

April  
2024



COMMUNITY  
**PLAYERS**  
*of Salisbury*

# Back Stage



## From the desk of the President...

A lot is happening at Community Players.

Director Sharon Benchoff says that rehearsals for our upcoming show, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, are going very well. I am really looking forward to seeing the show. I have read the script and I know you will enjoy this funny and thought provoking show. Reserved seat tickets for the April 12-13 and 19-20 show at WorWic Community College are available at our website [www.sbyplayers.org](http://www.sbyplayers.org).

Auditions for *Kiss Me Kate* will be held on Sunday, April 21 at 2 PM, Monday, April 22 and Wednesday, April 24 at 7 PM at Community Players. The show will be performed at Wicomico High School on June 21 – 23.

We will be performing a show at Players on April 26-28, *The Harlem Renaissance: A Celebration of the Arts*. It is a show that focuses on the visual, musical and literary artists who emerged during the 1920s and 1930s in Harlem. For more information contact Matt Bogdan at [oceancityhappyme@aol.com](mailto:oceancityhappyme@aol.com).

It is difficult to believe, but it is time to begin thinking about elections for Community Players Board of Directors. If you are interested in running for a position on the Board you must be a current dues paying member of Community Players (check the label on this newsletter), be able to attend the monthly meetings, and contribute to the discussions. The Board is responsible for running the organization as well as voting on the productions. Community Players is an inclusive organization and values the contributions of all of our members

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE cont.

If you believe you are ready to take that next step and become a member of the Board of Directors, or if you know someone whom you believe will be an asset to the Board, please contact me at [tomchicken@aol.com](mailto:tomchicken@aol.com). Nominations will be accepted through our April meeting with elections held at our May meeting.

Community Players Summer Children's Theater Workshop will be held July 8-12 from 9 AM to 3 PM at Community Players for students going into grades 3-8. The cost is \$200 per student, with a \$50 discount for Players' family or patron membership. Scholarship money will be available on a first come basis. Registration begins April 1 and ends June 15. For more information or to register for the workshop, contact Matt Bogdan at [oceanacityhappyme@aol.com](mailto:oceanacityhappyme@aol.com) or 443-235-3272.

If you are not getting our regular email blasts you can sign up at <http://eepurl.com/hpht11>. We won't sell your address nor overwhelm you with lots of emails.

**Tom Robinson**  
President

Many of you have asked me about the poster. When I started thinking about ideas for the poster, I was rather stumped. You, our friends, are usually familiar with the title or playwright of most of the shows we produce. Not so much with this one, even though it did win the Tony for Best Play in 2013 and Christopher Durang just received the Dramatists Guild Lifetime Achievement Award. On Broadway, it starred David Hyde Pierce and Sigourney Weaver – two names that you recognize. So, I decided to go with a poster, that hopefully piqued your curiosity and made you say to yourself, “well, this seems quirky and funny, let’s check it out”. There is truth in advertising. The show is funny and quirky. We are a couple of weeks away from opening and believe me when I say we have laughed our way through all eight weeks of rehearsals. Families are always fodder for comedy and this family, Vanya, Sonia and Masha plus their housekeeper Cassandra, Spike (Masha’s boyfriend) and visiting neighbor Nina will have you laughing, tittering, and sharing belly laughs. We all need laughs, and this witty comedy will leave you smiling for days to come. Oh, back to the poster. I decided to use an image that is tied to the character either in appearance or dialogue. To find the connection, come and see the play. Hope I see you there!

*Sharon*



## CONSIDERING AUDITIONING FOR KISS ME KATE?

Some folks are not familiar with Kiss Me Kate, so here are a few thoughts about a show that is one of the classic Broadway musicals. The show, with music by Cole Porter and book by Sam and Bella Spewack, premiered in 1948, and in 1949 won the first Tony Award for Best Musical. We will be doing the 1999 version, which won the Tony for best revival. In 2019, another revival was very successful.

The story is about a company trying out a play in Baltimore, getting ready for Broadway. The play within a play is a musical version of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, produced and directed by, and starring, Fred Graham. He claims to be 32 but is probably a little older. He has enticed his ex-wife, Lilli Vanessi, now a movie star, to return to theater to star as Katharine (the shrew). The second leading couple is Bill and Lois, "night club hoofers," who are playing Kate's sister Bianca, and her suitor Lucentio. Bill has a serious gambling problem. Lois a fidelity problem. Fred has his eye, and maybe more, on Lois. Bill signs Fred's name to an IOU to cover gambling debts. Two gangsters promptly show up to force Fred to pay, but he doesn't really owe the money, and doesn't have it anyway. The story is far-fetched, but funny.

In the first few scenes, the Broadway actors are introduced backstage. Then we move on stage to sixteenth century Padua for the show within a show, likewise, funny. Some of the dialogue is lifted from *The Taming of the Shrew*. Since we don't usually do Shakespeare here, this will give us some practice at it, without having to be Shakespearean actors.

There are music and dancing throughout the show, both in Baltimore and Italy. There are great production numbers starting each act, "Another Op'nin', Another Show" in Act I and "Too Darn Hot" in Act II. There are romantic songs, such as "So in Love" and "Wunderbar", and comic songs like "Always True to You in My Fashion" and "Tom, Dick or Harry". The eleven o'clock number, sung by the gangsters, "Brush Up Your Shakespeare", is one of the great comic songs in musical theater.

Last, this show is well suited for diverse casting, and race neutral casting. All are encouraged to audition.



# KISS ME KATE AUDITIONS

Auditions for *Kiss Me Kate* will be held on Sunday, April 21 at 2PM, Monday, April 22 and Wednesday, April 24 at 7PM at Community Players 5109 Nutters Cross Road in Salisbury, Maryland. Call backs, if necessary, will be at 7PM on Thursday, April 25 at Christ Methodist Church on Phillip Morris Drive in Salisbury. First rehearsal/read through, sing through will be Sunday, April 28 at 6:30. Show dates are June 21 to 23.

Auditioners should wear shoes and clothing appropriate for active dancing. Please prepare a song not from the show, of 16 to 32 bars or 30 to 60 seconds in duration. We prefer a song from a Broadway or movie musical, but other styles are acceptable. The director and musical director strongly prefer that you bring sheet music. An accompanist will be available. If you bring discs or tracks, we will be able to play them. Readings will be selections from the script. The cast of characters and director's comments about the show are included in this newsletter.

Questions? Contact director Kel Nagel at [kelnagel@yahoo.com](mailto:kelnagel@yahoo.com) or 410-726-0670.

KISS ME KATE--Cast of Characters		
Baltimore Cast	Description	Shrew Cast
Pops, stage doorman, part of quartet	60's	Padua priest, 3 <sup>rd</sup> male solo for Cantiamo D'Amore
Hattie, Lilli's dresser	30+	Ensemble?
Paul, Fred's dresser	20's+ specialty dance, lead solo Too Darn Hot	Ensemble?
Ralph, stage manager	30+	Ensemble singer
Lois Lane, nightclub singer, 1 <sup>st</sup> featured role	25+	Bianca Minola
Bill Calhoun, Broadway hooper, Lois' partner, gambler	25+	Lucentio
Lilli Vanessi, stage star and screen actress, former wife of Fred Graham	30's	Katherine Minola
Dance Captain, ensemble	20+	Gregory, servant to Petruchio
Fred Graham, writer producer, director, actor	30's	Petruchio and superman
Harry Trevor, veteran character actor	50+	Baptiste Minola
Stagehand 1, cab driver		Nathaniel, servant to Petruchio, solo for Cantiamo D' Amore
First Man, gangster	30+	"Aide" to Katherine
Second Man, gangster	30+	Aide" to Katherine
Flynt, aide to General Howell, ensemble dancer	20's	Gremio (1 <sup>st</sup> suitor)
Riley, aide to General Howell, ensemble dancer	20's	Hortensio (2 <sup>nd</sup> suitor), solo Cantiamo D'Amore
Stagehand 2, assistant electrician, part of quartet	20's, Too Darn Hot	Phillip, servant to Petruchio
Stagehand 3, driver for General Howell, part of quartet	20's, Too Darn Hot	Haberdasher
General Harrison Howell, career military officer, politician, Lilli's new man	50+	
Wardrobe lady	20+	Ensemble, part of female quartet
Ensemble singer		Padua Inn waitress, part of female quartet
Two women, ensemble	20+	Ensemble, part of female quartet
Additional Ensemble		
Note that the age ranges listed may not be the actual ages of the actors who are cast. Late teens will be considered for the 20+ parts and ensemble.		

## **THEATRE TEASERS**

Trivia by Sharon Benchoff  
April Showers

- 1.. Raindrops on roses, whiskers on kittens are just a few of Maria's "Favorite Things" in this musical.
2. "Soon it's going to rain" is one of the songs from this long, long running musical.
3. Well not as well-known as the title song of this musical, Sandy sings "It's Raining on Prom Night".
4. "River in the Rain" is a song in this musical about The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.
5. Where does the rain fall in *My Fair Lady*?
6. This musical features characters Don Lockwood, Kathy Selden and Cosmo Brown.
7. In this play Lizzie falls for a traveler who promises to bring rain to her draught plagued Texas town.
8. This Ziegfeld Follies star tells her friends "Don't Rain on My Parade".
9. Eponine sings "A Little Fall of Rain" in this monumental musical.
10. "Rain on the Roof" is featured in this Sondheim musical about a reunion of old chorus dancers.

Answers found on page 6

## **FUNDRAISING UPDATE**

Movie Night was held on March 16. Although attendance was low, the audience and the crew had a great time. Thanks to David Allen, Brenda Allen, Tony Broadbent, Matt Bogdan, and Bonnie Nay for their time and effort in the fundraiser. Also, thanks go to those who helped to man the gate at Bordeleau Vineyards and Winery in Eden as part of the Chili Cook-off and Spring Festival on March 30.

Volunteers are needed to help with the 50/50 raffle at the *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* performances on April 12-13 and April 19-20. To volunteer, contact Matt Bogdan at 443-235-3272 or [oceancityhappyme@aol.com](mailto:oceancityhappyme@aol.com).

## **GRANTS UPDATE**

Thanks go to the Coastal Association of Realtors who granted the Players \$500 to go toward the Children Theater's Workshop. Also, we thank the Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council and the Maryland State Arts Council for their continued support.

# CHILDREN'S THEATER WORKSHOP UPDATE

The Children's Theater Workshop will be held July 8-12 at the Players building on Nutters Cross Road. Registration begins April 1 and ends on June 15. The workshop is for children going into grades 3-8. For registration information, including the registration form, go to [sbyplayers.org](http://sbyplayers.org) and click on Workshops. Applications for Workshop counselors are also being accepted. They may be found on the website also and are due by April 15th.

## BACK STAGE SUBMISSIONS

Articles, photos, etc. for publication in Back Stage should be emailed to me ([popirusty@comcast.net](mailto:popirusty@comcast.net)) by the 15th of each month. Also, if you have ideas for the improvement of our newsletter, please let me know!

*Rusty Mumford*  
Corresponding Secretary



Players' next meetings will be **Wednesday, Apr. 3 (6:30 PM) and May 1 (7:00 PM)**. Join us to see where you can help with the second half of the season!

## ANSWERS TO TRIVIA QUESTIONS:



- Answers:
1. *The Sound of Music*
  2. *The Fantasticks*
  3. *Grease*
  4. *Big River*
  5. *Spain*
  6. *Singin' in the Rain*
  7. *The Rainmaker*
  8. *Fanny Brice*
  9. *Les Miserables*
  10. *Follies*

## PLAYERS ELECTIONS ARE AROUND THE CORNER

Hello, it's me again. Yes, I'm directing April's show, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, but I am writing this as the Chair of the Nominating Committee. I am directing because just one of the duties of the Board is selecting the season's slate of shows. We also decide how best to spend funds that we are fortunate to receive either in ticket purchases, patrons, grants, advertising, donations, or memberships. The officers and board members must make certain that Players is always striving to live up to our mission statement. We have healthy discussions, and all are welcome to speak their mind as we endeavor to bring quality productions to the citizens of the Eastern Shore.

Do you want to become part of the decision-making process? The Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month and you will be expected to attend and participate. You do not have to have a degree in theatre or an MBA. But, if you do have a passion for Players, whether on the stage, behind the scenes, fundraising, community outreach or brainstorming, you just may be exactly what we are looking for. We all have different strengths.

If you are interested in running for the Board or as an Officer, please send me an email. If you have any questions, please email me. If you know of someone whom you believe would be an asset to Players, please contact me. Nominations are open until the close of the May meeting. Votes will be counted at the June meeting. New terms begin in July.

Thank you,

*Sharon Benchoff*

***The Harlem Renaissance: A Celebration of the Arts*** will be held April 26 and 27 at 7 p.m. and April 28 at 2 p.m. at the Players Playhouse at 5109 Nutters Cross Road. Visual artists, musical artists, and literary artists will be showcased. Ernie Matthews, in memory of his wife Elizabeth, is sponsoring the Harlem Renaissance show. Tickets are \$10 (cash or check) and available at the door. For reservations contact Matt Bogdan, director and producer of the show, at 443-235-3272 or [oceancityhappyme@aol.com](mailto:oceancityhappyme@aol.com).

Cast includes the following:

Frank Armstead	Lew Kadushin
Matt Bogdan	Rusty Mumford
Holly Bruce	Josh Nordstrom
Jason Bruce	Skye Osborne
Amber Green	Bob Snyder
Judy Hearn	Sharnell Tull
Bob Herbertson	Sharon Washington
Adrienne Kadushin	Maria White



**Community Players of Salisbury**  
**P. O. Box 2431**  
**Salisbury, MD 21802**

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*Please consider  
becoming a member  
of Community Players.  
If you are not sure if  
your dues are paid for  
the current year,  
please check the  
mailing label on this  
newsletter.  
If it does not show  
2023-24, your dues  
are not up-to-date.*

**HAPPY  
EASTER**

*Back Stage is funded, in part by a grant from the Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council (SWAC). Players would like to thank SWAC for their continued support.*

**Next Meetings - Wednesday, Apr. 3 (6:30 PM) and May 1 (7:00 PM).**

**Community Players Officers & Board of Directors**  
**July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024**

*President: Tom Robinson - tomchicken@aol.com  
Vice-President: Matt Bogdan - oceancityhappyme@aol.com  
Recording Secretary: Darrell Mullins - dgmullins@salisbury.edu  
Corresponding Secretary: Rusty Mumford - popirusty@comcast.net  
Treasurer: Charlie Linton - charliecamtransport@yahoo.com  
Immediate Past-President: Kel Nagel - kelnagel@yahoo.com*

*Board Members*

*Kate Adkins, Bobbie Calloway, Robin Finley - Term Expires 2024  
Sharon Benchoff, Cass Dasher, Kyle Hayes - Term Expires 2025  
Lynne Bratten, Ken Johnson, Shelbie Thompson - Term Expires 2026*

*Community Players is committed to celebrating an inclusive culture of creativity by welcoming actors, technicians, designers, musicians, and production team members from varied backgrounds with regards to race, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, physical & mental ability, and religious & political beliefs.*