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Bear's Best



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Taproot Theatre

Tickets 206-781-9707 or Ticketmaster 206-292-ARTS

All performances are held at Taproot Theatre, 204 N. 85th St., Seattle

www.taproottheatre.org



Design & Photo © 2005 by Brian Design

204 N. 85th St. ■ Seattle, WA 98103
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Box Office ■ 206.781.9707
Admin. Office ■ 206.781.9705

The Beau

Mr. and Mrs. Goldman want the best for their daughter Sarah, including her beau (boyfriend). They will be happy with whoever she chooses as long as he is a good Jewish boy. Sarah is dating Chris, but he doesn't match their requirements. What is a girl to do?



C O M E D Y

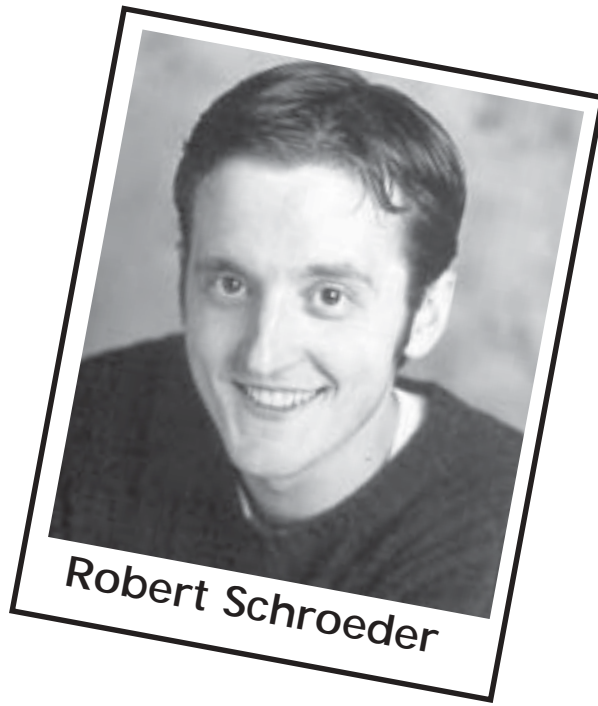
What makes a play a comedy?

The classic definition of comedy is a story that revolves around a character's struggle with their society. Comic stories involve one character who is 'out of sync' with the rest of his surroundings, or sometimes a whole society is somehow "off-balance" and needs to be set right. Dramatic comedy goes through a chiasmic story structure where a society lives within a particular norm,

and are brought to a new level of normalcy. Often comedies are humorous, but are defined by their structure.

The story of *Beau Jest* is both comic and funny. The plot revolves around Sarah Goldman and her struggles with her family. At the beginning of the play the dynamics of the family are terribly off-balance. Mr. and Mrs. Goldman are not communicating properly

with each other or their children. Sarah and her brother Joel are not sharing the truth of their lives with their parents. Sarah is attempting to fix her boyfriend dilemma with an elaborate lie. As the play unravels each character must make decisions that will effect their relationships. By the end of the play each character has changed and a new sense of unity is felt within the family.



Robert Schroeder

An Actor's Life in Chicago

An actor's life in Chicago is very similar to an actor's life anywhere else. The beginning years of an actor's career are filled with gigs that don't pay a lot of money. Usually their lives look very similar to Bobs', doing different day jobs which allow them to pay rent while they pursue the art that they love. Many professionals in the theatre will tell aspiring actors that if they can be happy doing anything else with their life, DON'T BECOME AN ACTOR! But it is the love of the art and the work that drives actors to keep going and live a less conventional lifestyle. Rewards other than money outweigh the cost.



As a city Chicago is rich in theatre culture with playhouses ranging from tiny, hole in the wall studios to large,

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The Jest

To hide Sarah's gentle boyfriend she calls an escort service to impersonate a Jewish boyfriend. When the hired Robert Schroeder (Bob) arrives at her door, a series of hilarious events unfolds. Sarah discovers Bob is not Jewish, and doesn't know their customs. Bob discovers he is not escorting an old lady to dinner, but becoming a fictionalized boyfriend. Sarah scrambles to tell Bob everything he needs to know about their relationship before her parents arrive.

internationally known stages. The style of theatre varies from the fast paced improv comedy of The Second City to the classics performed by the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. One director of *Beau Jest* described the Chicago theatre style as a cross between Stanislavski and Second City. He went on to explain that "Chicago theatre artists are concerned with honesty of emotion and also tend to feel comfortable with the process and results of improvisation." James Sherman is a great example of this kind of theatre artist and he has written quite a few of those qualities into the character of Bob.

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James Sherman



James Sherman began his career in Chicago as a performer/writer for The Second City. Since 1986 he has been a Playwright in Residence at the Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago. His play, *Beau Jest*, was the most successful play ever produced at Victory Gardens. It premiered on November 16, 1989. It played for a year in Chicago, ran for two and a half years Off-Broadway,

and is still being staged regularly by theatres around the country.



Sherman has been a teacher of playwrighting and acting at the SecondCity Training Center and the Chicago Dramatists Workshop. He was also a visiting professor at the Korean National University of the Arts in the spring of 2001. Sherman currently lives in Chicago with his wife, Linnea Todd and their sons Isaac & Avery.

Learn about

Victory Gardens Theatre & James Sherman

www.victorygardens.org www.jamessherman.com

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Broadway

Broadway is the theater and amusement district of New York City, centered on Broadway Ave. The street itself is 150 miles beginning at the south tip of Manhattan, passing through Time Square and extends north to Albany.

Off-Broadway

When a play runs Off-Broadway it plays in New York City, but outside the Broadway entertainment district.

Beau Jest remains Victory Garden's most successful plays of all time.

"A light, sweet romantic comedy."
Chicago Tribune

"Hilarious and quite moving. Sherman wonderfully blends farce with a genuine insight."
Chicago Sun Times

"Very funny... The well crafted play has a lot to say about nuclear families of any ethnic persuasion."
Wall Street Journal

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Chicago, 2005

Chicago is an exciting city to live in with plenty of opportunities in business, technology, and the arts. Chicago's history stretches all the way back to the founding of Fort de Chicago by French explorers in 1683.



Chicago is located near Lake Michigan, one of the Great Lakes.

Today it boasts the world's largest commercial office building (Merchandise Mart), the world's largest modern art museum (The Museum of Contemporary Art) and the world's busiest airport (O'Hare International Airport).

It is home to the Chicago Cubs, the Chicago White Sox and the Chicago Bulls.



Chicago trainyard.

Chicago is known for its cold, and windy winters, giving it the nickname "The Windy City." In the spring time months (during which *Beau Jest* is set) it enjoys mild weather with temperatures averaging around 49 degrees.

Movies that have been set in modern day Chicago:
While You Were Sleeping,
Return to Me.



A cold winter day in Chicago.

The Seder Meal

Sarah Goldman's family is Jewish. During the play the family participates in a seder meal. This is a special Jewish custom and holiday.

Jewish Customs for Passover

The celebration of Pesach is an ancient Hebrew ritual. It takes place in the spring and is a yearly remembrance of the Hebrew's enslavement in Egypt and of God's delivering them from their sufferings. The ceremony of Pesach involves a ceremonial meal known as the Seder, which is held in the home.



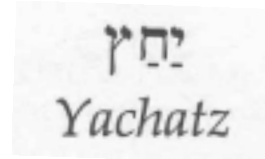
The first cup of wine is called the Kiddish Cup or the Cup of Sanctification. The father raises his glasses and recites the blessing. "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe and creator of the Fruit of the Vine." The Hebrew word "kiddush" literally means 'sanctification' or 'proclaiming holy.' Different versions of the kiddish blessing are

recited before Shabbat, (the Hebrew day of rest) and before most major festivals.



When the ancient Hebrews celebrated Pesach the ceremony revolved around the sacrificing and roasting of the paschal lambs. The Karpas was originally the first course of the Pesach supper. During this course, the roasted giblets of lamb were served with lettuce on large platters. Pieces of lettuce were wrapped around the giblets and then dipped into bowls of saltwater.

Today, the celebration of Pesach does not involve sacrifices; the Karpas is represented by parsley or celery. During the Seder everyone takes a sprig of parsley from their plate and dips it into the bowls of saltwater in the center of the table. The saltwater is symbolic of the tears shed by the Israelites when they were slaves in Egypt.



Matzot is the unleavened bread that is eaten during Pesach. The father takes three pieces of matzah and places them on a plate. He breaks the middle matzah in half, and recites:

"Behold this, the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat with us, let all who are needy come and share in our Passover feast. Now we are here, next year may we be in the land of Israel. Now we are slaves, next year may we all be free."

It is customary to open the front door at this point as a welcome to any unexpected guests.

The larger half of the broken matzah is wrapped in a white napkin. This symbolizes the unleavened dough that the Israelites wrapped in their bread troughs when they fled from Egypt. The piece of matzah in the napkin

is the Afikoman. It is not eaten until after the Seder. The father hides the Afikoman from the children, during the meal the children will make a game of finding the Afikomen and hiding it from their father until he pays them something for its return.

ארבע הקשיות
The Four Questions

The long recitation the events involving the Israelites' escape from Egypt begins with the four questions. The questions are usually asked by the youngest child present or the youngest person at the Seder table. The questions are often sung in Hebrew. "Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights, we eat leavened or unleavened bread; on this night we eat only unleavened bread. On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs; on this night we eat bitter herbs. On all other nights we don't dip even once; on this night we dip twice. On all other

nights we eat either seated or reclining; on this night we eat reclining." The father must now answer the young person's questions.

עשר מכות
The Ten Plagues

The book of Exodus tells of ten plagues that the Lord sent on the Egyptians in order to convince them to set the Israelites free. A list of plagues is recited during the Pesach ceremony. As each plague is named the participants dip their spoon or their little finger into their wineglass and transfer a drop of wine onto their plates "Blood, Frogs, Lice, Wild Beasts, Cattle Disease, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Death of Their Firstborn" The custom of spilling wine during the ceremony dates back to the eighteenth century. There are several different explanations given for this practice. One of these is that the power of the Egyptians was

reduced with each new plague and this is reflected in the decrease of the wine in the cup. Another interpretation says that "our cup of joy is diminished even when our enemies suffer."

דינו
Dayyenu

The Dayyenu is a joyful song that praises God for all that He did for the Israelites. The Hebrew word, "Dayyenu" can be loosely translated as "That alone would have been enough for us." The song has fifteen verses each followed by the one word chorus, "Dayyenu."

מרור
Maror

Bitter herbs are eaten during Pesach as a reminder of the bitter sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt. The bitter herb used for Pesach is horseradish.

Charoset is also served during the Seder table. This is a sweet mixture that often includes chopped apples, raisins, almonds, honey and wine.

Designs

Designers take the director's vision for a play and make it a reality.

Scenic

Sarah's apartment is set in the Lincoln Park neighborhood, a nice residential area of Chicago, very close to the famous Lincoln Park Zoo. Set designer Mark Lund used the conventions of Taproot's stage, distinct color choices and apartment research to create Sarah's home. Set design is crucial to a production. The director moves the actors on stage between the set pieces.

Set Design
Mark Lund



Costume Design
Carisa Bush



Image from Anthropologie
Summer Catalogue

Costume

Director Karen Lund envisioned the Goldman family to be upper-middle class status. Costume Designer Carisa Bush researched department stores in Chicago they would shop at. To the left is a photo Carisa used as inspiration for the design of Sarah Goldman.



Beau Jest

Cast Members

Bob



Tim Hornor

Chris



Jason Adkins

Sarah Goldman



Charity Parenzini

Abe



Steve Manning

Miriam



Kim Morris

Joel



Todd Kulczyk

Production Team

Director Karen Lund

Sound & Scenic Designer Mark Lund

Costume Designer Carissa Bush

Props Designer Charity Parenzini

Lighting Designer Richard Schaefer

Stage Manager Mitch McGowan

Dramaturg Sonja G. Lowe

TTC's Associate Artistic Director, Karen Lund made her professional directing debut with *Beau Jest* at Taproot Theatre in 1995. The play became an immediate hit with TTC's audiences and enjoyed a highly successful run. Since that time Ms. Lund has directed numerous successful productions for TTC, but *Beau Jest* remains among her favorites. She returns to the script with a talented new cast for the 2005 production.



Charity Parenzini plays dual roles for Taproot's *Beau Jest*. On Stage she plays the part of Sarah Goldman. Off stage she plays the role of the properties designer. Researching and purchasing the prop pieces for Sarah Goldman's apartment helped her explore her character and gave her another avenue of discovery.

Sonja G. Lowe is one of Taproot's long-time and favorite dramaturgs. The information in this study guide was researched and written by her. The dramaturg plays an important role before a production begins and during the rehearsal process. A dramaturg researches background information for the actors and director, so they can create a believable world on stage. They write the dramaturg notes and create the dramaturg display for the audience to have a more in-depth understanding of the play, playwright and time period surrounding the story.



It's time to Act!



Spring Quarter Classes

Youth Classes

Spring Showcase

Ages 9 -18 years
Mondays, April - May 23
6:00pm - 8:00pm
\$210

Youth Scene Study

Ages 10-18 years
Saturdays, April 2 - May 21
9:30am - 12:30pm
\$210

NEW!

Spring Break Camp

Ages 7-18 years
Monday-Friday, April 11-15
10am - 4pm
\$225

Adult Classes

Scene Study

Mondays, March 21 - May 9
7:00pm - 10:00pm
\$250

New!

Multi-Generational

Musical Theatre Basics

Ages 12-Adult
Tuesdays, April 5 - 26
6:30pm - 9:30pm
\$180

Audition/Monologue Workshop

Ages 16-Adult
Tuesdays, May 17 - June 7
7:00pm - 10:00pm
\$190

It's not too late. **Act Now** for your part on **STAGE**.

Go to www.taproottheatre.org & click the Acting Studio button to download a registration form.
Or contact Sara Willy at (206) 781-9705, or saraw@taproottheatre.org

Taproot Theatre

Education & Outreach Department

Educational Touring • Acting Studio • Student Matinees • Community Outreach

"Encouraging - Educating - Entertaining"

The mission of Taproot Theatre Company's education and outreach department is to make TTC's live theatre productions, social issue plays and educational programming accessible to students and all members of Puget Sound's diverse communities. We seek to develop programs that cultivate future artists, encourage an appreciation for the art of theatre and explore the beauty and questions of life while bringing hope to our search for meaning.

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