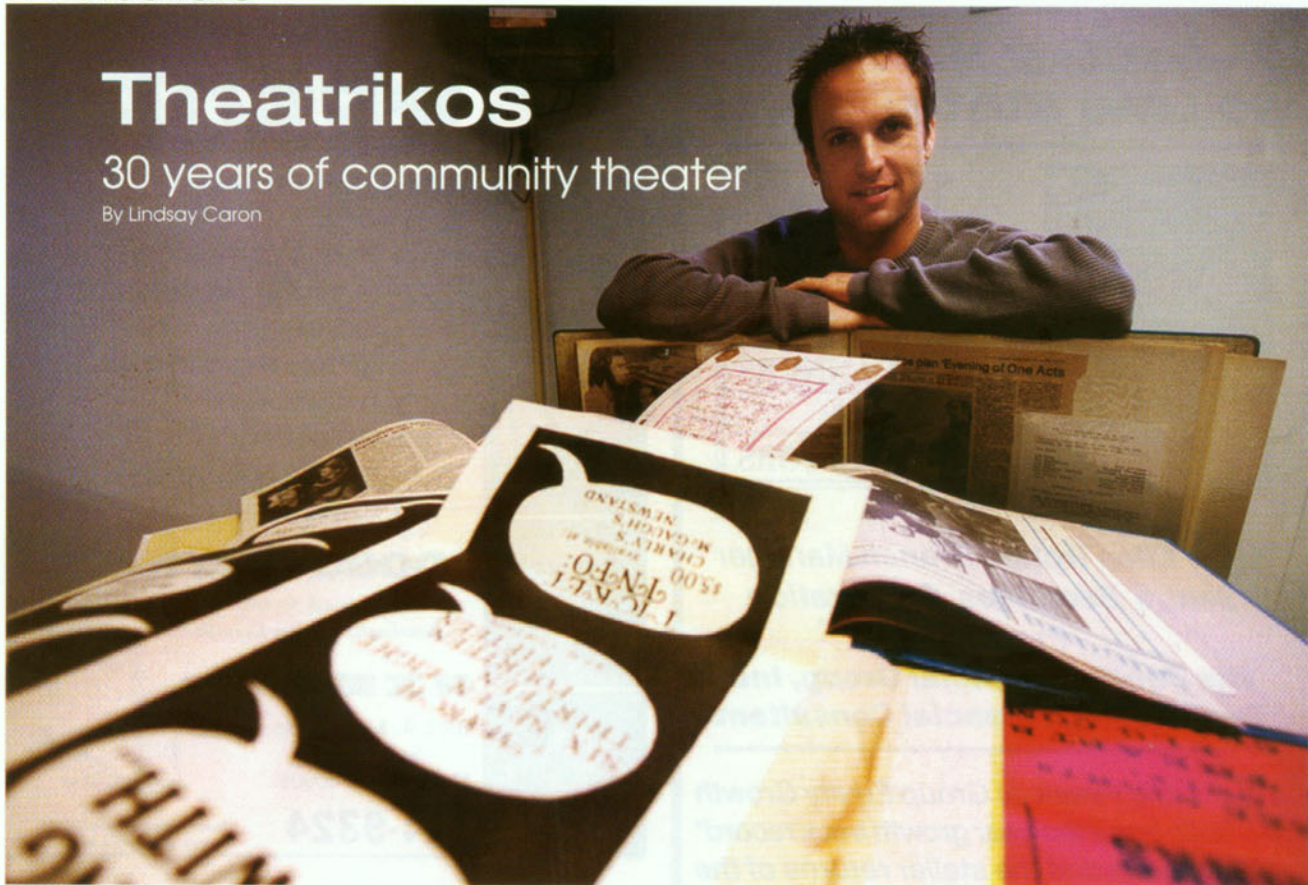


Theatrikos

30 years of community theater

By Lindsay Caron



Theatrikos Theatre Co. performed its first show ever at Coconino High School, asking “What Did We Do Wrong?” The answer: not a thing—proven by the start of Theatrikos’ 30th successful year.

The Theatrikos family is all about two things: great art and great fun. Part of the fun is finding any good reason to have a party. This article served as yet another fabulous excuse. Time to gather thespians, techies, directors and spectators old and new, interview, dig up dirt and collect ideas for an article. This last-minute party ended up as a small gathering of a dozen or so people for brunch, full of conversation and laughing at old memories. Out came the history books, newspaper articles, photos, playbills and personal accounts of the beginnings of this staple of the Flagstaff community.

In 1972, 15 people met in the basement of the Weatherford Hotel to hone their talents and their passions to provide Flagstaff with high caliber theater. After five performances in that first year of existence, Theatrikos Theatre Co. was nominated for *Arizona Daily Sun*’s Organization of the Year. Now, 30 years later, Theatrikos is finally bestowed with this honorable title.

Theatrikos has come quite a long way from the days of rehearsing downtown at Charly’s Bar and Grill, or the uncomfortable nights in the Art Barn. “We used to sit with our legs dangling over a beam, pressing play on a little tape recorder for music and sound effects,” recalls Wade Thorson, actor, sound designer and more. “The Art

Barn was our temporary permanent home,” laughs Doris Harper-White, as she reminisces about the numerous hardships of those early years. There was no heat or insulation in the barn, so winter shows were held out of necessity in a warmer location: Charly’s. Harper-White talks of the creative directing that made use of the whole bar—pillars, tables and all—and numerous rehearsals trying to take place while the open bar still served the cowboys.

Doris has many stories to tell from her whopping 34 productions at Theatrikos. In 1992, she received Flagstaff’s Citizen of the Year Award for 20 years of volunteering her time, hard work and talents to the community theater. “I couldn’t figure out why I got that award. I was almost embarrassed!” she laughs.

“I know exactly why she got that award!” says Theatrikos’ Executive Director Jonathan Beller. “She deserved so much more.” I fully agree. I was fortunate enough to have worked under the direction of Harper-White two years ago in “The Nerd.” I was blown away by her talent and vision and learned more than I have from any other director.

Having worked in and reviewed several different theaters, from community to college to professional, I am repeatedly impressed with the high caliber performances and the always warm and welcoming ambience of Theatrikos Theatre Co. Many others share this sentiment. “I spent 11 days checking out various theaters in Phoenix, and nothing stuck. The day I drove up to Flagstaff I

After many hours of listening to hysterical mishaps, I inquire about the occurrence of positive miracles. Jonathon Beller answers: “Miracles happen with every show.”