



FRIENDS OF MONOMOY THEATRE, INC.

POST OFFICE BOX 169, CHATHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, 02633

THE MAGPIE

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2015 - A FANTASTIC SEASON!

by Bernard Cornwell
Photos by Sarah Sierszyn

At the end, as the last set was dismantled, the lights taken down and the traditional broom and stool were placed center stage to guard the theater through the winter, we looked at each other and agreed it had been a fantastic season. As ever, it had been so much work! The Monomoy Theatre demands a huge amount from the students who make up the company, but this year the company combined enthusiasm, dedication and commitment. It was indeed a fantastic season.

It began with *Damn Yankees* and it almost began with disaster. After opening night Ella Mora, who had played the journalist brilliantly, tripped down some steps and broke her foot. She was rushed to hospital. Could she dance the next night? She could not even walk! One of the leading players was suddenly gone, but Cara Rashkin, who had been the



dance captain for the show, stepped in and it is an amazing tribute to the Hartt School and to Cara that subsequent audiences had no idea that she was a replacement. Somehow she learned the lines in a single day and saved the show! And it was worth saving! Darren Brown was a great Joe Hardy, the ballplayer who appears from nowhere to confound the Yankees,

Sara Killough enchanted as Lola and Juwan Crawley, fast becoming a Monomoy favorite, was a cheerfully sly devil. The show was directed by another Monomoy favorite, Kyle Brand. This was his first Monomoy production as a director and we all hope he'll direct many more!

Ella's injury meant we had to change some lines in *The Hollow*, the Agatha Christie thriller which followed *Damn Yankees*. My first line to Ella was 'Midge! How are you?' which we changed to 'Midge, how are you? How's the foot?' Ella bravely played the part on crutches despite still being in pain. The highlight, for me, was Ellen Fiske's portrayal of Lady Angkatell, the ditzy, unreliable, scatter-brained suspect who drove the stolid policemen to distraction. Another murder at Monomoy!



Murder was followed by farce, and what a farce! *Lend Me a Tenor*, written by the clever Ken Ludwig and superbly directed by Francesca James, was a complete





Season Recap (Continued)

triumph. It was, surely, one of the funniest productions ever to fill the Monomoy Theatre with laughter. Our stage is not large, but there were six doors in the set, and the eight actors had to rehearse their timings to perfection. They did. The story was simple enough; what do you do when the world's most famous tenor is comatose in his hotel bedroom instead of appearing at the Cleveland Opera House? The answer, of course, is to persuade someone to impersonate him, and the simple story then gets very complicated. Glenn Pepe's set was immaculate, Raven Ong's costumes were exquisite, and the show was a highlight in a memorable season.

The Underpants, by Steve Martin, followed. Note the 'by'. Actually the play was by Carl Sternheim, but our version was reworked BY Steve Martin. Again, note the BY.



Some folk did not notice the 'by' on the big Main Street poster and thought Steve Martin was appearing at the Monomoy Theatre and we had to hurriedly repaint the word in MUCH BIGGER LETTERS. Bill Kux and Arlene Bozich played the couple whose marriage is tested after she suffers a very public and very embarrassing wardrobe malfunction, while Lou Maloof made

a memorable appearance as the King.

From Dusseldorf in 1910 we moved to the Putnam Valley Middle School Gymnasium, the venue for the *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, a musical by Rachel Sheinkin and William Finn.

Phil Rittner again led the Monomoy Orchestra, generously provided by you, the Friends of the Monomoy Theatre. Annemarie Davis directed



this sweet musical with its tale of eccentric competitors, enhanced each evening by volunteers from the audience. Of course none of those volunteers could be allowed to actually win the spelling bee, so some fiendishly difficult words were kept in reserve just in case one turned out to be too good. Luckily no one needed to spell onychocryptosis, which, I hardly need tell you, is a technical name for an ingrowing toenail.

We followed the Spelling Bee with Jon Jory's adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, a story that never grows old. Jay Stratton directed, while Arlene Bozich and Darren Brown, both post-grad students from the University of Connecticut, led the cast as Lizzy Bennet and Mister Darcy. The costumes were again

by Raven Ong, and how lush they were! It took a large cast, no fewer than 20 actors,



to tell the much loved story. Alan Rust and a wondrously vaporous Ellen Fiske played Lizzy's parents . . . Alan had that most memorable of lines, 'Lizzy, if you do not marry Mister Collins your mother will never speak to you again, and I will never speak to you again if you do.' Luckily true love won out. Lizzy, instead of marrying the odious Mister Collins (wondrously played by Mac Westcott who delighted us all summer long) gets her man, Mister Darcy.

There was little true love in *Biloxi Blues*, Neil Simon's great comedy that follows the life of Eugene Jerome whom we met last year in Brighton Beach Memoirs. Nate Healey again played Eugene, and played it brilliantly as we followed him from New York to his basic infantry training in Mississippi. The year is 1943 and the comedy is touched with foreboding because we know





these boys will soon be sent abroad to fight. Mary O'Brady directed and we all hope that Monomoy will present the last of Eugene's trilogy, *Broadway Bound*, in the coming season

We came home for our last production; *A Midsummer Night's Dream (in Chatham!)*, and so it was! Shakespeare might have set the play in a wood near Athens, but it moved to Cape Cod with surprising ease. You might have noticed the Orpheum Theatre's popcorn buckets? The Candy Manor's candies? The Chatham Angler's uniform? This was an ebullient, delightful production of a much-loved play directed by Robert Davis. Terry Layman played Bottom, and his ass's head (with the moving ears) was supplied by Dennis Predovic who manufactures wonderful props for many of our productions (remember the penguins from *The Man Who Came to Dinner*?) Juwan Crawley, from the Hartt School of Music and Drama, was an outstanding Puck. It was a wonderful way to end a magnificent season, and all of us who either appeared on stage or worked so hard to make the sets, design the lighting or stitch the costumes are grateful to you, the Friends of the Monomoy Theatre, who make the season possible. Thank you! And see you next year!



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Special thanks to all of our Matching Funds donors. You made a big difference this year! If your employer or former employer offers charitable matching funds, this is a tremendously helpful way to support the Monomoy Theatre. ***We deeply appreciate year-end donations!***

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Our 2016 season will be announced early next year.

Season Tickets (8 shows)

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We welcome new board members Jenny Wood and Elsa Bastone. Thanks to Gay Murdoch, Carol Penfield, and Jan Rust who leave the board this year after year of meritorius service. All other 2015 board members will be returning. The board for 2016 is as follows:

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