

Backstage Pass

Minnesota State Mankato
Theatre & Dance

May 2011

It's Highland Summer Theatre '11

Alex Coe slated for all four shows

The Minnesota State University, Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance is thinking summer, with season subscriptions for the 45th annual Highland Summer Theatre season on sale now!

As always, the season will include two plays in the Andreas Theatre, two musicals in the Ted Paul Theatre, the return of alumni in acting and design roles, and a healthy sprinkling of current and graduating students all around. In keeping with the summer school schedule, the first show opens in late May with the final one closing before the end of July.

The season opens May 24 in the Andreas Theatre with "Almost, Maine" by John Cariani. Through a series of vignettes, the residents of Almost, Maine explore the fun, foibles and pain of love. Performances are 7:30 p.m. May 24-28; it is made possible by General Mills Foundation Gift Matching Program.

The cast of four features two spring BFA graduates (Megan Volkman-Wilson and J. Alexander Coe), one 2010 alum (Mathias Becker) and one current student (Jessica Dougherty).

"Clue: The Musical" is the first musical of the summer, running at 7:30 p.m. June 8-11 in the Ted Paul Theatre. The book is by Peter Depietro, music by Galen Blum, Wayne Barker and Vinnie Martucci, lyrics by Tom Chiodo. It is based on the Parker Brothers' Board Game.

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The Department of Theatre & Dance thanks everyone who supported us in our ongoing "Odyssey" production. About 50 faculty and students made the trip to Washington, D.C., for the performance at the Kennedy Center (called by some from outside the department the highlight of the national festival), our first trip there in 35 years. To see some photos from the receptions before and after the performance, the students working to get the show set up and a video clip of the post-show presentation, visit MSUTheatre.com, click on "Performance," then "Past Performances" and then the letter "O." Links are located at the top of the show's photo page.

A couple alums return for summer

Although we have several spring and summer 2011 graduates taking part in Highland Summer Theatre this year, we've also got a couple from long ago.

The first you'll see is Mathias Becker, who graduated last spring with his BFA in Musical Theatre. Originally from Yankton, SD, his first post-college professional show was with Anoka Community Theatre where he played "Riff" in *West Side Story*. Next he participated in

a staged reading of the new musical *Deal, Damn!* at The Loring Theatre and played "Wolf" in *Into the Woods* at Bloomington Civic Theatre.

Some of his favorite Minnesota State Mankato roles were "Malvolio" in *Twelfth Night*, "Bob Cratchit" in *A Christmas Carol* and appearing in Michael John LaChiusa's *See What I Wanna See*. He also appeared here in *Mame*, *Miss Saigon*, *Thoroughly*

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Minnesota State Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance

Dance to expand its offerings next year

Thanks to money available to arts organizations for outreach through Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Funds, the Minnesota State Mankato Dance Program will welcome artists for the Fall Dance Concert and two separate times during our 2011-12 season. It's possible more will be added later.

Here is the Dance performance schedule as of now:

Fall Dance Concert

7:30 p.m. Dec. 2 and 2 p.m. Dec. 3, 2011, in the Ted Paul Theatre
The Department's dancers will be joined by performers from the Zenon Dance Company of Minneapolis in the Fall Dance Concert. Funding made possible through Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Funds.

Spring Dance Concert

7:30 p.m. April 27 and 2 p.m. April 28, 2012, in the Ted Paul Theatre
To conclude the year, Dance students and faculty present a dynamic concert featuring several dance styles.

Dance Zorongo visits Minnesota State Mankato

The Department of Theatre & Dance will host an appearance of Dance Zorongo of Minneapolis on Friday, Jan. 27, 2012, in the Ostrander Auditorium of the Centennial Student Union. Funding made possible through Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Funds.

Flying Foot Dance Company shows off!

Flying Foot Dance Company of Minneapolis will perform in the Ted Paul Theatre on Friday, Feb. 29. Funding made possible through Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Funds. Watch MSU Theatre.com and MSUDance.com



Photo by Dan Norman

HIGHLAND: Michael James to direct *Clue* (from page 1)

internationally popular game comes to life—and death—as the audience is called upon to help discover who killed Mr. Boddy. New sponsor is Gislason & Hunter Law Office.

Directed by spring MFA Directing graduate Michael James, it features Theatre & Dance faculty member Paul Finocchiaro as Mr. Boddy along with a colorful cast of well-known characters, including Alex Coe as Prof. Plum.

Next is “The Owl and the Pussycat,” Bill Manhoff’s story that became a popular movie starring George Segal and Barbra Streisand. An aspiring author reports his neighbor to the landlord, thinking she’s a prostitute plying her trade.

When it’s discovered she’s an actress and model, she forces him to take her in since she’s been evicted. Performances are 7:30 p.m. June 21-25 in the Ted Paul Theatre, sponsored by the Minnesota State Mankato TRIO Program.

The cast of two consists of Coe and 2002 Theatre & Dance alumnus (and Mankato native) Zillah Glory (formerly Langsjoen), and it is directed by Finocchiaro.

The summer closer will be “Annie,” the musical adaptation of the comic strip character Little Orphan Annie. Performances are 7:30 p.m. July 7-9 and 13-16 in the Ted Paul Theatre, sponsored by Eide Bailly, Orthopaedic & Fracture

Clinic and Farrish Johnson Law Office. Annie is a spunky Depression-era orphan determined to find her parents who abandoned her years ago on the doorstep of a New York City orphanage run by the embittered Miss Hannigan. Annie foils Miss Hannigan’s evil machinations, befriends President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and finds a new family in billionaire Oliver Warbucks and a lovable mutt Sandy.

It features Coe as Miss Hannigan’s brother, Rooster, Volkman-Wilson as Hannigan and Becker as Daddy Warbucks.

Season subscriptions are \$60 (plus \$5 processing per order) and are available via mail order or online. Individual tickets for ALL shows go on sale May 16.

ALUMNI: Zillah graduated in 2002 (from page 1)



Mathias Becker as “Malvolio” in *Twelfth Night*



Zillah Glory as “Linda Loman” in *Death of a Salesman*

Modern Millie, Peter Pan, The Lark, Gypsy, Noises Off and Bus Stop, receiving Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship nominations for the last two. Previous HST performances include *Smokey Joe’s Café, The Music Man* and *Damn Yankees*.

Zillah Glory (Langsjoen) is a 2002 Theatre Performance graduate from Minnesota State Mankato who appeared in *Death of a Salesman* and *Lion in Winter*, among many others. In 2002, she was earned top Classical Acting honors at KCACTF’s Region V Festival.

Among her other stage credits are “Valerie” in *The Weir* for the San Jose Repertory Theatre, the title character in *Eurydice* and “Eliante” in *The Misanthrope* for The New Repertory Theatre. In addition, she was “Carly” in the film adaptation of the popular books “Conversations with God” and has done several commercials and voiceovers. She received the Metrolina Awards’ Best Actress in a Comedy 2006 for her portrayal of “Alex” in *On the Verge*.

This is her first appearance in a Minnesota State Mankato Department of Theatre & Dance production since the Andreas Theatre’s opening production *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in summer 2000, in which she played “Maggie.”

Also making his Minnesota State Mankato debut in a show is seven-year faculty member Paul Finocchiaro. He has appeared in several dance concerts and directed and/or choreographed many productions, but never has he been a character in a show. He will appear as “Mr. Boddy” in *Clue: The Musical*, immediately before directing J. Alexander Coe, spring BFA Musical Theatre graduate, and Zillah Glory in *The Owl and the Pussycat*.

Individual tickets for all shows in the HST season may be purchased beginning Monday, May 16, at MSUTheatre.com or by calling 507-389-6661.

Special thanks to our Highland Summer Theatre sponsors

Highland Summer Theatre welcomes the **General Mills Gift Matching** program in sponsorship of *Almost, Maine*. Last season we welcomed General Mills Gift Matching Program in its sponsorship of *On Golden Pond*.

The **Minnesota State TRIO Program**

is back in its summertime tradition. Past sponsored shows include *The Sunshine Boys, The Odd Couple* and *The Boys Next Door*.

For a sixth summer, **Eide Bailly LLP** and the **Orthopaedic & Fracture Clinic, PA**, are summer sponsors. This is the sec-

ond year for **Farrish Johnson Law Office, Chtd.** Thanks for sponsoring *High School Musical, A Christmas Carol, Of Mice and Men, The Crucible, Grease, Bye Bye Birdie, The Music Man* and *Damn Yankees*.

Welcome, **Gislason & Hunter**, in its first sponsorship for *Clue: The Musical*.