

Company of Musical Theatre 3rd Annual Alumni Newsletter

Wow! Can you believe 2004 is already coming to an end? How time flies! Good intentions to redesign our Alumni site fell by the wayside, but I did move it off the Geocities site where it lived for several years. After setting up OttawaTheatre.ca in the fall of 2003, I had no qualms about putting the CMT site underneath the site to make it easier to find, and easier to handle without all those annoying ads popping up. The new URL is <http://www.ottawatheatre.ca/cmt>.

Now, without further ado, is the news that I've collected from the past year:

On-stage

This is always the most difficult section to write since there are just so many things going on during the year! January already started off with **Stephanie Ramphos** appearing at Centrepointe Theatre in the touring production of *Caillou's Big Party*. Then, in March, Orpheus presented *Johnny Belinda* which featured musical direction by **Brian Boggs** and choreography by **Robin Guy**. **Shawna Morgan** was the Apprentice Director, and **Bob Lackey** and I both appeared in the cast. Orpheus' June production of *Annie Get Your Gun* featured Gabriel Leury as Apprentice Musical Director.

Although CSM closed its doors earlier this year, they did come back with a production called *Memory Lane* which was co-written by **Chad Nesrallah**. In June, **Barry Caiger** joined the cast of Kanata Theatre's *Out of Sight, Out of Murder*, and, that same month, both **Alain Patry** and **Lori Nancy Kalamanski** appeared at the Ottawa Fringe Festival. Alain appeared as Bob Abbott in *Extensions*, and Lori appeared as one of *The Amazing Fox Sisters*.

The 2004-2005 Ottawa theatre season started off with **Nicole Milne** reprising her role in the Zucchini Grotto Theatre Company's *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* – this time at the NAC Studio instead of the Fourth Stage. Earlier in the year, Nicole had appeared in ZGTC's production of *The Last 5 Years* (with costumes by **Joy Lackey**). In October, the hilariously funny *Menopositve!* hit the Centrepointe Stage with **Joan Scarcella** directing this GOYA production. Later, in November, Orpheus presented *Crazy For You*, featuring **Tricia Lackey** as Polly, **Derek Eyamie** as Bobby, and **Sharron McGuirl** as Bobby's mother. Also in the cast were CMT alumni **Alain Patry**, **Tim Hillock** and **Shawna Morgan**... and Tricia's sister Gillian filled the role of one of the showgirls, a role that Tricia had played in CMT's production of the same show back in 1995.

As this newsletter gets distributed, Suzart Productions will be in its final preparations to stage *Seussical, the Musical* at the Chamber, Centrepointe Theatre. Musical direction is provided by **Fiona Morrison**. And Orpheus is now in rehearsal for its March production of *Damn Yankees* with Orpheus alumni at the directorial helm: **Bob Lackey** is director, **John McGovern** is musical director, **Derek Eyamie** is making his debut as choreographer, and **Joy Lackey** will be designing the costumes.

In Toronto, **Nicolas Dromard** and **Alison Smyth** appeared in the Mirvish Production of *Hairspray* from April until closing night in November. Meanwhile, **Adrienne Gould** was strutting her stuff at the Stratford Festival, earning the Tyrone Guthrie Award for her performances. She appeared as Marie in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, as the First Fairy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in the cast of *The Swanee: Queen Victoria*. **Michael Falcucci** was also at the Stratford Festival, appearing in the casts of *Guys & Dolls* and *Anything Goes*. And, **Jennifer Waiser** was keeping busy, to say the least. She appeared as Little Sally in the CanStage production of *Urinetown*, and later in the year as Anne in the Marshall Arts production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Elsewhere in Canada, **Sarah Connell** appeared in the Stage West (Calgary) production of the *Rocky Horror Show*, and **Gabriel Wolinsky** could be found in the Neptune Theatre (Halifax) production of *Cats*.

On the Broadway scene, **Ericka Yang** continued to appear in *42nd Street* as Ethel. The show will be closing January 2nd, 2005.

Overseas, **Arthur Kyeyune** continued his tenure with the London production of *The Lion King*. I was able to catch up with him briefly after I received an email for him from the *Cirque du Soleil* of all places! I'm not sure what ever came of that, but it was exciting nonetheless. Meanwhile, **Melanie McInenly** wrapped a successful run of *Chicago* after several months at the Casino de Paris in France.

Film & Television

A few familiar faces have appeared on the small screen this year. In March, **Jonathan Estabrooks** appeared in the CBC production of Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, and in October and November, **Maya Chang** appeared in three episodes of the long-running Canadian TV series *DaVinci's Inquest*. And although you'd die holding your breath to see me, I actually appeared in *H2O* which starred Paul Gross and aired this fall on CBC. I never knew that standing for 11 hours could cause so much muscle ache in the legs (not even mentioning the sore feet!) until I worked with about 200 other extras to film the political convention scene, but you'll be hard pressed to find me in the final cut from the movie. Such is the life of an extra!

In the new year, **Chad McNamara** will appear as Rooney in 26 episodes of a new CBC children's series called *The Doodle Bops*. And don't forget to watch for the mini-series based on Shania Twain's life and rise to stardom. Our very own **Meredith Henderson** will play the diva from about the age of 17 to 20-something. Meredith was also scheduled to film a few more episodes of *Queer as Folk*, reprising her role as Callie.

Variety Performances & Concerts

This past year, **Shannon Mercer** appeared both in a concert by the Ottawa Chamber Music Society and at the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival. Earlier in the year, I also heard her performing some Welsh tunes on CBC radio.

Rory McGlynn was also back on the scene in March, appearing in Yoriko Kimmon's 9th Annual Shooting Stars Operatic Showcase. And, in January, the NAC Orchestra's Young People's Concert featured **Stephanie Cadman** among the guest artists.

This Christmas season, **Alain Patry** brought together his Christmas Edition vocal quintet which includes **Paul Melsness**. And yours truly joined the Hot Toddy holiday quartet to bring music of the festive season to shoppers, party-goers and seniors.

New Additions!

Congratulations go out this year to **Beki Henderson** who was wed this summer. She and her husband Adam spent a honeymoon in Vancouver, and in October they welcomed a daughter (Emelyn Laura Debbie Lantos) into their family – a sister for 2-year-old Austin. There are pictures of the beautiful bride, the groom and the Henderson family on Meredith's website (www.meredith-henderson.com).

And, alumni **Vivian** and **Paul Melsness** also welcomed a second child into their family. Sophie Noelle was born in June, a sister for 2-year-old Clara.

Funny Meeting You Here!

As more and more of our alumni find their way to our website, it's always interesting to receive emails or just bump into people who we once knew. Recently, I received an email from **Mark Allan** who is still keeping busy choreographing and performing. A chance encounter at the library with **Linda Connell** also brought back memories. And, on a visit back to the Canadian College of Performing Arts, **Maya** bumped into **Alyssa Delle Palme** who is now a student there! Both **Maya** and **Melanie McInenly** are graduates of the CCPA.

Other Stuff

Earlier this year, **Stacey Ingrey** was among three vocalists to record a concept CD for a show called *Cupid 911* by Larry Tarof and Lila Rose. The CD is now available in select stores in Ottawa and Toronto. (www.cupid911.com)

Congratulations to **Vivian Melsness** and **Nancy Feldbruegge** who opened up their own dance studio this year. Allegro Danceworks has been teaching out of various venues (churches and schools) over the past few years, but they can now boast their very own space in a new mall in Kanata.

What's Ahead?

The year ahead will surely get busier as it progresses, but already a few shows are underway in rehearsal, or have been announced, which feature CMT alumni.

In January, **Shannon Mercer** will be performing at Centrepointe Theatre in Opera Lyra's double bill of *The Telephone* and *The Old Maid and the Thief*. The following month, **Robin Guy** will be appearing in Kanata Theatre's production of *Dancing at Lughnasa*, and I'll be slated to appear as a nun in Suzart Productions' *The Sound of Music* which will be under the musical direction of **Gabriel Leury**. Also on the local scene, **Debbie Millett** will be choreographing Orpheus' June production of *Oliver!* and **Allison Woyiwada** will be musical director of the Savoy Society's production of *Patience* in the spring.

Outside of Ottawa, you may find it worthwhile to pay a visit to the Stratford Festival next year where alumni **Adrienne Gould** will appear as Miranda in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and **Jennifer Waiser** will play Little Red Riding Hood in the Sondheim musical *Into the Woods*.

Last Word

As I was preparing this newsletter, I went back to Meredith Henderson's website to check a few facts about her latest projects. On her page, she regularly posts messages to her fans, and there's a particularly poignant (real-life) story she tells in her message from October 24, 2004. I highly recommend that if you have the time, you go and read it. Especially around this time of year, her story of a particularly gloomy day and a chance encounter with two homeless men can remind us all to count our blessings, remember those who are less fortunate, and see the good in everyone. Thanks for posting that, Meredith.

**Have a safe & happy holiday season,
And all the best to everyone in the year ahead!**

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