



Alumni Newsletter

Spring 2009

Welcome!

The 2009-2010 PUP Board is excited to present our second annual alumni newsletter! We hope you enjoy the pieces we've prepared for you.

If you have any suggestions or requests for the future, we'd love to hear from you at the email address below.

Happy Reading!

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Questions, comments, or concerns? E-mail our Development Director, Margaret White (mtwhite@princeton.edu).

2008-2009 Season Report



Jonathan Schwartz '10, Liz Dengel '10, and Billy Hepfinger '10 in a scene from this past fall's production of *Tick, Tick...Boom!*, directed by Andrea Grody '11.

PUP had a very exciting season this year. We started off the year with *Tick, Tick...Boom!*, performed from October 2-4, 2009, in the Frist Film and Performance Theatre. The production was directed by Andrea Grody '11.

The semi-autobiographical *Tick, Tick...Boom!*, written by Jonathan Larson, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the Broadway smash hit *Rent*, tells the story of a young composer struggling to make a start in New York.

Next came *Footloose*, directed by Dylan Alban

'09 and performed November 6-9, 2009, in the Matthews Acting Studio at 185 Nassau Street.

Footloose, based on the iconic 1984 Kevin Bacon film, tells the story of a town in which dance is forbidden and the boy who sets out to change that.

Footloose was an exciting production because it brought many people to PUP who had not previously been involved. As Dylan Alban said in his director's note to the program, "For more than half of the cast before you, it is their

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PUP Alumni Reception

Actors! Directors! Techies!

Come revisit your days on (and behind!) the Princeton stage and meet PUP's latest members!

Refreshments will be served.

Friday, May 29 at 9:30 pm in Frist 309

immediately following *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*

If you have any photos you'd like to share for the PUP Wall of Fame please email them to csarner@princeton.edu!

Also, join us for our 2009 Reunions Show:

Flatland:

A Romance of Many Dimensions

A New Musical Based on the 1884 Novella by Edwin Abbott Abbott

Book by Zach Zimmerman '10

Music by Dave Holtz '10

Lyrics and Direction by Brandon Lowden '09

May 28-30, 2009 - 8:00 P.M.

Frist Film and Performance Theatre

Edwin Abbott Abbott's classic story comes to life in this new musical adaptation!

When a spherical visitor enters the two-dimensional world of Flatland she challenges not only their ideas about geometry but their whole way of life.

It is up to the humble Square to spread the truth about the third dimension—but can he convince the people of Flatland and their stubborn leaders?

Don't miss this exciting mix of music, math, and merriment!

PUP's Graduating Class of 2009

We are very sad that our seniors will be leaving us, but we wish them all the best as they pursue their "real world" endeavors, in theater or otherwise.

Christina Farah has been involved in various capacities with more than 16 PUP productions over the past four years. Since she also served on the PUP Board as Props Manager, Vice President, and President, PUP was a vital part of her Princeton experience. She is grateful for having had the opportunity to work with so many lovely and talented people through PUP, and will miss those late night paint-droozling sessions!

Taotao Liu has served on the board as Music Manager and Development Director, and played piano and/or music directed *Sex on Broadway 2009*, *Nunsense*, *A New Brain*, *John & Jen*, and *Tick, Tick... Boom!* She thanks PUP for getting her started as a collaborative pianist, a craft which, to Taotao's delight, is transferrable to opera and art song. In the fall, she will begin her masters in Piano Accompanying at Westminster Choir College.

Molly Borowitz fondly recalls several stints with PUP, both behind and in front of the curtain. She was a principal cast member of *A New Brain*, an assistant stage manager for *The Last Five Years*, and was co-director and music director for last year's production of *The Flood*.

Brian Gurewitz writes, "I had a blast



From left to right: former board members *Ralph Schaefer '09*, *Irene Moskowitz '09*, *Kate Stevick '09*, and *Christina Farah '09*.

with PUP throughout my Princeton career, although it was mostly cheering from the audiences. My primary involvement with PUP was during my sophomore year, when I music directed and acted in *A New Brain* (directed by Doug Lavanture '09). During that show, I started a lot of my best and most important friendships at Princeton, so I have fond memories of those rehearsals. The following year, I was a rehearsal and auditions accompanist for *Camelot* (directed by Cate Adams '08) and *The Flood* (directed by Sara-Ashley Bischoff '09 and Molly Borowitz '09). Although my involvement in PUP was relatively minimal, I feel like my life at Princeton has been inextricably linked with the group, since so many of my good friends are active members."

Brandon Lowden was director of PUP's pro-

duction of Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins* this winter, and is both lyricist and director of the new musical *Flatland*, which will have its premiere at Reunions this year. Of his experience directing *Assassins* he writes, "Assassins was one of the most rewarding journeys of my Princeton career. I was truly blessed to work with so many talented people on such an exciting and ultimately very successful production. I am proud to have been a part of PUP's season this year, and I hope they continue to push the boundaries of student-produced musical theatre."

Our graduating class this year also includes former board members **Irene Moskowitz**, **Ralph Schaefer**, and **Kate Stevick**, as well as numerous others who worked on productions throughout their years at Princeton.

“The Fates Command”: A Look at *Orpheus Waking*

by Alana Tornello '12
PUP Press Coordinator

Orpheus Waking, the collaborative, creative thesis project of Kelvin Dinkins, Jr. '09 (director, book and lyrics) and Jason Pomerantz '09 (music and lyrics) through the Music and English Departments, is different from PUP's usual repertoire, and I didn't quite know what to expect. But in the end I knew exactly how I felt: I was intrigued by the work of these two fellow students and relieved at an excellent and polished final result.

The show begins when Persephone (Phoenix Gonzalez '11) enters suddenly and almost seductively, hovering so high above us that the audience cannot help but feel as if they are at the foot of Olympus and are observing the rare appearance of a goddess to the mortals below. Soon the image of Olympus is shattered and using some furniture and tricks of costume we are now in the modern world of David (Billy Hepfinger '10), a composer whose music may move the gods but cannot move corporate big wigs in the music industry unless he consolidates. He is, of course, the modern Orpheus. We first meet his music and then meet his girlfriend and modern Eurydice, Angela (Dominique Salerno '10), as they move in together into a new home.

The general atmosphere of the production was meant to be emotional and powerful, but there was also a strong presence of humor throughout the piece, especially in the roles of Angela's mother, Hermia, (Stacy Testa '10) and the man who ferries the dead to the underworld, Charon (Dan Corica '12). It was the right way to balance out the heavy subject matter of the myth and to add more layers to the characters.

The music wavers between the song of a Greek lyre, the ballads of American rock and jazz, and the curious natural tones of ethereal spirits and sirens. I was especially moved by the harmonies of the sirens (Tracy Walsh '10, Meredith Wren '10, and Vivian DeWoskin '11) as they glare down upon the scene from the balcony with intimidating shadows and makeup strewn on the faces.

The story itself demands impressive vocals and music, because after all, the ancient tale of Orpheus revolves around the power of music to defy everything—even death. The music inspires the waking of dormant myths and hopes within the characters and accompanies this contemporary adaptation of an ancient tale of the human struggle with loss and the unknown of the afterlife.

It was the quadruple threat of stirring music, strong and unique vocals, an intimidating set, and

twists to this already fantastic Greek myth which overwhelmed me at the climax of the show: like Orpheus, David turns back as Angela follows him and loses her forever, yet unlike Eurydice, Angela cares so much for David that she chooses death over the sacrifice of his music.

I couldn't help being moved by the army of emotion which touches the audience at this point: the set appeared misty and far away in another world, the blue lights cast shadows of the underworld with little streams of golden rays hitting the moss strewn staircase, an illuminated shining fountain on a rock accompanies Persephone and Hades, and mahogany doors centered in this world open to blinding lights. It was an aesthetic and musical experience that I am glad I did not miss.

Kelvin Dinkins mentioned that he approached Jason Pomerantz in the spring of their sophomore year and casually said, “You know, we should write a musical.” Jason responded, “Yeah, that'd be cool.” You could never tell from that simple response that *Orpheus Waking* would be the product. It is a production sure to inspire future student-written works and touch audiences with a story of love: the journeys we travel in pursuit of it, the emotions we experience in attaining it, and the worlds we'll cross to keep it.

Season Report

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first time upon a Princeton stage. You will see actors tonight who have never before danced on stage, and I can tell you right now, you will not be able to tell the difference.”

Bringing even more new faces to PUP was this year’s version of *Sex on Broadway*, the annual all-freshman revue. This year’s *Sex on Broadway* was co-directed by Amanda Bestor-Siegal ’12 and Kathy Harwood ’12 and performed in the Forbes Blackbox Theater from December 4-6, 2009.

The directors chose to organize the show around the idea of starting college and all the new experiences it brings. They wrote in their directors’ note, “In this revue, we hope to illustrate some of the situations that



Joey Barnett ’12, Alana Tornello ’12, and company members in *Footloose*.

characterize this transition from the ecstasy of arriving on campus, to the disorientation of the adjustment process, to the eventual and inevitable realization that we are not alone.”

Though we were unfortunately not able to perform *Sweeney Todd*, which was announced in

last year’s newsletter for the February slot, director Brandon Lowden ’09 chose instead to mount one of Sondheim’s lesser-known works, *Assassins*, which tells the stories of the men and women who tried--and sometimes succeeded--to kill the President of the United States.

Brandon said of his choice, “As classic American apathy set in once more only a month after our historic inauguration, I felt more confident of this musical’s enduring relevance on opening night than ever before.”

What’s next for PUP, you ask? As this issue of the newsletter is written, we are just wrapping up a successful production of the original student-written musical *Orpheus Waking*--see the separate piece for more information--and preparing to start rehearsals for another student-written work, *Flatland the Musical*, which we’ll be presenting at Reunions in May. We hope to see some of you there!



The cast of *Assassins*. (Photo by Habin Chung)

The 2009-10 PUP Board

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Want to help continue to bring quality student
run musical theatre to Princeton's campus?

Become a Friend of PUP!

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Sponsor: \$0 - \$25
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Please send a check payable to Princeton University with
PUP written on the memo line to:
Princeton University Players
c/o Grace Hoerner
4353 Frist Center
Princeton, NJ 08544

All donations are tax deductible. Contact our Business
Manager at ghoerner@princeton.edu with any questions!

2009-10 Season!

PUP is proud to announce
our 2009-10 Season:

"Songs for a New World"

Directed by
Andrea Grody '11 and
Claire-Marine Sarner '10
October 1-3, 2009
Matthews Acting Studio

"Ragtime"

Directed by
Casey Ford Alexander '10
November 12-15, 2009
Matthews Acting Studio

"Company"

Directed by
Dave Holtz '10
February 2010
Venue TBD

"Reefer Madness"

Directed by
Amanda Bestor-Siegal '12
April 15-17 and
22-24, 2010
Theatre Intime
*A co-production with
Theatre Intime*

"You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown"

Directed by
Tiffania Willetts '12
Reunions:
May 28-30, 2010
Frist Theatre