



tactics NEWSLETTER

Vol. 18. No.2

TACT/The ACTORS COMPANY THEATRE
Scott Alan Evans, Cynthia Harris & Simon Jones, Co-Artistic Directors

Winter 2010/2011

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A letter from Jeffrey C. Hawkins.



1. takt; 2. taet, n.

dedicated to presenting **infrequently-seen** plays of **literary merit** with an emphasis on creating theatre from its essence: **the text and the actor's ability to bring it to life.**

Infrequently-seen: adj. phrase. unproduced in a first-class production in NYC within the last 15 years.

Literary merit: n. laudable language of particular interest, uniqueness; or representative of a specific period or era.

With original incidental musical scores commissioned exclusively for our production through a unique partnership with **The Manhattan School of Music.**

Our 2010/11 season is made possible with public funds from the **New York State Council on the Arts, a State agency.**

State of the Arts



SADDLE UP!

Written at the height of the Great Depression, *Three Men on a Horse* by John Cecil Holm and George Abbott is a quintessential example of the screwball comedies that lifted beleaguered spirits throughout the era. The play opened on Broadway in January of 1935 at The Playhouse Theater and was a huge hit, transferring to the Fulton Theater and running until 1937 for a total of 835 performances. The play follows the trials and tribulations of hen-pecked greeting card writer, "The Poet of Dobbins Drive," Erwin Trowbridge, who has a knack for picking the winners of horse races. Of course for Erwin, a middle-class suburban wage man, this dabbling with the dark world of gambling is just for fun, as he would never invest his money in such a morally suspect vice. But when one day Erwin decides to play hooky from work, he finds himself entangled with a pack of ne'er do well professional gamblers. In this topsy-turvy vision

of Depression era New York, Erwin learns to get ahead in the straight world through the tactics of its underbelly, and the riffraff finds happiness in appropriating middle-class trappings.

While *Three Men on a Horse* is a dizzy and delightful comedy, through their witty wordplay Abbott and Holm speak to many of the social phenomena, anxieties, and realities of the Depression. In an era when financial ruin afflicted random victims regardless of talent, diligence or moral standing, Abbott and Holm created a vision of class mobility dictated entirely by the farcical whims of chance. In 1935, with unemployment still hovering over 20% and the recent memories of the stock market crash and subsequent large-scale bank failures still fresh in the public's mind, Erwin's modest, prudent and assiduous approach to his professional life inevitably leaves him languishing at the bottom of the heap. The values that only

3MEN continues on page 2

THREE MEN ON A HORSE
John Cecil **HOLM** BY George & **ABBOTT**
DIRECTED BY Scott Alan **EVANS**

WITH

- Becky **BAUMWOLL**
- Don **BURROUGHS**
- Jeffrey C. **HAWKINS**
- Ron **McGLARY**
- Geoffrey **MOLLOY**
- James **MURTAUGH**
- Scott **SCHAFFER**
- Gregory **SALATA**
- Julianna **ZINKEL**



Anna Hayman

COMPANY NEWS

TACT welcomes **ANNA HAYMAN** as our new Director of Development, and director **DREW BARR** as the newest member of our Adjunct Company. Anna, is an NYC native with extensive experience in the NYC theatre scene. We're thrilled to have her on the **TACT** Team! Our Subscribers will know Drew for his subtle and beautiful direction of our Salon productions of *I Am a Camera*, *The Amazing Doctor Clitterhouse*, *Man and Boy*, *A Shot in the Dark* and *The Confidential Clerk*. Drew is currently the associate director on the up-coming Lincoln Center production of *War Horse*.

MARK ALHADEFF comes fresh off his triumph as the manipulative Mr. Ballas in **TACT's** *The Memorandum* (be sure to see his video about that experience on the **TACT** website). Having reached such artistic heights in the theatre, he says he is now considering a career in poetry...

MARY BACON and her husband Andrew Leynse went to Ethiopia twice this Fall and brought Abadi Bacon Leynse (a beautiful, happy, baby boy, currently 8 months) home with them! Mary was recently back on the **TACT** boards in *Uncle Harry*, the **TACT** Salon in January, and now is playing Lenny McGrath (seriously folks!) in *Crimes of the Heart* at the McCarter Theatre Feb/March. Liesl Tommy is directing. Mary reports, "I have missed seeing everyone - we've been pretty tied up this fall with the two trips, and then the new boy! He's doing great!"

TACT's Technical Director, **PATRICK CECALA**, happily announces his engagement to Rebecca Harvey, an extraordinary educator he met a year ago in September. An August wedding is being planned. In the meantime, Patrick continues to teach 4th grade math and science in the Patterson School District and work freelance as a TD for **TACT** and elsewhere.

NORA CHESTER spent a great autumn in Hartford appearing in *Equus* at Playhouse on Park, then back home to Brooklyn

where she once again coordinated **TACT's** classes with Richard Schotter's graduate students in the MFA program in Creative Writing at Queens College and appeared as Frau Schneider in **TACT's** salon performance of *I Am a Camera*. She enjoyed the Christmas holidays in the Pacific Northwest with brothers, sisters, in-laws, nieces and nephews and great nieces and great nephews, plus visiting old friends. And she returned in time to appear in **TACT's** salon performances of *Uncle Harry* in January and to recreate her roles from the original production of *THE TRIANGLE FACTORY FIRE PROJECT* to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the fire at the **TACT** benefit on February 7th. She continues to age gracefully, if rapidly.

After a few relaxing weeks over the holidays, **CYNTHIA DARLOW** will be returning to the national tour of "Billy Elliot" where it recent concluded a successful run in Chicago this past Spring and Summer. The show will be in Toronto from February 1 to July 3, 2011. Of course, she continues to record audiobooks and such...

COMPANY NEWS continues on page 6

THREE MEN ON A HORSE

Hen-pecked greeting-card writer, Erwin Trowbridge, has an uncanny ability for predicting the winners of horse races. For Erwin it's just a hobby, but when his extraordinary talent is discovered by a down-and-out pack of gamblers, Erin suddenly finds himself very far from his safe suburban home in Ozone Heights. This dizzy and delightful Depression-era comedy will bring a much needed lift to your Recession-wearied spirits.

MARCH 14 - APRIL 16, 2011

BECKETT THEATRE/THEATRE ROW

410 West 42nd St. NYC

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday at 7:30pm;
Saturday at 2pm & 8pm; Sunday at 3pm

BUY TICKETS

ONLINE: www.TELECHARGE.com

IN PERSON: **Theatre Row Box Office**
410 West 42nd Street (between 9th & 10th)

BY PHONE: **TELECHARGE 212/239-6200**

MORE INFO: www.TACTnyc.org

Tickets \$36.25 to \$56.25 - Price includes a \$1.25 facility fee.

Telephone /Internet orders subject to Telecharge service fees.

3MEN

continued from page 1

a decade earlier would have been associated with financial success seemed ridiculous in the face of an economic climate where all investment was essentially reduced to gambling. For Erwin, it is only when he flings propriety aside and spends a workday inside a bar that he can finally learn to assert himself and get what he deserves. The boom and bust gamblers he befriends at the bar are better able to navigate the path to success in the workday grind, cleverly maneuvering on behalf of Erwin in order to secure him a raise. In the world of *Three Men*, you have to risk big to win big, and the less prudent you play the better the returns.

For Patsy and Mabel, the ringleader of a professional gambling gang and his former Follies Girl girlfriend, who befriend Erwin, the economic swings of chance have long been a part of their lives, with both of them accustomed to living the high life one day and pawning their belongings for a sandwich next. It is telling that Mabel is an out-of-work chorus girl from the once-grand Ziegfeld Follies, a formerly lavish and popular Broadway revue that became defunct after the market crash in 1931. For a regular Broadway audience member, figures like Mabel would have been a familiar sight, reminders of a permanently deceased era in entertainment. Similarly, Patsy also behaves like a vestige of the boom years. Flinging his cash around like a stock investor in the 1920s, he is convinced that his fortune is always lying around the next corner and cheerfully spends whatever money he has on hand with no regard for the future. What makes these rough and tumble characters so lovable, however, is their desire to eventually attain the modest suburban lifestyle of Erwin. As hard as it is to imagine these two acting out this mundane middle-class routine, it adds a poignant absurdity to their late-night, hard-drinking, flying-by-the-seat-of-their-pants lifestyle.

John Cecil Holm originally wrote *Three Men on a Horse* under the title *Hobby Horse*, while acting in a Broadway production of *Mary of Scotland*. Holm was an established Broadway actor, but *Hobby Horse* was Holm's first foray into playwriting. Although the original script had potential that was quickly recognized by Warner Brothers Studio, who agreed to produce it, the financial backers also felt that it required a more experienced hand to clean it up and direct it. Thus, George Abbott, the great comedy maestro of Broadway whose career eventually spanned over 70 years, was brought in to add rewrites and direct. Abbott would later remark in his autobiography that: "I could see very clearly what was needed. The notion that a little greeting-card writer could tell by intuition what horse would win a race had to be carried on to its extreme, to be blown up like a balloon; but at the same time it had to be logical enough for the audience to accept it. I thought of a way to do this and began work immediately."

George Abbott tweaked the script until it was tailor-made to suit his trademark directorial style of breakneck speed, letting the action constantly rise toward the brink of a delirious chaos, and never letting his audience fall completely from the waves of laughter. Like other screwball comedies from the 1930s, a genre that Abbott was truly a master of, Abbott liked to have his actors fling wisecracks and wit like machine gun fire. A true showman, Abbott would load up his stage with so many pratfalls, sight gags and puns that the audience barely had space to breathe between laughs. *Hobby Horse*, in a sense, was transformed

TACT MAINSTAGE

into an Abbott vehicle, with the upside down, inside out, gleeful disorder of *Three Men* neatly suited to Abbott's signature style.

Despite the enormous success of the original production of *Three Men*, subsequent Broadway revivals had substantially more difficulty in capturing the public's interest. In 1942, the original production's producers put together a cast of many of the same actors to be directed by John Cecil Holm in a style that was clearly derivative of Abbott's original production. The ill-fated production felt disappointingly lackluster, however, and closed after only 28 performances. In 1969, Abbott decided to revive the production under his own direction, with a few of the original actors, managing a 100 performance run that although amusing, came across as out of touch with the moment. The play was revived for its most recent iteration on Broadway in 1993 under the direction of John Tillinger for the National Actors Theatre, with Tony Randall and Jack Klugman grossly miscast in the youthful lead roles. The awkward casting choices and a stiff, lifeless staging led to a disappointing production.

Three Men on a Horse, one of the great American comedies of the 1930s, has been curiously neglected from the American canon of theatre. Although sporadic, unsuccessful attempts to revive the play have emerged, it remains largely viewed as relic of the past. Yet, for a New York audience's Recession-wearied spirits in 2011, *Three Men* offers comfort in the form of some buoyant belly laughs. After having spent the last few years watching Lehman Brothers collapse, the Bernie Madoff debacle, and Wall Street bonus increases, **TACT** is pleased to offer New York theatre goers this riotous take on a world gone mad for big risks and bigger dividends.



George Abbott

tact The ACTORS COMPANY THEATRE

Scott Alan Evans, Cynthia Harris & Simon Jones *Co-Artistic Directors*

COMPANY

Mark Alhadeff, Sean Arbuckle, Mary Bacon, Jamie Bennett, Eve Bianco, Nora Chester, Cynthia Darlow, Francesca Di Mauro, Richard Ferrone, Todd Gearhart, Delphi Harrington, Jeffrey C. Hawkins, Jack Koenig, Darrie Lawrence, Ron McClary, Greg McFadden, Mackenzie Meehan, James Murtaugh, Margaret Nichols, John Plumpis, James Prendergast, Gregory Salata, Scott Schafer, David Staller, Jenn Thompson, Lynn Wright

IN MEMORIAM - Larry Keith

ADJUNCT COMPANY

Drew Barr, Daryl Bornstein, Patrick Cecala, Meredith Dixon, Dawn Dunlop, Jonathan Faiman, Mary Louise Geiger, Amir Khosrowpour, David Macdonald, Mel McCue, Barry Satchwell Smith, Jonathan Smith, Joseph Trapanese, David Toser

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Darya Geetter, *President*, Holly Etlin, *Treasurer*, John Adams, George Bunn, Mark Eberle, Scott Alan Evans, Michele Geist, John Gordon, Linda Greenberg, Cynthia Harris, Simon Jones, Susan Mindel, Nancy Nugent, Louise Schraa, Elaine Wolbrom

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DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Anna Hayman

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DRAMATURG INTERN - Stephanie Vella

TACT WINTER INTERN - Catherine Hall & Jack Ramsey

TACT is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and a member of the Alliance of Resident Theatre/NY

www.tactnyc.org

2010/2011 SEASON so far...

VACLAV HAVEL'S THE MEMORANDUM

"A **HANDSOME** PRODUCTION...HAS THE **CRISP PRECISION** OF FARCE. 'MAD MEN' MEETS CZECH MODERN." - *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

"A **BRISK LIGHTHEARTED** PRODUCTION...FILLED WITH **HUMOR**" - *ASSOCIATED PRESS*

"**STYLISH...FIRST-CLASS**" - *BACKSTAGE*

"**EXCELLENT**...THE CAST IS UNIFORMLY TOP-NOTCH"

"UNIFORMLY **SUPERB**" - *CURTAIN UP*

- *SHOW BUSINESS WEEKLY*

"**RAZOR-SHARP**... A **CRISP**, ENTERTAINING AND **THOUGHT-PROVOKING** PRODUCTION." - *WILLIAM WOLF ENTERTAINMENT*

Josef Gross.....**JAMES PRENDERGAST+***
 Jan Ballas.....**MARK ALHADEFF+***
 Pillar.....**JEFFREY C. HAWKINS+***
 Hana.....**LYNN WRIGHT+***
 Mark Lear.....**JOEL LEFFERT+***
 Thumb.....**JEFFREY C. HAWKINS+***
 Otto Stroll.....**JOHN PLUMPIS+***
 Alex Savant.....**TRENT DAWSON+***
 Helena.....**KATE LEVY+***
 Maria.....**NILANJANA BOSE**
 George.....**JEFFREY C. HAWKINS+***
 Column.....**JEFFREY C. HAWKINS+***

Original Music by **JOSEPH TRAPANESE+*** Sound & Projection Designs by **STEPHEN KUNKEN**

Costume Design by **DAVID TOSER+*** Lighting Design by **PHILIP S. ROSENBERG**

Scenic Design by **ADRIAN W. JONES**

Directed by **JENN THOMPSON+***



Top: A scene from *The Memorandum*. Above Left: The Cast on Opening Night; Above center: Opening Night with the Czech ambassador, Martin Palous, TACT's Scott Alan Evans, James Prendergast and Deputy Counsel for the Czech Republic, Tomas Hart. Above right: MEMO Surround event with Havel experts, Carol Roccomora, Edward Einhorn and TACT Dramaturg, Stephanie Vella.

This fall, **TACT** staged a critically acclaimed revival of Vaclav Havel's 1968 absurdist play *The Memorandum*. Kevin D. Williamson of *The New Criterion* said of the production, "the play is clever and lively, wallowing in its paradoxes without ever descending into the vulgar sort of farce. And while Mr. Havel surely deserves a heap of accolades for the play, the work is here animated by a sting of very nearly perfect performances..." The play's opening night was attended by the Ambassador to the Czech Republic and included a party sponsored by BrouCzech and the Brickyard, Gastropub.



OLYMPIA

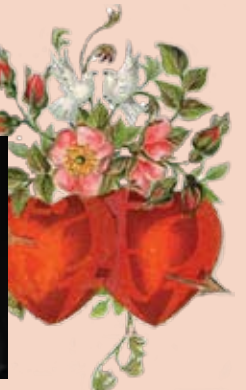
BY FERENC MOLNÁR
IN A TRANSLATION BY SIDNEY HOWARD

Countess Lina.....**CYNTHIA HARRIS+***
 Count Albert.....**EVAN THOMPSON+***
 Princess Plata-Ettingen.....**DELPHI HARRINGTON+***
 Olympia, her daughter.....**LAUREN ENGLISH+***
 Captain Kovacs.....**GENE GILLETTE+***
 Colonel Krehl.....**JOEL ROOKS+***
 Prince Plata-Ettingen.....**JAMES PRENDERGAST+***



Production Stage Manager: **MEGAN E. COUTTS**
 Pianist: **CHIA-EN HSIEH** Music by **WALLY GUNN**
 Directed by **STUART ROSS**

TACT ALON SERIES



I AM A CAMERA

BY JOHN VAN DRUTEN

Christopher Isherwood.....**JEREMY BECK+***
 Fraulein Schneider.....**NORA CHESTER+***
 Fritz Wendel.....**TODD GEARHART+***
 Sally Bowles.....**AMELIA PEDLOW+***
 Clive Mortimer.....**CHRISTOPHER BURNS+***
 Natalia Landauer.....**VICTORIA MACK+***
 Mrs. Watson-Courtneidge.....**DELPHI HARRINGTON+***

Production Stage Manager: **KATIE KAVETT**
 Music by **AMIR KHOSROWPOUR+***

Directed by **DREW BARR+***

Top Left: Gene Gillett and Lauren English. Middle: Evan Thompson and Cynthia Harris. Left: Delphi Harrington in *Olympia*. Above: Victoria Mack, Jeremy Beck and Todd Gearhart. Above right: Nora Chester in *I Am a Camera*.

+ TACT Company Member
* member Actor's Equity Association

My **FAVE** Five: JAMES MURTAUGH

TOP FIVE FAVORITE TACT ROLES



Jim as Dr. Haggert in
The Late Christopher Bean

What are my five favorite **TACT** roles? Now that's a question one would think should be easy enough to answer, but upon reflection on my over thirty roles with **TACT**, I found there were so many that I considered favorites that narrowing the list down to a measly five would not be that simple.

Well, the one thing I had no trouble choosing was my number one all time favorite **TACT** role and, I should add, my career favorite. I can say, without a scintilla of hesitation, that it was Doctor Haggert in *The Late Christopher Bean*. It was one of those roles that comes around once in a lifetime where an actor and the part just seem to come together like a perfect marriage. It also just happened to be an expertly crafted play that was relevant, moving and, at the same time, farcically funny. The memorable experience was enhanced by being able to share the stage with an absolutely brilliant cast under the imaginative direction of Jenn Thompson.

Another role I remember most fondly was played on the stage of the New-York Historical Society when I was cast in the part of Dr. Moriarty opposite Simon Jones's wonderfully inquisitorial Sherlock Holmes. I just remember it as being a heck of a lot of fun especially on the evening when a contingent of the Baker Street Irregulars showed up in mass and hissed and cheered throughout the performance.

A role I played for **TACT** that I felt had a lot of depth was that of Major Pollock in a very touching play by Terrence Rattigan called *Separate Tables*. It was a sensitive study of people spending quiet days at a resident hotel -- a very eclectic group all trying to lead separate lives but having to cope with their differences. My character was later revealed as a fraud with a tragic character flaw. In spite of being a very pathetic and sad figure, one couldn't help but feel somewhat sorry for him as the guests set him even further apart from their lives.



Jim as Major Pollock in
Separate Tables

I must say, though, if you give me a good role in an equally good comedy I am one happy camper. One such play I recall with relish was *Light Up The Sky*, which we did in New York and later that summer in Lewisburg, PA. I played the Sam Levine role of Sidney Black, the low brow, coarse mouthed producer of the new play being tried out in Boston. I remember the audience having as much fun watching that play as we had performing it. I always found there to be something so hilariously revealing about playing a phony hypocrite who then turns savagely on everyone around him when things go south as they do with his new production.



Jim as the irascible Mr. J.G. Carver
in *3Men on a Horse*, 1997

Finally, my fifth **TACT** favorite is... surprise, surprise! ... a role that I will be doing again this Spring on the **TACT** Mainstage at Theatre Row: the irascible Mr. J.G. Carver, in *Three Men On a Horse*. My character doesn't make his entrance until late in the play but when he does he's like a tornado tearing through the scene in his frantic search for his missing employee, Erwin. I played it years ago when we did it in one of our Concert Performance readings and I remember it as an exhausting but fun role in a very funny play. Our new production goes up in March -- you won't want to miss it, even if I do say so myself!

Well, those five I shared with you are but just a few of the many that I have enjoyed playing over the years for this wonderful company.

2011 Spring Gala

honoring
Anne Meara & Jerry Stiller

Monday, May 9, 2011

at the
EDISON BALLROOM

For more information or to be sure you are on the invitation list, contact the **TACT** office:
212/645-8228



Our SALON SERIES' theme is "A Fine Romance" - but don't think of these plays as your typical romances full of hearts & flowers. This year's series included witty and wonderful works by Sidney Howard, John Van Druten, Ferenc Molnár and Thomas Job and all fall more into the romantic camp described by the immortal song by Dorothy Fields and Jerome Kern - you know, the kind of romance with no kisses, Arctic seals, and cold mashed potatoes...

There's one more left! And remember, our SALON SERIES is the exclusive privilege of our subscribers. To reserve your spot, call the **TACT Subscriber Hotline: 1800/337-5921**.

Inhaled Romance
TWO DOZEN RED ROSES

By Aldo di Benedetti
May 20 - 23

In Aldo de Benedetti's charming comedy, a stagnating married couple finds their domestic life thrown into disarray when a bouquet of two dozen red roses is misinterpreted.

Our Salon Series is presented at the **TACT Studio**.

TACT ACADEMY



The **TACT ACADEMY** is pleased to announce both its Winter/Spring and Summer schedules. All **TACT ACADEMY** classes, workshops, and intensives involve performance-based learning and culminate in an open performance for friends and family. Instructor: Jenny Bennett, with professional actors from the **TACT** Company.

WINTER WEEKEND WORKSHOPS for HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

FEB 12/13 - "PLAY'S" THE THING: THEATRE GAMES & IMPROV

10:30am to 4:30pm Break from 1:30pm to 2:00pm

\$250 (or two or more workshops at \$200 each)

MAR. 12/13 - IT TAKES TWO: SCENE STUDY

10:30am to 4:30pm Break from 1:30pm to 2:00pm

\$250 (or two or more workshops at \$200 each)

SIX WEEK COURSE for MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

BREAKING THE CODE: 6 Week program for students in 5th to 9th grade. Beginning the week of **March 8 / 10 \$300**
4:00pm to 6:00pm

SECTION 1: Tuesdays: March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12

SECTION 2: Thursdays: March 10, 17, 24, 31, April 7, 14

The only elements needed to create great theatre are a plank, a passion, and an idea to convey. In our modern theatre culture those ideas typically



come from the script of a play and it is the actor's job to mine that text to discover the life and soul of the characters. **TACT ACADEMY'S** focus is the training of young actors in a variety of methods and modalities all of which center on creating theatre from the text and the actor's ability to bring it to life – a core principal

of the **TACT** aesthetic. This special Spring program will focus on **TACT's** Mainstage production of **THREE MEN ON A HORSE** by George Abbott and John Cecil Holm. Working alongside the professional actors from the company, students will explore this delightful Depression era comedy, discovering its rich vernacular and mining its raucous humor. The program includes a complimentary ticket for the student and a discounted ticket for one parent or guardian to attend a performance of the **TACT** production at the Beckett Theatre at Theatre Row.

SPRING BREAK TEEN ACTING INTENSIVE for HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Week of **April 18th** Monday to Friday 1:00pm to 5:00pm
\$400

Geared for students 13 - 17 years old, this Spring Break Intensive will focus on the variety of methods and modalities used in creating theatre from the text and the actor's craft - a core principal of the **TACT** aesthetic. Working with members of our acclaimed company and actress/theatre educator, Jenny Bennett, this one week workshop will look at unlocking the secrets of the



script and using those discoveries to create a character and a performance that comes alive on the stage.

There will be an open performance for friends and family at 5:00pm on Friday.

SUMMER INTENSIVES in ACTING for HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

July 11-15 : Focus on Scene Study

July 18-22: Focus on Monologues

July 25-29: Focus on Tackling the Text

Aug 1-5: Focus on Character Monologues (Student-generated)

Aug 8-12: Focus on Scene Study (Student-generated, developed from improv with other characters)

Aug 15-19: Focus on Play Creation (Student-generated)

ALL INTENSIVES are Monday to Friday 1:00pm to 5:00pm
These week-long INTENSIVES are designed to stand alone but can also be taken cumulatively. Students can take one week, multiple weeks, or all six weeks.

\$400 for one week/ \$375 Early Bird registration by March 1, 2011

\$750 for two/ \$725 Early Bird registration by March 1, 2011

\$1100 for a series of three/ \$1000 Early Bird registration by March 1, 2011

\$1800 for all 6! Save \$600!

Acceptance to all programs is by application only. Some FINANCIAL AID and Scholarships are available. Please inquire. To receive an application or for more information, contact **TACT** at 212/645-8228 or visit www.tactnyc.org/tact_academy.php

TACT ACADEMY programs take place at the **TACT Studio** at 900 Broadway in NYC. This professional rehearsal and presentation loft space is conveniently located just north of Union Square and just south of the Flatiron building and is where the **TACT** Company rehearses all its productions and presents its staged reading series.

COMPANY NEWS

continued from page 1

FRANCESCA DI MAURO is in for big changes - expanding, enhancing her life and back in school! Yes, she's enrolled at Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service and dreams of combining theatre and performance with social work. First semester down, lots more to go who said you're never too old to learn? For those of you who miss seeing Francesca on the **TACT** stage, she returns for the May Salon of *Two Dozen Red Roses*.

Higher education has been calling **DAWN DUNLOP**, **TACT** Stage manager emeritus, as well. Dawn is currently pursuing her MBA at the University of Edinburgh! Yes, that's right. In Scotland.

SCOTT ALAN EVANS has a very busy Winter and Spring ahead of him. He'll be directing the special one-night-only benefit of *The Triangle Factory Fire Project* on Monday, February 7th at Theatre 80 and is thrilled that so many of the original cast members will be returning to reprise their roles; he then goes into rehearsals for **TACT's** next Mainstage production: *Three Men on a Horse* and says he is very excited about this production as it's a play he's been wanting to do for years! After that he'll once again be directing the NYU Graduate Acting program's graduating class in their end of year industry showcase both here in NYC and LA. Then comes the **TACT** GALA in May at the Edison Ballroom!

AudioFile Magazine gave **RICHARD FERRONE** a Best Voices of 2010 award for his recording of *Head Wounds* by Chris Knopf. Besides that, whenever he can, Richard has been enjoying following around his wife, Cynthia Darlow, wherever she might be playing. Next stop: Toronto.

TODD GEARHART has been keeping busy: he worked on the film *Dogs Lie*, the highlight of which was his getting to drive a Maserati; he shot a commercial for Barclay's Bank; performed opposite Stefanie Powers in the regional premier of *Sunset Boulevard*; played Linus in *Sabrina Fair* at the Ford's Theatre in our nations capitol; and, most recently, returned to **TACT** to play Fritz in the our Salon production of *I Am a Camera* in December.

M. L. GEIGER recently returned from Copenhagen, Denmark where she was lighting a new production of *Sleeping Beauty* (called *Tornerose* there) choreographed by Christopher Wheeldon. The production was evidently a success and the opening night was attended by the Queen. My, my! Also this past Fall she managed to squeeze in a new piece for Ballet Hispanico "Mad*Moiselle" and *The Lieutenant Of Inishmore* at ACT in Seattle. Coming up this winter, she's designing *The New York Idea* for the Atlantic Theatre Company, but at the Lortel Theatre (we don't understand this either) and another new Wheeldon ballet at San Francisco Ballet. And, she adds, "of course, my favorite upcoming project: *Three Men on a Horse* with Scott at the Beckett Theater at Theatre Row!"

DELPHI HARRINGTON has been busy at **TACT** in Salon performances of *Olympia* and *I Am a Camera* this fall, as well as a reading of *Strange Birth* at the Mint. In January she started rehearsal for *White People* for the mainstage at EST, spearheading their play festival of full length plays written by members. She plays a hugely politically incorrect role: loud, domineering, and I hope, funny. Performances run Feb, 16th through March 13th at EST.

JEFFREY HAWKINS finished up his quadruple star turn in **TACT's** *The Memorandum* and immediately took off to play the Devil, himself, in *The Fall Of Heaven* at Rep Theatre of St. Louis. In addition, Mr. Hawkins has been shooting another "secret title" video game for Rockstar Games, but he can't talk about it. Upon his return from the Midwest, he heads right into *Three Men on a Horse*!

As may have heard, **SIMON JONES** had to withdraw from *The Memorandum* after he and his son Tim were knocked down by a car while crossing West 54th and 9th Avenue. The police report says that "the car was undamaged." So fortunately was Tim, but Dad had a fractured tibia, and rib, and torn knee ligaments, and is now undergoing Physical Therapy to try to avoid surgery. In the meantime, he was approached by the Irish Rep to appear in *A Child's Christmas in Wales in Concert* from December 8th to January 2nd,

which he gladly accepted, because he sits down for most of it, and gets to sing. He also recorded two radio plays by Tom Stoppard at the Greene Space for WNYC, and another drama called *The Witches of Lublin* for an independent company based at Hofstra, also slated for broadcast on NPR in 2011.

JACK KOENIG was the standby for the role of Robert Lyon, the instructor who taught art appreciation to a group of coal miners in England in the 1930s in the Manhattan Theatre Club's Broadway production of *The Pitmen Painters*. Lyon's practical, hands-on teaching approach fostered the working class artists' collective that became known to the art world as the Ashington Group. The limited run, after a four-week extension, ended on December 12th. On December 17th, Jack started rehearsals on two world-premiere plays at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery. 2011 is the sesquicentennial of the start of the Civil War, and ASF commissioned two plays, *Blood Divided* and *The Flag Maker of Market Street*, to mark the anniversary. Both are based on true stories that occurred in Montgomery during that era. They will run in repertory through March 20th.

DIANA LAWRENCE has been at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis doing Sister Clarissa (in full habit - no worries about hairstyle or waistline!) in *Over The Tavern*, a charming family comedy. Audiences are laughing a lot, which means lots of fun for the actors. In January the same production goes to Cincinnati Playhouse.

In addition to pounding the NY pavement as an actor looking for the next job, **RON McCLARY** has spent the past year working on his other passion. Last January, he enrolled in the professional cooking program at the French Culinary Institute here in NYC. Ron tells us, "it's been a hard but gratifying year of intensive study in the program's six levels, from the basics to cooking in the school's public restaurant, L'Ecole. In December, I passed the final exam and graduated with a Grande Diplôme in Classic Culinary Arts. A highlight of the program was the opportunity to go to San Francisco in October for an internship working in the back kitchen of Chef Jacques Pepin's new cooking series, 'The Essential Pepin', which will air on PBS stations starting next fall. I also had the opportunity in November to cook for one of **TACT's** patrons, Priscilla and Ron Hoffman, her friends, and Jim Murtaugh and his family for the Beer Dinner that Jim and his son Patrick auctioned off at last season's GALA. It was a great night of drink, food, and fun and I look forward to doing it again!"

The acting company of **TACT**

Since the last newsletter, **GREG McFADDEN** has appeared in two plays: *Roadkill Confidential* by Sheila Callaghan with Clubbed Thumb and *In The Footprint* with The Civilians. *In The Footprint* was named one of the ten best productions of the year in *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*. Next up: *Timons of Athens* at the Public.

This past Fall, **MACKENZIE MEEHAN** filmed a role in the HBO's Mini series, *Mildred Pierce* starring Kate Winslet. It's slated to come out in March of 2011. She also spent three months in DC at the Studio Theatre playing the role of Lauren in Annie Baker's, *Circle Mirror Transformation* directed by new artistic director, David Muse. *The Washington Post* recently named the production one of the 10 best shows of the year! More recently, she performed in John Kelly's original dance/theatre piece, *Pass the Blutwurst, Bitte* at La Mama (A *New York Times* 'Critic's Pick,' thank you very much) and shot an NYU Grad Short Film written and directed by Bella Wing-Davey called, 'Pick Something.'

In October, **JIM MURTAUGH** finished shooting a film called *Return*. It's the story of a woman soldier returning from Afghanistan and the difficulties she encounters trying to reclaim her former life. It stars Michael Shannon, John Slattery, and Linda Cardellini as the returning soldier. Jim played her boss. After the film shoot, Jim and his wife Alice took a trip through the Grand Canyon, Bryce, and Zion National Parks. November saw the famous 5 Beer/5 Course pairing dinner which (see Ron McClary above) where it is reported a grand time was had by all especially with Ron McClary as the head chef. De-

Dear Friends,

I'd like to ask you to join me in supporting something very close to my heart: my artistic home and source of support in this unpredictable life of a professional actor in New York City - **TACT/The Actors Company Theatre**.

When I was recently asked to join **TACT** it was a no brainer - first of all, they **(we) are a company** - an actual company of actors and directors and designers. True companies have all but gone the way of the Dodo in America, and in my opinion their near extinction doesn't bode well for the future of the Stage. Young actors are now relying on schools and classes to educate them in a craft that is better dealt with "hands on." Like a son working on the old Chevy in the garage with Pop, it's more instructional than a textbook with diagrams hinting at what an engine may look like - should one ever be encountered. But Pop has been there - he has the stories and the grease under his nails to prove it - and at the end of the day, he'll get that car off the blocks and let you drive it down the road. At **TACT** I am able to work with and learn from an ensemble of my elders and (dare I say) betters, and I am and will be a better actor for it.

Which brings me to another reason I value **TACT: the plays we choose**. **TACT** focuses on "language plays" - or plays that primarily rely on the words of the playwright to tell the story. Language plays are the meat, potatoes, and veggie side dishes of theater. Yet with Broadway musicals having the budgets of blockbuster films and with many of the newest plays being written in lowbrow sitcom format, most audience members have come to accept (even expect) a kind of fast food on stage. But with **TACT** it's Shaw, Miller, and Hellman on the menu. It's good food and a tasty well-balanced diet. The preparation must be done with skill, with care, and with passion, but when it's served well it feeds the community and keeps it healthy. I count myself lucky to be in the kitchen at **TACT**.

But we need you in the kitchen too!

You may not realize this, but according to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) this recession has hit performing artists harder than just about anyone. Yet, in the face of this reality, **TACT** is employing 47 (YES! That's 4-7) actors this season, paying all its actors, and contributing to the health and pension plans of all our actors in our Mainstage productions to ensure our future well being. Actor salaries and benefits are the single largest expense of any **TACT** Mainstage production.

In an era in which the two-character, single set show has become the norm even in the commercial Broadway world, **TACT** is employing a company of actors - men and women, old and young - to bring you the finest plays brought to like with skill and artistry.

Won't you please make a contribution to **TACT** today? You will be supporting a community of actors, of artists, dedicated to serving you, our audience. And for those of you who have already contributed to **TACT**, we thank you from the very bottoms of our collective good-food loving hearts!

Many Thanks,

Jeffrey

Jeffrey C. Hawkins

*(Jeffrey C. Hawkins has appeared in **The Confidential Clerk, Incident at Vichy, The Amazing Doctor Clitterhouse**, as several roles in **The Memorandum**, and will be seen once again in **Three Men on a Horse** this Spring)*



JOIN US IN THE TACT KITCHEN AND ADD TO THE POT!

To make a contribution to **TACT** to support our production of **THREE MEN ON A HORSE**, complete and mail in this form, or visit our website at www.tactnyc.org and click "Get Involved." and **THANK YOU!**

Enclosed is my contribution to **TACT** in the amount of: \$ _____

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TACT/The ACTORS COMPANY THEATRE

Scott Alan Evans, Cynthia Harris & Simon Jones, Co-Artistic Directors

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Winter News 2010/2011

NEXT from TACT

DON'T MISS IT!

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MARCH 14 - APRIL 16, 2011



TACT/The ACTORS COMPANY THEATRE

COMPANY NEWS continued from page 6

ember brought a guest spot on *The Good Wife*. Jim tells us, "surprisingly, I still find it a bit strange to walk on the set of a show I have been faithfully following every week. It's a little surreal. It's almost like stepping into someone else's world and realizing, 'Hey, wait a minute.. damn it... this really is all make believe. You people, this office, none of it's real!' However, like finding out there's no Santa Claus I quickly adapt, suspend belief and take the paycheck." Coming up for Jim: **TACT's** *Three Men on a Horse*. Jim plays the boss.

Immediately after appearing in **TACT's** *The Memorandum*, **JOHN PLUMPIS** flew to Toronto to join Christopher Plummer in rehearsals for *Barrymore*. Mr. Plummer won the 1997 Tony for Best Actor in this role. In 1998 John toured the play with Mr. Plummer. This revival, directed once again by the legendary Gene Saks, runs at Toronto's Elgin Theatre from January 27 - March 9. Following the Toronto run Messrs Plummer and Plumpis will make a feature film of the play.

JAMES PRENDERGAST tells us that *The Memorandum* occupied his every waking minute for most of the fall. And no wonder. With nerves of steel and great aplomb, James stepped into the leading role of Mr. Gross after Simon Jones was knocked down by a car a week and a half into rehearsals. Not only did the show go on, but Mr. Prendergast received rave notices for his portrayal. How will he follow up his triumph? He'll be doing a featured role in an indie movie called *The Adventures Of Paul And Marian*.

BARRY SATCHWELL SMITH is avidly looking for

plays for the **newTACTics'** June Play Reading Festival. In the fall several table readings have taken place and he thanks everyone for their involvement. **TACT** sends a particular thank you to Joe Marrone who is on the **newTACTics** Council and has been a great asset to the program. Outside of **TACT**, Barry is thrilled to be a Producing Partner *Bonnie and Clyde*, a new musical in Sarasota, where it has just finished a successful pre-Broadway try-out. The show will be coming to Broadway in August.

SCOTT SCHAFFER spent the fall in *You Cant Take It With You* at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. Christmas was with his family in Maryland and then Florida. The family includes 6 adults, 4 kids and 2 dogs staying in Grandma and Grandpa's 2 bedroom condo on the beach. Good thing they're a tight knit bunch! After those holidays, you'd think he needed a rest, but not Scott! He played the titular role in the January Salon of *Uncle Harry*, recreated his role in the special one-night-only benefit performance of *The Triangle Factory Fire Project* on February 7th, and then returning once more to the **TACT** Mainstage in *Three Men on a Horse!*

DAVID STALLER was the guest host for the NCAC (National Coalition Against Censorship) in November. **TACT** co-artistic director Cynthia Harris was on hand to read from Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. As he continues to prepare for season six of Project Shaw, he is, after all the artistic director and founder of Ginkgold Theatrical Group, he is also in pre-production for directing Shaw's *Candida* at the Two River Theatre Company in Red Bank, NJ. This production begins performances on March 22nd.

After directing **TACT's** fall Mainstage show *The Memorandum*, **JENN THOMPSON** is taking some holiday time off to enjoy with her husband Stephen Kunken and their 16-month-old daughter, Naomi. Later this spring Jenn will direct *The Syringa Tree* for the Portland Stage Company.

For the past 2 years, in addition to all his great scores for **TACT** shows (most recently his hilariously jaunty concoctions for *The Memorandum*), **TACT** adjunct company member **JOSEPH TRAPANESE** has been collaborating with Daft Punk (Thomas Bangalter and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo) on the score for Walt Disney Picture's *Tron: Legacy*. His arrangements and orchestrations for the soundtrack are described as "resolutely grand" (SPIN Magazine) and "stirring... ominous, hypnotic" (The Hollywood Reporter). The BBC described the work as "a sophisticated integration of acoustic and electronic instrumentation... majestic... rich, solemn tones... saturnine orchestration and a muscular rhythm," while Billboard Magazine called it a "seamless fusion of organic and electronic elements." The film was screened in IMAX 3D worldwide beginning December 17th. Directed by Joseph Kosinski, *Tron: Legacy* is the sequel to 1982's *Tron* and features the reprise of Jeff Bridges and Bruce Boxleitner, as well as Garrett Hedlund, Olivia Wilde, and Michael Sheen. Joe will be returning to **TACT** this spring with music for *Three Men on a Horse*.

This fall, **LYNN WRIGHT** was thrilled to play Hana in *The Memorandum* and also to be part of a "top secret" reading with Barry Satchwell Smith with a play for **newTACTics**.