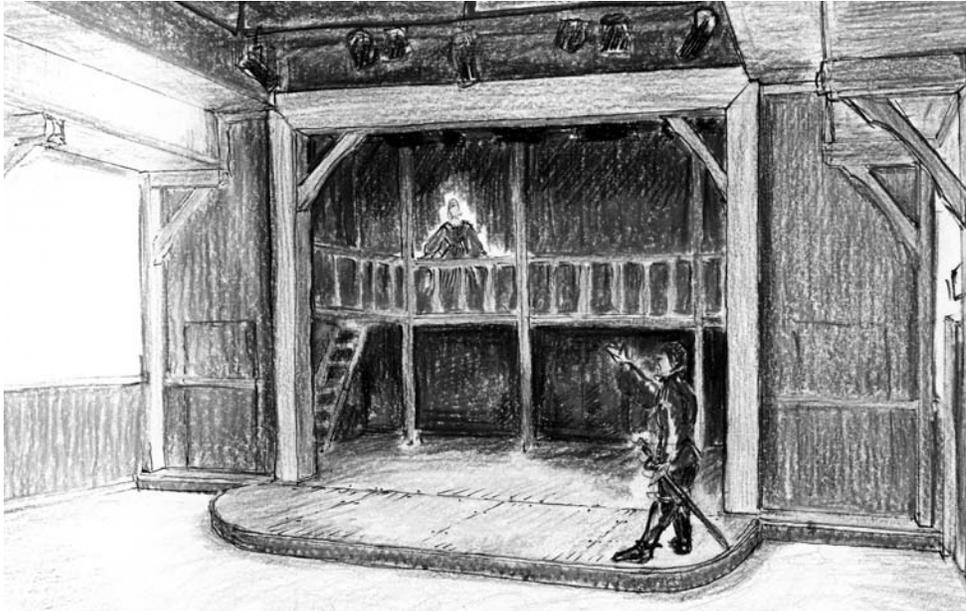


THE ROUGHIAN

Winter 2009

A Quarterly Newsletter of Theater in the Rough



CURRENT BALANCE: \$11,228
ADDITIONAL PLEDGES: \$25,000
OUR GOAL: \$100,000

THE NEW HOME FUND

Lots of people want to help build the New McPhetres and a new home for Theatre in the Rough but they are not sure that a donation directly to Holy Trinity is the right choice for them.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we give you, the New Home Fund.

Started in October 2008 and managed by the Juneau Community Foundation, the New Home Fund will be paid out in full to help build and equip the New McPhetres.

As the Fund is chiefly a way for our local fans to help make our work better and our town better equipped, we hope to secure at least 70% of our goal from private donors and we are well on our way. We hope to top it off with money from private foundations.

Private donations will be held by the Juneau Community Foundation until the Hall's drywall is up and work on the theatre enhancements (see OUR NEW HOME on this page) is ready to begin. Once that work begins, we will start to disburse the Fund so that donor dollars go right into the boards and nails of our stage, dressing areas, seating and storage.

The private foundation moneys will be used as soon as available to purchase movable gear, such as lights and dimmer packs. This is gear we can put to good use now, as all other such gear was lost in the fire. We will be buying all such equipment with an eye toward eventual installation in the New McPhetres. There, this equipment will be made available to any user or small arts group who rent the Hall.

OUR NEW HOME!

Theatre in the Rough to be Theatre in Residence in The New McPhetres Hall

The fire that took McPhetres Hall in March of 2006 left us vagabonds again but not for good. Holy Trinity Episcopal Church has invited us to move back in to McPhetres Hall once it's done and to make it our permanent home.

This is a fantastic opportunity. Since we have been making art at Holy Trinity since our first season's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1991-92, we felt like this was a natural next step for us.

Naturally, there are some big questions on the minds of those who care for us:

- What does theatre in residence mean?
- What's it going to cost?
- What will it be like?
- When can we come see a show there?
- How can I help make it happen?

Theatre in Residence

This means we have a place to hang our shingle. It means we will pay reduced rent for the facilities and get first dibs on scheduling in the new hall for the next 20 years.

It does NOT mean that we are the only arts group who can use the Hall. We don't want to own a great theatre; we just want to use one. We are artists with day jobs. We only have the gas for about two shows a year. The rest of the time the facilities will be available for rent by all of the traditional users and more besides. Rent revenues will help maintain the Hall and equipment.

In the end, we get a home, Juneau gets a new place to gather, and Holy Trinity remains what it has long been: a cultural and social hub for the Capital City.

Cost

The cost of a modern accessible and welcoming facility in these days is somewhat higher than the \$4000 it took to build Holy Trinity back in 1896. The cost of the entire project is set at \$5.2 million. This includes not only the construction cost and contractors fees, but the demolition of the ruins,

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FROM THE SKETCHBOOK

OUR NEW HOME!

(continued from page 1)

Spending too much time reading books without pictures can lead to humor loss, aching eyes and very dull newsletters. To combat these and the hours spent poring over dictionaries of arcane words and compendiums of Elizabethan verse, designer Aaron Elmore spends a fair amount of time filling blank sketch books with pictures of his own.

Some great design work happens instantly. The idea comes, the materials are close to hand and the finished product can be in action within hours. Most work of this kind takes a little more time and planning. And, for Aaron, a lot of drawing.

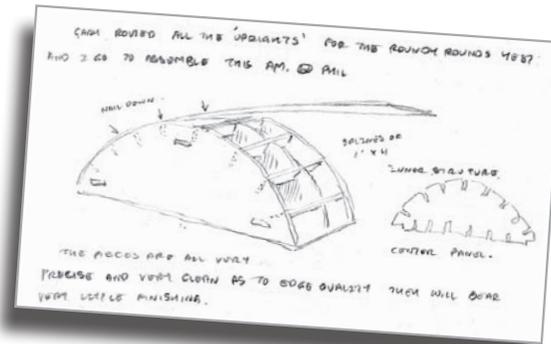
These scans show some fairly refined designs from *The Little Prince*. There were many sketches made before these in the year prior to opening night.

The first shows front and back views of the Aviator's Flying Machine. The story calls for the aviator to have a by-plane. It also calls for about twenty different locations, some of them on other worlds. After much discussion, we decided that any full-scale plane or even part-of-a-plane would not have given us the flexibility we needed. We also thought that the full scale plane would not be fragile enough. The aviator's breaking down in the desert needed to work on a metaphorical level as well as a practical one.

Leonardo da Vinci's designs for what he called Ornithopters, seemed just right for our production. The first idea of

making the frame of the wings out of bent wood would have been too time consuming. Instead, the frames were routed on the CNC router at Commercial Signs & Printing out of a piece of scrap plywood. After some sanding and oiling, twine, paper and other hardware was added to complete the look. Aaron-the-Stitcher manufactured a leather harness to attach them to Aaron-the-Actor and we had lift-off.

The second drawing shows the half-dune, half-planet set pieces affectionately known as Roundy-Rounds. After many options were considered for the set (a giant sand box, a single chalk board, spheres with puppets attached to



them) this solution seemed the most workable and gave us the location flexibility we needed.

Again the CNC router was pressed into service. The result was much more accurate and stable than hand cutting. They took two guys two days to assemble. The fantastic paint job by scenic artist Samantha Blankenship finished them off. The wonderful Turkish style carpets on the floor were director Katie Jensen's idea for how to make them (relatively) easy to move around.

We really didn't know if the wings would flap or the Roundy-Rounds would rock until they were done and we got them into the rehearsal hall. That's really when the ideas, the crafts and the magic all come together. When the audience sees them and accept all the pieces as part of the story, that is what it's all about.

You may be wondering what happens to all these wonderful things after the show is over. We still have them. We don't save everything. Some props and costume pieces go to the actors who used them. Some things get broken down and reused. Very little goes in the trash. But some things, like the wings and the Roundy-Rounds, will stick around.

You never know...

site prep, remediation of the oil found seeping through the site (not, alas, in marketable quantities) and architect fees.

The cost of the Theatre Enhancements to the facility is \$500,000. These are enhancements that Holy Trinity wants. They are part of what the parish recognizes as their mission of gathering the community under their roof in joy. Further, these enhancements will make the whole facility more arts friendly and will make the place particularly attractive to Theatre in the Rough.

Theatre Enhancements

Designer and co-artistic director Aaron Elmore was contracted by Holy Trinity to coordinate the presence of art throughout the new building. His 25 years experience in theatre made him a natural choice and he's worked closely the Design Committee at Holy Trinity and architect Jeff Robertson over the past two years.

The new Hall will be a lovely proscenium arch theatre space with curtains, state of the art tech and comfortable chairs. The walls of the hall will have extra sound-proofing and be pretty enough that we won't have to cover them in fabric. Those comfortable chairs will seat 72 people in on stepped platforms -- no more lights in anyone's eyes and not a bad seat in the house. The backstage facilities will be efficient but made to order-- no more putting on make-up over the kitchen sink with a mirror on the paper towel rack.

Patrons will buy tickets and wait for the show to start in an inviting Lobby / Gallery -- no more waiting on stairs unless you really want to. This will be a fine gathering place not only for audiences but for First Friday art openings and other social events.

On-site rehearsal space will be a huge addition to our community. Because it will not share any walls with the Hall, it will allow one company to rehearse and another to perform at the same time, indeed, on the same night. Given that the Sanctuary will be such a fantastic venue for live music, yet shares no walls with either the Hall or the Rehearsal Room, the whole facility at Fourth and Gold will likely become a bustling and rich addition to our town.

Timeline

Construction is underway and the structure is largely enclosed. The latest word from HT is that the building will be completely en-

(continued on back page)



TAMING THE SHREW

A Comedy Inside A Comedy

Our upcoming Shakespeare comedy, *The Taming of the Shrew* is a “play within a play.”

Plays within plays are easy to find in Shakespeare. *Hamlet* features *The Murder of Gonzago*, a tragedy of poison and misguided passion which reflects the love triangle and murder of a King featured in the main plot. *Loves Labors* ends with *The Nine Worthies*, a series of tableau featuring famous classical personalities. *A Midsummer Nights Dream* famously features *The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe*. It is put on the local tradesmen for the duke’s wedding celebration and teaches the many lovers in the main play that if you are going to arrange to elope at night in a grave yard, don’t do in Lion country and if you do, don’t assume that every blood sample you find on the scene is that of your dead betrothed. *Pyramus and Thisbe*, performed with puppets, remains a much loved standard of the TR repertory.

The play that Shakespeare calls *The Taming of the Shrew* is actually the play “within.” The outer frame has no separate title but could easily be called “Christopher Sly,” as it recounts one very strange afternoon in the life of a drunken tinker. A lord finds Sly passed out in his fore court and decides to play a trick on him. He tells his followers to dress Sly in nice clothes and treat him like a nobleman. A troupe of players soon arrive and are quickly made part of the trick. Before long, the players production of *The Shrew* takes over the world.

The outer play, known as the Induction, is often cut from performances. It has problems. For one, it never really ends. As the play is written, Sly does not speak after a quarter of a hour. There are other versions of the play that include more of the Sly framework, but they are inferior.

We have decided that Sly and his world of players and sudden wealth was too good to pass up. We shall play the play without and the play within.

The Taming of the Shrew

Free Preview Thurs Mar 5 @ 7:30PM

Opens Fri Mar 6 @ 7:30PM

Pay-as-you-Will, Mar 12 @ 7:30PM

Runs Thurs, Fri, & Sat

Mar 6 - Mar 22 @ 7:30PM

Special Priced Sunday Matinees

March 7, 14, 22 @ 2PM



FROM THE BOARDS

TR Board Members and The Stage

When I was about seven, my parents took me to my first Shakespeare play: TR’s *Much Ado About Nothing*. I was enchanted. I insisted on going back again and again. I even loved coming an hour early and sitting on the stairs with my mother, to ensure that I got a front row seat (which, with my lack of height at that age, was not so much selfish as necessary). After my parents saw how I loved that play, they took me to every non-tragedy TR put on. They thought it would be a bad idea to let me see a TR tragedy, as I would be expecting these people I had watched in show after show to be funny, and at that age they didn’t think I could cope with them all dying instead. Thinking back on it, I realize how remarkable the productions were to captivate such a small child as I then was.

Then, in 2005 when I was twelve, Katie and Aaron gave me the opportunity to be in one of their plays. With this invitation, I stepped from the audience onto the stage, and discovered how wonderful, sacred, terrifying, and ridiculous this pursuit can be.

The pursuit became embarrassing during *The Tempest*. We had just moved into the Old Elks’ Hall (this was the year after fire had claimed McPhetres Hall), and I and another actor (who shall remain nameless) were exploring the back hallways. We were so excited, thinking of all the ways the space could be used. We wandered farther and farther from the main hall, eventually reaching a closed door. Only after opening it did we discover that it was rigged with a burglar alarm that not only sounded throughout the building, but was connected to the police station as well. I felt terrible, but when the police came, the officers were very nice about everything, and though we lost some rehearsal time waiting for the thing to be shut off, the cast forgave me. Ever since I have been wary of closed doors.

Then there’s the ridiculous. There are times when it amazes me how far the audience must suspend their disbelief. During *Three Musketeers* I played Queen Anne. There was a very brief scene where I entered wearing ten diamond studs that were attached to a strip of black cloth that was supposed to drape over my shoulder. These

studs were vital to the plot. In that show, I played many minor characters and guards, and I had a lot of fast costume changes. This particular change into Queen Anne was long enough, but still close. One night, I made the change, and then realized I had no idea where my ten diamond studs were. I dashed around frantically (and silently) for what felt like several minutes, probably mut-

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yet it does.
A miracle,
indeed.**

tering curses, until I had no time left. My outfit included a pearl headband, which I untwisted and draped over my shoulder in place of the diamonds. Undoubtedly, they were the roundest, smoothest, and most opaque diamonds that audience had ever seen.

Among all the small miracles and amazements that acting with TR has presented to me, one that stands out clearly in my memory is that of the origami birds from *The Little Prince*. These were the birds that carried the Little Prince from planet to planet, and they were only a dozen paper cranes stuck on a bunch of sticks. When I first saw them, I presumed they were glued onto the sticks, but it turned out they were just stuck onto the ends. During the whole run of the play, there were only seven or eight times that a crane ever fell off in the middle of a show. It really made no sense—it was a mystery to me how they stayed on at all. It was truly a metaphor for the whole show—for any show. There is no reason for any of it to work, yet it does. A miracle, indeed.

Despite, or perhaps because of, all the drama, near-misses, hilarity, and stress that go on backstage, I have found rehearsing for and performing in Theatre in the Rough plays to be a sanctuary. No matter what is going on in the rest of my life, I can step through the doors of the rehearsal hall or performance space and all my little troubles fall away. Sometimes, after a long day in which nothing has gone right, I have gone to rehearsal and felt cleansed, for there is a sacredness in a group of people so focused on creating something of delight to share with others. It is not always easy, not always “fun.” But it is necessary. It is vital. Just like the flock of birds in *The Little Prince*, it’s a mystery how any of it works at all.

But it does.

Megan Behnke, a TR board member, enjoys Juno’s rain, mist, and sailing, though preferably not combined. At seven, she put on a 40-minute puppet show of The Tempest. Now, as a sophomore at JDHS, she is in rehearsal for her fifth TR show.

OUR NEW HOME!

(continued from page 2)

closed by February, 2009. The parish hopes to be in the Sanctuary for services and or concerts by late Summer. Completion of the rest of the building, including the new McPhetres, will continue as funding becomes available. We will start working in it as soon as there is an occupancy permit and a floor but we have high hopes of being in the completed hall with all systems go by the Fall of 2011-- our 20th Anniversary Season!

How Can I Help?

If you like this idea, please, first, tell your friends, your family, your coworkers. Word of mouth is our best way to get the word out. If you think they would like a copy of this and further newsletters, snail mail us or drop us a line at theatreintherough@gmail.com. Let us know what you think.

If you are considering a donation, Theatre in the Rough has established the New Home Fund (see article, page 1) to help with construction costs of the theatre enhancements.

Ladies and Gentlemen: IT'S A NEWSLETTER!

Welcome to the inaugural newsletter of Theatre in the Rough. Some would say, in light of such advances, that we should be called Theatre in the Not So Rough.

Be that as it may, in light of other advances, this is our best attempt to keep you better informed. In it you will find articles about our progress on the New McPhetres, up-coming shows, bits and pieces about the Greatest Playwright in the Western World. We hope you enjoy our efforts here as much as you have enjoyed our efforts on stage and we shall endeavor to make these efforts, like those, enjoyable and enlightening.

If you know someone else who would like to get this news regularly, please get us their address and we will be happy to send them a copy. If you, or they, would prefer an electronic copy to save your back as you stagger up your icy walk with all your other mail, please drop an email to theatreintherough@gmail.com and we will send you a PDF in future.



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Theatre in the Rough Board

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THEATRE IN THE ROUGH
presents

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW



by William Shakespeare

March 6 to March 22

Alaska Territorial Hall

For show times, see article, page 3