



In this issue...

- * ACT's Upcoming Shows and Workshops!
- * Behind ACT's New Logo
- * How to Wail & Grieve Like a Pro

Also..

- * Sneak Peek at Summer, 2009's new format!
- * Spotlight on the Board
- * Why I contribute to ACT

**ARLINGTON
CHILDREN'S
THEATRE**

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

COLLEEN'S CORNER

A long standing cliché in the theatre is the phrase, "What's my motivation?" What exactly does this mean? Every line an actor says on stage needs to have purpose behind it. So do pauses and actions. This purpose is what is meant by "motivation." When you think about it, we do the same thing in everyday life. What is my motivation for answering a question in class? I want a good grade. Or I want to show off. Or I don't want to be embarrassed by not answering. So, what do all of these motivations have in common? The magic word "want." In theatre, a character's wants are the most important part of that character. As an actor, your character's wants are going to inform how you deliver your lines and how you behave on stage.



Now, remember that English or Language Arts class you just took. Wants are expressed using verbs. Verbs are an actor's most useful part of speech. Why? Because, as we know, verbs are ACTION words and it's no coincidence that ACTING and ACTION share the same root, ACT, meaning to do, or to set in motion. So, acting is action, it is doing something!

One helpful way to figure out what your character is doing is to fill in the blanks in the following sentence:

I want _____, so I __ (verb) __ to make my partner _____.

For example, let's say your line is "I promise." Depending on the circumstances of the scene, here are several ways you

Continued on page 2

Summer Show Opens!

**WEST
SIDE
STORY**



**August 1st-9th
Regent Theatre
7 Medford Street
Arlington
Tickets \$15**

CBACT Festival a Rousing Success!

On Saturday, July 19th, ACT took part in the first-ever CBACT Theatre Festival. CBACT includes over twenty area theatres, seven of which participated in the festival, offering workshops and performances.



Four ACTors from ACT's spring production of *Romeo and Juliet* reprised their roles for the festival. Afterwards, the ACTors took questions from the audience. The festival included performances of *Once Upon a Mattress* by the Performing Arts Center of Framingham (which offered a hysterical lesson in improv when the on-stage lead had a costume "malfunction");

Continued on page 4

Colleen's Corner

Continued from Page 1

could complete the sentence to inform how you will deliver the line, "I promise" to your scene partner:

1) I want *money* so I threaten to make my partner **scared**.

2) I want *to extend my curfew* so I beg to make my partner **feel bad for me**.

3) I want *a date* so I compliment to make my partner **feel attractive**.

4) I want *to stay home* so I lie to make my partner **believe me**.

When looking for good and interesting verbs to play, there are a few things to keep in mind. A common mistake that beginning actors make is to assign a verb that is a state of being. For example, "to be happy," "be sad," "be angry." You cannot simply "be" something on stage. Another kind of verb that doesn't work are ones that take a very short time to complete. "Kick," "punch," "kiss" are all examples of this. These actions might be an outward expression of what your verb is, but your verb is more likely to be "to hurt," or "to flirt" in these cases. Remember to choose a verbs that you can work hard at for while. Your verbs will change as your character's wants change - this might happen a bunch of times in the course of one scene.

The other reason that using verbs is important is that it allows you, the actor, to make choices and be creative. Nobody wants a director to give them the exact way to say a line. Then you are just imitating the director, and what fun is that? Knowing your wants and verbs is hard work but will make your job a lot easier and your character more interesting and fun to play.

Colleen

Errata

Some eagle-eyed readers may have noticed a few errors in our last issue, most notably the mistakes in the comparisons of *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*. Devoted reader and costume chick Michelle Techler caught the errors (OK, she also produced *Romeo and Juliet*): *Just a quick note from someone who is living and breathing R & J, I think that the comparison of Tybalt to Riff and Mercutio to Bernardo is backwards... Tybalt is a Capulet, not a friend of Romeo's and he is killed by Romeo (similar to Bernardo being killed by Tony). Mercutio is Romeo's best friend (similar to Riff and Tony) who is killed by Tybalt (similar to Bernardo killing Riff). Just shows that I read what you write....*

NEW LOGO? NEW NAME? NEW LOOK?

You may have noticed that ACT has a brand new logo. And why not? We have a new space, after all. Why not take on a whole new look? And, as long as we're changing things a bit, how about a new name for the newsletter instead of, well, just calling it "the newsletter"?

So, as of *West Side Story* and the summer of 2008, ACT is now the Arlington Children's Theatre (note the spelling), with a brand new logo, designed by Julie Nudler. The newsletter is now called **In the Spotlight**. Gone is the bright yellow paper and the old ACT-on-a-stage-that-was-incredibly-hard-to-copy-and-reproduce logo.



We know that at least one person is happy about the name change. "It was really confusing for me to spell *theater* that way," says British-born ACT president Jackie Daley. "This'll be much easier for my brain to organise. I won't have to use spell cheque all the time. I also love the colours!"

ACT's Space Open for Business!

Thanks to the hard work of Jackie Daley, Ed Perkins, Kathy Perkins, Kevin McCarthy, Lisa Davenport, and countless others, the ACT space at Arlington Center for the Arts is formally open for business. The official ribbon-cutting was on May 18th. Since that time, ACT has had auditions and rehearsals for *West Side Story* there, as well as board and committee meetings, and one workshop ("Showtunes Showcase").

As a fundraiser for the new piano ACT bought for the space, we are selling "bricks" on one wall of the space. If you interested in purchasing a brick (\$10 each), contact Kathy Perkins at eak.perkins@comcast.net.



ACT plans to continue to use the space for rehearsals, meetings, and storage, as well as sometimes supplementing it with ACA's theater and the Kelleher room down the hall.

Colleen Rua (pictured above, cutting the ribbon on May 18th) will also finally have her own office, painted a lively shade of purple (yay!). The office will be a centralized location for everything related to the organization. **ACT also has a new phone number: 781-316-8090.**

Voices of ACT

How to Wail and Grieve Like a Pro

by Jess Couture

When I started ACT four years ago I never expected to get the experience I received. ACT came onto my radar when I saw *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A fellow ACTor told me that I should try out for the summer musical, *Bye Bye Birdie*. I was hooked.

From being a traveler in *Bye Bye Birdie*, to getting to role of Muzzy Van Hossmere in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, to taking up the role of Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*, my experience with ACT has been nothing but positive. My life has truly been touched by the caring production teams, parents, and ACTors of ACT. They have allowed me to explore myself as an actress and have allowed me to delve into new emotional levels in each character that I take. It has been a truly educational experience that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Out of the seven shows that I have done with ACT, the show that I remember most is *Into the Woods, Jr.* I was cast as Jack's Mother, and coincidentally one of my best friends was cast as my son (a funny moment for everyone). This was my first winter show with ACT, and being a huge Sondheim fan I was very excited about it. The cast was about twenty kids, and was also separated from the younger ACTors, a completely new experience. This intimacy of the cast created a tight knit circle of friends that still exists today.

The moment in the show that I remember the most is going to see the younger cast perform their last dress rehearsal. I was used to seeing the show performed through the eyes of teenagers so seeing our younger counterparts was a very interesting experience.



After they completed the show I got the opportunity to show my counterpart how to do one of the most enjoyable parts of the show for me. At one point in the show, when Jack's Mother thinks that her son has been killed by a giant, she runs across the stage screaming and throws herself to the ground after explaining her situation to the bystanders. At almost every stage rehearsal I did this I would have parents coming up to me asking me if I had hurt myself. I would always laugh and say no. I was never hurt, I had a blast!

When I found Sarah, my counterpart, I waited until everyone went backstage so that I could show her this, so that she could just be crazy and not have the judgment of other people while she did this. I took her over to the side and explained to her that I was going to show her how I acted out that moment in the show. So I placed her on the edge of the stage and took my place. I did

Continued on page 4

Spotlight on the Board

This is a new feature for the newsletter where we highlight a different ACT Board member with each issue.

Our first victim, uh, I mean board member is Kathy Perkins, who has been a board member since 2004. She spoke to Steve Smith while preparing costumes for *West Side Story*.

Why did you join the board?

Because you asked me to (laughs)... But seriously, it was Andrea's second show—*Alice in Wonderland* in 2004—and she was loving it so much that I felt like I wanted to help continue this wonderful experience for her. She had done *Oliver* the summer before when she was 9, then she'd done an Improvisation workshop with Mike Manship, and then *Alice*.



What do you like about being on the board?

Friendships...the feeling of adults working together to accomplish things for the kids and the creative aspects of the shows, mainly costumes and for Ed, creating and building sets, which he does even though he's not on the board.

What does your daughter get out of acting with ACT?

She came home from school one day and told me that she feels like two people: the one she is at school and the one she's able to be at ACT. The person who is most like the real her, she says, is the one at ACT because she can be herself and be accepted for that. It's who she wants to be. And then there was last fall—

When your husband was very ill?

Yes. Andrea was doing the lights for *Ten Little Indians*, and even though it was a very scary time for us, it was a tremendous relief and a gift that ACT was there for her and for us. For those two nights, she didn't have to think about her dad and she could just be there and have fun. Everyone was there for us and for her—it was a real comfort. That's the kind of community that ACT is and I know that we're very fortunate to have ACT in our lives.

**ACT's new phone number:
781-316-8090**

CBACT Festival

Continued from page 1

Wiley and the Hairy Man by Watertown Children's Theater, *Les Miserables* by Riverside Theatreworks, and Improv Soup—the Improv troupe from the UnCommon Theatre in Mansfield.

Workshops were offered by ArtBarn of Brookline, Wheelock Family Theatre, and Riverside, with kids from all the theaters participating. Many ACTors were spotted among the crowd, including a good half-dozen full-throated ACTors at the Karaoke Lunch program. In addition, thanks to some great press coverage in the Globe, loads of families were able to attend the full day.

By all accounts, the day was a big success. ACT is looking forward to taking part next year in the second annual CBACT Festival.



Wailing and Grieving, a la Couture

Continued from page 3

the scene, and when I stood up she was staring at me like I had seven heads. It was quite comical. I then turned around and saw that I had twenty pairs of eyes peeking out from behind the curtain to see what has just happened. I had Sarah try and do it but she just got the giggles. So then I tried to give her a situation to help her visualize what was happening. I told her to imagine that her pet had run away and she needed to alert everyone about it. That didn't work so well. I had her run it over and over again and each time she ran it she had more of a cheering audience. By maybe the tenth time she finally got it. It was an amazing feeling to see that I had helped her with this and she had brought it to life on stage. I felt like we had both accomplished so much and I hoped that she would be able to carry on that teaching experience beyond the show.

Also during *Into the Woods, Jr*, I watched one of my close friends complete his last ACT show. It was a very touching and difficult thing to watch. It still couldn't have prepared me for my time to leave.

So as it's time for me to say goodbye, I know that ACT has created a second family for me that will last on. I hope that the younger generation of ACTors and new ACTors will be able to have an amazing experience just like I had. And I know they will.

UPCOMING SHOWS



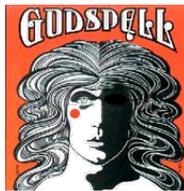
James and the Giant Peach
Registration opens in
September for 7-12 year olds



**William Sleator's
House of Stairs**
Registration opens in
September for 13-18
year olds



Henry and Ramona, a collaboration between
ACT and Arlington Center for the Arts, will be
open for registration this fall!



Godspell Registration
opens in November for
10-18 year olds



Taming of the Shrew
Registration opens in February
for 13-18 year olds

News Flash! ACT Considering Changing the Format of the Summer Play!

In our continuing efforts to get as many kids on stage as possible and to broaden the titles available for ACT to perform, ACT Artistic Director Colleen Rua has proposed changing the format of the Summer Show. Over the last seven years, the summer production has been a double-cast, seven and up performance. The challenge has been finding shows that allow for that many kids on stage. Next summer, ACT would like to move to three single-cast shows, one for 7-10 year olds, one for 11-14 year olds, and one for 14-18 year olds. Each cast would perform their show at the Regent four times but, with smaller casts in each show, each performer would be doing more on stage. What does this mean for your family and for ACT? How will we pull it off? Look for more information in the coming weeks and months and join us for Summer, 2009!!

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Information on these workshops will be available at the ACT website soon! All ACT Workshops will be held at ACT, 41 Foster Street, unless otherwise noted. Workshops opening for registration in the Fall:

Creative Movement (Jennifer Lester) ages 3-6

Musical Theatre for Pre-school and Kindergarten (Jennifer Lester) ages 3-6

Beginning Acting (Instructor, TBD) ages 7-10—This workshop series focuses on working with a scene partner and developing a character through improvisation and scene work.

Advanced Acting (Colleen Rua) 11+ —This workshop is for ACTors who have prior onstage experience and who are interested in sharpening their acting and auditioning skills for ACT or other productions. The focus will be on building a character through voice and movement; objective and obstacle; and techniques associated with various methods of acting.

Directing (Colleen Rua) 14+ —This workshop will cover the basics of directing including use of space, working with text, working with actors, inventing a design and the rehearsal and production process.

Showtunes Showcase (Lindsay Holland) 8-14—Designed to introduce participants to the many components of musical theater, such as choreography, singing, and acting. Students will learn songs from popular Broadway shows to be performed at the end of the session.

Playwriting (Steve Smith)—10-12. In this workshop, students will learn the elements of playwriting, focusing on conflict, stage time, monologue, dialogue, and characterization. By the end of the ten weeks, the workshop will have collaborated to produce a short play, to be produced during ACT's February Vacation Week Camp.

Improv Troupe (Instructor and ages TBD)—ACT will begin its first-ever Improv Troupe starting in the fall, with the goal of learning the basics of Improv and performing in front of an audience.

Producing Workshop (Steve Smith)—for adults. During 2007-08, ACT had several non-board members produce shows for the first time. This year, we'd like to get even more adults involved! We have gotten really good at producing shows and at team-building. All of our shows are now co-produced and we have a wealth of in-house, detailed institutional knowledge to share! In this one day, three-hour workshop, you will learn everything you need to know to produce a show for ACT.

Singing for the Actor (Instructor and Ages TBD)

Broadway Dance I (Instructor and Ages TBD)

Broadway Dance II (Instructor and Ages TBD)

Producers! (or soon-to-be-producers)



Have you always wondered what it would be like to produce a show for ACT? Well, the opportunity exists. Come find out what it's all about in the first-ever ACT Producing Workshop for Adults, Saturday, September 14th! Go to the website for details.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACT ANNUAL FUND



If you believe in us and in what we do for your family and for others, please consider contributing to ACT's Annual Fund! Keep current on our programs and support an important cultural resource! Our donors include families and friends from Arlington and throughout Greater Boston.

ACTor—\$50 Stage Manager—\$100

Director—\$250 Producer—\$500

Executive Producer—\$1000

Why do you contribute to A.C.T.?

What some of our parents have told us:

It's fun to have the whole family involved in something together, with each of us able to contribute our own particular skills or talents. Of all the opportunities I've been offered to volunteer in support of my children's experiences, A.C.T. has had the most fun people to work with and the most concrete and gratifying outcome: a top quality theater experience.

I want to express my gratitude and try to give something back to an organization which has meant so much to my children. A.C.T. has been like a second home, a place they can feel truly accepted and appreciated both by adults and by their peers.

ACT's a great grass-roots organization of caring adults who really love what they do. Not just a money-making machine, but a place that really cultivates and nurtures children's love of dance, singing, and acting.

I find ACT a wonderfully welcoming, accepting, and fun community to be a part of... We appreciate how you keep participation affordable. I love the team spirit you generate in the kids and amazed at how well-organized you are, dealing smoothly with remarkably complex logistics.



41 FOSTER STREET
ARLINGTON, MA 02474



**West Side
Story
opening
August 1st!**

**Performances
8/1-8/9
at the
Regent
Theatre
in
Arlington**



We need your help! Contribute to the Annual Fund today!