

TWIN LAKES PLAYHOUSE

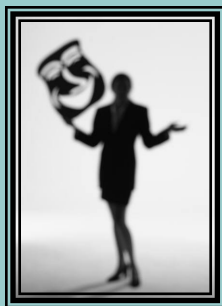
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PLAYBILL

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“IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE!” FINAL WEEKEND

If you didn’t get a chance to see this play, you missed out on something very special. This was one of the most industrious and challenging plays we’ve ever put on at TLP– at least, in the last 8 years. Not only were there tons of scene changes (40+), music cues (43), and sound effects (14), but we put on this huge production on our minute stage with little to no wings or backstage. Storing furniture backstage and in the green room was necessary. Each intermission was busy– some props were taken out of the wings and stored downstairs and others were brought up from downstairs. We had several large props (a miniature piano, a bridge, large monument signs... the list is long.) And the ACTORS did all the moving! Plus, let’s mention all the hand props, the costumes (each supporting actor played numerous parts) while the main characters had to change costumes- the play expands over almost 30 years.



THE BAILEY FAMILY Front row: Faith Harlin, Lilly Kingrey, Angie Cotter. Back row: Cameron Adkins, and Dylan Gamble.

Even though directing this show was difficult, how rewarding it is to see the final project. The actors are wonderful! You truly feel transported to the town of Bedford Falls– the audience cheers, cries, boos Mr. Potter (Stacy Tiffin), laughs, and has a merry ol’ time in this adaptation of Frank Capra’s beloved Christmas story. Originally written as a Radio Show, the author returned to his typewriter to make it into a full stage play. When I agreed to direct this show, I wasn’t prepared for the work it would entail. But, being a woman of my word, I pressured on, despite many pitfalls along the way.

We had difficulty with the scheduling of technicians, although they did a great job when they were here (Andrew Kibbe, Phillip Pool, Rashid Abdul-Algani, and Mike Johnson). I had to schedule two stage managers (Lynn Lawhon and Amy Stuart, both of whom were fabulous!), and we added a couple of backstage helpers, Dana Cook, April and Eric Webb, Michael and Shannon Adkins, and Erica Killian. And then our dear, talented Clarence (Karen McKaig) had to leave for Tulsa the Friday night of the second weekend because her mother had a serous stroke. Which left me playing Clarence, book in hand, for the rest of the run. Since all the other actors were so strong and did so well, most audience members were very forgiving and the show was still appreciated with mostly standing ovations for every performance. We’ve had requests for extending the play but at this point, it’s not even a consideration.

Cast members include: Dylan Gamble, Angie Cotter, Jim Smith, Karen McKaig/Deb Smith, Stacy Tiffin, Gary Blanck, Sue Howe, Shirley Spitzer, Lizzie Rambocek, Faith Harlin, Cameron Adkins, John-Carl Laidler, Evan Webb, Rowan Laidler, Tammy LeBrell, Pam Cook, Lilly Kingrey, and Barbara Dugger.

So, if you missed it, you missed a winner. We are TLP and we rock!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS PARADE– if you are interested in representing TLP at the Christmas Parade, please contact Deb Smith, email ozarktootsie10@yahoo.com. The parade is Friday, December 7th. We will have a BMW convertible with our signage on it. We need people to dress in costume and walk along side the car. It should be fun and help promote the playhouse. We should support more community events.

CHRISTMAS PARTY set for December 15 at Sean’s Restaurant. Please check website for ticket purchases.

NEW BOARD NOMINATIONS at this month’s Members’ Meeting. Make sure to cast your vote!

Want to help with **PLAYHOUSE RENOVATIONS**? Contact Mike Johnson, email: a174298@gmail.com.



SOLILOQUY by Deb Smith

Now that we're just wrapping up our final show for the year, it's time to start thinking about the acting workshops. I have the youth workshop curriculum finished, the improv workshops will always be on-going, so now I want to concentrate on the adult acting workshops. Most of our members have been in plays so we don't really need to start from the beginning and teach the basics. What we need now is technique— I've been reading lots of books written by our most prestigious acting teachers throughout the world. I've settled on a book written by an actor/teacher, Anton Chekhov's nephew, Michael Chekhov.

A book, *TO THE ACTOR*, was presented to me at my high school graduation by my drama teacher with a lovely inscription inside. I read and reread that book several times. Since then, the original material plus material from his second book, has been included, creating a full training program. The new book is called *ON THE TECHNIQUE OF ACTING*.

Michael Chekhov was famous for his unusual characters, his honesty on stage, and his ability to share his craft with those whom he worked. Since his stage philosophy is mostly about an actor using his *imagination* to create his characters, unlike Stanislavsky (The Method) or Meisner (Truth) who feel "recall" is one of the most important factors in creating a believable character, Michael Chekhov relies on observation and appreciation of all art, therefore expanding the actor's imagination, allowing free-thinking and creativity to grow within the actor. From my observation, I would say Johnny Depp's approach to characterization is about the same.

To hold this sort of workshop, I will need very committed people— actors who truly WANT to learn to be better on stage. Just because we are acting in a community theatre and not a professional one, we should still strive to do the best we can for every performance. I am willing to do the work to create a series of workshops but, if you are interested in attending, you will need to be just as committed. I don't care if we have a large group— in fact, a smaller, more intimate group will be better. I will limit it to 5-10 people. The workshops, because of the homework involved, will be held twice a month. We will be working on scene work, usually between two people. There will be lots of input, not only from me, but from those who are also in the workshop. Also, we will be doing acting exercises to help us tap into our imaginations.

Again, I am willing to create these workshops but I need enough interested people who are willing to WORK. So, if you are one of those people, let me know. I plan on starting these workshops within the next few months. If there is not a desire for this kind of education, I will concentrate on something else. You can email me at ozarktootsie10@yahoo.com.

Surviving the Less Than Stellar Performance By Flip Kobler

Flip Kobler began his performing career as an actor before morphing into a writer. Flip and his wife, Cindy Marcus, run Showdown Stage Company and Showdown Theater Academy in Valencia, California. Pioneer Drama Service is pleased to offer several plays and musicals by this dynamic duo, including Best of Both Worlds, the one-act version of the popular Mirror Image.

Part One

So you've been rehearsing for hours, days, weeks, months. You've poured sweat, tears, even a little blood into getting the show up and when the curtain finally rises — Ta-Da! — the reaction isn't what you hoped for. No laughs, polite applause, awkward coughs.

Suddenly you've got that mule kick in the guts feeling of disappointment, confusion, a little anger as garnish. Your cast is feeling disheartened and are so blue they want to start singing Tom Waits songs. And the question keeps coming up, "What went wrong?"

Odds are, nothing. This is just the glory of live theater. It's not always going to go perfectly. But we want to keep moral high and the good mojo flowin'.

So after every show (usually the following day before the next performance), we gather our cast to talk about the last performance. At first we focus on just the good stuff, asking them to share all the good comments and positive feedback and compliments they got. That usually gives their spirits a much-needed helium infusion. Then we start to talk about some of the possible reasons for that "let-down-iness."

There are two main reasons a performance doesn't go as well as hoped. Either the audience didn't react as we expected they would or there were mistakes, onstage or behind the scenes, that impacted the performance.

Sometimes these two things are related, but often they're not. So we'll tackle them separately and deal with unresponsive audiences here and mistakes in the next newsletter.

Audiences

Audiences vary. We've all seen it, Friday night's crowd laughed at every joke, they whooped and hooted after every song, they brought the rafters down with applause at curtain call. And Saturday's audience ... well, they sat on their hands and the only

sound was crickets. We all know that no two audiences are alike. Weeknights are harder on parents and friends who've already put in a long work day. If it's raining, or parking was a hassle, or the AC isn't working, or blah, blah, blah...

Some audiences are smilers, not laughers. That doesn't mean they're not totally diggin' the play. They're just quiet. Usually you get one good laugher in the mob and BAM! — that seems to give the rest of the audience permission to laugh. Consider a plant in the crowd, a mom or dad with a contagious laugh.

Sometimes the audience wasn't prepped for that kind of performance. A high-octane comedy can get off to a shaky start if the director's curtain speech is serious and somber. They're now ready for a subdued drama when suddenly jokes are flying and the audience doesn't know how to react.

Or they may simply be following the story. Unless you're doing *Wizard of Oz*, or *Grease*, or *Annie*, the audience may not know the tale and are laser focused on the plot. They don't laugh or clap for fear of missing a clue to a who-dun-it or to why Robin and His merry men are crashing Prince John's party.

Whatever the reason, it doesn't matter. Here's what we tell our casts: "It's *never* the audience's fault. Ever."

We can't control an audience. What we can control is ourselves. So let's make sure our diction and projection are better than ever so the spectators can understand every syllable. If the crowd is yawning, then we need to give even more energy and pick up our cues. If the audience isn't having fun, then we have a full-throttle blast. Because fun is infectious.

This is great stuff because it gives the power back to your cast. These are things they can change and control. They've worked hard to get to this point. Now isn't the time to let the audience control us. We need to stay in control and put forth our best effort ever. And when we do that, we are successful, no matter what.

Part Two

In the last issue, I talked about one of the biggest pitfalls we all dread — when a performance doesn't go as planned. This is just the glory of live theater. It's not always going to go perfectly. But as the director, it's your job to keep moral high so they can get out there at the next performance and really nail it.

Sometimes, it's more about the audience's reaction than anything going wrong onstage. But what about when a disappointing performance is because of mistakes onstage or behind the scenes?

Like I said last time, after every show (usually the following day before the next performance), we gather our cast and crew to talk about the last performance. At first we focus on just the good stuff, asking them to share all the good comments and positive feedback and compliments they got. That usually gives their spirits a much-needed helium infusion. Then we start to talk about the other stuff: the dropped lines, skipped scenes, missed cues, poorly timed blackouts, forgotten choreography, singing off key. This is a harder pill for a cast or crew to swallow because it means they are at fault.

And our reaction is: Whoo-hoo! "You made mistakes! That's awesome, you guys. Welcome to the human race." Our goal here is not to be perfect. That's a stupid and unrealistic goal. Our aim is to "dare to suck." Take a chance, take a risk, that's how we grow. The great Jessica Tandy (Your cast may not know the mighty Jessica, but should Google her) had a Broadway career that spanned over 60 years. She famously said, "In all that time, through all those shows, only one time, ONCE, did I walk offstage and say, 'that scene went perfect.'" That's a 99.985% rate of imperfection. Cool.

This isn't a movie where we can do the take over and over, or fix it in editing. This is live, and mistakes are going to happen.

So the question becomes what do we do about that? We rally our troops with love. Ask them what they can do to learn and grow from those mistakes. Can they be there for their scene partner? Can they learn each others' cues so they can pick them up? Can they help other singers get back on key?

We've found when actors stop worrying about themselves and are in it for someone else, the shows improve exponentially. Ask them to make a pledge to another actor, "I will be there for you tonight. I've got your back." This simple vow gets moral soaring and bonds your cast together.

On a tangent, let me just make a small point about performing a show more than once. We all hate to see an Olympic runner fall around that last curve. Years of training all coming down to one make-or-break moment. It's heart-rendering to watch, and heart-breaking for the one who's stumbled. But our actors aren't Olympic athletes. Sure we have budget constraints, but most of us have the freedom to perform a show more than once, doubling or tripling the odds of our cast and crew achieving the standing ovation they've rehearsed for weeks or even months to experience. Performing a show two or three times gives your cast members But what if your less-than-stellar-performance is closing night and there's no way to recoup or get a second chance?

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**Newsletter**

If you are reading this sentence, then take a moment to thank Deb Smith for churning out this newsletter month after month after month. Thanks, Deb! I appreciate your time and effort on this and what a wonderful communication device it is for TLP.

I believe Marge Rock may have started the newsletter back about ten years ago. Surprisingly enough, there was some serious resistance against it from some of the Board at that time. However, Marge persevered, and it has become a real institution and tool. As I remember, Sally Mollenkopf was her strong right arm on keeping it going, and Sally is part and parcel of it to this day.

We kind of tend to take it for granted, but it has become something that I never miss reading and look forward to immensely. If I have half a dozen items in my inbox, I click on the newsletter first.

It functions as a semi-official communication device now. Announcements, updates, needs, how-tos, what's happening, opinion, etc. are sprinkled throughout. It has local items of interest and presents theater techniques and information drawn from national sources.

It is a way to keep the membership informed, and to present different sides of issues that affect the Playhouse. It is also a place where YOU, the members, can have a voice. Just send Deb at ozarktootsie10@yahoo.com an article for inclusion and see how fast it goes in.

Again, we solicit questions and requests for subjects to be addressed, so let us know what you want to read about.

Surviving the Less than Stellar Performance continued

But what if your less-than-stellar-performance is closing night and there's no way to recoup or get a second chance?

Then after strike, or during the cast party, or as soon as possible, gather your cast and chat. Again, talk about the good stuff. Talk about the audience. But mostly, talk about the mistakes. Because that's how we learn, man. Most of us are not in this to change theater as we know it or to move our show to Broadway. (Although all of us are waiting for Guffman on some level.) We do this because we love it and we want to inspire young lives. Mistakes and disappointment are part of life. Teens especially are going to fail now and again and again. Their one true love won't love them back, they won't get into their first choice college, or get the job they want, or the promotion, or the big break, or they lose their run for Senate. That's the glory of life on Planet Earth.

I have a favorite quote from Captain Jean Luc Picard of the Starship Enterprise. "It is possible to do everything right and still fail."

It's how we deal with failure that makes us artists. So fail on, baby.

And that's our focus. Work your butt off, do your best, reach farther than you're comfortable, celebrate success and learn from failure.

That's theater. And that's life.

MEETING TIMES**Board Meeting, November 12, 2012 6:00 P.M.****Members' Meeting, November 19, 2012 7:00 P.M.****Board Meeting, December 10, 2012 6:00 P.M.****Members' Meeting, December 17, 2012 7:00 P.M.**