



FRIENDS OF MONOMOY THEATRE, INC.

POST OFFICE BOX 169, CHATHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, 02633

FALL/WINTER EDITION

THE MAGPIE

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2011 Monomoy Season Highlights

By Bernard Cornwell

Three days before *Comedy of Errors* opened a worried costume designer found Terry Layman, the play's director, on the patio. 'Terry,' he said, 'I have bad news.'

It was early morning. I imagine Terry just grunted, or perhaps raised an eyebrow.

'The whirling dervish costume,' the designer said, 'is stuck in Palestine.'

Only at Monomoy? Scott Anderson, who ran the costume shop, had found a genuine whirling dervish outfit, but it really was stuck in the Palestinian postal system and so never arrived and we never discovered why, but Scott ran up another in time for the play's opening and Doctor Pinch duly spun on stage. It was a wonderful production, enlivened by Zach Bencal's astonishing performance as one of the Dromios, and it ended a

scintillating season, a season which, sadly, ended early. Hurricane Irene threatened and, because the cast would all have to go home across the hurricane's forecasted path, the last performance was cancelled. It always seems to me that when Monomoy's season ends it's as if the lights go out in Chatham. The set of the last play is struck on the night of the last performance and next day the cast scatters across America and the theater lies empty and cold.

But what a season the 54th was! It began with a stunning production of *Man of La Mancha*, with Holly Holcomb as Aldonza and Steve French as Don Quixote. We gave fourteen performances and had thirteen standing ovations! Steve French stopped the show every night with The Impossible Dream, and there was hardly a dry eye at the end when Aldonza finds her redemption in the beautiful song Dulcinea.

Moliere succeeded Miguel de Cervantes. *The Imaginary Invalid* was elegant, funny and shamelessly stolen by Hannah Spacone's cameo appearance with a doll. Hannah, who is studying at the Hartt School (University of Hartford) was just 19, a reminder that this year's cast was younger than usual, but it was so full of talent! Another extraordinarily talented Hartt student, Mark Ford, teamed up with theater director Alan Rust to appear in the third play, *Mass Appeal*. It was another comedy, but one which made the audiences thoughtful as they watched a young seminary student struggle with his vocation.

Mass Appeal has a cast of two and was followed by an extravaganza, *Sherlock Holmes*. The play, written by William Gillette from an idea by Arthur Conan Doyle, ran for over thirty years when it was first produced, and its profits built the great Gillette Castle in Connecticut, and at times it seemed we were building something similar because the play demands four elabor-



rate sets, so elaborate that there had to be *entr'actes* which were wonderfully performed by Zack and Hannah. Bill Kux returned to Monomoy to play Sherlock (and wonderfully too) and David Haugen came to play the sinister Moriarty. At one performance the whole set was being held aloft by volunteers behind the flats, but luckily no one noticed and nothing collapsed. *Sherlock Holmes* was undoubtedly the biggest challenge for the technical crew and Margot-Layne Glickman,

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Season Highlights (Continued)

who headed the crew, overcame the challenge beautifully, as she did all season. Richard Mangan, from London's National Theatre, directed.

Another Monomoy favorite, Kyle Brand (who had choreographed *Man of La Mancha*), returned to star in *Dames at Sea* which brought Chatham's own Carol Penfield into the spotlight. Carol led a brilliant cast in performances which, like every play in the whole season, elicited superlatives from the newspaper critics.

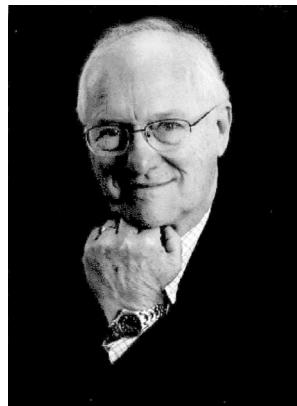
Another Chatham local starred in the next production; eleven year old Zoe Carlson making her first (but surely not her last) appearance at Monomoy in *I Remember Mama*. Ellen Fiske played Mama while her real life husband, Terry Layman, was Papa, and long time Monomoy favorite, Nora Chester, was superb as one of the aunts. The play is funny, but above all touching, and on stage we were all aware of the audience's warm reaction to its gentle tale of courage in adversity.

The mood changed abruptly into *Born Yesterday*, a savage comedy about political corruption, which brought red-haired Sarah Killough back to Chatham. Sarah was in the student cast last year, now she's an Equity member and proof that Monomoy really does prepare students for the professional theater. The season is unrelenting; eight plays in ten weeks, and that intensity is no excuse for sloppy work. It amazed me that *Man of La Mancha* was put together in two weeks, admittedly two weeks of long days, long nights, and endless rehearsals, but every Monomoy play has only two weeks preparation, and not full time either because usually two plays are being rehearsed at once and a third being performed, yet consistently, season after season, the standard is astonishingly high.

And so we went to Ephesus and the comedy of mistaken identity, and its premature ending because of Hurricane Irene. The theatre, on that last night, was full of light and laughter; Shakespeare's magic was still potent after four hundred years, and two nights later, as the wind passed, Monomoy was locked, the lighting rigs were gone, and the traditional stool and broom had been placed center stage to wait for next year's cast. The 54th season is a memory, now we look forward to the 55th!

In Memory . . .

Monomoy Theatre has lost two bright stars in its theatre family. We extend our deepest condolences to the families of Bob Axline and Jordan Popkin



If you'd like to make an end-of-year donation in memory of Jordan Popkin or Robert Axline, you may indicate that on the contribution form in this newsletter.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.monomoytheatre.org

2011 FOMT Board of Directors

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Bernard Cornwell, Cecile Maranhas, Mary O’Brady,
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Outgoing board members were Terry Caza, Nora Chester, Mary Ann Harwood, Sigrid Laughlin and Frank Messina. We greatly appreciate their contributions.

Incoming

members of the Board of Directors are Terry Layman, Cecile Maranhas, Mary O’Brady and Marsha Predovic.

THEATRE NEWS

Take a road trip this winter to the Hartford Stage to catch Monomoy favorites Alan Rust, Bob Davis, Mark Ford, Sarah Kilough and Alex Saffer in *A Christmas Carol*, November 25 through December 30. Call the box office at 860 527-5151 or online www.hartford-christmascarol.org.

In honor of Chatham’s 300th birthday, Artistic Director Alan Rust is basing the 2012 season on history through comedy, drama and music.



Thanks and Remembrance

By Mary O'Brady

The Holidays. The football game blares, turkeys and dinner guests are generously stuffed, it's sometimes easy to lose track of why we gather - to remember and give thanks. So as 2011 heads for the curtain, I'd like to take a moment to do just that.

As many of you know, the Monomoy Theatre lost two very dear Friends this year. Jordan Popkin had been a pillar of Chatham's artistic community for many years. Jordan appeared in many productions here and served as President of the Friends of the Monomoy for years.

Bob Axline was another committed supporter of the Monomoy. He and his wife Jean were the backbone of many FOMT activities. In recent years, they took on the tradition of opening their home for a post show dinner providing many in the company their first taste of real New England lobster. Bob's unique bond with Ohio University, his beloved alma mater, and his sponsorship of the OU alumni events are irreplaceable.

Both of these extraordinary gentlemen shared an infectious enthusiasm for the Monomoy and the students who breathe life into it each summer and they will be deeply missed. Luckily for all of us, they were not alone in that enthusiasm. I'm continually amazed at the unique relationship between the Monomoy Theatre and the surrounding community but that is big part of what makes a summer at Monomoy such an incredible experience for a theatre student.

30 years ago my husband Terry Caza and I came to the Monomoy Theatre as 1st year graduate students from the University of Washington. Our acting professor at UW, the

same person who'd previously taught Alan Rust, Michael John McGann, Ellen Fiske and others at OU had painted an idyllic picture of this place as the pinnacle of summer jobs. Where else could you do Shakespeare and Guys and Dolls in the same season? So when Alan called, we stuffed our belongings into a bedraggled AMC Matador with a mismatched door and headed cross-country from Seattle.

Despite being a few days early, Alan and Jan welcomed us and we were tasked with putting up posters at local businesses. As we worked our way from the Captain's Table to the hardware store to the Wayside, we were taken aback at being greeted with such enthusiasm by complete strangers. One woman at a local shop threw her arms around Terry and shrieked delightedly, "Oh, you're all back!" I thought she might actually cry. What was so special about this place? We soon discovered.

We worked harder than we ever had, but throughout that summer, the most consistent thing we experienced, (in addition to sleep deprivation) was unparalleled generosity. In the many years I've been connected to this place that has remained a constant, though sometimes in unlikely ways. Several years ago, I was directing a Neil Simon comedy and desperate to help an actor stop the action during a chaotic scene, I shouted in frustration, "What we need is a gong! A big one!" An elegant voice behind me interrupted. "I have a gong," she calmly offered, "When do you need it?" Then FOMT President, Betty Clements was picking up tickets and overheard my plea. She lent us her gong and it did indeed stop the show.

That first summer, there was one couple in particular we dubbed "fairy godparents." The mother of four grown boys, when Kate Kelley heard an actor pining for a basketball, the object

of his desire appeared the very next day, unearthed it from a corner of her garage. Another day as temperature soared, a cooler of fresh fruit appeared. To exhausted college students, cash strapped, and far from home, these small acts of kindness loomed immense. Later that season, Kate appeared in a non-speaking role in "Man in the moon Marigolds." She patiently endured the Sunday night tech rehearsal until 2am, and as the cast was small, she sent everyone not involved in the rehearsal to enjoy their Harding's beach deck for the evening.

But more than the boat rides or the beach parties, the people we met here encouraged us. They asked us questions and listened to the answers. They shared their vast and varied experiences and helped teach us the art of living. That begins with Alan and Jan, of course, and their insistence on the summer being about so much more than just getting the shows up but these 'Friends of the Monomoy' were really quite something. I remember delightedly hearing tales of what it was like to play with a 1940s big band in Harlem, lay transatlantic cable for the Navy or man a fishing boat. Most importantly these people taught by example, a spirit of generosity. We could never pay them back. All we could do was say thank you and promise to pay it forward.

We all know Chatham is a special place, as is this theatre. I just want to remind all of you that though you may not know it, your support of the Monomoy does more than help put on plays. You genuinely make a difference in the lives of the students who pass through here both as artists and as people. There is a new crop every year. Many will move on to other professions. They'll leave Chatham and get on with their lives, but I have no doubt that, one day, wherever they are, they will look back, remember and give thanks.



OPENING PARTY GALLERY





FOURTH OF JULY!

Our Parade entry from *Dames at Sea*!



BE A FRIEND: JOIN F.O.M.T

Make a tax-deductible contribution to the Friends of Monomoy Theatre*

FOMT Circle Sponsor	\$1,000+ \$100-\$249	Benefactor Family	\$500-\$999 \$ 50 - \$99	Patron Individual	\$250-499 \$ 30 - \$49
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Enclosed is my check for \$_____ payable to FOMT, Box 169, Chatham MA 02633

Name (please print) _____

Winter Address _____

Summer Address (after June 1) _____

*If your company has a matching program, please consider completing the necessary forms.

As a FRIEND, your name will be printed in the Monomoy Theatre program insert and
you will be invited to all FOMT functions.



Monomoy . . .

A Pure Theatre Experience

By Mark Ford

I was delighted at being asked to share my experience as a member of the Monomoy theatre team because for me that's what it was – a delight. When I say team I truly mean team. It was incredible to see how intricate the process of putting on a show, in that time frame was and how many crucial heads and hands it took to do it. Everyone worked so hard and through that hard work and living in such close quarters, we got to know each other pretty quickly and develop a professional community right from the start of the summer.

Squeezing in time to memorize lines between box office paper work and ringing phones, sewing together a torn costume after dress rehearsal chaos, painting a set piece for a show that has to go up “tomorrow”, trudging through a damp dungeon to find the perfect prop, were all in a day's work... needless to say everyone of every skill-set had trials a plenty. But! The beauty of the Monomoy theatre is that somehow... no matter how impossible it seems (Sherlock Holmes was devastatingly difficult. I swear we just made it across the finish line in time)... people rally together, the show

goes up successfully and, at least in my experience, everyone feels relieved, proud, exhausted and excited for the next one.

That's not to say that the entire time leading to opening night is stressful and chaotic. By the end of the summer I noticed that people were really developing a rhythm and falling into routines that made rehearsals, my job, a total joy. I had the honor to work with some fantastic directors and the amount of knowledge I gained about every nook of the theatre is extensive thanks to them. Getting to meet so many wonderful people, of all different areas of expertise and starting the season at a high pace with *Man of La Mancha* (and never slowing down) was a great way to cram training, networking and fun all into one summer.

You really can't beat the location either. For a summer job, wrapping up a hard day with a beer at the ocean, or studying lines in a Chatham park were nice pluses to

balance out the workload. I would recommend this experience to anyone interested in the theatre as it really did advance my comprehension of every aspect needed to create a successful production.

It also put me in a position where I was continually learning new skills and honing the ones I already had. Hey, I even got to tap dance! I loved my summer at the Monomoy Theatre and I hope that I am fortunate enough to be a part of the company in summers to come. I hope to see you there, or, until I do... Enjoy the wonderful theatre in that wonderful theatre. To the cast, crew and company of the Monomoy Theatre's 54th season, Jan, Alan, Lesley, The Friends of the Monomoy Theatre and everyone who came to enjoy our shows: Thank you for a remarkable summer.

ALAN D. RUST AWARD

A number of years ago, due to a generous contribution by an anonymous benefactor, the Friends established the Alan D. Rust Award. This award, voted by the permanent members of the company, is given to the person who contributed the most during the season. We are pleased to announce that Mark Ford of the Harrt School is the recipient of the Alan D. Rust Award for the season of 2011.

Congratulations Mark!

Be a Friend, bring a friend.....

The Friends of Monomoy Theatre, Inc. supports and enriches the unique Monomoy program by providing fellowships for over half the members of the company, purchasing the rehearsal tent and special equipment, and funding the orchestra of both musicals. It takes much more than the price of admission to bring this wonderful experience to Chatham.



**The Board and Alan and Jan Rust
join me in wishing you a joyous
holiday season!**

Gay Murdoch