



Over the River and Through the Woods

by Joe DiPietro

directed by Scott Nolte

TAPROOT  **THEATRE**
C O M P A N Y

Student Study Guide

Over the River and Through the Woods

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Table of Contents

Introduction
Joe DiPietro
Synopsis of *Over the River*
Hoboken
Italian Americans
Our Production
Year in Review
Activities
Works of Joe DiPietro

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Acting Studio

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“Encouraging – Educating – Entertaining”

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Play Synopsis

Nick, a single Italian American, is offered fulfilled dreams and a new life in Seattle. His traditional Italian grandparents propose a compelling reason to stay in New Jersey – the lovely and single Caitlin O’Hare. Their weekly Sunday dinners turn into a comic dance, as the entire family tries to influence Nick’s choice.

Cast

Kevin Brady
Gretchen Douma
Nolan Palmer
Bill Johns
Kim Morris
Charity Parenzini

Nick Cristano
Emma Cristano
Nunzio Cristano
Frank Gianelli
Aida Gianelli
Caitlin O’Hare

Setting

The Gianelli Home
Hoboken, New Jersey, 1998

Joe DiPietro

http://www.theatreinterngroup.org/biography/detail/joe_dipietro

JOE DIPIETRO wrote the book and lyrics to *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, Off-Broadway. He also wrote the much-produced comedy, *Over the River and Through the Woods*. Other works include the Off-Broadway musical *The Thing About Men* as well as the book for *All Shook Up*, the rock 'n roll musical *Memphis* and the new Gershwin musical *Heaven on Earth*. He has written new books for Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Allegro* (Signature Theatre) and Rodgers & Hart's *Babes in Arms* (Goodspeed Musicals).

Bio as of September, 2006.

Synopsis of *Over the River and Through the Woods*

Nick is a single, Italian-American guy from New Jersey who has dinner with his grandparents every Sunday night. But when Nick is offered a promotion to Seattle, the hardest thing for Nick will be trying to tell his grandparents he's leaving. Nick soon finds out that telling them isn't hard it's trying to fight off they're reasons for keeping him around, which starts with the lovely and single Caitlin O'Hare. Their weekly Sunday dinners turn into a comic dance, as the entire family tries to influence Nick's choice.

The City of Hoboken

<http://www.hobokenmuseum.org/>

Hoboken's modern history began when Henry Hudson's navigator made note of the area's green-veined rock during the 1609 voyage up the river that now bears the explorer's name. The men on the ship *Half Moon* were the first Europeans known to have seen the island. They were followed by Dutchmen, who visited the future Hoboken in those early years calling it "Hoebuck," meaning "high bluff." Today we call the elevation Castle Point.

In 1658 Peter Stuyvesant, Dutch Governor of Manhattan, bought all the land between the Hackensack and the Hudson Rivers from the Lenni Lenape for 80 fathoms of wampum, 20 fathoms of cloth, 12 kettles, 6 guns, 2 blankets, 1 double kettle and half a barrel of beer.

Subsequently the land came into the possession of William Bayard. Because he chose to be a Loyalist Tory in 1776, his land was confiscated by the

Revolutionary Government of New Jersey. In 1784 Colonel John Stevens, Colonial Treasurer of New Jersey and Patriot bought the island at public auction for 18,360 pounds sterling, then about \$90,000. Stevens envisioned this marshy island's possibilities. He settled on the name "Hoboken" and the Stevens family began to be an inseparable part of the city's history.

Hoboken's rapid growth from 1860 to 1910 and its role as a gateway to America brought many immigrants from Europe to the city. The Germans were the first, and German became a dominant language throughout Hoboken. After World War I, the city's ethnic character changed. Germans were followed by Irish, Italians, Yugoslavs, Latinos and Asian Indians.

Containerization of ship cargo made the city obsolete as a center for shipping. Hoboken's warehouses and lack of vast open spaces couldn't accommodate the large containers. This sparked a severe economic decline that reached its nadir in the 1970s.

Hoboken Firsts!

Baseball. On June 19, 1846 the first officially recorded, organized game of baseball was played on Hoboken's Elysian Fields. The New York Base Ball Club defeated the Knickerbockers 23-1. Learn more at HobokenBaseball.com.

America's First Brewery. On February 5, 1663 Nicholas Varlett obtained from Peter Stuyvesant a patent for the first brewery in America, located on Castle Point.

Zipper. That's right, the zipper was invented in Hoboken and first manufactured by Hoboken's Automatic Hook & Eye Co.

Blimpie. The fast food restaurant Blimpie was started by students from Stevens Institute of Technology, with its first "sub base" on Hoboken's Washington Street.

The first electrified train was driven by Thomas Edison from Hoboken's DL&W Terminal to Montclair, New Jersey.

Central Air. The first central air cooling system in the United States was housed in Hoboken's DL&W Terminal.

Wireless Phone. The first wireless phone, operable between Hoboken and Manhattan, was situated in Hoboken's DL&W Terminal.

Colonel John Stevens. The inventor of many significant firsts including the *first steam ferry* and the nation's *first steam locomotive*.

Italian Immigration

<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/immig/italian9.html>

By the late 19th century, the peninsula of Italy had finally been brought under one flag, but the land and the people were by no means unified. Decades of internal strife had left a legacy of violence, social chaos, and widespread poverty. The peasants in the primarily poor, mostly rural south of Italy and on the island of Sicily had little hope of improving their lot. Diseases and natural disasters swept through the new nation, but its fledgling government was in no condition to bring aid to the people. As transatlantic transportation became more affordable, and as word of American prosperity came via returning immigrants and U.S. recruiters, Italians found it increasingly difficult to resist the call of “L’America”.

By 1920, when immigration began to taper off, more than 4 million Italians had come to the United States, and represented more than 10 percent of the nation’s foreign-born population.

Ellis Island was generally not a pleasant experience. The regulations were confusing, the crowds disorienting, the officials rushed, and the hubbub of countless competing languages must have been jarring to the nerves. The moment of departure, when successful immigrants boarded ferries for New York City or destinations further west, came as a tremendous relief. As a final step, however, each new arrival had to be entered by name in the island’s official registry book. Because of the rush, the echoing noise of the vast Registry Hall, and many registrars’ unfamiliarity with European languages, some immigrants found themselves leaving with new, shorter, “American” versions of their names—a last, dubious gift from Ellis Island.

Many previous immigrant groups, such as those from Germany and Scandinavia, had passed through New York City in decades past, but most had regarded the city merely as a way station, and had continued on to settle elsewhere in the country. This generation of Italian immigrants, however, stopped and made their homes there; one third never got past New York City.

Ellis Island

<http://www.nps.gov/elis/>

Opened on January 1, 1892, Ellis Island became the nation's premier federal immigration station. In operation until 1954, the station processed over 12 million immigrant steamship passengers. The main building was restored after 30 years of abandonment and opened as a museum on September 10, 1990.

Today, over 40 percent of America's population can trace their ancestry through Ellis Island.

The Ellis Island Immigration Museum

http://www.ellisland.com/ellis_home.html



Bill Johns, Kim Morris and Kevin Brady

Italian-American Demographics

Wikipedia.com

Numbers

In the 2000 U.S. Census, Italian Americans constituted the fifth largest ancestry group in America with about 15.6 million people (5.6% of the total U.S. population). Sicilian Americans are a subset of numerous Americans of regional Italian ancestries.

Religion

Most immigrants had been Catholics in Italy. Observers have noted that they often became more devoutly Catholic in the United States, since their faith was a distinctive characteristic in the U.S.

Present

To this day, Italian Americans are frequently and unfairly associated with organized crime, and New York in the minds of many Americans, largely due to pervasive media stereotyping, a number of popular gangster movies (such as *The Godfather* and *Goodfellas*) and television series such as *The Sopranos*.

Famous Italian-Americans:

Mario Andretti b. 1940, Racecar driver.

Yogi Berra, b. 1925, Former catcher for the N.Y. Yankees.

Al Capone, 1899 – 1947, Gangster, known as "Scarface" and "Big Al"

Harry Caray 1914 - 1998, Sports broadcaster for the Chicago Cubs.

Adam Carolla b. 1964, Comedic radio and television personality

Francis Ford Coppola b. 1939, Academy Award winning director, producer, and screenwriter.

Robert De Niro – b. 1943, Academy Award-winning American film actor, director, and producer.

Leonardo DiCaprio- b. 1974, Academy Award-nominated actor

Joe DiMaggio 1914-1999, Baseball Hall of Famer. Considered the greatest Italian-American athlete ever.

Domenico Ghirardelli, Sr. 1817-1894, Established the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company.

Rudolph Giuliani, b. 1944, A lawyer and politician, was mayor of N.Y. City

Jon Bon Jovi – b. 1962, Singer

Jimmy Kimmel b. 1967, Television comedy talk-show host

Jake LaMotta, b. 1921, Boxer. The movie, *Raging Bull* is based of his life.

Jay Leno b. 1950, Comedian and host of *The Tonight Show*

Charles Luciano, 1896-1962 Gangster, known as "Lucky"

Dan Marino b. 1961, Hall of Fame quarterback for the Miami Dolphins.

Dean Martin 1917 - 1995 Actor/singer, member of the "Rat Pack"

Joe Montana b. 1956, Hall of Fame quarterback for the S.F. 49ers.

Jack Nicholson b. 1937, Academy Award-winning actor

Al Pacino b. 1940, Academy Award-winning actor

Joe Pesci b. 1943, Academy Award-winning actor

Rachael Ray b. 1968, Emmy-winning television personality and author

Mary Lou Retton b. 1968, Olympic gold medalist in gymnastics

Martin Scorsese b. 1942 Academy Award-winning film director

Frank Sinatra 1915 - 1998 Actor and singer, one of the finest male vocalists of all time

Sylvester Stallone b. 1946, Film actor, director, producer, and screenwriter

Gwen Stefani – b. 1969, Singer

Quentin Tarantino b. 1963, Film director, actor, and Oscar-winning screenwriter

John Travolta b. 1954, Actor, singer, dancer

Dick Vitale b. 1939, Basketball sportscaster.

Our Production

Everybody has to leave home, but how do you leave without leaving? And more importantly, how do you say good-bye when your family won't let you go?

One of the major themes of *Over the River and Through the Woods* is the Italian phrase, "Tango Famiglia." In Italian it means, "I am a man, I am doing well for my woman and my children, I have a reason for being alive." The idea being that every man must at some point in his life embark on a mission to start a career and a family. But when Nick decides to take a promotion that would move him to Seattle his grandparents fight to keep him in New Jersey!

The major conflict of *Over the River and Through the Woods* is the generational gap between Nick and his grandparents. Although Nick is striving to take a step in his life to, "become a man who can provide for a family", his grandparents desire him stay home, to keep their family together, thus preventing Nick from taking this step. What Nick's grandparents don't quite understand is that they worked their entire lives to give their children a better life with more options, and now that Nick has these new options, Nick's grandparents can't understand why Nick would make some of these choices.

Although this play deals with generational conflict, and the hurt and sorrow of the loss of family, it is also filled with a tremendous amount of love. This play shows that love can overcome obstacles, like Nick moving away from his grandparents. It also shows that love is what's holding the family together despite all the hilarity of how Nick's grandparents interact with each other.

A few things about the design

Mark Lund is our scenic designer for *Over the River and Through the Woods* and one of his main challenges was to create a house that looks like a grandparent's house. So how does a grandparent's house look different from a house owned by someone younger? Well one of Mark's ideas was to try to make the set look like the furniture hasn't been moved or updated in decades! Another way of creating this old feel was by adding numerous pictures on the wall from different decades. Other subtleties that Mark is using to help suggest an older house are using wallpaper instead of paint, having a picture of the pope or some other religious icon on the wall and the style of wood floors.

Set Designs by Mark Lund



Back wall of set



Panic Attack

<http://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/tc/panic-attacks-and-panic-disorder-topic-overview>

A panic attack is a sudden, intense fear or anxiety that may make you short of breath or dizzy or make your heart pound. You may feel out of control. Some people believe they are having a heart attack or are about to die. An attack may last from 5 to 20 minutes. You have the most anxiety about 10 minutes after the attack starts. If these attacks happen often, they are called a panic disorder.

Experts aren't sure what causes panic attacks and panic disorder. But the body has a natural response when you are stressed or in danger. It speeds up your heart, makes you breathe faster, and gives you a burst of energy. This is called the fight-or-flight response. It gets you ready to either cope with or run away from danger. A panic attack occurs when this response happens when there is no danger.

Music

"**Yes Sir, That's My Baby**" is a popular song from 1925.

The music was written by Walter Donaldson and the lyrics by Gus Kahn. It was a hit for Ace Brigode in 1925 and for Eddie Cantor in 1930. It was later a hit for Rick Nelson in the 1950s and Frank Sinatra in the 1960s. The song has become a standard that has been recorded by over 100 artists in genres from jazz to rock, marimba and country.

Lyrics

Yes sir, that's my baby
No sir, I don't mean maybe
Yes sir, that's my baby now

Yes, ma'm, we've decided
No ma'm, we ain't gonna hide it
Yes, ma'm, you're invited now

By the way, by the way
When we walk up to the preacher I'll say

Yes sir, that's my baby
No sir, I don't mean maybe
Yes sir, that's my baby no

Year in Review: 1998

From Wikipedia

January 22 - Suspected "Unabomber" Theodore Kaczynski pleads guilty, and accepts a sentence of life without the possibility of parole.

January 25 - Super Bowl XXXII: The Denver Broncos become the first AFC team in 14 years to win the Super Bowl, as they defeat the Green Bay Packers, 31-24.

February - Iraq disarmament crisis: The United States Senate passes Resolution 71, urging U.S. President Bill Clinton to "take all necessary and appropriate actions to respond to the threat posed by Iraq's refusal to end its weapons of mass destruction programs."

February 7-February 22 - The 1998 Winter Olympics are held in Nagano, Japan.

February 10 - A college dropout becomes the first person to be convicted of a hate crime committed in cyberspace.^[3]

March 23 - The 70th Academy Awards, hosted by Billy Crystal, are held at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California with the film *Titanic* winning a record 11 Oscars.

March 27 - The Food and Drug Administration approves Viagra for use as a treatment for male impotence, the first pill to be approved for this condition in the United States.

April 22 - The Disney's Animal Kingdom theme park at Walt Disney World opens to the public for the first time.

May 18 - *United States v. Microsoft*: The United States Department of Justice and 20 U.S. states file an antitrust case against Microsoft.

May 28 - In Encino, California, the wife of *Saturday Night Live* comedian Phil Hartman kills him and commits suicide afterwards.

June 4 - Terry Nichols is sentenced to life in prison for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing.

June 14 - The Chicago Bulls win their 6th NBA title in 8 years when they beat the Utah Jazz, 87-86 in Game Six. This is also Michael Jordan's last game as a Bull, clinching the game in the final seconds on a fadeaway jumper.

September 7 - Google, Inc. is founded, in Menlo Park, California, by Stanford University Ph.D. candidates Larry Page and Sergey Brin.

September 8 - St. Louis Cardinals first baseman Mark McGwire breaks baseball's single-season home-run record, formerly held by Roger Maris. McGwire hits #62 at Busch Stadium in the 4th inning off of Chicago Cubs pitcher Steve Trachsel.

October 21 - The New York Yankees defeat the San Diego Padres to sweep them in the World Series. The Yankees had a magical season with 114 regular-season wins and 11 postseason victories (125 total - the most by any team in 123 years of Major League baseball).

October 31 - Iraq disarmament crisis begins: Iraq announces it will no longer cooperate with United Nations weapons inspectors.

Activities

Family!

Do some family research and discover where your relatives came from. When did they come to America? Did they have a specific reason for coming? Is there anyone famous in your family lineage?

Food!

Does your family have a recipe that dates back a few generations? What is it and why is it so popular?

Tradition!

Does your family have any traditions? Like getting a Christmas Tree on the day after Thanksgiving or always watching the Super Bowl together or always going to a summer cabin? What are some of the traditions in your family and do you want to continue them when you're older?



Glossary of Terms

From Wikipedia.com and Dictionary.com

Sacco & Vanzetti (p. 9) - Ferdinando Nicola Sacco (April 22, 1891 – August 23, 1927) and Bartolomeo Vanzetti (June 11, 1888 – August 23, 1927) were two Italian-born American laborers and anarchists, who were tried, convicted and executed via electrocution on August 23, 1927 in Massachusetts for the 1920 armed robbery and murder of two pay-clerks in South Braintree, Massachusetts.

A&P (p.13) - The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, better known as **A&P**, is a supermarket chain.

Mass card (p.13) - A card sent to a bereaved person or family indicating that the sender has arranged for a Mass to be said in memory of the deceased.

Chronology of plays by Joe DiPietro

From Wikipedia

Theatre

2005 *All Shook Up* (book)

2004 *Allegro* (writer)

2003 *Memphis* (book and lyrics)

2003 *The Thing About Men* (book, lyrics)

2002 *Babes in Arms* (writer)

2001 *They All Laughed* (book)

1999 *Art Of Murder* (author)

1998 *Kiss At City Hall* (author)

1996 *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (book and lyrics)

1994 *Over The River And Through The Woods* (author)

1994 *The Virgin Weeps* (author)



Kim Morris, Kevin Brady, Charity Parenzini, Bill Johns

Production Team	
Director	Scott Nolte
Sound & Scene Designer	Mark Lund
Costume Designer	Mandy Mueller
Production Stage Manager	Rebecca Olson
Lighting Designer	Monty Taylor
Props Master	Dustin Morache
Costume Shop Manager	Sarah Gordon
Dramaturg	Judy Naegeli
Assistant Stage Manager	Dustin Morache
Light Board Operator	Rebecca Olson
Sound Board Operator	David Purdy
Dialect Coach	Nikki Visel

We are so glad you are joining Taproot Theatre for a student matinee performance. Audience Etiquette is important for everyone to experience an enriching and educational experience. See you at the performance!

Audience Etiquette

- It is appropriate to talk quietly until the performance begins.
- If you need to use the restroom, please do so before the performance begins. Restrooms are located in the upper and lower lobbies.
- Be sure to be seated before the performance begins
- No food, gum, candy or beverages are to be brought into the theatre.
- Please don't wear headphones during the performance.
- Please turn off watch alarms, cellular phones and other electronic devices.
- Students who disturb other members of the audience may be asked to leave the theatre and wait in the lobby.
- Remember: you will get an opportunity to talk with the actors and director at the end of the performance. Be prepared with questions about the production!
- Please stay out of the aisles (also called "voms") during the performance.
- Enjoy the Show!

Taproot Theatre Company

Taproot Theatre Company is a professional, nonprofit theatre company with a multi-faceted production program. Founded in 1976, they serve the Pacific Northwest with Mainstage Productions, Touring Productions and Acting Studio. Taproot exists to create theatre that explores the beauty and questions of life while bringing hope to our search for meaning.

If You've Always Wanted to be On Stage, It's Time to Act!

Whether you are a budding star or seasoned actor, Taproot's Acting Studio has classes for you!

Summer Quarter 2008:

Musical Theatre Daycamp 08-SUMTD

A week of singing, dancing, friendship and fun, culminating in a live performance for family and friends! It's a summer alternative of dramatic proportions for your gifted child.

Ages 9-17 years. Mon.-Fri., June 23-June 27, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 1 week, \$300. Performance: Fri., June 27, 3:00 PM at Taproot Theatre.

Mini Camp 1!! 08-SUMINI

Wondering what to do with your talented kids during this short holiday week? Mini camp will delight and entertain! Your student will sample skills such as improv, stage combat, Shakespeare and more!!!

Ages 4-17 years (kids will be broken up into age-appropriate groups), Mon.-Wed., June 30-July 2, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 3 days, \$160. No performance.

Youth Summer Showcase 08-SUYSS

Students will work together to put on a play in one week in this challenging camp!

Ages 8-12 years. Mon.-Fri., July 7-11, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 1 week, \$275. Performance: Fri., July 11, 3:00 PM at Grace Fellowship Church.

Teen Summer Showcase 08-SUTSS

All the fun of putting on a play in one week, with a play chosen specifically for teens.

Ages 13-18 years. Mon.-Fri., July 7-11, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 1 week, \$275. Performance: Fri., July 11, 3:00 PM at Taproot Theatre.

Shakespeare Daycamp 08-SUSD

This camp is an excellent introduction to Shakespeare and his plays. Our students will perform a shortened version of one of Shakespeare's great comedies.

Ages 9-18 years. Mon.-Fri., July 14-18, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 1 week, \$275. Performance: Fri., July 18, 3:00 PM at Taproot Theatre.

Musical Theatre Supercamp I 08-SUMTSC

This two-week intensive will dive deeply into the singing, dancing and acting techniques needed for Musical Theatre performance. Not for the faint of heart, this class will be a challenge to even the most experienced young actors. Each student will experience the audition process during the camp, and be cast in an amazing Broadway musical that they will never forget!

Pre-requisite: TTC Showcase class or Daycamp. Ages 9-18 years. Mon.-Fri., July 14-25, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 2 weeks, \$500. Invited Dress Rehearsal: Thur., July 24, 3:00 PM. Performance: Fri., July 25, 3:00 PM at Taproot Theatre.

Acting for the Camera 08-SUACT

This camp will teach your young star the basics of acting in front of a camera! They will use their existing acting skills to explore the wide world of TV and film acting.

Pre-requisite: Previous acting experience. Ages 9-18 years. Mon.-Fri., July 21-25, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 1 week, \$300.

The Art of Comedy 08-SUCOM

Make 'em laugh! This camp explores the basics of comedic acting, from improv to slapstick and pratfalls. This rousing one-week camp will help develop your young actor's comedic timing!

Ages 9-18 years. Mon.-Fri., July 28-Aug. 1, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 1 week, \$300.

Musical Theatre Supercamp II 08-SUMTSC2

This two-week intensive will dive deeply into the singing, dancing, and acting techniques needed for Musical Theatre performance. Not for the faint of heart, this class will be a challenge to even the most experienced young actors. Each student will experience

the audition process during the camp, and be cast in an amazing Broadway musical that they will never forget!

Pre-requisite: TTC Showcase class or Daycamp. Ages 9-18 years. Mon.-Fri., July 28-Aug. 8, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 2 weeks, \$500. Invited Dress Rehearsal: Thur., Aug. 7, 3:00 PM. Performance: Fri., Aug. 8, 3:00 PM at Taproot Theatre.

Shakespeare Supercamp 08-SUSSC

Brush up your Shakespeare...this class will challenge even the most experienced young actors! Culminating in a shortened version of one of Shakespeare's great plays, this two-week-long intensive will dive even more deeply into the voice, movement and acting techniques needed for Shakespearean performance.

Pre-requisite: TTC Showcase class or Daycamp. Ages 9-18 years. Mon.-Fri., Aug. 4-15, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 2 weeks, \$465. Invited Dress Rehearsal: Thur., Aug. 14, 3:00 PM. Performance: Fri., Aug. 15, 3:00 PM at Taproot Theatre.

Advanced Musical Theatre Supercamp 08-SUAMTSC

Aimed at young actors who want a taste of the professional world of musical theatre, this class is for the serious returning Acting Studio artist who wishes to take their performance to a new level. Each student will audition for a place in camp. Those who are accepted will audition for a role and be cast in a challenging Broadway musical.

Pre-requisite: Two TTC Musical Theatre Daycamps & audition with camp instructor. Ages 10-18 years. Mon.-Fri., Aug. 11-22, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 2 weeks, \$525. Invited Dress Rehearsal: Thur., Aug. 21, 3:00 PM. Performance: Fri., Aug. 22, 3:00 PM at Taproot Theatre.

Mini Camp 2!! 08-SUMINI

Wondering what to do with your talented kids during this short holiday week? Mini camp will delight and entertain! Your student will sample skills such as improv, stage combat, Shakespeare and more!!!

Ages 4-17 years (kids will be broken up into age-appropriate groups), Mon.-Thur., Aug. 25-Aug. 28, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, 4 days, \$200. No performance.



TAPROOT THEATRE
COMPANY