

READING COMMUNITY PLAYERS

Pennsylvania's Third Oldest Community Theater ... Founded In 1920



THE CALLBOY • NEWSLETTER FOR READING COMMUNITY PLAYERS • November 2011 ISSUE

November Dates to Remember:

November 18-20.....*The House Of Yes* at RCP theatre
November 21.....RCT monthly membership meeting, 7:30pm at VF complex
November 22.....Tech seminar with Joe Majesky at the theatre, \$5
November 24.....**Happy Thanksgiving!**
November 27, 28.....Auditions for *My Name Is Ossian Sweet*, 3PM, 7PM

• Curtain Call reviews RCP's *THE HOUSE OF YES* •

Another great review by The Pottstown Mercury's Cheryl Thornburg. Thanks, Cheryl, for reviewing our show and all local theatre productions as well.

RCP's 'The House of Yes' is a positively devious and delightful dark comedy

By Cheryl Thornburg • <http://curtaincallpottsmmerc.blogspot.com/>

If you like your comedy on the dark side, then Reading Community Players current production, "The House of Yes" could be right up your alley -- actually I should say right near THE Kennedy estate.

Set in the Pascals' well-to-do home in suburban Washington D.C. on Thanksgiving Day two decades after JFK was assassinated, the play focuses on a family that takes the word dysfunctional to a whole new level.

From the onset, it is easy to see that Jackie O, the daughter who has recently been released from a mental hospital, is the ringmaster in this bizarre household. She is used to getting her way, and when she doesn't, there's hell to pay.

Played to creepy perfection by Gabrielle Lewis, Jackie O has to be one of the most devious and deviant characters I've seen on stage in a long time. Her obsession with JFK's assassination, right down to dressing up as the real Jackie Kennedy, shows a deeply disturbed young woman. (Kudos to costume designer Debbi Silas -- the pink suit and pillbox hat are right on.) But that just scratches the surface of her depravity -- her obsession with her twin brother, Marty, and their longstanding sexual relationship, are at the heart of the conflict inside the house while a hurricane rages outside.

Jon Browning, veteran of many local musical theater productions, shows he's much more than a great voice. He brings a sensitivity to the conflicted young man who is trying to break free from the unnatural relationship with his twin sister and just wants to be "normal." When he arrives at the family home in the middle of the storm with his new fiancée, Lesly, tensions arise that are palpable. Kelly Elizabeth Schmehl plays Lesly, the young woman who doesn't meet the family's standards. Schmehl is particularly good in her interchanges with Jackie O as the two trade snappy retorts:

Lesly to Jackie: I don't think you're insane, I think you're just spoiled.

Jackie: If everyone around here is going to start telling the truth, I'm going to bed.



Seated: Kathy Newville; from left, Josh Austin, Gabrielle Lewis, Jon Browning & Kelly Schmehl.



And playwright Wendy MacLeod’s dialogue is what makes this play special. Laughter ripples through the audience as actors deliver one great line and comeback after another.

Getting some of the best of those lines is Kathy Newville as Mrs. Pascal, mother of the twins and their younger brother, Anthony. And Newville makes the most of them, with perfect timing to allow the audience to savor each one.

As an appetizer, when accused of spying on her children, she replies, “A mother doesn’t spy. A mother pays attention.” Rounding out this quirky family is Josh Austin as the closer-to-normal younger brother, Anthony. Austin seems very natural on stage, bringing a believability to his character in the midst of the more damaged family members.

It is hard to imagine that a play with incest as a major part of its plot could be funny, but “The House of Yes” is just that -- a very dark comedy that explores amorality -- and as MacLeod herself described is “about people who have never been said no to.”

When director Ray Rhoads mentioned in his opening speech that the cast had had less than two weeks to rehearse together, I braced myself for a disappointing experience -- but Rhoads and his cast delivered a polished and satisfying performance -- one that is worth your time and money. As mentioned before the play includes issues, including incest, that make it not suitable for younger audiences.

• *My Name is Ossian Sweet* Audition Dates •

This play, written by Gordon Bennett, Professor Emeritus at Eastern University, will be presented as a reader’s theatre piece for Black History Month. The show will be performed on February 17, 18 and 19. Bennett’s play is based on the true story of Ossian Sweet, a black medical doctor, who moves his family into a whites only neighborhood in Detroit. The year is 1925. An unruly mob approaches the house with the aim of forcing the Sweets out of the house and the neighborhood. In the chaos, Sweets younger brother fires a gun. Two white men are shot, one dies, the other is injured. The Sweet family is arrested and put on trial. Friends of the family persuade Clarence Darrow to lead the defense team that pursues an acquittal for theSweets.

Roles include:

- Ossian Sweet.....Mid to late twenties
- Gladys Sweet.....Ossian’s wife, early to mid twenties
- Henry Sweet, Sr.....Ossian’s Father, at middle age and older
- Dora Sweet.....Ossian’s Mother, middle age
- Henry Sweet, Jr.....Ossian’s younger brother
- Clarence Darrow.....Defense attorney, sixties
- Prosecutor Toms.....Leading the prosecution of the Sweets, middle age
- Judge Murphy.....Judge in the trial
- Inspector Shuknecht.....Key witness for the prosecution, thirties

Additional African-American and Caucasian actors will also be needed for the ensemble. **Auditions are scheduled for Sunday, November 27 at 3PM and Monday, November 28 at 7PM** in the theatre, 403 North 11th Street, Reading.

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• General Membership Meeting •

Please plan to attend the Membership Meeting on Tuesday, December 13. Members will vote on the new Season:

SHOW	DATES	DIRECTOR
My Name is Ossian Sweet.....	February 17-25.....	RuthMartelli
Leading Ladies.....	April 20-29.....	TBA
The Pirate's Life for Me.....	June 23-30.....	Debbie Silas
Angel Street (Gaslight).....	August 17-26.....	Bruce McLean
War of the Worlds.....	October 19-28.....	Pat Perfect

The 2013 and 2014 seasons will follow this format. Please give us your feedback prior to your vote at the December meeting. And vote in the new Board!

Your slate of candidates for next year are:

President.....	Ruth Martelli
Vice-President.....	Lizz Taylor
Secretary.....	Kim Richards (her surname name will change after her marriage in November)
Treasurer.....	Jodi Gibbs
Business Manager.....	Pamm Savage
Membership.....	Diann Stewart
Tech.....	Joseph Majesky
Production.....	Pat Perfect
Publicity.....	Celeste Montgomery
Backstage Manager.....	Kevin Wade
House.....	Debbi Silas
Web/Graphic Design.....	Mark Martelli

• Wish List •

The theatre is in need of many things, but chief among them is the following wish list. If you can donate any of the following, give us a call.

- Volunteers to help Joe organize the tech space!
- Gift cards for Lowes, Home Depot, etc.
- Laptops for use in the box office and sound booth
- Paper products

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READING COMMUNITY PLAYERS 2011 SEASON

HATS

Directed by Ruth Martelli
February 19 & 20

A LITTLE PRINCESS

Directed by Debbi Silas
June 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

Directed by Bruce McLean
September 23, 24, 25, 30, October 1, 2

DOUBT

Directed by Bruce McLean
March 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20

FAME

Directed by Hope O'Pake
July 29, 30, 31, August 5, 6, 7

HOUSE OF YES

Directed by Ray Rhoads
November 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20

www.rcptheatre.org



Reading Community Players
403 North 11th Street
P.O. Box 13425
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