



**THE NASHVILLE
NETWORK**

1997-1998 SEASON

JAC ALDER
Executive
Producer-Director

**NICE PEOPLE
DANCING *to***



**GOOD COUNTRY
MUSIC**

a romantic comedy by **LEE BLESSING**

PREMIUM SHOW TWO: July 5 through August 3

THEATRE THREE PLAYBILL

is a publication of

THEATRE THREE

The Theatre in the Round at the Stockyards

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Theatre Three publishes two Premium Attraction Playbills and six Subscription Series playbills each season. This playbill is published for *Nice People Dancing to Good Country Music*, the second Premium Attraction of the 1997-1998 season playing from July 5 through August 3, 1997. Theatre Three welcomes advertisers in its playbill who can call (214) 871-2933 for information.

Theatre Three is a 501(c)3, not-for-profit cultural institution incorporated in the State of Texas. Founded in 1961 by **Norma Young**, Theatre Three has been in continuous production since its founding. It was named for the three equally essential ingredients of significant theatre: gifted theatre artists, talented playwrights and experienced audiences.

IN MEMORIAM

Theatre Three wishes to recognize contributions made in memory of or from the estates of ... **Sam Catter**, Board Member and Supporter; **Bill Dallas**, Scenic Designer; **Scott Everheart**, Actor; **Paula Goodlet**, Supporter and Subscriber; **Oliver Hailey**, Playwright; **Anne Weeks Jackson**, Vocalist and Teacher; **Jim Jackson**, Singer and Actor; **Masha Porte**, Supporter and Subscriber; **Carolyn Ryburn**, Playwright; **Mary Blanche Scales**, Supporter and Subscriber; **Evelyn Wilke**, Supporter and Subscriber.

Beginning with the 1996-1997 season, all such gifts, unless otherwise designated, are placed in the theatre's new permanent fund.

FOR THEATRE GOERS WITH DISABILITIES:

- **RESTROOM.** A wheelchair-accessible restroom is next to the box office.
- **RAILINGS.** Over half of the seats at Theatre Three can be reached from staircases with a handrail. Please advise the box office of this need when making reservations.
- **INFRA-RED HEARING DEVICES** are available from the House Manager for the hearing impaired helped by these devices.

ABOUT PARKING

All parking options for Theatre Three patrons are **free**, including **valet parking**. Protected parking is available in the office tower garage. Surface parking is also available, though on popular restaurant nights is often limited. Handicapped parking is available next to the *Dream Café* lawn and at the end of the courtyard shared by Theatre Three and *North-South Restaurant*.

THEATRE THREE STAFF

NORMA YOUNG, Founding Artistic Director
JAC ALDER, Executive Producer-Director

TERRY DOBSON, Assistant to the Producer
THURMAN MOSS, Associate Producer

PRODUCTION

HARLAND WRIGHT, Director of Design
BRUCE COLEMAN, Costumer and Staff Director

TERRY DOBSON, Musical Director
BONNY HENLEY, Technical Co-ordinator and Staff Designer

TISH MUSSEY-HITT, Production Assistant

ADMINISTRATION

THURMAN MOSS, Chief of Operations
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-- FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

ADMISSION \$10 proceeds benefiting Theatre Three. For ticket information and reservations call (214) 871-3300.

Inquire at the box office for how to join the Theatre Three Guild, how to volunteer at Theatre Three or how to apply the price of admission to the cost of a new subscription for '97-98.

The 1997-1998 SEASON at THEATRE THREE. SUBSCRIBE TODAY!



There's still time to subscribe to Theatre Three's 1997-1998 season. In fact, you can apply the cost of your ticket tonight toward a full subscription. Next in the season is Moliere's richly comic, classic masterpiece newly translated by Richard Wilbur, *Amphitryon*. Then it's a new drama from England by David Hare who has written a stunningly candid look at modern clergymen, *Racing Demon*. *Dreams from a Summer House* is a new musical, with the book by Alan Ayckbourn and music by John Pattison, that mixes contemporary lovers with the characters from *Beauty and the Beast*.

The Pulitzer-nominated play by Jon Marans is next: *Old Wicked Songs* tells the story of a young American musician in Vienna and his conflicts with a demanding and enigmatic teacher. In *June Moon*, Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman return us to the early days of Tin Pan Alley and the fun and schemes of songwriters hustling their tunes. The season will include one more show which has yet to be selected.

Join the dream season at the theatre-in-the-round!

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT LEE BLESSING



The friendly forty-seven year old playwright was explaining his recent move from Minneapolis to Los Angeles. "After forty plus years of cold, you figure you have a right to that weather. Film and TV writing is there, of course. I've written a couple of episodes -- for *Picket Fences* and *Homicide* -- and film scripts that are 'in the works.'" But about living in Los Angeles he says, "It's another challenge."

He's chatting on the phone from Seattle where his newest play, *Going to St. Ives* is about to open at A Contemporary Theatre. "Structurally it's a bit like *Walk in the Woods* in that it is a two character play, but it's two women. No American characters; one woman is an English eye surgeon, the other woman is from central Africa who is the mother of a kind of Idi Amin dictator." Why the title? "St. Ives is a village outside Cambridge." Ever been there? "No. I've yet to go to Houston where *Nice People...* is set. I get to travel in my plays. Once when I drove to New Mexico I went along the length of the Oklahoma panhandle. You could look out the driver's window and see Texas, but you didn't have to go there," he laughed.

"*Nice People...* was a transitional play in that it was my first play with both men and women: it's my most deliberate comedy. Some of its humor was based on my wife's first marriage to an academic but mostly it's about my fascination with Texas and Texans. In Louisville [Actors Theatre of Louisville] I began it as a one act during the time I was there with my play *Oldtimers Game*. I wrote it as a kind of homage to the liberating qualities I appreciate about Southerners -- the logic, license and freedom they have. I set it in Houston because that city symbolizes growing in an unorderedly way and having a kind of boom or bust quality."

Nice People Dancing to Good Country Music is the second play Theatre Three has produced by this internationally recognized American playwright. In 1994, Theatre Three produced his political satire *Fortinbras* which wittily (yet seriously) imagined events in Denmark immediately following Hamlet's death. "I wrote that during the Gulf war," he recalled.

Twice nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, nominated for Tonys and Olivier awards, he is the winner of a Drama-Logue

Playwrighting Award, the Humanities Prize, the American Theatre Critics Award and the George and Elisabeth Martin Playwrighting Award. In its second season, the prestigious Signature Theatre in New York produced an all-Blessing season which concluded with the premiere of his highly praised play, *Patient A*. Blessing's works have been produced on numerous regional theatre stages, on Broadway, and in the West End of London. Indeed, particularly in the case of his most famous play, *A Walk in the Woods*, Blessing has been produced all over the world including a major production of that play in Moscow. PBS made *A Walk in the Woods* part of its *American Playhouse* series. When TIME Magazine said of *A Walk in the Woods* that the play "might have been written by Shaw" the comparison emphasized Blessing's love of language, his gift of rhetoric, and a particularly energetic sense of humor supporting keen intellectual observation.

He has applied these characteristics to an amazingly wide range of subject material including serial killers, journalists, diplomats, doctors, athletes and, (in the case of tonight's show) just "nice people". About his predilection for a wide range of subjects he says, "August Wilson mines a single vein in a deep way and that's his method. I immerse myself in a subject I don't know much about -- I had never been to Switzerland or known about nuclear arms negotiations before *A Walk in the Woods* -- and then I see what happens. Then when I see something I'm not doing [a subject] and it interests me, I do that."

He saw his first professional play as a teenager at the Guthrie Theatre in his hometown of Minneapolis. He acted in high school and began writing, at first trying his hand at poetry. His undergraduate degree in English was from Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and he did graduate work in Iowa where he wrote more and more for the stage.

Two collections of his plays have been published by Heinemann. Other plays include *Eleemosynary*, (produced recently by Circle Theatre in Fort Worth) *Independence, Two Rooms, Down the Road*, (produced by New Theatre last spring starring *Nice People...*'s director Bruce Coleman as the serial killer), *War of the Roses*, and *The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid*. His TNT film *Cooperstown*, starred Alan Arkin and won three nominations for Cable Ace Awards including Best Screenplay. **BB**

-- This article written for the playbill by JAC ALDER from a phone interview with the playwright and research by NATALIE GAUPP.

THEATRE THREE

JAC ALDER, Executive Producer-Director
presents

NICE PEOPLE DANCING to GOOD COUNTRY MUSIC

a romantic comedy by LEE BLESSING



BUNN



DOBSON



FALCON



MOSS



MURPHY

photo by Linda Blase

THE CAST

Jim Stools.....	Thurman Moss
Roy Manual.....	Terry Dobson
Jason (Jay Bob) Wilfong.....	Sitara Falcon
Eve (Eva June) Wilfong.....	Sharon Bunn
Catherine Empanger.....	Sarah Ann Murphy

THE ARTISTIC STAFF

Director.....	Bruce Coleman
Set Designer.....	Harland Wright
Costumer.....	Bruce Coleman
Lighting Designer.....	Bonny Henley
Assistant to the Director.....	Brian Walker
Sound Designer.....	Marco Salinas
AEA Stage Manager.....	Jac Alder

PLACE: Out back of The Nice People Bar on the outskirts of Houston.

ACT ONE: The present, one morning a few Septembers ago.

There will be one 15 minute intermission

ACT TWO: Later.

THEATRE THREE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair...Claire Cunningham

Jac Alder, Gregg Ballew, Michael Brennan, Craig Cathey, Dale Cunningham, Michael Davis (Theatre Three Guild Liaison), Virginia and Roland Dykes, Roslyn Fitch, Annie Biggs Haslett, David and Cherry Haymes, Ed Hughes, Lloyd W. Kitchens, Jr., David G. Luther, Jr., Duncan Muir, H. Keith Nix (Cultural Commission Liaison), Rosanne Pittman, Elizabeth Rivera, May Tweed, Norma Young, Barbara Yount, Don and Sally Weatherford (500 Liaison)

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ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

BRUCE COLEMAN began his association with Theatre Three as an apprentice after getting his degree in theatre from Midwestern State University. In a most unusual move, Norma Young gave Mr. Coleman a directing assignment during his internship (based on a concept he brought to the artistic director) and he has been continuously designing and directing for Theatre Three (and for other regional theatres) since. Last season at Theatre Three he designed costumes for all of the productions and staged two of the season's musicals, *Once On This Island* and *A Grand Night for Singing*. He is also a founder of his own company, New Theatre Company which specializes in presenting plays never seen in Dallas. That company recently included Lee Blessing's *Down the Road* in its schedule.

SET, LIGHT, SOUND CREW

Evan Brannen, Jeff Briggs, Preston Darley, David Fisher, Corey Jones, Carl Maeder, Bradley Spinelli.

FOR SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS to the production of *NICE PEOPLE*... Theatre Three thanks to

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for providing the *perfect* truck for *Nice People Dancing to Good Country Music*. This is the same fine company that assists Theatre Three by auctioning off the cars, boats, trucks, motorcycles and trailers donated to the theatre by patrons and supporters. (See ad below.)

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ABOUT THE ACTORS

SHARON BUNN* has been an important part of Theatre Three's artistic history since its first season when, as a high school student, she made her first appearance in *Sabrina Fair*. When Theatre Three moved from the Sheraton Hotel to a converted seat-cover garage on Main Street, she played leading roles in comedies like *The Moon Is Blue* and *The Tavern* as well as musicals like *Count Dracula*, or *A Musical Mania from Transylvania* and dramas including *A Member of the Wedding*. She continued university studies (and studies in England) and, after a time of performing in musical revues at clubs and theatres across the country, returned to Theatre Three's stage in such plays as *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little*, *The Gingerbread Lady*, *Canterbury Tales*, *The Elephant Man*, *Ruddigore*, *The Miss Firecracker Contest* and *Anything Goes*. After living in California for a few years, she returned to Dallas and Theatre Three to take a range of assignments from earthy comedy (like *Tobacco Road*), to complex comedy-dramas (like *A Woman in Mind*), to musicals (like *Weill Women*) to dramas (like *The Wake of Jamey Foster*). Recent assignments include Theatre Three appearances last season in *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You*, *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*, and *Blithe Spirit*. Ms. Bunn is known to her friends for her extensive knowledge of film history and theory as well as her passionate political advocacy for women's rights. She is also known as an unequalled raconteur on the perils of exposing children to early Walt Disney features though she will champion the rewards of experiencing films by David Lean. She is a winner of the Dallas Critics Forum Award.

TERRY DOBSON* was last season's most active performer at Theatre Three with leading roles in *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You*, *Sylvia*, *The Fantasticks*, as well as performing at the piano as musical director of *Into the Woods*, *Once on This Island* and *A Grand Night for Singing*. While serving as the Musical Director on staff at Theatre Three, Mr. Dobson took on the additional chores of playing piano for Ft. Worth's Casa on the Square production of *Forever Plaid* for part of its run, accompanied Candy Buckley when she appeared at the Dallas Theater Center's annual gala, and arranged, conducted and produced a show featuring The Turtle Creek Chorale's show music ensemble, *Encore*. He came to Theatre Three from his musical and dramatic studies at Auburn University and took his first assignment accompanying *Yip, Yip Hooray* (the revue featuring the lyrics and light verse of Yip Harburg). He, with Jac Alder, put together the musical revue based on men's experience in the '90s called *Ball Games* and another original revue *Weill Women* featuring the works of Kurt Weill. A Sondheim aficionado (and expert), he has been the musical director of the many Sondheim productions at Theatre Three including *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *The Frogs*, *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow*, *A Little Night Music*, *Into the Woods*, and at the late Dallas Repertory Theatre, *Marry Me a Little*. He is the winner of the Dallas Critics Forum Award for his acting work in Beth Henley's play *The Wake of Jamey Foster* when it was produced at Theatre Three.

SITARA FALCON (Jay Bob) hails from the small town of Blue Ridge just outside Dallas. He returned to the area two years ago after graduating from Southwestern University in Georgetown and began his acting career. His theatre credits include *Hal in Picnic* at Quad C and *Adam in Square One* which was presented by Core Performance Co. in Theatre Too, Theatre Three's downstairs rehearsal hall/performance space. His favorite role was that of Austin in Trident Production's *True West*, which he also co-produced. *Nice People Dancing to Good Country Music* is his Theatre Three debut. He wishes to dedicate his work in this show to his family.

THURMAN MOSS* is a staff director, actor, stage manager and administrator at Theatre Three, an organization he first worked for as an actor in children's shows in the 1970s. Later acting roles included *True West*, *The Wake of Jamey Foster*, *The Gingerbread Lady*, and *Season's Greetings*. Since those assignments he has graduated to directing, serving as the theatre's associate producer, and functions as its director of operations with responsibilities ranging from budget writing to staff development. In addition to his duties at Theatre Three he has been teaching and directing at Northlake College and at KD Studios. He directed the season-opener, *Burn This* to excellent reviews. Recent directing assignments at Theatre Three include *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*, *Sylvia*, *Tobacco Road*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Tiger Lady*, *Shadowlands*, and *A Small Family Business*. He continues to be an important actor for the company and was particularly appreciated for his role as the policeman-brother in Arthur Miller's *The Price*. He has also recently played Editor Webb in *Our Town* and has alternated (with Terry Dobson) as Mortimer in *The Fantasticks*. As co-founder of The Lean Theatre, he has directed (*We Wont Pay! We Won't Pay!*) and acted (*On the Road*) and written (he co-authored an adaptation of *Patterns*.) After a brief career as a rocker in Los Angeles, he returned to his hometown of Dallas, and to the astonishment of his family (but not his theatre pals) has become a major figure of Dallas theatre.

SARAH ANN MURPHY, known as "Sam" to her friends, made her Dallas debut at Theatre Three in last season's production of *Blithe Spirit* and followed that assignment with the role of Chloe in *Arcadia*. She has also appeared in productions at The Dallas Children's Theatre. She has recently returned to the Dallas area after studying with The British American Dramatic Academy in London after earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama from Loyola University, New Orleans. Lucky ticket buyers and TheatreThree subscribers sometimes reach her in the box office where she often assists as a reservationist between her acting assignments.

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