

The Summit Playhouse Green Room Notes

Qualified by The New Jersey Cultural Trust

June 2006

This Summer's Show will be *Once on This Island, Jr.*

Kaleidoscope Theater for Youth is hard at work preparing Flaherty and Ahrens's enchanting Caribbean musical for presentation in July. This Broadway Junior show, which retells a fairy tale, is about love and forgiveness. With its touching story and catchy pop and calypso-flavored tunes, this musical is a feast for the heart, mind, and soul. It will appeal to all generations.

"*Once on This Island* has been one of my favorites for a long time," says director **Renee Palermo**. "I am so thrilled to get to work on the show in a supportive environment such as the Summit Playhouse. Not only do we have a cast of committed, talented performers and a wonderful producer, **Abbe Maron**, but we're also lucky enough to have a group of parents who have volunteered to help us with every aspect of the production."

Our large cast includes: **Nick Benevenia, Nora Boylan, Erin Brady, Tess Cohen, Emily Mae Czachor, Ryan Damodaran, Rachel Donahue, Kylie Francis, Michael Hoey, Hale Jaeger, Molly Kearns, Claudia Kosiecki, Jami Lamaita, Joseph LaVarco, Tim Lynch, Carly Maitlin, Meghna Marathe, Priya Marathe, Alex Maron, Lindsay Maron, Kelly Marzoli, Jenny Mazzella, Riley McGregor, Joanna Messineo, Michael Nitting, Kaela O'Connor, Michael Pasternak, Zach Rissman, Caroline Turner, Rebecca Witt, and Brianna Zonin.**

Music director **Judy Brewer** remarks, "The level of talent, discipline and teamwork exhibited by our performers in *Once on This Island* makes the rehearsal process a joy. The Summit Playhouse community can expect the best Kaleidoscope production it has ever seen."

Performances: Saturday, July 22 (2 & 7pm); Sunday, July 23 (2 pm); Friday, July 28 (7pm); Saturday, July 29 (2 & 7pm); Sunday, July 30 (2pm). **Tickets:** \$12. Call (908) 273-2192 or go to www.summitplayhouse.org.

Election of 2006-2007 Officers

At the annual meeting on June 6 **Joann Scanlon** was chosen president by acclamation to succeed **Nancy Boucher**, who stepped down after six successful main stage productions (*Fiorello!*, *Inspecting Carol*, *A Delicate Balance*, *The Miracle Worker*, *The Lion in Winter*, and *The Sisters Rosensweig*) and much kudos for her efforts to restore our historic theatre. Re-elected by acclamation were Treasurer **Mike Tatlow**, Business Manager **Ed Johnson**, and Ticket Manager **Stephanie Fisk**. Unanimous ballots were also cast for **Sue Smith** for secretary and **Nina Deutz, Sondra Luckstone, Sue Smith, and Mike Tatlow** for next year's nominating committee. For the office of vice president **Betty Kaus**, who has been a Playhouse member for 55 years, narrowly defeated your editor, who was nominated from the floor. Forty per cent of the membership voted.

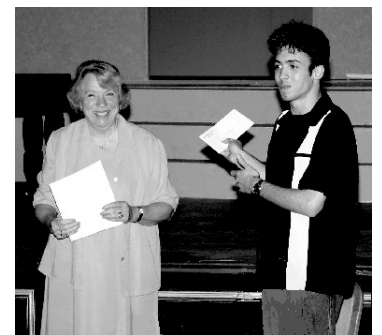
Playhouse Scholarships for Two Summit Students Awarded June 6



Vincent (père) and Joanna

Joanna Maulbeck, who debuted at the Playhouse in *Charlotte's Web* and later appeared as Angelique in *The Imaginary Invalid*, has been awarded \$500. Her performance in Suzanne Bradbeer's *Full Bloom* at Dreamcatcher's Repertory Theatre received a rave review from Peter Filichia in the *Star-Ledger* in May. Joanna will be attending Hampshire College in September where she plans to continue her studies in theater, music and creative writing.

Vincent William Balzano, who played Snoopy in *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* and just appeared as Tom in *The Sisters Rosensweig*, also received a \$500 award. Like Joanna, he has appeared in many plays in middle school and high school, including a recent production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at Oak Knoll. Vincent hopes to join the Mask & Bauble Society, a theater group at Georgetown, where he will matriculate in the fall.



Nancy Boucher and Vincent

Mark Your Calendar and Save the Dates to Earn Volunteer Hours

- ∞ **Saturday, July 29 – Summit Sidewalk Sales Days** (Volunteers needed for Playhouse booth); call Joann.
- ∞ **Saturday, September 23 – Fall Clean-Up Day at the Playhouse**; more about this later
- ∞ **Sunday, September 24 – Fall Membership Party** (for fun, not volunteer hours); invitations to follow

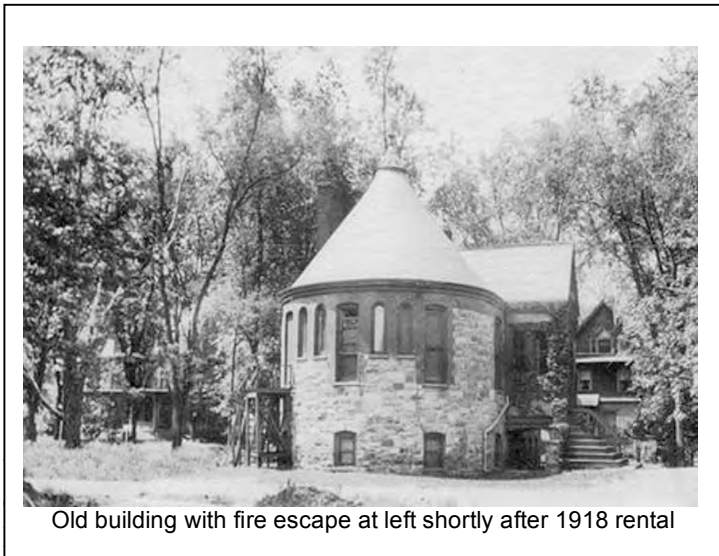
Committee Chairs for 2006-2007

Joann Scanlon announced committee chair appointments for next year at the joint Board of Governors meeting on June 20: **John Bauer** (Development); **Nancy Boucher** (Grants); **Robbie Curtis** (Newsletter); **Nina Deutz** (Producer); **PT Kizzia/Linn Smith** (Historian); **Abbe Maron** (Kaleidoscope); **Mary Lou Mayfield** (ACCESS); **Richard Nowel** (Fundraising); **Rose Pancirov** (Gifts & Benefits); **Rose Pancirov** (Community Theater), **Roy Pancirov** (Playreading); **Jo Ray** (Producer); and **Bill Roome** (Technical Director). (The Nominating Chair will be selected within the committee listed above.) Unfilled positions on the 2006-2007 Board are: (1) **House & Grounds**, (2) **Entertainment**, and (3) **Producer** for the fall show. (Joann and Betty are temporarily sharing this last responsibility.) Interested Active and Retired Active members are welcome to apply for these three Board positions. Call **Joann** at **(973) 635-6043**.

The Summit Playhouse: a Performance Space, a Museum, and a Public Trust *

By John Bauer

The arrangement with which the **Summit Library Association, i.e., the City of Summit**, fostered the original dramatic group in 1918 by renting the vacant building for \$1 a year until 1967 when it deeded the building (though not the property) for another \$1, made the Summit Playhouse a tax-free, public trust. Just think of it: all for a total of \$50! That was nearly as good a deal (on a microscopic scale, of course) as the settlers of New Amsterdam made with the Indians for Manhattan Island! Despite its origins as a private club, the Summit Playhouse remains essentially a **PUBLIC TRUST** for the citizens of Summit, not for its individual members who come and go. It will be here long after we members are gone.



Old building with fire escape at left shortly after 1918 rental

Yes, we are a public trust, not only with the support of the City of Summit but the Summit Area Public Foundation, the Manley Winsor Foundation, the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Union County Cultural & Heritage Affairs Office, and hundreds of private donors in the Summit area. Last year we passed a by-law to create a separate Board of Trustees to oversee the care of the building and to build an endowment to assure its upkeep. This group, which includes our president and treasurer, two elected members (John Bauer and Richard Nowel), and several Summit residents (Millie Cooper, Betty McColgan, and Vince Balzano), will meet two or three times a year and make recommendations to our Board of Governors. We are happy to report that Summit resident Erica Avrami, an architectural conservator who just received her Ph.D. at N.Y.U., has agreed to meet with this new board on planning and policy matters.

A **Community Advisory Board** has been also named. It will chaired by the immediate past president. Its members will be John McEwen from the New Jersey Theatre Alliance, John Pietrowski from Playwrights Theatre, Holly Logue from the Kean University Department of Theatre, Cara Salaki from the Summit Y, and two women active in Summit volunteer activities: Lenore Ford and Diane Gallo. They will convene in the fall and meet at least one more time during the year to assist in heightening awareness of the Playhouse in the area.

Yes, until now we have operated mainly as a performance organization, but our very standards of excellence have broadened our mission. What other theatre in New Jersey, or in the rest of the country, can match our wonderful archives that will soon be housed at the Summit Historical Society? With **“Four Centuries in a Weekend: A Journey Through Union County’s History”** on October 20-21, 2006, we become one of Summit’s tourist attractions, and the City is preparing signage for us as well as for the Historical Society, the Reed-Reeves Arboretum, and Twin Maples (the Fortnightly Club).

Yes, awareness of the Playhouse and its reputation are soaring locally, throughout Union County, in Trenton, and throughout the rest of the State. When we get on the National Register of Historic Sites, we will have truly arrived. Our performances are transitory, fading after three weeks into memory, but our records, our histories of them, abide. They are the legacy of which Summit is so proud. Providing our grant application to The Cultural Trust is approved for phase 3 of our restoration project and we are then able to complete phase 4 (re-landscaping of our pie-shaped property next spring), **we should plan to make an application for a stabilization grant, if and when we become eligible.** That's what non-profits with prudent leadership do. In the meantime, with a cooperative spirit and civility, we can accomplish much toward a goal of stabilization so that our destiny is assured and the City of Summit's trust in us is validated.

In late May my sister Nancy Boucher and I applied for a grant to have Farewell Mills Gatsch of Princeton (experts in American theatre restoration) write our nominations for the State and National Registers of Historic Sites. Grant awards will be announced in the fall.

We also have the grant application for phase 3 of our restoration (mentioned above) still pending. We will find out later this summer whether we will receive funding for 2006-2007. The criteria that evaluators in Trenton will be using when deliberating on our application are:

- ∞ "Nature and degree of threat, if any to the property
- ∞ "Archaeological, architectural, cultural and/or historical significance of the property
- ∞ "The ability of the project to improve long term preservation of the property
- ∞ "The ability and commitment of the applicant to execute the project
- ∞ "The extent to which the proposed project can be successfully accomplished with the grant and other resources available to the applicant
- ∞ "The nature and impact of the organization's programs and service on the intended audience
- ∞ "The benefit of the project to the community
- ∞ "The project's potential to serve as a model for other organizations."

I hope that the need for a Committee of Trustees and a Community Advisory Board to help our Board of Governors and the relevance of the work that Nancy and I have been doing are clearer to everyone now. To paraphrase John Winthrop's "City on a Hill" line from 1630: **"We must consider that we ... are a unique theatre, a public trust, in Hill City. The eyes of all people are upon us."** Isn't that the kind of attention thesians live for?

* **Clarification (9/25/06):** **1.** In response to concerns of a few Playhouse members about my signed op-ed piece in the June 2006 newsletter, I wish to clarify my use of the terms "museum" and "public trust." I was using them in a popular sense: **"a building where a collection of artistic, historical, and/or scientific items is displayed"** and **"a charity or a 501(c)(3) organization."** **2.** My assertion that we own the building but not the land has resulted in a deed review by an attorney familiar with the Playhouse, dispelling a long-held notion that many people, including the writer, had. **We do own both.** – John Bauer, Editor

PLAYHOUSE OPENS DOORS TO N.Y.U. TISCH SCHOOL OF THE ARTS FILM STUDENTS

From May 31 through June 4 a film crew of twenty, five professional actors, and an audience of local volunteers made history by filming segments of *Five Swords*, an original script that Jared Perez wrote and directed as his thesis in the acclaimed New York University film program. *Five Swords* will premiere at the Playhouse next season before it becomes part of a film festival in New York City. Jared searched the internet for a turn-of-the-century theater for the site of his project and selected us and then made necessary arrangements through the Mayor's Office.

"Access for All: A Cultural Accessibility Conference"

Thursday, August 10 (9:30am–7pm), Two River Theatre, Red Bank – A free day-long event sponsored by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, featuring sessions on marketing, sensitivity training, universal design, web accessibility, and more. Lunch provided. For information, call Robert Carr (973) 540-0515, x15 or e-mail him rcarr@njtheatrealliance.org.

A Note from the Retiring President

Thanks for the talent, time, and treasure that so many of you gave our theatre during the past two years and for the beautiful cracker tray I received at the annual meeting. My best to Joann and the members of the new Board of Governors. – Nancy

Sayonara from Your Editor

During the past two years I have brought you eight issues of "all news fit to print." I trust this information helped you better understand your community theatre's accomplishments and its potential. We all worked hard. Best wishes to Robbi, my successor. – John [Note to Susan Coen (Division of Cultural & Heritage Affairs): Our print is larger now per your request!]

The Playhouse Association, Inc., 10 New England Ave., Summit, NJ 07901 (908) 273-2192
Nancy Boucher, President • Ed Johnson, Business Manager • John Bauer, Editor • www.summitplayhouse.org