



Thursday, April 17, 2003

'Meshuggah-Nuns!' concludes MBT season

Set sail for laughter when "Meshuggah-Nuns!" makes its Michigan premiere Wednesday, April 23, at **Meadow Brook Theatre** (MBT), Michigan's largest professional theatre company at Oakland University. Directed by the playwright, "Meshuggah-Nuns!" runs through Sunday, May 18, and is the closing production in MBT's 37th season.

The latest in the acclaimed "Nunsense" series of musical comedies, "Meshuggah-Nuns!" finds the Little Sisters of Hoboken embarking upon another madcap adventure when they take a vacation cruise to the Holy Land and find themselves starring in a shipboard variety show. Never ones to pass up a challenge, the sisters pitch in for the original cast members who suddenly take ill. They join the only remaining healthy cast member, Tevye, in a "Fiddler On The Roof" production that promises to make audiences smile long after returning to port.

Playwright Dan Goggin will direct the MBT performance. He is known for his widely successful collection of musicals in the "Nunsense" anthology, starring audience favorites Reverend Mother, Sister Mary Amnesia and "the gang." The "Nunsense" musical comedies have grossed over \$300 million worldwide.

A Michigan native and a Catholic school graduate, Goggin originally set out for New York as a singer. He found writing lyrics was his calling and wrote two musicals, "Hark" and "Balancing Act," before he hit on a musical starring a group of nuns modeled after some of his former teachers. The first "Nunsense" opened in New York in 1983. A national 20th anniversary tour is in the works for fall 2003.

Now entering a third decade of good-natured fun, the faithful followers of the "Nunsense" productions have enjoyed several different madcap adventures of the fictional Little Sisters of Hoboken. The nuns "went country" in "Sister Amnesia's Country Western Nunsense Jamboree," celebrated the holidays in "Nuncrackers" and were replaced by an all-male cast in "A-Men." All the time, Goggin's aim has been to entertain, not preach, he says. His latest, "Meshuggah-Nuns!" serves up musical mischief while finding commonalities between Jews and Catholics.

"When you're laughing, you are not Catholic or Jewish. You are not hurting or hating, you are just laughing," Goggin said.

The appeal of "Meshuggah-Nuns!" is evident when considering every theater that has produced the play has extended its run since it premiered in September 2002 at the Chanhassen Theatres in Minneapolis. It currently is playing in Connecticut and Florida, where The Miami Herald called it a "crowd pleaser."

The MBT cast for "Meshuggah-Nuns!" represents an outstanding ensemble. The cast features both "Nunsense" family veterans and MBT actors.

Reprising her role as Reverend Mother from "Nunsense" and "Nunsense II" productions is Kathy Robinson. She has been in a host of musicals both at national theaters, Off Broadway and regionally, including "Funny Girl," "Music Man," "Sweet Charity" and "Follies." She also has worked in television and cabarets.

Fellow alumnus Bambi Jones will recreate the role of Sister Hubert, which she played in "Nuncrackers," "Nunsense" and "Sister Amnesia's Country Western Jamboree." Jones was in the international tours of "Show Boat" and "Ain't Misbehavin'."

Kenny Morris will play Tevye in "Meshuggah-Nuns!" The role is most familiar to him, as he played the character in a regional production of "Fiddler on the Roof." Morris has been on Broadway in "Les Miserables" and with the national and international companies of "Sunset Boulevard," "Joseph the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" and "Jolson-The Musical." He has worked extensively in regional theatres and television as well.

Joining the cast are two actors known to MBT audiences: Milica Govich, who plays Sister Robert Anne, and Shannon Locke, who plays Sister Amnesia. Govich is familiar to audiences for her roles in "A Christmas Carol," "The Odd Couple" (female version), and the award-winning "All My Sons." Her vocal talents were evident in the 2001 production "Pump Boys and Dinettes." Locke has appeared at MBT in last season's "Murder on the Nile" and "A Christmas Carol." She also has served backstage as MBT wardrobe mistress.

The production staff also includes a mix of outstanding "Nunsense" and MBT veterans.

Musical Director Leo P. Carusone has worked with Goggin on all of his shows. He also was musical director last season for MBT's acclaimed production of "Godspell."

The choreographer is Teri Gibson; scenic designer is Barry Axtell of New York; lighting designer is Dawn Chiang; and MBT's Brett Rominger is sound designer. Set modifications for the MBT stage are being made by Melinda Pacha.

Tickets for "Meshuggah-Nuns!" are on sale at the MBT box office by calling (248) 377-3300. Group tickets are available at (248) 370-3316. The production is suitable for middle-school age children and older. Sales for Meshuggah-Nuns! are strong and MBT officials encourage patrons to purchase tickets early.

"We are pleased to announce that the play is on schedule to exceed all non-subscription sales records in MBT's history," said Gregg Bloomfield, MBT's managing director. "This production caps off a very successful season for Meadow Brook Theatre and it is with pleasure that we have elected to add three performances."

This production of "Meshuggah-Nuns!" is co-sponsored by the Meadow Brook Theatre Guild. Meadow Brook Theatre is supported by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. Promotional sponsor for the 2002–2003 season is the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

For more information, visit the [Meadow Brook Theatre](#) Web site.

SUMMARY

Set sail for laughter when "Meshuggah-Nuns!" makes its Michigan premiere Wednesday, April 23, at Meadow Brook Theatre. Directed by the playwright, "Meshuggah-Nuns!" runs through Sunday, May 18, and is the closing production in MBT's 37th season. The latest in the acclaimed "Nunsense" series, "Meshuggah-Nuns!" finds the Little Sisters of Hoboken taking a vacation cruise to the Holy Land and find themselves starring in a shipboard variety show.

Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, April 17, 2003

Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, April 17, 2003

Article Start Date: Friday, October 24, 2003