

INSIDE

THE TRAGEDY OF CARMEN

Page 2

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: ARTS EDUCATION

Page 2

BROADWAY ON MAIN STREET

Page 3

TRTC WISH LIST

Page 3

COME JOIN THE NEW TRTC GUILD

Page 3

2003 BENEFIT SETS RECORD

Tastes of the Mediterranean was the most successful benefit Two River Theatre Company has ever held. Netting over \$80,000 for the Company's operating budget, these funds will ensure another season of dynamic and challenging productions for TRTC's audience. TRTC is

Continued on page 4

PLAYS ANNOUNCED FOR 10TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

2003/2004 SEASON

The plays selected for the 2003/04 season are a celebration of live theatre that we hope will both enthrall and challenge our audience. We will present a 90-minute, modern adaptation of Bizet's classic, *The Tragedy of Carmen*, a musical tale of doomed love and violent passion (October 2 – 19). Next will be *Abigail's Party*, written by noted film director Mike Leigh (January 15 - February 1, 2004). Then, *Miss Julie*, Strindberg's fever-pitched battle of the sexes, ignites the stage March 18 – April 4, 2004. And to close the season (May 6 – 23, 2004), *A Life in the Theatre*, a witty journey behind the footlights, by Pulitzer Prize winning playwright David Mamet.

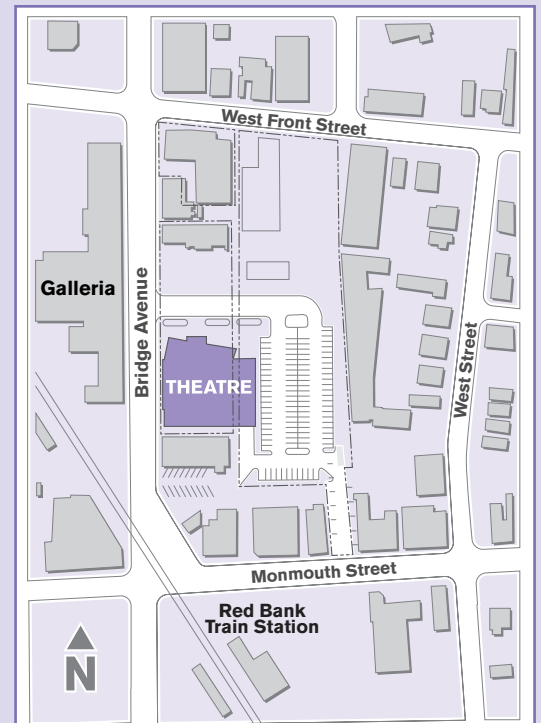
"For nine seasons we've balanced our selection of plays so that the slate would be not only entertaining theatre, but also an intellectually rewarding experience," said Artistic Director Jonathan Fox. "We think our audience will be intrigued by this tenth anniversary season, a mix of humor and drama, music and irony."

Carmen opens our season (for comments on *Carmen* see Mr. Fox's article on page 2), followed by Mike Leigh's *Abigail's Party*, a wildly successful dark comedy with a recent West End hit revival, that takes us back to the 70's, mini-skirts, and the Sex Pistols.

Continued on page 3

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!

We're about to begin construction of our new theatre building in Red Bank, with the groundbreaking set for the end of July or early August (we'll have photos of that event in the next issue of Two River Currents). The project should take approximately sixteen months to complete. During our production of *Stinkin' Rich* you may have seen the lobby display showing the architect's rendering of the building. However, we thought you might like to see the exact location of our new home. ~



THE TRAGEDY OF CARMEN

By Jonathan Fox, Artistic Director

Choosing what plays to present in a season is always a lively endeavor, with heated discussions around Two River Theatre Company's office, questions posed about the merits of a particular play, impassioned pleas to add a personal favorite ... and all the while we struggle to present wide-ranging choices and to keep within budget. We got to thinking about presenting a musical this season. It had been two years since our last musical, *Cookin' at the Cookery*, so the time felt right for another. After much consideration of several Broadway shows, we landed on one of our favorite musicals: *Carmen*.

Of course, some may stubbornly say that *Carmen* is an opera (and reputedly the world's most popular opera at that). But *Carmen* is arguably one of the first musicals ever written. George Bizet originally wrote *Carmen* as a "light opera" with spoken dialogue scenes between the songs. In fact, *Carmen* was not converted to "grand opera" until after Bizet's death, with the recitative passages written by Ernest Guiraud.

Oscar Hammerstein saw *Carmen*'s Broadway musical theatre potential when he set the story



Aaron Serotsky, last seen at TRTC in *Old Wicked Songs*, is set to play the love obsessed Don Jose in *Carmen*.

in the American South, wrote new lyrics, and called it *Carmen Jones*. The story and music of *Carmen* have been embraced by high art – ballet, flamenco, film, painting – and have popped up in the most pop of culture: on "Gilligan's Island,"

"The Simpsons," Pepsi commercials, and even an ice-skating show, "Carmen on Ice."

Based on an 1845 story by Prosper Mérimée, *Carmen* is a fiery tale of violent passion, of the conflict between duty and desire and between morality and sin. It is the ageless story of a man who destroys his life for the woman he loves ... and then destroys the woman he loves. The upright and handsome soldier Don Jose is no match for the gypsy's siren song. Bewitched by *Carmen*, he deserts the army, commits murder (several times), and follows his desire into the darkness of immorality. Mérimée surely knew that the Latin word *Carmen*, from which we get the word "charm," means "a song of evil witchcraft."

Like Hammerstein before him, the renowned theatre director Peter Brook also deleted the opera's recitative passages in his 90-minute adaptation, and added text from the original novella. Two River Theatre Company presents this adaptation, in a translation by Sheldon Harnick (librettist of *Fiddler on the Roof* and *She Loves Me*). With Aaron Serotsky (from last season's *Old Wicked Songs*) playing the love-obsessed Don Jose, we're thrilled to begin our 10th anniversary season with this beloved "musical." ~

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: ARTS EDUCATION

As we prepare for our move to Red Bank, TRTC has made a major commitment and rededication of our organization to the education of our community. In the last year we have expanded our Educational Advisory Board, launched a new arts access initiative aimed at Monmouth County's most economically disadvantaged youths, and hired Guy as a new Managing Director with twenty years of arts education experience.

Guy Gsell has taught theatre arts at the high school and college level and served as Staff Designer and Technical Director at Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey. He has

developed and run theatre workshops in public schools for The Carpenter Center in Long Beach, California, The Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, and NJPAC. In 1997, he was a teaching artist in residence at The Bob Hope Cultural Center in Palm Desert, California. Guy was Production Supervisor and Development Director from 1994-2002 for The Paper Bag Players, America's most honored theatre company for young audiences.

With Guy on board, we are confident that TRTC's educational programs will grow and flourish. ~



Guy Gsell

BROADWAY ON MAIN STREET

Two River Theatre Company is known for its ability to attract Broadway actors to Monmouth County. Last season alone, we had half a dozen Broadway veterans in residence at the Algonquin, including Tony nominee David Rogers. Two River actors are as good as any you'll find in a New York theatre.

The actors who've shared our stage have gone on to wonderful and varied careers. It's one of our great pleasures to sit in a Broadway theatre, or turn on the television, and see a familiar face: Lisa McMillan from *A Delicate Balance* on an afternoon Soap, or Kristen Lee Kelly from our *Heidi Chronicles* starring in *RENT*, or *Cookin' at the Cookery's* Debra Walton, or Ann Duquesnay, who won a Tony in Broadway's *Bring in Da Noise! Bring in Da Funk*.

Federico Castelluccio, a Two River alumnus, is remembered for his wonderfully passionate performance in our production of Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge* in 1996. Federico can now be seen Sunday nights on



Federico Castelluccio

HBO's hit series *The Sopranos*. As the lovesick Neapolitan enforcer, Furio, he impressed the audience and the critics as well. He's so popular that he has numerous websites and his own fan club.

Congratulations Federico! ~

COME JOIN THE NEW TRTC GUILD

TRTC volunteers are organizing an official support Guild with the following mission: "To support all aspects of the Two River Theatre Company, including Audience Services, Marketing and Production; and to encourage others in the community to attend TRTC productions and participate in the Guild."

"Not-for-profit theatre companies always need more volunteers," said Ron Steelman, TRTC

Director of Marketing. "We have a long list of interesting ways to participate, including helping to produce a series of Subscriber Parties this next season."

If you'd like to learn more about how you can help TRTC continue to produce exciting theatre, please contact Ron Steelman at 732-345-1400. ~

WISH LIST

MAKE AN IN-KIND DONATION TO TRTC

TRTC accepts in-kind donations of products and new/used equipment that we can use on stage, in our shop, and in our offices. We are a not-for-profit organization and your generous in-kind donation will be tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. If you would like to donate any of the items listed below on our Wish List, please contact TRTC Development Associate Suzanne Longley at 732-345-1400.

Audience Services

New Copier

Business Office

Electronic Typewriter

Development Office

Letter Size File Cabinet

Props Shop

12" Lathe

14" Band Saw

Metal Shelving

Antiques

Furniture

Chandeliers - Lamps

Costume Shop

Industrial Sewing Machine

Industrial Steam Iron

Dress & Suit Forms (all sizes)

Scene Shop

10' Cargo Van



PLAYS ANNOUNCED FOR 10TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON (Continued from page 1)

Wonderfully satiric, and at times hilariously funny, *Abigail's Party* is a witty portrait of a suburban hell. Academy Award nominee Mike Leigh directed the highly regarded films *Secrets and Lies* and *Topsy-Turvy*.

Strindberg, the complete male chauvinist, opposed women's suffrage and social equality. Hence, his *Miss Julie* is a most politically incorrect play. But bad politics sometimes leads to great art,

to highly charged drama. A disillusioned young girl flirts her way into the bed of her father's valet and it all ends with what happens when the lovers panic at the thought of the consequences. Seen through today's eyes, it is clear why men, the masters who used to wear the boots, ultimately had to share power.

A Life in the Theatre, David Mamet's poisonously funny ode to an actor's life, takes us behind the

scenes. It is the story of two actors, one a veteran of the stage, one a relative newcomer. The backstage personal politics and rivalry is very often more interesting than the onstage drama.

All performances will be at the historic Algonquin Arts Theatre located at 171 Main Street in Manasquan. ~

2003 BENEFIT SETS RECORD *(Continued from page 1)*

extremely grateful to those individuals and businesses who supported the 2003 Benefit and to the volunteers who spent so many hours planning this fabulous evening. Thank you all and we hope to see you next year!

Over two hundred people attended the June 27th event, held at "Navesink Hills" the beautiful estate of Tom and Kim Widener in Middletown. The food, featuring the creations of Nicholas Harary, of Restaurant Nicholas, included a raw bar and fabulous passed hors d'oeuvres. Artisanal Cheese Center provided a range of cheeses from Mediterranean countries and Colavita donated an array of classic

olive oils for tasting. Other Mediterranean fare included Italian Pastries by J&M Bakery and Spanish Meatballs from Bistro Olé in Asbury Park.

The Widener's beautiful Italianate gardens created the perfect setting, with the magical strings and percussion of the Steve Calafati Trio in the background. Even the thunderstorms that had been forecast held off. The evening began with a wine tasting class led by Len Pickell, President of the James Beard Foundation, and good friend of TRTC. Len's expertise and intimate knowledge of wines made it a privilege to be a part of this portion of the evening.

Despite the heat, all the guests truly enjoyed themselves, with many people commenting that they thought it was the best wine tasting event we've ever done.

A silent auction offered many one-of-a-kind items and the live auction sparked a round of good natured and lively bidding. Two dinners in the board room of the Beard House in New York City, a walk-on part in a Two River Theatre production, and dinner for ten hosted by Sevi and Marianne Avigdor, with wine from the cellar of Patrick Scire brought in over \$21,000.00. ~



(l-r) Michael & Diane Gooch, Enilda & Paul Sansone



(l-r) Judy Eisenberg, Kim Widener, Joan Rechnitz, Lew Eisenberg, Tom Widener

Raffle Winners

The winners of the raffle for his-and-her Cartier watches were Mr. & Mrs. Jay Herman. Unfortunately the Hermans were unable to attend the benefit. They were babysitting for their grandson, whose parents, Todd and Lanae Herman did attend the event. On arriving home, Lanae and Todd presented his parents with their "payment" for babysitting. If you divide the value of the watches by four hours of work, that's roughly \$681.25 an hour. Some expensive babysitters!

NEWS FROM TWO RIVER THEATRE COMPANY
CURRENTS
TWO RIVER

www.tworivetheatre.org

Fax (732) 345-1414

Phone (732) 345-1400

P.O. Box 8035 Red Bank, NJ 07701

TWO RIVER
10TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON
THEATRE COMPANY

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Red Bank, NJ
Permit No. 466