



## TWIN LAKES PLAYHOUSE

### Auditions Set For “The Brute and Other Farces”



Auditions have been set for Saturday, May 4th at 1:00 p.m. for our last production of the season, “The Brute and Other Farces,” written by Anton Chekhov, with translations by Eric Bentley and Theodore Hoffmann.

Twin Lakes Playhouse has been teaching directing techniques and encouraging new directors to get involved with their

New Directors Program for the last 30 years. This year we have three new directors who have taken on the challenge by participating in these classic farces from one of Russia’s most beloved authors and playwrights, Anton Chekhov. Chekhov was a literary artist who probed below the surface of life, baring the secret motives of his characters. His comedies create a special kind of atmosphere, oftentimes termed “lyrical.” The author of such great tragedies as Uncle Vanya, Three Sisters, The Cherry Orchard, and The Seagull, Chekhov described the Russian life of his time using a simple yet effective technique lacking of any flashy literary effects, and he is regarded as the outstanding representative of the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian realist school. Hopefully, audiences will be encouraged to seek out, read and attend other Chekhov plays after experiencing this production.

Olivia Wolfe directs **The Brute**, a story of Mrs. Popov, who is recently widowed and has decided to be the perfect widow, shutting herself up in her home, not visiting or being visited, pining away for her deceased husband. A knock on the front door from a gentleman farmer try-

ing to collect on a debt from her husband leads the poor woman into an emotional breakdown, making the farmer irate. After much name-calling, she exits and he vows to stay put in her drawing room until she pays him the money owed him. Insults fly again when she discovers he is still there and tempers climb until a duel is suggested. You’ll have to wait until the climax of the play to find out what happens but it’s safe to assume this classic Chekhov farce will have you shocked at the outcome. The characters are: Mrs. Popov, a widow and landowner, short with dimpled cheeks; Mr. Grigory Smirnov, a middle-aged gentleman farmer; Luka, Mrs. Popov’s footman, an old man; and a Gardener, Coachman, and Hired Man.

Barbara Dugger directs **A Marriage Proposal**. Female, twenty-five, unmarried, and no marital prospects: what to do? Marry the hypochondriac landowner next door who doesn’t agree with anything you say? That’s the plan in Chekhov’s hilarious story of a man, a woman, disagreements on land and dogs, and a marriage proposal. Always the master of rhetoric and well-defined characters, you won’t be disappointed with this farce. Its fast-paced humor is both physically and

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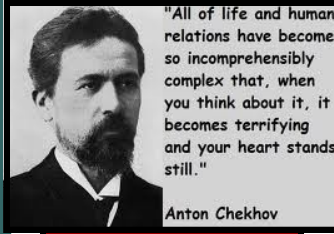
#### Board of Directors:

- Michael Johnson - Chairman
- Angie Cotter - Vice Chairman
- Anne Johnson-Loftis - Treasurer
- Shirley Spitzer - Secretary
- Tammy LeBrell - David Adkins
- Paula Hill - Amy Stuart

### MEETING TIMES

BOARD MEETING, MAY 13, 2013, 6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS’ MEETING, MAY 20, 2013, 7:00 P.M.



*Cont'd from page 1*

And mentally challenging. The characters include: Stephan Stepanovitch Chubukov, a landowner, elderly, pompous but affable; Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov, healthy, but a hypochondriac; nervous, suspicious. Also a landowner; Natalia Stepanovna, Chubukov's daughter; twenty-five but still unmarried.

And Paula Hill directs **The Celebration**. It is the day of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bank. The cashier is busy working on reports to give to

the Board members when the bank president, his wife, a pesky old woman, and extra work comes pouring in, enabling him to get his reports finished. All are confused and tempers flare as each interruption becomes a comedy of errors. The characters include: Kuzma Nikolayevitch Hirin, the cashier of the Mutual Bank and an irritable old man; Andrey Andreyevitch Shipuchin, President of the bank a vain, early middle aged man, who wears a monocle; Tatiana Aleseyevna, Shipuchin's frivolous 25- year- old wife;

Nastasia Fiodorvna Merchutkin, a pesky old woman in an old fashioned coat; and three Members of the Board, one of whom makes a speech.

These farces will not only be fun to do but will also introduce our actors to one of the classic playwrights.

As a playhouse, hopefully we can consider including more classic drama and comedy, perhaps more farces from authors such as Moliere and tragedies from Shakespeare.

## The Blue Collar Director's Notebook *by Mike Polo*

A director who can't answer or discuss interpretive questions should turn the show over to the A.D. and go home.

*(Warning: This is not advice for the highly educated or very seasoned director.)*

**So, what is a blue-collar director?** I have no formal training, never worked anywhere except in community theater, never studied acting or directing. I am a blue-collar director. Is this a philosophy? Not on your life... Think of it as a notebook with a couple of good ideas for dealing with people.

Okay, so what's it all about? It's about working with people. Take your ordinary community theater production. You generally have a mix of experienced and inexperienced actors, a tech crew in the same boat, and only a few weeks to put together a quality show.

Theater is about trust. When an actor steps on the stage for a performance, he is laying his ego on the line. He is exposed to the audience. If he screws up, they will know and he will be embarrassed. He has to trust the other actors, the crew and the director. Especially the director. He has to believe that the director isn't going to make him or let him look bad. After all, the director is looking at the show from the audience's perspective. You, as the director, have to earn that trust.

I've worked with a lot of directors and gotten a lot of different answers - most of them unusable. As an actor, I hate that... as a director, I won't do it. There are two basic kinds of questions in theater - one is interpretive, the other simple (by simple, I mean a yes/no answer is needed). A director who can't answer or discuss interpretive questions should turn the show over to the A.D. and go home. It's the simple questions that get directors in trouble.

I can't count the number of times I've asked a simple question and gotten a long-winded, philosophical reply,

puts the onus on the actor. Before everyone starts squawking, let me explain.

It's tech week (affectionately known as Hell Week); the lighting director has problems, the stage crew isn't clicking, the set needs to be finished, the décor people are fussing and the costumer has a bad cold. One of your walk-ons has a question about blocking. "Not now" won't do. You have to take the time to answer the question. But, the blocking in question could throw off the entire scene, yet he/she might have a point. You don't have the time or patience to deal with this now. "I'll have to think about it," you say. You are busy, things are hectic and you don't write it down. Will you remember? Probably not. Tack on "Ask me tomorrow night." This gives you time to think, and puts the remembering problem on the actor. Yes, it's a cop-out, but you've got ninety irons in the fire, scattering your efforts across half the theater. Your questioner has five lines to remember, as well as working on not bumping into the furniture. And it was his/her question. Realistically, it buys you time, sets up a re-

As well as not bumping into the furniture. And it was his/her question. Realistically, it buys you time, sets up a reminder and temporarily satisfies the actor. And it works. Most of the time, it'll be the first thing that actor asks at the next rehearsal - before you've been bombarded for a couple of hours. Try it.

Collaborative Directing  
Directing should involve input from everyone, cast and crew. I know, it sounds like a madhouse, but trust me.

Everyone working on a show has ideas. Some are good, others might inspire a better idea from you or someone else, and a few are just bad. Even those have a place. Bad ideas are teaching fodder. Directors have to be teachers, too. Help people learn from their mistakes, and their bad ideas. I even encourage people to argue with me. They learn, I learn, and the show is that much stronger because of it. And the next time they audition for you, they will be better and you will have a stronger cast.

If this sounds like direction by committee, it's close. It's not a democracy, though, it's benevolent dictatorship. Remember the "benevolent" part, it's important. As long as people feel comfortable bringing you their ideas, it'll work. Tell them up front that you want to hear from them, encourage them to talk with you, and remember to credit the person who came up with the idea when you use it. But - and there's always a "but" - the director has final say, no matter what.

Collaborative directing means you're going to get input from all over, including from your tech crew. This is a good thing. Some of them have probably seen more shows and worked with more directors than you have. And some of their advice will actually be about the tech-

nical aspects of the show. Of course, what the tech crew wants to do and what you want for your show may be very different. You need to know how to express what you want in terms that your tech crew will understand. If you're directing, especially in community theater, without any technical experience, *get some. Now!* And do it in the theater where you direct. If you understand the limitations and possibilities of your theater and its equipment, you will be a much better director.

As a director, it's not enough to know what isn't right, whether it comes from your actors or your tech crew. You have to explain why it isn't right, and explain what you want. They don't read minds. It's your vision, don't make them guess... right? Hah!

How to avoid the pain of beating your head against the wall? We've all had them - the actor that just doesn't "get it." What do you do? As a director, you have to understand that no two people are alike and you can't tackle everyone the same way. If at first you don't succeed, try another way. Don't hammer an actor with the same stuff over and over again, come at them from different directions. Change your approach, try something different, find out how to reach your actor. It's far easier for you, as one person, to alter your approach than it is for a cast and crew of however many to alter theirs to suit you. It's far easier for you, as one person, to alter your approach than it is for a cast and crew of however many to alter theirs to suit you.

The art of compromise. The promising actor that gave you that special something in audition just isn't measuring up. Now, you have to figure out what to do with this part. You can beat the actor up endlessly and hope for the best, but often this just demoralizes the actor and the rest of the cast. Bringing the characterization in line with the actor's capabilities is a good compromise. After all, if there was something there in auditions, the actor can't be THAT far off. Modify your vision of the character to play to the actor's strengths and minimize the demands on the actor's weaknesses and you'll have a compromise that everyone can live with...especially the audience.

*To be cont'd next month.*

### Acting Workshops *by Deb Smith*

It is now time to really do some heavy promotion for our acting workshops. The registration form is available. I will be happy to email it to anyone who has a child they would like to attend our workshops- just send me their email addresses. Hopefully, it will

be posted on our website also but in case it isn't, we need to move forward. Space is limited. We like to work with no more than 20 youths per workshop so we can devote our time and energy wisely and the kids get to participate as much as possible.

The dates again are:

Acting I- (ages 8-12) 6/1

Acting II- (ages 8-12) 6/8

Acting I- (ages 13-18) 6/15

Acting II-(ages 13-18) 6/22

The workshops run from

9:00 am—4:00 pm. Each participant should bring 2 snacks and a sack lunch.

We like to have everyone eat lunch together so we can get to know them better. Also, students need to wear comfortable clothing and tennis or closed-in shoes.

My friends at TLP,

I have no words to express my thanks and appreciation to each of you for your love and support during the last 5 months. From the moment I first got the call about my mother's stroke to now, one month after her death, I have been inundated with prayers, words of encouragement, cards, calls, texts, and hugs! Your outreach to me has been overwhelming and has made this time a bit more bearable.

I want to say thank-you specifically to director Deb Smith and the cast of "It's A Wonderful Life". I know my having to bow out the last 2 weeks of the run put an added strain on everyone. Thank you for understanding; understanding that while, there will, hopefully be more plays for me, I only had one mother, and my desire and need to be with her outweighed any other responsibilities I had. Please know that I would not have left you in such a pinch otherwise. I thank you all for understanding and going on with the show to make it a smashing success. Thank you, Deb, for going on in my place and making Clarence your own. I heard from many about what an amazing job you did to bring Clarence to life. I know it was hard on you to step up at the last minute and finish the run in my place but you outdid yourself and I thank you. To Cindy, Angie, Paula & Deb, I thank you so much for holding my hand and drying my tears through this journey. You guys have no idea how much you helped me through, just by being there when I needed you. To John & Carol, Mike & Debbie, Amy & Jim, Yvonne and all of the rest of you who sent cards and messages of comfort, thank you for sharing your love.

Lastly, to each of you who prayed for my mother and for me, know that your prayers were answered with her ultimate healing. This was not the end of her life but rather the beginning of her wonderful eternal life in heaven. I thank you for your prayers. They did make a difference. Your expressions of sympathy are much appreciated. I love you all and I thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Karen McKaig

## Bringing LIVE theatre to the Twin Lakes Area

### TWIN LAKES PLAYHOUSE

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P.O. Box 482  
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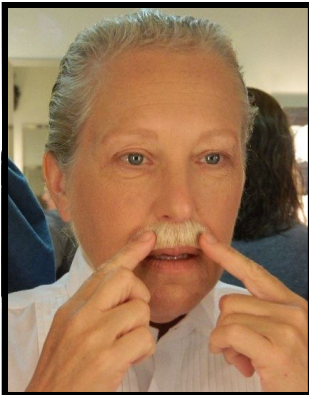
Phone: 870-424-0444

Website: [www.twinlakesplayhouse.org](http://www.twinlakesplayhouse.org)

We're on the Web  
[twinlakesplayhouse.org](http://twinlakesplayhouse.org)

Twin Lakes Playhouse is an ever-evolving community theatre, adding new and innovative ideas to our Season, with musicals, children's theatre, youth, teen and adult acting workshops, director, and improvisation workshops. We are always looking for interested members to participate in all aspects of producing plays. Community theatre is a great outlet for both children and adults, a safe place to create and wrangle your imagination. We also award a scholarship each year to a qualified student who wishes to continue their education in some aspect of the performing arts. And we have an active Benefit Program for local organizations.

### Member Focus— Stacy and Laurel Tiffin



Laurel in DRACULA



Cast of DRACULA, directed by Stacy Tiffin



Cast of PERFECT CRIME, directed by Stacy Tiffin



Laurel in TREASURE ISLAND



Stacy in TREASURE ISLAND



Stacy in BIGGER THAN LIFE

Stacy and Laurel Tiffin recently moved to Colorado. Boo Hoo! They were both such assets to our theatre when they were in Mountain Home. Even though they've moved, however, they are still active members of the playhouse. They flew out to see 12 ANGRY JURORS and had time to host a party at their beautiful home on the river in Gassville. We hope they continue to come see our shows in the future.

When Laurel accepted a job with her previous employer, their plans were to buy a home in Colorado, move there for about two years, and then return to Gassville and Twin Lakes Playhouse. When they last visited, the time they planned to stay in Colorado changed a bit but we're hoping they will still return to us in a short period of time.

Stacy not only played in productions such as Treasure Island, Dial M for Murder, Wind in the Willows, Bigger Than Life, and It's a Wonderful Life, but he also directed The Count Formerly Known as Dracula, a Justin Thyme Mystery and Perfect Crime. Laurel, a singer and dancer, played in Treasure Island, Wind in the Willows, and Dracula. She also is a wonderful seamstress and made costumes for a couple of our larger shows.

We miss this wonderful couple and think about them often. For those who know them, keep the faith of their return. For those who don't, look forward to spending time with them.

Love, TLP Playhouse Admirers