



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024

# Footlights

The Players of Utica Newsletter

## *She Kills Monsters* Offers Fantasy, Adventure, and Joy

THEATRE AT ITS best will transport you into interesting worlds—perhaps ones you’ve never experienced before. *She Kills Monsters* just might do that, especially if you’re not familiar with the universe of such immersive role-playing games as Dungeons & Dragons. The Players of Utica production opens on January 19 at the Players Theatre. *Footlights* spoke with director **Michael Clark** about the unique play.

**FOOTLIGHTS:** What do you find appealing about *She Kills Monsters* that led you to direct it?

**MICHAEL:** *She Kills Monsters* is a wonderful show with characters to which we can all relate. The reason Dungeons & Dragons is such a popular game worldwide is because it gives people the ability to tell their own stories the way they want—whether those stories be grand epics or silly fantasy plays, like *She Kills Monsters*. Stories that deserve to be told.

**FOOTLIGHTS:** What were your biggest challenges in putting together this production?

**MICHAEL:** The biggest challenge was finding ways to balance the reality of our characters’ struggles with the fantasy of the world in which they so often live. There are some very emotional scenes between the characters in the real world, and then in the next scene they’re fighting a giant gelatinous cube monster! Finding the balance in a way the audience will appreciate is the biggest challenge, but one in which I think we excel.

**FOOTLIGHTS:** There’s quite a bit of action in the play. How do you handle that?

**MICHAEL:** There’s a lot of action in this play! I’ve been in theater for almost two decades, and one thing audiences might not know is that choreographing a fight onstage is just as much work, if not more, than choreographing dance numbers in musicals. We were very lucky that my dear friend **Jim Drake** was able to come in and help us out. He’s been studying stage combat and fight choreography for years, and more recently teaching classes on the subject. It’s a lot of hard work, but the cast has proved up to the task—and the fights look awesome!

**FOOTLIGHTS:** Do audiences need to know anything about Dungeons & Dragons or any other role-playing games to appreciate the show?

**MICHAEL:** They do not! The creator of Dungeons & Dragons, Gary Gygax, had a saying: “The essence



of a role-playing game is a group, cooperative experience.” You don’t need to know that a Bugbear is neither a bug nor a bear to see this show; all you need to know is that it is a group of people working together to tell a fantastic story.

**FOOTLIGHTS:** What will audiences enjoy most?

**MICHAEL:** This show has so much for the audience to connect with and enjoy. There are awesome fight scenes, hilarious jokes, and real, heartfelt moments between these characters they will come to love. *She Kills Monsters* is a show about nerdy, queer joy—but it is also a show about discovering love where you didn’t expect, to which we all can relate.

The play features **Lizzie O’Connor, Sarah Wright, Joshua Thompson, Gabe Hage, Hannah Ali, Claire Bosley, Alaces Jewel Sarmiento, Haley Gatley, Mary Grace Kehrli, Dante Polumbo, Joan Price, Justin Jones, Vin Cavo, Makayla Arnold, Salvatore Perritano, and Mason McMahon.**

*She Kills Monsters* has a running time of about one hour, thirty minutes and has no intermission. The six performances of the play are as follows:

Fridays, January 19 and 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturdays, January 20 and 27 at 2:00 p.m.

Sundays, January 21 and 28 at 2:00 p.m.

For all tickets, go to our website at <http://www.playersofutica.org/order-tickets> or call 315-724-7624. ☆



# Become a Show Sponsor

And help defray the rising cost of our productions

HOW WOULD YOU like to have your name — or the name of your business — featured prominently on the poster and publicity for an upcoming Players production? Become a sponsor!

Sponsors help defray the cost of sets, props, costumes, printing, advertising — and especially the cost of the rights we have to pay to perform a show — all of which have gone up substantially in the last few years. And, unfortunately, ticket sales often do not cover all of these expenses.

That's where show sponsors can be a big help. A **single-show sponsorship is \$300**, and as a sponsor your name (or business name) will be printed on the show's poster, featured in publicity on our website and social media, and even mentioned on stage at the beginning of each performance, announcing your generosity and love of live community theatre. (And it's tax-deductible!)

Interested? Send your \$300 sponsorship check to:

Players of Utica Sponsorship

PO Box 29

New Hartford, NY 13413

## How to Get Your Tickets

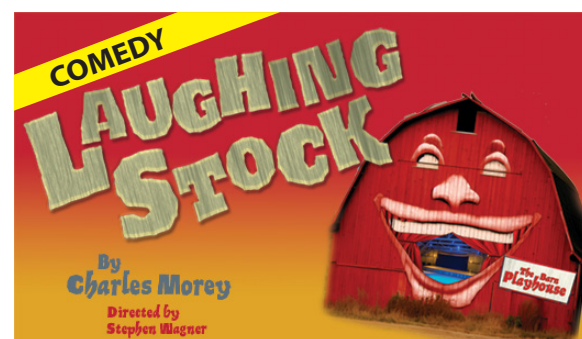
MANY OF YOU already know how to get tickets for our shows, but for those who don't, here's the scoop:

- **By phone:** Just call 315-724-7624 and tell us which performance you would like to attend. Have your credit card ready.
- **Online:** Go to our ticket page and securely purchase your tickets with your credit card: [www.playersofutica.org/order-tickets](http://www.playersofutica.org/order-tickets).
- **At the door.** You can often buy tickets at the box office on the day of the performance. But just don't get there too late because seating is limited and sometimes shows sell out.

If you're a subscriber, you have already bought your tickets, of course, but you should still call or go online to reserve your seat. See you at the show! ☆

## Coming Up at Players

After *She Kills Monsters* in January, next are these great shows



**APRIL 5-7, 12-14, 2024**



**JUNE 6-9, 13-16, 2024**

### THANK YOU, SUPPORTERS

A special thanks to these subscribers who gave extra support to Players

#### ANGEL LEVEL

Henry Bamberger  
Robert Barone  
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Vince Scalise, Coldwell Banker

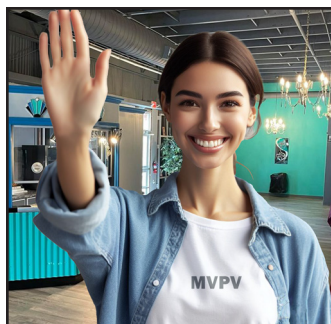
### FROM THE PLAYERS HISTORY ARCHIVES



#### THE LITTLE FOXES - JANUARY 1976

Directed by **Harrison Cline** and featuring **Daisy Harris, Ted Henderson, Win Haslam, Dr. John Kakaty, Paul Flemma, Maria Wallace, Joe Tierno, Andrea Fourtounis, Harry Teuchert, and Samuel F. Babbitt.**





## Would You Like To Volunteer?



**Yes, you can volunteer to help Players of Utica on show nights or even backstage.**

As you know, Players is an all-volunteer theatre organization, and although we have a working Board of Governors who take care of all the tasks a community theatre requires, we can always use the help of theatre-loving volunteers.

Maybe that's you! You can be an MVPV — a "Most Valuable Players Volunteer."

On show nights:

- take tickets
- hand out programs
- help with concessions

Help with a production backstage:

- build or paint sets
- find and manage props
- help with costumes

We also need volunteers to help prepare the theatre for show nights, including cleaning, tidying up, and just generally making the theatre look spiffy.

### So what do you get out of it?

Aside from being an important part of your community theatre, volunteers also get to see the show for free ... or will receive a comp ticket for a future performance! Pretty good deal, eh?

If you're interested, send an email to Kelly, our volunteer coordinator, at [kellydegraceplayers@aol.com](mailto:kellydegraceplayers@aol.com)

## Open Auditions for *Laughing Stock*

OPEN AUDITIONS for the comedy *Laughing Stock*, directed by Stephen Wagner, will be held at the Players Theatre as follows:

**Friday, February 2, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, February 3, 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

**Sunday, February 4, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.** For details: [www.playersofutica.org/auditions](http://www.playersofutica.org/auditions)

## We've Been Selected by the Hannaford Community Bag Program!



**For all of January, every reusable Hannaford Community Bag purchased at the Kellogg Rd. Hannaford store earns us \$1!**

**WE** ARE EXCITED to share that Players of Utica has been selected to benefit from Hannaford's Community Bag Program, which makes it easy for customers to contribute to their local communities.

For the month of January, whenever a \$2.50 reusable Hannaford Community Bag is purchased at the **Hannaford store located at 50 Kellogg Road, New Hartford**, \$1 will be donated to Players. This is a great way to broaden awareness and help our community theatre.

Let's get started! Share the news with friends and family. Call, send emails, and post on social media. The more people who purchase the Hannaford Community Bag in January, the more we can raise!

To learn more about this program, please visit [hannaford.2givelocal.com](http://hannaford.2givelocal.com). ☆

### PLAYERS OF UTICA

2023–2024 Season

#### Board Officers

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Players of Utica

1108 State St., Utica

315-724-7624

[www.playersofutica.org](http://www.playersofutica.org)

## Star Dims



**P**LAYERS OF UTICA lost one of its actors and volunteers with the passing of **Jeff Hartz** in October 2023. Jeff appeared in several Players' productions including *Sly Fox* (1993), *Little Shop of Horrors* (1998), *Almost, Maine* (2011), *A Delicate Balance*

(2013), and *Our Town* (2013).

"Jeff was a kind soul who had a great passion for theater, especially Players," says friend **Lonnie Etter**, a Players actor and board member. "When he was no longer physically able to take the stage, he found other ways to be active. He loved helping backstage and volunteered his time for many shows. His presence will be dearly missed by all of those who were fortunate to know him."

Players extends its sympathy to Jeff's family and friends. ☆

# 2023-2024 SEASON

It's not too late to buy a subscription, even though there are just three shows left in the season. Why? Because with each member subscription, you get 5 Flex-Pass tickets at a special price, which saves you money. And you can use those 5 tickets any way you want for the three remaining shows. Bring friends!

## W;t

A Play By  
Margaret Edson

Directed by  
Mike Beehm

**SEPT. 8-10, 15-17, 2023**

By  
Neil Simon

## LAST OF THE RED HOT LOVERS

Directed by  
Deborah Martin

**OCT. 27-29, NOV. 3-5, 2023**

## SHE KILLS MONSTERS

By Qui Nguyen  
Directed by Michael Clark

**JANUARY 19-21, 26-28, 2024**

## LAUGHING STOCK

By Charles Morey  
Directed by Stephen Wagner

**APRIL 5-7, 12-14, 2024**

## FUNNY GIRL

THE MUSICAL

Music by Jule Styne,  
Lyrics by Bob Merrill  
Book by Isobel Lennart  
from an original story  
by Miss Lennart

Directed by  
Daniel Fusillo  
Music Direction by  
Karen Cortigiano

**JUNE 6-9, 13-16, 2024**

### SUBSCRIBE NOW TO OUR 2023-2024 SEASON

FL-01-02-24

#### Players of Utica 2023-2024 Season Subscription Form

Complete this form and mail with payment to: Players of Utica, Subscriptions, PO Box 29, New Hartford, NY 13413

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, St, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CW: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Each subscription gets you 5 Flex-Pass tickets. Use one at each show or two at two shows, or any other combination. Select the # of subscriptions at the desired level below. An additional tax-deductible donation is always appreciated!

# of Adult @ \$80 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

# of Patron @ \$120 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

# of Angel @ \$150 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

# of Senior (62+) @ \$60 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

# of Student @ \$35 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

Here's an additional donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAND TOTAL ENCLOSED** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Please do not send cash through the mail.)  
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO PLAYERS OF UTICA, INC.  
To purchase online with credit card: [www.playersofutica.org](http://www.playersofutica.org)  
By phone: 315-724-7624



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PURCHASE ONLINE