

## Company of Musical Theatre 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Alumni Newsletter

Another year has come on gone, so here I am again to give you a summary of what some of the CMT Alumni have been up to. My husband asked me today how long I intended to keep up the webpage and the newsletter, and I honestly don't know, but I'm constantly keeping my ears and eyes open for news about anyone I've worked with or known in the past, so I don't feel that keeping people up-to-date is much of a chore.

In the next year, I'm hoping to somehow find some time to redesign the CMT web pages and maybe put them in a location where we don't have to deal with pop-up ads, but we'll have to see how busy I get. This past year, I added a "media" page to the site so you can see which DVDs, videos and CDs are available featuring our members. And, as part of my enthusiasm for theatre, I launched OttawaTheatre.ca where you can get up-to-date information on auditions and events in the Ottawa area.

On a more personal note, I got married on July 18<sup>th</sup> (if you didn't clue in already to the "husband" reference ☺ ) in a small ceremony to Mark Muench and life has not slowed down since. Now, on to the things that everyone else has been doing!.....

### On-stage

**Mike Falcucci** appeared in the Stratford productions of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Gigi*, which, incidentally, featured leading lady Jennifer Gould, sister of CMT alumnus **Adrienne Gould** who also appeared in *Gigi*.

**Robin Senzilet** spent her summer at the Charlottetown Festival, performing in their production of *Anne of Green Gables*.

**Shawna Morgan, Derek Eyamie, Nicole Milne, Andréa Black** and **Alyssa Delle Palme** jived to the tunes of the musical *Grease* for the Orpheus Musical Theatre Society – choreographed by **Debbie Millett**.

**Robin Guy** won rave reviews as Eve Harrington in OLT's *The Wisdom of Eve* and also wowed audiences with her portrayal of Bella Cohen in the Orpheus production of *Rags*. Other alumni involved in that show were **Bob Lackey** (Avram), **Frank Duern** (Ben Levitowitz), **Gabriel Leury** (Guard), and **John McGovern** (accompanist/keyboards) with musical direction by **Brian Boggs**. Set Design was by **Christy Bindhardt**.

**Brian Boggs** will also be waving his baton for Orpheus' next production of *Johnny Belinda* which also features **Robin Guy** in her debut as a choreographer, **Shawna Morgan** as assistant director, **Bob Lackey** in the role of Black McDonald, and **Tanya Chang** as Lizzie.

**Brian Cano** (Eddie McCuen) and **Sharron McGuirl** (Elsa von Grossenknueten) appeared in the farce *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* at the Ottawa Little Theatre; and CMT alumnae directing team of **Mari Lyn Kelly** (artistic director), **Allison Woyiwada** (musical director) and **Joan Scarcella** (choreographer) put together a hit for the Savoy Society with *The Sorcerer in March*. Other alumnae involved in the show were **Tanya Chang** and **John Seccombe**. Joan and Allison are now working together on Savoy's 2004 production of *The Mikado*.

**Tanya Chang** helped bring the record-holding longest-running off-Broadway musical, *The Fantasticks*, to Ottawa audiences as choreographer for the Ottawa Little Theatre's summer production.

Alumnae **Nicole Milne** and **Tricia Lackey** helped launch a brand new professional musical theatre company in Ottawa. The two appeared in the smash hit *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* which was presented at the NAC Fourth Stage by the Zucchini Grotto Theatre Company. Nicole was also a member of the Electric Cake Cabaret Company along with **Bob Lackey, Shawna Morgan**, and **John McGovern**.

In a difficult time with tourism down since September 11, 2001, Broadway saw the closing of *Flower Drum Song* and *Oklahoma*, among other shows. These shows had featured alumnae **Ericka Yang** and **Nicolas Dromard**,

respectively, but I've heard that both have moved on to their next projects: Ericka has since joined the cast of *42<sup>nd</sup> Street*, while Nick can be found performing in *The Boy From Oz*.

The SARS scare also didn't help theatre in Toronto, and *Mamma Mia* closed for the summer, being recast for its return in the fall. At the time of its close, **Crystal Martinez** and **Chad McNamara** were part of the cast. (Crystal has since returned to the role of Ali.) *The Lion King*, in which **Arthur Kyeyune** appeared, also ended a successful run at the end of the summer.

This fall, Ottawa saw the birth of a brand new theatre company, Suzart Productions, which is aiming to bring affordable musical theatre to family audiences. **Gabe Leury** appeared as the cat, and **Brian Boggs** played clarinet in the pit band, for Suzart's inaugural production of *Honk!*

Finally, the fall productions in Ottawa included GOYA Theatre Productions' *Vaudeville*. **Joan Scarella** (*Associate Director/Choreographer*), **Christy Bindhardt** (*Production Coordinator*), **Bob Lackey** (*Sam Goldstein*), **Moe Romanow**, **Alain Patry**, **Maria Galletta**, and **Tim Hillock** all participated in this production. And Orpheus presented *Sweet Charity* for which Nicole Milne received rave reviews for her performance in the title role. Other CMT alumnae to appear in the show were, **Debbie Millett**, **Andréa Black**, **Tanya Chang**, **Eleri Evans** and **Gabe Leury**, as well as **John McGovern** as Musical Director.

## Film & television

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, **Bill Luxton** (who played the voice of Ziegfeld in CMT's production of *The Will Rogers Follies*) was honoured alongside his *Willy and Floyd* partner Les Lye with a Lifetime Achievement Award from ACTRA Ottawa.

**Lori Nancy Kalamanski** appeared as the Second Woman in the Park in the made-for-TV movie *America's Prince: The John F. Kennedy Jr. Story* starring Kristoffer Polaha and Portia de Rossi. And this summer saw the video release of *A Wind at my Back Christmas* featuring **Meredith Henderson** as Anna Schiller.

The weekend before dress rehearsals of *The Sorcerer*, I pulled my first all-nighter since high school to appear as an extra in the sci-fi movie *Decoys*. No, I didn't audition for one of the belly-buttonless babes from space, but appeared as a college student at a sorority house party – realizing that I'm getting a bit old for a role like that!

## Variety performances & concerts

In early February, the Nepean Concert Band appeared on the CentrepoinTE Theatre stage with the Centralaires Band of the Air Force Association of Canada and I bumped into several alumni whom I hadn't seen in a long time including clarinetist **Charles Legault** and saxophonist **Tina Leach**. Of course, the NCB is still home (at last on Wednesday nights) for many of the musicians who found their way into the pit for CMT's productions.

In June, **Shannon Mercer** presented an hour-long recital at the National Arts Centre Studio for the NAC-CBC Debut series. (I actually heard it on the radio just a few weeks ago!) Shannon recently finished two years as a member of the Studio Ensemble of the Canadian Opera Company.

Jazz saxophonist, **Kenji Omae**, was spotted by the Ottawa Citizen at the Ottawa International Jazz Festival where **Leah State** received high praise for her jazz vocals. Being put in the same league as Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday and Sarah Vaughan is nothing to sneeze at!

## New additions!

The arrival of summer also summoned the arrival of Jenna Brown, a daughter for **Mike Brown** and his wife Micheline who were married in 2002. New baby, Samuel Stephen, arrived on October 1<sup>st</sup> to proud parents **Robin Guy** and her husband Stephen Lenser.

## What the new year holds in store...

I recently caught up with **Stephanie Ramphos**, and she'll be touring in a production of the children's show *Caillou's Big Party*. And in case you're wondering, **Maya** will be heading back to Vancouver after a whirlwind year which included whitewater kayaking in New Zealand and British Columbia, and a month exploring the not-so-touristy areas of Mexico.

There are so many CMT alumni who are keeping busy on- and off-stage, and I know everyone would love to hear all the news, so feel free to send me an email to get your events, achievements and news posted on the CMT website – and feel free to pass along this newsletter. It will be posted on the website by Christmas time!

**Have a safe & happy holiday season,  
And best wishes for the New Year!**

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