



Thursday, August 23, 2001

Upcoming MBT season entertains and enlightens

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

This year's season of shows at **Meadow Brook Theatre**, located on the campus of Oakland University, contain a mixture of entertaining and educational material, said Debra Wicks, MBT interim artistic director.

"With a theatre, you have to try to stretch one's boundaries," Wicks said. "The shows we have coming in are a nice mix between extremely entertaining and enlightening material. We have a balanced and upbeat season."

The 2001-2002 season offers a variety of material from upbeat musicals like "Godspell" to the provocative "Bee-luther-hatchee," which addresses cultural appropriation – the issue of who has the right to tell one's story. Wicks said the popular talkback sessions, in which audience members are invited to discuss the production with the performers, will be held after every performance of "Bee-luther-hatchee." Students in one OU Honors College course will study the play.

"Sometimes cultural appropriation comes up in very volatile situations," Wicks said. "Within an academic arena it's certainly something students deal with every day. This play is a catalyst for discussion, and generally speaking, people want to have their say if they're moved by the play. I'm hoping we'll have audiences that want to talk about these issues."

The season opens September 12 with "Pump Boys and Dinettes," a feel-good musical featuring the waitresses of the Double Cupp Diner, who serve up dreams, coffee and grits to the young men from the gas station across Highway 51.

Agatha Christie's "Murder on the Nile" begins October 17. In this mystery an unlikely group of passengers aboard an exotic Egyptian river cruise try to solve a wicked crime.

MBT continues its holiday tradition with an adaptation of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" beginning November 23. Audiences experience the true meaning of the holiday as Scrooge encounters the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future.

Two actors play eight characters in "The Mystery of Irma Vamp" by Charles Ludlam, beginning January 9. Werewolves, mummies and vampires appear in this campy spoof of gothic romances and classic horror movies.

"Bee-luther-hatchee" by Thomas Gibbons begins February 13. In the play, a successful book editor makes her first foray into non-fiction, and confronts a shocking reality when she wins an award for the first-person memoir of a reclusive 72-year-old African-American woman.

Tennessee Williams' steamy Pulitzer Prize-winning play "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" begins March 20. A family gathers to celebrate patriarch "Big Daddy" Pollitt's 65th birthday, but a battle erupts over the inheritance of his 28,000-acre Mississippi plantation.

The season concludes with the musical "Godspell" with music and new lyrics by Stephen Schwartz beginning April 24. Based on the Gospel according to St. Matthew, songs like "Day by Day" are part of the musical's life-affirming celebrations.

Subscriptions for six shows (not including "A Christmas Carol") start at \$99 and are available now. Tickets for individual performances are available starting at 10 a.m. Monday, August 27. Flex Tix and discounted student subscriptions are also available. For information, contact the MBT box office at (248) 377-3300.

SUMMARY

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