

Æ Actors Ensemble of Berkeley
presents

Arlene Hutton's

*As It Is in
Heaven*



directed by

Jeremy Cole

Live Oak Theatre, Berkeley
October 23 - November 22, 2009



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presents**

Arlene Hutton's

As It Is in Heaven

directed by **Jeremy Cole**

CAST

Sister Polly Jessica Price

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Sister Jane Lisa Drostova

Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Sister Peggy Alexis Lane Jensen

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Sister Phebe Peggy De Coursey

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Sister Hannah Ann Kendrick

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Sister Rachel Jennifer Rice

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.

Sister Betsy Jean Forsman

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Sister Izzy Jillian Jetton

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Sister Fanny Molly Holcomb

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

PLACE

A Shaker village in Pleasant Hill, Kentucky.

TIME

Summer, 1938

INTERMISSION

There will be one 10 minute intermission

As It Is in Heaven is presented by special arrangement with
Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York



PRODUCTION STAFF

ALAN BARKAN	PRODUCER
JEREMY COLE	DIRECTOR
NORMAN DE VEYRA	SET DESIGN/BENCHES
JOSE GARCIA	STAGE MANAGER & LIGHT OPERATOR
SHU PING GUAN	SET DESIGN/BACKDROP
MARTHA LUEHRMANN	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR & PROPS
ALECKS RUNDELL	LIGHT DESIGN
ELIZABETH VAN BUREN	COSTUME DESIGN
SILAS HUMPHRIES	VOLUNTEER
YU WU (PATIENCE)	VOLUNTEER

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Before I read *As It Is in Heaven*, I was guilty of equating the Shakers with their furniture. I didn't know much about the religion or its people. I didn't know that Shakers were the folks who squished a circular broom into the flat version we still use to this day. I didn't know how advanced their architecture was, nor how fond they were of song and dance. I certainly didn't know that they were a celibate order, and I knew nothing of their charismatic founder, Mother Ann Lee, who thought of herself as the second human manifestation of God. Nor was I aware of the events that occurred in the 1800's – where many young women in a variety of Shaker communities experienced visions and received “gifts” of song, dance and art...

I know a great deal more about the Shakers now, though it certainly isn't necessary to study them in order to appreciate *As It Is in Heaven*. The author, Arlene Hutton, has done a remarkable job of looking at the actual people, rather than focus on the religion itself. We view these ladies as we would any group of nine women who live in close quarters: they are not so different from us. We may not share their belief system, but we have certainly struggled with issues of vanity, lust, envy and pride. We have spoken in anger, and lived to regret it. We have jumped to conclusions, refused to listen, and yet, at other times, we have shown remarkable strength, given support to our fellows and performed acts of charity and grace.

When Ken Burns produced a short piece on the Shakers for PBS, one of the women he interviewed stated, “I don't want to be remembered as a chair.” It is my hope that no one who sees *As It Is in Heaven* will ever take that point of view again.



ABOUT ACTORS ENSEMBLE OF BERKELEY

Actors Ensemble of Berkeley has been around the block (and just around the corner from you) since 1957, making us the longest running stage company in Berkeley. In 1965, AE began performing at the Live Oak Theatre — and has ever since.

Our mission is to enrich, entertain and improve our community through fascinating theatrical works. With social consciousness and an ensemble approach, we provide area residents with opportunities to attend, participate in and be helped through theatre. Our shows will be affordable, our opportunities enjoyable, and our community impact felt year-round.

As Berkeley's only true community theatre company, we depend on our volunteers to bring their energy and creative vision to each play we produce. If you would like to volunteer in our theatre, give us a call or send us an email!

We'd love for you to play a part in our next show!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alan Barkan, Eric Carlson, Jeremy Cole, Maureen Coyne, Jose Garcia, Margaret Gudmundsson, Bob Gudmundsson, Martha Luehrmann, William Martinelli, Jerome Solberg, Stanley Spenger, Kim Stewart.

A SPECIAL GET WELL WISH

We would like to extend our best wishes to Bill Martinelli for a full recovery from a recent extended illness. Bill is one of the original members of Actors Ensemble and continues to play an important role in the company.

WE WANT TO THANK...

Pat and Eugene at the Live Oak Recreation Center
Bill Mastin for sharing his knowledge of the Shakers
Jonathan Gordon for help with the web-site and video-taping
Jerome Solberg for making sure nothing fell through the cracks
The Stichers who sewed their hearts out to make our costumes:

✧ Jeremy Cole ✧ Lucy Horns ✧ Martha Luehrmann
✧ Jessica Peter ✧ Kim Stewart

Sleeping Dog Productions for program/poster design
Virgilio deVeyra for helping build the benches
Virago Theater Company for their help with lights



ALLOW US TO INTRODUCE OUR CAST

Peggy De Coursey (Sister Phebe) - For the past five years Peggy De Coursey has performed with the Nguyen Dance Company in productions throughout the Bay Area, as well as Seattle, and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. She was last seen in *Morning's At Seven* at the Altarena Playhouse, and in Oakland Opera's *Les Enfants Terribles*. Additionally, Peggy has appeared in new music and futurist productions in San Francisco, New York, and Germany.

Lisa Drostova (Sister Jane) - Some of Drostova's favorite roles include Miriam in *The Women* and Gwendolen in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, both for Butterfield 8, where she recently directed a staged reading of *The Beekeeper*. She also originated Rabella in Jump! Theatre's *Cuckoo* and was in Scrap and Salvage's *Lab Or* and El Gato Theatre Company's *The Rogue El Gato*. She hopes to be a better bean the next time 'round.

Jean Forsman (Sister Betsy) - A veteran of Bay Area productions, Jean was last seen in Custom Made's production of *A Delicate Balance*. She has appeared often with The San Francisco Playhouse and in the East Bay with Subterranean Shakespeare. Jean is proud to join the Jubilee with the Shaker Babes, Jeremy and the Live Oak folks. To Catz and Dooley and the 94133 who inspire her to live with life and power.

Molly Holcomb (Sister Fanny) - Molly is thrilled to be performing with this talented cast under the splendid direction of Jeremy Cole. Recent performances include *The Hermit Bird* and *Mankind's Last Hope* with the Virago Theatre Company of Alameda. University San Diego performances: *Woody Guthrie's American Song*, *Arcadia*, and *The Dining Room* among others. Thanks to Mike and Mom for their constant support.

Alexis Lane Jensen (Sister Peggy) - As a "singer who acts", Alexis enjoys a wide variety of performance opportunities. She's appeared at the Altarena Playhouse, Berkeley Opera and Oakland Opera Theater, and sings with several groups. With the Pacific Mozart Ensemble she's performed with Sweet Honey in the Rock, Sufjan Stevens and Meredith Monk. Alexis is also a prize winning Karaoke artist, and as "Papa" Don Preach, was the Reigning 2008 SF Drag King.

Jillian Jetton (Sister Izzy) - Jillian Jetton made her stage debut nine years ago, right here at the Live Oak Theater. She is delighted to be back, after graduating from Berkeley High School last June where she performed in *Hair*, *The Serpent* and *The Madwoman of Chaillot*. She will be acting, working and traveling until she begins at Brown University next fall.



Ann Kendrick (Sister Hannah) - Making her debut with AEB, Ann is thrilled to be part of this amazing cast of women! Recent productions include *The Spitfire Grill* with CCCT, *Butterflies are Free* with DAE, *Jake's Women* with Act Now, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Guys and Dolls* with CCMT. Much love to her husband, John, and children, Courtney, Ryan and Megan. This performance is dedicated to Ryan.

Jessica Price (Sister Polly) - Jessica is a recent graduate from Academy of Art University in San Francisco where she studied acting. She has had a love of theatre her whole life and has experience both on stage and behind the scenes. Her favorite shows she has worked on are *South Pacific*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Jennifer Rice (Sister Rachel) - Jennifer Rice returns to the stage at AE after producing *Luv* and *Doctor Faustus* in the last year. She was last seen in *Uncle Vanya* at AE, and before that *And Then There Were None* at CCCT. Her favorite role was in *Anton in Show Business*, an all-women show like this one, except this time she doesn't get to wear a mustache.

ALLOW US TO INTRODUCE OUR PRODUCTION STAFF

Alan Barkan (Producer) - this is Alan's first time as Producer but not with AE. He has worked behind the scenes as stage manager for *True West* and *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* and directed *Barefoot in the Park* and *LUV*.

Jeremy Cole (Director) - returns to AE after directing last season's *Doctor Faustus*. Recent credits include acting in *A Necessary Evil* for Theatre Rhinoceros and *Aah! Rosebud* for Thunderbird Theater Co., as well as directing *Aaron Trotter* and *the Incident at Bikini Beach* (also for Thunderbird), *Richard III* and *Macbeth* for Subterranean Shakespeare. He will next direct *Great Expectations* for Contra Costa Civic Theatre.

Norman de Veyra (Set Design/Benches) - is a pro spacemaker by day and an amateur scenic designer by night. This is Norm's fourth AE production and he's looking forward to many more in the future. He was set designer for *Doctor Faustus* and *LUV*.

Jose Garcia (Stage Manager) - has stage managed many of AE's productions: *Exit The King*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Matchmaker*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Barefoot In The Park* and *LUV*. He also loves to perform on stage; his favorite roles have been the Teacher in *A Dream Play*, and the Ambassador in *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*.

Shu Ping Guan (Set Design/Backdrop) - is happy to be part of this production. She has lent both her set and graphic design talents to AE for a number of productions. Thanks to all involved and thanks to you for coming to our show.



Martha Luehrmann (Assistant Director) - Martha is well known to local audiences and has appeared in Valayre's *BookKeepers*, Keller's *Leave of Absence*, Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, Agatha Christie's *A Murder Is Announced*, *Arsenic & Old Lace*, and *The Importance of Being Ernest*.

Alecks Rundell (Light Design) - is excited to be working with Actors Ensemble again. He received his Theatre Arts degree from Reed College, Portland, OR. He completed his thesis on Fractals and Chaos Theory as applied to Theatre, and still pursues the beauty of fractals. He thanks his parents, Jeanne and Richard Rundell.

Elizabeth Van Buren (Costume Design) - is pleased to be participating in her second production with Actors Ensemble of Berkeley, having assisted with the costumes for *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown*. Other local costuming experience includes work with the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Shotgun Players and Woman's WILL. Thank you so much to all the stitchers who worked so quickly and skillfully to bring the Shaker aesthetic to the stage tonight.

Silas Humphries & Yu Wu "Patience" (Volunteers) - are both working with AE for the first time and look forward to working on more productions.

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