

What the heck is he talking about?

Terms, definitions, jokes and other miscellany from the world of live performance

Break a leg: A 19th century term for "taking a knee." Back in those days applause from the audience at the end of a performance was by no means guaranteed, so if you did, in fact, get to "break a leg" and bow before the audience, it was a pretty good sign that the show was a success.

Periaktoi: First used in the ancient Greek Theatre these devices for changing scenery are basically large triangles mounted on a central pivot point, with each face of the triangle representing a different scene. When used together they can create three very different scenes on the same stage, quickly and without much effort. To see some modern-day periaktoi in action you'll want to check out the first show of our fall season, *Absurd Person Singular*.

The "Talent": A semi-sarcastic term often used by technicians and other theatre people when referring to actors, particularly ones that have inflated egos. Also known as "The Stars," "The Divas," and a few other names I can't print in a family newsletter.

Don't take life too seriously; you'll never make it out alive.

- Bugs Bunny

Notes from the Director's Chair

The Grinder Productions saga continues. Over the month of July this little company has undergone some pretty big changes. Our production of *The Owl and the Pussycat* finished with 152 patrons over 12 performances at the Ennotville Library, smashing last season's record. Our second production, *Bordertown Café*, after much "casting chaos" has opened to much acclaim and is sure to be a hit. The renovations to our rehearsal hall are continuing, and the space is getting better and better every day. Our season ticket campaign and our stepped-up marketing plan to sell out the first show of the season are well underway. On top of all that, *Absurd Person Singular* has just begun rehearsals.

You may be asking yourself how it's humanly possible that I do all this by myself. Well obviously I'm not superhuman, I can't do everything (just ask some of my former associates). Luckily, though, thanks to all the support and assistance I've received so far I've been able to pull it off. Together we are laying the groundwork for an even larger, more successful Grinder Productions, and I hope I can continue to have your support as we move forward through the 2006-2007 season and expand our membership, productions and opportunities.

Thanks, again, everyone, for your help and encouragement in making it this far. I couldn't have done it without you.

Eric

Final Report: The Owl and the Pussycat

The first show of the Ennotville season is in the books, with 152 patrons over six weeks. To put that in context, last year's production of *Butterflies Are Free* at the library had just over 100 patrons – and a ten week run! Audience response was overwhelmingly positive (even when I had my doubts, they raved enthusiastically) and it was nice to see some "repeat business" with patrons who had come to last year's show return to see this one. Thanks again to John Bigelow and Shannon Miller for a bang-up job, and to Caitlin Alexander for going above and beyond the call of duty as a stage manager, and to all the volunteers who helped out with promotions, house managing, and everything else. A special thank-you as well to Alan Argue and Wellington-Waterloo Playhouse Productions for introducing this little gem of a play to me in the first place.

I got this in a mass e-mail sent out by the director of a particularly unpleasant show, a few months after it had closed. Not that anyone in our company would ever do any of these things, but still this is pretty good advice, and I thought I would pass it along, as a cautionary tale, if nothing else.

Top 10 Ways Actors Ensure They Never Work in this Town Again

1. Show up late for rehearsals.
2. **Miss rehearsals without warning and a very, very good reason.**
3. Disrespect their stage manager.
4. **Fail to make the effort to properly memorize their lines (as written, not just the general gist of them).**
5. Look down on members of the crew as inferior or incompetent, even if they don't do it consciously.
6. **Complain about the number of lines they have.**
7. Don't bother to help with the load-in or load-out from the theatre.
8. **Show up late for a show call.**
9. Back out a show once they have committed to it, or worst of all, after rehearsals have begun.
10. **Anything that causes their director to lose sleep, gain weight, yell, cry, throw things, have crew members walk out or threaten to give people their money back.**

You know who you are – now you know why I didn't call you for Faustus!

Comment overheard at a performance of The Owl and the Pussycat:

“This is way better than Stratford!”

Progress Report: Bordertown Café

We're open! After more than a few sleepless nights and long days spent running lines under the trees at the library the second show of our Ennotville Season opened on July 28th. In attendance that first night was a dignitary of sorts, our local MPP, Ted Arnott. Nice to see we're starting to get noticed in the community. In any event, the show is rolling along and will run until September 2nd. Featuring perhaps one of the most diverse casts I've ever worked with this show has been a good challenge for me, and has provided me not only with a new actress to add to the membership but also a renewed passion for the production end of things. The show features a rotating set that has to turn at intermission every night. After getting rather laid-back and avoiding the use of scenic devices for a few shows I now think I've got the spark back again, and I'll try to make more use of my technical knowledge on future shows, so that we may have all the more spectacular environments onstage.

Progress Report: Absurd Person Singular

Rehearsals are now underway for the first show of our winter season, but they just started, so there isn't much to report yet! More details to follow in the September newsletter, when the show will be about to open.

Season Marketing Campaign Update

We're working on it! After much discussion over non-alcoholic beverages Grinder Productions and Studio Gallery Design have teamed up to produce an advance program of our first show, Absurd Person Singular, which we will be using as the basis of a major promotional campaign aimed at not only selling the show but the season as well. The program will be distributed throughout Centre Wellington in as heavy a saturation as we can manage and will contain information about the show, the company, our season and as much other stuff as we can put in to get people talking about Grinder Productions.

We need your help!

We've promised the people who are advertising in the program that we will be printing 3000 copies. Since we mathematically can't use more than 750 at the show itself that leaves us with a TON of programs to get out into the community. We need volunteers to help us do this. If you have any time to give us a hand after August 8th please, please, let me know so I can get you helping out. (Otherwise I'll have to pound the pavement myself, which will be great for my waistline, but I'll probably go crazy – no wait – crazier than I already am)

Acting 101

*Baffled by blocking?
Can't tell your stage left from
your other stage left?
And how do you find your light?*

The answers to these and other questions can be found in Acting 101, a quick, concise overview of what it takes to be an actor in a play, designed for those with little or no experience onstage, or those that have done a few plays, but find themselves lost at times, unsure of what they should be doing. We'll go over everything from handling auditions to what to do in rehearsals to how to memorize lines. We'll talk about the many ways to "act" and how to find out which method is right for you.

The course is broken down into three sessions, one for kids aged 8 – 12, one for teens and one for adults so each session can be tailored to the specific needs and strengths of each age group.

The dates and times are as follows:

Children: Saturday, September 23rd, 10am – 12pm

Teens: Saturday, September 23rd, 2pm – 5pm

Adults: Sunday, September 24th, 2pm – 5pm

The cost for any one of these sessions is just \$20, and class sizes will be limited, so book early to avoid disappointment. You can register by e-mailing grinder@grinderproductions.org or leaving me a message at 519-843-5999 or 519-787-1981.

2006 – 2007 Workshop and Courses

As Grinder Productions grows it's essential that we work continuously to bring in new members and that existing members have opportunities to develop their skills in all areas of production. To that end I'm pleased to announce that starting in September Grinder Productions will be conducting monthly workshops, courses or seminars on various aspects of theatre, both onstage and off. The fees for these courses will be as modest as possible to make it easy for members to gain new skills and develop their existing talents. Below is a list of the workshops tentatively selected for this year, along with a brief explanation of what each one entails. See the side panel for more information about our first workshop, Acting 101, the booking for which are already open.

Month	Workshop	Notes
September	Acting 101	The basics of acting (see side panel)
October	Stage Management	As we are desperate for stage managers anyone who successfully completes this two-week course will be guaranteed an offer of paid stage managing work on a future show, either this season or in 07-08.
November	Set Design	An overview of the creative and practical considerations of set design.
December	Costume Design	An overview of the creative and practical considerations of costume design.
January	Lighting Design	Taught in conjunction with the tech of All My Sins Remembered, an overview of the creative and practical considerations of lighting design.
February	Sound Design	An overview of the creative and practical considerations of Sound Design.
March	Directing	A comprehensive study of the creative and practical aspects of directing for the stage. Graduates of the this course will be offered directing work in the 2007-2008 summer and winter seasons.
April	Technical Production	Covering everything from set construction

Our Contact Info

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Rehearsal Hall

6188 Second Line, West Garafraxa

Directions: Take Belsyde Avenue out of Fergus towards Orangeville.

Turn right at the second line, which is the second road out of town. We are the last farm on the right, and we are rehearsing in the renovated portion of the large barn, upstairs.

Volunteers Needed

I am still looking for people to help out with the following duties for upcoming shows.

Hosts: For Bordertown Café. I have four or five more days I still need people for.

Absurd Person Singular: Need people in all areas, but right now I need someone to do the Window and lobby displays, painting the sandwich board and an ASM. Also looking for "Hosts" for the show nights too.

Available? Call or e-mail me and we'll get you on board!

		to finding props, this course is designed to provide members with a wide range of technical skills, as well as the basis to work as Production Managers on future shows.
May	Promotions	A complete look at what is involved in marketing a show.
June	Playwrighting	A week-end workshop for developing dramatic material. An original short play or a selection from a longer play is required from each member prior to the start of the week-end.

Fergus Grand Season Casting Update

I'm still looking to hear back from a few people, and the offers for *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* will be out sometime this month. Other than that, we're all set for 06-07. Watch for the offers coming up soon for the Ennotville 2007 summer season (and maybe a surprise show or two in there as well).

Script Pick-up and Rehearsal Hall Warmer

Our rehearsal hall isn't quite ready for a party just yet, but that doesn't mean we can't use it! Due to the overwhelming requests I'm getting for scripts prior to the start of rehearsals I've decided to organize a "script pick-up drop-in day" for Saturday, September 2nd from 10am to 6pm at the rehearsal hall. Come on by, find out just where the place is, socialize for a little while, and pick up your scripts for the season. But there's a catch...

We're talking about over \$1000 worth of scripts and royalties here. In order for me to have everything by September 2nd I need to have a some very brisk sales from Bordertown Café and advance sales from Absurd Person Singular so if we're going to make this work we ALL need to get out there and sell, sell SELL Grinder Productions!