

Backstage Pass

Minnesota State Mankato
Theatre & Dance

April 2010

42nd Street our season “tapper”



The “Little Nifties from the Fifties” (Emily Jansen, Sarah Polis-Mares and Katherine Rapacz), the “Sexy Ladies from the Eighties” (Mackenzie Hundley, Larissa Schmitz and Laura Otremba) and “The Soldiers” (Rudolph Searles III and Craig Stastny) fighting for the heart of “Miss Peggy Sawyer” Kimberly Steffen.

Dance triumphs at regional fest

The Minnesota State University, Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance will present one of its dance pieces, “Politics Religion Sex,” at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, in May. Choreographed by faculty member Daniel Stark, it was selected following its performance at the

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Musical’s dance will astound

42nd Street is a musical with a book by Michael Stewart and Mark Bramble, lyrics by Al Dubin, and music by Harry Warren. The 1980 Broadway production, directed by Gower Champion and orchestrated by Philip J. Lang, won the Tony Award for Best Musical and became a long-running hit. The show was produced in London in 1984 (winning the Olivier Award for Best Musical) and its 2001 Broadway revival won the Tony

for Best Revival.

Based on the novel by Bradford Ropes and the subsequent 1933 film adaptation, it focuses on the efforts of famed dictatorial Great White Way director Julian Marsh to mount a successful stage production of a musical extravaganza at the height of the Great Depression.

The fact that before this the only movie musical adapted for the stage

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***Rikkie Recycle & the Eko-Kidz* hit it big**

The Minnesota State University, Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance has a long tradition of sending a children's theatre production on the road from January through March each year. This year, *Rikkie Recycle and the Eko-Kidz* joined that history, following most recent productions of *Abiyoyo*, *The Rainbow Fish*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Rising Sun/Rising Moon* and *Brave Little Tailor*.

This year, like last, the production was an original one written, directed and booked by third-year MFA Directing candidate Nikki Swoboda. Booking the show during its 8- to 10-week schedule is part of her graduate assistantship in the public relations office. Original music was by undergraduate Robb Krueger, with costuming by MFA candidate Nicole Pullaro.



Nikki Swoboda

The show was cast early in the fall and open only to first-year students (freshmen or transfer students), offering them the chance to get fully involved in a department full of students who are better known to their faculty directors. As a reward for their hard work—and getting up for morning and afternoon performances on Tuesdays and Thursdays—these students earn spots on the department's annual spring break trip to New York City.



***Rikkie Recycle* cast members include (left to right): Larissa Schmitz as Rikkie, Maggie Mae Dale as Polly Pollution and Austin England as Eric Earthenstein.**

As an added benefit, the students gain a group of close friends who will be there to work with them during their remaining years in the department.

In total, the show was performed nearly 34 times for close to 10,000 elementary school kids. In addition, a public performance on Saturday, Feb. 27, allowed other family and friends to see the fruits of their labor.

Become a part of the summer opener, *On Golden Pond*

Plans are to build a Maine summer cabin in the Andreas Theatre for the Highland Summer Theatre opening play, *On Golden Pond*. This is a seasonal home to which Norman and Ethel Thayer have returned for 48 years, so it will be a comfortable one.

As we all know, summer cabins are NOT exclusive to Maine. In fact, many Minnesota families head “up north” to “the cabin” on “the lake” whenever Memorial Day comes around. We’re hoping you’ll be willing to share your own family memories with us.

If you’ve got photos of your own summer cabin, perhaps being enjoyed by generations of family mem-

bers, we hope you’ll be willing to share them with us so we can create a lobby display for this production. In addition, include a short story if your cabin has a great history, if there’s a story that is repeated to visitors frequently, or if you’d like to tell us about those who built, purchased or first visited that cabin.

We invite you to send an electronic copy of a photo to us at theatre-arts@mnsu.edu. Include your story, if you’d like, as the text of the message. We may not be able to include them all, but we’ll do as many as we can for the show and maybe find a spot for them on our web site at MSUTheatre.com.

Summer theatre starting to heat up

On Golden Pond

by Ernest Thompson
7:30 p.m. May 25-29, 2010,
in the Andreas Theatre

*Made possible by General Mills Foundation
Gift Matching and Hale Associates*

This is the love story of Ethel and Norman Thayer, who are returning to their summer home on Golden Pond for the forty-eighth year. They are visited by their divorced, middle-aged daughter and her new fiancé, who then go off to Europe, leaving his teenage son behind for the summer. The boy quickly becomes the “grandchild” the elderly couple have longed for. This is the first time Minnesota State Mankato has presented *On Golden Pond*.

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

Music and lyrics by William Finn
and a book by Rachel Sheinkin.
7:30 p.m. June 9-12, 2010,
in the Ted Paul Theatre

This musical comedy centers around a fictional spelling bee set in a geographically ambiguous Putnam Valley Middle School in Putnam County, NY. Six quirky and very compelling adolescents compete in the Bee, run by three equally quirky grown-ups. The spellers learn that winning isn't everything as they spill out their letters and their lines on their way to their separate goals. This is the first time Minnesota State Mankato has presented *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Note: This musical includes mature themes.

The Sunshine Boys

by Neil Simon
June 22-26, 2010,
in the Andreas Theatre

Sponsored by Minnesota State Mankato TRIO Program

Al and Willie as “Lewis and Clark” were top-billed vaudevillians for over forty years. Now they aren't even speaking. When CBS requests them for a “History of Comedy” retrospective, a grudging reunion brings the two back together, along with a flood of memories, miseries and laughs. This is another of the brilliant Neil Simon's “odd couple” pairings, inspired by the author's own experience with very funny men. This is the first time for Minnesota State Mankato.

High School Musical

Book by Peter Barsocchini, music & lyrics by David Lawrence.
7:30 p.m. July 8-10 & 14-17, 2010,
in the Ted Paul Theatre
*Sponsored by Eide Bailly LLP, Orthopaedic & Fracture
Clinic, PA, and the Pamela & Wynn Kearney Fdtn.*

Troy Bolton and Gabriella Montez met over winter break after they were forced to sing together at a party. They became friends but expected not to see each other again. Then Gabriella's mother's company transferred her to another home in Albuquerque, NM, where Troy lives. Troy and Gabriella end up at the same school. They decide to audition for their school's musical and ... well, we won't give away the ending. This Disney classic, originally made for television, is now adapted for the stage — where it really belongs! This is another in a summer of Minnesota State Mankato premiers.

See them all by purchasing a season subscription

In mid-April we will be mailing out brochures for our 44th annual Highland Summer Theatre season. If you are not on our mailing list, let us know you'd like to receive a brochure by e-mailing us at theatre-arts@mnsu.edu. Otherwise, you will be able to order them at MSUTheatre.com (priority seating is given to Friends of the Theatre donors). Individual tickets for all shows go on sale May 17.

Minnesota State Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance

Dance: Performance in Washington, DC, in May

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Regional Gala Concert of the American College Dance Festival Association March 17-21 at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Thirty-two dances from 24 colleges and universities from around the country, as far away as New Mexico and Washington, competed in the festival (schools are not limited to competing in their own region). Adjudicators were made up of a panel of three nationally recognized artists in the field of dance.

From those 32, seven were selected for the Regional Gala (including "Stay," a student-choreographed work by Katie Drietz from Mankato), and two, including "Politics Religion Sex," earned performances at nationals.

For 22 years, Minnesota State Mankato has been involved with the American College Dance Festival As-

sociation and on several past occasions (2006, 2007 and 2009) has had dances adjudicated and invited to the regional conference's esteemed Regional Gala Concert.

Dance became an academic major at Minnesota State Mankato in 2005 and is the only one of its kind in MnSCU. The Department of Theatre and Dance offers the only Dance Education major in the state of Minnesota.

Director of Dance, Dr. Julie Kerr-Berry, currently serves as the Regional Director of the North Central Region of ACDFEA.

The cast for "Politics Religion Sex" is Katie Drietz (senior Dance major from Worthington); Melissa Eichelberger (senior Dance and Mass Communications double major from Lake City); Jennifer James (senior Dance and Exercise Science double major from Sioux Falls, SD); Lizzy

Luckhardt (sophomore Dance Education major from Apple Valley); Kelsey McGowan (senior Dance major from St. Cloud); Casey Morgan (sophomore Dance Education major from Rice Lake, WI); Amanda Puckett (senior Dance major from Waconia); and Craig Daniel Stastny (senior BFA Musical Theatre major from Cottage Grove). The understudies include Erin O'Connell (senior Dance major from Saugus, CA) and Jessie Loisel (senior Dance major from Ely) with Lighting Design by Professor Steve Smith and costume construction by Jessica Guthrie, the Costumer of the Department of Theatre and Dance.

The cast of "Stay" is Jennifer James (her understudy is Lauren Martin, a sophomore Dance major from Cottage Grove) and Rudolph Searles III (junior BFA Musical Theatre major from Aurora, CO); with Lighting Design by Smith and Costume Design by Guthrie.

42nd Street: Shows April 8-11 & 15-18

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW

Tickets for 42nd Street are \$20 regular, \$18 for senior citizens, youth under 16 and groups of 15 or more, and \$14 for current Minnesota State students. They may be purchased by calling 507-389-6661 from 4-6 p.m., M-F, or online at MSUTheatre.com.

This production is sponsored by Immanuel St. Joseph's-Mayo Health System.

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had been the 1974 flop, *Gigi*, did not deter producer David Merrick from taking a gamble with a \$3 million production. He felt audiences once again were ready to embrace the nostalgia craze started by the successful revivals of *No, No, Nanette*, *Irene* and his own *Very Good Eddie* several years earlier, and augmented the familiar songs from the film's soundtrack with a liberal dose of popular tunes from the Dubin-Warren catalogue.

Taking his cue from Hollywood's Busby Berkeley, famed for his elaborate musical numbers, director/choreographer Gower Champion filled the stage with spectacular dance routines, starting with forty pairs of feet tap-dancing away as the curtain slowly rose for the first act as they did at that time.

507-389-6661 MSUTheatre.com

42ND STREET

BOOK BY MICHAEL STEWART & MARK DRAMBLE, LYRICS BY AL DUBIN AND MUSIC BY HARRY WARREN

SPONSORED BY IMMANUEL ST. JOSEPH'S-MAYO HEALTH SYSTEM

7:30 P.M. APRIL 8 - 10 & 15 - 17
2:00 P.M. APRIL 10, 11, 17 & 18, 2010

The poster features a stylized city skyline at the bottom, a crescent moon and stars in the upper left, and the title "42ND STREET" in large, bold, red letters with a yellow outline. The background is dark with a subtle grid pattern.

Minnesota State Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance

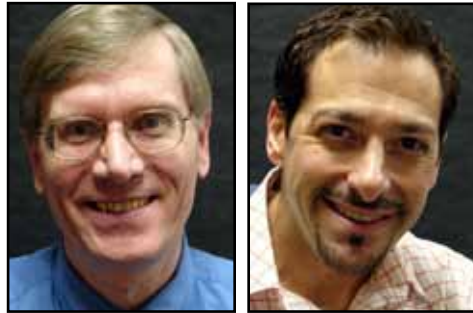
Hustoles was on the road for the Kennedy Center

Every year, the Kennedy Center selects three individuals to travel to eight geographical regions of the country from January through March, to “select” the plays and individuals who will be invited to the national Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in April. This trio is called the National Selection Team (NST).

One person is elected (by national and regional officers who specialize in playwriting) to represent all of the nation’s collegiate playwrights. Another is selected to represent the nation’s designers (by designers). The third is elected by the top leadership, current and past Region Chairs and National Officers. For 2010, Minnesota State Mankato Department Chair Paul J. Hustoles was elected to fill that position.

Paul is a past Chair of Region V and was elected at that time to be the National Chair of Chairs. He was humbled, honored and thrilled to be elected as a National Selector for KCACTF Festival 42. Over 200,000 individuals presented more than 1,300 productions last year.

In order to accomplish this adventure, Paul finally applied to take



During the spring semester sabbatical of Dr. Paul Hustoles (left), Paul Finocchiaro has been serving as Acting Chair of the Department of Theatre & Dance.

a one-term sabbatical—his first. The regional festivals usually begin on a Monday and last until the weekend. Paul has to get there by Tuesday and then is charged with seeing all plays invited to the regional festival. From those, the NST will select a very few to be performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

In addition, the NST can award “KCACTF Commendations” for outstanding work in any field (acting, directing, playwriting, design, etc.) and invite individuals from the festival to participate in the national gathering. He got to spend Mondays at home.

The process began early in the

semester. Region III (including Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana) had their festival before classes began in the first week of January. Region II (including Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia, Washington D.C., and parts of New York and Virginia) was next. Paul came “home” to Region V (Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas) during the third week.

In addition to seeing plays, Paul presented workshops and judged Irene Ryan scholarship nominees at the semifinals or finals level. He has directed the National Irene Ryan presentations at the Kennedy Center four times and last year served as the Master of Ceremonies for that event.

In his spare time this year, he is also serving as a national judge for the Mark Twain Comic Playwriting Award. One added bonus, Paul was able to connect with Minnesota State Mankato Theatre alum all across the country.

Paul reports, “This was the opportunity of a lifetime and I had a wonderful time on the road!”



Photo by Dan Norman.

See the full staging of “Politics Religion Sex” during the Spring Collection Concert April 29-30 & May 1.