

TCT Presents



March 10-12, 2011
7:30 p.m.

&

March 12, 2011
2:00 p.m.

I wrestled with reality for forty years, and I am happy to state that I finally won out over it." If you've ever seen the film or know the story, you know who the Harvey of the title is. If you haven't, then this play will introduce you to one of the most engaging characters in the American literary anthology.

Elwood P. Dowd is Harvey's best friend and central character of the play. He calls Harvey a pooka and when someone looks the word up, they find this definition: "From old Celtic mythology. A fairy spirit in animal form. Always very large. The pooka appears here and there, now and then, to this one and that one at his own caprice. A wise but mischievous creature. Very fond of rum-pots, crack-pots." Yes, Harvey is a rabbit, a six-foot-tall white rabbit and Elwood's constant companion. That's the problem. His social-climbing sister, Veta, is anxious for her daughter to make her way in society and Elwood's behavior is becoming more and more embarrassing. So they resolve to take care of the problem – they try committing Elwood to a sanatorium. Through a series of comic misunderstandings, Veta is almost committed and Elwood ends up inviting the doctors and nurses out for drinks.

That is the magic and charm of Elwood, and of the play. He's unlike anyone you've likely met – he's gentle and kind and everyone immediately warms to this character. He may visit the local bars a little too often, but when he describes his visits with Harvey, you can't help but want to join them. "Harvey and I sit in the bars and we have a drink or two and play the jukebox. Soon the faces of the other people turn toward mine and smile. They are saying: 'We don't know your name, Mister, but you're a lovely fel-

low.' Harvey and I warm ourselves in all these golden moments. We have entered as strangers – soon we have friends."

But Elwood cannot continue to escape the doctors and psychiatrists who wish to 'cure' him. His sister pleads with him to take the injection that will finally make him 'normal.' But does the world really need more normal? Or are Elwood and Harvey fine just as they are?

Playwright Mary Chase wrote the play in 1944, inspired in part by the effects of the war on her neighbors and friends. She was determined to write a play that would cheer people during those troubled times, and to create a hero for people to believe in. She knew Elwood would have an invisible animal companion – she remembered the stories of Irish relatives about pookas – and first imagined Harvey as a canary or a penguin. When she finally hit upon a rabbit, the play was born and its first production – directed by Antoinette Perry (the namesake of the Tony Awards) – ran on Broadway for five years, one of the longest runs ever for a Broadway play.

TCT is pleased to present this classic comedy to new audiences and old friends of Harvey on the Lyric stage March 10-12. Don't miss it! Call the TCT box office at 662-844-1935 to reserve your seat today. Directing *Harvey* is Jonathan Martin. Lindsey Tanner serves as Assistant Director. Set Designer is Marianna Coffey with assistance by Steve Miller. Bronwyn Teague is Light and Sound Designer. Bobby Geno serves as Costume Coordinator and Juliet Reeves serves as hair and make-up designer.

The gifted cast for *Harvey* is listed on page 2.

Harvey Cast List

Myrtle Mae Simmons
 Veta
 Elwood P. Dowd
 Ethel
 Nurse Ruth
 Duane Wilson
 Dr. Lyman Sanderson
 William
 Betty Chumley
 Judge Omar Gaffney
 E.J.

Megan O'Hargan
 Teracia Killian
 Todd Barnett
 Angela Howard
 Juliet Reeves
 Jason Pannell
 Chris Hussey
 Ron Stephens
 Beverly Murphree
 Bobby Geno
 Cliff Brock



TCT Receives Honors at MTA

Tupelo Community Theatre participated in the Mississippi Theatre Association Convention and Festivals at the historic MSU Riley Center in downtown Meridian January 14-16, 2011. TCT competed in the community theatre festival with its production of *Oleanna*, by the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright David Mamet. Director Tom Booth was awarded Best Director. Booth has previously directed three Best Production winners in Mississippi: *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* in 2001, *Bel Canto* in 2004, and *Doubt* in 2008. *Bel Canto* was also a winner at the Southeastern Theatre Conference in 2004. Allana Austin served as Assistant Director, with lights by Bronwyn Teague, sound by Lindsey Tanner, costumes by Suzanne Oakley, and stage assistance by Marianna Coffey.



Sarah Weatherby, were named to the All Star Cast. Last seen on the TCT stage in *And Then There Were None*, Jonathan is an attorney and is married to Lisa Ganaway Martin. They have two sons. Jonathan is currently directing TCT's production of *Harvey*. Ole Miss Musical Theatre major and Columbus resident Sarah Weatherby played Carol. The talented singer and actress had

her Lyric debut in the 2010 Gum Tree production of *All Shook Up* as Lorraine. She is the daughter of Arleen Peek Weatherby and the late Simeon T. Weatherby, Sr.

TCT veteran actress and director Suzanne Oakley won two awards in the Individual Events competition, first place for Solo Singing and second place in Solo Monologue. TCT is thankful to have these incredibly talented people working to make TCT one of the best "award-winning" community theatres in the country!

Both actors in the production, Jonathan Martin and

Grant Enhances Movies at the Lyric



Elaine Dundy

Built as a live theatre venue in 1912, the Lyric Theatre also has a long history as a movie house. From 1931 through the early 1980's, many North Mississippians fondest memories revolve around movies such as *The Great Ziegfeld*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, and *The Raiders of the Lost Ark* at the Lyric. Thanks to the Elaine Dundy and Roy Turner Endowment for the Arts, movies will have a permanent home at the Lyric

again. Elaine Dundy came to Tupelo in 1981 to begin research on her groundbreaking book *Elvis & Gladys* and become dear friends with local history buff and genealogist Roy Turner. When Elaine passed away in 2007, she continued to give just as she did in life by establishing the Elaine Dundy & Roy Turner Endowment for the Arts. Roy, a Tupelo native, is a film maker and has been actively involved in the Tupelo Film Festival hosted each year at the Lyric Theatre. Much like Elvis Presley, Roy grew up attending movies here and his first job

was selling popcorn at the Lyric. As a 14 year old, he played The Mute in TCT's first season in *The Fantasticks*.

In 2010, through a grant from the foundation, TCT was able to install a full size projection screen and dedicated line set in the theatre. Now through an additional grant from the endowment, TCT will install a modern projector in the building in early 2011 to be used for the film festival and other movie events in the future.

Thank you Roy and Elaine for your gifts to support the arts, to enrich our community and to enhance our home at the Lyric Theatre.

Mac McAnally Concert with Ironwood Bluff on February 26 at 7:30 is SOLD OUT!
Patrons may pick up previously reserved tickets at the box office.

Spring Education Event

Tupelo Community Theatre kicked off its annual Spring Education Event by hosting area third graders at the Lyric for two showings of *The Ugly Duckling* on February 7. Voices of the South, a theatrical touring company out of Memphis, were the guest artists for the event. They have been presenting this edifying classic by Hans Christian Andersen to students across the country for 10 years. Their version of the story carries a distinctly southern flair punctuated by an original score of down-home music and colorful characters.



commented “*The Ugly Duckling* was so good. All of you did a good job performing. The part I liked the most was all of it.”

Education events scheduled for the snow day on February 10 have been postponed until April. Metro Theatre Company out of St. Louis will present *Tomato Plant Girl* to students at Tupelo Middle School and Haven Acres Boys and Girls Club on

Comments we received from teachers included: “Students loved the theater and one student asked why the actors didn’t need a microphone.” ~ “Their favorite character was mother duck (played by a male actor).” ~ “It was a great experience for them because they don’t get to see a real live play very often.”

Student Okoye Harper wrote “it was fun to watch the play. I want to audition for *Alice in Wonderland* because I bet it would be fun to do a play with y’all.” Hunter Hatfield

Thursday, April 7, then at Lawhon Elementary School on Friday, April 8. There will also be a free public performance at the Lyric on the evening of April 7. *Tomato Plant Girl* delights audiences of all ages with its sharp dialogue, physical action, and playful, high-energy conflict in a plot line revolving around themes of friendship, bullying, peer pressure, and self-esteem.

These educationally enriching performances are made possible through the generous support of B&B Concrete, Inc., Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi, Mississippi Arts Commission, National Endowment for the Arts, South Arts, and the TCT Lyric Krewe.

TCT Hosts Splash of Talent

On February 5, TCT partnered with the Mississippi North District Junior Civitans to present the first annual *Splash of Talent* competition at the Lyric Theatre. Emcees for the event were television personality Kay Bain and Jr. Civitan member James Stephenson. Sixteen youth in grades six through twelve presented a varied evening of talent for the judges and audience.

The High School division winner was the girls trio “Yes Ma’am” made

up of Anna Blasingame and Margaret and Martha Chunn. Auburn McCormick won second place and Sarah Childers won third. Middle School winner was Jaime Muijwyck, with second place going to “Fiddlers Three” made up of Susan, Hannah, and Richard Gunnels. Brian Warnick and Claire Golding won the third place award. Samantha Witcher, Jr. Civitan Governor and one of the many volunteers helping to make the event possible stated “We are very excited for the

great turn out for the evening and thankful to TCT for its partnership in helping to make it possible.”

Junior Civitan is a community service organization for students who seek to meet the needs of our changing world and provide all members with personal and career development opportunities while improving schools and communities through volunteer service. Established in 1932, it is a program of Civitan International and has 14,000 members in 400 clubs.

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Auditions for Gum Tree Musical

Auditions for Tupelo Community Theatre's production of the Tony Award winning *The Drowsy Chaperone* will be February 27 at 2:00 p.m. and February 28 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lyric. Debby Gibbs, former drama instructor at Tupelo High School, will direct. Each person auditioning should prepare 16 bars of an upbeat Broadway song and be high school age or older. This "musical within a comedy" has many hilarious character roles, as well as the expected lead roles and chorus roles.

A rare combination of unprecedented originality and blinding talent, *The Drowsy Chaperone* boldly addresses a great unspoken desire in all of our



hearts: to be entertained. If you've ever sat in a dark theatre and thought, "Dear Lord in heaven please let it be good," this is the show for you! It all begins when a die-hard musical theater fan plays his favorite cast album on his turntable, and the musical literally bursts to life in his living room, telling the rambunctious tale of a brazen Broadway starlet trying to find, and keep, her true love. The Broadway production won five

Tony Awards for Book, Costume Design, Featured Actress, Original Score, and Scenic Design in 2006.

The production dates for this year's Gum Tree musical will be May 5-7. For more information contact the TCT office at 662-844-1935.