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The Season Ticket, Fall 2006

Columbia College Chicago

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The Season Ticket

Fall 2006



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create...
change

Running Smooth

Two Trains Running by August Wilson is one part of Wilson's ten-play cycle. This particular play is set in 1969, with the civil rights movement in full swing. *Two Trains Running* highlights the ongoing undercurrent of black power within the day to day lives of those African Americans who were not directly involved in the action. It is "an indication to those outside of the community that not all African Americans were involved. Some were simply observers," says Director Chuck Smith.

Smith looks back on the process of creating this show with warmth and pride, because "everything came together so smoothly." Smith found *Two Trains Running* to be the "most satisfying" production out of the 23 years he has been working at Columbia. "Everyone involved in the process came through." During a dress rehearsal one day the stage manager was worried because no one was in the room, to which Chuck replied, "when nobody's in the room, it means everything is going well."

Deviant Behavior

After the first word was uttered during the premiere of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, the crowd broke into a riot and the play was immediately shut down. As Sean Graney directed *Ubu Roi* this fall, he said that one of the most challenging aspects in making this play, which was once such an appalling defiance of authority, is actually portraying those ideals to a modern day audience. Since 1896, when *Ubu Roi* was first produced, theatergoers have witnessed much more outrageous work which make the play unable to hold the shock value that it once held. The story is that of an ordinary, boring man, who is fat, greedy and evil, who is prompted by his wife to kill the king and take the throne as king of Poland. Graney says the play suggests ideas about power and also the problems with power and more so the control that power has and its ability to take over an individual. Graney believes *Ubu Roi* was a fun, high-energy experience for the students, and an interesting opportunity to question and make jest of what an audience often thinks and expects of good theater.

Welcome!

New Theater Department Faculty/Staff

Heather Gilbert is the new fulltime Lighting Design Faculty member. Heather most recently comes from Louisiana State University where she held the position of Assistant Lighting Professor, Lighting Design. She received her Masters of Fine Arts in Lighting Design from The Theater School, DePaul University, Chicago, and her Bachelor of Arts in Drama from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. She is a member of United Scenic Artists Local 829. As a professional designer she brings to our department a deep and varied lighting design portfolio, including, among others, designs for Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Singapore Repertory Theatre, San Antonio Public Theatre, and Buckingham Fountain. She received the 1999-2000 NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Designers Award. The Theater Department welcomes Heather with open and excited arms!



Jonathan Mastro has been around for quite some time now, but nevertheless we would like us to welcome him to his new position as staff accompanist! Jonathan began at Columbia as a substitute accompanist for various musical theater classes and has been the musical director for many of Columbia's past musicals. He is excited about continuing his work in the constant development of the Musical Theater Program and his opportunity to work with the diverse and passionate group of students. Jonathan feels that musicals can be a powerful tool due to their ability to immediately engage an audience emotionally. The fact that this can be used to raise awareness opens doors to social and political awareness. Jonathan graduated from Northwestern in '97 with an B.A. degree in theater, and then traveled to Ireland where he received his master's degree in Irish theater at Trinity. Upon his return to Chicago, he began working with friends on a project called Barrel of Monkeys, an arts and education company, working with kids in low-income areas around Chicago. Teaching and encouraging these children to write plays, they then would take the scripts and perform them with a group of professional actors. These plays are continually performed at the Neo-Futurists on Monday nights as a show entitled *That's Weird, Grandma!* Jonathan has also worked within the Chicago improv circuit, performing at places such as Second City, as well as with Chicago Children's Theater, The Goodman, and Neo-Futurists.



Sneak Peek



What are the faculty and staff doing when they're not here?

For Paul Amandes the year 2006 has been about writing. He co-adapted and wrote original songs for *Local Wonders*, commissioned and produced by the Nebraska Repertory Theatre this summer. *Local Wonders* is based on the works of Nebraska native Ted Kooser, US poet laureate from 2004 to 2006. A new production of *Judevine* by David Budbill with songs by Paul is currently in rehearsal at Nebraska. He's finished a first draft of *Instruction for the Serious Guitarist*, a drama about music and lust. In addition, he has started work on four other scripts. Paul has been performing solo performance pieces all around Chicago including two runs with Blue Moon Studio Theater. His singer-songwriter act continues unabated as well.

Kirsten Fitzgerald is a proud ensemble member of A Red Orchid Theatre; she was most recently seen there in *The Sea Horse*, for which she has been nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award. Over the summer you may have seen her at the Royal George Theatre in *Leaving Iowa*, and later this fall you can catch her up at Next Theatre Co, in Christopher Durang's *Miss Witherspoon*. At Columbia Kirsten teaches Voice I, Acting I:Basic Skills and Acting I:Scene Study. She also teaches at Acting Studio Chicago and manages Thresholds Theatre Arts Project, a project committed to sharing the rarely heard artistic voices of people living with mental illness.

Joe Janes is working on *Conrad Brunst presents...DANSE MACABRE*, an improvised show done in the style of 1930's and 40's horror films. It's the fifth mounting of the show. His company, Teatro Bastardo, does it every Halloween. And there is usually a small run at Second City's cabaret space. This year, They're doing a six-week run, three shows a week, at the Athenaeum. He also has directed *Some Jerk Stole Our Pants*, a sketch comedy revue by Fool for Thought, presented at Donny's Skybox.



Sneak Peek



What are the faculty and staff doing when they're not here?

Jeff Ginsberg spent the summer teaching with Susan Padveen at the Columbia College High School Institute, and his fourth summer at the School at Steppenwolf. He is looking forward to three projects in 2007. He is thrilled to be working on Jean-Claude Grumberg's play, *The Workroom* for the Theater Department's Mainstage Season. The Steppenwolf group that he taught in 2005 have created an ensemble and have asked him to direct their first show, Stephen Metcalfe's *The Incredibly Famous Willy Rivers*. It's about a John Cougar-like rock star attempting a comeback after an assassination attempt; colorful characters, good writing: opening at the Viaduct in May '07. He has also been invited back to the Performing Arts Center at Oakton College (where he directed *The Laramie Project* in 2004) to stage Joshua Sobol's play *Ghetto* in November '07.

Caroline Latta had a busy and productive summer. In late May she took a group of faculty and students to Stratford, Ontario, to see five Shakespearean plays in three days—a wonderful exciting time full of playgoing and talks with actors and directors. In July she wrote an article for our own Columbia Theater Department magazine, exploring with Barbara Robertson the role of Hermione in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*. In August she made two conference presentations: one at the 26th Annual Women & Theater Conference—she and Estelle Spector hosted nine Chicago women theater professionals in a roundtable discussion on the opportunities/challenges the city has presented to these women. She also presented at the American Theater Higher Education 20th Anniversary Conference as part of a panel on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Acting. Finally she took a master class with Hollywood casting director Deborah Aquilla.

Clare Nolan is a member of Sweat Girls, which most recently performed at the Live Bait *Filet of Solo Festival*, *Around the Coyote Arts Festival*, and at the Acorn Theater in Three Oaks, Michigan. They are working on a new piece currently that should go up in the spring.

Scott Olson most recently appeared as Alex in *The Cocktail Party* with Caffeine Theatre and in *Wintertime* with Reverie Theatre and directed *Cotton Patch Gospel* at Columbia College where Scott has been a faculty member for the last seven years. He also is on the teaching staff at Act One Studios.



Sneak Peek



What are the faculty and staff doing when they're not here?

Cecilie O'Reilly most recently performed as Winnie in Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* at the Prop Theater for Rhino Fest. She also did accents for Steppenwolf's *The Unmentionables* this past summer, and will be doing accents for Milwaukee Rep's *Translations* in December.

Susan Padveen is currently working on a solo performance project called *Solo Not Alone*, running in November in the New Studio Theater. This summer she presented on a panel at ATHE on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

Jennifer Shook recently directed *The Cure at Troy (A Version of Sophocles' Philoctetes)* for Caffeine Theatre, and is working as Script Develop Dramaturg for *Caravaggio* at Silk Road Theatre Project and as the Production Dramaturg for *The Hypocrites' Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. This summer she participated in the annual conference of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, and last April spoke on a panel on Dance and Dramaturgy with Chicago Dancemakers Forum.

David Woolley's recent work includes: *Henry IV parts 1 & 2* for the Lakeside Theater (Michigan); *American Buffalo* for Raven Theater; and his 17th season as Guido Crescendo in *Dirk and Guido: the Swordsmen!* at the Bristol and Ohio Renaissance Faires (He's Guido...)... David also directed the Babes With Blades' *Affair of Honor: Satisfaction* at the Viaduct Theater this past Spring (as part of the One Act Play competition, which he sponsored).

Alumni at Work

Columbia Theater Department alumni and students in the outside world

Brad Bartolo, EP Theater, *Life Support*

Danny Bernardo, The Theatre Building, *Dorian*

Mac Brandt, Seanachai Theatre Company, *A Whistle in the Dark*

Eric Burgher, Profiles Theatre, *Autobahn*

Erin Carlson, Strawdog Theatre Company, *Tooth of Crime (Second Dance)*

Kathleen Carlson, Open Eye Productions, *Assassins*

Geoff Coates, Lifeline Theatre, *Brave Potatoes*

Nicole Cobb-Oliver, Cornservatory, *The Vietnamization of New Jersey*

Jason Ewers, EP Theater-Director

Jay Fontanetta, North Riverside Recreation Community Theater, *Grease*

Tyler Gray, Profiles Theatre, *Autobahn*

Brian Hammond, The Shakespeare Festival of Canada-Ensemble Member

Brian Herriott, Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*

Norm Holly, Oracle Productions, *Crying Loud in a Quite Place*



Emerald City
Theatre's
Snow White
featuring alumni
Steven Montague
and Steve Tomlitz.

Kelsie Huff, Bailiwick Repertory, *Huffs*

Christine Jennings, Factory Theater, *GI's in Europe*

Victoria Kallay, Rogue Theater, *Cinderella Goes Disco!*

Drew Kimball, Provision Theater Company, *The Spitfire Grill*

Jesse Klug, Bobkat Productions, *Electronic Baby*

Brandon Lewis, Piccolo Theatre, *Mistero Buffo, Comic Mysteries*

Jennifer Liu, Artistic Director-Stir-Friday Night!, *The Caste and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*

Eric Martin, Bailiwick Repertory, *Thrill Me*

Matt Massaro, Lakeshore Theater, *UU7: A Magician Never Tells His Tricks*

Alumni at Work

Columbia Theater Department alumni and students in the outside world






Adam Minegar, Open Eye Productions, *Assassins*
Steven Montague, Emerald City Theatre, *Snow White*
Leah Morrow, Griffin Theatre Company, *Sleeping Ugly*
Alzan Pelesic, Trap Door Productions, *The Fourth Sister*
Jennifer Pompa, Factory Theater, *GI's in Europe*
Niki Prugh, Bobkat Productions, *Electronic Baby*



The Black Donnellys
(Premieres January 4, 2007 NBC)
featuring alumnus Michael Stahl-David.

Mary Pat Sieck, Open Door Repertory Company, *The Sisters Rosensweig*
Michael Stahl-David, NBC, *The Black Donnellys* (Premieres January 4, 2007)
Dan Telfer, Playwright-Blewt! Production, *Rogue 8*
Steve Tomlitz, Emerald City Theatre, *Snow White*

Chas Vrba, Factory Theater, *GI's in Europe*, Open Eye Productions, *Assassins*
Erin Walsh, Grove Players, *School House Rock Live!*
Nicole Wiesner, Trap Door Productions, *The Fourth Sister*
Carl Wisniewski, Trap Door Productions, *The Fourth Sister*
D. Eric Woolweber, Theo Ubique Theatre Company, *Flora, the Red Menace*
A. Cameron Zetty, Seanachai Theatre Company, *A Whistle in the Dark*
David Zizic, Bailiwick Repertory, *Barenaked Boys in The Great Outdoors*
James Anthony Zocoli, Strawdog Theatre Company, *Tooth of Crime (Second Dance)*

 *"Most men pursue pleasure with such breathless haste that they hurry past it."* 
 *-Soren Kierkegaard*  

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