

# A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FILM

BOOK & LYRICS BY CHRISTOPHER DURANG

MUSIC BY MEL MARVIN

IT'S THE  
SEASON'S  
PEPPIER  
MUSICAL  
RIOT!

at the  
UNIVERSITY THEATRE IN COLEMAN HALL  
BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY

on

APRIL 26, 27, 28, 29

at 8 p.m.

\*Matinee at 2 p.m.

\*DEPT. OF THEATRE & DANCE  
CAP AND DAGGER  
Classics of the Stage

Department of Theatre and Dance & Cap and Dagger  
present

## A History of the American Film

Book and Lyrics by Christopher Durang  
Music by Mel Marvin

DIRECTION  
Gary Grant

CHOREOGRAPHY  
Suzanne Hawe

MUSICAL DIRECTION  
Andrew Levine

CHORAL ARRANGEMENTS  
Bill Boswell

COSTUME DESIGN  
Wendy Rolfe

SCENIC DESIGN  
Jason Aten

LIGHTING DESIGN  
Steven A. Draheim

SOUND DESIGN  
David Ames

## THE CAST

Loretta .....	Valerie K. Marsden*
Jimmy .....	Andrew Garman*
Bette .....	Penelope Kokines*
Hank .....	Marc E. Kenny*
Eve .....	Shelly Simonds*

## The Contract Players

Audrey Carmeli*	Katrina Herb
Jill Emery*	Erin Hunter
Kristen Feeney*	Mary Jordan
Geofry Glenn	Bryan Kenny*
Rebecca Goldstein	Stephen Leshinski
George Hannah*	Tom Quinn*
Paul Heimer	Katie Strauch

The contract players together play over 100 roles.

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THERE WILL BE ONE 15 MINUTE INTERMISSION.

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*Smoking, the taking of photographs, and the use of  
recording devices are strictly prohibited.*

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Christopher Durang loves the movies. He loves the moments when the big strong cowboy kisses the calf roping cowgirl, when the tough gangster with a soft heart dies in his mother's arms, when the lost orphan sees her first "talkie" and sadly remembers the folks back home, when "The End" descends like an exclamation point on the screwball antics of the rich waiting out the Great Depression in luxury and style. Durang feels great affection for these mythical, romantic adventures and his work offers a tribute to the enduring power and sheer energy of the film tradition; but, as with many romances, as the intensity of his love grows, his sensitivity to the faults of the beloved also grows. Durang seems particularly sensitive to Hollywood's hypocrisy, to Hollywood's persistent attempts to gloss human complexity with false optimism and sentimentality.

Like George S. Kauffman, another master of the barbed riposte, Durang has claimed the reputation as America's angry young man. Especially in this text his tone is very difficult to ascertain. Does the vaudeville surrealism affectionately recreate the stories and icons recycled again and again in movie genres from the screwball comedy and Busby Berkley musical through the Western and the WW II epic? Or, does this unusual play communicate a bitter satire on popular culture? In either scenario, *A History of the American Film* reclaims the movies as an experience for the theatre not in the story of how movies are made or the lives of famous actors but rather in the effect of each medium on our consciousness. In that liminal moment when we dream with our eyes open, where the imagistic qualities of theatre and film approach a kind of simultaneity as time and space contract, our history becomes our present.

Gary Grant

## DRAMATURG'S NOTES

American film might never have caught on as an essential element of life in twentieth-century America if the original filmmakers had sought merely to entertain, and the early audiences had sought nothing more than entertainment. The American film flourished because it offered its audiences compelling images of lost ideals and the new found visions which replaced them. One film genre after another moved into popularity and then passed into the realm of nostalgia as America's self-image continued to evolve.

The directors of American film have always been much more than camera men: they are creators of a mythology which is at the heart of our ever-changing cultural identity. Some moviegoers may have identified with Marlon Brando in *The Wild One*, while others may have rejected Brando's image in *On the Waterfront*, but in either case, the movie audience had an inescapable need to respond one way or another to Brando as a screen icon. The result was that each member of the audience left the movie theatre with a more clear and confident self-image, and a better understanding of his or her own relationship to the society that the film was conveniently reflecting.

Director D. W. Griffith knew how a 1916 audience would respond to Lillian Gish in *Intolerance*, and director Alfred Hitchcock also knew what a different kind of personal meaning a 1960 audience would derive while watching Anthony Perkins in *Psycho*. Now, we make our own personal connection to such classic screen images, as we watch them at home on video or as we see them re-created here on the stage.

Bryan Clark

## BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID AMES (*Sound Designer*). David began his sound design career at Bucknell in the fall of 1988 by writing original music for Sam Shepard's *The Tooth of Crime*. He has worked extensively in sound engineering and design in both theatre and dance. *A History of the American Film* is the third time David has worked with director Gary Grant, and is his fifth mainstage sound design at Bucknell.

JASON ATEN (*Scene Designer*). Jason is a Bucknell senior majoring in theatre production and English. The sets for *A History of the American Film* represent the culmination of his theatre design curriculum in an independent project for credit (TH319). His major influences include the work of F. Elaine Williams, and Adolphe Appia. Jason plans to travel abroad before pursuing graduate work.

STEVEN DRAHEIM (*Lighting designer*) joins the Department of Theatre and Dance this year as Lighting Designer and Technical Director. He holds an MFA in Theatrical Design from the University of Minnesota and has worked with a variety of professional theatre companies including the Guthrie Theatre, Utah Shakespearian Festival and Nebraska Theatre Caravan.

WILLIAM BOSWELL (*Chorus director and musical consultant*) became Director of Cultural Events at Bucknell after nearly two decades in New York City working in musical theatre and at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. He is co-author of *Creating Careers in Music Theater* (Peter Lang, 1988), and has served as composer, director, and/or musical director of numerous productions including the award-winning and internationally performed *I'll Die If I Can't Live Forever* (lyrics by Joyce Hill Stoner, book by William Brooke), and, most recently, *Campus Life Is What You Make It*, an orientation musical revue premiered at Bucknell in September 1990.

GARY GRANT (*Director, Assistant Professor of Theatre*). Gary's scholarly work with playwright Sam Shepard has greatly influenced his understanding of the cinematic qualities of the stage. His direction of Shepard's *Angel City* (A play also about Hollywood) earned him an award as the outstanding college director in the Northwest and a production that played at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. The Bucknell production of *The Tooth of Crime* (also a Sam Shepard play) earned special citation for direction and a production at the American College Theatre Festival.

SUZANNE HAWE (*Choreographer*). New York dancer, teacher and choreographer, Suzanne Hawe graduated from Skidmore College and began her performing career as an apprentice with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. As a member of Lee Theodore's American Dance Machine, Suzanne participated in the reconstruction and performance of original Broadway and film choreography from the 20's through the present. It is this experience that fueled her interest in a play about period style. While at Bucknell Suzanne has taught workshops and master classes in the choreographic styles of Jack Cole, Agnes de Mille, Carol Haney and Bob Fosse.

ANDREW LEVINE (*Musical Director*) is a recipient of the American College Theatre Festival award in musical direction for his adaptation of John Gay's 18th century piece *The Beggars Opera*, produced by C.W. Post. He is the composer of scores for *Shakustala and the Ring of Recollection*, an Eastern Indian dance/drama and an upcoming production of *Shakespeare's Women*, both produced at Post. This fall he will teach a course there in integrating acting and singing techniques.

Andrew has worked at the Cleveland Playhouse as musical director/pianist for John Raitt and as musical director of *Little Shop of Horrors* at New American Theatre in Rockford, Illinois. His work at NAT continues with upcoming productions of *Marry Me a Little* and *Into the Woods*. He has toured nationally with companies of *Evita* and *Phantom of the Opera* (music by Larry Hochman), and holds a Bachelor's of Music degree from Manhattan School of Music and a Masters degree in Creative Arts from New York University.

WENDY A. ROLFE (*Costume Designer*). Recently Ms. Rolfe designed costumes for the feature film *Deception* (shot in nearby Jim Thorpe, PA), and *June Roses*, a film short directed by Emmy Award-winning director, Christine Noschese. She has served as assistant costume designer on new films by John Sayles and Peter Sellars. Other film credits include *Goodfellas* and *The Fisher King* with Robin Williams. Wendy's Theatre credits include the Yale Rep, Lincoln Center Institute, and the newly emerging Gertrude Stein Rep Theatre Co. in New York. Wendy is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama, but more importantly, a graduate of the University of Puget Sound where she studied with Gary Grant.

Residencies have been made possible through grants from the Bucknell Association for the Arts, Bucknell Student Government, Committee on Student Programming, and the Office of Student Activities.



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## PRODUCTION STAFF

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Stage Manager ..... Karen B. McCann\*  
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Dramaturg ..... Bryan Clark\*  
Master Electrician/Light Board Operator ..... Toby Basiliko\*  
Follow Spot Operator ..... Casey Hall\*  
Sound Engineers ..... Joshua Brinen, Tad Klopovic  
Set Construction ..... Dana Arenson, Brett Brubaker, Colby Cox  
Mark Farina, Mary Kalbach\*, Jennifer Lake, Ross Landy  
Craig Lees, Kerry G. Marks, Nicole Mowad, Matt Rothera  
Jamie Schwarz, Tim Steimle\*, Pete Torcicollo  
Fly Operator ..... Mark Farina  
Properties ..... Nadine Knoche\*, Tom Quinn\*  
Electrician ..... Gerrit Fedele  
Sound Technician ..... David Ames\*  
Assistant Costume Designer ..... Elizabeth Samek  
Costumer ..... Pam Miller  
Costume Masters ..... Mark Minsavage, Stephanie Guntner  
Costume Construction ..... Mary Kate Behlke\*, Meme Cullison\*  
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