Fall 12-1999

Student One-Acts: Fixin' Amos and Rest Stop Program [1999]

University of Southern Maine Department of Theatre

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University of Southern Maine
Department of Theatre presents
two student-written one acts

Fixin' Amos
by K.J. Carpenter

Rest Stop
by Elias A. Bresnick

December 3-11, 1999
Oak Street Theatre
Oak Street, Portland
Synopsis

If it ain't bad enough that the mortician's in bed with the flu, Marty, our hardworking Maine lumberman, has to fix up his cousin's corpse, fend off the crazy young widow, and keep the pastor from discoverin' that something funny is going on down at the funeral parlor. Before Marty can decide what to do, Amos' wife (Bev) arrives, enraged that Marty plans to prepare Amos. She insists on helping, even though the body is doing spooky things. Just when Marty and Bev settle down to work, the Pastor arrives and all hell breaks loose. Set in small town Maine in 1948, this gentle comedy reveals the desires and difficulties that relatively sheltered country people face. Bev, caught in a web of old morals and religious beliefs, struggles to free herself, putting Marty in a panic and the Pastor in a rage. Bev's belief, that lesbian means a type of religion, is just one example of this play's humor.

Director's Note

I chose Kathy's play for its affectionate, yet clear-eyed, view of small town life and the struggles of its citizens to live a "propah" life. It has been a lot of fun for all of us to premiere this new comedy, whose belly laughs are grounded in real desire and emotional turmoil. In Amos, Ms. Carpenter gently probes (particularly) small town social issues, such as the very limited choice of sexual and life partners; the power that one preacher can wield over the gender and social mores of all citizens, "church-going" or not; and the family secrets deemed necessary to protect differences-- in lifestyle, sexual orientation, and religious belief.

Assunta Kent

Playwright's Note

My mother said many times "Whatever you do in this life, don't lose your sense of humor. If you lose that, you'll lose everything. You just won't be able to go on without it." She never was too old to play and to be silly with us. I hope that my play reflects that. If I can succeed in causing you to laugh, or perhaps, at the very least, chuckle, during this performance, then perhaps my mother's words and her legacy of love and laughter will live on. So, God bless you all with love and laughter and goodnight to everybody.

Kathy C.
Fixin’ Amos Cast Biographies

Monica McKenzie (Swing Dancer) - Gorham, NH
is a sophomore English major/theatre minor. She appeared as a dancer in Dance USM! and A Taste of Killing. She was Assistant Stage Manager for Sinners, Saints, and Fools. Previous roles include Ado Annie in Oklahoma! and Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing. Special thanks to Assunta Kent for giving me this opportunity and to the sisters of Alpha Xi Delta for being so understanding.

Gerry Shannon (Choreographer/Swing Dancer) - Oxford Hills
is a junior Theatre/Music major. His most recent work at USM includes Diesel in West Side Story, choreographer in Dance USM! and as a dancer in Dance USM! and A Taste of Killing. He also performed in Portland Players' Night of 100 Stars. He received a SPA nomination for Best Choreographer and Overall Dance.

Frank Taliento (Marty) - Sarasota, Florida
makes his return to Oak Street, portraying a more compassionate character than the inebriated brute from Dirt. He received the Irene Ryan Nomination for A Taste of Killing and can be seen every Thursday at the Keystone Theater as a member of Portland's own improvisational group, Instant Comedy. Special thanks to Tom and Dan for allowing me the time and patience necessary for this production.

Andrew Clifford Menard (Amos) - Standish
is a Maine native and junior Theatre/Music major at USM. Having worked both on and off stage most of his life, he is excited to add yet another challenging role to his credentials.

Lynn Bettencourt (Bev) - Middleboro, Massachusetts
is a sophomore Theatre major. You may have seen her on stage as a Jet girl in West Side Story, in Dance USM!, and the Convocation production of Red Fish. She has also worked backstage for Sinners, Saints, & Fools, and Illuminati. She is excited to be working at Oak Street Theatre. Special thanks to Assunta, cast, crew, and family.

Stephanie Fuller (Miss Lucy) - Old Town
a first-term Theatre major, has already worked on two shows at USM: backstage for Amazazi and as the Rooster puppeteer for USM Convocation production of Red Fish. In high school, she acted in both scripted and improvisational productions and lettered and received her service bar. She has been involved in church musicals since childhood.

Daniel Richardson (Pastor Roy) - Lincoln
is a second year Theatre major. He is ecstatic about making his acting debut at USM and excited that the play takes place in the Lincoln area. Previous experience at USM includes dresser for West Side Story and A Taste of Killing. Dan won "Dedication to Theatre and Music" awards in high school. Extra special thanks to my Mom and Assunta.

Artistic Staff Biographies

K. J. Carpenter (Playwright, Amos) - Raymond
is pursuing a minor in theatre and studied playwriting under Dr. Walter Stump. Previous theatre experience was acquired during years with Children's Theatre of Maine, where she acted and learned technical theatre skills. Since that period, she dreamed of writing plays and seeing them performed. Now, after many years have passed, she is witnessing a dream turn into reality.

Special Thanks to: Steve Schneider & my children, Karen, Corey, & Kim, & to "Nana" Joyce West; my brothers & sister in laws, Robert, Steve & Patty, Roger & Linnea, & Diane as well as my very large and ever expanding family, thanks for your love & support. To Candy, extra thanks for your proofreading, giggles and critique. Marie & Gordon Champion, & Jeannie Champion - my northern cousins, and Joe.

Thanks also to: Dr. Assunta Kent- for bringing my dream to reality & for an incredible learning experience and to Lynn, Dan, Frank, Andrew, and to all cast and crew members who worked countless hours to create this production.
To"Rudy, from BIW" for your funeral stories & to all my friends: Eric Burbank - who helped me get started; Nat & Caroline for comments & support; Dr. Walter Stump & my fellow class playwrights. Thanks to Hall's Funeral Home in Casco, especially to Loren and Eric (5th & 6th generation funeral directors) who followed in the footsteps of retired director, Hacker Hall & now deceased Myron, Stephen, and William Hall. Also Russ Whitney (Loren's cousin) who I met in Chough's country store in Raymond.

Assunta Kent (Director, Amos)
Assunta Kent earned her doctorate in Northwestern University’s Interdisciplinary Program in Theatre and Drama and teaches dramatic literature and cultural history in Theatre, Honors and Women's Studies. She is also Book Review editor for the New England Theatre Journal, and the author of Maria Irene Fornes and Her Critics and a critical essay for the lesbian play anthology, Amazon All-Stars. At USM, Assunta has directed Sinners, Saints & Fools, The Dคำtine, The Rokuro Lady's Passion, The Marriage of Figaro and A Dream of Canaries.

She specializes in stage adaptations of non-dramatic literature and the drama of women and children. Previously at Oak Street, she appeared as a Mermaid with the Esguardo Mariscal Dance Theatre and dramaturged Alice in Bed. At USM, she has mentored student projects in performed autobiography, bio-regionalism, puppetry, and production dramaturgy.

Special thanks to Kathy Carpenter for a fun, meaty play; to Janny Michaud, my long-time creative sidekick at USM; and to Morgan Gould for taking on responsibility so agreeably. I’ve enjoyed the energy and good spirit of all the cast and crew, and hope Oak Street audiences may find them a treat as well.
Rest Stop

Playwright’s Foreword:

Rest Stop is a play about invisible people. These people belong to a transient culture that exists on the highways of America. Their meeting places are truck stops and bathrooms, deserts and parking lots. They live and die on the road, and are never anywhere long enough to put down roots. By the time you think that you may have noticed them, they are gone again. Conventionally stationary citizens are just as faceless to these people, a part of the backdrop and then gone again, as the travelers move on. This invisible culture is made of a diverse selection of people: truckers, hikers, philosophers, religious wanderers, and the restless among the conventional. Far and away a majority of these are young people who have left their homes at an early age. The estimate of the numbers of people under eighteen alone is around two million. Having seen it all first hand, I was amazed at how little the average person knew about their existence. That is why I wrote this play. I wrote it to be a safe window for the audience to peer apprehensively through. A window that they could see through, but be glad that they were on this side of. I didn't want them to forget though, that only a slight twist of fate keeps them from being blown...right through the window.

Elias Bresnick

Director’s Note:

Runaways or throwaways? Each year thousands of kids roam on the streets and highways of America. Children of the shadows, they are like ghosts wandering the streets. They either left their homes and families because life was too unbearable there, or have been thrown out by parents who did not want them. Falling quickly into prostitution and drugs within a few days of being on the street, these kids have nowhere to turn except for the few shelters or teens centers who reach out to them. I was drawn to this play because it tells one of their poignant stories in a non-melodramatic way. It sheds a crude light on their reality, their pride, and their hopes -or lack thereof. “I don’t want to be saved,” says Kendra, even though she, deep inside, is sending a cry for help. Rest Stop is also a very poetic piece. Like in a European road movie, in the tradition of Wim Wenders, the characters are always looking forward to a better tomorrow, entangled in their fears, searching for the energy burning within themselves, and lost in the beauty of desolation.

Many thanks to a superior team of actors, designers and technicians. Each has brought his or her creative magic and made a dream come true.

Emmanuelle Chaulet

Rest Stop

Elias A. Bresnick

Director
Scenic Design
Costume Design
Lighting Design
Sound Design

Cast
in order of appearance

Neal
Kendra
Adam
Carl
The Chief

Settings

Scene 1
A Rest Stop off Interstate 10 in Texas

Scene 2
A Rest Stop off Interstate 10 in Arizona

Scene 3, 4, 5
A Rest Stop off Interstate 17 in Arizona

Scene 6
A Rest Stop off Interstate 17 in Arizona

Tobacco smoke, adult language, and adult situations will be used in this production.

Slides and Photographers Credits

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Emmanuelle Chaulet
Christopher M. Foss
Alexandra Munier
Thomas C. Vail
Andrew Ross
**Rest Stop Cast Biographies**

**Michael Thomas Toth (Neal) - Gorham, NH**

is currently a sophomore theatre major at USM. Past roles include Bentley Summerhayes in Misalliance, Arab in West Side Story and the One Man Ensemble in Josh Chenard's 75 Ways to Serve Grilled Squirrel. This fall he also appeared in Renegade Productions Tammy and Billy Bob's Anniversary as Amand. Michael would like to thank Emmanuelle for her direction and support.

**Emily Zack (Kendra) - Portland**

is a junior French major. Rest Stop is her third play at USM following two Irene Ryan nominated performances in As You Like It and Dirt. Last year Emily took on the exhausting task of performing in Company at Biddeford City Theatre where she wore out her pointe shoes in Nutcracker years before. Emily has studied at Portland Stage, with Maine Summer Dramatic Institute, and at Tisch in NYC.

**Josh Chenard (Adam) - Saco**

is a senior theater major at USM where he has performed numerous roles including Doc in West Side Story and Vic in the American Premiere of Xavier Durringer's A Taste of Killing on The Tip of the Tongue. Some of Josh's local performances include Barrette Lloyd in City Theater's production of Crimes of the Heart, David Mortimore in Pine Tree Players' production of It Runs In The Family, and an Irene Ryan nominated performance as Paul in To Gillian On Her 37th Birthday for SPA Productions. Josh will be spending his spring teaching and directing at Thornton Academy in Saco.

**Conrad Maurais (Carl) - Standish**

As a 2nd year student, Conrad is enjoying his first chance to work on stage at USM. It feels good to return to the stage after a year off and he is proud to be a part of this cast. You may have seen him previously at the School House Arts Center in such roles as the Dentist in Little Shop of Horrors, the High Priest Annas in Jesus Christ Superstar as well as numerous other roles.

**James Shay (The Chief) - Granby, CT**

is a junior majoring in Philosophy. He has appeared previously at USM as Rou in A Taste of Killing on The Tip of the Tongue, and Timmy in the student original Dirt. His current role is as challenging and educating as those last two. He would like to thank his director for her patience and inspiration.

**Artistic Staff Biographies (cont’)**

**Elias E. Bresnick (playwright, Rest Stop) - Portland**

is a non-traditional theatre student here at USM. He is currently in his seventh semester in the department. Previous roles at the university include Henry Sandor in The Daubue, Elliot Mitchell in Dirt and sound design for A Taste of Killing on the Tip of the Tongue. Last spring he directed To Gillian on Her 37th Birthday for SPA productions. Elias has been involved in theatre for nearly ten years. In that time he has served in many roles on and off the stage. These have included performances in Othello, Romeo and Juliet, Man of La Mancha, Candid, Canterbury Tales, The Crucible, and The Mahabharata.

**Emmanuelle Chaulet (Director, Rest Stop) - Raymond**

Emmanuelle has been involved in theatre and film both in France and in the United States. She studied acting as a Fulbright scholar at the Lee Strasberg Institute in New York and the Michael Chekhov technique with Robert Cordier in Paris. As a professional actress, her filmography includes lead roles in such movies as Boyfriends and Girlfriends by French New Wave master Eric Rohmer and All the Vermeers in New York by Jon Jost, an American Playhouse Production and best independent film of 1991. She also toured with several theatre productions. Her directing credits include: Durringer's A Taste Of Killing On The Tip of The Tongue for USM; The Marriage Proposal, The Brute, and Miss Julie at Deer trees Theatre. At Oak Street Theatre in Portland, she directed The Mauds and Music Hall with Vintage Repertory Company. She is the USM arts events director for Music and Theatre.

**Christopher M. Foss (Scenic Designer) - Hanover, NH**

Chris is a junior theater major. This is his first mainstage set design. His previous designs include To Gillian on her 37th Birthday, and Illuminati with Student Performing Artists. Chris is looking forward to being props master for Mad Horse Theater's Production of Skylight this winter.

**Alexandra Munier (Costume Designer, Rest Stop) - Augusta**

Alexandra Munier is a senior art major. Her last design project at USM was SPA’s 75 Ways to Serve Grilled Squirrel. She also recently completed Electra at The Theater Project in Brunswick. She would like to thank Sue Picinich for always supporting her craziness.

**Kimberly Morrill (Costume Designer, Amos) - Lisbon**

Kimberly is a junior at USM. Her experiences include assistant costume design in Dirt and costume design for Dance USM! and To Gillian on her 37th Birthday.
Artistic Staff

Assistant Director (Fixin' Amos)  Jenny Michaud
Fight Choreographers (Rest Stop)  Conrad Maurais, Michael Toth

Production Staff

Stage Manager (& Rehearsal SM Rest Stop)  Alison Ann Guinn
Assistant Stage Manager (& Rehearsal SM Amos)  Morgan Gould
Technical Director  Thomas C. Vail
Scenic Charge  Alison Ann Guinn
Master Carpenter  Caleb Wilson
Carpenters  Stage Craft Lab, Brian Birkinbine, Scott Essency, Amanda Poirier, Brandon Turner, Brian Wilson
Costume Shop Supervisor  Elsie Reese
Assistant Costume Shop Supervisor  Amy Barr
Stitchers  Alicia Allen, Jessica Black, Elizabeth Chambers, Julianna Laging-Nasse, Dani Nightingale, Amanda Poirier
Master Electrician  Kurt Ela
Properties Supervisor (Rest Stop)  Jenny Michaud
Properties Supervisor (Amos)  Michelle Leeman
Properties Construction (Rest Stop)  Aaron Lewis, Jenny Michaud
Properties Construction (Amos)  Michelle Leeman, Daniel Bourque

Join us for a post show discussion on the topic: "Runaways or Throwaways?" on December 9, after Rest Stop with guest speakers from: The Prebble Street Teens Center and James Daniels, manager of sexual assault programs, USM Police Department, and check our display in the lobby.

Production Crew

Deck Crew  Angela Lemire
Wardrobe  Courtney Elliott, Stephen Phiri
Light Board Operator  Amanda McKenney
Sound Board Operator  Kirsten Hayward
Slides Operator  Steve Johnson

Administrative Staff

Arts Promotions Director  Mary Snell
Arts Events Director  Emmanuelle Chaulet
Administrative Assistant  Lillian Campbell
Box Office Manager  Kendra Maria
Lobby Display (Rest Stop)  Dustin Levasseur, Emmanuelle Chaulet
Graphic Design  Leigh Raposo
Drawing for Amos  Daniel Richardson

Special Thanks

Fixin' Amos

Reed Funeral Parlor in Raymond, ME, John Tanguay and Dr. Richard Doherty for properties, The Originals, School House Theatre, Maine State Music Theater, Arizona Department of Transportation, Texas Department of Transportation and Commerce, Arizona Office of Tourism and Moses Anshell, George Post, Horst and Marie Hamann, The Burning Man Ring of Fire, Holistic Pathways and Bernadette Curtis, Portland Preble Street Teens Center, Home Base Youth Services, James Daniels, Mad Horse Theatre Company, Maine State Music Theater, Herb Ivy, WCLZ, Carol Ross, North Atlantic Leather and Nanou Chaulet, babysitter extraordinaire.

Rest Stop

And

James Cole for filming the two shows, Dr. Dan Panici, Nat Ives & Caroline Hendry, as well as the television production students; and Lillian Campbell for easing communication.
USM Playwriting Program:
The two plays performed today are a part of a unique program instituted several years ago by the Theatre Department at USM designed to provide student writers an opportunity to have their work recognized. Students first enroll in either THE 250: Playwriting or THE 350: Advanced Playwriting where the art of playwriting is studied and a play created. The plays are then given a readers theatre performance and viewed by faculty directors who make a selection. The selected play is staged by the Theatre Department and respondents from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival are invited to view the production. If a play is selected by KC/ACTF, it could receive publication, and national recognition for the writer. We are proud of our program and very proud of these young writers.

* * *

These plays are entered in the KC/ACTF XXXII Michael Kanin Playwriting Awards program and are being considered for the John Cauble Short Play Award.

* * *

There will be a fifteen minute intermission between the two shows.
Please, no photos are allowed during the performance.
Also, please turn off beepers and phones as a courtesy to the actors and other audience members.

Artistic Staff Biographies (cont')

Andrew Ross (Sound Designer) - Freeport
Andy thanks the gods for once again finding himself wearing his sound designer hat. A senior (mostly) at USM, he has had the pleasure of designing various shows at both Mad Horse Theatre and USM.

Jenny R. Michaud (Asst. Director, Amos) - Oakland
is graduating in December with her Theatre degree, having stage-managed Sinners, Saints and Fools, The Danube, and the Convocation production of Red Fish; and assistant stage-managed As You Like It. At Hampshire College, she appeared as Lolita in Deviant Aphrodites and Angela in Coming Full Circle. Jenny has been awarded both the Millard and the Grannia Theatre Scholarships.

Alison Ann Guinn (Stage Manager) - Sanford
Most recently Alison designed the set for SPA's production of 75 Ways To Serve Grilled Squirrel. She has also designed props for several shows including Sinners, Saints and Fools, and Road To Nirvana at Mad Horse Theatre. She is looking forward to designing the set for The Imaginary Invalid this Spring.

Morgan Gould (Rehearsal Stage Manager (Amos) /Asst Stage Manager) - Denver, Colorado
is a newly transferred Theatre major at USM. Already, in her first term, she worked as a "squirrel-dropper" for the SPA comedy 75 Ways to Serve Grilled Squirrel. Previous roles include Anything Goes and A Christmas Musical. She would like to thank her family, and the cast and crew for such a great time.
Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival XXXII
Presented and Produced by
the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Supported in Part by
The Kennedy Center Corporate Fund,
The US Department of Education,
and The National Committee for the Performing Arts

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KC/ACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KC/ACTF representative, and certain students are selected to participate in KC/ACTF programs involving awards, scholarships, and special grants for actors, playwrights, designers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KC/ACTF Regional Festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KC/ACTF National Festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, in the spring of 2000.

Last year more than 900 productions and 18,000 students participated in the American College Theater Festival nationwide. By entering this production, our department is sharing in the KC/ACTF goals to help college theater grow and to focus attention on the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

THE
1999-2000
SEASON!

THE PUBLIC THEATRE
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This hilarious one-woman show does Maine humor proud, as IDA shares stories of her husband’s “spousal deafness” and her adventures with the girls.
★ A CHRISTMAS CAROL by Charles Dickens, adapted by Chris Schario Dec 10, 11, 12
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Department of Music

1999-2000
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October 29
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University of Southern Maine

University of Southern Maine
Department of Theatre

1999-2000
Theatre Season

This season the USM Department of Theatre is proud to present several exciting original works.

October 2-10 GALA ARTS OPENING!
Anasazi
written and directed by Walter Stump

November 5-14
Grannia
written and directed by Thomas A. Power
music by Larry "Flash" Allen

December 3-11
STUDENT-WRITTEN ONE ACTS
Fixin' Amos
by K.J. Carpenter, directed by Assunta Kent
Rest Stop
by Elias A. Bresnick,
directed by Emmanuelle Chaulet
Oak Street Theatre

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