



CTAM
Community Theatre Association of Michigan

CALLBOARD

July 2021

Peterson wins Best Tech at AACTfest awards

Although saddened to report that 'our' show, *Jerry's Brain*, written by J. R. Spaulding, Jr., didn't win any acting awards at the American Association of Community Theatre national festival, we are proud as punch that our own Jamie Peterson won the Best Technical Direction Award! Hip-hip-hooray! Jamie is CTAM treasurer.

Players de Noc from Escanaba was selected as one of the twelve nationwide competitors in the first-ever virtual competition. Each production was filmed on their home stage by the same film production crew. The judges and virtual attendees then watched that filmed version at the same time.



Jamie Peterson

Players de Noc incorporated technology into every aspect of the performance. Utilizing seven moving and stationary cameras, five computers, three high powered projectors and three 120" screens on stage, they embraced the marriage of live and virtual theatre like never before.

Deemed a huge success, the first-ever virtual competition would never have seen the light of day without our

own Mary Jo DeNolf, the AACT2021 Production Manager (from her basement with three screens to keep it all straight) and Jill Patchin who handled just about everything else as Corporate Partners Manager for AACT!

Right is a photo of the dynamic duo having their morning coffee (at a previous AACTfest in Gettysburg!) Also very involved in AACTfest on the technical side were Michiganders JR Bornemann, Chuck Goddeeris and Marcus Chapman, who also worked from their homes to assure that everything went smoothly for the virtual AACT conference.





**Community Theatre
Association of Michigan**

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Callboard

Editor..... Mary Lou Britton

This is the official newsletter of the Community Theatre Association of Michigan, issued monthly to all group affiliates and individual members with e-mail addresses on record. Distribution is by e-mail with a link to the newsletter on the association website. Back issues are available on the association website. Correspondence to the **Callboard** should be sent to maryloubritton@gmail.com. Updated e-mail and postal addresses are maintained by the Administrator and should be sent to CTAMthrives@gmail.com.

Reasons you may not get that part!

Some are in your control, some are not!



- ☆ Someone else gave an interpretation that was closer to what the director wanted.
- ☆ Someone else was better prepared at auditions.
- ☆ Directors look for different things, this time they may (must) have been looking for something different for that role.
- ☆ Another actor was physically better suited for the part.
- ☆ Could have cast any one of a number of people for some roles, but had to match them up with others in the cast.
- ☆ It is like fitting parts of a puzzle together; some pieces fit while some have to go somewhere else in the puzzle.
- ☆ The director wanted a certain mix of physical characteristics among the cast.
- ☆ The director was unable to get you to deliver what he or she wanted to see.
- ☆ You're an unknown quantity; the director doesn't know what he or she will get.
- ☆ Based on past productions, you have difficulty remembering your lines.
- ☆ You have a reputation for being difficult to work with.
- ☆ You are perceived as unreliable, based on past productions.



CTAM Calendar of Events

Sept. 20-25, 2021	CTAM Virtual Fall Conference
Sept. 22-25, 2022	CTAM Fall Conference @ Treetops Resort



Bay City mounts *Godspell* outdoors

Bay City Players production of *Godspell* is the most demanding show we have directed since doing *Annie Get Your Gun* in Kentucky with real horses in a never-before-used horse arena. Covid restrictions and a large outdoor venue raised questions and concerns we had not confronted before.

We cast the show in March because we thought restrictions would mean very restricted rehearsals. As it turned out, restrictions started to ebb and we were able to involve more people at a time—but with a rehearsal schedule from March until performances July 15-18, we lightened it with fewer rehearsals in a week and long weekends.

Our first concern was the venue. The production will be performed in the newly remodeled performance shell in Wenona Park, an outdoor venue, to accommodate Covid. It had been used for concerts for years, but stage productions were rare. And in the remodeled shell, so much was still unknown. Additional concerns included the venue is twice the size of Players' stage, and we needed portable staging since concerts were scheduled before our time and the stage is unsecured at night.

The crown of the shell rises a good thirty feet above the stage floor. So, flats were out. But the crown is supported with four brick pillars on either side, and we incorporated them into our visuals by placing collapsible wagons against them with cube seating on them. A ten-foot stair unit was placed center as principal focus and performing area. A banner hung twenty feet above the rear of the stage with logo and production credits lowers the vertical sightline. The five-piece band is almost out of view up stage, but micing the band as well as actors in the improved acoustics of the shell will send out *Godspell*, loud and clear.

Casting was unusual. The script usually uses ten people, a small number in such a large space.

However, the script points out larger numbers have

been used in previous productions. So, we were looking for more than ten, even though it would involve hours of reassigning dialogue and music. Auditions were by video: remember they were in March with high restrictions. You don't get to see much in the way of movement or physical picture, but the energy and personality of the performer takes on new dimension. It had been a full year since anyone had been performing, and the videos were so sincere, we cast all who auditioned. Our final cast of eighteen has proven ideal for the venue.

We think America as a whole can use the teachings of love, harmony, and peace that are the core of *Godspell*. So, we are costuming all actors to suggest people prominent in our culture: a police officer, fire fighter, doctor, nurse, serviceman, student, clergy, even a bag lady—as well as ten others. No one performs as their costume suggests but, instead, as Americans working together in harmony and love.

—Leeds Bird, director, and Kevin Cole, music director





Highlights of AACTfest available

Don't miss out on the exciting opportunity to still see all the fabulous keynotes, workshops and adjudications from AACT Fest 2021! They had an amazing line-up of classes for the festival, which you can still access through July 20th by registering online at the reduced cost of \$150. That may seem like a lot but completely worth it; they have more than 50 workshops and presentations from supremely qualified individuals (well over 60 hours of content!). Not only that but you also get a glimpse of what an adjudication looks like - you can see the festival production adjudications but not the actual performances. It's a great wealth of information and available to you by registering at this link: <https://aact.org/aactfest-2021>

Owosso moves outside for the summer

Owosso Community Players at the Lebowsky Center for the Performing Arts in Owosso held their first outdoor summer performances of *ICONS: A Musical Review* in June at Fortitude Farms. Fortitude Farms & Events is an huge complex in Owosso — a former golf course — that offers a variety of activities outdoors — from weddings to concerts or a 5K race to a corn maze/pumpkin patch.

“It was a smash! Great singers and dancers and music and weather and atmosphere and fun! Also, great attendance from the community, pleased to see us up and performing again,” according to CTAM Board member Ruthann Liagre.

“Our next show, *Pop Up on Park*, will be a concert held outdoors next to our theatre in downtown Owosso, July 22-24. The street (Park!) will be closed for the concert, so let the good times roll!

“Our last show this summer will be *Head over Heels, The Musical*, August 11-15, again at Fortitude Farms.”



SPECIAL NOTICE

Monthly list of Michigan productions to resume in August!

Now that Covid restrictions are opening up for Michiganders, it's time for us to revive our monthly list of shows being offered by our affiliate groups.

Please send a list of your shows to the Editor at maryloubritton@gmail.com. Please include the name of your group, name of the play, and your opening and closing dates! (Also please indicate if this is a youth production and/or being offered in your second stage space.)

Are you working on your award nomination?



We're just checking to be sure that you are working on your award nominations, due September 1. The Board is specifically looking for nominees for the following:

Robert A. McKenna Award

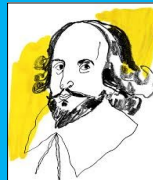
For long-term involvement in Michigan and local community theatre.

Dorothy Arnett Volunteer Service Award

For volunteer involvement in your group for more than ten years. Individuals and/or couples are eligible for nomination.

If you have any questions, please contact our Awards Chair Michael J. Wisniewski at mwisn62@gmail.com.

Playwright's Corner



Summer is the perfect time for sitting on the patio with an adult beverage and letting your creative juices flow. You just might be able to create a CTAM playwriting contest winner! The 2022 contest will open January 1st. Get on with it!



THIS year's plays are in the hands of the judges, being read and evaluated. The results will be announced at the CTAM Fall Conference in late September.



Just a few days until the first of four virtual playwriting workshop sessions offered by Grosse Pointe Theatre and starting Saturday, July 10. Only \$25 for all four sessions, this summer/fall series will guide you through completion of a ten-minute play. Go to their website at gpt.org for more information and to register.

AACT Youth Conference:

Building the next generation of arts leaders through the power of theatre
The AACT Youth Theatre Conference is a week-long opportunity for youth to discover paths to leadership in their community theatres. That path could be through acting, directing, technical theatre, stage management, marketing or another avenue of interest. This dynamic virtual conference is open to students ages 12-18.

Work with other youth from around the country

Attendees will be divided into subgroups and work with an AACT intern to develop unique ideas on inclusion and equity within their home theatres, and around the country. These ideas/proposals will be presented to the other groups and a representative from each will be invited to present the proposal to the AACT Board of Directors.

July 12-16, 2021

10-2 pm (Central) daily via Zoom
Cost - \$100

(Space is limited, registration deadline is July 11.) Go to aact.org for more information on this unique conference.



Don't Panic!

*Monthly musings by
Chuck Goddeeris*



Holy moly! Michigan is opening to full capacity! Battle stations, battle stations! It looks like theatres finally have an opportunity to reopen their doors to full capacity so the flood gates should open soon for people to get back on stage and in auditoriums to enjoy shows.

The hottest topic seems to be vaccinations: Should you require them and of whom?

Based on what I've seen in my area and heard from a few other organizations, I strongly recommend you require all of your volunteers, cast and crew to be vaccinated. They are your first line of defense in safety. Although having the vaccination doesn't guarantee you won't possibly have an outbreak in your production, it does mean it highly minimizes your risk of having to quarantine, cancel or postpone a performance.

I would not recommend requiring your patrons to be vaccinated. Why the difference? Requiring your patrons will more than likely open a can of worms and can create undue friction. Most people wanting to be in or work on shows will have gotten vaccinated in preparation of this moment. However, your patrons on the other hand are typically more stubborn in their ways, both good and bad. As long as you can guarantee your production on stage and off stage is at maximum safety, then you've done your best. You are providing the patron an opportunity to see a live performance and it is ultimately up to them what they want to do as part of the contractual agreement in buying a ticket.

If you take nothing away from this article, then I challenge you to strongly consider the following: Whatever your organization decides, make sure it is communicated on your website, on your social media, etc. Most importantly make sure the policy is clear at auditions, because if you don't state that you require it, even if you do, most

people will assume it doesn't matter and that you don't need a vaccine. The last thing you want is someone showing up for an audition or to purchase a ticket for a show only to find out you won't let them in because they are not vaccinated. Those people will have a negative experience, cause a stink, and let at least five of their friends know. Re-establishing a good reputation is ten times harder than recovering from a negative experience that has tarnished your organization's reputation. It always takes time to re-establish confidence from potential talent and patrons, so think every scenario through and make sure you've planned for every option in the decision tree.

Overall, communication will be critical moving forward. Be clear, be concise. The patrons that want to see live theatre, especially indoors, will be ready for you so do your best to provide the safest environment for them.

If your organization is still hesitant in re-opening right away, or just ill-prepared for the quick change in direction, then please don't rush back. Make sensible, methodical decisions and select shows that make the most sense for your organization. Don't rush back for the sake of rushing back. Take time to hit the reset button on your organization and build for healthy longevity. There will be a lot of theatres re-opening with plenty of opportunities to be in shows and see shows, so make sure you set yourselves up for the most success beyond this coming year.



Composite of the Broadway shows ready to re-open!

The Scoop on Scripts

By Tara Western



How happy are we that community theatre is returning? Are you making plans to see some theatre? Do it!

Dramatists' Publishing's **Outside Mullingar** ©2014 by John Patrick Shanley is a romantic drama with two men and two women. Set in Ireland on two neighboring cattle/sheep farms, spanning 2008-2013, the story explores the complications of family and love. The set includes two farm kitchens, Tony's bedroom, and "outside". First, we meet Tony, 75, and his son, Anthony, 42, just returned from the funeral of their closest neighbor, Christopher Muldoon. When Aoife, 70, Muldoon's widow, arrives the conversation turns to the future of the farms. Aoife, now a widow, only has Rosemary, 40. Tony, declares that he doesn't plan to leave the farm to Anthony as he is angry that he never married and feels he's too much of a dreamer to sustain the farm. Tony feels that he "owes" the farm a worthy inheritor, and Anthony is not worthy. Later, Rosemary, Aoife's daughter, and Anthony, two lonesome, middle-aged souls, argue about life's purpose: "flying" or doing your duty. A year later, both Tony and Aoife are gone. Years go by. One rainy night Rosemary bullies Anthony into her house where they talk for fourteen pages (!). The two introverts finally believe that they can make a life together. This play has so many beautiful and funny moments. Tony's death bed confession about not loving his wife, breaks your heart, but resonates with truth. He tells how "the want and loneliness" was in him as he "looked at people like they were work". Shanley's work includes intense discussions of life and death, and an indi-



vidual's purpose versus family obligations. The dialogue is true-to-life, poetic at times, but not flowery, with many truly funny moments.

Aboveboard by Peter Bloedel and Emily Kimball, published by Playscripts ©2017, is a contemporary romantic comedy, 100 to 115 minutes long. The cast of three men and three women come together in Nick's NYC apartment. All the characters' ages, but one, are early to late twenties; Rosa, the cleaning lady, can be 40s-50s. The plot is somewhat farce-like with many twists and turns. But the theme, in my humble opinion is: for true love, **wait** for the **right** person. Nick kind of likes Jessica. Marnie, who was engaged to Alex, who dumped her, goes to great lengths to win him back. Jessica and Milo are immediately smitten. In the end, Nick and Marnie realize they are a match. How this comes about: Marnie,

who cleans the apartments with Rosa, has been entering Nick's apartment thru a kitchen cupboard. She meets Alex there, trying to get him back, and is squatting in Nick's apartment until she gets on her feet. Nick needs to find who is stealing his food. Nick finds that Marnie is the intruder, but he comes to have feelings for her. And Marnie for him. Milo, Nick's wacky neighbor, is a hoot, focusing on a career as a magician/escapologist. Great moments with him in a straight-jacket!

This upper middle class NYC apartment has a living room and kitchen. Upstage, a hallway leads to an off-stage bathroom and bedroom. A closet next to the front door has a bar under a shelf which Milo destroys, practicing an escape maneuver. A TV, couch, and source of music are also needed. The kitchen must have a visible refrigerator and the illusion, at least, of a microwave. How does Marnie get into Nick's apartment? One set of high cabinet doors leads to a "person-sized" space. Marnie steps on the counter to get into the kitchen. Did I say Marnie should be agile? Fun show with heart. 13+