

Are you ready to rock?

"Rock 'n Roll Heaven" a feast of hits from on high

On a cool March night in 1952, DJ "Moon-dog" Alan Freed hosted a show that would change the world of music forever. It was at that concert where the frenzied media, the stampeding crowds, the frustrated authorities and, most importantly, the soul-stirring *sounds* converged to give a fresh and dangerous new musical genre its name - "rock 'n roll."

Forever after, rock artists have been our culture's dream makers, paving a path to free expression, responding to their times in widely divergent ways. The same decade that brought us Roy Orbison's "Only the Lonely," for example, also produced John Lennon's "Revolution."

In *Rock 'n Roll Heaven*, we honor the artists whose genius defined American popular music during the 50's, 60's and 70's. And what better way to honor a firmament filled with rock legends than with a no-holds-barred concert? From Dusty Springfield to Bill Haley to Sam Cooke to Jim Croce - we've combed the catalog for the best of the best and paired the songs we found

with some of the most phenomenally talented performers in the Upstate.

Scan the press releases for our lineup of vocalists and musicians and you'll find, among other things, a starring role in the Broadway tour of *Fame*, studio sessions in Nashville and Los Angeles, appearances on major network television shows like *Seinfeld* and (in cartoon form, of course) *The Simpsons*, and ... getting the idea?

Make no mistake, at \$30 a ticket, *Rock 'n Roll Heaven* is the entertainment bargain of the season. A concert of hits that you absolutely don't want to miss - not in this lifetime, anyway!

Rock 'n Roll Heaven runs Feb. 18 - March 13. Shows Thursday-Sunday only. Tickets go on sale to the general public Feb. 1. Members reserve now!



The last lady Lincoln saw alive

Or, an opening night to end all opening nights



By BJ Koonce, Executive Director

The circumstances surrounding the assassination of Abraham Lincoln are widely known. And the fact that the assassin was an actor certainly didn't help the already tarnished reputation of those who trod the boards in mid-19th century England and America. But what do we know of the actors who were performing at Ford's Theatre April 14, 1865? It was the final week of the Washington leg of Laura Keane's tour of *Our American Cousin*, a comedy by Tom Taylor. The play was owned by Laura Keane, an English actress who had become America's first female theater manager.

Our Leading Lady takes us backstage on the night Lincoln was assassinated and introduces us to a motley cast of characters, including the famous Laura Keane. It is not, however, an historical piece. It's a comedy sprung from the mind of the man who gave us *Psycho Beach Party*, *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife* and *Die, Mommie Die* ... Charles Busch. It has been described by some as Civil War meets *Noises Off*.

When I chose this play, it wasn't my intention to play Laura Keane, but director Ben Robinson insisted. He said it would be too perfect for the 'actor/manager' at Centre Stage to play the 'actor/manager' in *Our Leading Lady*. And that's why I'm finally getting to do something onstage again other than a curtain speech!

Mainstage

Rock 'n Roll Heaven: Feb. 18 - March 13

Our Leading Lady: April 15 - May 1

Driving Miss Daisy: June 10 - 26

See Rock City: Aug. 5 - 21

Special events

Spotlight concerts: Feb. 6, March 20

Summer fundraiser: July 15

2010 New Play Festival: Sept. 20-24

Trial By Jury: Nov. 12-14, 19, 20

Ben's outstanding cast for this production includes Cheryl Taylor, J. Michael Craig, Kelly Wallace, Katy Beth Cassell, Annette Garver, Justin Walker, Richard Beveridge and, new to our stage, Lavin Cuddihee.

Sponsored by Greenville Hospital System University Medical Center and Greenville First Bank, *Our Leading Lady* will run **April 15 - May 1**.

Donation

Return completed form with payment to: **Centre Stage, P.O. Box 8451, Greenville, SC 29604.**

1. Your contact information (please print and please answer all questions!)

Name _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Day phone _____ Night phone _____ Cell phone _____

Email _____

2. Your donation

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Producers Circle | \$10,000 - \$24,999 |
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Does your employer match donations?

Companies tend to support the arts organizations that their employees support ... and some employers match donations! We'll find out for you ...

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Thank you!



Savoyards rejoice!

Gilbert & Sullivan coming to Centre Stage Nov. 12-20

By Christian Elser, Assistant Professor of Music, Presbyterian College

After moving here from the Kansas City area in 2008, I was more than pleasantly surprised by what a vibrant and beautiful community Greenville is. In fact, Greenville was much of the reason I accepted the faculty position I now hold at Presbyterian College.

I was also surprised that no resident professional company was catering in any specific way to classical vocal music – not just opera, but *operetta* (light opera), as well as American and British musical theater.

So together with my fiancée, Jenna Tamsiea, a first rate musical theater actress and theater educator, I began to investigate the possibility of starting a company to fill this void in Greenville. That's how the **Greenville Light Opera Works (GLOW)** was born.

As a professional baritone, I've made my living for years in opera, operetta and musical theater with companies like the Chicago Opera Theatre, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Lyric Opera of Cleveland, and Light Opera Oklahoma. I now devote most of my non-teaching, non-singing time to GLOW.

Our plans for GLOW are two-fold. First, we want to bring light opera to the Upstate by producing first-rate productions with professional musicians and production staff. Second, we want to educate young audiences through our **GlowWorms** in-school residency program.

To be honest, when we began laying plans for GLOW, Jenna and I both thought, "Wouldn't it be just perfect if we could do something with Centre Stage?" The Centre Stage production of *Tomfoolery* had been the first event of any kind we'd attended in Greenville and we'd been very



Christian Elser



Jenna Tamsiea

Houston, we have a fundraiser

... and a dance party of interplanetary proportions July 15

By Tim Brosnan, Marketing Director

When our development director, Allen Evans, showed me the West End venue where we'll be landing our big dance party fundraiser, I thought I'd died and gone to ... well ... Mars. Or maybe a ballroom on Mars, circa 1950's Hollywood.



Interior of Zen

That's what I saw in my mind's eye, anyway, as I imagined our immersive, multi-media retro sci-fi theme applied to the urban bohemian interior of the place called Zen. 4,200 square feet of coolness we're going to pack with music (courtesy of Hitmob 7), motion, food, fog, fun and free valet parking.

As you can see, we've dubbed this casual attire

impressed, not only with the production, but with the gorgeous facility. Jenna then participated as a reader in the 2008 New Play Festival and got to know members of the wonderful Centre Stage staff.

But we thought that a GLOW/Centre Stage collaboration was just a pipe dream. After all, why would another theater company want to help us? Fortunately, we were wrong.

One conversation led to the next and now, thanks in no small part to Centre Stage, we'll begin our inaugural 2010-11 season right here Nov. 12-20 with one of Gilbert & Sullivan's comic masterpieces, *Trial By Jury* – and there's more to come!



event "Wanna take a ride?" and one wild ride it will be. \$35 boarding passes will go on sale soon, so brush up your Klingon and start getting ready for a night that's – and surely you saw this coming – out of this world!

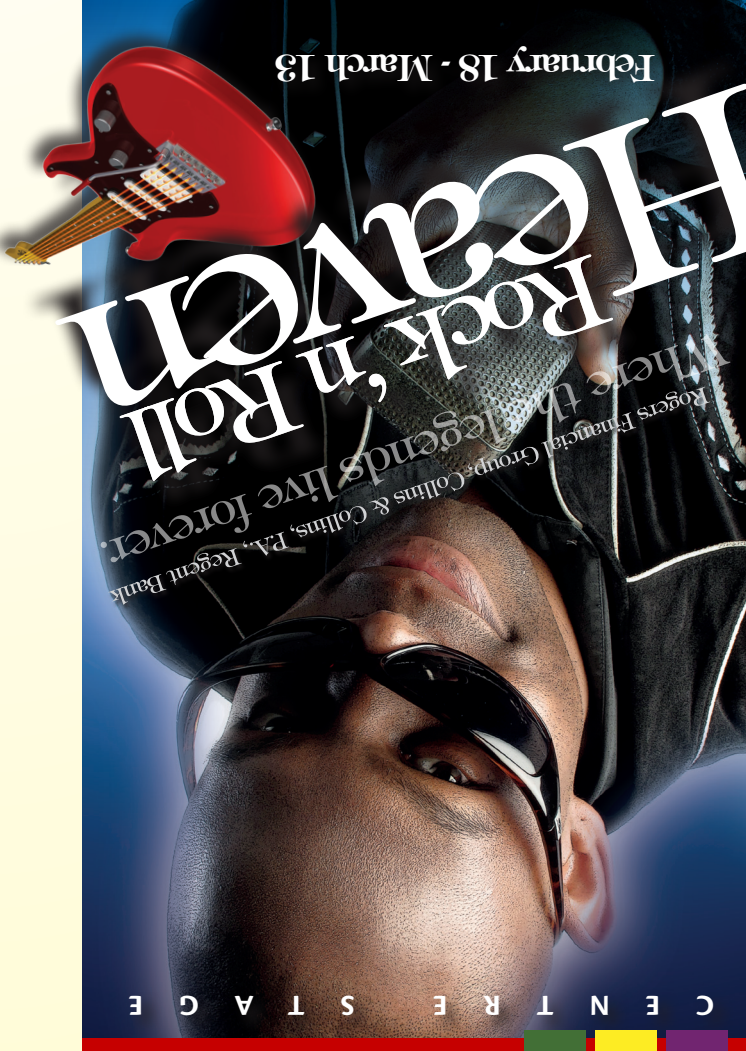
Jones joins CS staff

On January 1, Wofford Jones joined Centre Stage as technical coordinator. Most recently stage manager of *A Christmas Memory*, Wofford received his degree in engineering graphics technology from Greenville Technical College. He also has studied acting in North and South Carolina, Georgia and Los Angeles.

Wofford's performance credits include Mercutio (*Romeo and Juliet*), Barnette Lloyd (*Crimes of the Heart*) and Rev. David Marshall Lee (*The Foreigner*). His other interests include photography and screenwriting. Wofford hopes to see his novel *Soul Dreams* published this year and currently is directing *Stealing the Show*, a one-act he co-wrote with Jason Underwood at Greenville Little Theatre. Welcome, Wofford!

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Rock'n roll, UFO's, Light opera, Civil War

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