

THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

All too often in this day and age, the word "farical" can be used to sum up a common attitude to our world's current events: that we just may have, as a society, lost control as "cata-comically" (cataclysmically + comically) as a theatrical character caught half-dressed with their former mistress when the priest comes crashing thru the door.

This air of absurdity prevalent in our everyday may be precisely why theatre audiences love farce. The formula of expectations that are broken into little bits of chaos and sent hurtling forward faster and faster, resulting in misunderstandings, embarrassments, slapstick, and, of course, slamming doors. It provides diversion from weightier matters, being THE style of theatre most likely to achieve the cathartic release of laughter.

This catharsis is not so easily arrived at, however. For every minute of hilarity you enjoy, the cast has spent hours upon hours, working and honing the "bits" - the physical and verbal gymnastics and rhythms that will eventually release the audience's laughter; because nothing in farce can be left to chance. Ironically, though, chance will always be part of live performance; and because the action of farce often finds character tripping and bringing things crashing down or rushing through a door or getting smacked in the face by one - or maybe they really are getting smacked, night after night? - actors can be at genuine physical risk. The risk comes largely from the extreme pace farce demands. Great care must be taken to craft the chaos in a way that won't end with actors actually bruised or bandaged, but still deliver the perceived sense of danger that is part of what the audience enjoys. That's why it feels so live and dangerous and exciting.

While farce can bump and bruise characters, it can also touch audiences more painfully than its stereotype of silly entertainment might suggest. Having spent half my directing career working with farce, it's often struck me that not only does door-slamming, trouser-dropping comedy thrive in gloomy times because it provides easy laughs, but farce can be both hilarious - and - genuinely disturbing, because we recognize and deeply empathize with the characters' almost maddening desperation to keep going, even as their professional and personal circumstances unravel. So farce, perhaps, is not just a distraction from unhappy times, but also a reflection of how it feels to be caught up in them? When expertly performed, farce is almost transformative and cathartic out of an almost existential desperation. We might suddenly find ourselves afraid we may stop breathing because we are laughing so much. It's this sense of helplessness - that laughter is controlling us rather than the other way around - that is the special pleasure of farce. It's a sort of laughter that can't be achieved through any other art form. We are creating a safe space where we can just let go of the things that are beyond our control and let the best medicine of all do its magic. And that, as the kids in the hall might say, is a deeply theatrical vibe.

We hope you enjoy laughing and vibing with us tonight at The BIGGEST Li'l Theatre In Texas!

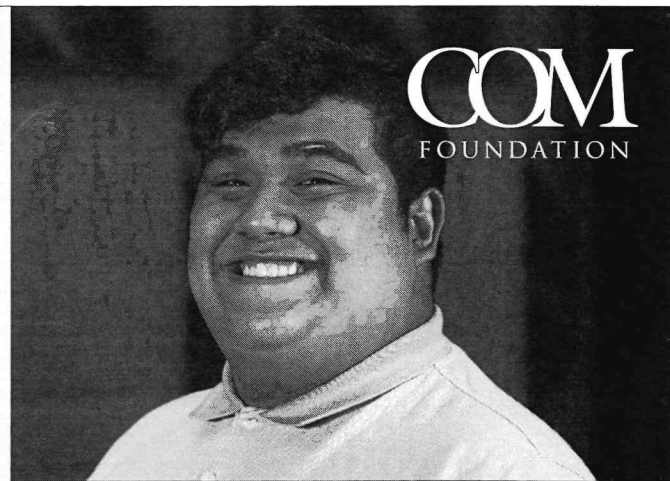
- H. Russ Brown

"I strive to be the best actor I can be, and with the program at COM, I have been moving forward with my goals and aspirations. Going to college is a big step, but figuring out how to fund it can feel like a roadblock in your path to greatness. That is why I am grateful for the generosity of the donors who have helped me immensely during my time here.

THANK YOU!"

- ISSAC LOPEZ

La Marque,
June Godard Webb
Memorial Scholarship
recipient,
A.A. Theatre
Class of 2020



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APPLAUSE WORTHY

A Very Special Thank You to ...

Our loyal season subscribers! Paul Boyd, Cindy Medford, Laura Horacefield, Rocky Barney, Dr. Jerry Fliger, the COM Fine Arts Faculty and the COM Marketing Department, COM President Dr. Warren Nichols and the COM Board of Trustees

- Thank You for Your Continued Support! -

If you enjoyed today's performance, please tell a friend!
If you have suggestions, please tell us!

comtheatre@com.edu

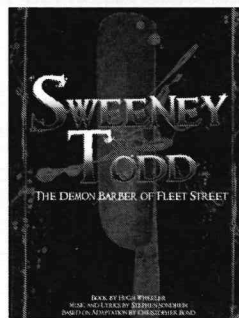
WAITING IN THE WINGS

SWEENEY TODD
THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET

FEB. 2-19, 2023

book by Hugh Wheeler / Music and Lyrics
by Stephen Sondheim

Directed by Ashley Love



Sweeney Todd, an unjustly exiled barber, returns to nineteenth century London, seeking vengeance against the lecherous judge who framed him and ravaged his young wife. The road to revenge

leads Todd to Mrs. Lovett, a resourceful proprietress of a failing pie shop, above which, he opens a new barber practice. Mrs. Lovett's luck sharply shifts when Todd's thirst for blood inspires the integration of an ingredient into her meat pies that has the people of London lining up... and the carnage has only just begun!

Thursday - Saturday at 7 p.m. and
Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

For Reservations

- Call the Box Office at 888-258-8859, ext. 8345 or 409-933-8345.
- Purchase tickets online at www.com.edu/theatre.

COM COMMUNITY THEATRE STAFF

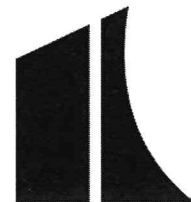
Artistic DirectorH. Russ Brown
Technical DirectorCurt Meyer
Box Office Manager.....Susan Gilbert
Costume Designer.....Amanda Bezemek
FacultyAshley Love

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TICKET INFORMATION

409-933-8345 or 1-888-258-8859, ext. 8345



The
Kennedy
Center

The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program, is generously funded by David M. Rubenstein.

Special thanks to The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust for supporting the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival.

Additional support is provided by The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein; and the Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols Foundation.

Kennedy Center education and related artistic programming is made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants, and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,500 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

BOX OFFICE HOURS

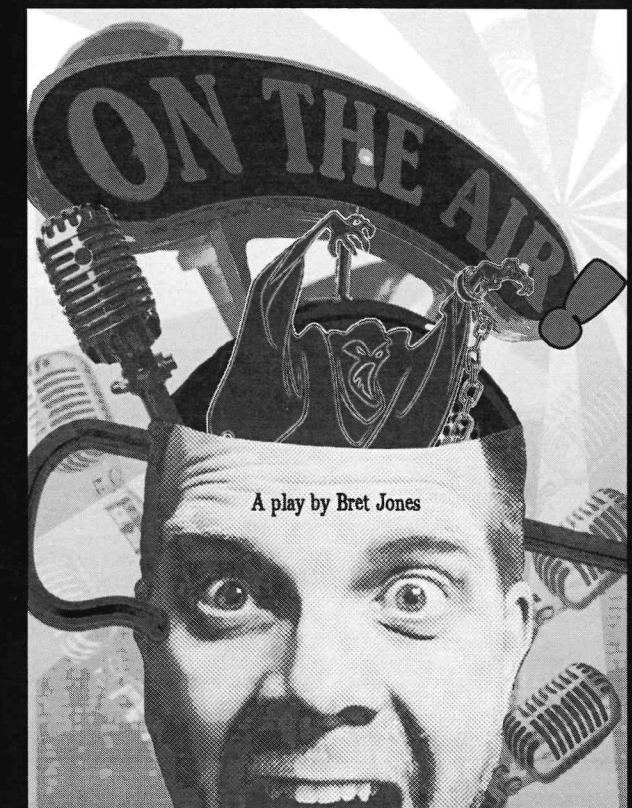
10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Tuesday - Friday
Extended hours on performance days
Telephone reservations can be made during regular office hours.

TICKET PRICES

Sections: A / \$20, B / \$15, C / \$10
One FREE Ticket with a COM I.D.!
Children must be age four years or older to attend.

COM THEATRE
THE BIGGEST LI'L THEATRE IN TEXAS

49³/₄ YEARS OF THEATRE MAGIC!



NOV. 3 - 20, 2022

Thursdays through Saturdays at 7 p.m. Sundays at 2:30 p.m.

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