

Frankly Speaking

NEWS OF FRANK THEATRE • MARCH 2008

Frank Theatre presents **Bertolt Brecht's**

Puntila & his Hired Man Matti

2 People's Play – Based on a story by **Hella Wuolijoki**

**March 20 -
April 13, 2008**

**DIRECTED BY
WENDY KNOX**

Set Design by
John Bueche

Costumes by
Kathy Kohl

Lighting by
Michael Wangen

Sound by
Montana Johnson

Stage Managed by
Kasey Brandt

with assistance from Katie Burger



PHOTO BY TONY NELSON

Featuring: **Grant Richey** as Puntila, with **Carson Lee** as Matti,
and **Maria Asp, Patrick Bailey, Joe Botten, Tony Brown, Aaron Coker,
Celeste Jones, Jonathan Peterson, Jennifer Phillips, Aja Pridgen,
Cheryl Willis** and **Emily Zimmer**.

PERFORMANCE LOCATION

Performed in the City of Minneapolis Public Works yard at 26th Street East and Hiawatha Avenue, in the Bridge Building, 1901 East 27th Street. The entrance is located at 27th Street East and Longfellow Avenue South, one block west of Hiawatha and one block south of 26th Street. **Look for the Roof Depot water tower!**

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

- Performances are March 20 (preview) – April 13, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8:00pm, Sundays at 2:00pm (Sunday, March 23 is a pay-what-you-can performance.)
- For tickets and reservations, visit our website at www.franktheatre.org, or call Frank Theatre at **612-724-3760**.
- Call for details about our audio described performance.

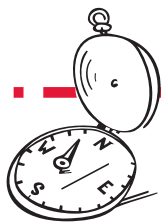


ABOUT THE PLAY

Mr. Puntila, the wealthy landowner of Puntila Estate, has a problem. When he is drunk, he is generous, humane, wildly fun and wants to be “one of the people.” During these frequent bouts, all those around him benefit from his largess. When he sobers up, he becomes the mean-spirited, petty, and greedy landlord. PUNTILA AND HIS HIRED MAN MATTI unfolds the adventures of Puntila and his chauffeur Matti, while skewering issues of class with a broad swipe of humor. A “vivacious” daughter unhappily engaged to an Attache (who is marrying her to pay off his debts), four bawdy working women who are just looking for a good time, the delicate facades of the upper-class, and a “hired man” who sees through it all, combine to make this a bawdy, raucous “folk play” that deliciously pokes at the gap between the haves and the have-nots.

“As the driving force behind Frank Theatre, Wendy Knox is the ideal mix of pragmatist and dreamer. She is as artistically adventurous as any director in town, but also sensible enough never to let her ambition overleap her company's resources. Frank's production of Brecht/Weill's The Threepenny Opera was proof positive of Knox's talent. From the very first scene, it was clear that Knox knew exactly how to play this tricky script. This was Brecht as Brecht would have had it.”

... CITY PAGES



DIRECTIONS:

(Please double check on Mapquest or Google!)

The performance is held in the Bridge Inspection building of the City of Minneapolis Public Works yard, which is visible from Hiawatha Avenue (Hwy. 55) and 26th Street East, just north of the new Greenway bridge. To get to the space, enter the Public Works yard from 27th Street East and Longfellow Avenue, one block west of Hiawatha and one block south of 26th. There is a gate that you will enter, and there is free parking available on-site.

FROM THE SOUTH:

Take 35W north to the Lake St./31st St. exit. Turn right on 31st St., and head east to Cedar Ave. Turn left (north) on Cedar Ave., to 28th St. E. Turn right on 28th, go a few blocks to Longfellow Ave, turn left one block, and the entrance will be on your right.

FROM THE NORTH OR WEST:

Take 94 E (or if you are coming from downtown, take 8th St.) to Hiawatha Ave., and head east (south) to 26th St. Turn right on 26th, go a few blocks to Longfellow Ave., turn left one block, and the entrance is on your left.

FROM THE EAST: I-94

Take 94 E to the Riverside Ave/25th Ave exit. Go to the second stoplight, turn left on to 25th Ave. S., and go to 26th St. E. Turn right, cross Hiawatha, and turn left on Longfellow. Go one block, and the entrance is on your left.

PARKING

Parking is free parking on-site.



ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Bertolt Brecht was one of the most influential playwrights of the 20th century. Born in Augsburg, Germany in 1898 to a middle class family, he enrolled in medical school in 1917, but was drafted in 1918. He wrote his first play in 1919, when he also met Caspar Neher who would be one of his longtime theatre collaborators. His plays and theoretical writings break with the classic notions of Aristotelian drama and call for a new “science” of the theatre that would demand the engagement of the audience. As Hitler rose to power and the climate became uncomfortable for many groups of people, Brecht fled Germany, not to return for 15 years. He continued to write while living in exile in Switzerland, England, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the USSR and the US. During this time, he wrote many of his most pivotal works, including FEAR AND MISERY OF THE THIRD REICH (1935), MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN (1939), GOOD PERSON OF SETZUAN ((1940), PUNTILA AND HIS HIRED MAN MATTI (1940) and THE RESISTIBLE RISE OF ARTURO UI (1941). Brecht returned to Germany in 1947, where he co-founded the Berliner Ensemble Theatre which continued to produce significant productions of Brecht’s work until its final tour in 1999. Brecht died in 1956.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

GRANT RICHEY (*Puntila*) first performed with Frank in 1992 when he played twin brothers, one blind and one deaf, in *ETTA JENKS*. He returned to Frank for *ARTURO UI* in 2001, and since then has appeared in *THE GOD OF HELL*, *MOTHER COURAGE*, and *THE PILLOWMAN*.

CARSON LEE (*Matti*) made his Frank debut in *VENUS*, and has just come off of a 5 months Neil Simon stint at Old Log. **EMILY ZIMMER**, a longtime Frank offender, is thrilled to be tackling the role of Puntila’s daughter Eva, before she heads off to Florida for her next theatrical engagement; **PATRICK BAILEY** sandwiched in a turn at the Jungle (*SHINING CITY*) between his last Frank performance in *THE PILLOWMAN* and his current portrayal of the very “continental” Attache in *PUNTILA*; **MARIA ASP** (just off of the run of *THE PILLOWMAN*), **JENNIFER PHILLIPS** (returning after her debut in *MOTHER COURAGE*), **CHERYL WILLIS** (making her Frank debut after her appearance in the Jungle’s *SHINING CITY*) and **CELESTE JONES** (making her Frank debut) compose the gaggle of gals who have great fun at Puntila’s expense; **JONATHAN**

PETERSON, a regular Frank offender, last appeared in *VENUS*. **AJA PRIDGEN** and **AARON COKER** appeared in the Ordway’s *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*, directed by Frank Artistic Director Wendy Knox, but now truly demonstrate their willingness to climb every mountain by joining Frank on a warehouse adventure, making their Frank debuts along with **TONY BROWN**, and **JOE BOTTEN**. The design team is led by **JOHN BUECHE**, the master who has created scenery for nearly all of our warehouse adventures, with assistance from **JUSTIN HOOPER**; **KATHY KOHL** remains the costume doyenne of Frank Theatre, with assistance from **ANNA LAWRENCE**; **MICHAEL WANGEN** goes for strike three at Frank, having previously designed lights for *MAD FOREST* and *MOTHER COURAGE*; **MONTANA JOHNSON** creates her first sound design for Frank; **NANCY WALDOCH** and **TESSA FLYNN** lend hands to assist director **WENDY KNOX** in wrangling this circus, while **KASEY BRANDT** makes her stage managing debut at Frank with assistance from our favorite “hired gal,” **KATIE BURGER**, **STEVE MATUSZAK** returns as our dramaturg.

“...an example of the fevered, intelligent, and uncompromising theater that this itinerant company consistently provides...”

...CITY PAGES

COMING UP NEXT AT FRANK!

NEXT YEAR, FRANK MARKS ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY! Details for the year are still being put into place, but among them are an irreverent staging of **MACBETH** that will outshine any other! Frank will reunite many performers who have worked with the theatre (as well as many who worked on an earlier production of the play helmed by Knox) to reinvestigate what the play means in the world today. We’re trying to bring together a group that will be led by the “good cop” of our recent production of **THE PILLOWMAN**, Luverne Seifert (who also played MacBeth in our last go-around with the script) and Virginia Burke (a repeat Frank offender, who also played his wife in our early production of **MACHINAL**). All in all, we promise you an innovative and electrifying evening of witches, curses, and unbridled ambition. **Don’t miss it!** Other production details of the year are still in process; join our CyberPatrol to be the first to know ... visit our website at www.franktheatre.org!

THE FRANK PANEL DISCUSSION



Frank regularly hosts a series of Sunday afternoon post-show panel discussions, spurred by an audience member who wanted to talk about the shows she was seeing at Frank! We invite various members of the community to join us for these discussions — people who have varied experience, perspective, or interest in some aspect of the subject matter of the play at hand. Immediately after the Sunday matinees, these panelists join in a casual conversation with the audience, the artists, or anyone who wants to drop in that day. We have attracted some fabulous participants in the past, resulting in many stimulating, insightful conversations. Not only do we get to hear your feedback and response to the work, but it also helps us achieve the goal of placing Frank's work in a larger context. Please join us on **Sunday, March 23, March 30 and April 8**, following the 2:00 matinees. The discussions are **FREE** and we would love to have you!

"The opening moment of Frank Theatre's production of "Mother Courage and Her Children" is an inspired blend of design, music, performance and spectacle."

... Pioneer Press

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via e-mail?

Join our CyberPatrol!

Send us an e-mail at
info@franktheatre.org
and we'll keep you cyberposted!

Check out our website at
www.franktheatre.org



Happy Birthday!

Frank marks it's 20th anniversary this upcoming season. We have ambitious plans to mark this occasion, and we could use your help. If you would like to join the significant number of individual contributors to Frank's work, there's always room in that crowd. Just go to our website, franktheatre.org/frank/supportfrank/supportfrank.html, and pick your category: cocktail wiener, vienna sausage, bratwurst mit kraut ... or send your contribution to Frank Theatre, 3156 23rd Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

And thanks so much for supporting Frank!

ABOUT THE LOCATION

PUNTILA ... will be performed in the Bridge Inspections building, located in the City of Minneapolis' Public Works yard, located at 26th Street and Hiawatha. Serving as the headquarters for many of the operations of the city's public works — sewers, paving, bridge inspection, etc. — this site is being redesigned by the architecture firm of RSP. Several months ago, Frank Artistic Director Wendy Knox served on a panel for the selection of a public artist to work with the architects, giving her a glimpse into the site which had piqued her curiosity after many years of living in the neighborhood. The warehouse space in which **PUNTILA** will be performed will be demolished following Frank's production, as the entire site is being redesigned. Many thanks to Mary Altman, Public Arts Administrator for the City of Minneapolis, and Councilman Gary Schiff for helping Frank secure this venue.

"... Yet Frank's follow-up, Brecht's Mother Courage and Her Children, tackled wartime mercenary values with a sense of queasy and reckless humor. Knox's shows crackle and bristle with intellectualism, but also serve up a texture of real emotional danger. The final tribute to Knox's talent is her ability to attract distinctive actors."

... CITY PAGES, Best of 2007

FEATURED RECIPE

PULLA (Finnish Coffee bread)

A classic of the Finnish coffee table — leftover bread makes THE BEST French toast and bread pudding EVER!

1 pkg yeast	1 cup sugar	8-9 cups white flour, approx.
1 cup warm water	1 tsp. salt	1/2 cup butter, melted and cooled
2 cups milk, scalded then cooled to lukewarm	1 T. cardamom	1 Egg yolk for glazing
	4 eggs, at room temp.	
1 cup almonds and 1/2 cup pearl sugar (available at Scandinavian shops) for decorating		

Dissolve yeast in water; add pinch of sugar to proof it. Beat the eggs and sugar; then add the milk, yeast, salt and cardamom. Add enough of the flour to make a thick, elastic mixture (about 2 cups). Beat vigorously until dough is smooth and elastic. Mix about 3 c. of flour, and add the butter. Add rest of flour. Knead until dough separates completely from your hands and sides of the bowl. Invert bowl over dough and let rest for 15 min. Put in lightly greased bowl, cover with a cloth and leave to rise in a warm place. When it has doubled (about an hour), punch down and let rise again (about 30 min.) Turn onto lightly floured board, divide into three parts, and then divide each section into 3 balls. Roll each ball into 3 strands about 16" long. Braid 3 strands together, tucking ends underneath, making 3 braided loaves. Place on a baking tray and let rise again, about 20 minutes. Glaze with beaten egg yolk, then sprinkle almonds and pearl sugar (or white sugar) on top. Bake 25-30 min. at 400 degrees.

MISSION STATEMENT

Frank Theatre is a professional theatre company committed to producing unique work that stretches the skills of the artists who create the work while simultaneously challenging the everyday perceptions of the audience through the exploration of ideas and issues of social, political and/or cultural concern.

Frank Theatre was founded with the desire to produce work that provides opportunities for artists to grow, to stretch, to work outside of and beyond the typical opportunities provided by theatres with a greater commercial interest. The theatre has successfully pursued this goal through the consistent staging of works that require the actors, designers, and director to challenge themselves and each other.

The theatre is a Twin Cities' based company, founded in 1989 by Artistic Director Wendy Knox. In its nineteen-year history, the theatre has staged 40 productions.

The theatre is committed to producing work that reflects the world in which we live.



For tickets & information call 612-724-3760 or go to

www.franktheatre.org

Want to receive Frank Theatre updates via e-mail? Join our CyberPatrol®! Send us an e-mail at info@franktheatre.org, and we'll keep you cyberposted!

WHY THIS PLAY?

When I returned to the US after Round 2 of living in Finland, I have to confess I had a slight twinge when Theatre de la Jeune Lune staged **PUNTILA** in 1991. As a committed Brecht fan, a Finn, and a theatre director, I somehow felt a proprietary sense about this play written in 1941 while Brecht was living in exile in Finland. These many years later, as Frank has developed a strong reputation for our stagings of Brecht's work, the Frank Artist Resource and Think Tank (FARTT) gave the script a read last summer. The actors' response was overwhelmingly positive: "Let's do it!," they said.

Perhaps less pointedly political than many of his works, this script takes jabs at issues of class and capitalism in the context of a bawdy, raucous comedy, set during Finnish midsummer when the world is turned upside down. Not indirectly reflecting Brecht's love of Charlie Chaplin, **PUNTILA** parallels the relationship between the Tramp and the Millionaire in Chaplin's "City Lights." The servants, the underclass, the workers are all portrayed as disempowered, yet their humor and their intelligence give them the upper hand. The servant is wiser than the master. Frank tends to tackle works that are serious, meaty, and edgy. People often ask me, especially with shows such as our recent production of **THE PILLOWMAN**, "How did you rehearse that play? It was SOOOOO intense!" But if there is anything that marks the Frank crowd besides an intelligence and a willingness to go out on a limb, it's the relentless and offbeat humor. I so appreciate the fact that nearly all of the folks I get to work with, play after play, dearly love a good laugh — the more irreverent, the naughtier, the better.

Frank has the good fortune of having a fabulous group of committed artists who truly have made the theatre survive nearly two decades. While I frequently choose scripts for production based on a desire to explore a particular issue or writer, or to see a particular actor stretch in one way or another, I also doggedly asked the actors to tell me what plays they want to tackle. Surprisingly, it can be very difficult to get them to answer that request. When the actors' immediate response to **PUNTILA** was so positive, it became clear that this was a chance for the actors to have a direct impact on Frank's programming. And not only that, the Brechtophile, semi-Finn director gets to put her own first hand experience with the source material to some practical application.

Tervetuloa! Welcome to the show!

Wendy Knox, Artistic Director



PHOTO BY ANN MARSDEN

FRANK T H E A T R E

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
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www.franktheatre.org



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