

Backstage Pass

August 2011

Season brochures coming soon!

It's a three-musical season

The Minnesota State University, Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance will present three musicals during its 2011-2012 season, opening with *Rent* and closing with the Andrew Lloyd Webber favorite, *The Phantom of the Opera*. These two shows have been among the most requested musicals for several years.

Season subscription brochures will be mailed in mid-August.

In addition, a third musical — *Altar Boyz* — will be presented in November. Each of these musicals has corporate sponsorship: HickoryTech Corporation for *Rent*; Blethen, Gage & Krause for *Altar Boyz*; and Community Bank Mankato, Radio Mankato and Mankato Ford for *The Phantom of the Opera*.

The other three Mainstage season productions are a thriller, *Wait Until Dark*, a comedy, *I Hate Hamlet*, and a farce, Moliere's *The Imaginary Invalid*.

The Studio season includes five productions: *The Shape of Things*, *Why We Have A Body* and *Endgame* presented in repertory, *The Gingerbread Lady* by Neil Simon and Sam Shepard's *True West*. The Minnesota State Mankato Women's Center returns as sponsor for *Why We Have A Body*.

Dance Concerts will be presented in December and April, with at least two guest dance artists being hosted in 2012, including public performances. It will include Dance Zorongo in January (in the Centennial Student Union's Ostrander Auditorium) and Flying Foot Dance Company in February in the Ted Paul Theatre.

Season tickets are \$100 and will go on sale by mail order ONLY in mid-August. Individual tickets for all shows go on sale Sept. 20 online at MSUTheatre.com or by calling or stopping by the Theatre & Dance Box Office in the Performing Arts Center lobby at 507-389-6661 between 4 & 6 p.m., Monday-Friday beginning Sept. 20.



Jake Nathan quickly captures Vegas job

When Jacob Nathan arrived at the Minnesota State University, Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance in fall 2007, he quickly proved himself to be a go-to guy in regards to every aspect of technical theatre. It's much the same position he held at Owatonna High School, which kept bringing him back after graduation to serve as technical director of their shows.

As the technical director at Minnesota State Mankato for several shows during his undergraduate career, Nathan was charged with taking the design drawings of the scenic designer and making them come to life on stage. Additionally, his advanced skills as a welder made him an invaluable member of the shop crew for many other productions.

Now as a summer graduate of the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) track in Design/Technology, Nathan has landed an incredible first job as a rigger for Cirque du Soleil's "O" show in Las Vegas, NV. (Nathan began the job while completing a final general education class online that should lead to a summer graduation.) When interviewing Nathan for an internship, the Cirque du Soleil people recognized his skills and immediately turned it into a hiring interview.

"I generally work as a maintenance rigger," Nathan writes from his home in Henderson, NV. "We are responsible for inspection, maintenance and fabrication of all of the cables and things that handle cables."

Although admitting his job is hard to describe, he provides this example: "[O]n a flying piece of scenery, [the] automation [crew is responsible for] the winch, carpentry owns the set piece and rigging takes care of connecting the two. ... We do some of the heavier fabrication and welding as well for the theatre."

In advance of starting to run the live shows in a few weeks, he continues his sharp learning curve. Because much of the show takes place in and around the water, he must learn both "a wet track and a dry track," he said. He's familiar with much of the dry track work because it's done on deck or at any of the various levels, but for the wet track he has had to learn SCUBA. As of Friday, July 15, he is a certified Rescue Diver, which is required before diving during the show. In addition, they are fast-tracking him through various First Aid, OSHA and diving certifications.

All of this comes less than three months after he worked as a microphone technician for the Minnesota State Mankato Theatre & Dance season-closing production of *The Producers*.

A pretty low-key guy in person, Nathan's excitement for his new job comes through in the details he relays.

"The show itself is incredible. It takes place in, on and above a 1.5 million gallon pool that has seven lifts. There is an incredible system of cable [riggings] above the stage about 60 feet up. It holds the carousel, which weighs around 11 tons and can do some pretty crazy stuff." They have as many as two dozen performers suspended by this system at one

For more Alumni updates, visit our website at MSUTheatre.com

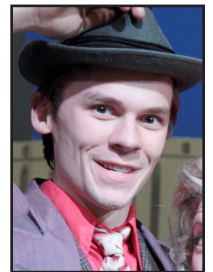
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Jerry Jay Cranford, spring 2010 MFA Directing graduate, has been busy since he graduated. His life in his home of Kansas City, MO, has been filled with acting, directing, choreographing and teaching, including:



He performed numerous roles in *The Producers* at Starlight Theatre; appearing as Max and dancer/ensemble in *Cabaret* for Kansas City Repertory Theatre; appearing as Man 1 in *39 Steps* at American Heartland Theatre; and playing Jacob and Potiphar in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at The New Theatre in Overland Park, KS. He directed the Equity production of *Forever Plaid* for The American Heartland Theatre; *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* for The Barstow Academy (also choreographed); choreographed *The Fantasticks* for The Jewish Community Center; musical staging for Equity production of *No Way To Treat a Lady* at The American Heartland Theatre; and choreographer for *Once on This Island* for The Jewish Community Center.

J. Alexander Coe, spring 2011 BFA Musical Theatre graduate who just completed his four-show Highland Summer Theatre 2011 marathon, will spend the next 9 months in Louisville, KY, as part of the Actors Theatre of Louisville's Acting Apprentice Company. It is the same program that Katharine Moeller, 2008 BFA Musical Theatre graduate, participated in following graduation. The Acting Apprentice Company is one of the nation's oldest pre-professional training programs. Each year more than 2,000 young artists audition but only 22 are selected for the season-long residency at the Tony Award-winning home of the Humana Festival of New American Plays.



Special thanks to our this season's show sponsors

We couldn't do everything we like to do without the constant and consistent support of patrons who buy tickets and become Friends of the Theatre and businesses that buy ads and/or become Corporate Sponsors.

In a future edition of *Backstage Pass*, we'll thank advertisers by name (sales are continuing at this point), but right now we'd like to thank Corporate Sponsors for this season's Mainstage shows.

First this season is **HickoryTech Corporation**, which returns for its 18th year with a sponsorship of *Rent*. It all began back in 1994 with *South Pacific* and has continued through *Brigadoon*, *Footloose*, *Peter Pan*, *Into the Woods* and last year's *Chicago*.

Next is Blethen, Gage & Krause, which started in 2005 with *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress* and continued

through such classics as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Bus Stop*, *The Christmas Carol* and last year's *The Odyssey*. This year they sponsor *Altar Boyz* for their seventh show.

Last season a new name appeared as **Community Bank Mankato** sponsored *Born Yesterday* in the Andreas Theatre. This season they return, but with a much bigger show and with corporate sponsor partners. They will be sponsoring our season finale, *The Phantom of the Opera*, with Radio Mankato and Mankato Ford.

Finally, we welcome back the **Minnesota State Mankato Women's Center** as sponsor for our Studio production of *Why We Have a Body*. Two seasons ago they also sponsored *Virgin Territory*.

Thank you so much, Corporate Sponsors!!! Your continuing support is greatly appreciated.

507-389-6661 MSUTheatre.com

RENT

Music & lyrics by Jonathan Larson. Book by Jonathan Larson.
Based on Puccini's *La Bohème*.

Sponsored by HickoryTech Corporation
Presented in the Ted Paul Theatre

7:30 P.M.
Sept. 29-Oct. 1
& Oct. 6-8

2:00 P.M.
Oct. 8 & 9, 2011

This Show includes mature language and themes

Season subscriptions on sale until Oct. 9!
Visit MSUTheatre.com for information and to purchase individual tickets.

Theatre & Dance
MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

The poster for *Rent* was designed by Art major Anna Beehler, who will design other posters this season.

JAKE NATHAN: Sharp learning curve (from page 2)

time, he says.

This "Minnesota Nice" kid finds himself working with many of the top people in their fields.

"The performers are world-class athletes. I think we have somewhere around 11 Olympians on the cast. They come from all over the world and speak many different languages.

"It's unbelievable to sit in the green room and hear conversations in French, Russian, English and German."

This show will have an extended

run in Henderson, and has already proven to be a head-spinning experience. "It went so fast it seems like I was only there for a few weeks."

There's one other thing Nathan will need to get used to: "I do miss striking sets and opening new shows [every few weeks]. I won't be doing much of that here."

During his career at Minnesota State Mankato, Nathan served in these capacities:

Technical Director: *Twelve Angry Men* and *Born Yesterday* in the Main-

stage, *Dog Sees God* and *See What I Wanna See* in the Studio.

Assistant Technical Director: *Noises Off* and *On the Razzle* in the Mainstage.

Scene Shop Assistant for Highland Summer Theatre 2009: *Death-trap*, *I Love You, You're Perfect*, *Now Change*, *Plaza Suite* and *Damn Yankees*.

Sound Assistant: *Into the Woods* on the Mainstage.

Microphone Technician: *The Producers* on the Mainstage.