assistant on *A Christmas Carol* at Madison Square Garden.

Scott Alan Evans will once again be directing the American Musicals Project concert series this March at The New-York Historical Society. The four part series will feature the work of Harold Rome, Harold Arlen, Jules Styne and Cy Coleman. For information visit www.nyhistory.org and click on "Programs".

Kyle Fabel was up at Merrimack Rep this fall playing a stalker in *Boy Gets Girl* by Rebecca Gilman. In January he'll be directing *The Good Soup* for **TACT**.

Jonathan Faiman taught a course this past fall on the history of Western Classical music at Concordia College. Of his many fall performances, the highlight was a concert of the music of Nils Vigeland. In the spring, Jonathan looks forward to writing the music for the *Triangle Factory Fire Project*, performing a program of his own arrangements and compositions both here in NYC and also in his hometown of Urbana, IL, and completing a CD of the music of Nils Vigeland.

Mary Louise Geiger designed the lighting for the acclaimed Mabou Mines production of *The Doll's House* at St. Ann's Warehouse in Dumbo. She lit *The Architecture of Loss* at New York Theatre Workshop, which began previews 12/18. Then *King Lear* directed by Mark Wing Davey at Playmakers Repertory Company in Chapel Hill, NC in January. Her holidays were spent painting the kitchen in her self-described "shack" upstate.

Delphi Harrington continues to appear in the critically acclaimed *Beckett/Albee* at Century Center for the Performing Arts.

Simon Jones directed and appeared in Bolton, Wodehouse and Kern's *Oh Boy!* at the York Theatre in October. He cast **TACT** member Darrie Lawrence as his dragon-wife, and former company member Tom Toner as the butler. Immediately following that, he took his real wife (of twenty years this past December), Nancy, on a cruise to the Caribbean, in exchange for a series of lectures on Science Fiction. At the end of that trip, while Nancy returned to New York, Simon went back to England to revive the character of Arthur Dent, the luckless hero of Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy*. In some circles, since he first played the role at the author's request in a pilot for BBC radio twenty-six years ago, it is what he is best known for, and it prompts him to describe himself as an actor with a great future behind him. (Certainly that's why he was asked to lecture on the cruise). The new series - a dramatization of the third book in the five part series of novels, *Life, the Universe and Everything*, with everyone in the original cast who is still alive - will be broadcast on BBC Radio 4 for six weeks starting on January 23rd 2004. In May he is scheduled to record the remaining two

COMPANY NEWS continues on page 8

Winter Newsletter
2003/2004



Kyle Fabel A Fabel for our Time

by **Simon Jones**

Florence Goodman was born in November 1903. What you must know about her, quite

aside from her being a remarkable spirit, is that she is one of the Chicago Cubs' most loyal supporters, and that she is Kyle Fabel's adored grandmother. In 1907/8 the Cubs won two consecutive World Series. They have played in a good few since, but have never won from that day to this. In 1932, a barely pregnant Flo was at Wrigley Field with her husband, Russell Fabel, watching Game Three of the World Series against the Yankees when Babe Ruth stepped up to the plate, gestured in Flo's direction and yelled, "You losers won't win a World Series until that gal's a hundred!".

Hardly surprising then that the noble game is in the family blood, and the Babe's challenge is one the Fabels as a clan felt they had to take up. It was Kyle's father, Warren, who was *almost* present at that game, and he started out promisingly enough. He led the City of Chicago in stolen bases as Third Baseman for Amundson High for two years in a row, but on the eve of a big game at which scouts were expected, a beautiful young woman accidentally shut his finger in a car door, and that was that.. It's an ill-wind, though, as the young lady could hardly refuse his proposal after that, and in short order they presented Flo with five grandchildren: Kim, Kristi, Kerry, Kirk and Kyle. It was Kyle who showed most talent with his glove, and became a three-time All Star, twice in Little League and once in Senior League. Flo had hopes that her family might yet provide the new blood that could drive the Cubs onto glory.

But Fate and a pitcher threw Kyle a curve ball, which he could not hit. It became apparent that he couldn't see them coming, and needed glasses. He told Florence that he must give up baseball for the stage, and she feigned hardness of hearing, a useful trick that she has used off and on ever since.

The acting bug had bitten quite early on in church plays with roles as various as "Young Scrooge" and "Willie, The Lame Kid" in *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, but he really became infected when he took the title role at High School of *The Foreigner* by Larry Shue. For someone he describes as "a miserable student underachiever, constantly at odds with his parents and teachers", the immoderate praise heaped on his performance was like fine vin-

tage champagne and went straight to his head.

While fervent support for the Cubs was a given, the Fabels were no strangers to theatricals. His father was a singer in community theatre. His frequently expressed ambition was to play Harold Hill in "The Music Man". When he did so, to suitable acclaim, he pronounced himself satisfied and with admirable resolve, never took to the boards again.

Kyle's brother, Kirk, older by seven years, gave, in his turn, a commendable performance as "Linus" in *You're a Good Boy, Charlie Brown*, on his way to a Ph.D in English Literature. The Fabels tend, it appears, to make decisions and stick to them. Kirk decided he hated Academia, and now runs a small business in Washington, D.C. In an equally decisive way,

It was Kyle who showed most talent with his glove, and became a three-time All Star, twice in Little League and once in Senior League

he has been his little brother's mentor in many matters unrelated to the Cubs. He wrote a script of terrible jokes which Kyle, complete with Groucho schnozz and glasses, performed in a Second Grade Talent Show to great acclaim. ("I just flew in from Cleveland, and boy, are my arms tired", "I shot a tiger in my pyjamas. How it got into my pyjamas I'll never know", "I tried a job as a printer, but I'm not the type". Etc.)

Kirk also turned him on to the work of Woody Allen, even encouraging him to play "Woody" in the one-acter "God" and "Death". (This has always struck Kyle as unusual for two mid-Western kids in Northern Wisconsin. It doesn't seem to fit the gestalt, which is more suited to the comedic stylings of Bob and Doug Mackenzie.)

But then Kirk is unusual. When he was 24, he took the 17-year-old Kyle to Europe on a five-week expedition that started in Munich, passed through Bavaria, moved onto Holland and to Brittany via Paris.

All this served to widen Kyle's horizons, and perhaps even to concentrate his mind. He

secured a scholarship in drama to a private university, where true to **TACT** form he was fired up by a young upstart teacher who cast him as *Macbeth* and under his tutelage had him direct *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. His third year he spent in London under the Marymount College Drama Program. This experience whetted his appetite for drama school proper, and sent him to NYU for a further three years. Some time later he was selected for the last Alumni Directors Lab Program (now, sadly abandoned after only five classes), and had the unique distinction, among the students, of having his production of Pirandello's *Henry IV* favorably reviewed by Margo Jefferson in The New York Times. Since then he has directed for **TACT** (last season's *Eurydice*), and will be in charge of *The Good Soup (La bonne soupe)* in January.

Perhaps to escape the Cubs' continued failure to seize the brass ring, he has always had a yen to travel - a run of successful commercial auditions sent him to Barcelona, Madrid, Venezuela, and Montreal. Regional theatre engagements took him to the South-East, and Mid-West, but the Far-West was a different kind of adventure. Like many before him he bought a used car and drove to Los Angeles where he spent what he describes as the worst month of his life. At the end, dispirited by the lack of encouragement and casual dismissal he encountered from the denizens of that unappealing city, he set off for Las Vegas. On the way back, his car blew a head gasket, he flagged down a charter bus back to L.A. and went straight to the airport to return to New York. When and if he returns, it will be on his own terms.

For a complete change he went to Cheb in the Czech Republic and earned a certificate to teach English as a foreign language. It could be his most useful qualification as a theatre director...

But what of the Cubs and of Florence? Her granddaughter Kerry's second child, A.P. Ray, has taken on the torch-bearing duties of "Cub-in-training", and is said to show more promise than any of the clan since Warren's finger got caught in the door. The Cubs in 2003 came within one game of the World Series - but then Flo, while being in her hundredth year, is still only ninety-nine. And of course while nobody doubts that 2004 will be the Year of the Cubs, it's always possible that the Babe actually said, "You losers won't win a World Series until that gal's at least a hundred!"

2003  2004

FAMILY
[dys]FUNCTIONS

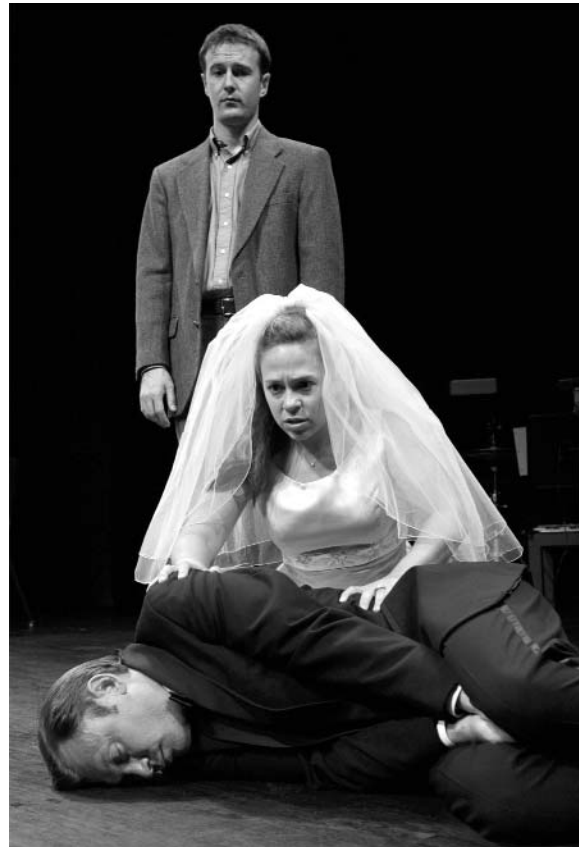
“Despite many chuckles, the play seems darker - and deeper. Scott Alan Evans directs a first-class company, where each member is given occasion to shine”

Backstage



Pictured from *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*: **Right:** Greg McFadden as Matt, Eve Michelson as Bette and Scott Schafer as Boo. **Above:** Greg McFadden and Scott Schafer. **Below Right:** Greg McFadden, Kate Ross, Eve Michelson, Jenn Thompson, James Prendergast and Cynthia Harris.

Photos by Richard Agudelo



THE MARRIAGE OF BETTE AND BOO began its life as a one act play written while Christopher Durang was a student at the Yale School of Drama, where it was first produced in 1974 (and featured classmates Kate McGregor-Stewart as Bette, John Rothman as Boo and Sigourney Weaver as Boo's mother, Soot). Several years later, Durang decided to expand the play. This expanded version premiered at Joseph Papp's Public Theatre in 1985. The production was directed by Jerry Zaks and featured a cast including Joan Allen, Graham Beckel, Olympia Dukakis, Patricia Falkenhain, Kathryn Grody, Bill McCutcheon, Bill Moor, Mercedes Ruehl, Richard Shull, and the playwright (who is also an actor) in the role of Matt, the plays narrator and guide. Admittedly autobiographical and arguably Durang's best work, the play, like many of his works, received a sharply divided critical response.

Still all the smartest people loved it: *The Village Voice* called it the "best play of the Season;" *The New Yorker* wrote: "Durang has rarely written anything funnier or more serious... he has perfected the art of turning bitterness into comedy without losing its edge." "Devastating and wickedly funny" said the *Christian Science Monitor*. "Surprisingly moving" said *Women's Wear Daily*. The production received Obie awards for best play, direction, set design and best Ensemble Acting.

Bette and Boo has gone on to become a staple in University drama departments, and occasional regional theatres, but hasn't enjoyed a professional production in New York City in years. **TACT** was proud to present this important American work of one of the theatre's most devastatingly funny dysfunctional families.

October 2003

THE SEASON THUS FAR...

November 2003

The Marriage of Bette and Boo

by Christopher Durang

with Company Members

Cynthia Darlow*, **Cynthia Harris***, **Greg McFadden***, **Eve Michelson***, **James Murtaugh***, **James Prendergast***, **Kate Ross***, **Gregory Salata***, **Scott Schafer***, & **Jenn Thompson***

*member Actors' Equity Association

Production Stage Manager

Dawn Dunlop*

Costumes by **David Toser** Lighting by **Juliet Chia**

Music Composed by **Colin McGrath**

Directed by **Scott Alan Evans**



“*Bette and Boo* turns out to be of the high quality that has kept **TACT's** reputation very much intact. What's so good about **TACT** is the way in which their productions come alive, creating an illusion that we are seeing a fully mounted play.”

William Wolf / Wolf Entertainment

Fathers & Sons

by Brian Friel
After the novel by Ivan Turgenev

with Company Members

Sean Arbuckle*, **Mary Bacon***, **Jamie Bennett***, **Nora Chester***, **Francesca Di Mauro***, **Richard Ferrone***, **David Staller*** and Guest Artists

Lucus Beck, **Lynn Cohen***, **Sam Gregory***, **John Horton***, **Kelly Hutchinson*** & **Ashley West***

*member Actors' Equity Association

Production Stage Manager

Jenny Noterman*

Costumes by **David Toser** Lighting by **Juliet Chia**

Music Composed by **David Macdonald**

Directed by **Stephen Hollis**



“*Fathers and Sons* ...an exquisite staged reading that showed the play off to its best advantage. Not only did the brilliant cast bring their characters to life, but they also made them quirkily their own.”

Backstage



Pictured from *Fathers and Sons*. **Top:** The Cast. **Above Left:** Francesca Di Mauro as Anna and Sean Arbuckle as Bazarov; **Above Middle:** father and son, Sam Gregory (Nikolai) and Jamie Bennett (Arkady); **Above Right:** David Staller and Mary Bacon. **Below Left:** Bazarov's father John Horton (standing) with Jamie Bennett, Lynn Cohen and Sean Arbuckle.

Photos by Carol Rosegg

FATHERS AND SONS premiered July 8, 1987 in a production by London's National Theatre. Directed by Michael Rudman the cast included some of England most accomplished theatre actors including Alec McCowen and a young Ralph Fiennes. Michael Billington of the *Guardian* wrote: "... what we see on stage is a delicately written, beautifully-acted play that subtly alters the emphasis of Turgenev's book in the light of modern experience ... the evening leaves you pondering not just the play's political implications but the ageless tragedy of parent-child relationships." Christopher Edwards of the *Spectator* called it "... an original and brilliant piece of drama." Giles Gordon of the *London Daily News* says the play "... has the density, complexity and richness of tone of a great 19th century novel, without the usual creaking stage mechanism of dramatized fiction."

What we like particularly about Mr. Gordon's review is the following: "Friel confirms that language more than anything else is how both stasis and change are achieved. He triumphantly proves that drama at its most stimulating and eloquent is essentially about trusting the word." Sounds like a **TACT** brochure!

As far as we can determine, the play has never been professional produced here in NYC (**TACT** strikes again!) The American premiere came in the regions in March of 1988 at the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven in a production directed by Austin Pendleton and featuring William Swetland and George Morfogen.