

We Love You, Colleen! ACT Hires Colleen Rua as Artistic Director

by Diane Clinton

ACT is beginning a new era and, as with any new beginning, there are changes afoot. So it is with great excitement and anticipation that ACT has named Colleen Rua as Artistic Director, starting September 1st. Colleen will oversee the artistic and educational aspects of ACT's program as well as handling much of the administration of the organization previously handled by volunteer board members. She will continue to direct plays and workshops and promises to play Twizzle as often as she can.

Colleen is not new to ACT. An ACTor at the age of fourteen, Colleen is also an old friend (see Interview, page 2). Colleen has directed many popular ACT plays including *Oliver*, *Our Town*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and last summer's *Bye Bye Birdie*. In addition to the time that Colleen has spent with ACT,



ACT's Artistic Director Colleen Rua with ACTors Devlin Daley, Becca Smith, and Georgia Grady.

Photo by Jeanne Meister

her career also includes directing productions with kids at Newton North High School, Wakefield Repertory Theatre, and The Winthrop Playmakers. Colleen is a director, actor, and is the co-founder of South City Theatre. In addition to her new position with ACT, Colleen begins a doctoral program in theater at Tufts University this fall.

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ACT Announces 2006-07 Productions:

Fall

The Twits (for ages 7-10), directed by Kate Wisnioski

Jeanne D'Arc (for ages 11-17), directed by Emily Allen and Kate Hamilton



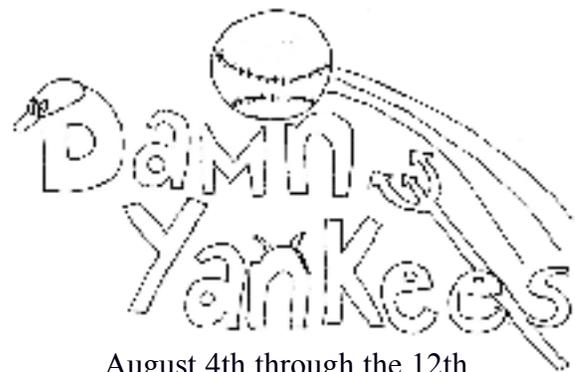
Winter Musical

Into the Woods (two casts: 7-11, 12-17), directed by Colleen Rua

Two Original Plays during February and April Vacation Weeks (ages 7-10)

Spring Shakespeare

Much Ado About Nothing, directed by Colleen Rua



August 4th through the 12th
 at the

Regent Theatre, 7 Medford Street, Arlington

Purchase tickets online at:

<http://act.arlington.ma.us/shows/#Ads>

Colleen Rua Named Artistic Director *continued from Page 1*

Colleen is a dynamic and committed individual, and this new position opens up new opportunities for growth and creates a level of professionalism that will serve as a sound administrative foundation for ACT. This position, and specifically Colleen herself, will provide the experience and tools necessary to meet the constantly increasing needs of our group and the community that we serve.

Current ACT president Steve Smith is excited to be working with Colleen in her new role, which leaves him free to pursue other aspects of ACT's growth. "In some ways, I feel that all of us on the ACT Board have been engaged in ship-building, creating a vibrant, viable, fun organization. We've found a terrific captain for our ship in Colleen. Now it's time to set sail," Steve says.

The strength of any organization depends on the soundness of its administration and the level of commitment that its members possess. Colleen is a passionate crusader for ACT and we hope you will join us in welcoming her to our community in her new capacity.

Changing Hats: Changes Ahead for ACT President by Diane Clinton

What do you say about someone who has done it all? Thank you, of course!

Steve Smith is a keystone in the ACT community. Known to all for his endless energy, drive and stamina, Steve maintains a level of professionalism and excitement at ACT that is the envy of many other theater organizations. He is also a driving force in ACT's ability to keep its eye on the future and what it takes to stay a success.

As President of the ACT Board, Steve continues to oversee and guide the many facets of ACT. However, with the creation of the new position of Artistic Director, ably filled by Colleen Rua, Steve will now have an opportunity to pursue and investigate the long time hopes and dreams of ACT, including fundraising and finding a permanent home for ACT.

"Wouldn't it be nice to drop your kids off at the same place every time, whether it's for a rehearsal or workshop or special event?" he asks. "More importantly, a permanent home for ACT is part of the overall plan of ensuring that this great organization continues for the next generation of ACTors and their families. I'd like to be able to point to this organization ten years down the road and see the same lively, thriving community theatre organization that ACT is now."

It is in great part what Steve Smith contributes that makes all of our dreams possible.

Thank you, Steve. We are fortunate to have you.

An Interview with Colleen Rua, ACT's first Artistic Director

ACT Board Member Diane Clinton (our own Baba Wawa) sat down with Colleen via email to discuss her new position and her history with ACT.

Baba Wawa: What are your thoughts about becoming the AD and what do you bring to this role?

Colleen: I am thrilled to take on the role of Artistic Director with ACT. In assuming this new role, I bring a passion for both theatre and education. I also bring the experience of having worked as an actor, director, producer and stage manager in various educational and professional theatres. Finally, I have a strong belief in ACT's mission and an energy and optimism to act as a catalyst for the development of new opportunities for ACTors.

Baba Wawa: Tell me about your history with ACT and your very first ACT show as an actor? As a director at ACT? How do you look at things now, as you have come full circle?

Colleen: At age 14, I was cast in my first ACT show, a play called *Fortress*, by Michael Scanlon. I played Kim Nolan, a sarcastic teenage outcast dealing with an abusive father. In 2002, I was looking for opportunities to direct. I saw an ad for an Assistant Director for ACT's production of *Patchwork Girl of Oz*, directed by Rose Carlson. She brought me onboard, and I have been working with ACT ever since. I have been pleased to find that the organization has grown from a handful of kids working on a small play, to entire families contributing to everything from small plays, to Shakespeare, to full-scale musicals.

Baba Wawa: What are you most excited about as ACT moves forward with you as its first Artistic Director, and as Steve (ACT's president) passes the baton and some of his many hats to you?

Colleen: I am most excited about the opportunity to develop new programs and offer ACTors more opportunities for experiences and training in all aspects of theatre. We have some exciting things planned for the upcoming season!

I am so grateful to Steve for his support, trust and guidance over the years. He has worked so hard to bring ACT to the point where it is now. I think we are great collaborators, and will work together to make this a smooth transition.

ACT's Fall Workshop Schedule

JR Discovery Theatre for the Younger Artist

Instructor: Jacqueline Rossi Ages: 4-5

Saturdays, 9:30 AM to 10:15

Session I: Sept 16th- Oct 7th

Cost: \$60

Through theatrical play, music, yoga and movement, children learn to sing in different languages, act out musical stories, practice simple yoga moves, work collaboratively with each other and, most importantly, have fun.

Playwriting: Mystery Theater

Instructor: Steve Smith Ages: 10-12

Tuesdays, 4 to 6 PM, Sept 19th-Dec 12th

Cost: \$100

Join Steve Smith for a ten week exploration of mystery writing! The mystery play the group creates will be performed by ACT's February Vacation Week Drama Camp.

Intermediate Acting

Instructor: Colleen Rua Ages: 9-12

Wednesdays, 3-4:30 PM, Sept 20th-Oct 25th

Cost: \$108

ACTors will delve into characterization and character development through movement and voice training; working with a scene partner and as part of an ensemble; and working with scripted material.

Directing: Fall, 2006

Instructor: Colleen Rua Ages: 12-17

Wednesdays, 4:30-6 PM, Sept 20th-Oct 25th

Cost: \$108

ACTors will learn the basics of directing including: using the stage in traditional and innovative ways; script analysis; working with actors to create characters; set design; and managing the production process. ACTors who have taken this workshop will be considered for a directing internship on a future show.

Storytime Theater

Instructor: Liz Buchanan Ages: 4-5

Thursdays, 1:30-2:30 PM, Sept. 14th-Nov. 16th

No classes on October 5th.

Cost: \$108

Together, the class will choose a story or stories that will be the basis for our performance. The children will choose which characters they'd like to play, then incorporate a variety of activities including movement, songwriting, singing, and having fun with costumes and props. Our focus will be on-stage attitude and becoming a character.

Invent a Musical

Instructor: Liz Buchanan Ages: 6-9

Thursdays, 3:30-5 PM, Sept. 14th-Nov. 16th

No classes on October 5th.

Cost: \$162

There are no limits to our creativity in this class! We'll start with acting games and improv, along with some exercises to get our creative juices flowing. From there, we'll write and perform our own script and songs, along with creating zany costumes and props.

Magic Carpet Riding: Fall, 2006

Instructor: Medina Mahfuz Ages: 6-8

Mondays, 4-5:30 PM, Sept 18th-Nov 13th

Cost: \$162

Hop on Medina's Magic Carpet as the class rides around the world. Each week, the class will land in a new place and explore the world that exists there. We'll use myths, creative movement, props, scenes, games and much, much more.

Creative Movement and Stories: Fall, 2006

Instructor: Medina Mahfuz Ages: 4-5

Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30 PM, Sept 19th-Nov 14th

Cost: \$108

In this nine-week class, the students will learn the basics of controlling their bodies and voice using movement. They will use music and words to move through the space and to act out numerous stories.

Magic Carpet Riding for Homeschoolers

Instructor: Medina Mahfuz Ages: 6-8

Tuesdays, 10-11:30 AM Sept 19th-Nov 14th

Cost: \$162

Magic Carpet Riding at a different time--for homeschoolers! It is a surprise each week as the carpet goes from Egypt to Space to Australia to the circus!

Playmaking for Homeschoolers

Instructor: Medina Mahfuz Ages: 9-12

Tuesdays, 12-2 PM, Sept 19th-Nov 14th

Cost: \$216

In this two hour workshop students will work together as a group to create a play. They will start from a theme and then use improvisation to develop scenes, characters and eventually a well-structured play. Students must have some experience with theater. There will be a performance of their play at the end of the nine weeks.

**More workshops!
Turn to Page 4**

Fall Workshop Schedule (cont.)

Arts Alive!

Instructor: Medina Mahfuz Ages: 8-11
Wednesdays, 4-5:30 PM, Sept 20th-Nov 15th
Cost: \$162

This is a class for children who are familiar with some movement. In this nine-week class, students will use acting basics to explore different art forms. They will create scenes from a painting, write monologues from a statue and use music as an inspiration for an adventure.

The Art of Improvisation

Instructor: Medina Mahfuz Ages: 11-13
Wednesdays, 6-7:30 PM, Sept 20th-Nov 15th
Cost: \$162

In this nine-week class students will learn the rules to improvise as a team. They will then act on their feet as new characters in new places and let their imagination take them anywhere. Using the skills of improvisation they will play games and work to develop a performance piece for parents and friends.

Musical Theatrics: Animal Sounds-Session I & II

Instructors: Anna Maughin and Medina Mahfuz Ages: 4-6
Two Saturdays
Session I: September 23rd and 30th, 10:30-11:30 AM
Session II: October 7th and 14th, 10:30-11:30 AM
Cost: \$50

In this two-week workshop, students will use music and movement to create animals. They will be learning the basics of musical composition and creative play. They will sound and move like their animal creations and interact with other animals in a musically composed rainstorm.

Musical Theatrics: Composing a Scene-Session I&II

Instructors: Anna Maughan and Medina Mahfuz Ages: 7-10
Two Saturdays
Session I: September 23rd and 30th from Noon to 1:30 PM
Session II: October 7th and 14th, Noon to 1:30 PM
Cost: \$75

This workshop teaches students to compose a piece of music that will inspire them to create movement, characters and even short scenes. They will be learning basic musical composition, basic scene structure and most importantly, TEAMWORK!!!

ACT's Fourth Annual Young Playwrights' Competition

ACT is now accepting submissions to our **Fourth Annual Young Playwrights' Competition**. Past winners have included the scripts for *The Replacement*, *The Well in the Woods*, and *Loving Louisa*. Last year's winner, *Jeanne D'Arc* by Emily and Miles Allen, will be produced this fall. ACT will award \$100 to the winning script and will produce the show at some point during the next year. The deadline for submissions is September 1st, 2006. For more information, go to <http://ACT.arlington.ma.us/PWContest/>.

Website Changes for ACT

by Steve Smith and Norton Allen

To the outside world, many of the changes the ACT website will be going through in the next few weeks will be invisible. Others will be immediately apparent, like on-line payment for workshops, shows, and tickets. Webmaster Norton Allen has been working tirelessly in the subterranean depths of the ACT website to institute these changes and others.

Perhaps the biggest change, is our host: we say farewell to ConnActivity, ACT's host for many years. ConnActivity's Rich Brennan allowed ACT to use their server free of charge for seven years—a huge thank you to him for providing this valuable community service, allowing ACT to grow in size and web presence during that time.

Our new host is TextDrive. Norton (what would we ever do without him?) tells us that “features of the new server include better support, separate mailing lists for each show and/or committee, less downtime, plus our own e-mail addresses (your_name@act.arlington.ma.us) and, on the back end, a huge selection of up-to-date tools and buzzwords to help us automate more of the site.”

So look for the new features, and please give us any feedback about how the website works or doesn't work for you.

ACT Goes to the Theater

Following the success of last year's ACT Goes to the Theater Program, where ACTors and their families enjoyed professional shows such as *Wicked*, *Joseph*, *Hairspray*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Lord of the Flies*, ACT will again be offering a full range of shows at discount prices. Once again, we'll be seeing shows through Broadway in Boston (*All Shook Up*, *Altar Boyz*, and *High Fidelity*, among others) North Shore Music Theare, Wheelock Family Theatre, and others. For more information and details, go to:

<http://act.arlington.ma.us/workshops.html>

Voices of ACT

Directing ACT's Vacation Week Camp Show

by Emily Allen

The following two articles are part of a new series entitled "Voices of ACT". This column is open to any member of the ACT community who'd like to share his or her thoughts and experiences. Submissions can be made by email to: ACT02174@yahoo.com.

My ACTing Experiences

by Hannah Allen

I first acted with ACT the summer before my freshman year of high school in *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*. It was a crazy, nonsensical production that I hammed it up in. Since then, I've gone from cameo roles to leads and actor to director in countless fabulous productions by this company.

The fact that ACT allowed me to act as a man, in a musical no less, was a precious and unheard of opportunity I was able to find nowhere else! We weren't expected to be so professional that it ruined the experience or limited our abilities. We were just kids, putting on a show.

I have directed and co-directed three of my own productions, and was able to experience a show from the technical end of the spectrum. For example, it was me telling everyone else what to do instead of taking direction.

Through ACT I have had the chance to act opposite some of the most talented children and teenagers I've met. I became amazingly close with two sets of school vacation campers who are like my own kids.

I'll always be grateful to ACT for the experiences I've had in this theater. The stage will always be my first love!

Hannah Allen, is 17 years old and recently graduated from Arlington High School. She came to ACT four years ago as a young teen. Some of her favorite productions were "Our Town" and "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer." She will attend Hampshire College in the fall to continue acting and hopefully study in the Middle

First of all, let it be said that ACT has done a great thing in initiating the school vacation camp programs. It is not only a fun experience for the kids involved. It is an educational experience for all ACTors learning to be directors, stage managers, interns or those who wish to be part of the production teams of future shows. As one of two directors of February's *Picture This*, I found that more than ever, ACT is giving opportunities to kids who just want *more* out of camp.

The entire process starts in the fall without a script. Then Steve's playwriting class puts one together, and finally delivers the finished product to us—that is, those who will make the script a reality. What comes out is a full-fledged production, made from scratch in the course of a week.

Upon entering the world of children's camp, one is overwhelmed with the responsibilities coming from left and right. Never before was I able to give cues, or have the duty of cleaning up after a hard day of blocking, painting, and continuous fun. Nothing in that week was a chore, because in the end, no matter how many naps you had to take or how many coffees you drank, you knew that the end product would be something magical—a play written by kids and put on by kids, made from your hard work and their perseverance.

Every day in camp begins with theater games and warm ups, directly followed by scene work and painting. The sets of *Picture This* consisted of backdrops of paintings and one of a classroom, where the students convene after being sucked into three drastically different paintings. Knowing that the kids created their own world for the play is what's best about having a blank canvas. In one way the entire play was a blank canvas, but the kids knew what they wanted to do with the script; they knew how to bring characters to life. Maybe it was the theater games, or perhaps they are all theater geniuses, but either way, the kids took their parts and ran with them until the finished product was a colorful array of characters, sets, and movements.

It still amazes me that in one week of hard work and loads of fun, we were able to create a show that incorporated kids in all aspects, from start to finish. In the end, camp was not only a pastime for vacation, it was an unforgettable experience.

Emily Allen is 15 years old and attends Arlington High School. She has been a member of ACT for 4 years. Some of her favorite productions were "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream". She plans to continue participating in ACT programs and plays in the future.

ACTors! Are you interested in directing a show or becoming a directing intern for ACT? If so, you need to take Colleen's Directing Workshop, which will be offered this fall and again in the spring. For more details, go to the workshops page:

<http://act.arlington.ma.us/workshops.html>



Join us
at



*ACT's Summer Fundraising Reception
at Tryst Restaurant in Arlington,
on Monday evening, August 7th at 6:30 PM*

Our First Summer Fundraising Reception is bound to be great evening! Cocktails, appetizers, adults—and not a single chicken finger! Join us on Monday, August 7th at 6:30 PM at this great restaurant, to help support an organization we all love. Tickets are \$35 per peson.

All the details of the evening can be found at:

<http://act.arlington.ma.us/Fundraiser2006.pdf>.

Please print the invitation and the RSVP and mail with your check to Jackie Daley, 182 Pleasant Street, Arlington MA 02476. Call Jackie at 781-648-1477 if you have any questions.

ACT will also be holding a 50/50 raffle to be drawn that evening. Tickets are \$100 but only 100 tickets will be sold. Please consider participating in our raffle and win a chance at up to \$5000, or sending a contribution even if you are unable to attend.

We hope to see you there!



P.O.Box 1076
Arlington, MA 02474

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**ACT's Summer
Fundraiser at
Tryst, August 7th**

**Renew Your ACT
Membership Today! And
come to Tryst, too!**



We need your help! Become a Member of ACT today!