



SLOC Spotlight

The Newsletter of the
Schenectady Light Opera Company
Volume 37-1
September 2003

Jane Eyre Cast Announced

Producers Michael McDermott and Fern Dutkin along with Director Michael Mensching are pleased to announce the cast for *Jane Eyre*, the first production of SLOC's 2003 – 2004 season. The cast includes: Joan Horgan (Jane Eyre), John Anthony Lopez (Rochester), Kate Kaufman Burns (Blanche Ingram), Carol Charniga (Mrs. Fairfax), Donna Carsten (Miss Scatchered), Neil Jones (Mr. Brocklehurst), Rachel Rhodes-Devey (Helen), Eileen O'Connor (Young Jane), Michael Wessells (Young John Reed), and Courtney Halsdorf (Adele, School Girl).

Rounding out the cast are ensemble members, many of whom play other characters in the production. They include: David Dixon (also Robert), Julia Franklin (also School Girl), Lisa Franklin (also Mrs. Reed, Ingram), Neil Jones (also St. John), Christina Nicotina (also Grace Poole), Marty O'Connor, Michelle Oppedisano (also School Girl), Amy Ragule (also School Girl), Ross Snyder (also Mr. Mason), Tracy Solarek, and Deb Weiskopf (also Bertha).

Performances of *Jane Eyre* run October 17th – 19th and 23rd – 26th. To reserve your tickets, please call Paige Gauvreau (377-5101).

Auditions Set For *Babes In Arms*

Producer Jodi Gilman has announced the audition dates for the second show of the SLOC season – *Babes In Arms*, directed by Jennifer S. Depew. "Where or When" you may ask... well here's where and when: at the Opera House, 826 State Street in Schenectady, on September 9th and 10th. Sign-in will begin at 7:00 PM. With old favorites like "My Funny Valentine", "Johnny One Note", "The Lady is a Tramp" and many more, you will have to resist the urge to sing along!

Many people have seen the Judy Garland/Mickey Rooney movie or the play where the plane crashes on stage. Well, this 1959 version has just a few similarities to each and, best of all, there are more great Rodgers and Hart songs and dances and no crashes at all! Set in Cape Cod during the summer, a group of young talents are trying to get their show seen by a Broadway talent scout. There are a lot of pitfalls along the way – will they ever pull it off? We can only "Imagine"!

The Director is looking for young adults to play the roles of the apprentices and several main characters. She would prefer actors in their 20's who can look young, but younger talent will also be considered. Please remember that the apprentices must LOOK between the ages of 16 and 24. (continued on page three)

Spotlight on...

Babes in Arms
Auditions

September 9 & 10, 7:00 PM
at the Opera House

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



Tom Heckert
President

Board of Directors
Alan Angelo
Mary Kozlowski
Richard Lenehan
Brett Putnam
Michelle Sausa-Gatta
Ted Vickery
Deb Weiskopf
Bonnie Williams
Ken Zarnoch



Next Newsletter
Deadline:
September 10





President's Notes...by Tom Heckert



Let's Get Started!

Welcome back! I hope everyone has enjoyed his or her summer and time away from SLOC. The weather has been far from perfect but there have been a few good days for some summer fun. For those who may not have heard, I have been elected President for the 2003 - 2004 season. Although I was not eligible to run for a position on the Board, I was still eligible for another term as President. This year will truly be a time of training and transition. I look forward to another exciting year! For those of you who may be unaware, Colin and I have moved to Clifton Park as of May. Our new address is 11 Nottingham Way South, Clifton Park, NY 12065. The new phone number is 877-6777.

Annual Meeting Recap

For those who could not attend the annual meeting in June, I am happy to report that SLOC enjoyed another excellent year artistically and a break-even year financially. We maintained a smaller profit as in past few years but hopefully this is temporary and the trend will return to the more successful years of the recent past. The Board has been meeting throughout the summer, planning its agenda for this year. We have a list of projects to complete from the last Board and some new initiatives to establish for the upcoming year.

One project under consideration is a by-laws revision aimed at maintaining an active membership. Quorum at this year's annual meeting was not achieved until 8:30 PM, well after the scheduled start of the meeting. Out of 136 voting members, only 34 were present. Absentee ballots were submitted by an almost equal number of members in attendance but that still left over half of the membership unaccounted for during the proceedings. The lack of quorum made for a longer than necessary meeting and also started a lively conversation about how to keep people involved as members. The idea of having everyone attend a SLOC annual meeting on a regular basis to keep his or her membership active is currently being discussed. If anyone has ideas, suggestions or comments on this issue, please consider contacting me to volunteer to work on the revision committee.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the newly elected Board members. Elected to the Board in June were: Alan Angelo, Mary Kozlowski, Richard Lenehan, Deb Weiskopf, and Ken Zarnoch. Returning members are: Brett Putnam, Michelle Sausa-Gatta, Ted Vickery and Bonnie Williams. I would like to extend my appreciation to the departing Board members: Peter Codella, Jodi Gilman, Dick Harte, and Judi Merriam.

Our Thanks to Madeline Codella

After several years of gathering information, typesetting the Playbill, and coordinating with the printer, Madeline Codella has decided it's time to spend more time with her family in Salt Lake City. So, on behalf of the Company, I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her years of dedication and hard work.

Jane Eyre starts Rehearsals

The first show of the season, *Jane Eyre*, is hard at work in rehearsal. Director Mike Menching has returned this season after directing the successful production of *Forum* last winter. I encourage everyone to come out in October to see a Victorian classic transformed into a brooding and melodic musical.

Bushwhacking Days A Success!

SLOC's bushwhacking days took place in late June. We "whacked the bushes and brush" around the parking lot area and used a whole lot of Round Up to kill the weeds. Thanks to all who helped: Alan Angelo, Paul Croteau, Tom Heckert, Mary Kozlowski, Richard Lenehan, Ted Vickery, and Melinda and Ken Zarnoch. Keep watching for more information for your chance to bushwack in the future!

TANYS Festival Coming To Albany

The TANYS festival will be held in Albany November 21 though 23, 2003. The festival encompasses performances by theater groups from around the state as well as stagecraft workshops for community theater members. SLOC is in the process of contacting the organizers the event to see if we can assist in some way. The Board is also exploring the possibility of making funds available to the membership to attend the workshops. Watch the next newsletter for more information about the festival and stipend opportunities or give me a call for more information.

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. 2** of the SLOC SPOTLIGHT is **Wednesday, September 10, 2003**. Issue No. 2 will be mailed by September 26.

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

In Memoriam

One of our most stalwart members, Ira Gilman, recently lost his battle with heart ailments and passed away in June. Just a year ago, I was wishing him well and a safe vacation in the family's Maine retreat. On behalf of the company, I would like to extend our sympathy to the Gilman family.

My favorite Ira movement involved Caren Chanley Golon teaching Ira a dance sequence to *Mame* during the Lighting Concert in 1994. Ira kept saying he had two left feet but Caren made him dance like Fred Astaire!

Many of our members and friends of Ira have been sending contributions to SLOC in his memory. SLOC has placed the money into a fund bearing Ira's name and later this year, the board will be working with Della to use the money to make a purchase of something for the Opera House that will bear Ira's name. If anyone would like to contribute to the fund, donations can be sent to the attention of Paige Gauvreau at SLOC, PO Box 1006, Schenectady, NY 12301-1006 or contact Paige (377-5101) for further information.

We also would like to acknowledge the passing of Carol (Butler) Simons. Carol played Aldonza in the SLOC production of *Man of La Mancha* directed by Ted Peck. Carol also performed an original song about her personal battle with Breast cancer in the Breast Cancer Benefit that Laurie Larsen organized last spring. Our condolences are extended to Carol's family and friends.

Many of our more seasoned members will remember Beverly Fasake who passed away in early June. Beverly was the first SLOC woman president. Our condolences to her family and friends.

We also want to mark the passing of Evelyn Johnson, our cleaning person for the last 20 years. Evelyn's health had been declining and she passed away in July. Our condolences to her family and loved ones. —Tom Heckert

Seeking New Playbill Coordinator

In light of Madeline's decision to lighten her SLOC duties, we are now in need of someone to coordinate information for the Playbill. The Playbill is published four times per year and this role would involve a minimum, sporadic time commitment. Responsibilities would include gathering information for each Playbill and delivering it to the printer. If you are interested in this type of involvement in our Company, please call Tom Heckert (877-6777) for more details.

Babes in Arms *continued*

The Press Agent - non-singing, male or female, young version of Our Town stage manager.

Apprentices - at least 6 young people who will sing and dance, can play 16-24. All ranges needed – strong tenor a must.

Terry Thompson – an apprentice, young Ado Annie type, love/hate relationship with Gus, must dance and sing. Range: D to high E.

Gus Field – an apprentice, comical, gangly, love/hate relationship with Terry, must dance and sing. Range: D to C.

Valentine White – lead, an apprentice, young man, 19-22, intellectual, several "love" songs. Range: D to high F.

Susie Ward - 17ish – an apprentice - in love with Val, forthright, enchanting. Range: D to high F.

Seymour Fleming – loves to yell and throw weight around, ½ owner of theater - 50+ - non-singing part.

Bunny – ½ owner of the theater, loved by apprentices, 25-40, has three great songs - must dance and be able to bring down the house. Range: A (below middle C) to high E (strong Mezzo)

Lee Calhoun - young playwright, dapper but aggressive, 25-35 – non-singing.

Jennifer Owen - 25+/- , lovely young star, several "love" songs. Range: D to high G.

Phyllis Owen - stage mother of Jennifer, non-singing.

Steve Edwards - 25 + - Broadway scout, attractive, in 2nd act only, non-singing.

Babes In Arms runs December 5th – 7th and 11th – 14th. For further information, or to assist backstage, please call Producer Jodi Gilman (869-4074) or Director Jennifer S. Depew (456-5504).

Summer Lovin'

The SLOC family would like to extend congratulations to Brett Putnam/Sondra Chizzolin and Connie Rowe/Jeff Rauhauser on their recent summer marriages. Brett and his bride saw stars on their wedding day near the July 4th holiday while Connie and her beau danced the night away in early August. Best Wishes to both happy couples!

Jane Eyre *F actoids*

*Paul Gordon (music and lyrics) devised the idea for a *Jane Eyre* musical while browsing through a book kiosk in the Los Angeles airport on New Year's Day in 1991.

*Paul Gordon is an LA based songwriter whose works have been performed by Bette Midler, Amy Grant, and Quincy Jones, among many others.

*The musical premiered in Toronto in December 1996 and opened on Broadway in December 2000.



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Jane Eyre

October 17-19, 23-26

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

TICKETS: 377-5101

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

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High School Musical Theater Award Winners

The High School Musical Theater Committee, led by co-chairs Sue and Greg Rucinski, traveled the Capital District with their intrepid group of committee members and substitutes to adjudicate 15 shows during our 2002-2003 season. This year the First place award of \$300 was presented to Saratoga Springs High School for their production of *Oklahoma*, the Second place award of \$200 went to Niskayuna High School for their production of *Crazy for You*, and the Third place award of \$100 went to Voorheesville High School for their production of *Les Miserables*. Due to the closeness of the scores, we also presented Shenendehowa High School an Honorable Mention award of \$75 for their production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. In addition to the cash awards, each school also received a plaque to commemorate their achievement.

Not only were the productions outstanding, but the actresses and actors were outstanding also, with a total of 50 performers nominated for the Outstanding Performer Award. This year the award was given to three actors due to the exceptional nature of their performances: John Christensen as Jud Fry in *Oklahoma*, Zach Berger as Bobby Child in *Crazy for You*, and Clint Johnson as Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Each student that was nominated for the award received a "Certificate of Recognition as a Nominee for Outstanding Performer" in acknowledgment of their wonderful efforts.

Sue and Greg would like to thank their hard working committee members and substitutes for their unwavering support and dedication: Ira, Della and Jodi Gilman, Jenny and Bill Depew, Ted Rucinski, Sally Farrell, Ken Zarnoch, Brett Putnam, Ron Fish and Gary Carter.

On a personal note, Greg and I are still shocked and saddened by the passing of our committee member and long time friend Ira Gilman. Ira took this very nervous teenager under his wing at her first SLOC audition, and has been a constant source of encouragement and support ever since. Our thoughts go out to Della, Jodi and the entire Gilman family. He will be missed, he will be remembered. —Sue Rucinski

Volunteers Needed!

We are still looking for volunteers to fill the role of houseman and/or head bartender during the runs of our productions. The commitment is minimal, just one night of the production run. We will be holding "on the job training" with a seasoned veteran during *Jane Eyre* for both jobs. If you are interested, please call Deb Weiskopf (372-3554) for bar training or Tom Heckert (877-6777) for houseman training. It's a good way to get involved with the company and help keep things running. The support of our membership keeps SLOC vibrant and running smoothly!