

Lex-Ham Community Theater

presents



by Hugh Leonard

8:00 p.m., August 6

O'Gara's Garage,
164 Snelling Avenue North, Saint Paul

8:00 p.m., August 8

Black Box Theater, Concordia University-St. Paul,
312 N Hamline Avenue, Saint Paul

4:00 p.m., August 9

Irish Fair of Minnesota,
Minnesota Centennial Showboat by Harriet Island

www.LexHamArts.org/theater

PIZZAZZ

by Hugh Leonard

Cast and Crew

Jim Bitney G.P. Conroy
 Michael Harrison Fergal Rooney
 Krystle Igbo-Ogbonna Olivia Gaynor
 Julie Jackson Marion
 Mary Beth Redmond Mrs. Hand

Director Mishia Burns Edwards
 Stage Manager Tara Nielson
 Costume Designer Renae Redenius
 Props and Set Coordinator Terri Ristow
 Producer Urban Landreman

Pizzazz takes place in the reception area of the Royal Brosna Line - one of the companies which hire out cabin cruisers on the River Shannon. Time: the present.



Hugh Leonard
1926 - 2009

Hugh Leonard was a prolific writer who is hard to pigeon hole into one category. He wrote a large number of plays. His most successful one was *Da*, which earned Leonard both a Tony Award and a Drama Desk Award for Best Play in 1978. Leonard also wrote screenplays and for television and his 1992 novel, *Parnell and the Englishwoman*. Until 2006 he wrote a humorous monthly column, “The Curmudgeon”, for the Irish Sunday Independent newspaper.

As for his 1986 play, *Pizzazz*, Hugh Leonard wrote, “I have always wanted to write the dramatic equivalent of a Chinese Box: the toy that is simple to look upon and drives one to near-madness when played with. This is my attempt, and I hope it is not as intimidating to see as it was to write.”

Mr. Leonard died on February 12, 2009 after a long illness. Lex-Ham Community Theater hopes this production honors his life and body of work.

Director’s Musings on Hugh Leonard’s *Pizzazz*

Hugh Leonard’s play about the complexity of human interaction and the search for connection has been referred to as “A Chinese Box in dramatic form, a toy that is simple to look at but drives one to near madness when played with.” This story between people who meet in an apparently innocuous setting and the twists and turns of human interaction has as many possible outcomes as life experienced on a daily basis. Just as in life, the fun of *Pizzazz* is the unpredictability of the ride. Thank you for riding along with us.



Please remember to turn off all cell phones or pagers during the performance.

Cast and Crew

Jim Bitney (G.P. Conroy) This marks Jim's second venture with Lex-Ham Community Theater. He has appeared at a number of venues around the Twin Cities, including Lakeshore Players, Theatre in the Round, Phipps Center for the Arts, Old Log Theater, In the Basement Productions, Chaska Civic Theater, OOPs Theatre, and Ensemble Productions to name a few. Jim is excited to work with such a generous and talented cast and crew and to be involved with the Minnesota Irish Fair of Minnesota. Sláinte!

Mishia Burns Edwards (Director) Mishia Edwards is a director, theatre educator and actor with a Master's Degree in Theatre from the UN-Omaha and is an Actor's Equity Membership Candidate. She is also the Production Director for St. Olaf College Theatre Camp and serves as a Production Manager for Starting Gate Productions.

Mishia's Minnesota directing credits include *Little Shop of Horrors* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* for the Northfield Arts Guild, *The Trip to Bountiful* for Lyric Arts and *An American Daughter* and *The Taming of the Shrew* for The Chameleon Theatre Circle. Upcoming shows: *Sylvia* for The Chameleon Theatre Circle, *Light Up the Sky* for Starting Gate and *Proof* for the Northfield Arts Guild. Mishia wants to thank Lex-Ham community for the fun opportunity to direct this story.

Michael Harrison (Fergal Rooney) This is Michael's debut performance for Lex-Ham Community Theater. Other shows include *Hamlet* and *Pygmalion* at the Guthrie, *Oklahoma* at Mounds View, *The Foreigner*, *Music Man*, *Snow White* at Lyric Arts, *Picnic* and *Dracula* for Lakeshore Players just to name a few. He is very happy to part of this production and wishes everyone the best.

Krystle Igbo-Ogbonna (Olivia Gaynor) Krystle is a junior at the University of Minnesota where she is currently working towards degrees in Communication Studies and Theatre Arts with an emphasis in Directing. She has been involved in the arts since the age of 4. She has studied classical piano for 12 years. She has been dancing since the age of 6 and is trained in classical Ballet, Modern, Pointe, and Russian Character. Krystle's theatrical experiences began in 2003 as a chorus member in a production of *West Side Story*. Since then, she has had roles in *Hair* the musical, *Terror Town USA*, played the lead role in *FAME*, and was a company member in *The Wiz* at the University of Minnesota. She has also choreographed musicals including *Anything Goes* in 2005 and most recently *West Side Story* at Patrick Henry High School (Minneapolis, MN) in the winter of 2009. She has also directed many plays including *A Raisin in the Sun* in 2007. Krystle is excited to be a part of *Pizzazz* with Lex-Ham this summer!

Julie Jackson (Marion) Julie is excited to be working with Lex-Ham again after playing a series of bit parts in *The Women*. Favorite roles include Dotty Otley in *Noises Off* (twice!) for Heritage Theater Company, Mrs. Drudge in *The Real Inspector Hound* for Sweet Charities Theater, and singing in an Irish capella group at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival.

Urban Landreman (Producer) Urban has had the privilege of being involved with Lex-Ham shows since the scripts were written on parchment and stored in folios. His job duty is primarily to assemble a great director and crew, cross his fingers and pray that talented actors audition, and he's overjoyed that once again he succeeded.

Tara Nielson (Stage Manager) Tara Nielson has stage managed many of Lex-Ham's shows over the past four years. Some of which include: *Sylvia*, *All My Sons*, and *State of the Union*. She is thrilled again to be involved with such a great director, cast and crew. When she is not stage managing she is often found working on a mosaic project or two. Tara lives in St. Paul.

Rena Redenius (Costume Designer) This is Rena's third time doing costuming for the Lex-Ham Community Theater. She is a recent grad from the Apparel Design and Development course at the University of Wisconsin Stout. In her free time she enjoys learning new crafts and making gifts for friends and family.

Mary Beth Redmond (Mrs. Hand) Having been born of a mother; having read the whole of Mother Goose before she was 26; and having had five children of her own (really!) Mary Beth has spent her life preparing for this brilliant role. She is delighted as always to be a Lex-Ham player once again. Previous shows include *Quilters*, *The Road to Romance*, and *There's Talk In Town*. Commercial work: Moma's Pizza, Captain Jack's Mother of Pearl and Scrimshaw Boutique. Film: Stunt double for Grandmother in Vacation. Current read: Biography of Mother Theresa.

Terri Ristow (Props and Set Coordinator) Terri Ristow is both an analytical chemist and artist. She has published poetry under the pen name Tirows Byrd, including the witty "Interloper" for the Everyday Poem for City Sidewalk project. She has also exhibited drawings and mixed media artwork at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery and Macalester College. In her free time she enjoys designing gardens and renovating her 1923 home in St. Paul.

This production has been made possible with special arrangements with Samuel French, Inc.

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, *The Vegetable* by F. Scott Fitzgerald; and *Motomorphosis* by Václav Havel.
- Giving the regional and world premieres of works by local authors, such as *There's Talk in Town* by John Solensten and *Bullets and Beauties* by Urban Landreman;
- Reviving wonderful classics such as *The Women* by Clare Boothe Luce, *Under the Gaslight* by Augustin Daly, and *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller; and
- Winning awards for Outstanding Performance by an Actor (Shad Cooper) and Sound Design (David Lind) at the 2003 and 2005 Minnesota Association of Community Theatres Play Festivals.

The theater offers many opportunities for people to get involved at any level or time commitment. Opportunities range from attending an evening reading of a play written by Shakespeare or which won the Pulitzer Prize in Drama to enrolling in a beginning or advanced acting class.

To get involved contact theater@LexHamArts.org or www.LexHamArts.org/theater

Upcoming events:

August 14 - Pulitzer Prize Winner Reading Series: *Street Scene* by Elmer Rice

September 11 - Shakespeare Reading Series: *Henry IV, Part 2*

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