

Family-friendly and Hilarious “Charley’s Aunt” to Play at the Clarence Brown Theatre

The comedy “Charley’s Aunt” will run on the CBT main stage February 18 through March 7, 2010. The show is sponsored by Schaad Companies. Media sponsors are WUOT, WUTK and the Knoxville News Sentinel.

Written by Brandon Thomas, “Charley’s Aunt” first opened in London in 1892, where it quickly became a long running hit. It went on to run on Broadway, and eventually spawned several film adaptations, most notably the 1941 movie starring Jack Benny.

“It has been filmed nine times, has been translated into virtually every language (in Russia it was titled “Hello I’m Your Auntie”) and there was a Danish musical version. Short of Shakespeare, this has been one of the most performed plays worldwide,” said director Kate Buckley.

The play centers around two undergraduate students at Oxford University, Jack and Charley. They invite their girlfriends to lunch-properly chaperoned by Charley’s wealthy aunt from Brazil. But when Charley’s aunt cancels at the last minute, the guys panic and hastily convince their friend to play the part of the “aunt.” All goes well for Jack and Charley until the real aunt shows up, resulting in hilarious confusion for all.

“It’s delightfully funny- crazily funny, in fact. It’s also joyful and good-natured; there is no skepticism found in this play. We follow very reasonable people caught in a very unreasonable situation. The sweet courtships, the lovely manners, the dashing gentlemen and beautiful ladies are brought together in a perfectly created farce that holds absolutely no ill will,” Buckley said.

In her third year as assistant professor in Theatre, Kate’s CBT directing credits include “Copenhagen” and “Antigone.” She also has directed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Goodman Theatre, American Players Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, and the Utah Shakespearean Festival to name a few. Her international work includes The National Theatre of Slovakia and the Colla Marionette Company in Milan, Italy. Her awards include four Best Director nominations from the Joseph Jefferson Committee, two After Dark Awards for Outstanding Direction, a Distinguished Alumni Award from Aurora University and a 2008 Creative Research Award from The University of Tennessee. Other credits include her work as one of the founding members of Chicago Shakespeare Theater and four seasons as the Artistic Director of The Next Theatre.

The cast includes CBT resident artists and staff, and students, and a well-respected regional theatre actors now residing in Knoxville.

Resident artist, **Neil Freidman**, is in his third season at the CBT. He has performed in regional theatres across the country and is a recipient of Chicago’s Joseph Jefferson Awards. He most recently performed in “A Christmas Carol.” **Terry Weber** is associate professor of Theatre and volunteers as the Artistic Director of The WordPlayers. Most recently, he was Bob Cratchitt in “A Christmas Carol.” **Tracy Copeland Halter** is a member of the UT Theatre faculty. She has performed on Broadway and in regional theatres across the country. Most recently, she was the Acid Queen in CBT’s “Tommy.”

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Steve Fitchpatrick in his third season with the CBT, most recently performing in “A Christmas Carol.” He has guest starred on many top ten television shows such as “Northern Exposure,” “Murphy Brown,” and “Chicago Hope.”

Several UT Theatre graduate students will perform in this production. **Jonathan Visser** hails from the Pacific Northwest and most recently was on the CBT stage as Marley in “A Christmas Carol.” **Matthew Bassett** is a third year MFA candidate. He has performed in regional theatres throughout the south and was most recently seen on the CBT stage in “A Christmas Carol.” **Mike Moreno** is in his third year in the MFA acting program. Most recently he was seen on the CBT stage in “A Christmas Carol.” **Amy Mathews** is a third year MFA acting candidate and most recently was seen on the CBT stage in “A Christmas Carol.” She has worked with theatre artists all over the world, including New York City, Indonesia, Italy and Serbia. **Morganne Davies** is in her third year in the MFA Acting program and is a member of the Omnicron Delta Kappa Honor Society and a graduate of Fordham University. She has performed in regional theatres and in New York City. Most recently, she was seen at the CBT in “A Christmas Carol.” **Martha Reddick** is an undergraduate student in Theatre. Most recently, she was seen on the CBT stage in “The Marriage of Bette and Boo.”

“Our set, sound, costume and lighting designs take us to England circa 1910. College rooms, a garden and an estate created by our wonderful artistic team bring the previous turn of the century to life,” Buckley said.

Two visiting guest artists will be designing the Set and the Sound for the production. **Scenic Designer Linda Buchanan**, heads the design department at DePaul University and has worked at every major regional theatre in the country. **Sound Designer, Joe Cerqua**, is recognized nationwide as a freelance composer, producer, vocalist, and sound designer, he is the Production Supervisor of the Music Department and faculty member at Columbia College Chicago.

Costume Designer, Elizabeth Aaron, is a MFA student in the Design program. Her costume designs were previously seen in “The Marriage of Bette and Boo.”

Lighting Design, Kenton Yeager, is head of the graduate program in Entertainment Lighting Design. He has designed, produced or directed more than 500 productions for Theatre, Dance, Music, Industrials, Churches, Festivals, Touring Productions to name a few both nationally and internationally.

Preview for “Charley’s Aunt” is Thursday, February 4, followed by Opening Night Friday, February 5. The show runs through Sunday, March 7. **Two special performances FREE FOR UT FACULTY AND STAFF will be held on February 23 and March 2 as part of the UT TribUTE Faculty and Staff Appreciation program.**

For more information, contact: Robin Conklin, Marketing Director 974-2497.

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