

## Some Enchanted Evening

Arts Center to stage audience favorites *South Pacific* and *Steel Magnolias*

Sixty years after making its Broadway debut, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* is still enchanting audiences with its compelling story and rapturous score. This musical masterpiece, only now enjoying its first Broadway revival, recently added another seven Tonys to the 10 it garnered in 1950.

Even as it's playing to packed houses in New York, Arts Center audiences will have the opportunity to see it right here in the intimate Elizabeth Wallace Theatre.

The show, running December 3-28, is one of two productions requested by our audiences being presented this winter as part of the 2008-09 Theater Series. *Steel Magnolias* – the No. 1 non-musical pick of Arts Center audiences surveyed last spring – will be staged Feb. 4-22.

Directing both productions is Russell Treyz, the creative genius behind the summer blockbuster, *The Buddy Holly Story*. A Drama Desk Award winner, Treyz has directed 10 Arts Center shows to date, including *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *White Christmas* and Neil Simon's *Proposals*.

"I've always wanted to do *South Pacific*," said Treyz, whose directing credits include two other Rodgers & Hammerstein shows – *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel*. "It's a very moving

Charles West as  
Emile de Becque and  
Maria Brinkmann  
as Nellie Forbush  
in *South Pacific*

Photo by  
Rob Kaufman

story with absolutely wonderful music. It's the height of Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical comedies."

Inspired by James A. Michener's Pulitzer Prize-winning book, "Tales of the South Pacific," the story revolves around two couples who meet on an exotic tropical island in the middle of World War II. Despite being deeply in love, their happiness is threatened by the realities of war and their cultural differences.

For Navy nurse Nellie Forbush, who falls for French plantation owner Emile de Becque, the trouble begins when she discovers he had children with a Polynesian woman. She's "in love with a wonderful guy," but conflicted by her prejudices.

The score includes some of American theater's most glorious music, including "Some Enchanted Evening," "A Wonderful Guy," "Bali H'ai," "There Is Nothin' Like a Dame" and "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out-a My Hair."

*South Pacific* will be followed by *Steel Magnolias*, Robert Harling's delightful comedy

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## Theater Series *continued from page 10*

about a group of Southern women who meet regularly at Truvy's small-town beauty parlor for counsel, comfort and the latest gossip.

Among the quirky characters are Ouiser, the town's rich curmudgeon, eccentric millionaire Miss Clairee, the loveable socialite M'Lynn, her spunky daughter Shelby and Truvy's new assistant Annelle, who can't say for sure if she is married, but will not let her problems get in the way of "doing good hair."

In between their hilarious and sometimes acerbic repartee, the women reveal a touching camaraderie that ties them together through the best and worst of times.

The play starts on the happy occasion of Shelby's wedding with the women gathered in the shop for last-minute advice and an appropriately done-up do. But when Shelby announces in a later scene that she is preg-

nant – despite a warning from her doctor that she shouldn't have children – her mother is left fretting for her health.

Originally produced off-Broadway, *Steel Magnolias*, which is based on a true life story that took place in New Orleans, was such a hit on the stage, it was made into a movie two years later. "The play is infinitely better than the movie," Treyz said. "You really get to know these women and their relationship."

There's still time to purchase a subscription to the Theater Series, which also includes *Les Miserables* and *Menopause The Musical*, offering discounted ticket prices and advanced seat selection. For more details on subscriber benefits, call the box office at 842-ARTS (2787).



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