

Ripples Riverwalk Theatre

from the Community Circle Players at

Season 21; Number 1
June/July - 2009

228 Museum Dr. • PO Box 12249 • Lansing, MI 48901 • 517-482-5700 • Office Hours: Tues.-Fri. 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. • Fax: 482-9812 • e-mail: Riverwalk@acd.net • web site: RiverwalkTheatre.com

REVIEW



Doak Bloss and Colleen Bethea

In her director's note, Jane Falion touches on the enduring appeal of *The Rothschilds*, as "a testament to family, dignity, honor, and unflinching tenacity against all odds... [and] a story that transcends time...." Having seen her expert adaptation of this mighty musical, one might employ those same descriptors for her cast, crew, and production!

With more characters than an entire season of Riverwalk black box, more musicians than a downtown "Blues on the Square" concert, and more costumes than the annual Tony Awards, this cast and crew of "more than a few" pull off a tour de force at once powerful and poignant, epic and intimate.

The Rothschilds, by Sherman Yellen and Sheldon Harnick, music by Jerry Bock, tells the true tale of the remarkable rise of this international banking family, from its plebeian plantings in the Jewish ghetto of 18th century Frankfurt to its patrician blossoming in the courts and capitals of 19th century Europe.

Lead protagonist Mayer Rothschild is affectionately and energetically portrayed by Riverwalk regular Doak Bloss, who wins over audience hearts from the start as a humble and hardworking Jewish shopkeeper in love. By show's end he is no less admirable as the principled patriarch

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Good Night Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)

All of the elements of classic Shakespeare appear in *Goodnight, Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*.

Iambic pentameter? Check.

Cross-dressing and love at first sight? You bet.

Hot-headed murder with lasting repercussions?

It's got that, too.

And scheming, scheming and more scheming.

But in this play by Ann Marie McDonald, which takes the Riverwalk stage July 16-19 and 23-26, there's also a time and culture-hopping professor who is looking to prove that both "Othello" and "Romeo and Juliet" are both really ... comedies.

Constance is a spinsterly academic trying to prove her theory by decoding a tome called "The Gustav Manuscript." As she is tossing it — and much of her career — in frustration, she gets sucked into a vortex that takes first to Cyprus, the setting for *Othello*.

"First you get to meet Desdemona, who is not some beautiful victim of a warlike brute, but an equally robust, Xena-like character," said Jeff Croff, who directs. "After things get a little hot in Cyprus, she finds herself transported to Verona, where, apparently at the drop of a hat, everyone will pull a sword or fall in love indiscriminately."

Kelly Gmazel is the time-traveling professor, Constance. She's the only one of five cast members who has just one role. Among Scott Stearns' roles is Othello. Amy Winchell's key turn is as Juliet. Todd Humphrey is both Romeo and the *Othello* villain Iago, while Brittney Benjamin plays Desdemona as well as the sword-wielding Mercutio.

Croff said the show works for both Shakespeare fans and newbies. "For Shakespeare traditionalists, they'll enjoy a lot of the references and the nods to so many Shakespearean themes and ideas," he said. "There's also very broad comedy."

Kathleen Lavey

2008-2009 Barney Awards

Director Sue Chmurynsky concocted a clever homage to our past season and our new "Black Box" stage with *Sherlock Noir and the Woman in Black*, played by Philip Himebaugh and Ann Glenn, with a host of helpers. These vignettes linked the Barney Awards presentations. Show directors categorize actors, and judges rate each 1-10. Those averaging 8 or higher are "nominated" and the highest score receives the Barney.

Lead Actor/Musical: Ethan Link, *The Full Monty*; Nominees: Tony Sump and Joe Quick, *Monty*; Doak Bloss, *Rothschilds*

Lead Actor/Play: Kevin Burnham, *Sherlock Holmes*; Nominated: Doak Bloss, *The Dead and Born Yesterday*, Brad Rutledge, *Macbeth*

Lead Actor/Children's Show: Edric Haleen, *Jack and the Beanstalk*

Lead Actress/Musical: Colleen Bethea, *Rothschilds*; Nominated: Kelly Stu-

Continued on page 3

CALENDAR

All events at Riverwalk Theatre unless noted.

July 15 - 5:30 pm

BOARD MEETING - use back door; guests welcome.

July 16-26

GOOD NIGHT DESDEMONA (GOOD MORNING JULIET)
Comedy, by Ann Marie McDonald, Directed by Jeff Croff

July 12-13 - 7 pm

AUDITIONS for INTO THE WOODS musical directed by Rick Dethlefsen

August 14-23

THUNDERHOOF & THE PRINCE Children's Musical by Fran Johnson, Music Yvonne Whitmore, Directed by Dan Pappas - August 14-16 & 21-23

August 19 - 5:30 pm

BOARD MEETING - use back door; guests welcome.

September 10-13 & 17-20

INTO THE WOODS - Musical, by James Lapine, Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, Directed by Rick Dethlefsen.

September 13-14 - 7 pm

AUDITIONS for A FEW GOOD MEN directed by Lee Helder

September 20-21 - 7 pm

AUDITIONS for THE MUSICIANS OF BREMEN - family musical comedy directed by Ann Glenn

October 2-4 & 9-11

CHEKHOV LITE by Anton Chekhov, Directed by Bob Gras on RWT's BLACK BOX series


















October 17 - 8 pm

RIVERWALK SATURDAY NIGHT - Musical fun-fest assembled by Tom Heideman, with a variety of musicians, including Tom and Mary. Minimum donation \$10.

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SEASON 21

-  **Good Night Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)** - Comedy, by Ann Marie McDonald, Directed by Jeff Croff - **July 16-19 & 23-26** (auditions May 17-18)
-  **Thunderhoof and the Prince** Children's Musical by Fran Johnson, Music Yvonne Whitmore, Directed by Dan Pappas - **August 14-16 & 21-23** (auditions June 7-8)
-  **Into the Woods** - Musical, by James Lapine, Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, Directed by Rick Dethlefsen. **September 10-13 & 17-20** (auditions July 12-13)
-  **Chekhov Lite** by Anton Chekhov, Directed by Bob Gras - **October 2-4 & 9-11**
-  **Riverwalk Saturday Night** - Musical fun-fest assembled by Tom Heideman and featuring a variety of talented musicians, including favorites, Tom & Mary - **Saturday, October 17 at 8 pm** - Suggested minimum donation \$10.
-  **A Few Good Men** - Drama by Aaron Sorkin, Directed by Lee Helder (Stages of Law Series) **October 22-25 & Oct 29-November 1** (auditions September 13-14)
-  **The Bremen Town Musicians** Children's Musical by Stan Gill, Directed by Ann Glenn- **November 27-29 & December 4-6** (auditions September 20-21)
-  **The Doowops** 50's & 60's Musical Concert, Saturday, **December 12**, - 8 pm. All seats \$15.00.
-  **Christmas Special Event** - 8 pm. Dec. 19; 2 pm Dec. 20 Price TBA.
-  **Book of Days** - Mystery by Lanford Wilson, Directed by Philip Himebaugh - **January 14-17, 21-24** (auditions Nov. 29-30)
-  **Black History Special Event - Feb 5-7** - \$20.00
-  **The Cemetery Club** - Comedy by Ivan Menchell, Directed by Mary K. Hodges-Nees - **Feb 18-21 & 25-28** (auditions Dec. 13-14)
-  **The Watch List** - Drama by Eric Dawe, Directed by Eric Dawe - **March 5-7 & 12-14**
-  **Enchanted April** - Romantic Comedy by Matthew Barber, Directed by Mary Job - **March 18-21, & 25-28** (auditions Jan. 17-18)
-  **Singers on the Grand** - Musical Concert directed by Libby Brandon - **Saturday, April 10 at 8 pm and Sunday, April 11 at 2 pm**, Tickets are \$10.00 if reserved in advance, \$12.00 at the door
-  **Dragon Song** - Joint production with All-of-us Express Children's Theatre - **April 23-25 & April 30 - May 2** (audition info at allofusexpress.com)
-  **Size 8 Shorts** - by various authors, Directed by Rick Dethlefsen, Tom Ferris, Lee Helder & Bill Helder - **May 7-9, 14-16**

 **The Light in the Piazza** - Musical by Craig Lucas, Music and Lyrics by Adam Guettel, Directed by Jane Falion, **June 3-6 & 10-13** (auditions March 28-29)

 **TIMES:** 7:00 pm Thurs.; 8:00 pm Fri./Sat.; 2:00 pm Sun.

 **PLAYS:** Fri.-Sat.-Sun. \$14 (\$12 Student/Senior)
BARGAIN THURSDAYS: \$10 (\$8)

 **MUSICALS:** \$20 (\$18 Student/Senior)

 **CHILDREN'S SHOWS:** \$5 kids; \$7 adults aged 16+; 7:00 pm Fri.; 2:00 & 4:30 pm Sat.; 2 pm only Sun.

 **SPECIAL EVENT**

 **BLACK BOX SHOWS** at Riverwalk's Dart Studio Theatre
Black Box Stage • \$12 for all

Included in the Season Ticket; four plays and two musicals, just \$75!

Rothschilds cont. from page 1

and endearing entrepreneur behind Rothschild and Sons!

Mayer's loving wife, Gutele, is tenderly played by Colleen Bethea. The cornerstone on which he builds his familial and financial foundations, she gives him five sons (four in one song!), tempers his temper (though not his resolve) regarding anti-Semitism, and moderates his monetary concerns, reminding him, "We have enough. We have each other."

Joel Reynolds (Amshel), Dominic Redman (Solomon), Nic Roberts (Nathan), and Lexie Roberts (Jacob) sparkle as the young Rothschild boys, while Scott Larson, Simon Tower, Joseph Baumann, and Logan Emler, with Danny Bethea (Kalman), shine as their elder counterparts after a transition made mid-song.

While his brothers emigrate throughout Europe in search of financial advantage, Nathan heads for London to invest the family's ever-multiplying money. He eventually woos and weds the spirited Hannah Cohen, staged by Sarah Sonnenberg. While all five brothers fight for Jewish justice abroad, their parents stay home to battle the ghetto from within.

The text is "on the money" with a "wealth" of ageless aphorisms, advising: "There is no virtue in riches. There is none in poverty either. Only in the acts of man;" revealing: "War makes money, peace makes money, but money makes money most of all;" and warning: "You think your new power can change the world. It won't. It will only change you."

Two thumbs up for Tom Klunzinger in his two distinct renderings of two distinguished princes (William and Metternich) — in two

successive acts. He was simply "two much!" And two hands two-gether for Matt Lago, Rich Helder, and Patrick Monroe (vendors), Cameron Bethea and Scotty Arbour (urchins), and Matt Szymanski and Paul Gordon (bankers).

Additional acting credit to Jeff Massey (Joseph Fouche and Herries), Tony Zappa (Buderus), Alan Bloomfield (Blum), Lindsay Palinsky (pauper), and Mark Bethea (swing), as well as Theresa Spisak (Mrs. Kaufman), Mara Schaberg (Mrs. Segal), Laura Johnson (Mrs. Feldman), Donna Green (Mrs. Rosen), and Charlotte Rupert (Mrs. Greenberg).

On the technical end, kudos to those responsible for the set, scenery, and properties, for the sound, music, and lighting, and of course for the costuming! From the grand attire and courtly cadence of the European ballroom to the red-shifting and transcendent tension at the nightly closing of the Jewish ghetto, the atmosphere was tangible.

So thanks to Larry Savoie (master builder and technician), Bob Nees and Tim Stapleton (design technicians), Tim Fox (lighting design), Ray Kurtis and Melody Teodoro-Kurtis (properties and set dressing), Dan Moore (hair design), Javier Rivera (hair assistant), Ruth Jean (clarinet), Andrew Herrbach (trumpet), Jackie Bernott (flute), and Jesse Slocum (bass).

And congratulations to Jane Falion (director), Rich Helder (assistant director), Tom Ferris (producer), Roberta Otten (choreographer), James Geer (music director and keyboards), Val Lea (stage manager), Jane Falion (again!) and her four assistants (scenic design), Mary K. Hodges-Nees and her ten technicians (costuming!), and the full stage and running crews.

Bill Kennedy

RWT Season Tickets

Only \$75 for 4 plays and 2 musicals!

The first 100 Season Ticket buyers are automatically entered in a drawing to win a convenient **VIP PARKING SPOT!** When the winner calls to reserve theatre seats, a reservation is made for his/her car as well. Mike will put out the "VIP Parking" sign right outside the Riverwalk door!

- you save up to 32% over individual ticket prices, and avoid the \$1-per-ticket surcharge on credit card orders.
- season ticket coupons are *interchangeable*. (A couple could go to two plays and one musical using *one* season ticket.)
- season ticket holders get a 10% discount on any additional individual-show tickets they buy — bring your friends and relations!
- season ticket holders can make reservations *any* time; individual ticket buyers must wait until the on-sale date about six weeks before each show.

See Mike at the office — or go to RiverwalkTheatre.com

INTO THE WOODS

MUSICAL: by James Lapine, Lyrics, Stephen Soundheim

AUDITIONS: Sunday & Monday, July 12 & 13 at 7pm

SHOWS: Sept. 10-13 & 17-20, 2009, RWT Mainstage

DIRECTOR: Rick Dethlefsen

INTO THE WOODS weaves grown up versions of well-known fairy tales into the story of the Baker and his wife who have been cursed with childlessness by a witch. As the two of them struggle to fulfill the witch's demands and break the curse, they cross paths with a number of fairy tale characters who become involved in the quest. Along the way they each learn the impact of acting on their wishes without considering the consequences.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Little Red Riding Hood: Female, Mezzo, age 13-18, Supporting role

Rapunzel: Female, Soprano, age 18-30, Supporting role

Cinderella: Female, Soprano, age 17-26, Supporting role

Jack: Male, Tenor, age 15-24, Supporting role

Jack's Mother: Female, Soprano, age 35-55, Supporting role

Narrator: Male, Baritone, age 40-99, Supporting role

The Baker: Male, Baritone, age 28-40, Lead

The Baker's Wife: Female, Mezzo, age 26-38, Lead

The Witch: Female, Mezzo, age 25-99, Supporting role

Florinda: Female, Mezzo, age 16-25, Supporting role

Stepmother: Female, Mezzo, age 40-55, Supporting role

Wolf: Male, Baritone, age 25-50, Supporting role

Mysterious Man: Male, Baritone, age 40-99, Supporting role

Cinderella's Prince: Male, Baritone, age 25-50, Supporting role

Lucinda: Female, Mezzo, age 16-25, Supporting role

Snow White: Female, Spoken, age 18-30, Cameo

Sleeping Beauty: Female, Spoken, age 18-30, Cameo

Cinderella's Father: Male, Non-singing, age 40-55, Supporting role

Cinderella's Mother: Female, B flat-D, 40-55, Supporting role

Granny: Female, Non-singing, 50+, Supporting role

Giant's Wife: Offstage voice, Female, Age indeterminate

Auditioners should come prepared to read from the script, and bring a song to sing. (An accompanist will be provided) Wear comfortable clothes and shoes which will make movement about the stage easier. Some dance steps may be done as well.

Perusal scripts may be checked out from Mike at the Riverwalk office, Tuesdays - Fridays, 10 am - 5:30 pm. Call 482-5700 to check on availability.

Barneys continued from page 1

ible, Kerry Waters, and Patricia Smyka, *Monty*

Lead Actress/Play: Gini Larson, *The Dead*; Nominated: Carolyn Thornton, *Raisin*; Emily Himebaugh, *Born Yesterday*; Tanya Burnham, *Sherlock Holmes*; Kelly Gmazel, *Macbeth*

Lead Actress/Children's Show: Laura Johnson, *Jack and the Beanstalk*

Supporting Actor/Musical: Joseph Bauman, *The Rothschilds*; Nominated: Joe Quick and Jeff English, *Monty*; Sineh Wurie and Jace McCloy, *Monty*; Chad Dekatch and Mark Zussman, *Little Shop*

Supporting Actor/Play: Terry Jones, *Sherlock Holmes*; Nominated: Efiok Nwa, *Raisin*; Joseph Bauman, *Born Yesterday*; Michael Erwine, *Born Yesterday*; Alec Nagy, *The Dead*

Supporting Actress/Musical: Amanda Himebaugh, *The Full Monty*; Nominated: Kat Cooper, *Monty*, Sarah Sonnenberg, *Rothschilds*

Supporting Actress/Play: Elizabeth Cahimba, *Raisin in the Sun*

Supporting Actress/Children's Show: Marilyn Steegstra, *Jack and the Beanstalk*

Featured Actor/Musical: Ryan Fuller, *The Full Monty*; Nominated: Keith Wing, *Monty*; Mike Zamora, *Little Shop*

Featured Actor/Play: Philip Himebaugh, *Born Yesterday*; Nominated: Gary Mitchell, *Born Yesterday*; James Houska, and Joe Dickson, *Sherlock Holmes*; Eric D. Dawe, *Macbeth*

Featured Actress/Musical: Shantel Hamilton, *Little Shop of Horrors*; Nominated: Mandy Dallaire; Kelly Stuibie; Candance Stanfield, all from *Little Shop*.

Featured Actress/Play: Barbara Stauffer, *Born Yesterday*; Nominated: Tiffani Ferguson, *Born Yesterday*; Eve Davidson, *The Dead*

Featured Actress/Children's Show: Shannon Bonney, *Jack and the Beanstalk*

Ensemble Award: Scott Larson, Simon Tower, Logan Emlet,

Danny Bethea, *The Rothschilds*; Nominated: Bob Murrell, Charlotte Ruppert, Sarah Sonnenberg/Minstrels in *Beanstalk*

Director/Musical: Veronica Gracia-Wing, *The Full Monty*; Nominated: Stephanie Banghart, *Little Shop*; Jane Falion, *Rothschilds*

Director/Play: Susan Chmurynsky, *Born Yesterday*; Nominated: Addiann Hinds, *Sherlock Holmes*; Mary Job, *The Dead*; Eric Dawe, *Macbeth*

Director/Children's Show: Lee Helder, *Jack and the Beanstalk*

Musical Direction: Meredith Bowen and David Wiseman, *The Full Monty*; Nominated: Scott Stearns, *Little Shop*; Doug Austin, *Beanstalk*; Bill Henson, *The Dead*; James Geer, *Rothschilds*

Choreographer: Amanda Himebaugh, *The Full Monty*; Nominated: Kat Cooper and Amanda Himebaugh, *Little Shop*; Roberta Otten, *Rothschilds*

Set Design: Craig Mitchell Smith, *Born Yesterday*; Nominated: Jeff Boerger and Mark Mandenberg, *Monty*; Jay McCusker, *Little Shop*; Craig Mitchell Smith, *Sherlock Holmes*; Paul Marisch, *Beanstalk*; Craig Mitchell Smith, *Macbeth*; Mary Job, *The Dead*; Jane Falion, *Rothschilds*

Lighting Design: Ben Hancock, *The Full Monty*; Nominated: Tom Ferris, *Raisin*; Jack Hetherington, *Born Yesterday* and *Beanstalk*; Aaron Herrbach *Sherlock Holmes* and *Macbeth*; Tim Fox, *Rothschilds*

Costume Design: Mary K. Hodges-Nees, *The Rothschilds*; Nominated: Mandy Dallaire, *Monty*; Emily English, *Little Shop*; Marge Hetherington, *Born Yesterday*; Lee Helder, *Beanstalk*; Mary K. Hodges-Nees, *Sherlock Holmes*; Lark Burger, *The Dead*; Terri Lehman Carow, *Macbeth*

Sound Design: Patrick Monroe, *Macbeth*; Nominated: Ben Hancock *Monty*; Jeff Sand, *Born Yesterday*; Doug Austin, *Beanstalk*

Properties Design: Melody Teodoro-Kurtis and Ray Kurtis,

—Continued on page 4

AUDITIONS for

A FEW GOOD MEN

directed by
Lee Helder

Sun, & Mon,
Sept. 13 & 14,
7 pm

SHOWS:
Oct. 22 - Nov. 1

More info at
RiverwalkTheatre.com,
click "auditions"

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Actor — \$15-24, *Ripples*
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Star — \$500-999, *Ripples* plus program listing, 6 comp tickets and your name on a seat in the theatre

Angel — \$1000 or more, *Ripples* plus program listing, 12 comp tickets, your name on a theatre seat and on the donor board in the lobby

Membership is July through June. Send checks to
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Riverwalk Theatre

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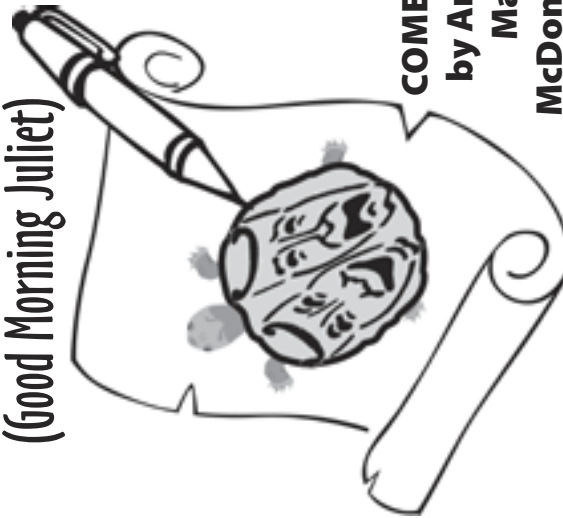
**Riverwalk was
a leader this year with
13 Pulsar and 14 Thespie awards;
check RiverwalkTheatre.com
and click "announcements"
for the listings!**

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Good Night Desdemona

(Good Morning Juliet)



COMEDY
by **Anne Marie McDonald**
Directed by Jeff Croff

What if 400 years of scholars were wrong and two of Shakespeare's most recognized tragedies were actually comedies? That's what the timid and awkward Constance Ledbelly finds herself exploring as she careens from Verona to Spain, seemingly transforming Shakespeare's canon into broadside comedies of mistaken identities and misplaced love.

July 16-19 & 23-26

7 pm Thursdays • 8 pm Fridays & Saturdays • 2 pm Sundays
Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays: \$14 adult, \$12 senior/student
BARGAIN THURSDAYS: \$10 adult, \$8 senior/student
Reservations: 482-5700 or at RiverwalkTheatre.com
228 Museum Dr., south off Mich. Ave. across from Lansing Center

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In these challenging economic times, Riverwalk needs member support more than ever. We get only about 60% of our operating revenue from ticket sales. *Memberships* help keep our theatre financially healthy. Join, or check the membership listing at the web site, RiverwalkTheatre.com - click "support" — or phone Mike at 482-5700 (membership categories, see p. 3) Send checks to Riverwalk Membership, P.O. Box 12249, Lansing, MI 48901. (Season Tickets, are also available on-line or at the RWT office.)

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Barneys, cont. from p. 3

The Rothschilds; Nominated: Leslie Arnell, *Monty*; Evon Anderson, *Raisin*; Merialice Jenson & Carol Ferris, *Little Shop*; Celia Ainslie, *Born Yesterday*; Sharon Straubel, *Beanstalk*; Carol Ferris, *Sherlock Holmes*; Lindsay Palinsky, *Macbeth*

Scenographer: Craig Mitchell Smith, *Born Yesterday*; Nominated: Mark Mandenberg, *Monty* and *Little Shop*, Mary K. Hodges-Nees & Bob Nees, *Raisin*; Diana Rochowiak, *Beanstalk*

Set Dressing: Melody Teodoro-Kurtis and Ray Kurtis, *The Dead*; Nominated: Diane Gracia-Wing, *Monty*; Evon Anderson and Wanda Gilkey, *Raisin*; Carol Ferris, *Sherlock Holmes*, Lindsay Palinsky, *Macbeth*

Backstage Awards: *Full Monty* - Amanda Himebaugh; *Raisin in the Sun* - Robin Duke and Pat Hoskins; *Little Shop* - Veronica Gracia Wing; *Born Yesterday* - Mike Pohnl; *Jack and the Beanstalk* - Merialice Jensen; *Sherlock Holmes* - James Houska; *The Dead* - Ray Kurtis; *Macbeth* - Mark Bethea; *The Rothschilds* - Val Lea

President's Award - Mike Pohnl

Howard Lancour Award - Patricia Smyka, *Little Shop of Horrors*