

ADMIT ONE

SAP'S SEMI-OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

Saline Area Players

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The Saline Area Players announce auditions for "Chicago: The Musical", book by Fred Ebb and Bob Fosse, Music by John Kander & Lyrics by Fred Ebb. The show's artistic director is Wendy Sielaff, musical director is Rich Alder, and Choreographer is Brian Buckner.

Auditions will be on January 12 & 14 at 7:00 at the Liberty School Theater, 7265 N. Ann Arbor St., Saline, Michigan. Please arrive a little early to register. Call-backs will be on January 15 at the same time and place. The dates of the performances are March 20, 21 & 22. The show will be performed in the Saline Middle School auditorium.

Auditioners are expected to sing 16 bars from a song of their choosing (not from the show) and bring the piano music for the accompanist. Come in comfortable clothes and be prepared for a dance audition as well. There may also be cold readings from the script.

There are parts for 3 Men and 3 women (see character descriptions at www.salineareaplayers.com). All of the

other parts will be pulled from the chorus/dancers, including the Merry Murderers. The chorus will need to sing and be able to move well. There will also be specialty dancers who are expected to sing as well.

Costumes for the women will have a lingerie-look to them. Auditioners 16 years of age and older are invited to participate. Those 16 or 17 years of age will need to have parental permission to be cast in the show. We are keeping this true to the Broadway version and Fosse style of dancing.

For audition forms go to: www.salineareaplayers.com.

If you have any questions about auditions, please contact Wendy at: sap_chicago@comcast.net

As always, in addition to the on-stage roles, there are plenty of opportunities for backstage talent to assist with props, publicity, painting, set construction, costumes, program ad sales, etc. If interested, please call 439-8613 for more information.

“On Golden Pond” Delivers

(As reviewed by Brian Cox in The Saline Reporter.)

Blair Driskell pulls off an astounding feat in the on-going Saline Area Players' production of “On Golden Pond,” the final performances of which are Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m. in the Liberty School auditorium. As Norman Thayer, the cantankerous and at times bitter octogenarian unforgettably portrayed by Henry Fonda in his final film role and for which he won an Oscar, Driskell made a choice that is almost always fatal to a dramatic performance, but nonetheless difficult to resist when a character has become so indelibly identified with a particular actor as Norman has with Fonda.

Driskell opted to trace his characterization of the retired English professor over Fonda's portrayal and manages to capture perfectly the iconic cadence of Fonda's voice, the distinctive rise and fall of his intonation and phrasing. Usually, an actor can get into trouble when he tries to recreate a film performance, particularly one as memorable as Fonda's. The audience sees an actor acting like another actor and is left to judge how close the impersonation is.

A perfect example might be the stage version of “A Few Good Men,” where the performance of an actor choosing to mime Jack Nicholson as Col. Nathan Jessep will be rated by how well he replicates Nicholson snapping, “You can't handle the truth.” The audience doesn't hear Jessep; they hear Nicholson. It's a dangerous trap. But to his credit, Driskell never trips the wire. Instead, he walks a fine tightrope, reproducing Fonda's speech pattern but allowing the audience to see and appreciate Norman, not Fonda. He also demonstrates a fine sense for comedic timing.

Driskell's strong, spot-on performance is only one highlight of what may be the sharpest drama SAP has staged in a while. Opposite Driskell is SAP newcomer June Weiland as Norman's endearing and long-suffering wife, Ethel. Weiland is charmingly natural and relaxed. She moves with grace and fluidity on stage and is clearly at ease in the role. The pair emanates a comfortableness with and fondness for one another that can only be attained after decades of marriage.

Norman and Ethel are marking their 48th summer in a New England cottage on the shores of Golden Pond. Norman will celebrate his 80th birthday and is convinced it will be their last summer in the cottage. “You're old and I'm ancient,” he tells Ethel.

Physically and mentally deteriorating, Norman has lost interest in simple activities such as berry picking and fishing in which Ethel still finds pleasure. He feels useless and unneeded. That is until his estranged daughter Chelsea (Denene Pollock) appears with her fiancé, a dentist named Bill Ray (Adam Nola), and his 13-year-old son, also named Bill Ray (Michael Doa). The boy stays with Norman and Ethel for a month while Chelsea and Bill travel to Europe where they marry. Norman is rejuvenated by the presence of the boy, who is perhaps the son he never had.

Pollock is striking as Chelsea. She has the unenviable task, however, of providing the emotional powder keg that is inadequately fleshed out in Ernest Thompson's script. It is never clear what caused the rift between Chelsea and her father. The climax of their emotionally charged conflict is unconvincing and its resolution seems rushed, falling well short of feeling redemptive. The time Thompson spends on the dialogue between Norman and Ethel earlier in the play, while delightful and engaging, might have been better used beefing up the conflict that exists between Norman and his daughter.

On par with Driskell and Weiland's performances is Brad Richert's portrayal of Charlie Martin, the self-effacing mailman who has had a crush on Chelsea since their teen years. Richert masters a New England accent and is nothing less than charming. The talented Richert last appeared in a SAP production 12 years ago and is a welcomed return.

Dick Vail's set design depicting a lake cottage is phenomenal in its detail and brilliant in its layout. It rivals professional designs and alone is worth the price of a ticket. Richard Deitering's direction is solid, though at times the blocking struggles between being static and then unnecessarily busy, as if at times the thought was that the actors in the dialogue-rich play cannot just sit there and yap at one another but no convincing solution could be found.

But that's nitpicking. In the whole, “On Golden Pond” will leave theater-goers well rewarded and stands as a high mark of SAP dramas in recent years.

"On Golden Pond" in Pix



SALINE AREA PLAYERS

P.O. Box 334
Saline, MI 48176
E-mail:
President@salineareaplayers.com



Although technically founded in 1973, the Saline Area Players' first production was in 1972. Performers come from all walks of life, drawn together by their love of the stage. None of them are paid; they all do it for the enjoyment. In addition to performing onstage, all of the cast members (along with their family and friends) are asked to help out backstage - painting or building scenery, sewing costumes, putting up posters, etc. The Saline Area Players pride ourselves on our commitment to educating our members and performers and giving them a chance to be creative.



Important Dates to Remember

Jan. 12 & 14
March 20-22

Chicago Auditions
"Chicago"

Liberty School, Saline
Saline Middle School

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Name _____ Email _____

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I am interested in becoming a member. I understand that membership is for one season and includes the quarterly newsletter, advance notice of auditions and shows, and voting rights. Membership is required of performers.

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Complete this form and return it along with your check made payable to:

Saline Area Players

P.O. Box 334, Saline, MI 48176

Thank you for your generous support!