

american
stage

30th
Anniversary
Season

Whisper STAGE

A Quarterly Publication of American Stage Theatre Company, Spring 2009

211 3rd Street South, St. Petersburg, FL

Todd Olson, Producing Artistic Director

727.823.PLAY (7529) • americanstage.org

Big Plans for Act II of the '08-'09 Season

Notes from Todd Olson,
Producing Artistic Director



Dear AS Family:

It's been a good 30th Anniversary year so far, and the final days in our beloved theatre are nearing. On the one hand it's hard to leave home, but on the other hand, we have

just moved our offices, and when the new home looks as good as this, then it's exciting!

As for the new theatre itself, it's completely inspired by the old, which makes it all the more anticipated.

While you will be enjoying the off-Broadway smash hit musical *Altar Boyz* in the Park, we will be busy putting the finishing touches on everything including the lobby, rehearsal space and costume shop, waiting until you walk through the front door for the first time, up the elevator into the lobby, through the double doors, walk across our stage (just as you do now), and sit in your new, more comfortable seat.

Our first production in there will be the phenomenal best-seller *Tuesdays with Morrie* opening June 2. It will be followed by our season closer, the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning drama, *Doubt*. What a season this will have been!

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE. I won't spoil the surprise for you right here, but if you look on the third page you will see what we have planned for you for our 2009-2010 season – the first full season in the Raymond James Theatre.

Great things are on the horizon, for us and for you. I'll see you at the theatre!

Todd Olson
Producing Artistic Director
candtolson@aol.com

The 24th Annual American Stage in the Park

Altar Boyz to Rock the Park

"TOTALLY HILARIOUS! It keeps you laughing all evening long. If laughter is a form of salvation, my soul is clean!" - *New York Daily News*

American Stage Theatre Company is excited to produce the off-Broadway smash hit musical-comedy that

is taking America by storm, *Altar Boyz*, during the theatre's 24th annual production at American Stage in the Park.

"Pay What You Can" nights are April 15 and 16. Gala Under the Stars will be April 17 (fundraiser event).

Altar Boyz is the musical phenomenon about five young men and their hilarious struggles in a Christian boy band. The action follows Matthew, Mark, Luke, Juan,

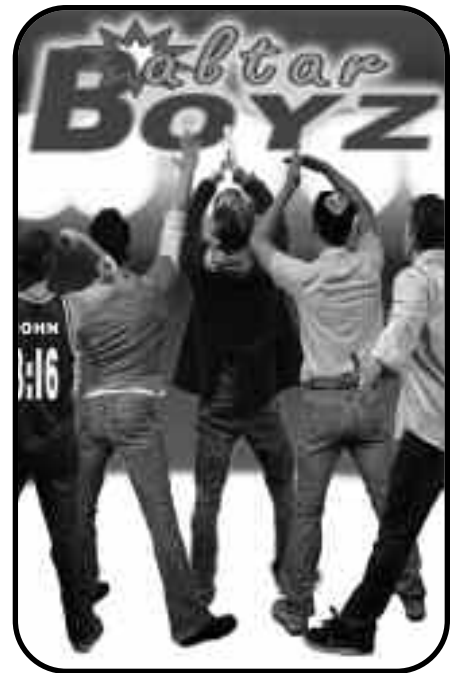
and Abraham (the unsure, Jewish fifth member) as they stop in St. Petersburg as part of their climactic concert tour.

An explosive mixture of modernism, irony and energetic singing and dancing makes *Altar Boyz* your ticket to one of the most exciting and funny theatre shows of the year.

Performances are Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings at 8 p.m.

Tickets prices for general admission lawn seats at the Park are \$13 for Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday performances and \$16 for Friday and Saturday. Reserved chair seating is \$27 and premium blanket seating is \$21 for all performances.

Kids 12 and under are free on the lawn.



Altar Boyz
by Kevin Del Aguila, Gary Adler, Michael Patrick Walker, and Marc Kessler
Runs:
April 15
thru
May 10
For Tickets:
727.823.PLAY
americanstage.org



Return this form to get your tickets by mail for Altar Boyz in the Park and save \$2 per ticket!

All performances are at 8 p.m. at Demens Landing Park, located on the corner of 1st Ave N and Bayshore Blvd SE on the beautiful downtown St. Petersburg waterfront. Deadline to order tickets by mail is May 1. You must order at least seven days in advance of desired performance date in order for tickets to be mailed to you. Send this form to:

American Stage Theatre Company, P.O. Box 1560, St. Petersburg, FL 33731

General Admission Lawn Seats: (prices show discount)

Previews April 15 & 16 _____ # of tickets x \$7 = \$ _____

Wed, Thurs and Sun _____ # of tickets x \$11 = \$ _____

Friday and Saturday _____ # of tickets x \$14 = \$ _____

Children 12 and under _____ # of tickets x \$0 = \$ _____ free

Premier Blanket: All Performances (price shows discount)

_____ # of tickets x \$19 = \$ _____

Reserved Chair: All Performances (price shows discount)

_____ # of tickets x \$25 = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Payment Information:

_____ Check, payable to American Stage enclosed
_____ Please bill my credit card (circle) Amex, MC, Visa, Disc.

Exp. Date _____

Sign _____

Please indicate your preferred dates (subject to availability)

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

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Happy 30th Birthday American Stage Theatre Company!

Three decades of bringing the best in professional regional theatre to Florida

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Angela's Corner

Notes from our Director of Development

What an incredibly exciting time this is at American Stage! The

holidays saw a super successful Subscriber Open House and Volunteer Appreciation Night. We had the most successful Annual Fund drive ever, thanks to our many generous friends.

On the horizon is our 24th Gala Under the Stars in Demens Landing on April 17th. This year's Gala is going to be better than ever – a black and white theme, with a delicious menu provided by Bon Appetit Management Company and wine provided by Southern Wine & Spirits, along with silent auction items for every budget and a high-end live auction featuring trips and fine art. Visit our Web site for details – invitations go out soon. Call me if you don't get yours!

In the works are our End of Era events – a matinee and evening performance of Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* on April 25 at the old theatre will bookend a party in our beloved courtyard to celebrate the last of our After Hours series shows. Similarly, on May 2, will be a matinee and evening performance of Anton Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard* with another courtyard party that will help us say goodbye to the old mainstage.

On May 3, we will have a Brick Brunch for those of you who bought a brick in years past and would like to take it with you – we will try to notify all of you "brickers," but it would help us if you would let me know who you are!

Finally – on May 30th we will hold a VIP Grand Opening Gala to mark the debut of the new Raymond James Theatre, featuring tours of the new offices and backstage area and hors d'oeuvres by Marchand's at the Vinoy. Tickets will be \$150. To be sure you're on the mailing list, please give me a ring or send me an email (727-823-1600 x. 203 or abond@americanstage.org).

On another note – as most of you know, our production of August Wilson's *King Hedley II* was an amazing critical and popular hit, with almost every show at near capacity. Tony Dungy came again (he attended *Gem of the Ocean* last year, too) and chatted with the actors afterwards! Coupled with *Gem's* success last year, we are truly on a roll with August Wilson's Century Cycle.

We are looking for dedicated August Wilson enthusiasts to help ensure the success of the rest of the Cycle during the next eight years by becoming members of our **Century Cycle Consortium**. For as little as \$500 per year for the next eight years, you can join an elite group of Wilson devotees that are helping American Stage foot the bill for these expensive shows. They are bigger in almost every way than most of our other shows (larger casts and larger sets add much to our production costs) and we need your help. Please call me at 727-823-1600 x. 203 to find out about the benefits of joining the Consortium.

Angela Bond

Director of Development
americanstage.org/contribute.php
abond@americanstage.org
 727-823-1600 x. 203

A Record 3,000 Patrons Subscribe for 30th Anniversary

American Stage Theatre Company is having an incredible 30th anniversary season, and most of the success is thanks to you. *A Tuna Christmas* is now the most attended play in our theatre's history, our "After Hours" series of edgier plays performed after the mainstage has closed for the night has been extremely successful and our move into our new building is almost complete.

The most impressive of our accomplishments this season, however, has got to be surpassing 3,000 subscribers for the first time ever.

"Prior to the season, we set a goal to have 3,000 of our patrons as subscribers in our 30th anniversary season," said Todd Olson, producing artistic director. "Thanks to you, we have not only met this goal, but have surpassed it."

For over 25 years, the theatre was unable to surpass 2,000 subscribers. Olson gives credit to the commitment of American Stage's patrons for the theatre's growth over the past few years.

"Five years ago, we only had 1,776 subscribers, and last season 2,807, so the growth of our subscribership and our subscribers love of American Stage says much about the health and importance of the art form in the Tampa Bay area," said Olson. "We have an incredible season planned for next year, and subscribing guarantees you the best price on tickets to see every show in our brand new theatre. If you are a current subscriber or want to join your friends and neighbors as a first time subscriber, now is the time to take advantage of our special prices (see the order form on page three)."

Two Special Events Planned to Say "Goodbye" to Old Theatre

It's time to celebrate the final days in our grand old building before we move into our new state-of-the-art theatre this June.

To commemorate the end of an era, American Stage has two special productions planned.

First up will be Samuel Beckett's beautiful statement on the need for change, *Happy Days*, on April 25, and Anton Chekov's valentine to saying goodbye, *The Cherry Orchard*, on May 2.

"Two seasons ago we had planned to



do a production of *The Cherry Orchard* as our way to say goodbye to our old building," said Todd Olson, producing artistic director. "We were all sad when that fell apart. Fortunately, we can now do two

readings of this great play as a final celebration for a building we all have such great memories in."

Both productions will have a matinee and evening performance with a special celebration in the old buildings courtyard. Call 727-823-PLAY(7529) for tickets.

End of Our Historic Season



Tampa Bay Premier!
TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE

by Jeffrey Hatcher after Mitch Albom
June 3 - 28

"A touching, life-affirming, deeply emotional drama with a generous dose of humor." -*New York Daily News*

One of the Top-10 most-produced plays in America this season, this is the comic and moving dramatization of the novel that was on *N.Y. Times'* Bestseller List for more than four years.

A Must See Hit!

DOUBT

by John Patrick Shanley
July 22 - Aug. 16

"The great American play certain to stand the test of time."

-*The Star Ledger*

The most lauded play of this century and winner of the Tony Award for "Best Play" and Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Sister Aloysius is an old-school nun who insists that the young and popular Father Flynn is having an inappropriate relationship with the school's first black student. Father Flynn denies the rumors, but who's telling the truth?



Take the BAIT "After Hours"

For 12 performances only, Bay Area Improv Theatre (BAIT) will perform their mind blowing improv as part of the American Stage "After Hours" series, March 17 thru April 11. All performances are "Pay-What-You-Can".

BAIT is the Tampa Bay area's premier long-form improvisation troupe. Starting with a simple one-word audience suggestion, BAIT creates an evening of bold, high-energy, and often hilarious unscripted scenes, in which a series of fascinating characters, themes and stories emerge. You've never seen anything like it!

Performances are Tuesdays at 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday nights at 11 p.m. For tickets call (727) 823-PLAY (7529) or visit americanstage.org.

Subscribe Now for the Best Prices!

Come and be among the first to experience the excitement of our first full season in the only brand new state-of-the-art building constructed for professional theatre in the Tampa Bay area. Subscribe now and receive the best prices on tickets you'll receive all season, along with the additional benefits that come with subscribership.



The Next Chapter in Our August Wilson Cycle!

FENCES by August Wilson September 27 - October 11, 2009

"The strongest, most passionate American dramatic writing since Tennessee Williams...*Fences* gave me one of the richest experiences I have ever had in the theatre." - *New York Post*

Fences is the powerful Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning drama by August Wilson that explores what holds families together and drives them apart.



The Perfect Start to the Holidays!

THIS WONDERFUL LIFE by Steve Murray, conceived by Mark Setlock November 20 - December 27, 2009

"This one-man tour de force bursts with hope and humor and delivers a witty and moving story brimming with nostalgia and imagination. A must-see during this holiday season. A pure joy to watch." - *Richmond.com*

A holiday classic about second chances.



Noel Coward's Classic British Farce!

BLITHE SPIRIT by Noel Coward January 22 - February 7, 2010

"Riotously witty stuff!" - *Daily Mail*

A smash on London's West End and on Broadway, this comic classic from the author of *Private Lives* and *Hay Fever* is the story of cantankerous novelist Charles Condine, who is re-married but haunted (literally) by the ghost of his ex-wife. When a medium conjures the late wife's spirit, inspired hilarity ensues.



The Must See Pulitzer Prize-Winning Smash Hit!

DRIVING MISS DAISY by Alfred Uhry March 12 - 28, 2010

"A perfectly shaped exploration of the relationship of two mirror opposites!" - *New York Post*

In the post-World War II South, a rich, sharp-tongued Jewish widow meets her new black chauffeur. Over a series of absorbing scenes spanning 25 years, the two earn each other's friendship and grow into one of theatre's great odd-couples.



25th Annual American Stage in the Park

HAIR by James Rado, Gerome Ragni, and Galt MacDermot April 23 - May 16, 2010

"*Hair* seems more daring than ever!"
- *Time Magazine*

Come see the groundbreaking rock musical featuring such loved classics as *Aquarius*, *Let the Sunshine In*, *Good Morning Starshine*, *Hair*, *I Got Life*, *What a Piece of Work Is Man*, *Ain't Got No*, *Easy to Be Hard* and *Where Do I Go?*



Tampa Bay Area Premiere!

NOVEMBER by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright David Mamet June 11 - 27, 2010

"A laugh machine! The audience provides a wall-to-wall laugh track" - *New York Times*

This new Broadway hit comedy by playwright and political satirist David Mamet proves once and for all that there is no lower place than the highest office in the land.



Tampa Bay Area Premiere!

THE SEAFARER by Conor McPherson July 23 - August 8, 2010

"The best new play of the year!"
- *Wall Street Journal*

In this eerie hit Broadway comedy, celebrated Irish playwright Conor McPherson examines how we struggle for redemption. It's Christmas Eve in Dublin, and a poker game is being played between four friends and an ominous stranger. As the booze flows and the play intensifies, the ultimate stakes are pitted on the games outcome.

SUBSCRIBING IS EASIER THAN EVER

Return this order form to our box office to get up to a 50% SAVINGS!
Compared to purchasing single tickets (prices good thru May 10)

Step 1: Who Are You?

Your Name _____
Address _____
City _____
Zip _____
Phone _____
E-Mail _____

Step 2: What Subscription Fits You?

7 Play Package (includes reserved chair at Park)

_____ opening night	\$209 each= \$ _____
_____ Friday/Saturday (circle day)	\$205 each= \$ _____
_____ Wednesday	\$155 each= \$ _____
_____ Thursday	\$163 each= \$ _____
_____ Matinee Sat/Sun (circle day)	\$172 each= \$ _____
_____ Preview Wed/Thur (circle day)	\$130 each= \$ _____

6 Play Package

_____ opening night	\$189 each= \$ _____
_____ Friday/Saturday (circle day)	\$185 each= \$ _____
_____ Wednesday	\$134 each= \$ _____
_____ Thursday	\$143 each= \$ _____
_____ Matinee Sat/Sun (circle day)	\$151 each= \$ _____
_____ Preview Wed/Thur (circle day)	\$109 each= \$ _____

5 Play Package

_____ opening night	\$158 each= \$ _____
_____ Friday/Saturday (circle day)	\$154 each= \$ _____
_____ Wednesday	\$112 each= \$ _____
_____ Thursday	\$119 each= \$ _____
_____ Matinee Sat/Sun (circle day)	\$126 each= \$ _____
_____ Preview Wed/Thur (circle day)	\$91 each= \$ _____

Flex Pass

_____ 6 Tickets to use when you want \$162 each= \$ _____

NextWAVE Pass (for 30 year olds and younger)

_____ 6 Tickets to use when you want \$108 each= \$ _____

100% SUBSCRIBER - each= \$ _____

Your subscription covers only a portion of the cost of your seat. Match your subscription cost with a tax-deductible contribution. **Be 100% SUBSCRIBED!**

DONATION - \$ _____

Any extra amount helps us produce the best in professional theatre.

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Enclosed, please find my check to American Stage

Please charge my credit card: _____ AMEX _____ MC
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Signature: _____

Send Order Form To: American Stage
P.O. Box 1560
St. Petersburg, FL 33731
or call our box office at 727-823-PLAY(7529)

229 Club

For only \$229 per year for three years, you can become a member of this exclusive club (only 229 allowed!) that we formed to help fund our new state-of-the-art lighting system (including 229 lighting instruments) in the Raymond James Theatre. Benefits include:

- Recognition on a special 229 Club plaque in the Hall of Honor of the Raymond James Theatre
- A specially designed 229 Club lapel pin
- Up to two (2) 2-for-1 tickets (total of four tickets) for any performance during the first week of any Mainstage play, excluding opening nights
- Up to four (4) free tickets to any After Hours play (excluding co-productions)
- A private backstage tour (call for an appointment)
- Opportunity to chat with a lighting designer about the new lighting system (call for an appointment)

Just call the development office at (727) 823-1600 x. 203 to sign up!

Lysistrata Closes Our Doors

American Stage Theatre Company performs its final play in its current building, Aristophanes' classic Greek comedy *Lysistrata*, running March 11 thru April 5, before moving into its new theater.

"No sex, please, we're Greek" is the theme of Aristophanes' famous comedy *Lysistrata*, first performed in 411 B.C. The Peloponnesian War has been raging for two decades and the women are tired of it. So one brave lady – Lysistrata – has a plan. She gathers all of the women together to agree to a pact: no sex until the war is over. What happens then when the men return for a little R&R is bawdy, naughty, funny, sexy and



shows again why the original Greek comedy is still so popular 2,500 years after it played at the Parthenon in Athens. The first Greek play in American Stage's history may well be the sexy sensation of the theatre going season!

Adapted by Todd Olson and T. Scott Wooten, *Lysistrata* is directed by Olson (*Betrayal*), and stars Steven Clark Pachosa

(*Hamlet*), Drew DeCaro (*Betrayal*), Julie Rowe (*By the Waters of Babylon*), and American Stage newcomers Sam Brown, Jon Gennari and Francine Wolf.

Performances and ticket prices are as follows: Wednesday and Thursday evening curtain is at 7:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday evening curtain is at 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday matinee curtain is at 3 p.m.

Tickets prices are \$24-\$39 depending on date and time of performance.

For tickets or information please call (727) 823-PLAY (7529) or go to our website at americanstage.org.



GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

LYSISTRATA

by Aristophanes

March 11 thru Apr. 5

Co-Sponsors: **Beth Houghton & Scott Wagman**
ABC Bicycles

American Stage "After Hours"

BAIT (BAY AREA IMPROV THEATRE)

March 17 thru Apr. 11

The 24th Annual American Stage in the Park
"Gulf Coast Florida's Favorite Outdoor Theatre Tradition"

ALTAR BOYZ

by Kevin Del Aguila, Gary Adler, Michael Patrick Walker, and Marc Kessler

April 15 thru May 10

To order your tickets or to purchase a subscription:

727.823.PLAY (7529) or
americanstage.org

American Stage Theatre Company

PO Box 1560

St. Petersburg, FL 33731

727.823.PLAY (7529)

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(L-R) Matthew McGee and Candler Budd starred in our all-time highest attended show, *A Tuna Christmas*



WHAT THE CRITICS ARE SAYING!

A Tuna Christmas by Ed Howard, Joe Sears, and Jaston Williams

"Matthew McGee and Candler Budd are both due the applause and laughter they receive. Uproarious...spectacular...as many laughs as there are toys in Santa's sleigh. Precisely what Santa ordered to spread a little mirth around Tampa Bay this holiday season!"
-Tampa Bay Newspaper

King Hedley II by August Wilson

"A stunning production, powerful, masterful...American Stage's 'King Hedley II' succeeds on a grand scale."
-St. Petersburg Times

"Stunning, brilliant and so often superb that we remain transfixed"-Creative Loafing
"Gritty, grimy and glorious"-Seminole Beacon Leader