
BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

1501 BROADWAY • SUITE 1314 • NEW YORK, NY 10036

PHONE: 212-575-3030

FAX: 212-575-7534

THE MORNING LINE

DATE: **Wednesday, March 20, 2013**

FROM: **Michael Strassheim, Emily Meagher, Michelle Farabaugh
 Katelyn Levy**

PAGES: **8, *including this page***

The New York Times

Arts Beat

The Culture at Large

MARCH 19, 2013, 4:15 PM

Judge Sets Court Date in 'Spider-Man' Trial

By *PATRICK HEALY*

A federal judge has set a May 28 trial date for the director Julie Taymor, Bono and the Edge of U2, and the producers of the Broadway musical “Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark” to battle in court over a lawsuit stemming from the spectacular implosion of their years-long collaboration on the show.

Judge Katherine B. Forrest of Federal District Court in Manhattan ordered on Friday that the parties may conduct discovery through May 1 and that “trial is and will be on May 28, 2013,” adding that no further meetings with the judge were necessary. The order came four days after the judge, during a closed-door session with the various sides, [expressed frustration](#) that they had not been able to settle disputes over copyright control and profits from the show in spite of coming to terms in principle in August.

One person familiar with the settlement negotiations said on Tuesday that the sides were at an impasse, and that the holdup had less to do with compensating Ms. Taymor than with creative rights and control of “Spider-Man,” whose producers are now considering future overseas tours and other runs. The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid antagonizing the parties involved in the lawsuit, said that the sides were still talking and that a settlement was still possible.

A lawyer for Ms. Taymor declined to comment on Tuesday; lawyers for the producers did not return phone messages seeking comment.

The lawsuit is primarily between Ms. Taymor, the musical’s former director and one of its script writers, and the producers and “Spider-Man” composers, Bono and the Edge; the producers, with the composers’ blessing, fired Ms. Taymor in March 2011. She sued that November on copyright grounds, saying the producers were making money off her ideas and script and owed her more than \$1 million. The producers countersued, saying that they had ousted her for breach of contract.

“Spider-Man,” by far the most expensive musical in the history of Broadway with a \$75 million budget, opened in June 2011 to largely negative reviews but has gone on to be a fan favorite, grossing more than \$1 million a week. Its weekly running costs are quite high on Broadway, however, at roughly \$1 million, and ticket sales have dipped slightly in recent months.

March 19, 2013

THEATER REVIEW

Hit Men and Hurt Lovers Meet Minnesota Nice

By ANITA GATES

A pair of sweet Scandinavian hit men in Minnesota grill a young woman under bright lights while serving her elderberry wine. In flashback, the woman talks to a new friend at a bar — about the weather, horses and the men who recently did them wrong.

The [Drilling Company](#)'s production of "The Norwegians," C. Denby Swanson's extremely odd and delightful comedy, is something of a guilty pleasure. Much of its humor ridicules various ethnicities and American states. Black people escape its wrath, as do Jews — unless you count the time Gus (Dan Teachout) corrects Tor (Hamilton Clancy) with " 'Shiksa' does not mean 'not Norwegian.' "

But pity, to varying degrees, Italians (stereotyped as murderers for hire), the Swiss ("they're like their own trains"), Texans (if you want to secede, you're told, nobody would try to stop you) and, above all, the title nationality. Norwegians are criticized for stopping to help people in need and wearing "cheerful snowsuits."

Karla Hendrick is a scene stealer as Betty, who meets Olive (Veronica Cruz) in a bar's restroom. They talk over glasses of wine, and Betty confesses to ordering a hit on an ex-boyfriend and suggests that Olive follow suit. But it is Betty's deadpan, [Mary-Louise Parker](#)-ish delivery while lamenting the horrors of Minnesota winters that kills.

Her co-stars do excellent jobs, too. Mr. Clancy and Mr. Teachout finish each other's sentences as longtime partners in murder. And Ms. Cruz keeps Olive worthy of empathy, even when she feels the ugly power of taking a life.

Thanks to Elwyn Castle's expert direction, a long piece of stage business in which Betty goes through the bowels of her giant purse keeps delivering. Even the lighting (by Tyler Learned) is funny. When the men ask Olive where she got their phone number, a spotlight hits an unguarded handbag at the bar.

Who knows whether [Ms. Swanson](#) is an original theatrical voice? There is every chance that she wrote "The Norwegians" after falling asleep during a late-night rerun of "[Fargo](#)." But this profane, playfully dark comedy is often hysterical. True, it's a low-budget production up a steep flight of stairs, but you don't find 90 minutes of good-hearted laughter at Off Off Broadway prices every day.

March 13, 2013

THEATER REVIEW

Romance (and S&M) in the Shtetl

By JASON ZINOMAN

“Give me a good thrashing because I’m such a bad girl,” says a young woman to her seductive male cousin. He later woos her with this sweet nothing: “Here is my heart. Take it and gulp down my blood.”

No, this isn’t a new episode of “True Blood.” It’s a translation of a century-old Yiddish play about shtetl life, “The (*) Inn,” that the adventurous Target Margin Theater has revived to mixed results. The director, [David Herskovits](#), stymies any expectations of stodgy melodrama, which is apt because Peretz Hirschbein’s tempestuous drama has enough kinks, forbidden romance and hints of the supernatural to fill an HBO time slot. But in straining for a modern, lively update, Mr. Herskovits has staged a show that is more bold than coherent.

The play, at the Abrons Arts Center, has a sturdy romantic plot about a woman, Meta (Rachel Claire), choosing between the safe, family-sanctioned Leibush (Susan Hyon, cross-gendered casting) or her passionate cousin, Itsik (Sam T. West). It’s the kind of old-fashioned drama in which a stubborn father, Bendet (Amir Darvish), yells at a young man: “I won’t give you my daughter.” Bendet has other, more fantastical worries as well. Namely his nearby inn, whose odd lighting has led some to believe it’s haunted.

If played straight the familiar romantic triangle mixed in with dime-store gothic could seem awfully fusty. Mr. Herskovits, however, directs the early scenes with highly stylized artifice: presentational acting, some recorded dialogue, near-cartoonish performances. As a sensible grandfather, David Greenspan, a famously freewheeling performer, delivers line readings that are pleasingly musical. But the self-awareness on display here distances the audience, and the playful style does not make clarity, pacing or character explication a priority.

The cost of this choice becomes apparent in the second half when Meta flees her wedding and meets up with Itsik for a long, baroque scene, the most interesting and charged of the play. The production itself switches gears, replacing its broad style with something more stark and simple. The stage empties as smoke fills up the blackness. Mr. West and Ms. Claire clash onstage with fervor, but their unorthodox, psychologically tortured romance never satisfyingly comes into focus. The violent imagery of their seduction startles but seems hollow, imprecise, tacked on. Their scenes together are a little rushed and muddled. The lighting is sometimes so dark that you can barely see them. While this is a bracing production, it surprises more often than illuminates.

March 19, 2013

THEATER REVIEW

If Those Dusty Common Rooms Could Talk ...

By ANITA GATES

Alison, in her 40s now, is having straight vodka with a former beau in a room that looks like the Harvard Club. “They say if you marry money, you earn every cent of it,” she observes.

That line earned a hearty laugh at a recent performance of “The Old Boy.” Hearty, at least, by the restrained, knowing standards of the admirers of A. R. [Gurney](#), who wrote this play in 1991. This [Keen Company](#) revival, directed by Jonathan Silverstein, gives those admirers what they came for, a tale of class-consciousness, money, loyalty and resistance to change, all under the watchful eyes of dead white men in suits whose framed portraits hang high on dark-paneled walls. Those portraits turn shinier and newer, on Steven C. Kemp’s handsome set, during the 1960s flashbacks.

Sam (Peter Rini), the title character, is a politician returning to his snobbish New England boarding school to deliver the commencement address. There, he learns about the death of a dear friend, encounters people from his past and makes a wrenching choice between morality and the expediency of tradition. [“The Old Boy”](#) brings AIDS and a gay man’s struggle for his sexual identity into the plot.

Mr. Rini imbues Sam with nonstop if not entirely convincing charm (appropriate enough for a man planning to run for governor). In flashbacks the privileged teenage Sam, also played by Mr. Rini, seems to have been born smiling for the camera. As his schoolmate Perry, Chris Dwan is young, skinny, boyish and talented enough to pass convincingly and sympathetically for an adolescent who rolls his eyes and wishes for death when his forceful mother, Harriet (Laura Esterman), talks about him.

The punch lines don’t always land as hard as they should, and occasionally the exposition seems a bit more recited than relived, but the script is rich and literate, and the present-day tension between Harriet and her daughter-in-law, Alison (Marsha Dietlein Bennett), is delicious.

Cary Donaldson has the thankless role of Bud, Sam’s bad-cop campaign manager. And Tom Riis Farrell is sweet and deliberately stiff as Dexter, a longtime school employee who has never married. It is Dexter who explains why tennis is Catholic, and golf is Protestant.

Time Out

New York

March 21–27, 2013

The Lying Lesson



Atlantic Theater Company (see Off Broadway). By Craig Lucas. Dir. Pam MacKinnon. With Carol Kane, Mickey Sumner. 2hrs. One intermission.

"Isn't this nice," says the great Bette Davis (Kane), alone in the dark on a frayed old sofa, a butcher knife in one hand and a cigarette in the other. The power has been knocked out by a thunderstorm raging outside her remote country cottage; a stranger named Minnie (Sumner) is about to climb in through the window. This could be a scene in one of Davis's later, less respectable films; in fact it's a moment from Craig Lucas's engrossing and highly enjoyable *The Lying Lesson*, which imagines a septuagenarian Davis returning, in 1981, to a small Maine town she visited as a teenager. Although she travels under the quasi-pseudonym Ruth Elizabeth (Davis's real first and middle names), there's no disguising who she is: She gives herself away in the blink of a famous eye. Much less clear is the identity of Minnie, a gangling and seemingly artless local woman who—shades of *All About Eve?*—ingratiates herself to Davis and applies to be her assistant.

Smartly directed by Pam MacKinnon, *The Lying Lesson* presents itself as a thriller of sorts. But its two-hander structure is best seen as an ingenious strategy to deliver the kind of material usually found in a biographical solo show (like *Full Gallop* or *Try*) without the presentational stasis that can drag that genre down. Lucas lets Davis repeat many of her wittiest and campiest real-life one-liners, and the personal details she doles out—childhood dreams, Hollywood rivalries, romantic failures—form the portrait of a complex woman: rueful, vengeful, sensitive but every bit as tough as she thought she had to be. And Carol Kane is superb as Davis. Not only does she capture the star's (very imitable) inflections and mannerisms—the play suggests that Davis played them too, all along—but she also acts through and beyond impersonation. And even as she immerses herself in Davis, one catches occasional glints of the pixie dust that defines Kane's own

unique persona. This magic combination of actor and role is thrilling in itself.—*Adam Feldman*



Something's cooking Kane, right, confronts Sumner.

TimeOut New York

Total Weekly Circulation—150,748
Monthly Online Readership—240,334

BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

MARCH 20 – MARCH 26, 2013

VOICE CHOICES

WEEK OF MARCH 21 - MARCH 27, 2013 WWW.VILLAGEVOICE.COM/CALENDAR

SUN. 3/24

▼ THEATER

FINE DINING

RICHARD GREENBERG INVITES YOU TO DINNER

OK, theatergoer: You've silenced your cellphone, unwrapped your candy, and shushed your seatmate. Nicely done. But how are your table manners? Well, get ready to put your napkin in your lap and seize your appetizer fork as you dine out on Richard Greenberg's new show, *The Assembled Parties*. As with the earlier *Three Days of Rain*, this Manhattan Theatre Club show moves between decades and generations. Initially set in 1980 at a Jewish family dinner on the Upper West Side and then jumping 20 years into the future, it concerns the changing fortunes of the wealthy Bascov clan, portrayed by the likes of Judith Light, Jessica Hecht, Jeremy Shamos, and Mark Blum. Lynne Meadow directs this multi-course drama. *In previews, opens April 17, Samuel J. Friedman Theatre, 261 West 47th Street, manhattantheatreclub.com, \$67-\$120 ALEXIS SOLOSKI*

**TUESDAY**

PAGE 19

Ben Foster roughs up Alec Baldwin in *Orphans***TUES.** 3/26

▼ THEATER

LOST BOYSALEC BALDWIN STARS IN *ORPHANS*

It was 2006 when we last saw Alec Baldwin on the New York stage in the Off-Broadway production of *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*. Now, with *30 Rock* behind him, he finally returns, and as a gangster no less, in the Broadway revival of Lyle Kessler's 1983 drama *Orphans*. The story concerns two orphaned brothers living in squalor in a run-down house in North Philadelphia. Treat (Ben Foster) is a violent thug and Phillip (Tom Sturridge) is the dopey younger sibling whom he keeps imprisoned in their house. But, when Treat kidnaps Harold (Baldwin), a notorious gangster, the boys think they might have found themselves a new parent. Tony winner Daniel Sullivan (*The Columnist, Proof*) directs. *Previews begin tonight, opens April 18, Schoenfeld Theatre, 236 West 45th Street, 212-239-6200, orphansonbroadway.com, \$67-\$132*

ANGELA ASHMAN

The Village Voice

Total Weekly Circulation—210,000
 Monthly Online Circulation—472,907

BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

TimeOut

New York

March 21–27, 2013

Critics' picks The five best events this week

2 ***The Dance and the Railroad*** Pershing Square Signature Center
David Henry Hwang balances historical realism and whimsy in this thoughtful two-hander about Chinese laborers (see Off Broadway).

4 ***Old Hats*** Pershing Square Signature Center
Bill Irwin and David Shiner give us the silent treatment in a delightful comic vaudeville, joined by singer Nellie McKay (see Off Broadway).

TimeOut New York

Total Weekly Circulation—150,748
Monthly Online Readership—240,334

BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN