

1940s Radio Hour

It is December 1942 and our troops overseas are listening to the radio for news and entertainment from back home. *The 1940's Radio Hour*, written by Walton Jones, is opening at the Wimberley Playhouse February 12. It is a nostalgic musical about a radio broadcast – but this time you, the playgoers, are the actual audience.

Reminiscent of the setting of the recent film, “A Prairie Home Companion,” the play shows how a radio broadcast is put together. Only this time the music is not country, but favorite old ballads from the 40’s – “Kalamazoo,” “Blue Moon,” “Ain’t She Sweet?” “Blues in the Night,” “You Go to My Head,” “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy,” and many others. The music will be presented onstage by a small orchestra consisting of bass (**Guy Ben Moshe**), trumpet (**Sean Palmer**), trombone (**Tom Van Tassel**), drums (**John King**), piano (**Robert FitzGerald**), saxophone (**Robert Eaton**) and tenor sax (**Donna Heath**).

The 1940's Radio Hour is directed by **Jennifer McKenna**, new to the Wimberley Playhouse but known in Austin theatre (*Crimes of the Heart* at City Theatre and *The Diaries of Adam and Eve* at the Baker Theatre). Producer is **Kay Allison**, a long-time member of the Players board. Musical Director is **Jonna Beck**, who acted in the Players’ last production, *Inspecting Carol*. **Carole Hofstad**, a Players actress, is choral director and rehearsal pianist.

Several actors are also Wimberley veterans. Ann Collier is played by **Juli Dearington**, most recently seen in *Stop the World, I Want to Get Off* and in *My Fair Lady* (Emily Ann). Lou Cohn is **Derek Smootz**, seen in *Man of La Mancha* and *The Mousetrap* at the Playhouse. **Gary Yowell** plays Clifton A. Feddington; Gary was seen last year in *Leading Ladies* and was also in *The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge* in Lockhart. Johnny Cantone is



Boogieing with the Bugle Boy are (l to r) Abreeta Goode, Juli Dearington and Laura Cannon.

portrayed by **Dan Stephens**, minister of music at First Baptist Church (see PlayMakers insert for more information). And **Robert FitzGerald**, who plays Zoot as well as the piano, was seen in *Inspecting Carol* last fall, and was more recently in *The Secret Lives of InBetweeners* at the Vortex Theater.

Rounding out the cast are **Abreeta Goode** as Geneva Lee Browne; Abreeta comes from Texas State, where she played Anarqik in *Ice Wolf*, Snoopy in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, and Mary Warren in *The Crucible*. **John Kenneth Harder**, playing Pops Baily, wrote and directed his own theatrical production in South Carolina, *Running without Legs*, to raise awareness of the effect drugs have on our youth. **Laura Cannon**, as Connie Miller, was last seen in *In the Company of Sinners and Saints* at Texas State. Other actors are **Alexandra Russo**, as Ginger Brooks, **Brandon VanGieson** as B.J. Gibson, **Benjamin Wright** as Neal Tilden and **Andy Fleming** as Wally Ferguson. **Sean Palmer** plays Biff as well as the trumpet.

“As a director of many other shows,” says McKenna, “*The 1940's Radio Hour* is like no other I have directed. As a period piece, it touches on many themes close to my heart, including love of country and fellow man, music and dance. With a very talented cast of Wimberley favorites and some Austin newcomers to embody these very real characters in the early days of World War II, this is sure to be an early winter treat. If you like music, if you like dancing, if you like theatre, this is the show to come and see.”

1940's Radio Hour will run February 12 – March 7. Friday and Saturday shows begin at 8:00 pm and Sunday shows are at 2:30. Tickets are \$18 except opening night (\$25, with a reception at 7:00) and may be purchased online at www.wimberleyplayers.org or by calling (512) 847-0575.



Coming to the Playhouse Feb. 20 Dallas book reviewer

It will be a first in the Wimberley Playhouse, and you'll want to be there.

On Saturday, February 20 at 2:00 p.m., the eminent Dallas book reviewer and lecturer, Marjorie Currey, will present *The Snowball, Warren Buffett and the Business of Life* by Alice Schroeder.

The lecture inaugurates our Expanded Offerings project, a commitment to bring additional cultural offerings to the community when the Players' show schedule permits. A chamber music concert is planned for May and a dance group is under consideration for the summer.

Each audience member is likely to take away a nugget of wisdom from this event—especially useful in these economic times! Reviewer Currey says of the book, "I learned something on almost every page." The author of the book, a Texan, was given complete access to Buffet's personal and business contacts and authorized to dig deep, even if the research was unflattering to Buffet.

Since the book has more than 800 pages, the lecture offers a great shortcut for all those (men as well as women) interested in finance, the stock market, reading, or just hearing about the life of a very interesting man of our times.

Currey has a remarkable resume as a teacher, lecturer and world traveler. She earned her Phi Beta Kappa key at Southern Methodist University. As a resident of Dallas for many years, she has served on the boards of Dallas organizations and supported many worthy causes. She has been a consultant to a private foundation and to private businesses. Most recently she and her husband have spent time in Libya, northern India, Southeast Asia and Turkey. Her broad-ranging life experiences give Currey rare insights into contemporary issues.

The Expanded Offerings committee includes **Kay Allison, Nora Moeller, Mary Northern, Julie Ray, Al Sander, Adam Witko** and **Linda Young**. All seats are reserved, and refreshments will be served. Tickets are \$10 each, available online at wimberleyplayers.org. Or call 847-0575, requesting a call back, to reserve by phone with MasterCard or Visa.

Here and There...

■ The Wimberley Players are very grateful to the **Lions Club** for their recent donation of \$750, which will help with planned box office renovations. The support of this generous community group is appreciated by our membership. Thank you, Lions, for all you do in the Wimberley Community.

(Continued in next column)

(Here and There continued)

■ The Wimberley Players scrapbooks have been updated through the diligent efforts of **Nori Larson**. If you didn't get to look through this visual history of all Players productions at the Annual Meeting, be sure to look for the scrapbooks at another Players event. Thanks to Nori for getting these books up to date.

■ By the time this issue of *Curtain Call* has been printed, another group of board members will have been elected by the members of the Players. Look under "Board" on the Players web site (www.wimberleyplayers.org) for the names of those who are now governing the theatre group.

■ Have you always thought it would be fun to read through plays and help decide which ones are chosen for the Players to produce? Here is your chance! The Readers Team will begin meeting in February to select plays for 2011. If you would like to see how this is done, you are welcome to attend a meeting. To express interest or find out more, e-mail info@wimberleyplayers.org, specifying "Readers" in the subject. If you don't want to read plays but are familiar with some plays you think the Players would enjoy producing, you can also e-mail info@wimberleyplayers.org, specifying "Play Suggestions" in the subject.

Starlight Symphony Orchestra Spring Concerts

Young Artist Showcase

Saturday, March 6, 2010

First Baptist Church

15951 Winters Mill Parkway, Wimberley

7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 7, 2010

Hays Performing Arts Center

979 Kohler's Crossing, Kyle

4:00 p.m.

Overtures, Concertos and a Symphony!!

The Young Artist Showcase features two student soloists, 12th grade or under, who are the top scoring performers at the SSO Young Artist Festival. The Starlight Youth Orchestra, selected from festival participants, will perform two pieces at the concert.



Dody Spencer

Volunteer Extraordinaire



She loves being part of Wimberley, and she has supported the community well over the 30 years she has lived in it. **Dody Spencer**, one of the Players' most loyal fans, thinks moving to Wimberley was "the best thing we ever did."

Dody can be found at any event where the Players need a bit of extra help. She has assisted with hospitality for opening nights, was honorary chair of one of the Players fundraisers, and is present at every production and activity. "You couldn't do it without an audience, and I'm a great audience," she quips. Dody is also a staunch financial supporter of the theatre.

Dody has been involved in planning commissions for the city, the Wimberley Institute of Cultures, and other civic programs. A self-admitted "homebody," she raised three sons and has spent her spare time being a part of the community.

Born and raised in Dallas, Dody and her late husband Bill started coming to stay in old log cabins on the creek whenever they had a chance to get away from the city. "Wimberley was the prettiest place in the world," she says, "but when we decided to move to it, my mother thought we were out of our minds."

Being a part of the Wimberley Players is an easy way to get to know other people in the community, have an inside peek at the fine arts, and see the results of your efforts on stage as each play is presented. As a community theatre, the Wimberley Players depend upon volunteer help.

That help can be one-time, such as working on costumes, painting or designing sets, taking tickets and running concessions at a play. It can be more continuous: preparing *Curtain Call* for mailing before each play, being a house manager, delivering publicity posters, working at the Village Store for the Players. Need a bigger challenge? There are lots of opportunities to show off your skills, as in writing stories for the newsletter and local papers, planning hospitality for theatre events, learning to run the light or sound board during performances. Whatever your skills or interests, there is a job for you, and we are very willing to train you!

And, of course, we love the members of the Players who support our work financially. We couldn't do it without you! If you haven't already joined for 2010, do so now, at whatever level you feel you can meet.

To learn how you can help the Players, visit our web site (www.wimberleyplayers.org) and go to "Volunteers."

Ticket exchange program

If you need to exchange your tickets with Wimberley Players, you can:

1. Use the link inside the confirmation email you received when you purchased your tickets - this includes season tickets, *or*
2. Contact the box office and a volunteer will exchange the tickets for you. Leave a message on the answering machine at the box office, if no one answers, and a volunteer will return your call as soon as possible. 512.847.0575

You are no longer required to present original tickets at the will call window in order to exchange them. New tickets will be produced for you, and you can pick them up at the will call window prior to the performance.

Tickets can be exchanged until Wed. at 5 p.m. prior to the weekend for which you hold tickets. Tickets are non-refundable.

2010 Music Theatre Boot Camp *Broadway Bound*

The biggest production yet is being planned for this summer's musical theatre boot camp, produced and directed by **Lee Coleé Studios** at the Wimberley Playhouse.

This June, kids 8-14 and teens 15 and up will be performing highlights from four Broadway blockbuster classics: *West Side Story*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Annie* and *Oliver*. Camp dates are June 7-27 and the performances will be the last two weekends.

Audition times are by appointment with Lee, 512/847-7934.

Coming up next...

Can devotion really be "virtual?" *Virtual Devotion*, a modern satire by Eric Coble, will be coming to the Wimberley stage April 16 – May 9.

Three diverse characters try to navigate a world of pollution, terrorism and disease to make some kind of connection through – or perhaps in spite of – their faith and the Home Shopping Network. The play is a comic look at the Internet, telemarketing, politics and organized religion. **Whitney Marlett Mollahan**, a frequent actor and director at the Players, is the director.

Plan to come and let your funny bone be tickled!

The spotlight is on you!
Year of the Member

Benefits of membership:

- You get** invitations to special events for members only
- You receive** this colorful and informative newsletter five times a year
- You support** your local theatre group and help it produce fantastic plays
- Join your friends** in having good times with the Players all year long!

Annual Membership Renewal Time

Join the Players online (www.wimberleyplayers.org), or **Join by mail** (application form available on web site).

If you have already renewed your membership or if you have become a new member of the Players for 2010, we can't tell you enough how much we appreciate your support. Our goal is to bring you great theatre, and your membership dollars help us keep the lights turned on and the air conditioner running.



At Dia de los Muertos are Inspecting Carol director Dawn Youngs and Kurt Hildebrand.



Also at Dia de los Muertos are Cleon Dunham and T Cay Rowe.



Always working hard and smiling big, Betty Wright at Dia de los Muertos.



The Three Julies: l to r, Julie Ray, Julie Harris and Julie Harrington.

Benefits of supporting the Players...
Classic hospitality and classic cars

If you attended the "Dia de los Muertos" fundraiser for the Players at Old Glory Ranch on November 1, you will probably remember the auctions run by our own brilliant auctioneer, **David Bisett**.

One of the auctions was for a progressive dinner for eight, with host-chauffeured rides in classic old cars to each house.

The winner of this fine prize was **Lane Coffey**, and he took along 6 friends. The dinner was held on January 9, hosted by **Lynn and Allen Adelson, Gordon Dysart, Ceale and Bob Kirkham, and Kathy Gamel and Gary Brim**.

"All of you went 'above and beyond' to make the evening a great experience," writes Coffey. "The food and ambiance was wonderful at each person's home. We all got to meet people in our community that we hadn't known before, and riding in the old cars was a classic touch."

Although you might have missed having the winning bid on this year's special progressive dinner, it could be on the auction list again at another fundraiser event. While helping to support the Players, you can have a rollickin' good time!



Gordon Dysart proudly shows off his classic red Caddy convertible and his chauffeur's uniform.



L to R, Lynn Adelson, Allen Adelson, Gordon Dysart, Bob Kirkham and Ceale Kirkham.

Behind
the
curtain
with

PLAYMAKERS

It's about all the people who magically transform a starkly empty stage into a wonderfully performed and produced play.

Proudly Published by The Wimberley Players

Dan Stephens... He knows who gave him his musical gift

In real life **Dan Stephens** is the minister of music at First Baptist Church, Wimberley. He also coordinates the senior adult activities there. His family moved to Wimberley in 1997 and has enjoyed the community from the very beginning. Having been raised in San Antonio, Dan considers himself to be a true Central Texan.

Dan's wife of 25 years, **Leslie**, is a registered nurse and has worked for the Methodist Hospital system in San Antonio for over 20 years. She commutes back and forth to work but enjoys her job and considers it to be a real calling. Their children, **Justin** and **Faith**, attended St. Stephens Episcopal School, and Faith is about to graduate from the 8th grade there. Justin is a home school student, but takes dual credit college courses at Austin Community College.

Dan went to school at the University of Texas at San Antonio where he earned the bachelor of music education degree and the master of music degree. He considers his musical abilities to be a gift from God. Dan has enjoyed his work at the church for the last 12 years. He has a strong passion for seeing others develop their musical gifts. In senior adult ministry, he desires that seniors connect with God and each other, through worship, ministry, and fellowship.

In addition to his duties at church, Dan enjoys playing percussion in the Starlight Symphony Orchestra and occasionally playing in the Hill Country Community Band. Being a percussionist was his first entry into the field of music when he joined the middle school band. It was in high school that he joined the choir program.

In the fall of 2007 Dan appeared in the Wimberley Players production of *Man of La Mancha*, directed by **LeRoy Nienow**. Dan played the role of the Padre, and was often accused of being typecast! It was then that LeRoy encouraged him to audition

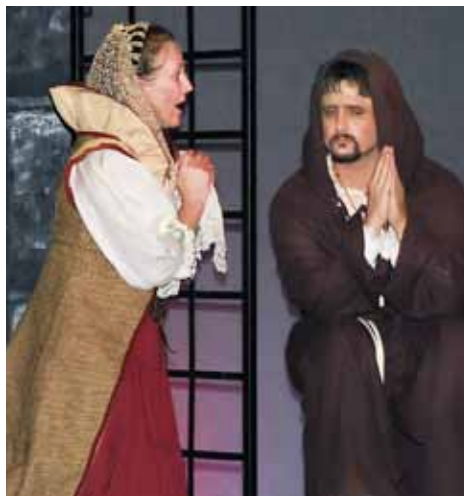


for the EmilyAnn Theatre's production of *The Gospel Accordin' to Texas*. So in the summer of the following year, Dan appeared in the role of Jesus Davidson in that musical retelling of the gospel story. In December of 2008, he directed and arranged the music for the Players production of *Christmas Belles*. The following summer Dan played the role of Freddy Eynsford-Hill in *My Fair Lady* at the EmilyAnn Theatre.

This past Christmas, Dan directed the musical *I'll Be Home for Christmas* at his church, a collaborative effort. He enjoys getting the community involved as much as possible with the musical productions of FBC Wimberley. For example, the drama part of this year's FBC Christmas musical was co-directed by Angie Lassetter and Lisa Pitcher, who seem to always be directing something wonderful. Al Corley, director of the Hill Country Community Band, prepared the orchestra, while Dan rehearsed the choir and soloists. And that's just the way a lot of things work in this community. It takes a lot of talented people working together to produce the high quality programs that Wimberley is used to.

So many fine people have helped Dan along the way that he is willing to "give back" to the community as time allows. When he is not directing music at his church or playing a role in a musical, he really enjoys the quiet moments at home with his family, as well as occasional hikes in and around the hill country. Before living in Wimberley, he used to vacation here from time to time.

Dan is very happy to be playing Johnny Cantone in *1940's Radio Hour*, and is thankful for the opportunity of working with director **Jennifer McKenna** and the wonderful cast. It's a very different role for him, but he has really enjoyed the process of rehearsing for the part.



As in *Man of La Mancha*, **Dan** and **Juli Dearrington** will exhibit their exceptional talents in *1940's Radio Hour*.

Jason Foreman Jack of all trades, master of many

You may have seen **Jason Foreman** playing an enamored minister...or goofily selling you raffle tickets at a Players fundraiser (costumed as a “Schmoozer”)...or singing and dancing his heart out at an Emily Ann musical production. It is possible he has come to eliminate household pests at your home in an environmentally friendly way, or has delivered furniture you ordered from Interior Elements. Stick around long enough, and you will find Jason teaching sculpture to kids at Arts from the Heart, or helping to build sets for the next Wimberley Players pro-



his local community, and he has done that with an unmatched elán.

Among his many other occupations have been computer animation, furniture repair, oil painting, drawing, running heavy equipment, waiting tables, handyman work and carpentry. “I’ve been able to help a lot of folks,” he explains. “It is good to feel needed.”

Jason is single. “All I do is work and do these shows,” he says. “Work” can include running spot lights, painting sets or anything else that is needed. In addition to his roles in the Players productions *Man of La Mancha* (Muleteer, Gypsy, Knight) and *Christmas*



Jason played two hilarious roles in *Christmas Belles*: an enamored minister and Santa’s (Gary Yowell) helper.

duction. Wherever you find Jason, you will see him happily working away, stopping only to distribute free hugs or grace you with a heartwarming smile.

Jason was raised in the “Far East” (Orange, Texas), but managed to get to the Hill Country six years ago after obtaining a Bachelor’s degree in Art (Graphic Design) at Lamar University. Three years later he landed in Wimberley, because “It’s beautiful, and I don’t really like the city.” Jason’s grandmother taught him to get involved in



Never one to back away from hard work, Jason puts his carpentry skills to work helping **Jim White** (center), **Michael Iles** (right) and **Adam Witko** (standing) with the set construction for *1940s Radio Hour*.

Belles (Justin Waverly), he has performed in many Emily Ann musicals and has also acted at the Gaslight Baker Theatre in Lockhart. “I’ve met a lot of wonderful people through the theatre,” says Jason. “I’ve done a lot of things I wouldn’t have done otherwise.”

What are his visions for the future? Jason would like to open his own sculpture workshop, perhaps do more teaching of arts to children. He is willing to learn new skills and develop new interests to make this happen. He likes to be “a man who makes the impossible possible.”