

Spring 4-1-2004

The Season Ticket, Fall 2004

Columbia College Chicago

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Recommended Citation

Columbia College Chicago, "The Season Ticket, Fall 2004" (2004). *Season Ticket*. 31.
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Season Ticket

Columbia College Chicago Theater Department

Fall 2004

Need: A World of Sacrifice

"Just so you understand: the problem is not that you're fucking my husband. The problem is that you need to." The problem in needing...Angelika, a top executive in *Push Up*, acknowledges the danger and power fermenting under the human race's tendency to need. The humans in German playwright Roland Schimmelpfennig's primal drama need...they need the suite, the job, the sex, the love. Hence, these eight characters struggle.



According to director Jeff Ginsberg, *Push Up*, Columbia Theater Department's first main stage show in the 2004-2005 season, explores the "personal cost" of eight characters "trying to escalate up through the ranks in a highly intense corporate culture." Jeff further explains that in a very short time-span, plot entanglements that destroy careers take place due to "people wanting to push up." However, these plot entanglements also offer humor as the ridiculousness of human desire is explored. And in this corporate world where power, authority and status are paramount, Jeff, an artist who admits he is a stranger to that world, finds himself "afraid, intrigued and in awe of it."

Because he knows so little of this world, however, Jeff acknowledges that one of his foremost challenges is "to make it authentic." Yet, Jeff is not alone in this challenge; set designer Jackie Penrod, costume designer Joyce Greening, lighting designer Kristin Helfrich and sound designer Benjamin Blodgett, with original music by Dean A. Johnson, all have a large hand in transforming Columbia's New Studio Theater into the sleek, crisp, corporate, tension-filled environment Schimmelpfennig's *Push Up* demands. And this environment is one that Jeff feels that many in the audience may "already know or

may be aware of."

It is the same atmosphere that fuels Macbeth's vaulting ambition, the blood and guts of 20th Century Fox's 1999 cinematic thriller, *Fight Club*, and sometimes pursuing a career in the theater. It is an atmosphere in which people "see their own ambition" along with the "cost of [their] ambition." It is also an atmosphere in which student actors face the challenges of British dialects, contact improvisation, discovering the physical and vocal grammar of a corporate world, and ultimately becoming fearless with their own bodies.

A "lethal but silky smooth" corporate tale awaits! Don't miss *Push Up*, starting November 10th!

Directed by Jeff Ginsberg

Set Design: Jackie Penrod
Assistant Set Design: Sarah Seaman
Costume Design: Joyce Greening
Light Design: Kristin Helfrich
Assistant Light Design: Josh Weckesser
Sound Design: Benjamin Blodgett
Original Music by Dean A. Johnson
Fight Choreography: David Woolley
Stage Managers: Mary Ann Simbulan and Patrick Spreadbury

Performance Schedule:

New Studio Theater
Wednesday, Nov. 10, 6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Nov. 11, 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Nov. 12, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 13, 7 p.m. (opening)
Sunday, Nov. 14, 3 p.m.
Monday, Nov. 15, 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2 p.m.
Thursday, Nov. 18, 4 p.m.*
Friday, Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 21, 3 p.m.

*There will be a post-show discussion after this performance moderated by Jason Loewith, Artistic Director of Next Theatre.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★
★ **What's Inside?** ★
★ *Tribute to a Classic ★
★ *Happy to Let Go ★
★ *What I Did On My ★
★ Summer Vacation! ★
★★★★★★★★★★★★★

-Columbia College Theater Department's new Web Site is up and running! Please check the smorgesbord of Theater Department information out at www.colum.edu/undergraduate/theater

Suggestions are welcome via Susan Padveen at X6104... Please be gentle, however, as Susan and Rachel Kuhn have worked very hard and continue to update.
Thank you!

-Announcing the **Departmental Theater Journal**, "Portfolio Review" exploring the art, craft and process of theater. Student, faculty and staff work is welcome with **New Beginnings** as the theme for the first issue.

-There are now over **750 Theater Majors!** 170+ more than last year and the most so far in the Department's history!

-The official new bright color of the Theater Department corridors is candy cane red!



Tribute to a Classic



Who: Half a dozen faculty members, a dozen designers and technical staff, half a dozen musicians and over thirty Columbia College students.

What: The classic American musical, *Guys and Dolls*.

Where: New York City, in the heart of Broadway transported to 72 E. 11th Street, more commonly known as the Getz Theater.

When: Post WWII, December 9, 2004 until December 19, 2004.

Why: "It's important in our [theater] season to do classics...classics of musical theater," reports Estelle Spector, one of the directors.

How: With the themes of devotion and loyalty to root the love stories that are *Guys and Dolls* along with respect to the golden era this fable emerges from.

The heart of *Guys and Dolls* is Broadway. And the characters in the musical are "devoted to the beat of the city which is the pulse of their lives,"

comments co-directors Estelle Spector and Kristi Bramlett. Among these characters are the two devoted couples, Sarah and Sky and Adelaide and Nathan. Sarah devotes her life to religion and people while Sky is a self-educated guy and devoted to gambling. Adelaide is an entertainer and is devoted to the love of her life and fiancée of fourteen years, Nathan, who is also a gambler. *Guys and Dolls* not only explores the love stories of these couples, but the "devotion to their ideals" as well, amidst the many other colorful characters of Broadway.

It is a musical of triple threats where actors must find the marriage of acting, singing and dancing. It is also a musical with a myriad of locations, from the streets of Broadway to Cuba to a telephone booth to the Mission to a nightclub, where the directors and the designers must find the marriage of a Broadway set, lights, costumes and

sound. But will the *couples* in the musical ever find marriage? Come and find out from the classic magic that is *Guys and Dolls* beginning December 9th!

The book is by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows with music and lyrics by Frank Loesser. Directed by Estelle Spector and Kristi Bramlett. Musical Direction by Jonathan Mastro and choreography by Wilfredo Rivera. Set Design, David Beaupre, Light Design, Emil Boulos and Rachel Damon, Costume Design, Jared Kassof, Fight Choreographer, David Woolley, Stage Manager, Mary Patchell.

Performance Schedule:

Getz Theater

Thursday, Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m. (opening)

Sunday, Dec. 12, 3 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 15, 11 a.m.

Thursday, Dec. 16, 4 p.m. *

Friday, Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 19, 3 p.m.

*Post-show discussion

~Happy To Let Go~

Marie Gillespie sits comfortably across from me in the buzzing copy room of Columbia College's Theater Department, radiates compassion and states, "I feel like I'm twenty-two and just starting." Marie has just returned from her first head shot session in 10 years in preparation for returning to the audition process that all actors face...and she is excited. Yet, despite Marie's admirable willingness to admit to her latest vulnerability, Marie is neither "just starting" at Columbia nor at theater in general.

Marie's journey began in her childhood stomping grounds of Minnesota at age twelve in a community theater production of *Music Man*. Now with years of theater at her heels, spanning from a B.A. in Speech-Theater Education from St. Olaf College in Minnesota and an M.F.A. in Acting from the University of Southern California, to extensive acting, directing, youth teaching and seminar/speech experience in Minnesota, California, New York, New Jersey, North Dakota, Chicago and the Chicagoland area, Marie enters her 16th school year at Columbia College this fall. And in light of one and a half decades spent at Columbia and reviving her interest in her own acting, Marie knows the term "full-circle" well.

Marie's Columbia cycle began in 1989 as a part-time faculty member, teaching Voice Training for the Actor I in the Theater Department. Since then, Marie has also taught Voice Training for the Actor II, Speaking Out, Senior Seminar: Creative Collaboration, Survival for the

Individual: Artist/ Entrepreneur, and Acting I: Basic Skills at Columbia College. She has also served as the Coordinator of the Oral Communications general education requirement, the Academic Advisor for Theater, Music and Dance and, for the past four years, the Senior Seminar Program Development Coordinator. Hence, Fall 2004 serves as a theater homecoming for Marie, professionally and personally.

Starting this fall, Marie is a full-time lecturer at Columbia, teaching Voice for the Actor I & II and being the Manager of Audience Services at the Theater Department. Therefore, Marie will be challenged in and out of the classroom as she encounters the persistent worlds of theater marketing and theater instructing. Marie, however, states that her newest challenge is to "walk in that 'let go' frame of mind." And as Marie believes that theater thrives as the "art form in our world that is the most engaging and capable of provoking change," finding peace amidst the rigors of theater and teaching is an ideal challenge for Marie.

Whether in her diverse responsibilities at Columbia or in her most recent personal affairs with acting and co-creating Yoga Voice Quest, a business she operates with her husband that focuses on providing a "place where people can grow physically and vocally," Marie chooses to "let go...and be happy to let go."

Marie Gillespie, no doubt, knows the power of choice.

"What I Did On My Summer Vacation!"

by the Faculty and Staff of Columbia's Theater Department

Paul Amandes directed a well-received production of *Lovers* for the Open Door Repertory Theatre last spring. This summer Paul performed triple duty with the Oak Park Festival Theatre's successful production of *Romeo and Juliet*. He wrote a dozen songs for the show, served as music director and performed the role of Lord Capulet. Having directed six shows and performed in three shows over the last two years, Paul is determined to spend the next year writing plays in solitude.

Gigi Buffington has been directing *Orpheus Now* this summer, which has been chosen for the Storefront Theater's 2004-2005 season. The company, comprised of Columbia faculty and alumni, will perform the original work in March and April. Gigi's film, *EMPATHY*, screened at Facets in August and is being distributed to art houses across the country by Icarus Films. Actor James Woods also cast her in a commercial he directed in Chicago this summer.

Phillip Caldwell music directed three shows at Davenport's Cabaret and is currently music directing *Camp Nimrod for Girls* at Live Bait Theatre.

Marie Gillespie participated in Columbia College's first annual Staff Showcase via the planning committee and performance art.

Jeff Ginsberg started his summer by traveling to New York City and studying Acting at the Michael Howard Studio in Chelsea. Jeff also taught in the Columbia College High School Institute and continued working on *Orpheus Now*, an original piece he created with fellow Columbia students, alumni and faculty and others. Jeff then worked with Columbia students Jeff Phillips and Dan Howard and fellow faculty member Gigi Buffington on an original film. Currently, Jeff is in the midst of rehearsing Roland Shimmelpfennig's *Push Up* which is the first main-season New Studio Theater presentation this Fall. Jeff also continues to work on a year-long project by author Alex Kotlowitz, a piece Alex is adapting from a series of NPR interviews on the themes of Love, Money and Home. Jeff will be co-directing this piece with fellow faculty member Susan Padveen for Pegasus Players for a May 2005 opening.

Caroline Latta led a group of Columbia students and faculty this past June to the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford Ontario. It was Columbia's first theater trip. The group saw five plays in three days and met with resident designers, directors and young Chicago

actors. Caroline also took a weekend intensive Encore Workshop with Steppenwolf Casting Director Erica Daniels and Claire Simon of Claire Simon casting.

Tanera Marshall spent the summer at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival in Normal, IL, playing Gertrude (*Hamlet*), The Duenna (*Cyrano*) and Antonia (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*). She is thrilled to be back at Columbia, but sad to have left the bucolic, small-town summer life of central Illinois!

Margaret Nelson acted as Production Manager and Lighting Designer for three major projects this summer: the "Chicago Human Rhythm Project," involving tap and rhythm dancers from Japan, Germany, Brazil and the USA, at the MCA, Northwestern University and other venues in town; *Dance for Life* at Skyline Stage at Navy Pier; three different performances, "Concert Dance," "Luna Negra Dance Theatre" and the "Ruth Page Tribute," at Ravinia. She also stage managed for Illinois Ballet Theatre's performances at the Harris Theatre in Millennium Park, was the theater consultant for the renovation of the Ruth Page Theatre and acted as co-lighting designer with Columbia student Josh Weckesser for *The Seldoms'* show at Architectural Artifacts along with several other participating Columbia students. Currently, Margaret prepares for "Dance Africa" at the Chicago Theatre, her 10th year with "Dance Chicago," and the world premiere of the Goat Island Performance Group's *When Will the September Roses Bloom? Last Night Was Only a Comedy*, opening in London October 4th and then on to Manchester, England, and Hamburg, Germany.

Cecilie O'Reilly was the accent coach for Steppenwolf Theatre's season opener, *The Dresser* by Ron Harwood. She also taught Voice I & II in the Theater Department this summer.

Barbara Robertson worked with the Art Institute of Chicago on a few projects connected to the Seurat exhibition. In addition, Barbara was nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award for Actress in a Principal Role (play) as Stevie in *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* at the Goodman Theatre as well as for Actress in a Principal Role (musical) as Desiree in *A Little Night Music* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. She is currently playing Martha in Court Theatre's production of *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?* until October 24th.



Susan Padveen began developmental work on a new play by Alex Kotlewitz she will be co-directing with Jeff Ginsberg at Pegasus Players, to be designed by Jackie Penrod (sets), Mary Badger (lights) and Joyce Greening (costumes), all Columbia colleagues. She is in the midst of finishing the first draft of a play adapted from a book about Lucy Grealy, which will be performed in its first version as a Freshman Project in the spring. She also taught in the High School Institute, and presented on a panel on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Theater at the ATHE conference in Toronto.

Sheldon Patinkin taught at the Steppenwolf Theatre summer ensemble training program.

Jennifer Shook launched the first full production of Caffeine Theatre, as Artistic Director and director of Sandra Deer's *Sailing to Byzantium*. In addition, she dramaturged *Leonce and Lena* and *Equus* for The Hypocrites and began work on the dramaturgy for *This Happy Breed* with Timeline Theater. Jennifer also spent a week in Philadelphia exploring "Democracy & Art" at the annual conference of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas.

Brian Shaw provided oversight for the six Theater students working in youth theater programs with FreeStreet Programs, Association House of Chicago and Young Chicago Authors. Brian is happy to say the students did a fantastic job bringing their creativity and commitment to these programs. Brian is currently in rehearsal for *The Perimeter*, a new theatrical construction to be presented by Plasticene Physical Theater at the Viaduct Theater opening October 28th. A documentary of the Teaching Practicum class Brian teaches with faculty from FreeStreet Programs and Association House is currently in the editing process. It will be released.

Chuck Smith directed *Dearly Departed* in the 2004 Summer Season of Summer Stock Players at Timber Lake Playhouse in Mt. Carroll, IL. Fellow faculty member David Cromer and Columbia student Vanessa Panerosa also participated in the summer season.

Wendi Weber received Collaboration's Sketchbook 2004 Best Actress Award for her work in Lisa Dillman's *My Yeti Dreams*, recorded Hannah Tinti's *Reasonable Demands* for WBEZ's *Stories on Stage* and played Isabella in *Measure for Measure* at Riverside Shakespeare Festival. Wendi is currently appearing in the Jeff-Recommended new play by Keith Huff, *The Age of Cynicism or Karaoke Night at the Hog*, at Chicago Dramatists through October 31st.

David Woolley staged fights for *Duck Hunter Shoots Angel* (Purple Rose Theater), *Pirates!* (Defiant Theater), *Peter Pan* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater). He also co-directed *Dash and Garibaldi: Bold and Stupid Men* at the New York Renaissance Faire as well as *Bolt and Gianni: Bold and Stupid Men* at the Southern California, Bristol, Michigan and Texas Renaissance Faires. In addition to staging fights and co-directing this summer, David performed in his 15th year as Guido Crescendo in *Dirk & Guido: the Swordsmen!* at the Bristol and Ohio Renaissance Faires along with teaching various stage combat master classes at the SAFD Teacher Training Workshop and the SAFD National Workshop.

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 ★ **QUOTE OF THE SEMESTER** ★
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 ★ *"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are*
 ★ *powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us."* ★
 ★ *-Nelson Mandela* ★
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(THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!!) *Acknowledgements* (THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!!)

Kristi Bramlett
 Marie Gillespie
 Jeff Ginsberg

Gillian Hastings
 Debbie Kuhn
 Kevin Kuhn

Lee Kuhn
 Julie Lutgen
 Marissa McKown

Mary Patchell
 Nathan Paul
 Jeff Phillips

Elio Reyes
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