

Life in LAMORINDA

Town Hall Theater Names New Artistic Director—Clive Worsley

Season Kicks Off with *The Graduate*

By Andrea A. Firth



Emily Garcia, Clive Worsley (in back), and Joel Roster at Town Hall Theater
Photo Andrea A. Firth

Town Hall Theater (THT) will launch its 2008-2009 season with a new Artistic Director at the helm—Clive Worsley, an award-winning Bay Area actor, director, and theater educator, will be steering the THT cast and crew. Worsley is a familiar face at Town Hall where he has acted and directed in the past. “This a good move for me,” states Worsley. “I am a firm believer that theater enhances education and builds community. And, I am really impressed by the com-

mitment to community that is exemplified by Town Hall Theater.”

Born in Glasgow, Scotland and raised in British Columbia, Worsley has spent the last thirty plus years in the Bay Area. Following stints with Armitage Shanks Theater and San Francisco’s Viaduct Theater, Worsley became a core company member of Berkeley’s acclaimed Shotgun Players. For the last six years he has turned much of his attention to theater education working as a Teaching

Artist in classrooms throughout Contra Costa County and as an Associate Artist with California Shakespeare Theater’s educational and outreach programs.

One of the things that Worsley has learned from his teaching experience is that he likes it on this side of the tunnel. “I give credit to the parents and theater professionals in Contra Costa County. They embrace their community, and they commit to strengthening it—all while making some really good art,” he states.

Worsley is already intimately familiar with the great main stage productions produced by Town Hall Theater, and he describes the educational program as the best in the East Bay. So what’s left for him to do? “I want to reach our farther,” sates Worsley. “I would like Town Hall Theater to be a household name in Lamorinda and beyond.” To achieve that goal, he plans to keep the selection of plays fresh and varied while still accessible to the average theater-goer.

“I’m looking forward to my first season with Town Hall Theater and getting to know the patrons,” states Worsley. “Town Hall is an ac-

tive member of the community, and I want to increase the dialogue.”

THT Season Kicks off with *The Graduate*.

Town Hall Theater’s 2008-2009 season will kick off with *The Graduate* on September 11th. Based on the novel by Charles Webb, this new adaptation for the stage stays pretty true to the movie version from the sixties that many baby boomers will remember.

“While the show is set in the 1960’s, it is no way limited to that time,” states Joel Roster who will direct the Town Hall Theater (THT) play—an East Bay premier. “The themes of alcoholism, infidelity, and dysfunctional families persist and may be even more relevant today. It makes the comedic moments even funnier and the poignant moments hit harder,” he adds. Roster says play-goers should be prepared for an evening of laughter and tears. “It’s a startling moving show. It’s brilliant.”

The Graduate will play at Town Hall Theater from September 11th through October 11th. For tickets contact the box office at 925.283.1557.

Paws to Read in Lamorinda

By Sophie Braccini

As she comes in to the special library room, Melyssa, a 3rd grader, is told that today she will read to Trevin. The dog is waiting for her with his handler/owner, Carol. He is one of the three canines present that day at the Orinda Library to participate in “Paws to Read,” a program where elementary school children come to read to dogs.

The program has been running in Orinda for three years. “It was started in Salt Lake City many years ago,” says Lin Look, the librarian in charge of children’s activities, “I heard about it at a conference and was immediately convinced of its value.” Research shows that kids who are learning to read can become nervous about looking dumb around their friends. But with a dog, they start to relax and reading becomes easier.

The program will start in Moraga this August. Moraga librarian Linda Waldroup summarizes, “Children enjoy reading to non-judgmental canines.”

“Dogs are not critical,” says

Melyssa’s mother, “they take the children for who they are.” Paws to Read attracts children from the entire spectrum of reading levels. Martha, a 4th grader who was there that morning in Orinda, is a very avid reader, having completed the library summer program for her age

in triplicate. During the session she read three books to her dog. “She takes any opportunity to read,” says her mother. The little girl commented, “I love to read to dogs, you can see they really understand what you read.”

The dogs involved in the pro-

gram are family pets of many different breeds and their owners, who volunteer their time, have been certified in pet therapy. In addition to reading improvement, “Paws” shows kids how to relate to dogs as pets.

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