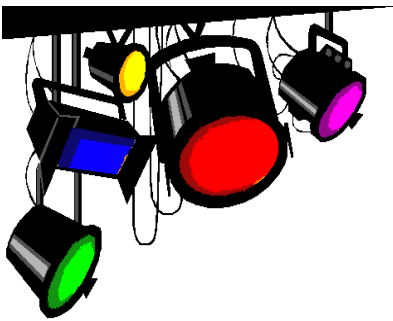




MAY-JUNE, 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



We live in very interesting times. I have never seen anything close to this in my 79 years of living. As I'm sure you all know by now, that we have had to cancel our 2019/20 season and the summer camp for the kids. I would like to recount the circumstances that led up to this unprecedented happening.

Back in February it was evident that Covid-19 was going to be a very serious problem in this country, but we were hoping for the best. By March, it was clear that things were getting worse. When the Governor called for a shutdown in the state, it was decided to cancel the remainder of *Lend Me a Tenor* and all of *Prisoner of Second Avenue*. At the time, the government was saying that it should be ok by June, so we said that we would watch the

progress of the disease and make a determination as to what to do about the rest of the season. By early April, things were looking much worse, so we decided to cancel the last production of the season and the kid's camp to protect our actors, staff and the kids as well.

At this time, we are planning to hold virtual auditions on July 19-20 for the first production of the next season, *Fox on the Fairway*. We will ask actors to send in a video of themselves (everyone has a camera on their phone these days) reading from the sides that are online. Then we will have call backs using Zoom video conferencing. If this works out, we plan to do the same thing for the next audition that will take place on August 30-31 for *Separate Beds* and *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. We must be willing and able to roll with the punches in these trying times.

In the meantime, our Artistic Production Manager, Jeff Dillon, is using this downturn in action to give the theatre a much-needed facelift with new paint. He also is bringing our lighting system up to date with a new control system that will enable us to update our lights to new LED fixtures and more.

I want to thank all our patrons who decided to donate their ticket purchases back to us to help us defray the tremendous loss of revenue that this pandemic is causing. Have no fear, Lemon Bay Playhouse is financially sound since we have a very healthy cushion that we had been building looking forward to moving to a new location. This may delay that project for a while but, in the meantime, we will go on bringing great live theatre to our community using our present facility. It is my fervent hope that this message finds you all well and staying safe at home. We want to see all of you at the theatre when this crisis is over.

Respectfully,

Bob La Salle

LEMON BAY PLAYHOUSE NEWS

IN MEMORY OF GARY SEDDON

BY RIC GOODWIN



“A fabulous director and a good friend.”

“He will be missed for who he was as an actor and friend to the theatre.”

“He was my friend and I will miss him dearly.”

“I considered Gary a friend and his wife Betty as a bonus in the friend department.”

Fittingly, I first met Gary at an audition where we were vying for the same role. Gary got the part, but he sought me out as I was leaving the theatre. He introduced himself and congratulated me on my audition. Soon thereafter he sent me a Facebook friend request. That was Gary. Needless to say, I accepted his friend request and discovered that everyone I know who has worked with Gary considered him a friend.

“As a director he was interested in what motivated the actor through a role...he created a bond that was special and rewarding.”

“Someone who knew what he wanted out of a production but always found time to listen to people’s ideas.” “He was very helpful and quick to respond to my requests on the things I needed from him and from the cast members during the pre-show tasks.”

“...talented, patient, kind, wickedly funny: an actor’s director”

“Loved acting for and being directed by him.”

During my tenure as LBP’s Artistic Production Manager, one of my duties was to secure possible directors for our productions. I asked Gary to send me his resume and references and I was impressed with his education, experience and credentials. We hired Gary to direct Neil Simon’s *Last Of The Red Hot Lovers* to lead off our 32nd season. The production was an unqualified success! The cast, crew, stage manager and publicity manager were universal in their praise of Gary’s leadership and directing style. I did not hesitate to invite Gary back to direct for our 33rd season. He was slated to direct Simon’s *Prisoner of Second Avenue* and was going to open our 34th season by directing Ken Ludwig’s *Fox on the Fairway*.

“Not only did he understand comedy, he was a great comedic actor as well and I learned so much from him.”

“He was so natural with his well-honed comedic talent for bringing life to the words on the page...I loved his sense of humor.”

“I had looked forward to working with him again. I found him to be nice, fun, and an excellent actor.” “I loved watching him and never had the impression he was “acting...he was so natural.”

The preceding quotes are from some of Gary’s fellow cast members in last fall’s production of *Lying In State* (which I directed). Gary was an inspiration to all of us throughout the rehearsal process and run of the show. Though he was in obvious and nearly constant pain, Gary never complained and brought his “A game” to the stage every single night. He set the pace as he burst onto the stage as the pompous, philandering Governor. As an actor, Gary was a director’s dream, bringing to comedic life this character who was the total opposite of Gary. He was the definition of a consummate professional. I also had the privilege of acting alongside of him in a production of *You Can’t Take It With You* where I witnessed his strong rehearsal ethic and precise comedic timing. His portrayal of the zany, mooching ballet instructor, Boris Kolenkov, was spot on right down to the Russian dialect. Sharing the stage with Gary was a true joy. It’s been said that those who can ‘do’ and those who can’t ‘teach.’ Gary could do and teach.

“He taught and he cared about people.”

“Gary was most encouraging...He was always kind and generous and honest with his comments and criticisms. We will all miss you, Gary...especially the students.”

Before retiring, Gary was a teacher and director in Maryland and New Jersey. After he and Betty settled in North Port, Gary taught theatre classes for the Boys and Girls Club and adult theatre classes for Venice Theatre. The preceding quotes are from students and fellow teachers, all reflecting the kind of teacher Gary was. The quotes in this tribute are just a sampling from people who knew and worked with Gary. We are the lucky ones! He touched countless lives with his many talents, not just in theatre but in life lessons as well.

“Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest” -Hamlet

Special thanks to the following for their thoughtful quotes about Gary to assist me in writing this tribute: Kathy Amelia, Marilyn Barton, Judy Glynn, Kathy Kovarik, Bob LaSalle, Jim Manns, Jim Parise, Sandy Davisson and Jim Sciarrello,

LEMON BAY PLAYHOUSE NEWS

BROADWAY IS DARK NOT DEAD!

BY MELISSA MUTKOSKI

When our local theatres went dark and I was stuck at home with time on my hands, I found myself watching movies about theatre productions like *The Producers*, *All That Jazz* and *Sweeney Todd*. I just had to get my “theatre fix” from somewhere! I enjoyed watching *Nine*, even though that is about making a movie not a stage play.

Then, on Netflix, I found a few new movies I’d never seen before. They weren’t musicals or plays turned into movies, but movies about theatre productions. That was so much more fun for a “theatre nerd” like me! I tripped over the 2016 movie *Best Worst Thing That Ever Could Have Happened*. Wow, that was fun. It’s all about the Stephen Sondheim musical *Merrily We Roll Along* and the then-unknown actors cast in the Broadway opening in 1981 (which closed abruptly!) Many of those unknowns are now famous actors, but the way they talked about that production made me re-live in my memory those productions in my past that felt so big, so important at the time. If you have Netflix, look it up. It’s a documentary, but done so very entertainingly.

A really silly one I never saw before that is also available on Netflix is *Opening Night*. The whole show (yes, another musical) is about the production of a new show as seen from the eyes of the production/stage manager. The show on-stage is not the focus and really shouldn’t be, but the comedic dramas happening backstage are riotous and even the backstage musical numbers are better than what they’re doing onstage! A really fun thing to watch.

But my favorite thing about this pandemic / social distancing / quarantine time is the creative ways theatre people have found new outlets for their music, their need to perform, and to show us that their ability to entertain us is still very alive. If you’ve spent any time at all on Facebook this month, you have surely seen some musical groups doing Face-Time or Zoom gatherings. We even have professionals putting on whole TV shows that way like the recent *American Country Music Show*. Broadway performers are doing the same thing. Search Facebook or YouTube for “Broadway” and you will see a ton of singers singing, dancers giving dance classes, and interviews.

But let’s get back to real theatre. It’s not the same as getting dressed nice and showing up on time to get settled into your seat before the lights dim (and you realize it is too late for a bathroom visit). But several professional theatre companies are providing streamed versions of pre-recorded past productions of their live plays and musicals. Check out the list on the Theater Mania website!

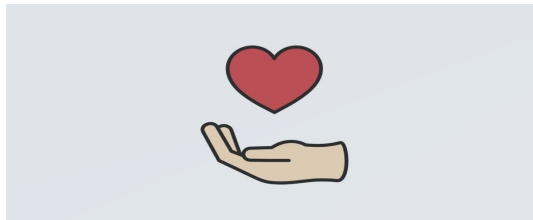
INSPIRING GENEROSITY!

BY DEB POLING

The pandemic has changed our everyday lives and what we used to consider ‘normal.’ The playhouse was closed mid-March and our normal No Refund policy was waived based on the unusual circumstances. I processed over a hundred refunds upon patron requests. Refunds were made back to their credit cards if purchased within 120 days, otherwise paper checks were issued. I appreciate everyone’s patience as I worked through this process.

Most surprising and uplifting is the amount of patrons that happily did not request a refund. Everyone’s situation is different and there were many that were able to donate the value of their tickets back to the Playhouse. Over 300 patrons donated back – Three Hundred! During a time like this we realize how much our friends really mean to us. The Playhouse is lucky to have generous patrons and you have helped us weather the financial impact. I personally spoke to many patrons and have been touched by their generosity and kind words. Your donations and continued support are greatly appreciated!

Again, Thank You for your generosity, kindness and patience in these uncertain times.



LEMON BAY PLAYHOUSE NEWS

STAGE MANAGERS NEEDED

BY JEFF DILLON

As Lemon Bay Playhouse looks forward to the 20-21 Season, a lot of planning and prep goes on behind the scenes. It takes a group of dedicated volunteers running the show backstage and supporting the actors on stage. We have a technician on lights and sound, a prop crew, costume helpers, front house volunteers and they all have one thing in common. They are led by the Stage Manager.

The Stage Manager is the center of the production wheel. A Stage Manager is the Director's right hand person, working with the Director closely on the play at hand. Scheduling actors and rehearsals, organizing the props, working with the various designers, making sure the rehearsals start on time and they get as much done as possible. They make sure the actors have everything they need. The Stage Manager makes sure the shows run smoothly and start promptly. It's a cross between a Manager, Technician and Administrator.

It is the job of the Stage Manager to merge Back of House (the actors, technicians, crew) and Front of House (house managers, ushers, box office) and put on well-run performances from start to finish.

Lemon Bay Playhouse is looking to add to our ranks of Stage Managers! No experience necessary, Lemon Bay Playhouse will train you! If you are an organized person, looking for an outlet with responsibility - being a Stage Manager may be for you. If you have an administration background and want be around the creative arts - being a Stage Manager may be for you. If you are looking for something to do - new to town, more free time on your hands - being a Stage Manager may be for you. If you want to hang out with creative exciting people and learn from gifted theatre professionals - being a Stage Manager may be for you. We offer a stipend and it is a great way to meet new people, learn something and become part of the LBP theatre family. I look forward to hearing from you!

For more information, please contact Jeff Dillon, Artistic Production Manager.

MOVING FORWARD!

BY JEFF DILLON

Lemon Bay Playhouse is moving forward with their 2020-2021 Season with auditions in July. We are ready for a great season that has it all. As we move through this challenging year as a community theatre, tough decisions had to be made for the safety of our patrons, volunteers and staff. LBP had to close early due the effects of COVID 19. We know the closure was sudden and not easy for anyone. We hope you will consider a donation of your ticket or the rest of your season subscription as "a gift in kind" to Lemon Bay Playhouse as we struggle to move forward in this difficult time. Financial help is greatly appreciated and will benefit LBP in many ways.

LBP is being proactive! We are using this "down time" to work on our physical appearance. We are doing some light renovations and other upgrades to the facility to make it a safer and more current performing arts center.

We stand firm in the belief that this pandemic will be over sooner rather than later and we, as an Arts Organization, Community and Country will prevail. It is our hope to have a strong return for the LBP 2020-2021 Season with our seven show season, unique and entertaining show-cases and children's programming.

We start off the season with *Fox on The Fairway* by Ken Ludwig. This is a fast paced romp at a prestigious country club, featuring an expensive wager on a golf game, double entendre and a hidden family secret. In the second slot is *Separate Beds* by MJ Cruise. A charming, funny tale of two couples on a cruise ship as they discover how to reignite their respective relationships. To fill out our Holiday Season, *A Child's Christmas in Wales* by Polly Hogan. A heartwarming telling of Dylan Thomas's beloved holiday story. Next in line is *Art of Murder* by Joe DiPietro. An Artist, his wife, the agent, the maid, who did it? *Old Ringers* by Joe Simonelli. A bawdy tale of four senior girls who make ends meet by "Making ends meet!" Next up, *Now and Then* by Sean Grennan. A romantic, moving tale of young love and aged wisdom. Lastly is *Baggage* by Sam Bobrick. It's a tale of mixed up luggage, a growing friendship and are they the right people for each other? Working at LBP next season as Directors are Will Horton, Bob La Salle, Polly Hogan, Jeff Dillon, Richard Levene, John Munn and Ron Bupp. We look forward to their visions and experiences in guiding us to produce seven great shows for the upcoming season. We have 12 diverse, entertaining and exciting showcase performances scheduled from October 2020 through April 2021.

Like many other arts organizations, we are working on virtual ways to connect and stay in contact with our LBP family. virtual meetings, auditions and presentations will become part of the ever changing landscape of LBP communications and interaction.

We thank you for your patronage and support and look forward to a bright and promising future for Lemon Bay Playhouse and our local thriving community.

LEMON BAY PLAYHOUSE NEWS

2020 GIVING CHALLENGE—REMARKABLE SUPPORT

BY DEB POLING



The 2020 Giving Challenge was hosted by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County with giving strengthened by The Patterson Foundation. The event was held from noon April 28 to noon April 29 and the participation was outstanding. In this time of unprecedented need, our community and patrons reached out with a remarkable outpouring of support. Lemon Bay Playhouse had 99 donors and raised \$6,920. All donations between \$25 and \$100 have been matched by The Patterson Foundation for a total of \$13,340 raised! This surpassed our goal of \$10,000 and shows the passion our community has for the theatre arts. The Lemon Bay Playhouse staff and Board of Trustees extend our sincere “Thank You!” to those who donated and helped make the event a success.

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”
— Helen Keller

2020-2021 SEASON TICKETS ON SALE

BY DEB POLING

As of right now, the 2020-2021 Season is scheduled to open in September. Lemon Bay Playhouse is again providing you with seven great plays, along with several musical and comedy showcases. If you did not receive a brochure, you can view it on our website at: www.lemonbayplayhouse.com.

Are you here for the whole season? If you are not already a season subscriber, this provides an opportunity to purchase reduced price tickets and have the same seat for each show. Purchase a season ticket and get seven shows for the price of six at a cost of \$138 per person. One free ticket!

There has been concern about purchasing the season ticket subscription based on the current pandemic situation. Unfortunately there is no way to know what the situation will be in September. Current season ticket patrons love having their same seats and many have been loyal patrons for several years. Regrettably if the subscription is not renewed, there is the risk of losing those seats. There are no guarantees how the next season will go and we are going to make the best decision for the safety of our patrons, actors, and volunteers. We may have 50% capacity, staggered seating, whatever is necessary to keep everyone safe.

If you are not here for the whole season, you can still purchase reduced tickets by getting a Flex Pass. The Flex Pass is good for four different plays and purchased for \$82. Each Flex Pass is valid for one ticket to a performance of your choice to any four of our plays you choose.

Season and Flex Pass Subscription tickets may be purchased by completing the season ticket form on our website and mailing it to the Playhouse at 96 W. Dearborn Street, Englewood, FL 34223.

All renewals of season tickets must be purchased by May 31 to keep the same seat assignment. New season ticket seats will be assigned after May 31. Flex Pass subscription sales will continue as long as there are four productions available. Individual ticket sales for all performances and events may be purchased starting August 1 via the website. The Box Office will reopen for business at 10:00 am on Monday, August 3. Purchase your tickets early to get the best available seats for the upcoming exciting season.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT READER'S THEATRE?

BY KATHY AMELIA

Well as I sit and experience "stay-at-home" restrictions, I realize how much our intimate theatre brought to my life. As Stage Manager for the shortened run of *Lend Me a Tenor*, it was a flurry of activity every night with a cast that was excited every night until we were told "Wrap it up!" As the days went by in mid-March, the theatre started to slowly cancel plays, showcases and then the summer camp program. Three of Readers Theatre outreach performances also were canceled by the clients with a hope to reschedule in the next season.

Safety considerations take precedence over our audiences and of course our actors, staff, etc. We spend our days reading, rearranging our cupboards, doing those "to-do" lists from 2017 and waiting for this pandemic to be done with us.

All of us have been affected by this virus in some way. Be smart and be safe. See you in October when Readers Theatre resumes.



96 W. Dearborn Street
Englewood, FL 34223

Celebrating our 33rd Season! 2019-2020

<i>THE LADIES FOURSOME</i> by Norm Foster	September 11 – September 22, 2019
<i>LYING IN STATE</i> by David C. Hyer	October 16 – November 3, 2019
<i>IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE</i> by Joe Landry	November 26 - December 15, 2019
<i>2 ACROSS</i> by Jerry Mayer	January 15 - February 9, 2020
<i>LEND ME A TENOR</i> by Ken Ludwig	March 4 - March 29, 2020 CANCELLED
<i>THE PRISONER OF SECOND AVENUE</i> by Neil Simon	April 22 - May 10, 2020 CANCELLED
<i>THE SAVANNAH SIPPING SOCIETY</i> by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope, Jamie Wooten	June 3 - June 21, 2020 CANCELLED

Editor/Publisher: Crystal Coluzzi **Photography:** John Bass **Proofreader:** Debbie Park
Printing and Mailing: The Olde Englewood Mailing Co.

LBP Box Office is open Monday-Friday, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Phone 941-475-6756

Visit our website at: www.lemonbayplayhouse.com (or scan the QR code)



Mission Statement

“We strive to improve diversity and enrich the greater Englewood community through live theater, volunteerism, education in the performing arts, and to provide a venue for other cultural activities.”