



## Country Gate Players Announce 2004 Season

Country Gate Players, a non-profit community theatre, has announced plans for its 2004 season. The group, founded in 1972, will present three musicals, one comedy, and one drama in its 32<sup>nd</sup> theatrical season. Season tickets are now available at \$70. each. Season ticket holders are provided with preferential seating and a convenient exchange policy. All performances will be presented at the Country Gate Playhouse, 114 Greenwich Street, Belvidere, New Jersey.

The season opens with the classic American musical, *Kiss Me Kate*, on March 20, 27, and April 3, at 8:00 p.m., as well as April 4, at 2:00 p.m. *Kiss Me Kate*, with a score by Cole Porter, is loosely based on Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. Originally produced in 1948, *Kiss Me Kate* won five Tony awards and ran for three years on Broadway. A revival in 1999 proved that it's just as enjoyable for modern audiences as it was 50 years ago. The plot follows the antics of a troupe of Shakespearean actors, as the plot of *Taming of the Shrew* is interwoven in their lives. The music has often been called Porter's greatest contribution to the

Ludwig's farce, set in 1934, sends its characters on a wacky romp of mistaken identity, desperate measures, and compromising positions. A world-famous tenor, engaged to perform Verdi's "Otello" in a benefit for a struggling opera company, is taken for dead after an accidental overdose of sleeping pills. Frantic attempts to pass off a local amateur as the absentee star result in chaos. The 1989 Broadway production won two Tony Awards after earning seven nominations.

This summer, Country Gate revisits the child in each of us with the high flying musical, *Peter Pan*. The production will be presented July 17, 24 and 31st at 8:00 p.m. as well as August 1 at 2:00 p.m. It's a well-known story. One night, Wendy Darling and her two younger brothers are in the nursery. Suddenly, a wispy figure flies in through the window -- it is Peter Pan, and oh, the adventures he has to share...pirates, crocodiles, and of course, Captain Hook! Country Gate happily returns to Never-Never Land with the ageless musical based on the James Barrie story. With great songs like "I Gotta Crow", "I Won't Grow Up", and the inevitable "Never Land".

In the fall, Country Gate hosts the "laughter through tears" emotion in the popular play of close knit friendships among five strong women, the *Steel Magnolias*. Performances will be staged September 11, 18, and 25 at 8:00 p.m. as well as, September 26, at 2:00 p.m. Alternately hilarious and touching, the play focuses on the camaraderie of six Southern women who talk, gab, gossip, chitchat, needle and harangue each other through the best of times -- and cry, caress, comfort and repair one another through the worst. They're soul mates in a rarefied way that assumes a cult of femininity -- sisters come hell and high water. Pushing laughter and pain together, *Steel Magnolias* pulls tears from even the most cynical eyes.

Country Gate concludes its 2004 season with the tuneful and durable musical, *Annie Get Your Gun*. The show will be presented November 13, 20 and 27, at 8:00 p.m., as well as, November 28, at 2:00 p.m. A fun filled



musical theatre, and includes favorites such as "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" and "Another Opening, Another Show."

The focus turns to comedy with Country Gate's spring offering, *Lend Me A Tenor*, with performances May 15, 22, and 29 at 8:00 p.m. as well as, May 30, at 2:00 p.m. Ken

family musical tracing the trials and tribulations of Annie Oakley on the wild west show circuit, *Annie Get Your Gun* is packed with wonderful Irving Berlin songs, including "You Cain't Get A Man With A Gun", "They Say That Falling In Love Is Wonderful", and the anthem of the theatre, "There's No Business Like Show Business"

Further information on season tickets is available by calling Country Gate at (908) 475-1104, or by logging onto the theatre's website at [www.countrygate.org](http://www.countrygate.org)

### *Auditions For Kiss Me Kate January 14*

Country Gate will hold open auditions for its upcoming production of *Kiss Me Kate* on January 14, at 7:30 p.m. at the Country Gate Playhouse, 114 Greenwich Street, in Belvidere, New Jersey. *Kiss Me Kate* is known as "a play within a play" that shifts from the backstage antics of a group of actors to their actual production of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. Music and lyrics for the production were written by Cole Porter and include musical numbers ranging from the Broadway classic *Another Openin', Another Show* to the boisterous *Brush Up Your Shakespeare*. The production runs March 20, 27, and April 3, at 8:00 p.m., as well as, April 4, at 2:00 p.m. The cast requires approximately 13 men and 11 women (ages 15 and older). Rehearsals will begin January 5. Those auditioning will be asked to sing from the score and read from the script. Gina Scurato, of Harmony Township, is directing the production. Further information is available at (908) 475-1104 or at [www.countrygate.org](http://www.countrygate.org)

### **Country Gate & Belvidere "Perfect Together"**

Country Gate is continuing a close alliance with the town of Belvidere. The theatre will continue its practice of providing free previews for each of its 2004 season shows at the town's Riverside Park. On the Saturday prior to the opening of each production, our actor's will be on hand to perform. We'll also play trivia games, with show tickets and other prizes. Riverside is a beautiful spot in our hometown. We're delighted the town has asked us to be part of it. Hope to see you on Saturdays in the park.

### *Love Letters at the Riv Feb. 7*

Our next dinner theatre production will be A. R. Gurney's *Love Letters*. The play is a bittersweet story of two star-crossed lovers who exchange letters over a 50-year span. From their first scrawled valentines of childhood, to the last guilty goodbyes, Melissa Gardner and Andrew Makepeace Ladd III's letters envelop the audience in a unique nostalgia. While the images they create bring back youth's universal innocence, fears and fancies, they further reveal themselves, their goals and their dreams in a "love affair" that takes them from grade school through middle age. And as they ponder opportunities lost, and love squandered, the audience sees the very essence of their life-long relationship...all in the letters that were at it's very root. The show feature JoAnn Mazza and Bill Scurato. Ticket information is available through the Riverton at 610-498-4241.

*Country Gate Players*  
*114 Greenwich Street*  
*Belvidere, New Jersey 07823*  
*(908) 475-1104*  
*[www.countrygate.org](http://www.countrygate.org)*