

## THE MORNING LINE

**DATE:** Thursday, January 17, 2013

**FROM:** Michael Strassheim, Emily Meagher, Michelle Farabaugh  
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**PAGES:** 20, *including this page*

The New York Times

## Arts Beat

The Culture at Large

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JANUARY 16, 2013, 10:53 AM

### Second Stage Adds 'Nobody Loves You'

By *DAVE ITZKOFF*

"Nobody Loves You," a musical satire about reality television and its shameless contestants, will be the final production in the 2012-13 season at Second Stage Theater, the company said on Wednesday. The musical -- which features a book by Itamar Moses (the playwright of "[The Four of Us](#)" and a writer for television's "Boardwalk Empire"), music by Gaby Alter, lyrics by Mr. Moses and Mr. Alter and choreography by Mandy Moore (of television's "So You Think You Can Dance") -- chronicles a young man who competes on a fictional reality show (also called "Nobody Loves You") in hopes of regaining a lost girlfriend and of exposing the contrivances of the show.

Reviewing the original production of "Nobody Loves You" at the Old Globe Theater in San Diego, Charles Isherwood [wrote in The New York Times](#) that it "confounds expectations with its verve and ingenuity in poking silly fun at the absurdities of the crass, malice-riddled and embarrassingly addictive" varieties of reality TV contests.

Michelle Tattenbaum, who directed "Nobody Loves You" at the Old Globe, will return as director for the Second Stage production. Dates and casting were not immediately announced.

January 16, 2013  
THEATER REVIEW

## Scent of Chekhov May Confuse the Senses

By BEN BRANTLEY

Remember those much-parodied [Calvin Klein fragrance commercials](#) that Richard Avedon did in the mid-1980s? The ones with glamorous, sexually ambiguous young creatures in stark rooms, striking languorous poses and speaking enigmatic nonsense? Well, that's kind of what Tina Satter's "Seagull (Thinking of you)," part of Performance Space 122's [Coil Festival](#), feels like, at least at first.

The stage at the New Ohio Theater is a rhapsody in white, with billowing, diaphanous curtains and small columns on which cunning little bibelots are perched. (Andreea Mincic is the set designer.) As wind chimes and bird song delicately drift through the air, you half expect to hear a breathless voice whisper, "Chekhov: The Perfume. Smell the melancholy."

Instead, six glamorous, sexually ambiguous young creatures in cocktail outfits and silly headgear drift onto the stage and start chattering irritably and competitively in what appears to be Russian. They're a lot more animated than the poseurs from those Obsession ads. But they too speak in what is likely to sound like enigmatic gibberish to anyone who isn't thoroughly familiar with [Chekhov's "Seagull,"](#) the play that inspired this performance piece.

Actually, to make sense of this production from Ms. Satter's [Half Straddle](#) company, you probably need to have made a study of Chekhov's life and letters too. And it would probably help if you were a personal friend of the members of the ensemble and have heard about their relationships during rehearsals.

This is one of those pieces, familiar to avant-garde audiences since the days of Dada, that blur all possible boundaries: between actors and their roles, male and female, fiction and reality, past and present, parody and sincerity. Or as Ms. Satter said [in an interview](#), "It's like someone took Chekhov's 'The Seagull' and put it inside a snow globe and shook it up." As this production's Nina might answer, "Whatever."

Nina, of course, is the young actress who identifies with the title bird of Chekhov's play. In this version, embodied by the willowy Emily Davis, she often talks contemporary girl talk, sounding sulky, self-conscious and awesomely hyperbolic. Ms. Satter has said that the character of Nina — with her "weird, adolescent girl magic" — was the gateway to her interpretation of Chekhov.

This means that we find Nina swapping acting tips and comparing her hair luster with that of her frenemy Masha (Eliza Bent). And getting testy with the writer Trigorin, also known as Peter, also known as Dorn (Becca Blackwell) and her kind of sort of boyfriend Treplov (Jess Barbagallo). And necking with that vain, older actress, Arkadina (Suzie Sokol).

Huh? Well, I might have gotten it wrong, since in the necking scene Arkadina is speaking the lines of Treplov, who will speak them himself later. Or it's possible that Ms. Davis and Ms. Sokol are just necking as themselves.

You're probably not expected to make coherent sense of this "Seagull," which also features Julia Sirna-Frest as a guitar-strumming Polina. Or is she a bossy stage manager? The performers frequently step out of character, if they were ever in it, to discuss the agonies of acting. Occasionally, they sing Russian-style rock music by Chris Giarmo.

The overall effect is self-conscious, giddy and sometimes funny in its absurdity. (The stuffed seal on the skateboard is quite winning.) At other times the production is just numbing, in the way that shows that seem hermetically sealed to outsiders can be. At a moment in New York theater when adventurous young artists are [taking their Chekhov very personally](#), Ms. Satter manages to be the most strictly personal of all.

### **Seagull (Thinking of you)**

Written and directed by Tina Satter; sets by Andreea Mincic; lighting by Zack Tinkelman; music and sound by Chris Giarmo; production manager, Liz Nielsen; stage manager, Randi Rivera; costumes by Enver Chakartash; Russian translation assistance by Tom Coiner, Kate Marvin, Olga Okuneva and Maxin Tumenev. A Half Straddle production, presented by Performance Space 122 and the New Ohio Theater, as part of P.S. 122's Coil Festival. At the New Ohio Theater, 143 Christopher Street, West Village; (212) 352-3101; ps122.org. Through Jan. 26. Running time: 1 hour, 15 minutes.

WITH: Jess Barbagallo (Treplov), Eliza Bent (Masha), Becca Blackwell (Peter), Emily Davis (Nina), Julia Sirna-Frest (Polina) and Susie Sokol (Arkadina).

January 16, 2013

THEATER REVIEW

## By the Fadduh of '60s Parodies

By DANIEL M. GOLD

Broadway history is punctuated with failures, but some are more spectacular than others. Surely hopes were high in 1969 when Allan Sherman, he of “[Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh](#)” and the best-selling song-parody album “My Son, the Folk Singer,” delivered a musical about the strains of infidelity then sweeping across suburbia. Despite Dorothy Loudon as its star and [George Abbott](#) as its director “The Fig Leaves Are Falling” closed after four performances, leaving behind a memorable pan from Clive Barnes of The New York Times. “There is nothing much wrong” with the show, [he wrote](#), “that a new book, new music, new lyrics, new settings, new direction, new choreography and a partially new cast would not quite possibly put right.”

Now [UnsungMusicalsCo.](#) has revived — or more accurately, revised — the show, keeping Sherman’s book and lyrics and Albert Hague’s music in play. But as the director, Ben West, notes in the program, this “Fig Leaves” drops some characters and elements, and restores three musical numbers, unused lyrics and two scenes cut from the original production. Whether this tinkering helps is hard to determine.

Presented here as a tale told on a 1960s variety show (Broadway’s “[Catch Me if You Can](#)” had a similar conceit), the story is as basic as a charcoal-gray suit: Harry Stone (Jonathan Rayson), a middle-aged corporate executive who lives in Larchmont, N.Y., with his devoted wife, Lillian (Natalie Venetia Belcon), is tested when Jenny (Morgan Weed), a young Sarah Lawrence graduate who looks really good in a miniskirt, becomes his secretary. There’s some exceptional singing by the cast of eight; smart, smooth choreography; and costuming that serves as markers of that era.

But in the end the songs and their chronicle of temptation disappoint. There is little of the snap or crackle of Sherman’s best lyrics, and Hague’s music is forgettable. The high-quality production values and cast, especially Mr. Rayson, provide satisfying moments, but sometimes it’s best to keep a curio in the cabinet.

The New York Times

January 16, 2013

# Conrad Bain, Father on 'Diff'rent Strokes', Dies at 89

By WILLIAM YARDLEY

Conrad Bain, an accomplished stage and film actor who was best known for a late-career role on television as the white adoptive father of two poor black boys on the long-running comedy "Diff'rent Strokes," died on Monday in Livermore, Calif. He was 89.

His daughter, Jennifer Bain, confirmed the death on Wednesday.

Mr. Bain had been familiar to television viewers as Dr. Arthur Harmon, a neighbor of Bea Arthur's title character on "Maude," when he joined the cast of "Diff'rent Strokes" in 1978, the beginning of an eight-season run. He played Phillip Drummond, a wealthy Manhattan widower who had promised his dying housekeeper, who was black and lived in Harlem, that he would rear her sons, Arnold (Gary Coleman) and Willis (Todd Bridges).

Drummond had a biological daughter, Kimberly, played by Dana Plato, and the show's plotlines interwove punch lines with larger lessons about the experiences of a racially blended family.

Mr. Bain's Drummond was stiff but steady and warm when necessary, the implication being that willingly adopting and nurturing poor, older black children attested to the strength of his character.

"You know, a lot of people just talk of taking on bigots," Drummond said to Kimberly in an early episode, after she had rejected a suitor who told her he did not like being around black people, "but very few people ever really do."

Drummond's gentle moralizing, as well as his gentle language — using "bigots" rather than "racists" — was central to the show, which was popular with both black and white viewers. But the show was also criticized as simplistic and patronizing.

Henry Louis Gates Jr., writing in The New York Times in 1989, three years after the show's final season, said "Diff'rent Strokes" followed a tradition of "domestication" and "cultural dwarfism" of black men in mainstream entertainment, "in which small black 'boys' (arrested adolescents who were much older than the characters they played) were adopted by tall, successful white males," who "represented the myth of the benevolent paternalism of the white upper class."

Mr. Coleman, who was diminutive because of treatments related to a congenital kidney disease, said later that he had come to dislike the scenes in which, even when he had become a teenager in real life, his character continued to hop into Mr. Bain's lap for yet another light lecture.

In one final-season episode that focused on older foster children, Drummond looked into the camera and said: "Being father to these boys brought a warmth and richness into my life that I never could possibly have imagined. And of course I was able to give two kids a chance that they might otherwise have been denied."

Drummond delivered an occasional cultural jab as well. In an early episode he tells Arnold he is going out for dinner with a friend from England.

"England?" Arnold says. "Isn't that where they talk funny?"

"No," Mr. Drummond replies, "that's the Bronx."

Jennifer Bain said her father was warm, loving and politically liberal, but bore few other similarities to Drummond.

“My father was far more interesting than that character,” Ms. Bain said, adding, “We were a very intellectual, artsy family.”

Conrad Stafford Bain was born on Feb. 4, 1923, in Lethbridge, Alberta, in Canada. He attended the Banff School of Fine Arts in Alberta and served as a sergeant in the Canadian Army from 1943 to 1946. He then moved to New York, where he graduated from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

He spent much of the next 30 years in the theater, making his New York debut Off Broadway in 1956 in “The Iceman Cometh.” In 1971 he appeared in Ibsen’s “Enemy of the People” by the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center.

Besides his daughter, he is survived by two sons, Mark and Kent, and a twin brother, Bonar. His wife of more than 60 years, the abstract painter and art collector Monica Bain (born Monica Sloan), died in 2009.

The three child actors who starred alongside Mr. Bain on “Diff'rent Strokes” struggled in their private lives with substance abuse and legal and financial problems. Mr. Coleman died in 2010 at 42. Ms. Plato died of a drug overdose in 1999 at 34. Mr. Bridges was acquitted of attempted murder in 1990.

Mr. Bridges, who remained in contact with Mr. Bain, said in a statement that “in addition to being a positive and supportive father figure both on and off screen, Conrad was well loved and made going to work each day enjoyable for all of us.”

JANUARY 2013

# A Walk on the Dark Side

After several presidential detours, Benjamin Walker comes back to the classics in Broadway's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

by Brandon Voss

He's played the titular presidents in the blockbuster *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* and the Broadway rock musical *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, but Benjamin Walker now faces one of his greatest challenges in leading a classic Tennessee Williams family drama. Walker—whose previous Broadway credits include revivals of *Inherit the Wind* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*—stars as tormented alcoholic Brick Pollitt opposite Tony winner Scarlett Johansson's Maggie in the latest revival of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, which officially opens January 17 at Broadway's Richard Rodgers Theatre. The 30-year-old actor-comedian discusses the perils of onstage drinking and how he's found the funny in the dysfunction.

**You became an action star in *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*, and you'll next appear onscreen in the HBO film *Muhammad Ali's Greatest Fight*. As you branch out into television and film, how important is it for you to stay connected to the theatre?**

I started out in the theatre, and I'm never going to not be doing theatre. I love that the best literature is in the theatre, and I love the people in the theatre. I love that the theatre community is a real community, whereas the movie business is a business. I like working in that business too, and I'm inspired by people in that field, but it's the legacy of the theatre that keeps drawing me to it.

**What attracted you to *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*?**

Our director, Rob Ashford, was one of the first guys to give me a shot. We were going to do *Brigadoon* together a few years ago, but it fell apart. I adore his work. He inspires me, and I knew that I could learn a lot from him. And Scarlett's not bad either! Based on those two components alone, I'd be interested in doing the play even if it were toilet paper.



Benjamin Walker and his Maggie, Scarlett Johansson, promoting *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

**Rob Ashford is an inspired choice for this revival, which marks his directorial debut of a non-musical Broadway production. He's a director-choreographer best known for his work on shows like *Evita*, *How to Succeed*, and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.**

Well, the play is very musical. It is music. It is poetry. It is dance. A trap of the play is to let the movement be worn down slow by the Southern heat, but these people really are like a cat on a hot tin roof—screaming, bouncing, constantly jumping in pain. The need for that physicality is something Rob really understands and is brilliant at pulling out of us.

**You married actress Mamie Gummer last year. Are you drawing on the new marriage, with all its ups and downs, to enrich Brick and Maggie's relationship?**

Luckily my wife and I don't have that much in common with Maggie and Brick. [Laughs] But yeah, I draw from every relationship. And



JON MARCUS



Walker broke into the public consciousness as the titular presidents in *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* (above) and *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* (below)

STEPHEN VAUGHAN



Scarlett also brings so much from her own life that really creates a lovely chemistry.

**What's the greatest challenge in playing this iconic role?**

Finding a pee break. I have to keep drinking, refilling my glass, and I'm onstage the whole time! I might need to hide a spittoon in the corner. Other than that, where to begin? Tennessee Williams is the best, but he's certainly the most challenging writer that I've worked on in a long time.

**As far as Brick's heavy drinking goes, how method have you been in your research?**

Oh, my research on that has been well done for years. I'm typecast, if nothing else.

**You're also a stand-up comic and host of a variety series called *Find the Funny*. Are you finding the humor in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*?**

The more time I spend with my comedian friends, the more I realize that truly funny people are ones with a really deep inner darkness. Brick is definitely stewing over some painful stuff, and oftentimes people can only release that through humor, sarcasm, or being cutting in a way that causes nervous laughter. Tennessee Williams is a funny writer in the same way as Chekhov; if the audience isn't laughing, you've probably missed the point. There's a fine line between drama and comedy that we walk, and life is like that too.

**Some theatergoers may compare your performance as Brick with your performance as Andrew Jackson. It's easy to dismiss those characters as having nothing in common, but have you noticed any similarities?**

Yeah, actually. They're both very conflicted men at crossroads in their lives, and they have to make huge decisions that will affect the legacy of their families. Of course, the shows are very different. When a cell phone rang during *Andrew Jackson*, I could just yell, "Shut off your phone, you prick!" I have to get out of that habit. ♦



KEVIN TATAROLA

**THEATRE QUIZ**

by Andrew Gans

**ACTING PRESIDENTIAL**

January 20 marks Inauguration Day. On that day, President Barack Obama, who was recently elected to a second term as commander-in-chief, will take the oath of office once again. Throughout the years, U.S. presidents have been depicted on stages both on and off Broadway. Pictured below are photos of productions featuring a U.S. president as a character. Can you identify each show's title?



- 1 Sam Waterston (pictured left with David Aaron Baker) earned a Tony Award nomination for Best Actor for his performance in the title role of this 1993 Broadway revival of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Robert E. Sherwood play.
- 2 Benjamin Walker played the seventh President of the United States in this emo rock musical by Alex Timbers and Michael Friedman.
- 3 Frank Langella won a Tony for his performance as a president who famously resigned while facing impeachment and removal from office in this Peter Morgan play set in and around an infamous talk-show appearance.
- 4 The 1969 Broadway debut of this Sherman Edwards–Peter Stone musical about the signing of the Declaration of Independence featured William Daniels as John Adams.
- 5 Franklin D. Roosevelt (played by Merwin Foard) makes an appearance in the current Broadway revival of this classic musical and even sings a few bars of the musical's anthem.
- 6 This David Hare play made its New York premiere in 2006 at the Public Theater. It starred Jay O. Sanders as George W. Bush and concerned the events leading up to the Iraq War.



Answers: 1 Abe Lincoln in Illinois 2 Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson 3 Frost/Nixon 4 1776 5 Annie 6 Stuff Happens

01.17.13

PLAY N.Y.

# The Other Place

BY ERIK HAAGENSEN

**S**harr White's penetrating drama "The Other Place" was a highlight of the 2011 winter theatrical season when it played Off-Broadway at the Lucille Lortel Theatre. Now the MCC Theater show is on Broadway, courtesy of Manhattan Theatre Club, with half of its four-person cast new. Once again guided faultlessly by director Joe Mantello, the production has been expertly expanded to fill the larger space without sacrificing intimacy or nuance. Laurie Metcalf returns to offer her galvanizing portrayal of Dr. Juliana Smithton, a dementia specialist suddenly faced with the condition herself, and Metcalf's shattering work has only gotten richer. Bold, unflinching, and ingeniously constructed, this is a show not to be missed.

Clocking in at a swift 75 minutes, "The Other Place" still begins with Juliana giving a presentation to a gathering of scientists about a possible new wonder drug for fighting dementia. Though White comes back to this lecture repeatedly, he interrupts it with scenes detailing Juliana's attempts to discover why she experienced a meltdown in the middle of it. Included are Juliana's husband, Ian, a well-known oncologist; her estranged daughter, Laurel; and Laurel's husband, Richard, a former postdoc of Juliana's. There's also Juliana's young doctor, Cindy Teller, who remains unfazed by her often condescending, even cuttingly cruel patient. Juliana insists that she has brain cancer, but as the proceedings progress we come to understand that she is in denial about more than just her illness, despite her ferocious intelligence and astringent personality. The title refers to a Cape Cod beach house that has been in Juliana's family for generations and that will be the site of both Juliana's humbling and her salvation.

White asks his audience to put together the puzzle itself, and surprise is crucial to the play's success. Nevertheless, even knowing what would happen, I was again riveted. Metcalf is



Laurie Metcalf, Daniel Stern, and Zoe Perry in "The Other Place"

**METCALF IS DEVASTATING AS JULIANA, WHETHER RIGOROUSLY UNSENTIMENTAL WHILE REVIEWING HER OPTIONS, VICIOUSLY LASHING OUT AT THE GENTLE IAN FOR ILLUSORY BETRAYALS, OR SUDDENLY, SHOCKINGLY VULNERABLE IN HER LOVE FOR HIM AND HER DAUGHTER.**

devastating as Juliana, whether clinically unsentimental while reviewing her options, viciously lashing out at the gentle Ian for illusory betrayals, or suddenly, shockingly vulnerable in her love for him and Laurel. Zoe Perry, Metcalf's real-life daughter, steps into the part of Laurel and also limns Cindy and a third character, a soon-to-be-divorced young woman who comes into Juliana's life unexpectedly. Perry is excellent as all three and particularly shines in the last, going from fear to frustration to melting concern with subtlety. Daniel Stern takes over the part of Ian and stresses his decency and deep feelings for his wife; Stern's playing of the moment when Ian finds himself overwhelmed by the abuse the damaged Juliana is hurling at him is heartbreaking. John Schiappa is again on hand to play Richard and a helpful nurse (his third small role, as a medical technician, is gone) with quiet authority.

As he did with "Other Desert Cities," Mantello proves his adeptness at retaining the magic of an ensemble production despite cast changes and a larger venue. And this is an ensemble piece, notwithstanding the tour de force nature of Metcalf's role and her work in it. "The Other Place" marks White as a formidable talent. **b**



Critic's Score

**PRODUCED BY**

Manhattan Theatre Club,  
by special arrangement  
with MCC Theater

**CAST BY**

Caparelliottis Casting  
and Telsey + Company

**SCHEDULE**

Jan. 10–Feb. 24

**LOCATION**

The Samuel J.  
Friedman Theatre

JANUARY 2013

## A Family That Plays Together

Laurie Metcalf returns to her acclaimed role in *The Other Place*—this time, with her daughter by her side.

by Stuart Miller

Laurie Metcalf is doing this interview from a hospital room; but Metcalf, who is getting ready to star on Broadway as a biophysicist confronting a possible medical crisis in *The Other Place*, is not doing research for her role. "I'm learning to flush out an IV," she explains by way of greeting.

Her 12-year-old son was recovering from appendicitis and Metcalf and ex-husband Matt Roth were learning the process before taking

him home. Metcalf admits that she feels some guilt flying off to New York while he recovers but says most of the time her theatre career is a perk for her three kids with Roth.

"They're able to stay in Los Angeles with their dad but when they come to see me in New York or Chicago or London, it's the best vacation," she says. In New York this time around there will be even more family, since Metcalf's onstage daughter is being played

by her actual daughter—Zoe Perry (from first husband Jeff Perry). "I have my days free and we get to see these great cities, and they love hanging around the theatre."

No one in the family loves hanging around the theatre more than Metcalf herself. She recently had recurring roles in television series like *Desperate Housewives* and *The Big Bang Theory*, and she returned as the voice of Andy's mom in the animated film *Toy Story 3*, but she has really spent most of her time and energy over the last five years on stage, since her Tony-nominated performance in David Mamet's *November*.

"I work kind of backward—I never thought I'd end up living in L.A.—so now I'm always traveling to do theatre," she says. She ended up in L.A., of course, because of the role that made her famous, playing Roseanne's sister Jackie on *Roseanne*, for which she won three Emmys and was nominated for four more (plus two Golden Globes).



Laurie Metcalf as Juliana Smithton  
in the Off-Broadway production  
of *The Other Place*

JOAN MARCUS

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PLAYBILL.COM

She was nominated this past November for a London Evening Standard Award for her work as Mary Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and she won an Obie and a Lucille Lortel Award last year for the Off-Broadway production of *The Other Place*. Playwright Sharr White was struck by how Metcalf is both so technically proficient and emotionally available, a combination that gave her the ability to "draw the audience in to her," which her character, Juliana, needs to do immediately. "I was just blown away," White says.

The previous year she also won an Obie for Ethan Hawke's superb revival of Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind*. In 2010 the Illinois native also returned to Chicago's famed Steppenwolf theatre group for the first time in six years. She was part of the group's original ensemble—which included founders Gary Sinise, Terry Kinney, and Perry, plus John Malkovich. She had appeared in 29 productions there from its start in 1976 to 1990, but only got back for another seven shows between 1991 and 2010, when she co-starred in the hit *Detroit*—all told, Metcalf has won seven Jeff Awards, Chicago's Tony equivalent.

Of the impressive versatility she has displayed moving between comedy and drama, contemporary and classic, she says it just happened organically, based on the scripts she was given. She does, however, find being the first to play a role in a contemporary play most exciting of all.

"But it was definitely a conscious choice to go back to theatre," she says, in part because Hollywood doesn't offer as many "complicated and deep roles" as theatre does, especially for women as they get older and in part because theatre, her "first love," is where she's best able to "attack those kind of roles."

"The process is so different in theatre; you don't have to work out of order on scenes and you have the luxury of a longer rehearsal period," she says. That was necessary with *Mary Tyrone*, for instance, because "it was difficult finding my path to her mental state and to figure out how to moderate the [impact] of the drugs."

It won't take that long with *The Other Place*, which opens January 11 at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre, since she's already inhabited

the character of Juliana Smithton but still, she says, "I've learned stuff in my life since then, so there's always something new I can apply." Metcalf hopes to find even more vulnerability in this determined and intellectual character, who is so in command that she can otherwise come off as brusque, but she's confident that reuniting with director Joe Mantello while having new co-stars—in addition to her daughter, Daniel Stern has taken over the role originated by Dennis Boutsikaris Off-Broadway—to bounce ideas off.



"I'm very excited to see Laurie and Zoe work together," White says. "There are some real similarities in their speech and in their presence."

Metcalf is excited about the cast and the role but in a way she's just excited to be working again. "I don't really love being between jobs," Metcalf says. "I'm happy whenever I'm in a rehearsal room. I've always gotten all my energy and creativity in there."

And it doesn't get old no matter how many times she has to leave home for a show. "I'm grateful that my passion for it has not gone away. I've loved every minute of every hour I've spent doing theatre." ◆

January 17, 2013

## The Show Must Go On— Even With Flu Symptoms

By RICHARD MORGAN

Most of the time, Broadway actors are merely annoyed by sniffles and wheezes from the seats. But a virulent New York flu season means performers have more to fear than audiences' badly timed coughs.

For John Michael Dias, who just finished a three-week run as Frankie Valli in "Jersey Boys," the germ threat to his onstage stint seemed to be everywhere—even inside his apartment. "I have a roommate who's a pediatrician at New York Presbyterian," he said, "and every night she comes home with fresh baby germs. What am I thinking?"

Fearing the winter mélange of maladies that actors call "the crud" is an annual rite of passage under Broadway's bright lights, but the city's severe flu season has fueled extra dread.

Patients with flu-like symptoms now account for about 5% of all city hospital visits, according to latest report from the city's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, more than double the national base line.

Barry Kohn, a retired allergist who makes house calls on Broadway, has administered more than 4,300 flu shots at 140 theater venues since September. He volunteers his time and sees anxious actors at his apartment on Central Park South.

"Everything has broken loose," said Dr. Kohn, who has been a theater-world fixture since before he inspired "The Tale of the Allergist's Wife," a 2000 play that was nominated for three Tony awards. "Suddenly the phone is ringing off the hook."

Nicole Bouvier, an internist at Mount Sinai School of Medicine who researches influenza, said a particularly virulent strain had spread in the city this winter. But, she added, the current flu season started earlier than nor-



Bryan Derballa for The Wall Street Journal

Barry Kohn, right, gives a flu shot to actor Daniel Stern, who is currently performing in 'The Other Place.'

mal and followed a below-average flu year.

"So this year seems to be hitting harder," Dr. Bouvier said.

The show must go on, of course, and performers interviewed this week described a host of homeopathic help for warding off symptoms.

Some rely on the Cold Warrior, a hot fruit smoothie marketed as a made-for-actors remedy by Juice Generation. Others swear by grapefruit-seed extract, zinc bracelets, Chinese isatis root, acupuncture and Grether's glycerin pastilles.

For throat protection, not just any honey will do: Actors suggest manuka honey or honey loquat available at the Westerly Natural Market just off Broadway in Hell's Kitchen, sold in jars with a microphone on the label.

Doubling as a team- and immunity-building tradition, the cast of "Mary Poppins" enjoys a formal tea time during the show's intermission, especially on days with two performances.



Adrienne Grunwald for The Wall Street Journal

Actress Judy McLane of 'Mama Mia' steams her throat before a show.

"Any of those homeopathic remedies are fine," said Dr. Kohn, "because they all involve you paying close attention to your body, which is always a good idea."

Judy McLane, who plays the titular mama in "Mamma Mia!" keeps a nebulizer in her dressing room and uptown apartment. She uses the throat-steaming device year-round, but it is especially helpful with flu symptoms.

Backstage before each performance, she does her hair and makeup with her mouth clamped to the nebulizer. "Theaters can be such petri dishes," said Ms. McLane, recalling a time when she came into work despite a 102-degree fever.

"Thankfully," she added, "we all have Dr. Footlights," a reference to the actors' superstition that stage lights help the sick to soldier on.

There is a certain amount of stubborn pride in the equation—even to the slight frustration of plucky understudies waiting for the sick call.

"In the theater, nobody wants to give up their performance," said Diane Davis, an understudy for two roles in "Golden Boy" who recently played the part of Anna when star Dagmara Dominczyk fell ill. "You know it's serious. People will perform until they can't get out of bed."

She recounted an episode in a different show a few years ago when a septuagenarian cast member spent the first act and intermission vomiting backstage, only to sweep onto the stage for her role in the second act. Ms. Davis watched as the performer turned away from the audience and discreetly ballooned her cheeks like a bullfrog.

"I'm pretty sure she just swallowed," Ms. Davis said. "She was a real pro."

Brendon Stimson, an understudy in "Newsies" with a regular part as a minor character, wears a single leather glove on the subway to avoid germ-covered poles and railings. But his skittishness is counterbalanced by an artistic attitude.

"We're supposed to be orphans living on the streets in 1899," Mr. Stimson said of his hardscrabble role in the musical. "We can cough in character."

01.17.13



## THE BEST *of the* WEEK AHEAD



**BROADWAY**

### **1** "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"

Scarlett Johansson and Benjamin Walker steam up the stage in Tennessee Williams' Southern drama "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," opening Jan. 17 at the Richard Rodgers Theatre for a limited run through March 30. This latest Broadway revival is directed by Tony winner Rob Ashford.

Backstage

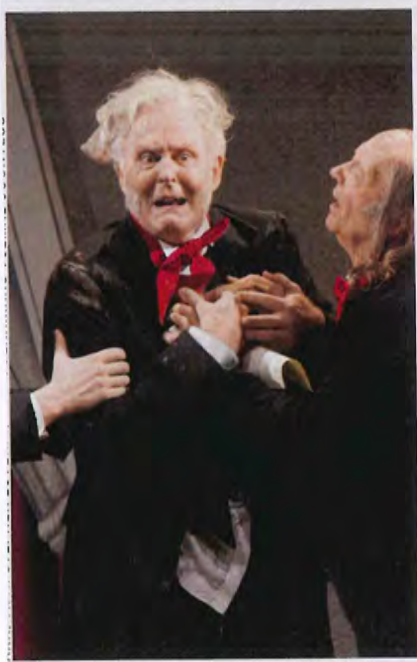
Total Weekly Circulation – 9,116  
 Monthly Online Readership – 117,151

**BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN**



**TAKE**  
**5**

**THE BEST *of the* WEEK AHEAD**



**FILM**

**2** "THE MAGISTRATE"

John Lithgow stars in the title role in Pinero's 19th-century farce "The Magistrate," which National Theatre Live presents as a live performance broadcast in select movie theaters Jan. 17. The production will be rebroadcast internationally on various dates thereafter.

Backstage

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## TRENDING THIS WEEK

### VISIT BACKSTAGE.COM

News & Reviews for these and other top industry stories



## THEATER

### John Schiappa

The Broadway veteran returns to the Main Stem in "The Other Place," starring Laurie Metcalf. The actor discusses taking the play from Off-Broadway and why he can't reveal anything that happens!

## Backstage

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## Top Cast Albums Issue Date: 2013-01-26

This Week	Last Week	Two Weeks Ago	Weeks on Chart	Title, Artist Imprint   Catalog No.   Distributing Label	Peak Position
1	1	1	20	Les Miserables, Original Broadway Cast Recording ▲4 <b>Geffen/Decca Broadway</b> 24151   <b>UMe</b>   35.98	1
2	2	2	29	Les Miserables, Original London Cast Recording ▲ <b>First Night</b> 7336   24.98	1
3	3	4	368	Wicked, Original Broadway Cast Recording ▲2 <b>Decca Broadway</b> 001682   <b>Decca</b>   18.98	1
4	4	3	8	Les Miserables: In Concert At The Royal Albert Hall, Cast Recording <b>First Night/Relativity</b> 73326   <b>Red Ink</b>   23.98	3
5	6	5	87	The Book Of Mormon, Original Broadway Cast Recording <b>Ghostlight</b> 84448   <b>Sh-K-Boom</b>   18.98	1
6	5	6	64	Les Miserables Live!: New 25th Anniversary Production, The 2010 Cast Album <b>First Night</b> 99508   18.98	2
7	7	9	44	Once: A New Musical, Original Broadway Cast Recording <b>Masterworks Broadway</b> 94824   <b>Sony Masterworks</b>   12.98	1
8	8	8	39	Les Miserables: Highlights From, Original Broadway Cast Recording <b>Decca Broadway</b> 016998   <b>Decca</b>   18.98	4
9	<b>RE-ENTRY</b>		2	Chaplin: The Musical, Original Broadway Cast Recording <b>Masterworks Broadway</b> 43950   <b>Sony Masterworks</b>   12.98	9
10	10	7	366	Jersey Boys, Original Broadway Cast Recording ▲ <b>Rhino</b> 73271   18.98	1

# Duchess to tell 'Stories'

**By David Benedict**

LONDON

The National Theater production of Alan Bennett's "Untold Stories" will transfer to the West End's Duchess Theater from March 22 for a 12-week season.

The show is comprised of two one-act autobiographical recollections, "Hymn" and "Cocktail Sticks," by the author of the Tony-winning "The History Boys." Currently playing separately in rep at the National, both pieces feature Alex Jennings as the much-loved Brit author and playwright.

"Hymn," a memoir of music in childhood, features a score by George Fenton and is helmed by Nadia Fall. "Cocktail Sticks," a tender investigation of parents and loss, is helmed by National a.d. Nicholas Hytner ("One Man, Two Guvnors").

Designed by Bob Crowley with lighting by Tom Snell, "Untold Stories" opens April 2.

Hytner's production of Bennett's new full-length play "People" continues its SRO run at the National. Its March 21 perf will be broadcast around the world as part of NTLive.

**Daily Variety**

Total Daily Circulation – 24,740

Monthly Online Readership – 276,128

**BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN**

Posted: Wed., Jan. 16, 2013, 9:00pm PT

## 'Can-Can' shimmies to B'way

Revival targets a spring 2014 opening

By GORDON COX

The 1953 musical "Can-Can" will shake a leg on Broadway, with a revival gearing up for a 2014 run

Jonathan Burrows, nephew of the tuner's original book writer Abe Burrows, will produce the show to be directed by David Lee, who also pens a revised book with co-scribe Joel Fields. Patti Colombo choreographs.

With tunes by Cole Porter, "Can-Can" follows the owner of a Belle Epoque dancehall whose run-in with the law -- prompted by the scandalous dance of title -- leads to romance.

Lee, the scribe-helmer whose smallscreen work includes a longtime gig with "Frasier," took an initial stab at "Can-Can" when he adapted the book for the concert staging that starred Patti LuPone and Michael Nouri as part of the City Center Encores! series in 2004.

Lee went on to direct a production, with a book that was further revised, at Pasadena Playhouse in 2007. Co-writer Fields ("The Americans," "Ugly Betty") and choreographer Colombo ("Peter Pan") boarded that production, which starred Michelle Duffy and Kevin Earley

Producer Burrows, whose Hollywood credits include "Fletch," said he's aiming for big names for the Broadway revival, adding that he hopes to pull together a developmental lab presentation of the show this summer or fall.

Burrows wouldn't reveal the capitalization cost, but he described the show as a medium-scale musical. Productions of that size often come in at around \$8 million.

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