



# Footlights

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2023

The Players of Utica Newsletter

## Last of the Red Hot Lovers Sizzles at Players

WHO DOESN'T LOVE a Neil Simon comedy? As one of the most successful playwrights of all time, Simon had an incredible knack for turning out hilarious plays that also had heart, from *The Odd Couple* to *Barefoot in the Park* to *Chapter Two* and many more. *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* is right up there with the best of them, and the Players of Utica production opens on October 27 at the Players Theatre. *Footlights* spoke with director Deborah Martin about the comedy.

**FOOTLIGHTS:** As a director, what did you find appealing when choosing *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*?

**DEBORAH:** First of all, I'm a big Neil Simon fan. I have seen the movie with Alan Arkin quite a few times. I like the premise of this play: nice, ordinary guy wants to be part of the sexual revolution, to see himself a little naughty... not just an ordinary, invisible human. Don't we all want to have something to look back on? For people to say, "He was a crazy guy. He was exciting. He was fun to be with." Not just "He was a nice guy."

**FOOTLIGHTS:** Do you prefer directing comedies or dramas? Why?

**DEBORAH:** I like the silliness in a comedy. I love hearing the audience laugh. Once an actor understands the timing of a comedic performance, it's easier for them to become relaxed and confident in their role.

**FOOTLIGHTS:** Does this play present any particular challenges for a production? If so, how did you overcome them?

**DEBORAH:** Well, casting had its challenges. You'd be surprised how many people are reluctant to audition for a play with a small cast — in this case, just four. I think there are a couple of reasons for this: there are a lot of actors to compete for just a



few parts, and they might think, "I don't stand a chance," so they don't even try; and with fewer actors in the play, that usually means a much longer time on stage and many more lines — and that can be daunting for some actors. But actors should realize they always have a chance at Players' open auditions. And even if an actor doesn't get a part, the audition itself is valuable experience. For us, it all worked out. I have a fabulous cast.

**FOOTLIGHTS:** What do you think audiences will enjoy most about this comedy?

**DEBORAH:** They'll love the different personalities of the three women that the one man in the play tries to seduce — one heavy-drinking and smoking woman, one just plain goofy, and another very neurotic. It's classic Neil Simon!

The play features **Stephen Wagner** as Barney Cashman, **Kelly Yule-Motyl** as Elaine Navazio, **Tori Deane Peters** as Bobbi Michele, and **Debra Harrison** as Jeanette Fisher.

Performances for *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* are as follows:

- Fridays, October 27 and November 3 at 7:30 p.m.
- Saturdays, October 28 and November 4 at 2:00 p.m.
- Sundays, October 29 and November 5 at 2:00 p.m.

For all tickets, go to our website at <http://www.playersofutica.org/order-tickets> or call 315-724-7624. ☆



By  
Neil Simon

**LAST OF THE  
RED HOT  
LOVERS**

Directed by  
Deborah Martin

**OCT. 27-29, NOV. 3-5, 2023**

# The Latest Improvements to the Theatre

Here's how your patronage and donations are helping us improve and maintain your community theatre



The driveway next to the theatre has been paved.



Numerous leaks in the lobby ceiling have been plugged.



A donated TV has been mounted to the concession wall for show promotions, and a shelf has been added for coffee self-service.

## THANK YOU, SUPPORTERS

A special thanks to these subscribers who gave extra support to Players

### ANGEL LEVEL

Henry Bamberger

Robert Barone

Joni DePerno-Zahas

Marilee Ensign

Art Felshaw

Shirley Felt

Daniel Fusillo

James Gifford

Elizabeth J. Harvilla

Robert Hodgkinson

Terry & Sharmane Johnson

Rona Lucas

Donald Lynskey

John Murphy

Barbara Shuck

### PATRON LEVEL

Patricia Knobloch

Constance Marson

Leslie Reilly

### FRIENDS OF PLAYERS

Vince Scalise, Coldwell Banker



The backstage storage area has been neatly organized.

Many thanks to Rick Stoodley and the Building and Grounds Committee for spearheading all of these great improvements.



An array of much-needed tools was purchased for maintenance and the construction of show sets.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES



### NEXT TO NORMAL - OCTOBER 2013

Directed by **Dan Fusillo**, music direction by **Bonnie Hibbard**, and featuring **Linda LaPorte-Stoodley, Michael A. Wratten, Mike Day, Jessica Sherman, Anthony J. Razzano, and Adam Lawless.** (Set designed and built by **Art Felshaw.**)



# Would You Like To Volunteer?



**Yes, *you* can volunteer to help Players of Utica on show nights or even backstage.**

As you know, Players is an all-volunteer theatre organization, and although we have a working Board of Governors who take care of all the tasks a community theatre requires, we can always use the help of theatre-loving volunteers.

Maybe that's you! You can be an MVPV — a "Most Valuable Players Volunteer."

On show nights:

- take tickets
- hand out programs
- help with concessions

Help with a production backstage:

- build or paint sets
- find and manage props
- help with costumes

We also need volunteers to help prepare the theatre for show nights, including cleaning, tidying up, and just generally making the theatre look spiffy.

## So what do you get out of it?

Aside from being an important part of your community theatre, volunteers also get to see the show for free ... or will receive a comp ticket for a future performance! Pretty good deal, eh?

If you're interested, send an email to Kelly, our volunteer coordinator, at [kellydegraceplayers@aol.com](mailto:kellydegraceplayers@aol.com)

## PLAYERS OF UTICA

2023–2024 Season

### Board Officers

Art Felshaw  
*President*

Daniel Fusillo  
*Vice President for Programs*

Richard Stoodley  
*Vice President for Operations*

Stephen Wagner  
*Vice President for PR & Development*

Shinae Garceau  
*Treasurer*

Kelly DeGrace  
*Secretary*

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Sean Arnold

Tammy Arnold

Lonnie Etter

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Becki Pawlikowski

Astena Smith

Cristiana Damiano  
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Robert Barone

Don Daniels

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Vince Scalise

Linda Yost

Players of Utica  
1108 State St., Utica  
315-724-7624

[www.playersofutica.org](http://www.playersofutica.org)

# Call for Directors

PLAYERS OF UTICA is seeking directors for full-length plays for our 2024–2025 season. To provide audiences with the best possible entertainment, Players is seeking shows that have strong audience appeal or recognition, are commercially successful, and appeal to a diverse age range.

Prospective directors can apply by using the [Director's Proposal Form](#).

Get details at <https://www.playersofutica.org/call-for-directors> or scan the QR code below.

**Submission deadline: November 1, 2023.**

Send scripts and proposals to:

Players of Utica – Proposals  
PO Box 29  
New Hartford, NY 13413

Or email (with pdf of script) to  
[jdzahas@gmail.com](mailto:jdzahas@gmail.com)





# CALL FOR DIRECTORS

YES, WE MEAN YOU!

for our 2024-2025 Season

**Want to direct a play, some one-acts or a musical? Now's your chance!**

APPLY NOW!

# 2023-2024 SEASON

A new season  
of drama, comedy,  
music, and great  
entertainment!



## SUBSCRIBE NOW TO OUR 2023-2024 SEASON Players of Utica 2023-2024 Season Subscription Form

FL-10-11-23

Complete this form and mail with payment to: Players of Utica, Subscriptions, PO Box 29, New Hartford, NY 13413

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, St, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CW: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Each subscription gets you 5 Flex-Pass tickets. Use one at each show or two at two shows, or any other combination. Select the # of subscriptions at the desired level below. An additional tax-deductible donation is always appreciated!

# of Adult @ \$80 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

# of Patron @ \$120 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

# of Angel @ \$150 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

# of Senior (62+) @ \$60 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

# of Student @ \$35 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

Here's an additional donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAND TOTAL ENCLOSED** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Please do not send cash through the mail.)  
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO PLAYERS OF UTICA, INC.  
To purchase online with credit card: [www.playersofutica.org](http://www.playersofutica.org)  
By phone: 315-724-7624



SCAN TO  
PURCHASE ONLINE