



SLOC Spotlight

The Newsletter of the
Schenectady Light Opera Company
Volume 37-3
December 2003

Babes in Arms **Opens December 5, 2003**

826 State St.
Schenectady, NY 12307
393-5732

Web Site:
www.sloctheater.com



2003-2004 Season

Jane Eyre
October 17-19, 23-26
Babes in Arms
December 5-7, 11-14
Drood
March 5-7, 11-14
Victor/Victoria
April 30, May 1-2, 6-9



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Next Newsletter
Deadline:
December 12

The history of Rodgers & Hart's *Babes in Arms* is a long one. Originally written and brought to Broadway in 1937, it ran for 289 performances and grossed \$474,000. *Babes in Arms* has been revived on Broadway several times since then. Each revival, on and off Broadway, has made minor changes in script but kept the enduring musical numbers that define Rodgers and Hart. In 1959 George Oppenheimer, closely supervised by Mr. Rodgers himself, updated the humor and story line. It is this version, about summer stock apprentices trying to put on their own revue on Cape Cod, that SLOC is presenting. The show arguably has more hits than any other Rodgers and Hart musical including: "My Funny Valentine", "Where or When", "The Lady Is A Tramp", "I Wish I Were In Love Again", and "Johnny One Note".

Producer Jodi Gilman, Director Jennifer S. Depew, Choreographer Donna Panzl and Musical Director Frank Krummal have brought together a very talented young cast. Christopher Howard as Valentine White and Allison Fagan as Susie Ward lead the group that will leave you whistling and singing their songs for days. Other apprentices are played by: Joe Carusone [Gus Field], Katie Christian [Terry Thompson], Adam Coons [Don], Jessica Discipio [Ann], Kevin Guzewish [Peter], Graig Shapiro [Bob], Alexandra Tarantelli [Betty], and Abby Van Deusen [Libby]. Heather D'Arcy as Bunny, the self-proclaimed oldest living apprentice, will wow audiences with her renditions of some of the most memorable tunes.

Supporting actors for these apprentices are: Casey Dinkin [Jennifer Owen], Sean Fagan [Lee Calhoun], Andrew Laurie [Seymour Fleming], Sally Farrell [Phyllis Owen], Brian Sheldon [Steve Edwards] and Joe Pickett [Press Agent].

Producer Jodi Gilman has announced a hard working staff for this show: Set Design – Debi McDermott; Set Construction – Richard Lenehan; Lighting Design and Execution – Greg Rucinski; Lighting Execution – Bill Depew; Costumer – Emily Bingham; Sound Design – Dave Wilkinson; Properties – Carolyn Mills; Makeup Design – Marcia Lenehan; Hair Stylist – Katherine Zaleski; Stage Manager – Donna Baxter; and Publicity – Melissa Lacijan. Jodi makes note that this is the Director's and Musical Director's first full musical at SLOC.

Curtain time for this rousing experience is 8 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and 2 p.m. on Sunday during the show's two-week-end run of December 5-7 and 11-14, at the Opera House. *Babes in Arms* – great for all ages! Reserve your tickets now (\$18) by calling Sue Culver at 383-9350.



Choreographer Donna Panzl teaches the cast a few moves.

Spotlight on...

Drood

Audition Dates:

**December 8 & 9, at 7 p.m.
at the Opera House**



President's Notes...by Tom Heckert



Jane Eyre Sets Fire to SLOC

Congratulations to Mike Mensching, Ferne Dutkin, Mike McDermott, and the cast and crew of *Jane Eyre* for a job well done! The show played to full houses both weekends. Congratulations to Rachel Rhodes-Devey, winner of the ticket-selling contest. The Board has also received several notes congratulating the Company on its successful production!

Babes in Arms is Ready to Put On A Show!

Director Jennifer S. Depew, Producer Jodi Gilman, and Choreographer Donna Panzl have assembled a fine group of young people to grace the SLOC stage in an old Rodgers and Hart chestnut. I'm sure everyone will want to come and hear some of the most beautiful and time-honored melodies in Broadway history!

SLOC Potluck/Semi-annual Meeting

Mark your calendars for January 24th and come join us for the SLOC potluck dinner and semi-annual meeting. Festivities include great food, conversation, announcement of the Etta Moore Award recipient and the announcement of next year's season. Get the full details in the related article below.

Kudos to Tree Decorators

Hats off to the decorators of the SLOC tree displayed in the Proctor's Festival of Trees. The theme this year was: "Let's Go On With The Show", a tree with decorations being poured onto it from paint cans. Thanks go out to Bryant Empie, Mary Kozloski, Deb Weiskopf, and me. If you have an idea that you would like to offer for next year's tree, it's not too early! Contact Deb Weiskopf at 373-0975 to volunteer. SLOC Outreach performers also dazzled Festival attendees with Broadway tunes during a Sunday afternoon performance.

Membership Has Its Privileges

Please remember to pay your dues before the February 1st deadline for voting privileges at the June meeting. By becoming a member, you can vote for the candidates you feel will best represent your views for SLOC's future. For your convenience, a form is available on the back page of this issue. If you have any questions about the status of your membership, please give a call to Della Gilman [280-8076], SLOC membership chairperson.

New Playbill Editor

I would like to welcome Mary Ann Muth as our new Playbill Editor. Mary Ann has been involved with SLOC in various capacities for the last few years and has courageously agreed to take on this task!



Mark Your Calendars

The semi-annual potluck dinner and Board meeting will be held on Saturday January 24, 2004 at 6:00 pm. There will be a potluck dinner, followed by the Board meeting, and then we will move upstairs to the theater for an open mic night.

Please RSVP by 1/17/04 to Michelle Sausa-Gatta with the number attending and the food item you would like to bring to share. She can be reached at 377-1905 or by e-mail at gattat4@aol.com.

As always, this promises to be a deliciously entertaining evening so mark your calendar and RSVP ASAP!



SLOC Spotlight

SLOC Spotlight is a newsletter of the Schenectady Light Opera Company, P. O. Box 1006, Schenectady, NY 12301. SLOC is a community volunteer musical and theatre arts incorporated, nonprofit organization. Governed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership, SLOC's purpose is to foster light opera and related arts for the people in and around Schenectady County, NY.

Newsletter Staff: Jill Coloney, Tom Heckert, Jackie Mosher, and Greg Rucinski.

Subscription Rates: \$5 per year, check payable to SLOC. Send subscription inquiries and address changes to the address listed above.

DEADLINE for submissions to **Vol. 37 Issue No. 4** of the SLOC SPOTLIGHT is **Friday, December 12, 2003**. Issue No. 4 will be mailed by January 7.

Please submit your articles to Jill Coloney at jac12661@aol.com or 92 Cooks Court, Waterford, NY 12188.

***Drood* Audition Dates Set**

Auditions for SLOC's third production of the season, Rupert Holmes' Tony-winning *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* are scheduled for Dec. 8 and 9 (sign-in at 7 p.m.), with a probable callback date of Dec. 15. The show will be directed by Joe Phillips, and produced by Madeline and Peter Codella - with Stephen Sanford making his SLOC debut as musical director. Performances are set for March 5-7 and 11-14, with a read-through before Christmas and rehearsals starting in earnest in January.

Auditioners should prepare at least 16 bars of any song; please bring sheet music. Music on hand for those who come unprepared will be extremely limited, and *a cappella* and self-accompanied auditions will be frowned upon. Actors may also be taught a brief selection from the show or asked to sing something contrasting. Approximate vocal ranges are listed with the characters below.

There will also be readings of selected scenes, and a brief movement audition. No accents will be required at auditions, but plausible ones will be needed in performance.

Roles are as follows, their "Music Hall Royale" name followed by their "Drood" character:

WOMEN:

Alice Nutting/Edwin Drood: Alice, a 20-ish woman who plays the dramatic juvenile-male roles - and a cocky Music Hall outsider. No attempt is made to conceal her real sex, but she should convincingly act the young man. Edwin is brash and self-absorbed. Alice also plays the goofy Act II role of mystery man Datchery, until the audience chooses another. A strong dramatic "tenor" (Betty Buckley on Broadway), up to a mezzo high E, with some very demanding singing, including a fast-paced confrontation number and a wistful duet with Rosa.

Deirdre Peregrine/Rosa Bud: 20-ish, the beautiful ingénue with a strong, sweet lyric soprano. Rosa is a sweet young thing, ward of a convent school, but she's feisty, fierce and brave. Probably, with the exception of Alice, the most demanding singing in the show - reaches a sustained high B.

Janet Conover/Helena Landless: a company veteran in her 20's or older, a little over-the-top and a bit of a comedienne, she plays exotic character roles. Fierce, protective, mysterious, intriguing. Strong, alto, though not lyrical singer.

Angela Prysock/Princess Puffer: an older character actress, now the beloved Grande Dame of the Music Hall Royale. Here she plays Puffer, as red a herring as there is, proprietor of a London opium den. Low-alto character voice to a low G, the silder the better [this was Cleo Laine's role].

MEN:

William Cartwright, The Chairman/Mayor Sapsea: the George Rose role, ideally 40 and up, a veteran character actor now 'retired' to supporting roles and the company master of ceremonies; colorful, funny and sarcastic, he leads the voting and interacts a lot with the audience; he must hold their attention and jovially banter without annoying them. Voice is character-baritone; must be able to handle fast patter.

Clive Paget/John Jasper: the dramatic, dashing leading man, ideally 30's or older, he here plays the most likely of villains, the dark, secretive, vengeful, troubled and schizophrenic choir master Jasper. A dramatic baritone-tenor with some demanding, near-operatic singing - and some fast patter.

Victor Grinstead/Neville Landless: a 20-something newcomer to the Music Hall Royale, he plays the handsome, mysterioso, hot-tempered colonial, Neville, a broad but earnest caricature. A baritone, not overly demanding vocally, but a good singer and mover is clearly a plus.

Cedric Moncrieffe/Rev. Mr. Crisparkle: should be upwards of 50, a lovable old character actor with a twinkle in his eye, who plays the befuddled guardian of Rosa, Neville and Helena. A character voice in the tenor-baritone range, with character the premium.

Nick Cricker/Durdles: The Music Hall Royale's resident comic/cockney performer, he plays the scene-stealing role of the drunken stonemason, Durdles. A baritone with gusto.

Nick Cricker Jr./Deputy: Following in Dad's footsteps, he basically plays Durdles' whiny, confused apprentice. A smallish role, age depends upon that of Nick Sr.; could be 12-19-ish. Boy baritone.

Phillip Bax/Bazzard: Mr. Bax is the perpetual understudy to Mr. Paget, who never misses a performance. Mr. Bax pleads with the audience for a better part - so he figures prominently in the various votes later on. Age negotiable, adorableness the main requirement. A plausible tenor with bravado.

ENSEMBLE:

At least 10, mixed male-female, various ages; solid singers, assorted lines here and there, crowd scenes, lots of enthusiastic singing and dancing. The ensemble also actually conducts the Murderer balloting and will do a lot of pre-show and entr'acte interaction with the audience. They may also "shadow" the leads in a dumb-show re-enactment of the murder - so they will also have a stake in the outcome of the voting.

Any questions, contact Joe Phillips at 464-2698.



P.O. Box 1006
Schenectady, NY 12301-1006

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Babes in Arms

December 5-7, 11-14

Thursday, Friday, and
Saturday at 8:00 PM
Sunday at 2:00 PM

TICKETS: 383-9350

Adults: \$18; Children under 13: \$9
Group rates available! Call for information.

**Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Schenectady, NY
Permit #120**

The Prince is Giving a Ball...

and you're invited! Anyone wishing to volunteer as a substitute for the High School Musical Theater Awards Committee is asked to call Sue Rucinski at 785-3530. Leave your name, phone number and address, and she will send you an information packet.

2003 - 2004 New Membership/Membership Renewal Form

Please return by **February 1, 2004** to:

Della Gilman • 125 Glen Eddy Drive, Schenectady, NY 12309

PLEASE PRINT Name[s] _____

Address, incl. 9-digit zip _____

Phone _____ Today's Date _____

My/Our last show involvement was _____
[Membership requires participation in some aspect of a recent production.]

I/We have enclosed my/our \$10 membership fee *per person*.
Dues paid now will make me/us a member **through June 2004**.

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____ Check # _____ payable to **SLOC**.
Credit Card number _____ MC/Visa Exp.date _____

Signature [Charges only] _____

Babes Factoids

* When *Babes In Arms* opened on Broadway at the Shubert Theatre on April 14, 1937, the top ticket price was...\$3.85!

* Part of the reason for the reasonable ticket price was that the show featured modest sets and no stars.

* Among other things, the show is noted for being Alfred Drake's Broadway debut. He was in the chorus!

* The total cost of staging *Babes in Arms* was \$55,000.

* The show won no Tony Awards - why? - because the Awards were not handed out until 1947!

* George Balanchine staged Broadway's first ever "dream" ballet in this show.

* The movie version opened in 1939 with stars Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney.