



Jimi Lott / Seattle Times

At the Storefront Theater, 'Girl Crazy' cast members are, from left, Adele Berg, Brad Watson, Cindy McAllister, John Sandifer (behind the wheel), Michelle McCrackin, Nancy Hendler and Deborah Cheadle.

## An island in the artistic stream

### Bainbridge Islanders take their arts — and artists — seriously

by Wayne Johnson  
Times drama critic

**W**INSLOW, Bainbridge Island — "Kids can start in the arts here when they're only 3 years old, and we have programs to keep them going in the arts for the rest of their lives."

Few arts organizations can make such a claim, but Susan Glass Burdick, artistic director of Bainbridge Performing Arts (BPA), can and does make it on behalf of her organization, which has a success story that almost any community arts group would envy — and could — learn from.

The multifaceted organization on Bainbridge Island, located across Puget Sound from Seattle, regularly involves a high percentage of the island's 13,000 residents in the six programs it directly operates and about a half dozen others that fall under its institutional umbrella.

"Anyone who's aware of what goes on here certainly knows

about BPA," said Alice Tawresley, who has been the mayor of Winslow for eight years. "BPA is one of the most aggressive and talented groups I've run into. I'm no critic, but when I go to their shows, the performers seem so talented that I wonder, 'Are they really just amateurs and our own island people?'"

Yes, they are, mostly. BPA brings in arts professionals from Seattle, but they're usually involved not in performing but in directing or teaching. For example, Chris Nardine, a Seattle-based director-choreographer-performer, is the director of BPA's production of the George Gershwin musical "Girl Crazy," which will open Friday evening in the Storefront Theater at the corner of High School Road and Highway 305.

Although separated in age by many decades, Jordan Friedman and Anne Fleming are typical BPA veterans.

Friedman, 13, has been in-



Vickery Prongay wears a mask she used in the Greasepaint Repertory Company's production of 'Quirk in Progress.'

involved in various BPA training programs and productions since he was 8. Because of the skills he developed with BPA, he worked as a professional actor in a key role in the Seattle Children's Theater's recent production of "Through Separate Doors."

Friedman recalled that in his first BPA production he played

the tail of a crocodile: "All I had to do was sorta lie there. It was like being in a sleeping bag. So I went to sleep."

Fleming, a native of the Isle of Wight and a veteran of 27 years of performing in productions on Bainbridge Island, experienced a different kind of snooze in a production of "Hansel and Gre-

tel."  
"As usual, everything was not quite finished by the first performance," she recalled. "The oven had been completed on the outside, but the padding hadn't been put inside it. I was playing the witch, and when I was pushed into the oven, my nose hit an unpadded board. It stunned me for a while, and when I came to, blood was absolutely gushing from my nose. The only thought I had was, 'I mustn't get blood on the costume.' My nose was broken and the laceration had to be stitched up. Now, whenever I act in a show, I much prefer that people not tell me to break a leg, or break anything!"

BPA was founded in 1980 as the successor of Bainbridge Light Opera, which had been producing musicals and operettas since 1957.

"Bainbridge Light Opera did one show a year, except we missed one year because everyone was burned out," said Karen Rice, administrative director of BPA. "It was a close-knit group that involved, at most, 50 or 60 people."

BPA now directly involves upwards of 500 persons a year in its classes and productions, and

burnouts are unthinkable when the schedule calls for dozens of performances each year.

"BPA has excellent programs and a strong following on the island," said Chuck Field, director of the Bainbridge Island Parks and Recreation District. "In the last five years, I've been to only one performance that wasn't sold out. Usually I enjoy myself so much that I go back and see the show again."

Glass Burdick notes that almost every business on Bainbridge Island (which is 10 miles long and 4 miles wide) supports BPA with contributions or donated services.

That fact was seconded by Vicki Rauh, office manager of the

Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce, who added her estimate that "at least 65 percent or more" of the island's population is involved with, or touched in some way by, BPA.

The organization has only two paid employees: Glass Burdick and Rice.

"We work part time — about

Please see **ACTORS** on L 2



# For folks on Bainbridge Island, all the world's a stage

## ACTORS

continued from L 1

60 hours a week!" said Rice. Between them, they handle the details for BPA's six principal programs: the children's theater (performances by kids for kids), the adult theater (two play productions a year), the musical productions (two a year), the Greasepaint Repertory Company (for high-school students), the Second Stage (for experimental work and Theatersports, among other activities) and the Young Artists' Theater Workshops in the summer.

"The Greasepaint Repertory Company is essentially a professional training program for young actors," said Glass Burdick, who is known to Seattle theatergoers as a director and choreographer. "The kids have to audition to get into the company. They pay a small tuition fee. We rehearse at least two times a week, and each year we develop a new production. This year's show was 'Quirk in Progress.'

She explained that the Greasepainters receive regular instruction from herself as well as theater professionals Seattle. The students also learn how to audition.

"As a result of all that," Glass Burdick said, "they get cast in professional productions and in TV and radio commercials, and some have gone on to attend top actor-training schools."

"Girl Crazy," this summer's musical production with a cast of 24, will open at 8 p.m. Friday and run through June 30, with performances at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 6 p.m. Sunday. It will be housed in a former supermarket, a temporary home for BPA shows.

BPA knows a lot about temporary homes. Since it never has had its own theater, it uses space in the schools, community centers, churches and even a parking lot (where for two summers it erected a tent to house its summer musical).

"Endless hours have been put into trying to find a permanent home for BPA," said Mayor Tawressey. "There's super enthusiasm for the group but, so far, no home. We're exploring building a theater as an annex to a senior center, and we're also looking into putting a



Everybody wants a chance at stardom, and these budding actors are no exception. From left to right are Andrew Nelson and his sister and brother, Darby and Mitchell. Jimi Lott / Seattle Times

theater into a new downtown parking facility."

BPA also serves as an umbrella organization for the Bainbridge Chorale and Orchestra, the annual Seattle Symphony family concert on the island, visits by members of the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, and various other touring and/or arts-related activities on the island.

"The community is becoming more and more aware that the arts need space," said Rice. "There's an increasing recognition of the importance of our work, especially in the training we provide for children from a very early age. In these programs, the kids develop their self-confidence and the ability to project themselves. That's

bound to be helpful to them even if they never again go on a stage."

"There's no organization on the island that involves as many people as we do," said Glass Burdick. "Our aim has always been twofold: to further the arts and to further the artists on Bainbridge Island and in Kitsap County."

BPA has a 12-member working board ("And boy! do they work!" said Rice), 363 members (who pay a membership fee of at least \$10) and an annual budget of about \$60,000.

"We've always been in the black, without any grants," said Rice. "But it's not feasible to think we're living in a Pollyanna world where we're going to continue operating without any deficit. We're going to have to go to the community for financial help. BPA has been giving to the community; now it's time for the community to give to BPA."

To borrow a couple of song titles from "Girl Crazy," the Bainbridge Island community clearly regards BPA as "Embraceable You," but if BPA is to do more

than "Bidin' (My) Time" it needs additional financial support so it can collectively exult, "I Got Rhythm!"

## The 10th Seattle International Film Festival

**MAY 9 - JUNE 10**

Sunday at the S.I.F.F. — FESTIVAL INFO. 323-4978

1:30 **STREAMERS** — U.S.A.  
A FREE screening of Robert Altman's explosive adaptation of the electrifying stage play about six men in a military barracks. Mitchell Lichtenstein and Matthew Modine star in this, the last film in our "Best of the Fest" series.

4:00 **THE CLAW AND THE TOOTH** — France  
Probably the most beautiful movie on wild animals ever made, over four years in production. Discover this amazing, award-winning film. (Presented in Dolby Stereo, and without a single word of dialogue.)

8:00 **FLESH AND BLOOD** — U.S.A.  
The Seattle International Film Festival is honored to present the World Premiere of the newest film by Paul Verhoeven, a high-voltage, gutsy and passionate adventure set in medieval times. Director Verhoeven, producer Gys Versluys and star Jennifer Jason Leigh will attend the screening. (SORRY! "Flesh and Blood" is completely SOLD OUT!)

Monday at 7:30  
**The Golden Space Needle Awards** — and — **An Evening of Short Films**  
Join us on Monday for a free evening of the best short films of the Festival, plus the presentation of awards to our audiences' favorite feature films of the Festival!

Tuesday, June 11th  
Our delayed Double Dutchies!  
**The Pretenders** (7:00) and **Darlings** (9:30)  
All screenings will take place at the Egyptian Theatre, 801 East Pine.

**AMERICAN PREMIERE**

## "A WICKEDLY FUNNY COMEDY."

As the thriller plot thickens, so does director Paul Verhoeven's sardonic sense of humor. The fascination of Verhoeven's dark and stylish riddle is its ability to work simultaneously as mystery and satire. There's not a dull moment in it. *David Ansen, Newsweek*

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—Richard Freedman, Newhouse Newspapers

**"ZIDI'S COMEDY IS A LOT OF FUN!"**  
—David Ansen, Newsweek

**PHILIPPE NOIRET MY NEW PARTNER**  
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**THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO**

**ALBERT BROOKS LOST IN AMERICA**

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**LADY HAWKE**  
70MM DOOLBY STEREO

**Harrison Ford WITNESS**  
Sun 1:40, 7:00 / 1st Mat at Discount / M-Th 7:00

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