



NEWS RELEASE

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USI announces the 2003-04 theatre season

Building on a strong 2002-03 season, during which the University of Southern Indiana theatre program received positive reviews from the American College Theatre Festival, USI announces the 2003-04 season.

Opening in October will be Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, one of the most significant plays of the last century. A famous work of the Nobel Prize-winning playwright's illustrious career, *Waiting for Godot* uses comical wordplay, slapstick physical comedy, and vaudevillian characters to explore the ultimate questions of existence. Imaginatively reconceived by Elliot Wasserman, theatre director, and Richard Kuykendall, scenic designer, "the quintessential play of the twentieth century" will make new connections with the new millennium.

In November, USI Theatre will present its first musical in four years with *A....My Name is Alice*, conceived by Joan Micklin Silver and Julianne Boyd. This award-winning, funny, touching, sophisticated, and bawdy musical revue about the many roles of modern women features 20 lively musical numbers mixed with vignettes both comic and serious and a sprinkling of tongue-in-cheek poetry. Directed by USI newcomer John Berst with sets by USI senior Kyle Andres, *A....My Name is Alice* is recommended for women who can laugh at themselves and the men who love them.

Coming in February is *Loot* by Joe Orton. A dark, witty, and outrageous farce by the infamous bad boy of the British theatre, *Loot* features a murderous and seductive nurse, a bumbling detective with a mean streak, and a bank robber who cannot tell a lie. Nothing is sacred, not even a mother's corpse, as Orton lampoons church, state, and all things middle-class. Not recommended for children or those

easily offended, *Loot* will be directed by Wasserman with sets by Douglas Hubbell, associate professor of theatre.

Closing the season in April will be the classic British comedy *Charley's Aunt* by Brandon Thomas. A worldwide favorite since 1892, the well-known plot begins when college boys Charley and Jack invite their girlfriends to visit them at Oxford. A chaperone is, of course, a necessity and the boys recruit Charley's aunt to provide the requisite feminine adult presence. But when the formidable old lady cancels her visit, the boys force a chum into a dress and wig and the masquerade succeeds, until Charley's aunt shows up after all. The frothy Victorian fun will be directed by Berst with sets by Hubbell.

"Every show is a type of comedy," said Wasserman. "We open with an absurdist comedy (*Godot*), and then move to a satire about the very real situation of women in our society. *Loot* is a dark farce filled with crazy, unforgettable characters. We close our season with *Charley's Aunt*, an effervescent situational comedy. Audiences will start our season with a chuckle and by the season's end, they'll be slapping their knees. Yet each and every one of these plays has a message and theme worthy of a university audience. Each play can be said to pose the question, 'which is truly comic--man or the world he lives in?' Regardless of the answer, we leave the theatre redeemed and cheered by our capacity to laugh."

Waiting for Godot will be produced in the Helen Mallette Studio Theatre on campus at USI. The flexible "black box" theatre is an intimate setting (seating 100) that Wasserman feels is perfectly suited for his production. All other plays will be presented at the USI Theatre at 3001 Igleheart Avenue.

Waiting for Godot runs October 8 – 11 and 15 – 19, with *A...My Name is Alice* on the boards November 12 -15 and 19 – 23. February 18 – 21 and 25 – 29 are the dates for *Loot* with *Charley's Aunt* closing the season April 14 – 17 and 21 – 25. Performance times for all productions are 7 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, and 2 p.m. on Sundays.

Subscribers may see all four shows for the price of three. Subscription prices are \$27 for adults, \$21 for seniors (60+) or students, and \$9 for USI students with a valid ID. Ticket prices for individual performances are \$9 for adults, \$7 for seniors and students, and \$3 for USI students. Tickets are now available by phone at 812/422-3970.

School matinees also are available. USI Theatre offers area schools the opportunity to bring student groups to special matinee performances of some productions at a price of \$5 per student. Currently, matinees are planned for *Waiting for Godot* on October 15 and for *Charley's Aunt* on April 21. For more information call 812/465-1668.

Like the University itself, the USI Theatre program is growing in numbers and acclaim. With less than six majors in 1980, the program this fall welcomed 19 freshmen as new theatre majors, joining the current pool of 31 majors. At this spring's American College Theatre Festival, co-hosted by USI, adjudicators commended the program's presentation of *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* as a "truly beautiful production."

Providing artistic leadership for the season are three veteran faculty members and two newcomers. Wasserman is in his 12th year with USI and also serves as artistic director of Lincoln Amphitheatre as well as directing professionally around the country. His recent production of *The Sound of Music* for Casa Manana was praised by the *Fort Worth (TX) Star-Telegram* for its high quality with Wasserman's work singled out for special mention. He also is a published playwright and his play *Outlaws* received its New York premiere this summer.

Berst joins the program this year from the Boston area, where he most recently served as resident music director at the Rochester Summer Music Theatre in Rochester, NH. As a music director, conductor and accompanist, he has worked throughout the Northeast, Midwest, and Canada, including projects with The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, John Houseman's Acting Company and The Juilliard School. As a visiting artist and theatre educator, Berst has worked at Buffalo State College (SUCNY) and Manhattan College.

In addition to providing scenic design for *Waiting for Godot*, Kuykendall is lighting designer for the remainder of the season. He joined the USI faculty last fall and also served this summer as production manager for both Lincoln Amphitheatre and The New Harmony Theatre as well as designing lights for *The Foreigner* at New Harmony and the entire season at Lincoln. His professional lighting and production credits are worldwide and include work at the Lincoln Center, the Festival de Avignon, and the 2000 Olympics. He is a former faculty member at Washington University and the University of Colorado.

Hubbell, the program's most senior member, will design the sets for *Loot* and *Charley's Aunt*. Director of theatre from his arrival in 1980 through 1986, Hubbell has directed and designed innumerable productions for USI Theatre as well as contributing set designs for Lincoln Amphitheatre, The New Harmony Theatre, Vincennes Summer Theatre, and Indiana University. He is a former faculty member at University of Evansville, Milliken University, and Earlham College.

Shan Jensen, associate professor of theatre, will serve as costume designer for all four productions. Jensen's theatre credits include work regionally and in New York while her film credits range from feature films including *A League of Their Own*, *Billy Bathgate*, *Goodfellas* and *Legal Eagles* to a host of commercials and industrial projects. She also is resident costume designer for The New Harmony Theatre.