

## Company of Musical Theatre 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Alumni Newsletter

Another busy year has come and gone for our Alumni. It's quite a challenge to keep my finger on the lives of our CMT "family", but it's so exciting to hear about everything that you're all accomplishing. So, for another year, I'll attempt to highlight as many things as possible! (I will admit that I really started to lose track towards the end of the year, but here goes...)

### Theatre in the Ottawa area

Taking a look back at theatre in Ottawa, there is always a lot going on, and always a lot of familiar faces. And, since we all have roots at least partly (if not completely) in musical theatre, the easiest place



to find CMT alumni is at Orpheus. In March, Orpheus presented *Nonsense: The Mega-Musical* with **Gabriel Leury** as musical director. In the cast were **Suzanne Castanza** (Sister Mary Hubert), **Tanya Chang** (Sister Mary

Brendan), and **Bob Lackey** (Father Virgil), while **Pierre Huneault** could be found in the pit handling percussion duties. Wrapping up the 2008-2009 season was *The Full Monty*, directed by **Debbie Millett** with choreography by **Linda Fournier-Brown**. We all got to see just a bit more of **Derek Eyamie** than we ever thought we would, and kudos to the production team for turning those bright back lights on just in the nick of time. ☺ **Nicole Milne**, **Shawna McSheffrey** and **Rebecca Henderson** (now known as Beki Lantos) were also in the cast. In the fall, **John McGovern** provided accompaniment for Orpheus' production of *Little Women* while **Sharron McGuirl** played a wonderfully stern but lovable Aunt Josephine March.

Orpheus's production of *The Full Monty* won this year's Capital Critic's Circle award for best community production, and *Nonsense: The Mega-Musical* earned an award for director Debbie Miller. **Gabriel Leury** was also nominated in the category for best director alongside Debbie Miller, and **Chad McNamara** earned a nomination for his appearance in Orpheus's production of *Fame*, as did **Suzanne Castanza** for her appearance as Sister Mary Hubert in *Nonsense: The Mega-Musical*.

Starting off the year, **Nicole Milne** appeared in Ottawa Little Theatre's production of *Over My Dead Body*, and she hit the stage barely a month later in Zucchini Grotto Theatre Company's *Silver Screen Cabaret* with **Pierre Huneault** and **Gabriel Leury** providing accompaniment in the "pit". Vision Theatre presented *Life After God* featuring **Shawna McSheffrey**, followed by *Some Girls* in which **Robin Guy** appeared. **Robin** also directed and performed in *Birth*, a play by Karen Brody that was featured at the International Breech Conference (also organized by **Robin**).

In February, Opera Lyra held their annual Black and White Opera Soiree at which **Tanya Chang** and **Diana Zahab** sang with the chorus. **Tanya** and **Diana** also sang with the Opera Lyra chorus in July for Opera Under the Stars at LeBreton Flats.

Later in February, Suzart presented *Once Upon a Mattress* with musical director **John McGovern**, and **Barry Caiger** as the Wizard and **Tim Hillock** as Sir Ambos. **Tim** also appeared in GOYA Theatre's production of *Gabriel* along with **Tanya Chang** and **Moe Romanow**. **Joan Scarcella-Kovacs** provided choreography for the show.

The Ottawa Little Theatre 2009-2010 season included *Same Time Next Year* under the direction of **Brian Cano**, and *I Love You You're Perfect Now Change*, directed by **Debbie Millett**. Her assistant director was **Nicole Milne**, and **Brian Cano** provided the lighting design. Meanwhile, **Maureen McGovern** appeared in the role of Mary Hogan in Kanata Theatre's production of *Having A Wonderful Time, Wish You Were Her*.

Next year is already shaping up as well. JCC is taking another shot at presenting a musical with a production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. CMT alum involved on the production team are **Robert Gould**, **Pat Neuman**, **Morris Neuman** and **Marty Black**. **Bob Lackey** will be directing Orpheus' March production of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* with **John McGovern** as his musical director, **Joy Lackey** as costume designer, and **Lawrence Mahusky** in the role of Reverend Sprague. **Joan Scarcella-Kovacs** was also coaxed back into the role of choreographer at

Orpheus for their June production of *The Producers*. **Brian Boggs** will be musical director for this production, while **Gabriel Leury** will be Production Assistant and **Joy Lackey** will be the social convenor.

Reaching even further into the year, **Brian Cano** is slated to direct *Messiah on the Frigidaire* in June 2011 at Ottawa Little Theatre, while **John McGovern** will be musical director for Orpheus' Fall 2010 production of *Annie*, and **Debbie Millett** will be choreographing their March 2011 production of *Into The Woods*.

### Theatre outside of Ottawa

Early in the year, **Lori Nancy Kalamanski** played the Phoenix in *The Forbidden Phoenix* for the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre For Young People in Toronto, and **Alison Smyth** joined the cast of



*Jersey Boys* in multiple roles. Meanwhile, the North American Tour of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* wrapped up in May, leading **Melanie McInenly**, **Michael Falcucci** and **Gabriel Wolinsky** to other projects.

In the spring, **Chad McNamara** appeared as Ryan Evans in Neptune Theatre's production of *High School Musical* in

Halifax, and **Mark Allan** appeared in Sudbury Theatre's production of *Sweeney Todd*. **Laura Caswell** was also in Sudbury for her role as Meg in *Leading Ladies* which was presented in October. And, more recently, **Alyssa Delle Palme** (who is part of the Magic 104 Morning team in Moncton) took to the stage in *The Mind with the Dirty Man*, presented by Hairy Tease Productions.

Meanwhile, **Nicolas Dromard** continues his tenure as Fiyero in the San Francisco production of

*Wicked*. There are even fan websites and Facebook pages for him! ☺

### Film, Television & other media

There are undoubtedly several CMT alumni who have been busy with film and television projects throughout the year; however, the easiest person about whom to find information (thanks to IMDB) is **Chad Connell** who worked on *Taking a Chance on Love* (as Billy Miller), *Wild Roses* (series – as Aaron), *At Risk* (as Toby Huber).

### Musically speaking

**Shannon Mercer** is one busy lady with dozens of appearances every year. In Ottawa, she most recently appeared as Pamina in Opera Lyr's production of *The Magic Flute*. Her recording "Bach and the Liturgical Year" was up for a Juno award this year in the category for Best Vocal Classical Album, but she lost out to "Gloria! Vivaldi and his Angels", an album on which she also performed.

Many of our alumni have busy performance calendars – **Chantelle Wilson**, **Diane White**, **Siobhan McGovern**, **Stephanie Cadman**, just to name a few – so hopefully some of you are able to catch their acts.

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Outside the theatre, congratulations go out to **Bob Lackey** who is now retired from teaching. His retirement party was held at Orpheus House and was attended by friends and family including CMT alumni **Danny Boucher**, **John McGovern**, **Maureen McGovern**, myself and Bob's family (including his lovely wife **Joy** and his eldest daughter **Tricia**). Also, congratulations to those who tied the knot this past year. **Samantha Wolinsky** married Michael Fekkes, and **Stephanie Ramphos** was a bridesmaid at **Andréa Black's** wedding.

And, taking a step alongside other CMT alumni who have opened dance studios, **Gabriel Wolinsky** and **Michael Falcucci** joined forces to launch Capital City Dance this past September. Check out their website at [www.capitalcitydance.ca](http://www.capitalcitydance.ca), or join their Facebook group for more information.

**Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and have a happy & safe holiday season!**

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