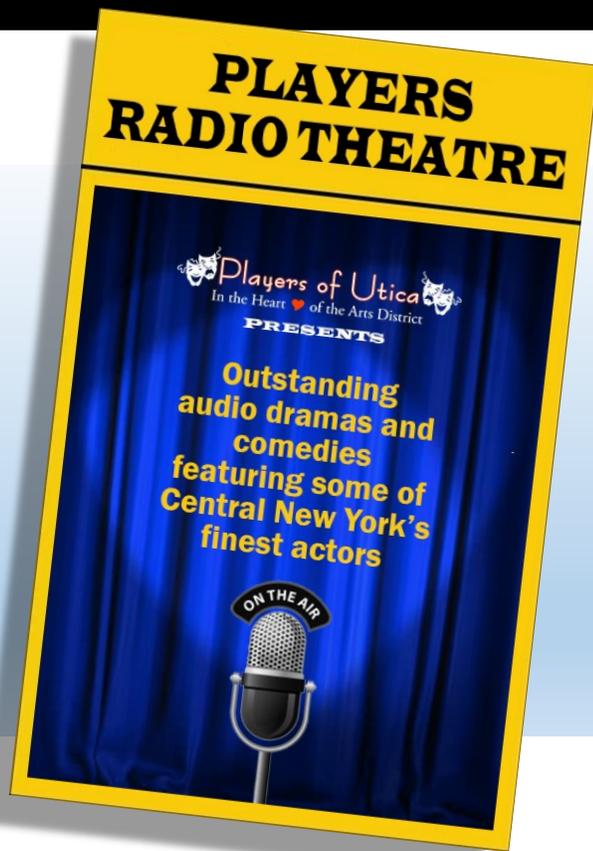


# Footlights

The Players of Utica Newsletter

MAY 2020

1108 State St, Utica, NY 13502 • [www.playersofutica.org](http://www.playersofutica.org) • 315-724-7624



## Do You Miss Us? We Miss You!

IT WAS WITH great difficulty — but understanding — that we had to cancel the last two shows of our 2019–2020 season, *I Hate Hamlet* and *Always... Patsy Cline*. But, of course, the well-being of our audiences, actors, and stage personnel always come first, and we want everyone to be safe and healthy.

Despite the stay-at-home and social-distancing policies, however, Players has been busy creating various entertainments (from our homes) for our patrons and the community at large in the form of our Virtual Open Mic (#VirtualOpenMic) videos and Players Radio Theatre. Both are available on our website ([playersofutica.org](http://playersofutica.org)) and on our Facebook page.

Virtual Open Mic features video performances of songs by great local talent, with new videos being released on a regular basis. It's amazing the wealth of talented people we have in Central New York!

Players Radio Theatre is a series of short comic and dramatic plays in audio format written by renowned playwrights (such as Anton Chekhov) as well as local playwrights and adapted specifically for Players Radio Theatre. They feature many wonderful actors familiar to you from the Players of Utica stage. Listen to them on your computer, phone, or tablet.

Although these virtual shows are completely free to watch and listen to, we *are* seeking donations. We understand that finances might be tight for people during this health crisis, and if you cannot donate, that's fine — we're glad to bring you entertainment anyway. But if you *can* donate — even a little — it's very much appreciated since even though we have no revenue coming in from ticket sales, we still have to pay our bills for utilities, insurance, and more. If you have already donated, you have our deepest gratitude.

Here's even more good news. Although we did have to cancel our last two shows of this season, we are happy to announce that we will be bringing you *I Hate Hamlet* and *Always... Patsy Cline* in the 2020–2021 season, which begins in just a few months! Very soon, we will also be announcing the other productions for next season — comedy, drama, and shows for the entire family — along with cabarets, comedy nights, and open mics. We are extremely excited about them and are sure you will be, too.

We can't wait to re-open the doors to Players Theatre once again. We hope to see you then! Stay safe and well. ❖

## PLAYERS OF UTICA

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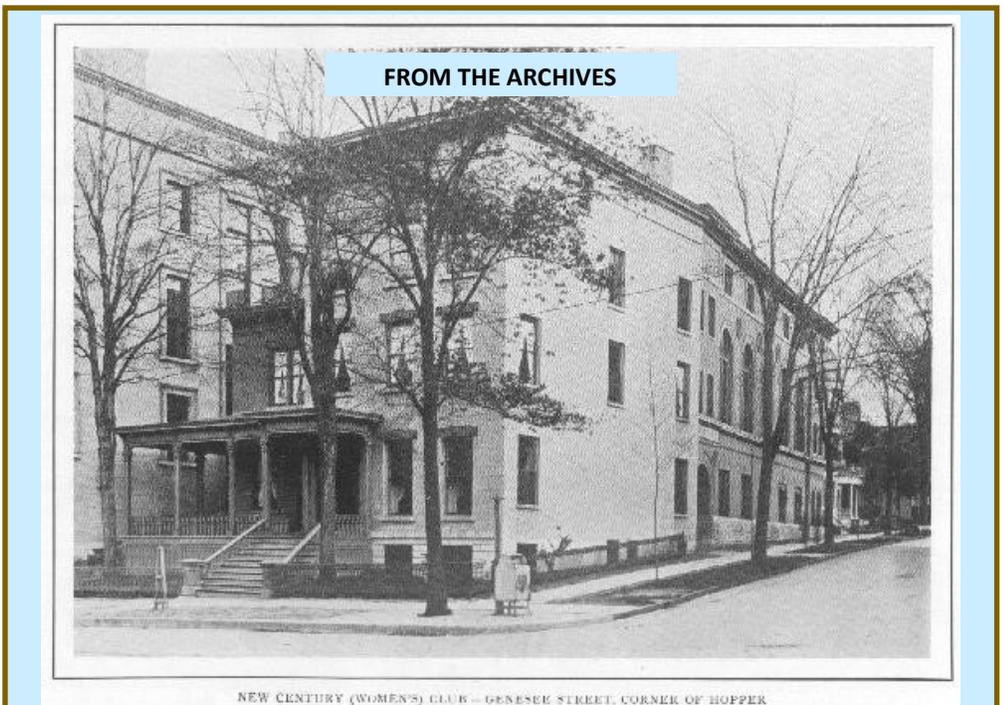
Stephen Wagner, editor

Carrie Bostick, reporter

## New Lobby Floor!



**T**HE LOBBY OF our Players Theatre continues to improve with the installation of a brand new laminate floor, thanks to funding from our NY State grant and the expert work of Ted Damiano and Ted's Home Improvement. The original cement floor, now over ten years old, was showing signs of age with many cracks, chips, and stains. The new cushioned flooring helps complete the modern look of the lobby and adds quieting, comfort, and style. Now all we need is a waiting audience to walk on it! ❖



The last time Players of Utica faced a major pandemic was back in 1918, when the world was recovering from World War I and was then fighting the Spanish Flu — much more devastating than COVID-19. Our historical records indicate that Players was pretty quiet that year, too, but re-energized in 1919 with two productions: *The Mad Hatter Coffee House*, which the *Utica Herald Dispatch* called “a most enjoyable and entertaining event,” and *The Bobby Edwards Show*, a selection of song and dance numbers.

In those days, productions were staged in The Hotel Utica, the Gaiety Theater, the Lake Placid Club, and the New Century Club, pictured above, on the corner of Hopper and Genesee Streets.

**Frank Stirling**, after a dramatic career around the world, came to Utica to act with the Shubert Stock Company. He decided to remain in Utica and directed almost every Players production from 1916 to 1931.