

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre presents

A comedy by Alfred Uhry

"The Last Night of Ballyhoo"

*Directed by
Chris Starkey*

Winner of the
1997 Tony Award for Best Play

May 3rd-13th
Thurs., Fri. & Sat.
Evenings at 8 pm

Sun. Matinees
at 2pm

box office: 971-2228
www.a2ct.org

performances at
AACT *Downtown*
408 W. Washington
Ann Arbor

Produced by special arrangement with Dramatist Play Service, Inc.

The Last Night of Ballyhoo

This Tony Award winning comedy transports you to Atlanta for the premiere of *Gone With The Wind* and the biggest party of 1939!

Ballyhoo: Sensational or noisy publicity; A three-day Southern debutante celebration that culminates in a grand ballroom dance for the rich, Jewish elite.

December 1939; Atlanta, Georgia. A line of spectators in wide-brimmed hats and thick wool coats stretches for blocks to see the stars of *Gone with the Wind* at its world premiere at Loew's Grand Theatre. The air is cold and crisp as the entire nation waits in anticipation for this momentous event.

Halfway across the globe, a cold European winter has brought forth a different type of anticipation. Adolph Hitler has just invaded Poland and set the scene for what will quickly become World War II.

Against this backdrop, two young women, first cousins Lala Levy and Sunny Freitag, prepare for the Jewish social event of the year, Ballyhoo. Simply put, Ballyhoo, is a three-day Southern debutante celebration that culminates in a grand ballroom dance for the rich, Jewish elite.

Lala and Sunny are focused on finding the proper date for the Ballyhoo, and in their comedic search discover lessons about love, bigotry, and the uplifting power of family.

Letter from the Director

Welcome to Ann Arbor Civic and thank you for coming to experience, "The Last Night of Ballyhoo."

Theatre is about telling stories. The story can be funny, sad, touching, clever, or mind-bending. The story of "The Last Night of Ballyhoo" has changed me a little as an observer of theatre and as an actor. It is my hope that you will join the cast and crew and enjoy the next two hours of laughter, enlightenment and growth.

We have all been "*the other kind*" at some point in our lives, whether we knew it or not. If it wasn't at school or in our community, it may have been within our own family. Many times being "*the other kind*" was because of some ascribed characteristic that we had no control of, such as race or gender.

With so much pressure to be thin enough, pretty enough, rich enough, smart enough, masculine or feminine enough we can never be reminded often enough that we are fine just the way we are. I thank "The Last Night of Ballyhoo" for reminding me of that.

The cast and crew would like to applaud you for coming to see this production. We are happy that you are here to share this experience with us!

Chris Starkey
Director

CAST OF CHARACTERS

{In order of appearance}

Lala Levy.....Dayna Woodhams
Reba Freitag.....Francyn Chomic
Boo Levy.....Christie Farris Öberg
Adolph FreitagDavid Keren
Joe FarkasSam Zwetchkenbaum
Sunny Freitag.....Melissa Henderson
Peachy Weil.....Michael Roehrig

TIME:

December, 1939

PLACE:

Atlanta, Georgia

INTERMISSION:

*There will be one 15-minute intermission
between Act I and Act II.*

Lala - - - - Dayna Woodhams

A junior at Huron High School, Dayna has been doing theatre all her life, and is by far the thing she most loves to do. She recently appeared in Redbud's production of *The Miracle Worker*, playing Annie Sullivan. Other appearances include, Penny Whistle in Huron Players' *Radio Drama*, and roles in All City Players' production of *Westside Story* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Dayna has performed in several Young Peoples Theater productions: Step mom (*Cinderella*), Witch (*Into the Woods*), Frumasarah (*Fiddler on the Roof*) and many others. A graduate of YPT, She is now in her third term of adult acting classes with Redbud Productions.

Reba - - - - Francyn Chomic

Francyn is thrilled to be in her first AACT production. She began acting at 12 years old and has a strong background in community theatre. She has performed with the Ridgedale Players, Pinckney Players, Livingston Players, Community Theatre of Howell, and the Dexter Players. Her most rewarding experience was directing *Steel Magnolias* for the Pinckney Players, assisted in set design/construction by her husband Don. Acting is her favorite part of theatre ("I'd rather be on stage than ANYWHERE"). Favorite roles include: Stepsister Joy (*Cinderella*), Lily St. Regis (*Annie*), Jennie (*Chapter Two*), Sylvia (*Stepping Out*), and Reba is quickly becoming tops on the list. Francyn frequently works in the schools with her children, Tally & Kyle. You may have seen her in a commercial for Jerry's Tire & Auto. She also enjoys showing her champion Chesapeake Bay Retriever, Tabasco, at AKC dog shows.

Boo - - - - Christie Farris Öberg

Ballyhoo marks Christie's first appearance with the AACT. Having spent several years away from the theatre, she is thrilled to return to the stage with this wonderful group of people. Christie's most recent acting credits are as Estelle in *No Exit*, and as various characters in an adaptation of *Canterbury Tales* - - both taking place in Stockholm Sweden, where she lived for several years before moving to Ann Arbor in 1998. As of May 5th, Christie will be (is) a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School.

Adolph - - - David Keren

David is delighted to work with this wonderful cast and crew as Uncle Adolph. Unlike Uncle Adolph, David did speak to the woman on the Chattahoochee Avenue Streetcar and she may be sitting near you in the audience today. In the past couple of years, David has appeared in several AACT productions including portraying Grandpa in *You Can't Take it With You*, Norman Thayer, Jr. (Best Actor, 98-99 Season Award) in *On Golden Pond*, also as Dr. Chumley in Saline Area Player's production of *Harvey*. Most recently he changed roles and directed *Marvin's Room* for Redbud Productions. In his spare time, David directs Warde Medical Laboratory for Trinity Health Corporation and teaches pathology at the University of Michigan.

Joe - - - Sam Zwetchkenbaum

New to AACT, Sam hails originally from Providence, Rhode Island...due east of Brooklyn. When not on stage, he makes teeth in the basement of University of Michigan Hospital. It's nice to see the candlesticks in action again ~ they belonged to Sam's grandmother, Matilda Zwetchkenbaum. Sam sends thanks to all his mispochah who shlepped in from out east to see the play. Many thanks to Chris, Dave, and the cast for your trust, guidance, and humor, which has made these last couple of months a lot of fun.

Sunny - - - Melissa Henderson

After graduating from U of M in 1995, Melissa married, taught high school for two years and had children, Ben 3 ½ and Elizabeth 21 months. A stay-at-home mom, Melissa is starting a custom embroidery business in addition to working as church organist. She enjoys singing, playing piano, reading, camping, teaching Sunday school, horseback riding, embroidering, serving God and grocery shopping! Out of theatre for a decade, past roles with Plymouth Park Players include Peggy (*42nd Street*) and Tup Tim (*The Kind and I*).

Peachy - - - - Michael Roehrig

Michael marks his second AACT appearance in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*. Previously he appeared in *The Front Page*, in which he spent a lot of time inside a desk. He now looks forward to **stretching** his limbs onstage in the role of Peachy Weil. *{What do you think?}* He expresses his thanks for being given this opportunity.

Director - - - - Chris Starkey

Chris has worked with various theatre companies, both on and off stage, for the last 12 years. After Assistant Directing *The Trip to Bountiful* for AACT two seasons ago he felt it was time to take the plunge into his biggest theatrical endeavor to date. Previous directing experience has included *I Take This Man* for the Ypsilanti Players and teaching scene study courses. Chris has appeared in AACT productions of *Jeffrey*, *Medea*, *You Can't Take it With You*, *My Favorite Year* and *The Trip to Bountiful*. He has also appeared on stage for MorrisCo, Orpheus, Phoenix, PTD and Redbud Productions. Many, many thanks to the talented cast and crew that have been involved with this production. Special thanks to David Wright and Ernie Terry for their never ending contributions to this production. *Too many names, too little space to list them all!* For his day job Chris performs for the State of Michigan as a Program Manager in Children's Services.

Assistant Director/Stage Manager - - - - David Wright

Dave has worked on stage or behind the scenes on a number of area productions over the past 6 years. He has appeared on stage in *The Secret Garden* and *Jeffrey* for AACT, and was in PTD's production of *Our Town*. He has also appeared in Our Time Productions staging of *The Destiny of Me*, and *Love, Valor, and Compassion*. Thanks Chris for the opportunity to join the fun. Thanks Doc Roc for understanding and support.

CREW OF CHARACTERS

Director	Chris Starkey
Assistant Director	Dave Wright
Stage Manager	Dave Wright
Stage Crew	Michael Rockwell, Gary Olszewski, Alison Gent
Producer	Ernie Terry
Poster Design	Deb Golden
Costumes	Suzie Berneis
Make-up & Hair	Loretta Grimes
Lighting Design	Thom Johnson
Sound Design	Bob Farra
Set Design	Bob Seeman & Chris Starkey
Master Set Builder	Bob Seeman
Building Assistants	Deb Golden, Barb Wells, Cheryl Berteel, Deb Starkey, Dave Wright, Chris Starkey
Light Board	Torey Berneis
Sound Board	Torey Berneis
Props	Suzi Peterson
Publicity	Tim Grimes
House Managers	Ernie Terry, Richard Casto, Khurum Sheik
Program	Ernie Terry
Production Support	Cassie Mann, Suzi Peterson, Joyce Casale
Photography	Marilyn Gouin
Choreography	Ann Chapman

SPECIAL THANKS:

- *To Pop Terry for the use of his truck*
- *Pamela Starkey for decorations*
- *To Deb Starkey for moving and painting*
- *Debbie Beebe for tree skirts*
- *Dexter Players for petticoats*
- *Don Chomic for the knitting bag*

A special note of thanks and appreciation to:



out \aut\ adv: into the open

\aut\ BAR
315 Braun Court
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
734-994-3677

For sponsoring and hosting our Opening Night Reception

May 3rd, ~ 10:30 p.m.

You are welcome and invited to join us after the opening!

Alfred Uhry, Playwright

Alfred Uhry is the only playwright to win a Pulitzer Prize, an Oscar Award, and a Tony Award. An Atlanta native, Uhry scored big with his first play, "Driving Miss Daisy" taking home the Oscar and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1988. His next play, "The Last Night of Ballyhoo" landed him the 1997 Tony Award for Best Play.

Uhry's charm for capturing southern humor and wit in his work no doubt came from his Atlanta upbringing. He was a graduate of Brown University and worked for 25 years in the theater as a lyric writer without much success. In 1976, this struggling writer received a surprise Tony nomination for the book and lyrics of "The Robber Bridegroom" but he eventually lost the award to the smash hit – A Chorus Line. In 1986, Uhry decided to give up theater for good and focus on his family. *"I had responsibilities. I realized I could have earned in one week of writing TV stuff what I had made in four years in the theatre,"* he said. Uhry gave the theater one last shot, and that is when Driving Miss Daisy was born, a play based upon the life of his grandmother. The play earned many awards including the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. For the film version, Mr. Uhry won an Academy Award, and the film itself was voted Best Picture of the Year. *Other films include "Mystic Pizza" and "Rich in Love."*

The Cultural Olympiad commissioned Mr. Uhry's second play, "The Last Night of Ballyhoo," for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. The play opened on Broadway in February 1997. It has been chosen Best Play by the American Theatre Critics Association, the Outer Critics Circle and The Drama League, as well as winning the 1997 Tony Award. Mr. Uhry's most recent play, "Parade," is a musical about the Leo Frank case the Jewish victim of a 1913 lynch mob, with music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown.

MorrisCo Art Theatre
presents

Hedda Gabler

by Henrik Ibsen

May 17, 18, 19 at 8:00 pm

May 20 at 2:00 pm

AACT Downtown (old Performance Network)

408 West Washington (734) 996-2549

MorrisCo will stage their production of "Hedda Gabler" here at AACT on May 17, 18, 19 at 8:00 p.m. and on May 20 at 2:00 p.m. For more information or to purchase tickets please call MorrisCo at (734) 996-2549.

Look for the announcement of AACT's 2001-2002 Season in the upcoming Evita program.

Season brochures will be mailed out this summer. If you are not on our mailing list, please fill out one of the blue cards located in the lobby.

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre will be presenting:

“Evita”

Directed by: Kyle Matthews

June 7, 8, 9 at 8:00 p.m. and June 10 at 2:00 p.m.

This production will be staged at the Lydia Mendelsson Theatre, Michigan League Building on U-M campus. For more information or to order your tickets, please call the AACT office at 971-2228.