



Thursday, April 25, 2002

MBT announces 2002-2003 season

The 2002-2003 season of dramatic performances at Oakland University's **Meadow Brook Theatre** (MBT) includes the initiation of an international residency with the Shaw Festival of Canada. The residency marks the first of its kind at MBT and reflects a deeper relationship between two institutions and neighboring nations.

"Meadow Brook Theatre will produce an exciting season, created to make theater come alive for each member of our audience," said Debra Wicks, MBT interim artistic director. "To keep with our tradition of excellence, we will present a range of experiences, including a rollicking comedy, an entertaining musical, and a unique collaboration with one of North America's great treasures, the Shaw Festival."

Based in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, the Shaw Festival is renowned for its masterful productions of the works of George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) and his contemporaries. Shaw, Irish playwright, essayist and Nobel Laureate, is considered a giant in the world of arts and letters.

MBT will present Shaw's "Candida" beginning Jan. 8. The romantic comedy examines the roles and relations between men and women within family and society. The work tells the story of Candida Morrell, the first of the author's great heroines. Candida becomes enamored with an unexpected guest, a homeless poet taken in by her husband. In addition to public performances, members of the Shaw Festival will conduct community outreach and educational activities.

OTHER 2002-2003 PERFORMANCES

Witness for the Prosecution

"Witness for the Prosecution" by Agatha Christie launches the 2002-2003 MBT season Oct. 16. The play spins a tale around the trial of young Leonard Vole, accused of murder. Barrister Sir Wilfred Robarts, Q.C., is retained to defend Vole from a charge solidly supported by a foundation of circumstantial evidence. Jeopardizing the defense is a mysterious wife, the only supporting witness whose testimony may ruin more than a marriage.

A Christmas Carol

MBT's holiday tradition, "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens, with adaptation and original staging by Charles Nolte, opens Nov. 29. Audiences will experience the true meaning of the holiday as Scrooge encounters the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future.

The Foreigner

Larry Shue's comedy "The Foreigner" opens Feb. 12. A socially phobic Englishman named Charlie finds himself marooned in a Georgia fishing lodge. Pretending to be a foreigner who speaks no English, Charlie must navigate the nefarious schemes planned for him by his eccentric local hosts.

Wait Until Dark

"Wait Until Dark," an outstanding example of suspense created for the stage, opens March 19. Frederick Knott's drama centers on the terrifying ordeal faced by a young bride. Susy Hendricks has to use all her wits to foil criminal's intent on retrieving drugs that were slipped unknowingly into her husband's luggage. Courageous and resourceful, Susy uses her blindness as a weapon against her attackers.

Meshuggah-Nuns

Dan Goggin's "Meshuggah-Nuns" is the latest in a string of hits by the virtuoso of musical comedy and will make its Great Lakes debut April 23. The Little Sisters of Hoboken are on a cut-rate cruise when they are called to duty. The entire cast of the shipboard production of "Fiddler on the Roof" suddenly takes ill, and the sisters pitch in to make sure the show goes on.

A Thousand Cranes

Meadow Brook Theatre is producing, for student and family audiences, the true story of 12-year-old Sadako Sasaki, a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, in the play "A Thousand Cranes" by Kathryn Shultz Miller. Sasaki, who is slowly dying from the effects of radiation sickness, is reminded of the legend stating that a person's health will return upon the folding of a thousand paper cranes. The young girl works resolutely until her passing, and her classmates take up the work and create a legacy of

peace. The play begins Sept. 19, with shows for the public on Sept. 28 and Oct. 5.

MBT will expand its educational programs by doubling the number of student matinees. In addition to its regular seasonal offerings, students can attend performances of "A Thousand Cranes" and a production of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," created exclusively for school groups, which opens April 29, 2003.

"Next season, Meadow Brook Theatre will serve over 30,000 students with professional theatre presentations," Wicks said. "It is our hope that these performances of the dramatic arts serve to spark young minds, stimulate conversation, create lasting memories and help students grow in many ways."

Subscriptions for the 2002-2003 season start at \$89 each and are now on sale at the MBT Box Office by calling (248) 370-3300. For group sales, call (248) 370-3316. Individual tickets, including "A Christmas Carol," go on sale Sept. 4 beginning at 10 a.m.

Meadow Brook Theatre serves more than 100,000 patrons a year, representing a cultural asset and source of pride for Oakland University and its students. Nationally recognized actors, directors and designers work alongside Michigan actors and MBT's professional staff. For more information, visit the **Meadow Brook Theatre** Web site.

SUMMARY

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