



THE PLAYER

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DETROIT, MICHIGAN

APRIL 2020

APRIL FROLIC POSTPONED – LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT ON PAGE 2

Springing Forward

By Player Fuzz Corey

It was the last day of Eastern Standard Time until November as the clocks were just hours away from springing forward into Daylight Savings. And the playhouse was brimming with guests looking forward to their first Players experience. About 30 members had just returned from the pre-frolic dinner at the London Chop House and were about to be treated to probably the best Frolic of the year.

Before the curtain rose, **Player Earl Wolfe** warmed up the crowd with his deft piano playing, **President Tim Cordes** welcomed the audience, **Players Bill Robinson** and **John Daly** made a plea for the Endowment Fund and the Player appreciation party on September 11 of this year and **Player Tom Ball** performed his rendition of the *Players Song*. The body of Players was willing to jump in and aid him in the completion of the song. The sight of the Player membership singing and toasting is a striking moment in a Frolic, one that impresses the guests in the house, sometimes encouraging them, for that reason alone, to fill out a membership form.

The first offering of the evening was a reprise of a couple of skits from *Saturday Night Live*: "In a Van, Down by the River" and "Chippendales Try-outs" directed by **Player John Hatcher**.

The first shows parents Dad (**Player Ted Groustra**) and Mom (**Player Shane Henry**) talking to their kids (**Players Jeremy Tick** and **Matt Wozniak**-what happened? In the original Matt's role was done by a female!). The maid has discovered some marijuana and instead of dad reading them the riot act they decided to hire a motivational speaker to preach to them instead (**Player Matt Ochab**- I figured that for St. Patty's Day he would change it to O'Chab!). Matt channels his best Chris Farley as he takes over the room like a wild man, attempting to motivate the kids so they don't end up living in a van by the river. He even included the falling on a table from the original, smashing it to pieces! It's his world and the others just live in it. It's the part Matt was born to play.

The second part shows the tryout for Chippendales where Matt (Chris) competes against Patrick Swayze (Player **Sean Fisher**). Both are excellent dancers and worthy of the position, but the jury can only take one and unfortunately it isn't Matt. It was a good recreation of the SNL skits, and a good comedic start to the Frolic.

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APRIL FROLIC POSTPONED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS

Fellow Players,

Over the weekend, the public response to the COVID-19 virus pandemic has changed dramatically. In light of statements by the Governor of the State of Michigan, the World Health Organization, and the US Centers for Disease Control, I think that we have no choice other than to cancel our April 4 Frolic. Given that many of our membership fall into the highly vulnerable over-70-year-old population for serious complications from the virus, it would be a disservice to our members to make them have to choose between attending a club event and safeguarding their health. I think we similarly owe it to our directors and casts to clarify the situation so they don't have to choose between preparing for a Frolic that may not happen and maintaining the officially-recommended "social distancing" to prevent the needless spread of the virus.

Accordingly, I am making the decision to postpone our April Frolic indefinitely, and that all rehearsals at the Playhouse for Players shows should be suspended effective immediately. More information will be released following our regular Board of Governors meeting in March, such as potentially rescheduling the April Frolic and contingency planning for May and other events, as well as a decision on whether we should shut down the Playhouse entirely for all activities and rentals.

This an extraordinary situation, and guidance from state and local authorities is continually evolving, however the most pressing need is for each member of the Players to remain safe and healthy. The Board of Governors is currently developing plans for how to move forward, both during and after the current period of officially-recommended restrictions on large-group gatherings. The Players has weathered the Spanish Influenza, two world wars, Prohibition and the Great Depression. Players a hundred years from now look back on 2020. In the interim, as president I ask you all to be smart, stay safe, wash your hands, and dream about the Frolics to come.

Tim Cordes, President, The Players

May Invitational

The Board will make a determination about whether to postpone the May Invitational at a later date.

Annual Meeting

The Board will make a determination about the date and process of the Annual Meeting at a later date. This is your opportunity to vote for candidates to join our esteemed Board of Governors.

The next edition of THE PLAYER will include brief biographies of the gentlemen who will be competing for three open positions on the Board.

Invitational Voting

Due to the Coronavirus, the Board has decided to amend the balloting procedure for the Invitational.

Given the postponement of the April Frolic, members will vote for three one-act plays from the October through March Frolics.

The one-act plays that receive the most votes will then be reviewed by Scripts and Casting and the Board.

The ballots will be sent to members via email and snail mail. Ballots must be received by April 4 in order to be counted.

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The evening's second offering was the second play written by **Player Bill Volz** for the Players stage. The first, co-written by Volz and two others, was the underappreciated "A Midsummer's Night Date" from about five years ago. This play, almost as good as the previous one, is "Second Divorce."

The story is focused on two friends, both dermatologists, on a fishing trip at the Easy Lake Lodge in Northern Ontario. Myles (**Player Jeff Barry**), is a jaded, twice-divorced doctor from New York who feels the monetary rewards of the occupation is his greatest success. He doesn't get much joy from fishing and is only on the trip in order to placate his friend, Tony (**Player Todd Storrs**), a more humane, contented doctor from Detroit.

The camp is run by three close friends: Julius Childs, the chef of the camp (**Player Tim Flintoff**) who provides French food without an accent, Guy Guerrier (**Player John O'Hara**), who, like his name, is a former hockey player enforcer who continues to be an enforcer in the camp situation, and Horne Payne (**Player Steven Flum**), a dipsomaniac who tends to provide comic relief in the camp. Steve is having a renaissance, having graced the stage here and last month, both times in strong performances.

Player Mark Habel sneaks in as a hungover drunk in a bunk. Tension rises between the Americans and the Canadians (can you hear Neil Young singing "Helpless?"). Myles becomes even more bitter while Tony tries to soothe him.

But misfortune occurs with an explosion in the kitchen and the divisiveness of the two groups turns more to harmony, as the guys work together to save the camp and the vacation.

After seeing the friendship between the three Canadians and aware of the strength of the relationship between Tony and his wife, Myles has an awakening and vows to get back in touch with one of his ex-wives and to rekindle a friendship.

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Be Our Guest!

This year, the number of guests attending our frolics may have reached an all-time high (at least in recent history). Inviting a guest to attend a frolic is an important tool in our membership recruiting efforts. In fact Article VI of our By-laws provides that invitations are generally "limited to prospective members."

As Players, we are all responsible for ensuring that our membership base remains strong. It goes without saying that a strong membership base is essential to our financial health. It is also essential to our ability to put on our monthly frolics without having to rely on the same few Players every month. When you bring a guest, please follow up with an invitation to apply for membership.

Take a look at the banners that adorn the theater. They represent a cross section of the skills required to put on a show, including writing, music, art, financial acumen, and set design and construction. In other words, there is something for everyone. For more information, talk with Membership chair **Chuck Steltenkamp** or any member of the Board of Governors.

Important Numbers

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THE PLAYER is published more or less monthly from October to May with an occasional summer issue. The views expressed herein are those of the respective authors and/or editor, whoever they may be in any given month, and not necessarily those of The Players. Comments may be made to, and back issues may be available from, the Office, (313) 259-3385, or send an inquiry to Office@playersdetroit.org. **THE PLAYER** is available online at www.playersdetroit.org.

Players Caricature Book

In the wake of our successful exhibit at the Detroit Historical Museum, The Players has published a book named appropriately, ***PLAYERS ART & MEMOIRS***. It has most of The Players' caricatures from over the years, chapters on the history of the club, as well as a nice recap of the museum exhibit. Included are many memoirs of current and past members. We uncovered several letters of founding and early members that are as informative as they are hilarious. This remarkable book is available in hardcover at a **low low price of \$65**. It continues to be on sale at Frolics with an initial limited run. Interest in the book will allow us to reprint more on demand.

Did You Ever Want To...

- Prepare a Frolic Supper?
- Write a Frolic Review?
- Lead us in The Players Song?
- Learn to be a Frolic Producer?

All of these and more are possible for any Player, regardless of how long you have been a member. If producing a Frolic interests you, please email Player **Allan Dick**, who chairs the Producer Committee and is more than willing to instruct. Likewise, if you think you might have the chops for singing *The Players Song*, contact Allan. The Producer selects the singer each month.

How about writing a Frolic review? If you read THE PLAYER, (Shame on you if you don't. Players **Mickey** and **Bill Champion** put a lot of work into it each month!) you read the review of last month's frolic. This is a great opportunity to express your appreciation for the hard work that goes into each Frolic. If this interests you, again, contact Allan Dick.

And finally, if you would like to take a turn in the Players kitchen, DO NOT contact Allen Dick. He doesn't handle that. Instead, contact Player **Matthew Turnbull**, who chairs the Frolic Supper Committee, and lines up the chefs for each month's post-Frolic meal.

Did You Know?

Did you know that you can search for Frolics by name, actor, director or Frolic number on The Players website? You can also search through back issues of THE PLAYER by typing in a date range. For example, by searching for Frolics directed by Player **Bill Robinson**, one discovers that Player Robinson has been responsible for such artistic gems as *Thunderbird*, *Frontier Accountant*, *Wasting Away*, *The Footsteps of Doves*, and *The Rewrite* in just the past five years.

So, just how does one gain access to this treasure trove of trivia? First, go to: www.playersdetroit.org. Next, click the "Member Login" link at the top of the page. The username is "**players**" and the password is "**fr0llc**". (Note, the "o" is a zero and the "i" is an exclamation point). At the bottom of the members page, click on "search for a frolic."

You've Got to Have Art

One of the many side benefits of digitizing The Players' records and artwork is the ability to provide you with copies of the wonderful caricatures that reside on the walls of the Playhouse.

If you are interested in purchasing a copy of one the wonderful Bil Barrett caricatures that appear in this publication, please call the office. 11"x14" copies on heavyweight acid-free paper suitable for framing are available for just \$25.00. Larger sizes at additional cost may also be available.

Board of Governors

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Governor.....	Tom Ball

Springing Forward, continued from page 3.

As the two leads, Jeff and Todd give very believable and strong performances (Jeff, project more to the audience!). They have a good rapport and allow the audience to care for them.

Kudos to director **Player Bob O'Leary** (assisted by Steve Flum and Bill Volz).

The third offering of the evening was "7 Angry Men," written and directed by **Player Matt Maul**. It's a kind of meta-play about a rehearsal of players for "12 Angry Men."

Player Bill Robinson is typecast as an exasperated director, trying to get the actors to rehearsal on time and focused on the job at hand,

Player Ted Groustra plays a loud-mouthed character named "Eric," who is in another play and who seems to have Caligula mixed up with Nero. **Player Nick Stojkovski** plays the stage manager, Nick.

The jurors in the play are **Players Jeff Berry, Matt McGuire, Larry Smith, Gari Kersten, Michael Cretu**, and on the phone, **Ben Liston**. Who, as they say, dialed it in. (He was only present as a voice on the phone). We miss you Ben.

Lots of shenanigans take place, and because of the absence of actors, the play is reduced from 12 angry men to 7.

The funniest actor was the screen overhead, which acted as a kind of footnoter, describing the actual meaning of what was said by the actors and director.

The movement was swift and the players performed with sharpness and cleverness. It was a true ensemble piece and Matt is to be congratulated for a job well done. There were a lot of inside jokes, but guests enjoyed it as much as Players.

So three fine offerings for this first Saturday in March. At least one of them should be seen again in May.

The evening was capped off by the traditional March dinner of corned beef and cabbage, prepared by our own **Players Milt Osgood II** and **Milt Osgood III**.

For an afterglow, **Player Eric Christian** was able to procure the Baldock Mountain Ramblers. They played a number of Irish-tinted songs, marred only by the number of audience members who wouldn't shut up while they were singing. Some consideration would be appreciated.

So, all-in-all, apart from the rudeness at the end, March did indeed come in like a lion!



100 Years Ago at The Players

The Players performed their April Frolic on April 10, 1920 at the Arts and Crafts Theatre.

The Player Cartoonist

Russel H. Legge made the sketches of "Mutiny," "Whose Wife" and "It Can't Be Done," shown in this issue of the **Player**. Mr. Legge also made the sketches of "The Last Man In," "In the Thousands of Years to Come," and "Pearls Before Swine."

They are amongst the best sketches we have ever had of the skits at Players' frolics. Mr. Legge catches the subtleties of the **Player** acting or the humor of the situation and depicts it in a charming way.

We hope to be able to say "Player" Legge in the next issue of the **Player**, as his application has already been approved by the Board and is submitted to the membership in this issue. We hope Legge is a very healthy man; first, that he may be able to stand the abuse of some of the **Players** he may cartoon; and secondly, because these same **Players** will want him present at every frolic to cartoon them.



SECOND DIVORCE



7 ANGRY MEN

FROLIC 641 MARCH 7, 2020

