

**Lex-Ham Community Theater  
Presents**

**ALL MY SONS**

**By Arthur Miller**

**Oct. 28th-Nov. 12th, 2005  
St. Paul Central High School  
275 N. Lexington Pkwy.**

*Produced by special arrangement with  
The Dramatists Play Service*

# Alimony Sons

**By Arthur Miller**

## Cast and Crew

### CHARACTERS

Joe Keller, owner of a factory .....	Frank Blomgren
Kate Keller, Joe's wife .....	Meri Golden
Chris Keller, son of Joe and Kate .....	Greg Hernandez
Ann Deever, former fiancée of the Kellers' dead son, Larry .....	Heather Meyer
George Deever, Ann's brother .....	Andrew Baker
Dr. Jim Bayliss, next door neighbor to the Kellers .....	Mark Mahon
Sue Bayliss, Jim's wife .....	Barbara Benson Keith
Frank Lubey, neighbor to the Kellers .....	Tim Hagedorn
Lydia Lubey, Frank's wife .....	Sara Davis
Bert, adolescent neighbor .....	Connor Swanson

### SETTING

The Kellers' back yard in August, 1947.

*There will be one 10-minute intermission between the first and second acts.*

### CREW

Producer .....	Urban Landreman
Director .....	Kevin T. Houle
Stage Manager .....	Tara Nielson
Assistant Stage Manager .....	Kathleen Lomax
Set Design and Construction .....	Dutton Foster
Lighting Design .....	Leigh Gice
Set Construction .....	Jon Stierwald
.....	Hannah Carlson
Tech Operator .....	Nic Broadnax
Props .....	Kathy Super
Costumes .....	Ed Quirin
Photography .....	Lila Taft
Publicity .....	Lindsay Buescher
.....	Ann Griffith
Program Design .....	Kelly Rivers
.....	Jack Rose

## Director's Notes

In *All My Sons*, Arthur Miller has expertly dramatized the universal challenge we all face in trying to find a balance between personal responsibility for oneself and one's family and a moral responsibility towards society and a 'greater good.' Aristotle wrote that "He who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god," and this is exactly the dilemma Joe Keller faces in the play.

Joe slowly discovers the cost of his decisions because, as another philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, made clear, "the consequences of our actions grab us by the scruff of our necks, quite indifferent to our claim that we have 'gotten better' in the meantime." In that light, it's not hard at all to imagine some of today's politicians and corporate CEOs facing the same kind of challenges and consequences the fictional Joe

Keller did in the 1940s. As a character in Arthur Miller's great masterpiece, "Death of a Salesman" says, "Attention must be paid," and it's crucial to always remember that where each of us chooses to focus our own attention profoundly affects not only ourselves and our families, but also our communities and our world.

For over fifty years, Arthur Miller's plays helped shape the American theatre, and I once had the great fortune to meet him and listen to him speak. It has been incredibly satisfying to work with material as rich and meaningful as his, and everyone who's worked on this play and everyone at Lex-Ham Community Theater is grateful that you've chosen to focus some of your attention on this production. Hopefully, the consequences of that decision will be as rewarding for you as they are for us.

## About the Author

Arthur Miller was born in Harlem, New York City, in October 1915. At that time the area was largely Jewish and Italian. His father, who had emigrated from Poland at the age of eight, had built up a sizeable company manufacturing women's coats. He was the epitome of the American Dream, which proposed that America offered the opportunity to rise from rags to riches, a dream whose material thrust Miller would later question both in *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*.

The family was rich, with an expensive apartment and chauffeur-driven car. They lost much of their money, however, in the Stock Market crash of 1929 and moved to the then less fashionable borough of Brooklyn, just across the river from the tip of Manhattan. The Depression which followed made a deep impression on Miller and echoes throughout his work. Together with the Civil War of the 19th century, it was, he believed, the experience that touched the lives of most Americans. He himself learned that it was possible suddenly to lose everything, a lesson later reinforced by the treatment of the Jews during the war, and it is worth remembering that Miller is Jewish. When you know you can lose everything you have to decide what really matters in life, what is fundamental. In many of his plays, including *All My Sons*, he would insist that human relationships and obligations take primacy, that it is necessary to accept responsibility for your own life, your own actions, but also to accept that you live in the world and that therefore you are responsible for and to others.

The Depression also forced Miller into manual labour in



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order to earn enough money to get to university. He delivered bread at four in the morning, drove a delivery van, worked in an auto parts warehouse. This, in turn, gave him a respect for those who also struggled on a daily basis.

At University, in Michigan, he became radicalised. This, after all, was a radical decade, with the Spanish Civil War raging in Europe (several of his friends went there and died) and strikes and labour unrest in America. He also began to write, winning a series of prizes for plays which also had radical themes.

After University he made his money by writing radio plays, often on patriotic subjects, and by working on a film script about army life, eventually made under the title *The Story Of GI Joe*. He tried to enlist but an old football injury kept him out of the services so, while writing his plays, he worked as a fitter in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. He was to draw on this experience as background for *A View from the Bridge* in 1955.

His first Broadway play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, was a failure. It closed after four days. In despair, he turned to the novel and wrote *Focus*, which took as its subject antisemitism in America, a remarkable choice given the fact that America had been engaged in a war against Nazism abroad. It was published in 1945 and was a considerable success. He decided, however, to have one last assault on the theatre. The result was *All My Sons*. It had previously taken him three months to write a stage play and eight weeks to write a radio play. *All My Sons* took two and a half years.

— Christopher Bigsby, *Professor of American Studies at the University of East Anglia, author of Contemporary American Playwrights, and editor (with Don Wilmeth) of The Cambridge History of American Theatre. Reproduced from the National Theatre (UK) Education Workpack, <http://website-archive2.nt-online.org/download.php?id=2>.*

## Literary References and Suggested Reading

America was isolationist in the early part of the European war; Ohio, where this play is set, more so than most, at least according to Miller. Miller himself thought of the war at first as merely one more imperial conflict. That is to say, America decided to be responsible only for its own. Joe Keller takes a similar view on a personal level. The family is all that counts. In the course of the play he learns otherwise, and it is a truth he cannot bear.

It is a fundamental tenet of Miller's drama that the private and the public world are intertwined. As he is fond of saying, the fish is in the water and the water is in the



fish. But so, too, are the past and the present. We are, he insists, responsible for one another, responsible for our actions, for who we are. *All My Sons* stages that truth.

— Christopher Bigsby, *NT Education Workpack (see credits above)*.

Other related materials:

- *All My Sons* Study Guide, Guthrie Theater, <http://www.guthrietheater.org/pdf/sons.pdf>
- *Arthur Miller*, ed. by Harold Bloom, Chelsea House Publisher, New York, 1987.
- *Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller*, ed. Bigsby, Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- *The Portable Arthur Miller*, ed. Bigsby, Penguin, USA, 1995.
- *The Theatre Essays of Arthur Miller*, ed. by Robert A Martin and Steven R Centola, Da Capo Press, New York, 1996.
- *Conversations with Arthur Miller*, ed. by Matthew C Roudané, University Press of Mississippi, 1987.

## Cast and Crew Information

**Andrew Baker** (George Deever) studied Music, Spanish, and Theatre at Concordia College in Moorhead, MN. He performed on the Concordia Mainstage in such productions as *Fiddler on the Roof*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *The Diviners*, *La Bête*, *The Tempest*, and *Medea*. He also co-directed *The Exonerated* as part of Concordia's Death Penalty Awareness Week. This year, he has appeared in *Boys' Life* with Theatre B in Fargo, ND; and *Bliss: Three One-Acts* with Swandive Theatre. Andy would like to thank the people at Lex-Ham for allowing him this fantastic opportunity.

**Frank Blomgren** (Joe Keller) is pleased and excited to be doing his third Lex-Ham show; having appeared in a melodrama and *Talley and Son* the last couple of years. It's nice to be doing a production so close to home for a change, with previous shows in Lakeville with Chameleon Players (*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*) and Minneapolis with Sweet Charities and the Corcoran Park Players (*The Duck Variations* and *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*). So sit back and enjoy this comedic romp through the heartland of America. What a guy that Arthur Miller!

**Sara Davis** (Lydia Lubey) is pleased to be a part of her first Lex Ham production. She obtained a BFA in Theatre from Culver-Stockton College in Canton, MO and studied with Shakespeare and Company in Lenox, MA. Sara would like to thank friends, family, and Bill for all their love and support. Enjoy the show!

**Dutton Foster** (Set Designer) As a child of twelve or so, Dutton Foster built an elaborate puppet theater complete with footlights and a fancy act curtain, intended for puppet shows he never actually produced. After a sporadic acting career that began by playing Lady Macbeth in grade nine (all-male school) and ended after graduate school, Dutton has directed, designed, and built high-school and middle school shows since 1961. In recent years he has retired from directing and teaching high-school English, but continues to design and build for St. Paul Academy and Summit School, his former employer. Dutton enjoys salvaging materials for sets as well as using unconventional materials. Dutton is also a published playwright; his most

successful opus has been a one-act melodrama, *The Wild Flowering of Chastity, or Chaste Across the Stage*, published in about 1970.

Since the turn of the century Dutton's set work has included (among others) *The Laramie Project*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Miracle Worker*, *Peer Gynt*, *Into the Woods*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Sound of Music*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *City of Angels*, and *Pippin*. He has enjoyed working with Lex-Ham for the first time.

**Leigh Gice** (Lighting Designer) As an alumnus of the University of MN, Leigh has designed for numerous directors and choreographers such as Joel Sass, Doug Elkins, and Kari Margolis. Currently the interim lighting director at ShopNBC, she has made a small move into television and film, while keeping her soul in theatre and dance.

**Meri Golden** (Kate) Meri is in her first show with Lex-Ham. She has performed with a number of theatres around the Metro area, including Mixed Blood Theatre, Park Square, Theatre in the Round, Gremlin Theatre, Shakespeare & Company and many others. Among her favorite roles are Gertrude in *Hamlet*, Evelyn in *Independence* and the title role in *Filumena*. Meri is on the faculty at Inver Hills Community College where she teaches communication and theatre classes and directs college play productions. She loves to travel and lives in Minneapolis with her husband and two sons.

**Tim Hagedorn** (Frank Lubey) This is Tim's second show with the Lex-Ham Community Theater. Tim previously played Timmy in the 2003 production of *Talley and Son*. Tim has also somewhat recently been in *See How They Run* at Theater in the Round in the summer of 2004. This the first production Tim has done since his daughter, Leila, was born in September 2004. Tim would like to thank his lovely wife, Hildi, for her support as well as his daughter for her unconscious support.

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**Greg Hernandez** (Chris Keller) burst onto the Twin Cities theater scene last year in *RADIO, RADIO*, a Minnesota Fringe Festival favorite. Since then, he has portrayed a 30s-era gangster in Lakeshore Players production of Ayn Rand's *Night of January 16th* and a diabolically smooth abuser in Ariel Pinkerton's *Teach Me Tonight* - currently on tour. Greg is also available in downloadable form in the internet TV series *Phase Nine From Deep Space* ([www.p9fds.com](http://www.p9fds.com)). This is Greg's first time working with Lex-Ham.

**Kevin T. Houle** (Director) has been active in community, educational and professional theatre for almost 30 years as an actor, educator, technician, administrator, stage manager and director. He has an M.F.A. in Directing from the University of Utah and a B.A. in Drama from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD. He previously directed *The Dining Room* and *O'Flaherty V.C.* for Lex-Ham, and has directed many other productions in the Twin Cities for such groups as Lakeshore Players, Heritage Theatre Company, Northwestern College, Child's Play Theatre Company, and hipp-kitten theatreworks, of which he was also one of the co-founders. He has been a Guest Artist/ Lecturer at Simpson College in Indianola, IA and Doane College in Crete, NE, and served as the Managing Artistic Director of the Waukesha Civic Theatre in Waukesha, WI for one season.

**Barbara Benson Keith** (Sue Bayliss) is happy to be making her Lex-Ham debut with *All My Sons* and a terrific cast. Stained Glass Mosaic Artist and Freelance Graphic Designer by day, she just recently returned from a two month long kayaking trip down the Mississippi River with her husband (who, incidentally, works in medical research, discovering things). The very end of the trip was foiled by Hurricane Katrina, when they joined the rest of the evacuation traffic heading out of Louisiana.

**Kathleen Lomax** (Assistant Stage Manager) Kathleen is happy to be embarking on her third show with Lex-Ham and her first backstage role in several years. Kathleen appeared as Avalaine in Lex-Ham's 2004 production of *Talley and Son*, as well as Mrs O'Flaherty in *O'Flaherty V.C.* this past August. She has also been involved with

Apple Valley's Chameleon Theatre Circle. Kathleen would like to thank Urban, Kevin, Tara, and the cast for this opportunity to work with such a great group.

**Mark Mahon** (Jim Bayliss) This represents Mark's first performance with Lex-Ham Theater. Mark studied improvisation at Dudley Riggs' Brave New Workshop. He was a member of the workshop's Touring Company and appeared in the workshop's submission to the 2000 MN Fringe Festival, *Blinded by the Right*. He performed previously at the Red Eye Theater and Tenth Muse Theater, as well as numerous Fringe Festival performances.

**Heather Meyer** (Ann Deever) is very excited to be back in the Twin Cities after recently finishing a summer at the Pioneer Playhouse in Kentucky where she appeared in as Maggie in *The Man Who Came to Dinner* and Miss Bell in *The Last of Jane Austen*. Heather is also a very big fan of beets and kittens.

**Tara Nielson** (Stage Manager) has stage managed Lex Ham's last two productions of *Sylvia* and *O'Flaherty V.C.* She loves theatre, taking acting classes and looking forward to the road ahead. Tara would like to thank her family, friends and everyone she has worked with in doing *All My Sons*. You are all so wonderful! A big hip-hooray to John who opened this door to me, for Urban who continues to open it and for Kevin with whom I've had the chance to walk through it twice.

**Ed Quirin** (Costumes) This is Ed's third time working with Lex-Ham and the first time he isn't designing costumes for people playing animals. While his first love is being in a plant pathology lab and working towards his Master's degree, he has always been a huge fan of the theater having performed, directed, produced, choreographed, musically directed, arranged music, set and costume designed, and pretty much anything else you can imagine for a number of different performing groups since high school. His other costume design credits include *The Frog Prince* and *Sylvia* (Lex-Ham), *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (Risely Theater, Ithaca, NY), *The Red Coat and Other Plays* (CTA,

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Cornell Univeristy), *Pirates of Penzance*, *Patience*, and *Iolanthe* (Cornell Savoyards), and *Once Upon A Mattress* (Brand X Musical Theater, Ithaca, NY). Ed would like to thank Lex-Ham for allowing him to continue being a part of their productions and James for putting up with him when he gets involved with things like this.

**Kathy Super** (Props) My real identity: Prop Mistress/Thrift Store Annie/Antique Dweller/Halftime Crafter/Garbage Digger and the Friendly Brower. If you need me. look for the car or house stuffed with the most unique items. Call me at my home phone number (GET-THE-PROP).

**Connor Swanson** (Bert) is appearing in his first

Lex-Ham performance. He regularly performs with A.C.T. (Awesome Children's Theater) in Inver Grove Heights. Some of his more recent roles include Henry in *Frankenstein*, Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, and Scapin in Molière's *The Tricks of Scapin*. A very special thank you goes to Rudd Reyfield for recommending me to the Lex-Ham company.

## Special Thanks To:

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# Lex-Ham Community Theater

Since its start in 1995, the Lex-Ham Community Theater has striven to achieve its mission of producing quality theatrical experiences by and for the residents of the Lexington-Hamline and surrounding neighborhoods in St. Paul. The company has enhanced the local theatrical scene by

- Selecting lesser-known works by noted playwrights, such as *Soul Gone Home* by Langston Hughes and *The Vegetable* by F. Scott Fitzgerald.
- Giving the regional and world premiers of works by local authors, such as *Bullets and Beauties* by Urban Landreman.
- Reviving wonderful classics such as *The Philadelphia Story* by Philip Barry and *Under the Gaslight* by Augustin Daly.

All of its shows have provided people with little previous experience an opportunity to be on-stage or work off-stage side by side with those who have more experience.

Finally, the company strives to help build community by involving people across generations and walks of life with each of its productions.

The theater is further involved with the community by offering acting classes through St. Paul Community Education and St. Paul Parks & Recreation, and holding free informal Shakespeare Reading Series events. Call (651) 644-3366 to get involved.

## Upcoming Events & Acting Classes

**Shakespeare Reading Series:** *Henry VI, Part 3*, 6:30 p.m., Friday, November 18, 2005, 1184 Portland Avenue, St. Paul.

The Lexington-Hamline Community Theater sponsors a reading series of the plays by William Shakespeare. The readings are held in homes, are quite informal, and include a pot-luck supper. Anyone who has an interest in Shakespeare, young or old, is encouraged to attend one, some, or all the readings.

The format for each session is:

- 6:30 p.m., pot-luck supper
- 7:00 p.m., start reading. The group will read the whole play during the evening.

No previous acting experience is required. Each person is responsible for bringing a copy of the play. Parts will be reassigned at the start of each scene so all those in attendance can have a chance to read.

**Acting Classes** are taught in conjunction with St. Paul Community Education and St. Paul Parks & Recreation. During the current term we offer courses in beginning acting, American classic scene study, beginning acting for history buffs, advanced beginning acting, contemporary scene study, and Shakespeare. For further information, ask a volunteer at this show, phone 651-644-3366, or ...

Visit our website - [www.LexHamArts.org](http://www.LexHamArts.org)