

THE MORNING LINE

DATE: Monday, January 14, 2013

FROM: Emily Meagher, Kelly Guidod, Michael Strassheim,
Michelle Farabaugh
Katelyn Levy, Madeline Haurin

PAGES: 19, *including this page*

JANUARY 13, 2013

A Lone Yank Takes Joy In Togetherness

By JOHN LITHGOW

THE language of theater here is slightly different from ours in New York. The crackly speaker in a London dressing room is called the "tannoy." The opening night of a London show is called its "Press Night." When a stage manager announces the start of a performance, London actors don't hear the word "places." They hear "beginners."

At the National Theater when beginners is called over the tannoy on Press Night, something extraordinary happens. It is a simple, sentimental and highly theatrical custom unique to the National. On Nov. 21 there was a Press Night. I was in the show. Hence I was there to witness this custom firsthand. My memory of that moment, more than any other event, has come to crystallize the experience of working at the National. I am one of only a handful of American actors to perform there during its 50-year history, which perhaps explains why I found that heartfelt custom so stirring.

And what exactly is the custom? I'll get to that shortly. First let me tell you a bit about the National and how I came to be there.

The National is a big operation, arguably the biggest of its kind in the world. Its enormous, many-tiered physical plant dominates the South Bank, looming up from the Thames at the southern end of Waterloo Bridge. Its exterior walls of poured concrete, so modish when the theater opened in



JOHAN PERSSON

From left, Alexander Cobb, John Lithgow and Roger Sloman in "The Magistrate," at the National Theater in London.

1976, have not aged especially well, but the building still manages to project youthful bustle and fun. The concrete's oppressive gray is enlivened by pastel banners, by scores of bright posters for current and future productions and, at night, by vivid colored lights projected onto its vast rectangular planes.

Inside, the National teems with activity. It houses three theaters: the large thrust-style Olivier, the slightly smaller proscenium-style Lyttelton and the tiny, infinitely adaptable Cottesloe. All three are in constant year-round use. At any given time each presents up

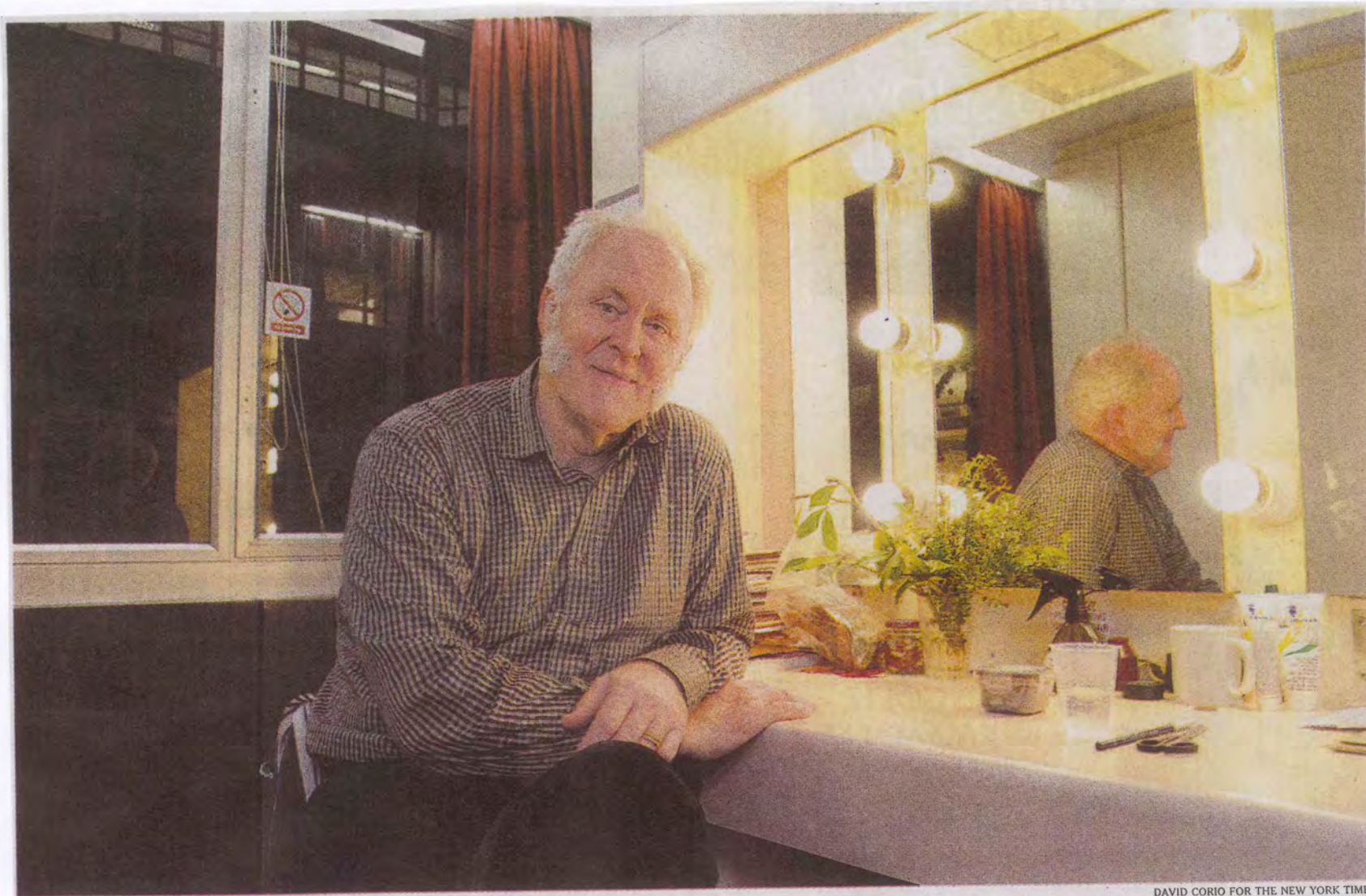
to three plays in repertory, amounting to, plus or minus, nine shows at once. New productions open with amazing frequency. Considering its prolific output, it is not surprising that the National sends so much work across the Thames to the West End and across the Atlantic to Broadway. Recent prizewinning examples include "The History Boys," "War Horse" and "One Man, Two Guvnors."

A lot of the excitement at the National these days is attributable to Nicholas Hytner, its director for the last 10 years. I first got to know Nick when he di-

rected me in the 2002 Broadway musical adaptation of the 1950s showbiz noir, "Sweet Smell of Success." At that time he had been hired as the National's director but would not officially take the reins for several months. In our numerous conversations he would effusively describe his aspirations for the place. He envisioned a truly national theater that would attract audiences from age groups, economic strata and ethnicities that had rarely set foot in the building before. Above all he wanted the National to be the place where everyone most wanted to work.

BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

John Lithgow in his dressing room in London at the National Theater, where he is performing in "The Magistrate" and — as the rare American to play there — taking part in an equally rare tradition.



DAVID CORIO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"The Magistrate" will be broadcast beginning Thursday to some movie theaters as part of the National Theater Live program. Information: microsites.nationaltheatre.org.uk/ntlive.

BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

The following year I was in the audience at the Lyttelton for a preview performance of the first major production of Nick's regime: a new musical piece with the memorable title "Jerry Springer: The Opera." It was an outrageous, profane and hilarious spectacle, the first smash hit of Nick's tenure and a brash statement of his intent. It was an audacious, auspicious start, and the following 10 years have borne out its early promise.

So imagine my excitement last July when I read an e-mail from Nick that began with the following words:

"Dear John,

"Do you know Pinero's 'The Magistrate'? And are you free September 24th — February/March?"

The e-mail went on to describe the plot of "The Magistrate," a Victorian farce, from 1885, by Arthur Wing Pinero, which Nick wanted to produce on the Olivier stage. In 1969, at 13, he had seen Alastair Sim in the play's title role at the Chichester Festival Theater, and he now imagined me in the same part. As it happened, I had seen the very same production as a 23-year-old drama student. I had loved it so much that, given the chance, I had directed the play and played a small role in it the following year in American summer stock. In the intervening four decades, I had not heard the play mentioned even once.

My answer to the two questions that began Nick's e-mail? Yes and yes.

And so it was that on the first day of the following October I found myself in the bowels of the National, meeting the 21 British actors who would be my onstage colleagues for the next five months. There were roughly 150 actors employed by the National that day, working on shows in various stages of rehearsal and production. Of all of them I was the only American.

That morning, as I navigated the building's maze-like hallways, I saw small signs that pointed the way to rehearsal rooms for three or four different plays. At 1:30 p.m. all those rehearsals broke for lunch simultaneously, and scores of actors headed to the Blue Room. This is the National's canteen, a bright, utilitarian dining room with a capacity of

around 60.

The actors piled in, lined up for hot lunches and then sat together in groupings loosely based on the shows they were working on. It was a daily ritual not unlike that of a high school cafeteria, the difference being that, instead of raucous teenage schoolkids, this crowd included some of the finest English-speaking stage actors in the world.

I shortly learned that, in the coming months, I would be sharing the building with Fiona Shaw, Alex Jennings, Rory Kinnear, Frances de la Tour, Anthony Sher and Simon Russell Beale. These men and women are among Britain's most highly regarded actors, but in the Blue Room the whiff of hierarchy is barely detectable.

The same egalitarian spirit prevails in the Green Room, the National's pub. It is about 20 feet from the Blue Room, across a large common space whose walls are covered with announcements and schedules. Every night all three of the National's theaters discharge their companies at roughly the same time, and a large contingent from every show congregates in the pub, joining their guests and friends.

By 10:30 p.m. the Green Room is packed and the decibel level is high. Half of the customers are National Theater actors, their pink faces scoured clean of makeup and all of them bursting with tipsy self-congratulation.

The actors at the National are a smart and raffish lot, full of high spirits and self-mocking humor, with a disarming absence of snobbery and pretense. Because of them I have loved my time there. I have rarely had a job where I have been so eager to get to the theater at night. All of which accounts for the sentimental importance I attach to that vivid Press Night tradition in the National's dressing rooms.

Remember that? At long last, let me tell you about it.

There are about 30 dressing rooms at the National. Some hold up to five people, and a few accommodate just one. They are arranged around a 60-foot-square air shaft, five stories high, at the very center of the building's sprawling complex. All of the dressing room windows face in on one another. Look out any window at the half-hour call, and you stare right into the windows of dozens of other actors, all readying themselves for one of the three shows they are about to perform.

Actors wave greetings to one another, send news via sign language or open their windows to chat breezily across the air shaft. As the three showtimes approach, everyone gets down to business. The actors sit at their mirrors, don their wigs, make up their faces and climb into their costumes. Few choose to draw their curtains. The architectural setup tends to sharpen everyone's latent tendency toward exhibitionism and voyeurism.

When one of the shows opens for the press, no official announcement is made over the tannoys, but everyone is acutely aware that, for a third of their number, this is their big night. At the instant their show's stage manager announces beginners, all the actors in all the dressing

rooms walk to their windows and, with open palms and in full view of everyone else, they drum on the glass. The sound is like the stampede of a thousand wildebeests.

It is a glorious moment and the most beautiful tribute from one set of actors to another that I have ever been a part of. It is like the thunderous heartbeat of theater itself. When it happened on that November night for all of us in "The Magistrate," I stood at my window, banged on the glass and burst into tears.

A few weekends ago I was at my make-up mirror tying a Victorian cravat around my neck. It was a few minutes before an evening performance of our show. I heard beginners called for "This House," being presented that night at the Cottesloe. It was to be the final performance of its sensationally successful premiere run.

"This House" was slated to reopen on the much larger Olivier stage three months hence, but for now this was its

closing night. A few seconds after the call I heard a familiar rumbling sound. At first I thought it was a low-flying jet passing overhead, or perhaps an earthquake. I looked out my dressing room window and there they were — 50 actors banging on their windows.

"Of course," I thought. "The Press Night custom applies to closing nights too. And nobody told me."

I joined in once again. If anything, it was even more moving than the first time. My thoughts, you see, were racing ahead to the night of Feb. 10. That is the night when our show will close, everyone will bang on their windows for us, and my five months at the National Theater will come to an end. Unlike the return of "This House," our beloved production of "The Magistrate" will not be coming back.

I could hardly bear to think about it.

ONLINE: VIDEO

John Lithgow in a scene from "The Magistrate" in London: nytimes.com/theater

January 11, 2013
THEATER REVIEW

A Crash Course in Mandarin, With No Books or Interpreters

By CHARLES ISHERWOOD

Ready to learn a little Mandarin? Head down to the [Public Theater](#) for the next week or so, where “C’est du Chinois,” a language lesson in the lively form of an interactive theater piece, is being presented as part of the [Under the Radar](#) festival.

Created by the Hungarian-born Edit Kaldor, “C’est du Chinois” is really a no-frills, no-drama production: an amiable 80 minutes of energetic language instruction for audience members, performed by a (fictional) family from Shanghai that has recently immigrated to America. (The title is the French expression meaning “It’s Chinese,” equivalent to our own “It’s Greek to me.” Which I’m told, in Turkish, becomes “It’s French.” Go figure.)

Learning aids, like textbooks or supertitles to help keep us focused, are absent: only Mandarin spoken here. Of props, however, there are many, lugged onstage by the five performers as the piece opens. The father of the family, played by Siping Yao, starts the proceedings by handing a few sheets of paper to a volunteer in the front row, who then reads the introductory remarks:

“Thank you for your interest to learn Mandarin,” the remarks begin. This will be “an important step for your future,” they continue, an amusing acknowledgment of how large China looms in world consciousness as it flexes its increasing financial muscle.

And we’re off! Usually standing on gray carpet rolled out on center stage, the performers take turns teaching us new words and simple phrases. Hanging from their necks are small, round whistles they use to cue us to repeat the sounds we have just heard.

The early rounds are pretty easy: a few self-defense maneuvers are demonstrated, and then we are asked to say “kung fu.” Equally easy are “tofu” and “feng shui.” No extra credit for those, or for the words for cola and beer and chocolate, which are also vaguely similar to our own. But beware the emphasis on intonation that, so I’ve been made to understand, is central to the language.

The words for mother and father are easily assimilated too. But things start getting more complicated when whole phrases are involved. I think I could say “I love chocolate” in Mandarin, although I don’t suppose the immediate future will make this a necessity. Beyond that, I fear I’d be back at square one.

As a theatrical performance, “C’est du Chinois” is spare and unadorned, and the performers (some are nonprofessional actors) are engaging and un-self-conscious. Mr. Siping is an actor with some 40 years of experience: “entitled as national class B actor,” his program biography informs ominously, suggesting the weird rigidities of even the arts in China.

At one point he brings out a scrapbook of photos and proudly flips through it, showing us pictures of himself

in various roles. He also plays a mouth organ and performs a passage from what I presume to be a traditional Chinese theater piece, wearing a painted white mask with long red whiskers. That's about it for entertainment, and then it's back to school.

"C'est du Chinois" may inspire musings on our tendency to perceive the world through language alone, which becomes a one-way street when we encounter someone who doesn't happen to speak our native tongue.

It also gets you thinking about the challenges facing immigrants everywhere. Long before the show was over, I felt myself wilting at the thought of trying to make my way through even a single day in Shanghai. "I love chocolate," after all, isn't going to help much. Then again, "I love beer" might well come in handy.

C'est du Chinois

Conceived and directed by Edit Kaldor; language consultant, Xi Zeng; lighting by Ingeborg Slaats; props and costumes by Janneke Raaphorst; dramaturgical advice by Zhana Ivanova and Nicola Unger; produced by Stichting Kata and Productiehuis Rotterdam. Presented by the Public Theater as part of the Under the Radar festival, Oskar Eustis, artistic director; Patrick Willingham, executive director; Mark Russell, festival director. At the Public Theater, 425 Lafayette Street, at Astor Place, East Village; (212) 967-7555, publictheater.org. Through Wednesday. Running time: 1 hour 20 minutes.

WITH: Nucheng Lu, Siping Yao, Aaron Chun Fai Wan, Lei Wang and Qifeng Shang.

January 13, 2013
THEATER REVIEW

A Deadpan Look at Life Before and After a Stroke

By CHARLES ISHERWOOD

“I found myself praying,” [Peggy Shaw](#) says in her new solo show “Ruff,” recalling the day she suffered a stroke. It seemed the natural thing to do, since she had already fallen to her knees. “If you get me through this I will stop wearing suits,” she remembers thinking. “I will get married. I will pay market rent in Manhattan. I will not wear skinny jeans. I’ll take antidepressants.”

Such are the deals the desperate are willing to make in moments of crisis, although to get the joke you probably need to know that Ms. Shaw, an Obie-winning lesbian performer and writer, is a habitual suit wearer and dedicated bohemian. In “Ruff,” written with her longtime collaborator Lois Weaver, who also directs, Ms. Shaw ruminates on life before and after her “ischemic infarction,” investigating the workings of her mind and memory in an impressionistic monologue that’s engaging, admirably unsentimental and often very funny indeed.

“Do I look like a Peggy to you?” Ms. Shaw asks at one point. No, that perky name suggests a bouncy young thing with pigtails and pompoms. Ms. Shaw, 68, has a bristly brush of gray hair and wears a peak-lapel black jacket and skinny tie. She idolizes Marlon Brando, and has often been told she looks like Sean Penn. (“I always say he looks like me,” she cracks.)

Standing on a wide strip of green material that scrolls up against the back wall of Dixon Place to become a video screen, Ms. Shaw recounts her experience in the burly, tough-guy voice of a minor Mafioso. She certainly doesn’t sound like a Peggy either.

“Ruff,” presented by [Dixon Place](#) as part of P.S. 122’s [Coil Festival](#), doesn’t have a strong narrative through line. Video images of a backup band are intermittently projected onto the green screen, and the show has the rough-edged feel of a stand-up routine or rock ‘n’ roll show more than a carefully sculptured monologue. In her husky voice Ms. Shaw actually sings a couple of songs, including Jacques Brel’s [“Jacky.”](#)

The looseness reflects Ms. Shaw’s new reality. There are dark spots in her mind now, blanks in her memory, and the leapfrogging in her show reflects the disorienting experience she’s come through. Tidy and completely cogent this 75-minute monologue may not be, but it is rich in the kind of insight that only an artist of Ms. Shaw’s age and experience can bring.

Although she sometimes reads the text from three video monitors surrounding her onstage, for the most part Ms. Shaw seems to have physically recovered from her illness. She says at one point that she lists to the left — but then she always has. And those strange lights she sometimes sees, in the shape of grapes, tend to disappear when she has a couple of glasses of wine.

Reflecting on her experience, she is never maudlin and almost always amusing. “I went into the hospital as a woman who gets mistaken for a man,” she recounts. “But it seems I came out of the hospital as a straight white

man, 'cause half my brain was missing.' ”

Ouch! But that’s about as inflammatory as “Ruff” ever gets. The show’s light touch never falters, and Ms. Shaw’s delivery maintains its deadpan edge even when she’s lamenting the loss of cherished memories and the frustrating sensation of not even knowing what was lost. As a tongue-in-cheek public service, she leads us through the government’s official list of indications that you are having a stroke: a matter of closing your eyes and trying to touch your finger to your nose, or saying a certain phrase while holding your tongue. This lecture is embedded seamlessly, and somehow aptly, within her version of the “Hokey Pokey.”

Ruff

By Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver; performed by Ms. Shaw; directed by Ms. Weaver; music and sound by Vivian Stoll; movement consultant, Stormy Brandenberger; set and media design by Matt Delbridge; lighting and video by Lori E. Seid; produced by Tracy Gentles; assistant director, Louis King; production manager, Jo Palmer. A Performance Space 122 and Out North Contemporary Art House production, presented by P.S.122 and Dixon Place, as part of P.S. 122’s Coil Festival. At Dixon Place, 161A Chrystie Street, between Rivington and Delancey Streets, Lower East Side; (212) 811-4111; ps122.org/coil. Through Jan. 19. Running time: 1 hour 15 minutes.

JANUARY 13, 2013

Lithgow's love of theater takes to the big screen

By Don Aucoin

GLOBE STAFF

Few actors manage to remain as consistently busy as John Lithgow does, whether onstage or onscreen.

Lithgow, 67, who can currently be seen in Judd Apatow's "This Is 40," is performing at the Olivier Theatre in London in the National Theatre production of Arthur Wing Pinero's Victorian-era farce, "The Magistrate."

As part of the National Theatre Live series, "The Magistrate" will screen at the Coolidge Corner Theatre in Brookline Thursday at 7 p.m. and again on Feb. 4 at 7 p.m. The Globe spoke with Lithgow by phone while he was at a cafe in England.

Q. What was the appeal for you in tackling the title role of "The Magistrate," before a British audience, no less?

A. Well, it certainly was the challenge of it, and the honor of being invited by the National to work with the company. I actually saw a fantastic production of it in 1969, when I was a drama student over here, starring Alastair Sim in the title role. It was a very, very vivid memory. The following year in summer stock I had the chance to direct, and I chose "The Magistrate," and I even played a small role in it. Since then I've been in two productions of [Pinero's] "Trelawny of the Wells."

Q. Do you find there to be any difference between British theater audiences and American ones, in terms of how they react, what they appreciate and don't, what they laugh at or don't laugh at?

A. British audiences are a little

more reserved, I think, although they are very, very smart audiences. And of course there's a tremendous theater tradition. You get the feeling you're performing for people who go to the theater 20 times a year on average. They are innately less raucous. American audiences want to make sure they're getting their money's worth; they cheer, they jump to their feet.

Q. You seem to be constantly working, whether it's onstage, on TV, or in the movies.

A. I'm a very lucky actor. I'm constantly asked. I don't think I would work all the time if they weren't constantly offering me jobs. I do feel as if I'm working more than is good for me. Right now, as I'm sitting here in this cafe, my back is killing me from the stress and strain of this performance [in "The Magistrate"]. It's hard work. But it's irresistible. There's no way I could pass up this chance.

Q. Can you tell me a bit about your theater activities when you were a student at Harvard? What was the most memorable production you took part in?

A. Ooh, there were lots. Those four years at Harvard, they were, no doubt about it, the most creative years of my life. I wasn't studying theater or opera or ballet, but I did them all, in an extracurricular way. My first time singing onstage was "Utopia, Limited," by Gilbert and Sullivan. I staged Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" in the Leverett House dining room. I directed "The Beggar's Opera" in the Adams House dining room. I played Tartuffe at the Loeb. I played King Lear. I directed many times. Anything you



JOHAN PERSSON

John Lithgow (seen in "The Magistrate" with the National Theatre) says that British audiences are reserved but smart. "You get the feeling you're performing for people who go to the theater 20 times a year on average," he said.

wanted to try, there was somebody who would let you do it.

Q. How do you adjust to the different rhythms of TV, stage, and movie rehearsal and performance?

A. They are very, very different disciplines, but I would say that in the most broad and general ways it's a process

that's always the same. You build a performance. It's a combination of an intellectual and emotional exercise. You just use different muscles. At the heart of it all, for me, is theater technique, because that's where I came from. What I bring to television is the equipment I learned onstage. I'm a fairly theatrical actor, even on

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television. I'm fairly technical. I turn a movie crew into an audience. I'm always aware I'm performing for people, not a camera.

Q. Should every actor at least try comedy, for the discipline of it?

A. It is a great discipline. It's a lot of fun doing comedy. Making an audience laugh is a very particular thrill. My background is Shakespeare. I did many summers doing different Shakespeare roles. He wrote "King Lear" but he also wrote "Comedy of Errors." He wrote "Macbeth" but he also wrote "As You Like It." Even in the tragedies, there's a great variety of character roles. You have a different impact on the audience every night. I call myself a full-service entertainer. It's all the same things. If you're doing a scene of comedy or tragedy or horror, you're still looking for the organic shape of the scene, the truth of what you're doing. That's what the tears come out of; that's what the laughter comes out of.

Q. You've played some memorable bad guys, including the Trinity Killer on "Dexter." What is it you enjoy about playing villains?

A. Well, I love overturning everybody's expectations. That's the fun of going from comedy to horror, that people are primed to react one way and you can jerk the rug out from under them and completely surprise them. In terms of playing villains, I never think of them as villains. I think of them as completely self-justifying people. Even the Trinity Killer. Here's this man who has this terrible compulsion, who wishes that somebody would stop him. There was tremendous agony in his sadistic behavior. To me that's an interesting way to approach it, as a man who doesn't want to be the bad guy, or doesn't see himself as a bad guy.

Q. Are some of your fans dismayed when you do play a bad guy?

A. It's an equal number of people who say, "Oh, I loved you on '3rd Rock From the Sun' to the people who say, 'Oh, I loved you as Trinity.'" I tell them, "You're supposed to hate me in that!"

Q. You're presently appearing in "This Is 40." What was it like working with Judd Apatow?

A. It's a fantastic experience working for Judd. It's so spontaneous, so improvisatory. He takes so much of what actors bring to the table. He turns on three cameras and never turns them off. You play the scripted scenes, and then he throws in other lines. He's still yelling things for you to throw on. It can go on for 15 minutes; he never yells "Cut." And from that he just winnows out what he needs. So his films are just full of comic surprises.

Q. You've played newspaper columnists on Broadway: a Walter Winchell-like gossip columnist in "The Sweet Smell of Success," Joseph Alsop in David Auburn's "The Columnist." Why do you like playing journalists, of all things?

A. Because journalists are after the drama. The great journalist play was "The Front Page," and I played Walter Burns in that. There's a reason that athletes and journalists make great characters: They are in the drama business.

Q. Tom Hanks is about to make his Broadway debut playing a newspaper columnist, in "Lucky Guy." Any advice for him?

A. Tom needs no advice from me.

Q. Any roles you regret taking?

A. There have been plenty of roles I've regretted taking, but I'm not going to tell you what they are. Chances are you haven't seen them, either.

Interview has been edited and condensed. Don Aucoin can be reached at aucoin@globe.com.

BIOGRAPHIC

By STEVE MCGARRY



BORN AND RAISED IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, JESSICA CHASTAIN STUDIED DRAMA AT NEW YORK CITY'S FAMED JULLIARD SCHOOL ON A SCHOLARSHIP MADE AVAILABLE BY ROBIN WILLIAMS. AFTER GRADUATING WITH A B.F.A. IN 2003, SHE MADE HER TV DEBUT IN A 2004 REMAKE OF THE GOTHIC SOAP OPERA "DARK SHADOWS."

SUBSEQUENT TV CREDITS INCLUDED ROLES ON THE LIKES OF "ER," "VERONICA MARS" AND "LAW AND ORDER: TRIAL BY JURY."



Follow STEVE MCGARRY CARTOONS every day on Facebook

JESSICA



SHE MADE HER FILM DEBUT WITH THE STARRING ROLE IN 2008's "JOLENE," A MOVIE INSPIRED BY THE DOLLY PARTON SONG OF THE SAME NAME. HER PERFORMANCE EARNED HER THE BEST ACTRESS AWARD AT THE SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL. A ROLE IN 2009's "STOLEN" WAS FOLLOWED BY THE FEMALE LEAD IN 2011's "THE TREE OF LIFE," OPPOSITE BRAD PITT AND SEAN PENN, WITH HER PERFORMANCE EARNING HER CRITICAL ACCLAIM AND NUMEROUS AWARDS.



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CHASTAIN

ASTONISHINGLY, THAT SAME YEAR, JESSICA ALSO STARRED IN "THE DEBT," "TAKE SHELTER," "TEXAS KILLING FIELDS," "CORIOLANUS" AND THE SHORT "TOUCH OF EVIL." SHE ALSO EARNED RAVE REVIEWS FOR HER PERFORMANCE IN THE BOX-OFFICE SMASH "THE HELP," FOR WHICH SHE WAS REWARDED WITH OSCAR AND GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS AND A CLUTCH OF OTHER AWARDS.



SHE CHANGED PACE IN 2012, WITH A VOICE ROLE IN THE ANIMATED "MADAGASCAR 3: EUROPE'S MOST WANTED," BEFORE STARRING IN THE GANGSTER FILM "LAWLESS."

CURRENTLY APPEARING ON BROADWAY IN A REVIVAL OF "THE HEIRESS," SHE STARTS 2013 WITH THE RELEASE OF TWO MOVIES: "ZERO DARK THIRTY," A DRAMA BASED ON THE HUNT FOR OSAMA BIN LADEN, AND THE HORROR FILM "MAMA."



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

January 14, 2013

Culture Count

Life in the Orphanage



'Annie: The Musical' employs two child guardians for its young cast.

In New York state, stage actors under the age of 16 are required by law to have an onsite guardian during rehearsals, performances and public appearances. For the Broadway revival of "Annie," that role belongs to Jill Valentine.

"I like to say it's part stage manager, part cool aunt," Ms. Valentine said. "We try to be everything we can be for the children, so that they can be professional, and so that they can be kids."

Until recently, guardians lacked the contractual protection typically provided for Broadway professionals. But in 2010 they joined the New York City Theatrical Wardrobe Union, Local 764, and in August they ratified a collective bargaining agreement with the Broadway League to insure the terms and conditions of their employment.

Ms. Valentine, who is 30,

trained as an actor at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and began working as a guardian three years ago. "I like the backstage world more," she said. "I find it so interesting, how everybody's jobs fit together."

The eight child actresses in "Annie" are between the ages of 7 and 12, and they perform eight shows a week. The production employs two full-time guardians. "It's certainly not boring," Ms. Valentine said. "Sometimes they behave like they're 40, and sometimes they're suddenly 7. But we're lucky, I think. We have a great group of girls."

We wondered: When the girls do get in trouble, what is it typically for? "Talking in the wings," she said. "The hardest thing for kids to do is to remember to keep their energy up and stay quiet—at the same time."

—Lizzie Simon

Jill Valentine, the head child guardian for the girls of 'Annie: The Musical,' gives us a peak into how the actresses were cast.

2-12
Months of auditioning



2-10
Auditions to get the part



Graphic by Kathryn Tam/
The Wall Street Journal



5
Number who are home-schooled

6
Making their Broadway debuts

7-12
Age range

2-6
Shoe-size range



Wall Street Journal

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Monthly Online Readership-6,656,700

BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

MANHATTAN

Jan/Feb 2013

Calendar *January 2013*

50 SHADES OF SCARLETT
Tennessee Williams' Pulitzer-
winning play gets a revival starring
Scarlett Johansson.



JAN. **17** Opening night of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* on Broadway
Starring Scarlett Johansson. Tickets from \$77. *Richard Rodgers Theater*,
226 W. 46 St., 877.250.2929, catonahottinroofbroadway.com

BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

January 13, 2013

4x10

OUR CRITICS' WEEKLY PICKS IN ENTERTAINMENT

NYC STAGE BY JOE DZIEMIANOWICZ

2 **"The Other Place"** (Samuel J. Friedman Theatre)
Laurie Metcalf makes this
twisty drama a must.

7 **"The Jammer"** (Atlantic
Theater Company Stage
2) Writer Rolin Jones spins
a roller derby fable in 1950s
Brooklyn.

8 **"Old Jews Telling Jokes"**
(Westside Theatre) New
year, old Jews, lots of laughs.

10 **"The Piano Lesson"**
(Signature Theater) Last
week for Off-Broadway's best
revival.

Daily News

Total Daily Circulation - 530,924
Daily Online Circulation, 4,798,930

BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

NEW YORK POST

January 13, 2013

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Sightings . . .

"DOWNTON Abbey" star **Michelle Dockery** at Broadway's "The Heiress" . . .

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BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

VARIETY

JANUARY 14-27, 2013

GOTHAM LIMELIGHT

Rialto warming trend



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Broadway continued to inch upward in 2012, not only in terms of grosses — an unsurprising trend, given inflation and the widespread presence of premium-priced seating — but, encouragingly, in terms of attendance as well.

Calendar years don't mean as much to Broadway bookkeepers, who tend to concentrate on the May-to-May season sked as the definitive circle of B.O. life. Still, the numbers can provide a good midseason barometer, and the 2012 figures indicate that despite concerns regarding the lingering attendance dip following superstorm Sandy — as well as insider carping about a mediocre fall season — Broadway biz continued to rise year-to-year.

By *Variety's* tallies, sales for the 53-week period beginning Dec. 26, 2011 and ending Dec. 30, 2012 nudged up to \$1.196 billion — although the Broadway League has come up with a different tally, \$1.158 billion for 52 weeks,

based on an accounting change that shifts the periodic 53-week annual sesh from 2012, as originally planned, back to 2010.

Attendance, per *Variety's* 53-week frame, climbed to 12.48 million, up from 12.13 million in 2011 and 12.11 million in 2010. Attendance also rose compared with the 2011 frame in the League's accounting, which rang in 12.16 million theatergoers during the 52-week window.

Variety's 2012 tallies are boosted, of course, by the boffo figures from the 2011 holiday week that are rolled into the 53-week annum. But no matter when you slot in the 53rd week, box office has trended up year-to-year over the past several years.

Among individual shows, "Wicked" remained at the top of the list, logging \$96.6 million for the 53-week year. That marks the ninth consecutive calendar year in which the tuner has been the top grosser, a record it continues to hold despite increasing competition from a resurgent "Lion King," which pulled in \$94.5 million.

At \$84.6 million, "The Book of Mormon" is no slouch either, especially since that show's in a significantly smaller house (1,066 seats) than either "Wicked" (1,809) or "The Lion King" (1,677).

Productions that opened during the year are hindered when compared with those that ran all 53 weeks, but Tony champ "Once" (\$40.4 million) and "Newsies" (\$39.4 million) nonetheless muscled their way into the Top 10. Ahead of them both was "Evita" (\$48.6 million), powered by the B.O.-boosting presence of topliner Ricky Martin.

For shows that open in fall, it can be tough to establish much of a foothold in the year-end charts, although musical "Annie" (\$12.8 million from

perfs starting Oct. 3) and Al Pacino-topliner "Glengarry Glen Ross" (\$11.6 million from an Oct. 19 launch) have been standouts.

As for the potential box office drivers of the coming spring, question marks abound. Among the new musicals, "Matilda" looks like the pre-approved critics' darling from London, but whether American auds will flock to the dark kids' tale remains to be seen; "Motown" seems poised to pull in crowds, based on the global popularity of the titular music; and "Kinky Boots" has stirred some pre-Broadway excitement, too. There's also "Cinderella," soon to battle "Annie" for the same girl-centric all-ages demo, and "Hands on a Hardbody," waiting to carve out a profile with consumers.

One thing that's certain is that there's no shortage of big-name celebs toplining plays this spring. The only worry may be: How many is too many for the Street to sustain?

Insiders say that, based on advance sales, Tom Hanks in "Lucky Guy" is looking like a home run, and Scarlett Johansson in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" has so far posted robust biz for a previewing play. Two other formidable performers with the potential to attract crowds, Alec Baldwin (in "Orphans") and Bette Midler (in "I'll Eat You Last"), join the lineup later in the spring — along with Nathan Lane, generally considered a solid B.O. draw, starring in "The Nance."

Weekly Variety

Total Weekly Circulation — 35,403

Monthly Online Readership — 276,128

BONEAU / BRYAN-BROWN

Page 1 of 2

In the immediate future, there's the traditionally fallow period of January and early February to contend with. But recent years have seen producers and the Broadway League become more savvy with pricing schemes, with initiatives such as Kids' Nights on Broadway helping to keep the annual box office come on the rise. ■

Top 10 for 2012

<i>Wicked</i>	96.6
<i>The Lion King</i>	94.5
<i>The Book of Mormon</i>	84.6
<i>Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark</i>	78.5
<i>Jersey Boys</i>	51.0
<i>Evita</i>	48.6
<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	47.5
<i>Mary Poppins</i>	44.7
<i>Once</i>	40.4
<i>Newsies</i>	39.4

Note: All figures in millions of \$; from the week beginning Dec. 26, 2011, to the week ending Dec. 30, 2012

VARIETY

JANUARY 14-27, 2013

Sun comes up for 'Annie,' even after holidays

The tail end of the annual holiday sales boost helped keep Broadway B.O. relatively robust in Week 32 (Dec. 31-Jan. 6), although the numbers still took a hit in the wake of the Christmas frame spike.

Although almost every production on the boards saw sales decline — many by hundreds of thousands of dollars — there was still enough revenue coming in to the Main Stem to keep nine shows above the \$1 million mark. "Wicked" (\$2,106,339) and "The Lion King" (\$2,017,921) both stayed above \$2 million.

Fall opener "Annie" (\$1,252,683) continued to benefit from tourists and family auds looking for all-ages entertainment, coming in just behind "The Book of Mormon" (\$1,833,432) and "Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark" (down more than \$1 million, to \$1,636,789), while "Evita" (\$1,091,836) hung in there in its final month on the boards. Perennial out-of-towner faves "Jersey Boys" (\$1,112,848), "The Phantom of the Opera" (\$1,052,613 for seven perfs) and "Mary Poppins" (\$1,028,946) stayed strong as well.

seven), with the cume also impacted by the prior closings of "A Christmas Story" and "Bring It On."

Five more shows joined those two in shuttering before the doldrums of January set in, with "War Horse" (\$948,043) playing to near-capacity auds in its final week. "Elf" (\$696,616) took a predictable tumble in the one week it was scheduled to play after the Christmas holiday, while "Chaplin" (\$509,381), "Grace" (\$418,788) and "Dead Accounts" (\$254,255) bowed out with little B.O. fanfare.

Overall Broadway sales came in at \$24.5 million for 29 shows, down \$12 million on the previous week.

The 18 musicals grossed \$19,589,737 for 80% of the Broadway total, with attendance of 176,469 and an average paid admission of \$111.01.

The 11 plays grossed \$4,911,528 for 20% of the Broadway total, with attendance of 58,763 and an average paid admission of \$83.58.

— Gordon Cox
and Annetta Konstantinides



Road grosses

Seven of nine touring shows pulled in more than \$1 million in Week 32 (Dec. 31-Jan. 6). Total box office decreased 2.86% over the frame, although "The Lion King" set a house record for the third time in 11 weeks at San Francisco's Orpheum Theater, grossing \$2,101,332 for nine performances. "Wicked's" second company in St. Louis once again took the week's top spot, with \$2,470,590. "Memphis," which was in its second week of layoff, returns to the boards in the coming week. Total gross for the week was \$13,206,688.

CHICAGO

The Book of Mormon (M-2nd Co.) Bank of America Theater (\$107; 1,952; \$1,298,122) (12/11/12-3/3/13)
PW, \$1,645,201
LW (4th), **\$1,535,863**

DETROIT

Jersey Boys (M-1st Co.) Fisher Theater (\$121; 2,048; \$1,183,519) (12/12/12-1/6/13)
PW, \$963,156
LW (4th), **\$987,642**

HONOLULU

Wicked (M-1st Co.) Blaisdell Center (\$90; 2,089; \$1,470,150) (11/22/12-1/12/13)
PW, \$1,585,402
LW (7th), **\$1,531,147** (9 perfs)

PHILADELPHIA

Les Miserables (M-1st Co.) Academy of Music (\$97; 2,588; \$1,308,080) (1/2-1/13/13)
PW, \$1,198,110 in Washington, D.C.
LW (1st), **\$1,143,781**

PORTLAND, ORE.

The Book of Mormon (M-1st Co.) Keller Auditorium (\$85; 1,603; \$1,476,940) (1/01/13-1/06/13)
PW, \$1,607,677 in San Francisco
LW (1st), **\$1,530,475**

ST. LOUIS

Wicked (M-2nd Co.) Fox Theater (\$85; 4,074; \$2,310,111) (12/12/12-1/6/13)
PW, \$2,755,070
LW (4th), **\$2,470,590**

SAN FRANCISCO

The Lion King (M-1st Co.) The Orpheum Theater (\$106; 2,125; \$1,979,496) (11/1/12-1/13/13)
PW, \$2,100,980
LW (10th), **\$2,101,332** (9 perfs)

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Million Dollar Quartet (M-1st Co.) Kenned Center (\$150; 1,129; \$745,384) (12/18/12-1/6/13)
PW, \$748,356
LW (3rd), **\$788,679**

WEST PALM BEACH, FLA.

Jersey Boys (M-2nd Co.) Kravis Center (\$125; 2,195; \$1,264,379) (12/22/12-1/6/13)
PW, \$991,545
LW (3rd), **\$1,117,179**

— Annetta Konstantinides

■ For Season and TKTS information, go to Variety.com/legitcharts

The variance in the numbers between the two frames was exacerbated by the fact that many shows played nine performances during the Christmas sesh, and the following week played the usual eight (or, in some cases,

Weekly Variety

Week 32: Dec. 31, 2012-Jan.6, 2013

Show (Theater)(Prod. Category)(Seats)	Week's Gross Receipts Potential Gross Receipts	Prev Week's Gross Receipts	\$Change Avg. Tick	Attendance Capacity	Attendance Percentage	Perfs to Date Top Box Price	Gross to Date Opening Date
Annie (Palace)(M-R)(1,708)	\$1,252,683 \$1,220,932	\$2,054,848	-\$802,165 \$99.66	12,570 13,664	92.0%	70 \$137	\$11,855,418 11/8/2012
The Book of Mormon* (Eugene O'Neill)(M)(1,066)	\$1,833,432 \$1,428,404	\$2,158,595	-\$325,163 \$209.49	8,752 8,528	102.6%	745 \$175	\$134,164,840 3/24/2011
Chicago (Ambassador)(M-R)(1,080)	\$758,785 \$1,062,488	\$1,174,672	-\$415,887 \$95.38	7,955 8,640	92.1%	6,701 \$140	\$450,566,639 11/14/1996
Evita (Marquis)(M-R)(1,612)	\$1,091,836 \$1,666,936	\$1,548,991	-\$457,155 \$97.23	11,229 12,896	87.1%	313 \$140	\$48,134,562 4/5/2012
Glengarry Glen Ross (Schoenfeld)(P-R)(1,070)(5 perf)	\$687,771 \$755,545	\$1,228,867	-\$541,097 \$143.52	4,792 5,350	89.6%	30 \$150	\$9,867,838 11/11/2012
Golden Boy (Belasco)(P-R)(972)	\$329,636 \$796,690	\$396,424	-\$66,789 \$67.49	4,884 7,776	62.8%	37 \$125	\$1,601,710 12/6/2012
The Heiress (Walter Kerr)(P-R)(951)	\$380,424 \$898,072	\$496,204	-\$115,780 \$78.42	4,851 7,608	63.8%	78 \$145	\$5,777,461 11/1/2012
Jersey Boys (August Wilson)(M)(1,228)	\$1,112,848 \$1,291,544	\$1,367,678	-\$254,830 \$117.03	9,509 9,824	96.8%	2,964 \$162	\$396,946,425 11/6/2005
The Lion King* (Minskoff)(M)(1,677)	\$2,017,921 \$1,869,768	\$2,666,616	-\$648,694 \$150.36	13,421 13,416	100.0%	6,290 \$133	\$920,528,301 11/13/1997
Mamma Mia! (Winter Garden)(M)(1,498)(7 perf)	\$869,907 \$1,282,647	\$1,439,211	-\$569,304 \$94.71	9,185 10,486	87.6%	4,651 \$148	\$523,309,098 10/18/2001
Mary Poppins (New Amsterdam)(M)(1,797)	\$1,028,946 \$1,361,916	\$1,487,252	-\$458,306 \$79.79	12,896 14,376	89.7%	2,555 \$132	\$286,878,415 11/16/2006
The Mystery of Edwin Drood (Studio 54)(M-R)(1,004)	\$396,214 \$928,200	\$560,100	-\$163,886 \$64.05	6,186 8,032	77.0%	64 \$137	\$3,174,165 11/11/2012
Newsies (Nederlander)(M)(1,195)	\$998,814 \$1,124,042	\$1,396,734	-\$397,920 \$103.96	9,608 9,560	100.5%	324 \$147	\$38,538,256 4/29/2012
Nice Work If You Can Get It (Imperial)(M)(1,439)	\$796,705 \$1,393,205	\$1,265,146	-\$468,441 \$90.75	8,779 11,512	76.3%	294 \$150	\$34,236,734 4/24/2012
Once (Jacobs)(M)(1,058) (7 perf)	\$956,660 \$937,954	\$1,446,088	-\$489,428 \$126.89	7,539 7,406	101.8%	336 \$148	\$39,232,813 3/18/2012
Peter and the Starcatcher (Brooks Atkinson)(P)(1,038)	\$519,744 \$899,626	\$768,302	-\$248,558 \$79.10	6,571 8,304	79.1%	303 \$123	\$16,049,943 4/15/2012
The Phantom of the Opera (Majestic)(M)(1,605)(7 perf)	\$1,052,613 \$1,238,981	\$1,751,458	-\$698,845 \$95.33	11,042 11,235	98.3%	10,375 \$140	\$887,837,025 1/26/1988
Rock of Ages (Helen Hayes)(M)(583)(7 perf)	\$473,248 \$572,874	\$744,667	-\$271,419 \$121.94	3,881 4,081	95.1%	1,480 \$168	\$87,674,845 4/7/2009
Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark (Foxwoods)(M)(1,930)	\$1,636,789 \$1,807,688	\$2,716,990	-\$1,080,201 \$119.40	13,709 15,440	88.8%	651 \$136	\$152,452,826 6/14/2011
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Booth)(P-R)(780)(7 perf)	\$258,795 \$666,920	\$344,190	-\$85,395 \$83.08	3,115 5,460	57.1%	93 \$130	\$3,602,951 10/13/2012
Wicked* (Gershwin)(M)(1,809)	\$2,106,339 \$1,681,127	\$2,947,172	-\$840,833 \$146.07	14,420 14,472	99.6%	3,814 \$135	\$699,787,103 10/30/2003

PREVIEWING

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (Richard Rodgers)(P-R)(1,384)	\$761,845 \$1,313,805	\$966,948	-\$205,103 \$91.91	8,289 11,072	74.9%	23 \$140	\$1,728,793 1/17/2013
The Other Place (Friedman)(P)(644)	\$167,770 \$565,416	\$158,737	\$9,033 \$37.47	4,477 5,152	86.9%	31 \$120	\$37,156,572 1/10/2013
Picnic (American Airlines)(P-R)(740)	\$184,458 \$682,680	\$154,501	\$29,957 \$46.69	3,951 5,920	66.7%	29 \$127	\$885,371,911 1/13/2013

CLOSED

Chaplin (Barnmore)(M)(1,045)(24 pr/135 perf)	\$509,381 \$979,036	\$558,368	-\$48,987 \$75.17	6,776 8,360	81.1%	143 \$134	\$7,844,720 9/10/12-1/6/13
Dead Accounts (Music Box)(P-R)(997)(27 pr/44 perf)	\$254,255 \$982,243	\$327,803	-\$73,549 \$70.96	3,583 7,976	44.9%	44 \$145	\$2,509,126 11/29/12-1/6/13
Elf (Hirschfeld)(M)(1,424) (74 perf)	\$696,616 \$1,278,076	\$1,267,397	-\$570,781 \$77.30	9,012 11,392	79.1%	74 \$160	\$5,785,003 11/9/12-1/6/13
Grace (Cort)(P)(1,073)(22 pr/108 perf)	\$418,788 \$916,965	\$445,047	-\$26,259 \$72.44	5,781 8,584	67.3%	108 \$130	\$5,897,538 10/4/12-1/6/13
War Horse (Vivian Beaumont)(P)(1,069)(33 pr/718 perf)	\$948,043 \$1,063,060	\$1,041,448	-\$93,405 \$111.94	8,469 8,552	99.0%	718 \$145	\$73,552,955 4/14/11-1/6/13

Reported box office receipts are followed by the week's paid attendance (including standees) and percentage of the week's total capacity represented. The theatrical week runs Monday through the following Sunday. Unless otherwise specified, the week consists of eight performances. Abbreviations and designations are (P) play, (M) musical, (R) revival, (*) did not use the Times Square Ticket Center (TKTS) reduced-rate booth last week, (perf) performances, (pr) previews, (PW) previous week, (LW) last week. © 2013 VARIETY Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction or distribution strictly prohibited. Compiled by Annetta Konstantinides from figures reported by the Broadway League.