



tactics NEWSLETTER

Vol. 17. No.2

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

Winter 2009/2010

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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 2009/10 season is made
possible with public funds from
the **New York State Council** on
the Arts, a State agency.



T.S. Eliot and his Funny Party

Thomas S(terns) Eliot and the theater? Sure, there was the huge run-away success of *Cats*, but beyond that, what does the brilliant mind behind *The Waste Land* have to do with theater? Surprisingly, few people are even aware that T.S. Eliot wrote a single play, let alone six of them (and the fragment of a seventh). For those who are aware of Eliot's dramatic work, the play that comes to mind most frequently is *Murder in the Cathedral*. While that play is not without its considerable merits, it is rather somber and bears little resemblance to his later more effervescent work. Eliot's plays have certainly been overshadowed by his poetry, yet lovers of literature who stop at the page are missing something equally brilliant – Eliot's dramatic spoken verse, a verse so carefully composed that you might not even realize it is verse.

T.S. Eliot was born September 26, 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri. His love of literature and learning began at Harvard, where he graduated with an A.B. in English Literature in 1909. He became the secretary for the *Harvard Advocate*, a literary magazine and fell in love with writing poetry. Following Harvard, he studied in Paris at the Sorbonne for a year where, after attending lectures by philosopher Henri Bergson, Eliot decided to pursue another degree from Harvard, this time in philosophy.

With a particular interest in the philosophical conundrum of consciousness, Eliot's poetry during his postgraduate years often



T.S. ELIOT continues on page 2

Cocktails & Critics 2009/10 Season*

THE COCKTAIL PARTY by T.S. ELIOT 7 March to 10 April, 2010

Edward and Lavinia Chamberlayne are throwing a party at their fashionable London flat. The guests arrive only to discover that their hostess is no where to be found and a rather strange man, who no one knows, seems right at home. Ruthless and compassionate, this "Cocktail Party" embodies the day-to-day struggle of domestic life while turning the classic 'drawing room comedy' on its head.

BUY TICKETS:

ONLINE: www.ticketcentral.com

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

BY PHONE: Ticket Central

212-279-4200 12noon until 8pm daily

MORE INFO: www.TACTnyc.org

Tickets \$36.25 to \$56.25*
Price INCLUDES a \$1.25 facility fee.



COMPANY NEWS

TACT welcomes not one but two new Board Members to the company: **Mark Eberle** and **Michele Geist!** Mark is a partner in the law firm Augustine & Eberle, LLP and Michele is the Director of Human Resources for Ernst & Young. Both come to us with a love of the theatre instilled in them from youth and both have already shown their great energy and enthusiasm for their new roles with the company. We are thrilled to have them both on board!

Mark Alhadeff was the understudy for *Lovechild* at New World Stages and is playing Alex MacColbie Gibbs in the upcoming TACT production of *The Cocktail Party*. He's been multi-tasking his creative outlets and has also been shooting and editing video for his production company.

Daryl Bornstein is consulting on the renovation of the sound systems for three theatres in a performing arts complex in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He's been traveling extensively internationally for work in Brussels and Quebec City as well

as working at various colleges and on "The View." A recording he produced and engineered featuring Judy Leclair, principal bassoon of the NY Philharmonic, will be released in February on AVIE records, coinciding with the NY Phil 2010 European tour. A recording he produced featuring Robert Langevin, principal flute with NY Phil, will be released in April, also on AVIE (both Judy and Robert, along with three of their NY Philharmonic colleagues played the recorded music for TACT productions of *The Sea* and *HOME*). In March, Daryl will design sound for the Newark Academy production of *How To Succeed...*

Nora Chester recently appeared in TACT's Salon presentation of *Waters Of The Moon* and is looking forward to the continuation of TACT's collaboration with the Queens College MFA Creative Writing program over the next semester. She is also busy loosening up her pipes in anticipation of playing Golde in *Fiddler On The Roof* later in the year... "Oy."

The Cocktail Party

BY
T.S. ELIOT

DIRECTED BY
SCOTT ALAN EVANS

with company members: MARK ALHADEFF,
CYNTHIA HARRIS, SIMON JONES,
JACK KOENIG and guest artists:
JEREMY BECK, LAUREN ENGLISH,
ERIKA ROLFSRUD
BEN BECKLEY & CELIA SMITH

Production Stage Manager: MEREDITH DIXON

Asst. Stage Manager: KELSEY DAYE LUTZ

Asst. Director: ANDREW BLOCK

Casting by STEPHANIE KLAPPER

General Manager: CATHY BENCIVENGA

Associate Producer: JENN THOMPSON

Press Representative: O&M CO.

Props by: LILY FAIRBANKS

Production Manager: JOSHUA SCHERR

Original Music by JOSEPH TRAPANESI

Sound Design by JILL BC DU BOFF & DANIEL KLUGER

Costume Design by DAVID TOSER

Lighting design by AARON COPP

Set design by

ANDREW LIEBERMAN & LAURA JELLINEK

T.S. ELIOT & his Funny Party continued from page 1

dealt with failures to connect to and perceive the world. Eliot's studies continued in Germany, but the start of WWI forced him to move to England, and there he continued his studies at Merton College, Oxford. It was in England that Eliot's life was changed, both personally and professionally.

In 1915, Eliot met Vivienne Haigh-Wood, and the two quickly fell in love, marrying that summer. Due to the war, Eliot and his wife decided to stay in England, living with philosopher and writer Bertrand Russell (an arrangement that quickly ended when Russell and Vivienne engaged in a brief romantic entanglement). On the professional front, Eliot met Ezra Pound who, falling in love with Eliot's poetry, provided both encouragement and monetary help. Eliot became the editor of *The Egoist*, an avant-garde literary magazine, and in 1917 published his first book, *Prufrock and Other Observations*.

With his intellectual and literary connections across London, Eliot began moving in high circles. He gained a reputation not only as a poet and critic in his own right, but as a champion for the works of others, such as James Joyce, whose novel *Ulysses* was serialized in *The Egoist*. In 1919, Eliot wrote what many consider his masterpiece, *The Waste Land*, a work that was immediately seen as an important expression of the avant-garde movement, a defining leader in a major literary movement.

Despite the international acclaim for his poetry, Eliot still found himself wanting financially. That was solved in 1925 when he became the literary editor at Faber & Faber. This position, which Eliot held until his death, enabled Eliot to seek out and foster young talent, putting him at the forefront of a literary movement and making him a role model for young writers.

Somewhat controversially, Eliot joined the Church of England in 1927. A few months later, he became a British citizen. His audience for *The Waste Land*, many of whom saw in the poem a voice for the spiritually lost and discontent, felt the hint of betrayal. For Eliot, religion was something intensely personal, which is reflected in his later poetry and plays.

Around the same time as his conversion, Eliot's relationship with his wife grew tumultuous and the two separated. Eliot began a relationship with Emily Hale in the early 30's, although for religious reasons Eliot would not divorce his wife. Vivienne Eliot was committed to a mental hospital in 1938, where she stayed until her death in 1947. She had suffered for many years from depression and mental instabilities, and the separation with her husband had been damaging. Throughout his personal troubles, Eliot maintained his career, writing new poetry including the *Four Quartets* (1943), perhaps his most famous poem outside of *The Waste Land*. He also continued to write literary criticism and essays on a great variety of subjects as well as lecture extensively at universities. He was awarded the Nobel Prize "for his work as a trail-blazing pioneer of modern poetry" in 1948, and later received the rare and coveted British Order of Merit. As celebrated a poet as Eliot was, however, he maintained a great love for the theater.

Eliot's first foray into drama had been many years earlier, with *Sweeney Agonistes*, a play he began in 1923 but never finished. The fragments were published and performed during Eliot's lifetime, notably by the Group Theatre in London in 1934. Quite different from his later plays, *Sweeney Agonistes* has a free-flowing, experimental structure akin to jazz improvisation. Many scholars today look upon this as a prime example of early experimental theater. The theatrical evolution of T.S. Eliot, however, went in another direction.

Eliot's next dramatic writings were an extension of his involvement with the church. Following a church pageant in 1934 titled *The Rock*, Eliot was commissioned to write a play to be per-

formed in Canterbury Cathedral during the Canterbury Festival. The resulting verse drama, *Murder in the Cathedral*, proved a great success and was moved to London, eventually settling at the Old Vic. Eliot's next play, however, were meant to appeal to an even broader audience. With a love of Oscar Wilde and Noel Coward, Eliot sought to combine the contemporary social comedy with his philosophical and intellectual ideas. Incorporating plot elements of Greek drama, metaphysics, and theology, Eliot worked on refining and perfecting his style throughout the rest of his life. While *The Family Reunion* (1939) played only five weeks and fizzled out, Eliot eventually sought and won the critical and popular success he desired after WWII with *The Cocktail Party*.

The Cocktail Party (1949) and the two plays that followed it, *The Confidential Clerk* (1953 - TACT Salon 08/09) and *The Elder Statesman* (1958), redefined Eliot. No longer could he be accused of being a modernist poet absurdly attempting to become a playwright; he was a successful West End and Broadway dramatist.

For the last ten years of his life, Eliot enjoyed personal happiness as well as professional success. In 1957, he married his secretary, Valerie Fletcher, and the two stayed together until Eliot's death. When he died in 1965 of emphysema, Eliot's legacy was already long established, not only in the plays, poems, and essays he wrote, but in the countless writers who got their first opportunities through Eliot's work as an editor.

Eliot's works are read extensively both in classrooms and for leisure. His poems and dramatic works are exciting and lively on the page, but at the same time they deserve to be seen in full production. Eliot was a firm believer in the importance of the dramatic arts, and he designed his plays to be seen, not read. The verse he included in his drama was intended to find the beauty and rhythm in everyday speech, a vision that only truly comes to life in the mouths of live actors. Sadly, while Eliot is read by millions, he is rarely seen, particularly in the States (discounting Cats). The last major New York production of *The Cocktail Party* was a Broadway revival in 1968. TACT thinks it is time for an audience only accustomed to Eliot the Poet to learn about Eliot the Dramatist. Please join us for *The Cocktail Party*, a revealing and insightful comedy about very serious matters.

THE COCKTAIL PARTY

Surround Events

Join us for a series of lively and provocative discussions about the play and the playwright with scholars, theologians, and artists following the Friday evening performances on March 19th, 26th and April 2nd. For more details visit the

TACT website:

www.tactnyc.org

COMPANY NEWS

continued from page 1

Cynthia Darlow is off to Chicago to play Grandma in the first national tour of *Billy Elliot*. She'll be in the Windy City at the Oriental Theatre (Ford Performing Arts Center) for a year to a year and a half and then continue on to San Francisco and L.A. She writes: "It's a great town and I encourage visitors! I miss you all terribly already."

Francesca Di Mauro is up for canonization for sainthood: she is in her SECOND year as Parents' Association President at PS/IS187 (her daughter, Chiara's, school). Needless to say, she is looking forward to the end of school in June. *Waters of the Moon* was great fun for Francesca and she was absolutely wild to have Justine Salata (daughter of fellow founding members Gregory & Jo-Ann Salata) play her grown up daughter.

Scott Alan Evans is gearing up for the Spring production of *The Cocktail Party* which goes into rehearsals in February. This spring he'll be directing the NYU Graduate Acting program's graduating class in their professional League presentation here in NYC and in LA. He is also looking forward to putting together the show for the Spring Gala (don't forget: Monday, May 3rd). The Honoree, Sam Waterston, will be TACT's first "Sir," following the past two years "Dames:" Dame Julie (Harris) and Dame Angela (Lansbury).

Richard Ferrone has been recording audiobooks with alarming regularity. Audiophile Magazine awarded 2 of his recordings, "Wicked Prey" and "Black Mask Audio Magazine, Vol. 1", Best Audiobooks of the Year 2009 citations and another one, "The Sign", a Best Voices of the Year citation. Many congratulations Richard!

Todd Gearhart has been playing the role of Mr. Henckel and understudying John Stamos in the Broadway revival of *Bye Bye Birdie*. Sweet Apple, Ohio is a long way from Vichy, France.

Mary Louise Geiger is designing the lighting for a new Mabou Mines piece - *Finn*, directed by Sharon Fogarty, with live actors and animation at Skirball Theatre. It opens in March. She's also doing the lighting for TACT guest director, Victor Pappas' production of *Two By Pinter (Ashes To Ashes and A Kind Of Alaska)* at ACT Theatre's Central Heating Lab in Seattle. As if that's not enough, she's also designing for a new ballet with Christopher Wheeldon for the San Francisco Ballet called *Ghosts* opening 2/9.

Delphi Harrington has busied herself for the last two months nursing her husband Norman, who is recovering from open-heart surgery. She is thankful for the support of her friends, her church and most touching of all, her colleagues, who have kept her just busy enough doing readings for CSC, RED BULL, EST and other theatres around town, the highlight of which was *Waters of the Moon* at TACT.

Cynthia Harris after 17 years of reading plays of great merit from the past (that have been neglected), Cynthia finds it interesting to read plays of recent vintage under TACT'S new initiative **newTACTics**. Scott, Simon, Cynthia and Barry Satchwell Smith

have been reading new plays that have come to us from agents, artists and friends. Four of those plays were chosen to receive "table readings," this Fall and Winter. These initial developmental readings have been extremely useful in assessing the work and determining if TACT should go on developing the material. Stay tuned for more on this soon! She and the artistic triumvirate, as well as board and company members, have started preparing for the Spring Gala (coming up May 3rd... save the date!), getting auction items organized and Save The Date cards prepared and mailed. Cynthia is also deep into learning her lines for the upcoming production of *The Cocktail Party*. It is a very busy time for the company and all Cynthia hopes for now is a day with additional hours in it to get all this accomplished. She looks forward to seeing you all at the theatre and wishes everyone "HAPPY NEW YEAR."

Amir Khosrowpour's upcoming projects include a rock Greek tragedy musical and a zombie musical with playwrights Jonathan Goldberg and Edith Freni, respectively, with a reading of the former at the end of January.

Jack Koenig spent six weeks out at the Pioneer Theatre in Salt Lake City, Utah, playing Ralph the narrator (i.e., the grown-up Ralphie) in their smash hit production of *A Christmas Story*. He tells us it was loads of fun, and the local children in the show (all 11 of them!) were all terrific. Next up, of course, he's playing Edward Chamberlayne in *The Cocktail Party*.

Darrie Lawrence has been participating in a number of readings and other projects about town. She cites working with Victor Pappas and the rest of the TACTors and team on *Waters Of The Moon* as "pure enjoyment." She's grateful to have had

more time to visit and travel with her dear mother who remains remarkably sturdy at 90. We should all be so lucky!

After the wonderful experience of *The Late Christopher Bean*, **James Murtaugh** tells us he found himself going through withdrawal, wandering around the apt in his bathrobe, unshaven, replaying BEAN scenes in his head. The film he did with Robert De Niro, *Everything's Fine*, which was supposed to get him through that period, only stayed in the theatres for two weeks, which he states, "only added to my depression." His wife finally told him he had to snap out of it and get on with his life so on Feb 1st he begins rehearsals for The Ensemble Studio Theatre's main stage production of a new play titled *Lenin's Embalmers*. It opens March 1st.

This fall, **Margaret Nichols** sang and sashayed her way through *Seeing Stars* at the New York Musical Theatre Festival (NYMF), directed by TACT's own "genius/Godsend" Jenn Thompson, and shared the stage with fellow TACTor, the terrific John Plumpis. It was a family affair! The TACT Salon of *Waters Of The Moon* rounded out the holiday season and the Salon of *Candle-Light* got the new year off to a great start.

John Plumpis and his wife Celia happily moved into their new apartment in Washington Heights in late September. At this time John was also rehearsing *Seeing Stars* at the NY Musical Theatre Festival - see above. Immediately following, John began rehearsals for *Lost in Yonkers*. He is playing Eddie in a co-production that ran at the Maltz Jupiter Theatre in Florida in December. After spending the holidays with family, the show played at the Cleveland Playhouse for the month of January,

COMPANY NEWS continues on page 8



TACT / The ACTORS COMPANY THEATRE

Spring Gala

Honoring Sam Waterston

May 3 2010

at the Edison Ballroom

TACT SALON SERIES

"ENGLISH ECCENTRICS"

2009/2010
TACT STUDIO
900 Broadway,
New York, NY

OCTOBER, 2009

THE DEVIL PASSES

BY BENN LEVY

CAST (in speaking order)

D. C. Magnus..... JACK KOENIG+*
Cosmo PennyHARRY BARANDES*
Louis KischRICHARD FERRONE+*
Rev. Herbert MessiterSCOTT SCHAFFER+*
Rev. Nicholas LucyROBERT KRAKOVSKI*
Paul Robinson..... MACKENZIE MEEHAN*
Dorothy ListerMELISSA MILLER*
Mrs. Beatrice Messiter....CYNTHIA DARLOW+*

Stage Manager: **CHRISTINE MASSOUD**
Music by **DAVID BROOME**

Directed by **SCOTT ALAN EVANS+**



Jack Koenig, Cynthia Darlow, Scott Schaffer, Rob Krakovski, Melissa Miller, Harry Barandes & Mackenzie Meehan in *THE DEVIL PASSES*

JANUARY, 2010

CANDLE-LIGHT

BY SIEGFRIED GEYER
ADAPTED BY P.G. WODEHOUSE

CAST (in speaking order)

Josef.....SCOTT SCHAFFER+*
Prince Rudolf.....MARK ALHADEFF+*
Chauffeur.....RICHARD FERRONE+*
MarieMARGARET NICHOLS+*
Liserl.....LYNN WRIGHT+*
Baron.....RICHARD FERRONE+*
Waiter.....RICHARD FERRONE+*
Baroness.....LYNN WRIGHT+*

Stage Manager: **MEL McCUE+**
Music by **AYANNA WITTER-JOHNSON**
Directed by **GREGORY SALATA+**



Lynn Wright, Margaret Nichols, Mark Alhadeff & Scott Schaffer in *CANDLE-LIGHT*

The **SALON SERIES** is made possible through the generous support of our subscribers and contributors and by a grant from **BARBARA FLEISCHMAN**.



Justine Salata, Matthew Carlson and Francesca Di Mauro in *WATERS OF THE MOON*.

DECEMBER, 2009

WATERS OF THE MOON

BY N.C. HUNTER

CAST (in speaking order)

John DalyMATTHEW CARLSON*
Evelyn Daly (his sister)..MARGARET NICHOLS+*
Mrs. WhyteDELPHI HARRINGTON+*
Colonel SelbySIMON JONES+*
Mrs. DalyNORA CHESTER+*
Mrs. AshworthDARRIE LAWRENCE+*
Julius Winterhalter..... GREGORY SALATA+*
Helen Lancaster.....FRANCESCA DI MAURO+*
Tonetta Landi (her daughter).....JUSTINE SALATA
Robert Lancaster.....RON McCLARY+*

Stage Manager: **KELSEY DAYE LUTZ**
Music by **AMIR KHOSROWPOUR+**

Directed by **VICTOR PAPPAS**

+ TACT Company Member
* member Actor's Equity Association



Cynthia Darlow, James Murtaugh look on as Kate Middleton, Hunter Canning and Jessie Datino listen to Mary Bacon in *THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN*. Photo by Stephen Kunken

Dr. Haggett**JAMES MURTAUGH+***
Mrs. Haggett**CYNTHIA DARLOW+***
Susan Haggett.....**JESSIE DATINO**
Abby**MARY BACON+***
Ada Haggett.....**KATE MIDDLETON***
Warren Creamer.....**HUNTER CANNING**
Tallant.....**GREG McFADDEN+***
Rosen**BOB ARI***
Maxwell Davenport.....**JAMES PRENDERGAST+***
Production Stage Manager.....**MEREDITH DIXON***
Sound design by**STEPHEN KUNKEN**
Music by**MARK BERMAN**
Costume design by.....**MARTHA HALLY**
Lighting design by.....**BEN STANTON**
Scenic design by.....**CHARLIE CORCORAN**
Directed by.....**JENN THOMPSON+**

+ TACT Company Member

* Member Actor's Equity Association

Queens College & TACT: THE STORY CONTINUES...

by Nora Chester

Another Semester has begun for professor Richard Schotter and the MFA candidates in Creative Writing at Queens College, and once again the actors of **TACT** are going back to school with them, sharing the benefit of their experience with aspiring playwrights in special classes at the **TACT Studio**.

These lively and extremely interesting sessions give the writers the opportunity to hear their works-in-progress read by trained professionals, followed by a freewheeling discussion of the material. Each two hour class consists of a reading from one script followed by a discussion, a short break and then a reading from a second script and discussion.

The actors share their immediate impressions and ask questions regarding structure, character and dialogue providing valuable feedback during the actual writing process. The playwrights receive advice, encouragement and insight into how an actor approaches dramatic material while the participating actors have the distinct pleasure of reading a tremendously varied amount of imaginative and exciting material from a talented group of young writers. It's an A+ evening, for all concerned.

ED: If you are interested in sitting in on one of these classes, contact the **TACT** office for information. Guests are welcome!

www.tactnyc.org

Going Bonkers for SIDNEY HOWARD'S THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN!

Audiences and critics alike cheered loudly when Sidney Howard's *The Late Christopher Bean* returned to the New York stage last November more than 75 years after its Broadway debut.

With an impressive cast and a script *The New York Times* said remained "fresh and funny," **TACT's** production earned some of the most enthusiastic critical reviews of the fall 2009 theater season. Following strong audience demand, an additional week of performances was scheduled. This is the first time in **TACT's** history that one of its productions extended its run.

Here's what the critics had to say about **BEAN**:

"FRESH AND FUNNY...
The treasure hunters at TACT/
The Actors Company Theater
have unearthed another jewel."
- *The New York Times*

"SCRUMPTIOUS...A GEM
IN ANY ERA and CATNIP for a
COMEDIC ENSEMBLE."
- *The New Yorker*

"INTELLIGENT, WELL CRAFTED
AND LAUGH-OUT-LOUD
FUNNY... demonstrates that
there are indeed overlooked
treasures on the old-play shelf."
- *Variety*

"HILARIOUSLY
PERTINENT...
Howard's 1932 comedy is
LOADED WITH LAUGHS."
- *TheaterMania*

"DESERVES A BIG
ROUND OF APPLAUSE...
A well-acted and handsomely
staged production." - *CurtainUp*

"FOUR STARS! As FRESH as
if it were written this year...
IT'S GREAT!"
- *WOR Radio*

"A COMEDIC GEM...
A DELICIOUS evening at the
theatre." - *Backstage*

"TERRIFIC...RUSH TO
THIS EXEMPLARY
PRODUCTION...
another COMPLETE SUCCESS
from TACT."
- *Peter Filichia's Diary/
TheaterMania*

"CHARMING...
TOUCHING...PITCH
PERFECT."
- *NYTheatre.com*

"A GLOWING AND
LOVING REVIVAL! TACT has
produced another WINNER!"
- *Talk Entertainment*

"A SPARKLING
PRODUCTION...filled with
exquisitely timed bombshells
that continue dropping up until
the very last minute."
- *Lighting and Sound America*

"EXCELLENT FROM TOP
TO BOTTOM...The cast
displays THE MOST WONDERFUL
ENSEMBLE ACTING TO BE SEEN
IN NEW YORK OR ANYWHERE!"
- *The Epoch Times*

My **FAVE** Five: TOP FIVE FAVORITE TACT ROLES



Jack Koenig

When I was asked to pick the five favorite roles that I have done with TACT, I thought it would be easier than it has turned out to be. Looking back over the 20 parts that I've had the privilege of playing for TACT (well, 19 actually; *The Rivals* counts twice), I often found myself wondering

"Was I in that? Who the hell did I play?" But after a little consideration, the following list just wrote itself. (So blame the list for any typos, not me!)

5.) **BOY MEETS GIRL.** A bit of a departure for me, playing an egotistical movie cowboy star who's as dumb as a bag of hammers in this 1930s comedy, but a lot of fun. (And if you're asking where's the departure, I reply that I've never been a movie cowboy star – so there!)



Jack in *Boy Meets Girl* - he's the one in the cowboy hat!

4.) **THE TORCHBEARERS.** A sentimental favorite because this was my very first TACT appearance. The second act, the play-within-the play, was possibly the funniest half hour in TACT history. (Note: I did not appear in the second act.) And besides making my TACT debut, I got to play the sarcastic husband of the stellar Nancy Opel. Not too shabby.

3.) **THE RIVALS.** I got to play Captain Jack Absolute in Sheridan's classic comedy. Any time you get a chance to play a character named Jack, I say jump at it. And I finally was able to use my Winston Churchill impression on stage.

2.) **LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL.** This makes the memorable list for two reasons: it was the first time I worked with the brilliant Jamie Bennett, who was making his TACT debut playing my kid brother (the Thomas Wolfe character). And second, I got to have a death scene and die in Nora Chester's arms. What more could anyone want?



Jack as the German Captain in *Incident at Vichy*

Lastly, and firstly:

1.) **INCIDENT AT VICHY.** A first-rate production of a first-rate play. It all came together on this one: the design elements (lighting, sound, set, costumes); the inspired and expert direction of Scott Alan Evans; the excellent and dedicated cast, a true ensemble; the stage management and running crew, both in front and back of house; and, of course, Mr. Miller's words. It takes a nurturing and supportive company to really bring out an actor's best, and that's what TACT in general and this production specifically has done for me. It was a signal honor and privilege for me to try to bring the Major to life each evening.

ED: Jack will be playing the role of Edward Chamberlayne in TACT's upcoming production of *THE COCKTAIL PARTY*.



Todd Gearhart, Cynthia Harris, Larry Keith, Amy Lee William & Jack Koenig at Bucknell University

What We Did Last Summer TACT's Summer Program in PA

Once again we were delighted to be in the beautiful Susquehanna Valley for TACT's annual summer visit this past July. For the past ten years, TACT has headed out to Central Pennsylvania to run workshops for the students of the **TRIO Upward Bound** program at Bloomsburg University. Kate Bauman, the Program Director, tells us that not only does the work the actors from TACT do with the students help them find new ways to express themselves through the various exercises, improvisations, and theatre games we do, it also is an important bonding experience for them. And, she tells us, "TACT is a personal [staff] favorite as we often see student who have yet to get actively involved in the program find a way to participate through the group work of TACT... Our return[ing students] look forward to [the workshop] on the calendar each and every year!"

As we continued to build on our highly successful program with the students there, it is gratifying to know that we are making such an impact. That impact, however, couldn't be achieved without the sustaining generous support of the **Degenstein Foundation**.

While in PA, we also presented an original musical evening by Barry Day: *Private Lives Revealed: The Letters of Noel Coward* in the lovely Terrace Room at Bucknell University. This was our first time at Bucknell, and we were thrilled to be there. TACT's Scott Alan Evans directed the evening with a stellar cast: TACT Artistic Director, Cynthia Harris, founding member, Larry Keith, and company members Todd Gearhart and Jack Koenig were joined by guest artist Amy Lee Williams. David Broome was our musical director. Special thanks go to our fabulous PA Committee, without whom none of this would be possible: Nancy & Sam Craig, Lore Degenstein, Dede & Bob Gronlund, Kay & Roger Lyons, Gayle Pollock, Nancy Rizzo, Sandy & Gary Sojka, Connie Timm & Neil Anderson and Janet Weis, and especially to TACT Board Chair, Stephen Lindenmuth. Undying appreciation also goes to Marsha & Jay Lemons, Ruth & Cliff Melberger, Maryjane & Brian Mitchell and Bill Boswell. We know the words of the master, Mr. Coward, pack a wallop with the audience, but it must be noted that this year the weather was equally dramatic! Certainly the natural pyrotechnics on the night were phenomenal.

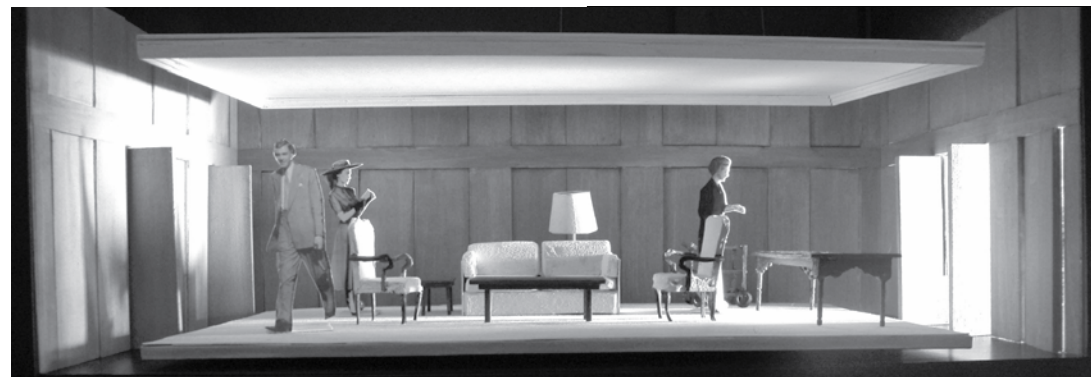
2009-2010 SALON SERIES Continues...

"ENGLISH ECCENTRICS" Our seventeenth season of TACT SALON performances, concludes in May with another delightful rarity.

The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse
by Barré Lyndon, 1937
May 14 - 17, 2010

Dr. Clitterhouse has a secret. By day, in his prestigious Harley Street medical practice, he attends to a wealthy and influential clientele. By night, however, he conducts experiments in studying the criminal mind, using himself as the guinea pig. The good doctor sees himself as a pioneer in medical science, but can even the best intentions justify murder?

"TACT – the BEST THEATRICAL BANG for your BUCK!"



Photograph of model of the set design by Andrew Lieberman & Laura Jellinek for *The Cocktail Party*

During the recent riotously successful run of *The Late Christopher Bean*, a well-known Broadway producer asked us how much the show had cost to produce. When we told him he picked his jaw up off the floor and expressed wonder and admiration that we had been able to do so much with so little.

That's the explanation for our survival in a chilly climate for the Theatre: we maximize our resources, so as to give everyone – actors and audience – the best possible value. Every dollar donated counts, and your generosity toward TACT enables us to do the best we can – for a lot less.

Our seventeen years have been a continuous collaboration with our faithful subscribers (now at a record number) and our contributors. Because of you we have been able to mount shows that you enjoy in a style that does justice to the play.

We're gearing up for *The Cocktail Party* and to bring you the best production we can we've put together a brilliant cast and design team. But it does take some planning - and a lot of creative thinking - to make it all happen on the budgets we can afford. If you'd like to pitch in and help out, we can *certainly* use your assistance. Here are just a few items that could use some extra teamwork.

Remember your contributions are tax-deductible - **AND THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE RECENTLY DONATED TO TACT!** We can't do it without you! We're confident that you will be gratified to see every dollar is stretched to the fullest - and then some!

Here are just a FEW of the items WE NEED HELP with:

ACTORS SALARIES!:

As an ACTORS' company, we have increased the compensation our actors receive each and every year. Granted it began ridiculously low, and still isn't up to a real living wage, but we do also provide AEA Pension and Health benefits and that all adds up!

SET/PRODUCTION COSTS:

As our focus is always on the play and the actor, our set designs reflect that. But often a simple elegant set is more difficult (and expensive) to achieve than a complicated cluttered one. Here are just a few of the things we need for *The Cocktail Party* production:

LUMBER: \$1,500
SUPER POLY MUSLIN: \$665
PRINTED BACKDROP: \$410
CARPETING: \$7.99 per tile
(we need 130)
DOOR HINGES: \$150
(we need 16)
FURNITURE RENTALS per week: \$145
EDIBLE PROPS: \$10
(potato crisps and olives, etc.)

LIGHTING RENTALS: \$600 (per week)
LIGHTING GELS: \$100
FABRIC & NOTIONS for 1 dress: \$195
(there are 10 of them)
MEN'S SHOES: \$85-150
(each pair)
LAUNDRY & DRY CLEANING: \$150
(per week)
SOUND EQUIPMENT: \$250
(rental per week)
etc. etc. etc...

A BANG for YOUR BUCKS

To make a contribution to TACT to support our production of *The Cocktail Party*, 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: \$ _____

Please use it towards (check one):

- Artist fees/salaries
 Production expenses
 Whatever is most needed

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Email Address _____

Day Phone _____

Evening Phone _____

PAYMENT METHOD

Check enclosed, payable to TACT MasterCard Visa AmEX

Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____

Verif. Code
(required) _____

Signature _____

Billing Zip Code
(required) _____

My employer: _____

Will match my gift.

- My Matching Form is enclosed
 I have registered my gift with my company

For more information call 212/645-TACT (8228) or visit www.tactnyc.org
900 Broadway, Suite 905 NYC 10003

and then comes closer to home to the Paper Mill Playhouse February 17 - March 14. John is also happy to report that his wife, Celia, will be appearing in TACT's *The Cocktail Party*.

James Prendergast performed in *The Late Christopher Bean* this fall and enjoyed every minute of it.

Barry Satchwell Smith has been working to get **newTACTics** off the ground. It is now officially up and running. Four new plays have been given readings to date, *The Sussman Variations*, *Maddy Heisler*, *An Ideal Truth* and *T or C*. Of these four, *T or C* has been chosen to advance to Stage 4 of the **newTACTics** program and will be given a rehearsed staged reading in the coming months.

Scott Schafer spent the holidays in Rwanda, where he and his partner, Doug, trekked up to see the mountain gorillas, safaried in Queen Elizabeth Park in Uganda, and hung out with his brother, sister-in-law, and nieces and nephew who are living here. He deemed it: "one amazing trip." Soon he will be heading to the Rep in St Louis to do *The Fantastics* in February/March after, of course, first shining his comic light in the January Salon, *Candle-Light*.

Jonathan Smith will be back in New York in February full time after a three-year run with *Jersey Boys* in San Francisco and Chicago. During that time he conducted "Sherry" almost 1,300 times. So he's available and looking for work, especially if it's music of anyone other than the Four Seasons!

David Staller is the artistic director and founder of the Gingold Theatrical Group, which produces Project Shaw, devoted to presenting plays by George Bernard Shaw, and which is the first group ever to present every one of Shaw's 65 plays: www.projectsshaw.com. GTG is also producing the Press Cuttings: New Plays Series. Since Shaw began his theatrical career as a critic, the writers chosen for this program are all currently theatre journalists. He is also continuing educational programs, including the Saturday program for teens at Lighthouse International. GTG is presently preparing to begin presenting fully mounted productions in NY, of both Shaw plays and the newly commissioned plays.

Jenn Thompson is recuperating after a crazy fall where she directed both *Seeing Stars* (a rousing new boxing musical for NYMF) and TACT's celebrated production of *The Late Christopher Bean* - practically simultaneously. This spring she, along with actor/designer/husband Stephen Kunken, will travel to Ethiopia to bring home their new adopted baby daughter, Naomi.

Joe Trapanese was awarded the 2009 Harold Arlen Award from the ASCAP Foundation. He also composed the original music for Sony Pictures Television's *The Bannen Way* and orchestrated the season finale of *Dexter* (Showtime.) Additional music arranging for *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* has taken up the rest of his working hours.

tact
 TheACTORS COMPANY THEATRE

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

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

ADJUNCT COMPANY

Daryl Bornstein, Patrick Cecala, Dawn Dunlop, Jonathan Faiman, Mary Louise Geiger, Amir Khosrowpour, David Macdonald, Mel McCue, Colin McGrath, Marcus Paus, Yuzuru Sadashige, John Slover, Jonathan Smith, Joseph Trapanese, David Toser

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TACT is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and a member of the Alliance of Resident Theatres /New York

at the BECKETT THEATRE, NYC
 7 MARCH - APRIL 10, 2010

BY T.S. ELIOT
The Cocktail Party

Next on the MAINSTAGE:

Winter News 2009/2010

900 Broadway, Suite 905 New York, NY 10003

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

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