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# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Colleen's Corner

As Artistic Director, the question I hear the most often is some variation of: "Have you chosen the summer show?" Choosing the shows for ACT's season is probably one of the most important things I do and one of the hardest. Play selections are huge because, you have to take into account multiple factors:

- \* **cast size** is especially important for ACT because we try to include as many kids as possible;
- \* the **population**--do you have tons of girls and only a few boys, or vice-versa? If you have all girls you might not do *Twelve Angry Men*; if you have all boys you may not want to do *Twelve Dancing Princesses* (although both shows could

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## ACT Expands School Programs

One of the goals of ACT has always been to get as many kids as possible involved in theater. So, in an effort to increase dramatic opportunities for area children, ACT has expanded their offerings into local schools—including ACT's first collaborative effort with Arlington Center for the Arts (ACA): *Henry and Ramona*, with performances opening this weekend. Over the last three years, ACT has developed programs in two Arlington Schools: Thompson Elementary and Brackett Elementary.

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## FALL SHOWS!

COME SEE YOUR FRIENDS IN ONE OF ACT'S FABULOUS FALL SHOWS:

ACT and Arlington Center for the Arts present

### Henry and Ramona

Based on the beloved stories of Beverly Cleary

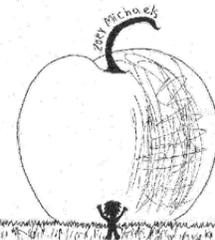
November 7th-9th and 13th-16th at Arlington Center for the Arts



### William Sleator's House of Stairs

November 21st and 22nd at Arlington's Masonic Temple

December 5th-7th at Arlington Center for the Arts



### James and the Giant Peach

For more information or for tickets for all of these shows, call 781-316-8090 or go to [ACT.arlington.ma.us](http://ACT.arlington.ma.us).

## Colleen's Corner

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offer interesting cross-gender possibilities...):

\* if you are doing a **musical**, you have to consider factors like the size of the pit or orchestra (both the number of players and the physical space required for them), the difficulty of the music—what are the ranges of your singers? how experienced is your cast? are the songs written for adult voices?;

\* **the story and the message of the play**--is the play saying anything important? For example, *West Side Story* (ACT's 2008 summer show) deals with issues like racism and gang violence, but has a message of hope;

\* you have to consider all the **production elements**: does the play require anything out of the ordinary? (The classic example is *Miss Saigon* and the helicopter). Even with such limitations, how can you think of things differently to fit into the company or community you're working with?;

\* it's also important to consider what local schools and **other theaters** are doing or have done recently and not doing those exact same shows;

\* you should think about what's going to be **popular among the actors** you know you have;

\* **production team**: it's important to think about who else is working on the show with you and their desires and abilities, so that everyone can feel good about working on that show together.

\* in my role as Artistic Director, I want to make sure ACT has a **balanced season** of shows of genre, drama, comedy, and musicals, featuring new and edgy shows and good old standbys that will bring in audience; but you can also fit shows together almost like a theme (like the natural progression last spring from *Romeo and Juliet* to *West Side Story*), but if every show was about star-cross'd lovers in a season, people would get tired of it;

\* lastly, you have to choose **something that excites you and speaks to you as a director**. I chose *Godspell* for ACT's winter musical because the show has a really strong message about the importance of bringing people together as a community. The show is also a lot of fun



and will give many opportunities to tons of ACTors to showcase their talents. It's a true ensemble show—an ACT show.

**Colleen**

## WINTER WORKSHOPS BEGIN JANUARY 5th Registration Open Soon

Broadway Dance 1, Instructor: Leah Fine  
Days/Times: Mondays, 4:30-5:45

Broadway Dance 2, Instructor: Leah Fine  
Days/Times: Thursdays, 6:00-7:15

Acting Shakespeare, Instructor: Matt Lundeen  
Days/Times: Thursdays, 6:15-7:30

Beginning Acting, Instructor: TBA  
Days/Times: TBA

Advanced Acting, Instructor: Colleen Rua  
Days/Times: Wednesdays, 4:00-5:00

Directing, Instructor: Colleen Rua  
Days/Times: Wednesdays, 5:00-6:30

Advanced Playwriting, Instructor: Steve Smith  
Days/Times: Thursdays 4:00-5:30

Singing for the Actor, Instructor: Cory D'Arco  
Days/Times: TBA

Showtunes Showcase, Instructor: Lindsay Holland  
Days/Times: TBA

Musical Theatre for Pre-Schoolers, Instructor: Jennifer Lester  
Days/Times: Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30

Theatre Games, Instructor: TBA  
Days/Times: TBA

## CBACT News

ACT is a founding member of CBACT, the Consortium of Boston Area Children's Theatres. Last summer's CBACT Festival, which featured works from seven different area children's theaters, was so successful and so much fun for all involved, that we have already begun planning for 2009! The



Festival will once again be held at Arsenal Center for the Arts, on **Saturday, July 18th**. ACT has not decided which show to bring to the Festival yet, but look for more information in the coming months!

# Voices of ACT

## Painting the Polka Dot Tie

by Steve Smith

My mom will always remember the scene. In fact, next time you see her, she'll probably regale you with all the details. The number of stores she went to. Finding just the right shade of blue. The right color, but no dots. The right size but not blue. Finally settling on WiteOut to make the polka dots.

It was Junior year and all those years of carting me down to the Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia, to Broadway, and to local community productions had finally paid off: I was in my first show. OK, we're not counting the widely-acclaimed role of the prosecuting attorney in my 5th grade crime show courtroom drama, nor stints as the class clown, with productions in class and in the principal's office. This was *Guys and Dolls*, the big time, and I was Nathan Detroit.

I'd grown up on musical theater. There weren't many kids my age who listened to (and lked!) Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra, the songs of Rodgers and Hart, Stephen Sondheim, and Maltby and Shire. By the time I was fourteen, I knew many of the shows in the Americal Musical Theater canon (see Contest, page 5). I saw tons of musicals live and probably many more on film. That's why I had Sinatra's Nathan Detroit down pat. I nailed that audition.

Brimming with confidence at a time in my life when I needed confidence, I reveled in rehearsals. I had never been on the other side of the curtain before. Now I knew what it was like. What I hadn't expected was how much fun it would be and how much work it would take.

So when it came time to get our costume, my mother and I went searching for just the right fedora, the perfect pair of pants, and—critical to the show and one particular joke—a polka-dotted bow tie, blue with white spots, to be exact.

We went everywhere. There were no dark blue bow ties with white polka dots out there. Thank goodness eBay wasn't around then because I think she was ready to empty out the family bank account to find one. Finally, she found a tie and, sitting down at the kitchen table one night, she meticulously—lovingly—used an entire bottle of WiteOut to paint precise little white dots on my bow tie. I shyly brought the tie in to the director for her approval. It was a 'go'.

The performance itself was a blur, but I remember the feelings I had afterwards: the joy, the relief, the pride, the affection I felt for the entire cast. It was a time to remember, a brief, glowing moment in the sun.

Well, you may be saying, that's all fine and dandy, but what does all that have to do with ACT?

I went on to be in several more shows as an actor, as a techie, and, when I started teaching, I wrote shows with my class, played piano, and directed, too. And in each of those experiences, I was trying to recreate and recapture two things for my students: first, those feelings of connected-

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## Spotlight on the Board

Each issue of *In the Spotlight* we highlight a different ACT Board member. This month, we spoke to long-time ACT friend and committee head Mary Anne Lamar. She became a board member this year (finally).

### *What led you to join the ACT Board?*

Ever since the days of "Patchwork Girl of Oz" (which, I think, translates to 2002), I've been inspired by the energy, cooperation and creativity of the ACT community. Each year, as my daughter, Annie, was drawn into new shows, workshops, and friendships, I found myself joining or even chairing committees for things I hadn't known I could do. One of my favorite committees was Box Office. Long before the days of Brown Paper Tickets, we designed and even cut out each individual ticket. In an effort



Annie Lamar and Andrea Perkins as rosesellers in ACT's *Oliver*, 2003

to keep the tickets organized, we picked out eight different colors for the tickets, one for each of the eight summer performances. We chose cool colors, like "ocean breeze," "deep spruce," and "real teal" for the blue cast and "super sunshine," "flaming fuschia," and "Palin pink" for the red cast. *What does your daughter get out of acting with ACT?* Annie is a people person. For her, the best parts of

ACT are the people, both real and fictitious. She has loved making friends with kids from different communities, working with kids of different ages, and getting to know and understand the characters in many, many different productions.



Annie and Jeff Landale in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, 2007

### *What do you get out of being on the Board?*

So far, I've gotten a medium size, 100% cotton, black T-shirt. And once, about six months ago, Jackie brought some stale truffles to a Board meeting in an attempt to keep us awake. On a more serious note, I've derived tremendous satisfaction from working with a bunch of middle-aged adults (mostly in black T-shirts) who are so thoroughly committed to making ACT an inclusive, welcoming, and sustainable organization.

### School Programs, Continued from page 1

Now ACT has added a third school: Stratton Elementary.

Starting this fall, under the guidance of Artistic Director Colleen Rua, ACT is working with Stratton students in grades 1 through 5 on projects related to the in-school curriculum. First and second graders are creating three plays based on folktales from around the world. Students in grades three through five, who are studying Colonial times and westward expansion in school, are creating a play based on the story of Lewis & Clark. All of these plays will be performed in early to mid-December at Stratton in the cafeteria.

Stratton parent and enrichment coordinator Lynn Horgan says, "The Stratton community is absolutely thrilled to have ACT as an after-school program. This much anticipated pilot program is an ideal enrichment opportunity for elementary school children. ACT has designed this program in a way that suits the curriculum frameworks, the population, and the pocketbook, making the class affordable to all."

At Thompson, Managing Director Steve Smith has worked with a group of parents to produce two original shows, both written by parent Georgia Gersch: 2007's *Orion and the Flying Toasters*, and 2008's *Wake Up, Buttercup*. ACT Instructor Medina Mahfuz worked with children grades 1-5, many of whom had never been on stage before, to prepare for auditions.

In Brackett Elementary's After-School Program, ACT offered theater workshops taught by Medina which led into rehearsals for two plays: 2007's *Fairy Tale Courtroom* and 2008's *Lion and Mouse Stories*.

Both Thompson and Brackett programs are continuing again this year.

As for *Henry and Ramona*, ACT's Alice Hunter has directed a large cast of children from all over the Boston area in an adaptation of Beverly Cleary's classic tales. Students from Arlington schools will attend performances of the show during the school day at ACA.

John Budzyna, Executive Director of ACA, started the School Show Program three years ago and said of this coordinated effort between ACA and ACT, "When we began the School shows, I was hoping long term that ACT would collaborate with us in this important program for area students. It's exciting to see *Henry and Ramona* come to fruition and hope it's the beginning of many more collaborations in the future."



### Voices of ACT, Continued from page 3

ness, of prideful confidence and joy among the entire cast, and second, that spirit of love, hard work, and inspiration behind my mother painting *WiteOut* on a bow tie.

That's what I've tried to do in my years with ACT, and what I love about this organization. It's what we do for our kids and for our community and the ways that theater makes our world a better place to live: to inspire, to connect, to bring joy, to build teams, to create.

ACT is a better organization now than it has ever been: it's growing and changing and serving more children and families than ever before. It is with pride and confidence that I handed over my duties first as president and now Managing Director to ACT President Jackie Daley and Artistic Director Colleen Rua. Although I will still produce shows every now and then (and, thus, reserve my right to wear a dress if the situation calls for it, and even and especially when it doesn't), I will no longer be Managing Director. It's been a wonderful ride these seven years, painting polka dots with all of you.

Steve Smith has been Managing Director of ACT over the last year, but served as President of the organization since 2003.



Steve and his alter ego, Irving de la Hoya.

## BACKSTAGE PASS AUCTION AND DANCE 2009!

Mark your calendar now! Arlington Children's Theatre is holding its Second Annual Backstage Pass Silent Auction and Dance, scheduled for February 28, 2009. This exciting fundraiser will again be at The Sons of Italy in Arlington, and our guests will enjoy a light dinner, cocktails, dancing and a silent and live auction. Entertainment will be provided by DJ Randy Barth and the cast of ACT's 2009 production of *Godspell*.

Funds from this event will help ACT in its mission to provide affordable theater education, scholarships, and quality productions. Please consider



contributing to the silent auction—you, your employer, a friend or family member can contribute and all donations are tax deductible. Contact Jackie Daley at 781.648.1477 or MJ Michaels at 781-438-3716. We would be happy to pick up any donation at your

convenience. Thanks in advance for your consideration we hope to see you at this fun event!

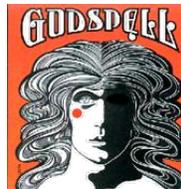
# NAME THAT MUSICAL: A CONTEST

All right. We know you love musical theater. That's why you're an ACTor. But can you name all of the hidden musicals in the list below? Email your answers to: [info@ACT.arlington.ma.us](mailto:info@ACT.arlington.ma.us) by **Friday, November 21st**. The person or persons with the most correct answers will receive two free tickets to an upcoming ACT show.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Dulcet philanthropy</li> <li>2) Felines</li> <li>3) Apply New Pigment to Your Red Flyer</li> <li>4) ACTor Kate Colorado Rockie Helton</li> <li>5) Perpendicular to Street R follower</li> <li>6) A tale of the left border</li> <li>7) AA, BB, CC, DD, EE, FF, ...</li> <li>8) Alas, Bombay!</li> <li>9) The 46th state</li> <li>10) A violinist upon the vaulted support structure</li> <li>11) A pig &amp; a Truman</li> <li>12) Injure</li> <li>13) The ghost of Aida</li> <li>14) Jacob's son &amp; the remarkable, multi-hued, visionary mantle</li> <li>15) Audible notes</li> <li>16) Me and my monarch</li> <li>17) Stupendous waterway</li> <li>18) A tuneful member of the male gender</li> <li>19) Condemmed Steinbrennerites</li> <li>20) Dr. Denton's contest</li> <li>21) Pigmented filamentous projections of the scalp</li> <li>22) Glucose</li> <li>23) Single file choir</li> <li>24) Mr. Lewis's Daughters</li> <li>25) Phineas Tyler</li> <li>26) The oven maker's spouse</li> <li>27) Women of incubus</li> <li>28) So long, chickadee</li> <li>29) The lord's pallid wife</li> <li>30) Our record is on</li> <li>31) Times Square Crossroad</li> <li>32) Swedish version of an Italian exclamation?</li> <li>33) Nautical prison sandbar</li> <li>34) Brylcreem</li> <li>35) Cow young males</li> <li>36) Amusing female child</li> <li>37) Peanut butter</li> <li>38) Guests</li> <li>39) Among the elevated areas</li> <li>40) Pucker up, Miss Winslet</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>41) Insufficient limbs to become theological pugilist</li> <li>42) Tons of processed meat</li> <li>43) Not a lot of evening melodies</li> <li>44) Nomadic caucasoid person</li> <li>45) Triskaidekaphobic's nightmare?</li> <li>46) Isaiah's prophesied celebrity</li> <li>47) The Mane-covered Monarch</li> <li>48) Performance water vehicle</li> <li>49) Divine orthography</li> <li>50) Windy City</li> <li>51) Acht und ein</li> <li>52) Metropolis of wee-wee</li> <li>53) Seraphim metropolis</li> <li>54) Geiselana</li> <li>55) Final day of the week in the public recreation area with W</li> <li>56) Aerosol control for a mop</li> <li>58) Infinitesimal atrocity boutique</li> <li>59) Nightclub</li> <li>60) Bostonian's favorite adjective</li> <li>61) The depressed French folks</li> <li>62) A young kangaroo for a chum</li> <li>63) Licitly straw-colored</li> <li>64) That lady has an admiration for yours truly</li> <li>65) Divine fate</li> <li>66) About you I warble</li> <li>67) Kodak slide tray</li> <li>68) Torn</li> <li>69) Juvenile Doctor</li> <li>70) Howdy, Barbie!</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

Email your answers to: [info@ACT.arlington.ma.us](mailto:info@ACT.arlington.ma.us) by **Friday, November 21st**.

## ACT'S NEXT SHOW



**Registration opens  
December 1st for 10-18  
year olds**

## 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:

ACT is an organization that I talk about to my friends whenever I think about it. It's a very special place, that truly puts the best interests of the children first.

I love ACT! It's well run, high quality, full of wonderful people (young and not so young), and a fantastic social outlet—a "second family," as my child says.

ACT is the most positive, organized, good natured, efficient arts organization I have ever been involved with...

I think ACT is great. You convey to the kids your enormous enthusiasm for them and for the shows, and that's a catalyst for their own passion.

ACT is a great organization. ACT is like another family to me. You put on shows for the kids, it's fun, and even I can get involved by being on committees.



41 FOSTER STREET  
ARLINGTON, MA 02474

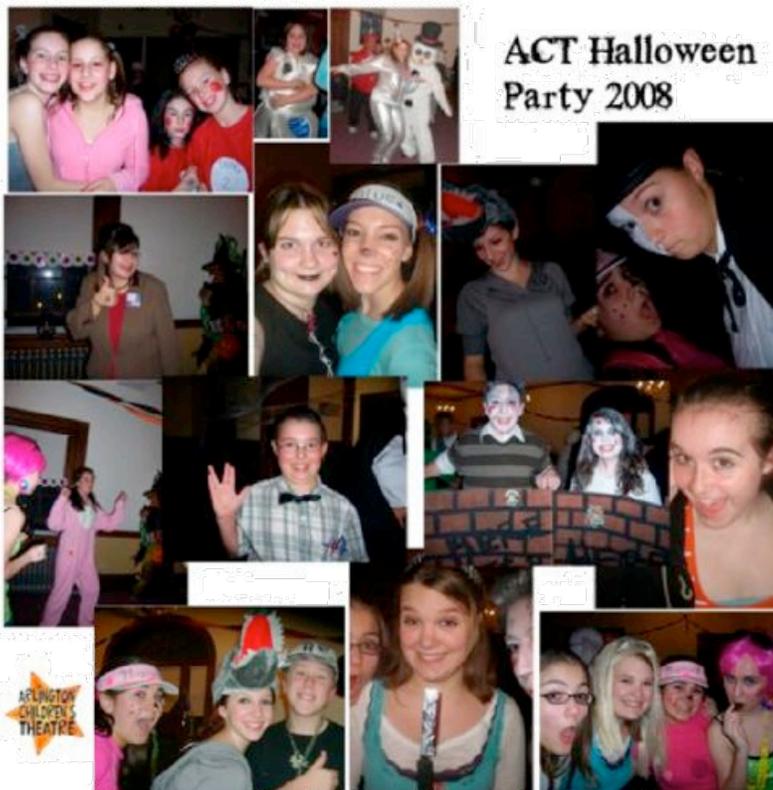


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*James & the Giant  
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December 5th-7th

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