

Alumni Newsletter

Spring 2010

Welcome!

The 2010-2011 PUP Board is excited to present our third annual alumni newsletter!

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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Announcement

Questions, comments, or concerns? E-mail our Development Director, David Mendelsohn (dmendels@princeton.edu).

2009-2010 Season Report



Billy Hefpinger '10 and the cast of this year's production of Company, directed by Dave Holtz

It's been quite a year. Dealing with one of the most diverse seasons in PUP's recent history has been hectic and extremely rewarding. We have been reminded of just how much talent we have on this campus, and we feel honored to have showcased so much of it on Princeton's stages. This year has been a great example of PUP's ability to handle a wide range of shows, casts, and visions – if this season is any indication, PUP has a very bright future!

Our first show of the season was *Songs for a New World*, directed by Andrea Grody '11

and Claire-Marine Sarner '10. A song cycle written by Jason Robert Brown, *Songs for a New World* is unconventional in that it does not have an overarching plot or continuous characters, but rather focuses on different scenes which depict people longing for something new. From the deck of a Spanish sailing ship bound for the New World to an inner-city kid hoping that basketball is his ticket to a better life, the stories connect particularly well with students freshly arrived on campus for a new school year.

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PUP Alumni Reception

Actors! Directors! Techies!

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

Refreshments will be served.

Friday, May 28 at 9:30 pm

(Immediately following *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*)

in Frist Multipurpose Room A

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

Also, join us for our 2010 Reunions Show:

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown

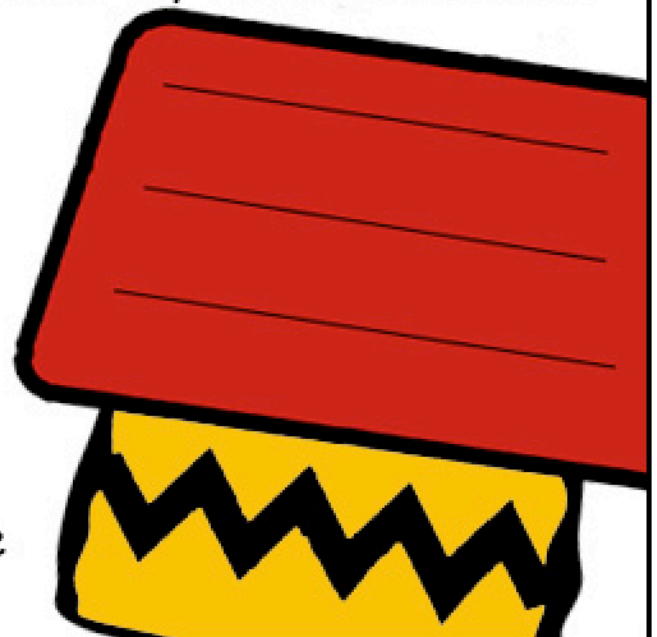
Based on the Comic Strip "Peanuts®" by Charles M. Schulz

Book, Music, and Lyrics by
Clark Gesner '60

Directed by
Tiffania Willetts '12

May 27-29, 2010 at 8pm

Film and Performance Theatre
at Frist Campus Center



PUP's Graduating Class of 2010

Unfortunately there is a time when we must all leave the Orange Bubble. We wish our seniors the best of luck as they step outside and breathe the free air once again!

Anastasia Erbe '10 made her first PUP appearance as the Gemini Twin in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Fall '06) and also was a member of 2006's *Sex on Broadway*'s cast. Anastasia has served as PUP's Press Coordinator from 2007 to 2008 and was a Co-Publicity Chair from 2008 to 2009.

Laura Huchel '10 started her PUP experience with *Sex on Broadway* her freshman year and was elected tech director immediately afterward, a position she held for two years. PUP holds some of her fondest and craziest Princeton memories, from explaining to the Frist mailing office staff that she actually did order a sizable flammables cabinet, to late-night undercover painting operations that never happened. She was happy to contribute to PUP's new website design and reorganized the archives. Laura treasures her PUP experience and is grateful for all of the wonderful people and experiences she had through PUP.

PJ Miller '10 began his Princeton theater career in *Sex on Broadway* with PUP in 2006 and ended it in 2010 in *Reefer Madness*. He also appeared for PUP in *Camelot* and *Clue the Musical*, served as Master Builder for several shows, and served on the PUP board for two years as Webmaster and Production Manager. He will be moving to New York City in the fall to pursue theater, and he is incredibly grateful for PUP and the rest of the Princeton theater community for the last four years!

Zach Ruchman '10 started his PUP career playing Erronius in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Fall '06). Zach appeared



Seniors and PUP board lifers Stacy Testa, Zach Ruchman and Claire-Marine Sarner at their last board meeting

in and worked as stage manager for *In Touch* (Reunions '08). Zach also worked behind the scenes as stage manager for *Myths and Hymns* (Spring '07) and as props manager for *Camelot* (Fall '07). Zach has been a valued member of the board serving as Historian in 2007, Social Chair in 2008, Graphics Designer in 2009, and PUP's Photographer from 2007-2010. Zach would like to send a shout-out to PUP: "PUP has been a fantastic experience from the very first week of my freshman year. I cannot imagine my Princeton experience without all of the wonderful PUPeople who have populated it."

Claire-Marine Sarner '10 worked on some 18 PUP shows over the past four years, including stints as a Director, Choreographer, Set Designer, Stage Manager, and Production Manager. She served on the PUP board as Props/Costume Manager (2007), Vice President (2008),

and President (2009). She hopes to continue pursuing dance and theater after graduation.

Stacy Testa '10 has served one term on the board as Vice President and two as Publicity Chair. From her initial involvement directing *Sex On Broadway* freshman year, to her final performance in this year's *Company*, PUP has been a huge part of her Princeton experience. Stacy has performed in five PUP shows and been on the production team for three. Most importantly, PUP is responsible for some of her dearest friendships and fondest memories of Princeton. She will not miss carrying the marquee, but life will be a little less cheerful without the illustrious pink shoes.

Thanks to everyone who has helped PUP continue to grow and thrive! We wish you the best on all your endeavors!

A sneak peek of *Illyria*: coming this fall!

by Julia Bumke
Director

Illyria takes the familiar story of *Twelfth Night*, with its mistaken identities, forsaken love, and bawdy humor behind closed doors, and sets it to music. Written by PUP alums Peter Mills '95 and Cara Reichel '96, the play remains truthful to its source text while telling the story of Viola, Orsino, Olivia, Sebastian, Malvolio, and all of the others in a refreshing new light.

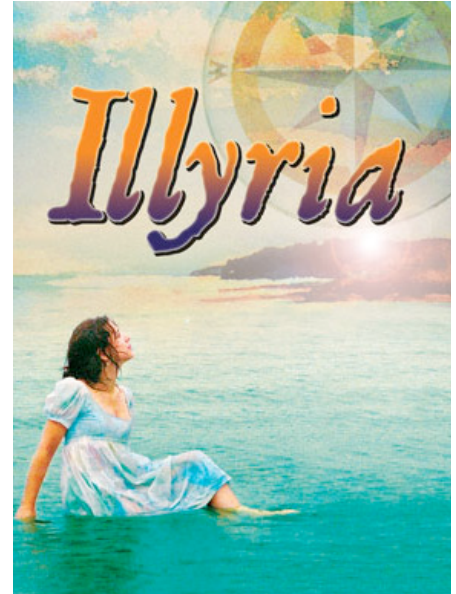
For those of you who don't know *Twelfth Night*, here's a general synopsis. When Viola is shipwrecked on the shores of Illyria, she assumes that her brother Sebastian has been killed in the wreck. She takes Sebastian's identity and finds work with Duke Orsino, a nobleman who pines for the widowed Lady Olivia. Orsino convinces the disguised Viola to plead his suit—but the plan backfires when Olivia falls in love with "Sebastian." Viola, meanwhile has fallen for Orsino, but can't tell him because she's still disguised as a boy. And just when you thought things couldn't get any more complicated, the real Sebastian reappears, creating chaos for all involved! High hilarity, amazing ensemble pieces, and a happy denouement ensue.

Rather than taking the dreaded *She's The Man* route and transplanting Shakespeare's

comedy in the present day, *Illyria* is set in Elizabethan times, and its sticking to the traditional period increases the music's effectiveness at transforming Shakespeare's language. A great deal of the plot is told in song, with a cast of up to fourteen performers and a pit orchestra of six.

I must admit that I'm a little biased in my vision for this play. I've loved *Illyria* ever since I saw it performed in 2004 at the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, where I was volunteering as an usher. I proceeded to see the play two more times and become totally obsessed with its soundtrack, which I listened to on repeat until my parents tried (unsuccessfully, I might add) to hide my CD. I loved how the play combined such a familiar story with beautiful, simple music. While I'm a self-professed Shakespeare geek, I've always found his comedies much harder to take—all of their convoluted plotlines, mistaken identities and star-crossed lovers start to blur together after a while. *Illyria* solved this problem for me with its extremely funny, engaging, and surprisingly compelling characters. Viola's role is relatable in a way that I'd never gleaned from *Twelfth Night*—her reactions as she starts falling for Orsino in the song "How These Things Start" are priceless, and the song perfectly conveys that all-too-familiar feeling of the awkward crush.

While the play is set in the



Elizabethan era, subtle modern costuming choices and a fairly minimalist set will remind the audience that *Illyria's* story could happen in any time period. In the black box setting of Matthews Acting Studio, the play gets across this feeling of modernity, and will also help emphasize the more pensive aspects of the story. The play is cheerful, escapist and lighter than air—but the moments when it touches on the raw emotions of love, loss, and self-discovery are some of its strongest, and are what elevate the play above the stuff of mere frothy spectacle.

In the show's Prologue, the jester Feste calls the island of Illyria a "land of fools; where clarity's a rarity and madness rules." Sound familiar to a certain Tiger-obsessed university we all know and love? I thought so. The point that *Illyria* hits home, which hadn't struck me as much in *Twelfth Night*, is an

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Princeton University Players presents:

*You're a Good Man, Charlie
Brown*

Book, Music, and Lyrics by Clark Gesner '60

Directed by Tiffania Willetts '12

May 27-29 at 8pm

Frist Film and Performance Theatre

Based on Charles Schultz's iconic comic strip "Peanuts," *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* presents a series of glimpses at the lives of Charlie Brown and all of his friends, both human and non-human. The events are strung together to form a single day, from bright, uncertain morning to hopeful, starlit evening. The familiar cast of characters includes Charlie Brown, Lucy and Linus Van Pelt, Schroeder, and the famous beagle dog, Snoopy. With a sweet and tuneful score and whimsical stories that will tug at the heartstrings of anyone who has ever been a child, this fast-paced, lighthearted musical is the perfect entertainment for children and adults alike.

Music direction for *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* is by Theo Popov '11, and choreography is by Tiffania Willetts '12. Lighting design is by Michael Gibbs '12, costume design is by Lindsey-Paige McCloy '12, and set design is by Rob Clayton '12.

Tickets:

\$8 Students

\$10 Faculty/Staff/Seniors

\$12 Community Members

<http://www.princeton.edu/utickets>

Or call 609-258-1742

If you have any further question or inquiries, please contact:

Margaret White

Press Coordinator, Princeton University Players

mtwhite@princeton.edu

917.751.1494

emphasis on self-discovery. Viola is thrown into an alien world for which she is wholly unprepared, where no one seems to act normally and she's a complete outsider. So how does she react? She disguises herself and hides behind someone else's personality, living cautiously as she attempts to find her place in the community. Her path to self-realization is completely relevant to college kids—and her ability to finally doff her façade in favor of being herself makes her an admirable example of how students can find their way in a strange new world.

Despite the craziness that Illyria puts its residents through, the play's characters always feel the island's pull. "O, that Illyria: I'm still yours," Feste sings at the play's close, and the affinity that these characters feel towards their island becomes a lifelong connection. Sounds like they might as well be buying orange-and-black blazers for Reunions! When I was doing my research on Illyria this winter and looked at the playwrights' bios for the first time, the fact that Pete Mills and Cara Reichel both hailed from Princeton didn't surprise me one bit. Rather, it was the icing on the cake: this play's beautiful combination of classic literature and compelling music couldn't have come from anywhere else.

The 2009-10 PUP Board

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Claire Greene '13
Webmaster

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

Become a Friend of PUP!

Donation Levels:

Sponsor: \$0 - \$25

Supporter: \$25 - \$50

Patron: \$50 - \$100

Star: \$100 +

Please send a check payable to Princeton University with PUP written on
the memo line to:

Princeton University Players
c/o Tiffania Willetts
971 Frist Center
Princeton, NJ 08544

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

2010-11 Season!

**PUP is proud to announce our
2010-2011 Season:**

Illyria

By Peter Mills '95 and
Cara Reichel '96

Directed by

Julia Bumke '13

Co-produced with the Princeton
Shakespeare Company
November 11-13, 2010
Matthews Acting Studio

Sex On Broadway

Featuring the Class of 2014
December 9-11, 2010
Class of 1970 Theatre at
Whitman College

Carousel

Directed by
Francesca Furchtgott '12
February 24-26 & March 3-5,
2011

The 25th Annual Putnam

County Spelling Bee

Directed by

Clayton Raithel '12

April 2011

The Last Five Years

Directed by

Amanda Bestor-Siegal '12

May 27-29, 2011

For our November show, PUP presented *Ragtime*, directed by Casey Ford Alexander '10. *Ragtime*, with book by Terrence McNally, lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, and music by Stephen Flaherty, is one of the timeless classics of musical theater, and we were very excited to help it open on the Princeton stage. The large cast of the show drew people from a variety of groups across campus, including many people who had never worked with PUP before. Poetically, the *Ragtime* revival on Broadway opened the day our production closed.



Cast of Ragtime, directed by Casey Ford Alexander '10

PUP's annual freshman revue, *Sex on Broadway '09*, directed by Brandon Davis '13, took a new route by portraying Princeton alums singing about their days at Old Nassau. With Woodrow Wilson, Donald Rumsfeld, Michelle Obama, and many others making appearances, Broadway songs became distinctly Princeton and hilarious (imagine, for example, Wilson singing "I Just Can't Wait to be King").

Our February show was *Company*, directed by Dave Holtz

'10, with book by George Furth and music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. *Company* is a show about the crises of commitment and relationships. The cast did a fantastic job with a very challenging show, and the end result led *Company* to sell out almost every night of its run.

In April, PUP took a step back from the serious with *Reefer Madness*, a joint show with Theatre Intime, directed by Amanda

Bestor-Siegel '12. The satirical show, a parody of the over-the-top anti-drug 1936 movie, "Tell Your Children," was written by Kevin Murphy and Dan Studney. The show warns the audiences of the dangers of the "leafy green assassin" and shows how smoking even once can lead to orgies, murder, sado-masochism, and cannibalism. With its catchy songs and overly exaggerated scenes, *Reefer Madness* made for an extremely funny show.

For Reunions this year, PUP is honoring the class of 1960 and putting up Clark Gesner '60's *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, directed by Tiffania Willetts '12. Based on the comic strip "Peanuts" by Charles M. Schulz, the show promises to be a great experience. We sincerely hope that you will drop by for the show!

We made some great memories in the 2009-2010 season, but, ever vigilant, we are already looking ahead to an exciting season starting this coming year and will be sure to let you know all about it!



Daniel Yawitz '12 & Catherine Cohen '13 in Reefer Madness

