



## **ALIVE AND WELL**



## **PRESS HIGHLIGHTS**



# REVIEWS

# Legit

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Regional

## Alive and Well

(Sheryl and Harvey White Theater, San Diego; 250 seats; \$62 top)

By BOB VERINI

An Old Globe presentation of a play in two acts by Kenny Finkle. Directed by Jeremy Dobrish. Sets, Robin Sanford Roberts; costumes, Shelly Williams; lighting, Michael Gottlieb; sound, Paul Peterson; stage manager, Moira Gleason. Opened Mar. 25, 2010. Reviewed Mar. 27. Runs through Apr. 25. Running time: 1 HOUR, 55 MIN.

Carla Keenan - Kelly McAndrew  
Zachariah Clemenson - James Knight

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**Kenny Finkle's "Alive and Well" is neither. The Old Globe world premiere, detailing a mismatched couple's romantic road trip across a Civil War battlefield, brings to mind the likes of "The African Queen" and "It Happened One Night" without much awareness on display of what makes their genre tick. The germ of a good idea - a Southerner and Northerner acting out America's attempt to transcend its blue state/red state differences - founders on the shoals of illogic and unlikability.**

Our red state rep is Zachariah Clemenson (James Knight), a professional Civil War recreator with disdain for anything or anyone "farb" (inauthentic). Highest on that list is Carla (Kelly McAndrew), a visiting Yankee journalist he's been engaged to guide across Virginia in search of the legendary, ghostly "Lonesome Soldier," an obvious symbol for the ongoing tensions the events of 1861-65 couldn't bring to closure.

The script never clarifies whether Zachariah is a true hick, poet in the raw or intellectual manque, forcing Knight to juggle wisps of those personas while justifying silly, out-of-character crying jags.

Still, he mostly maintains presence and appealing authority, which is more than one can say for the smug, overbearing McAndrew. A highly unprofessional Carla says she needs this assignment, but she's done no research and shows no reporter's interest in the environment, mostly complaining and squealing brittle quips.

Finkle sidesteps truly deep-seated North/South tensions, including basic nomenclature (most Southerners insist on "War Between the States"), in favor of sitcom clichés: Zach likes Jeff Foxworthy and eats noisily, while she cherishes her BlackBerry and Charlie Rose.

They bicker less than credibly until too many sips from a flask bring the hair down. Come the dawn, Carla again sports her characteristic sourpuss and the game tediously resumes. An 11th hour plot twists fails to convince.

Jeremy Dobrish's staging displays little affinity for commercial comedy conventions. Besides indulging mannered wordplay (from both thespians) and outrageous mugging (from McAndrew), he permits the tone to lurch from farce to maudlin sentiment without adequate setup.


He steers Michael Gottlieb to some delicate lighting effects, while betraying a curious indifference to given circumstances. The pair's shouting and movement in a diner would never be tolerated by patrons or manager. Seeking shelter from a punishing storm, they bounce around a deserted cabin as if hopped up on speed; after days of tromping in the mud she pulls a People magazine from her boot (don't ask) and it's fresh as a daisy.

The absence of exhaustion, or of any reality of being drenched, is just plain farb.

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## THEATER REVIEW

# 'United we aren't' seems to define 'Alive and Well'

**By James Hebert**  
THEATER CRITIC

The Civil War-minded "Alive and Well" has a way of creating its own war between the states for a playgoer: States such as amusement vs. confusion, acceptance vs. skepticism, absorption vs. the doldrums.

Kenny Finkle's oddball comedy, now at the Old Globe, approaches potentially heavy ideas — America's red-vs.-blue rancor, the lingering legacy of the Confederacy — through a feather-weight romantic saga that has its wry charms but doesn't shy from contrivance.

The play, directed by Jeremy Dobrish, puts one character in Union blue and the other in Rebel gray; the audience, meanwhile, tends to be left in shades of uncertainty about how these two speak to Finkle's theme of a nation still yearning for unity.

This is a "co-world premiere" for the Globe and Virginia Stage Co., which first staged "Alive and Well" last fall. Finkle constructs the piece as a kind of modern-day riff on classic romantic comedies such as "The African Queen" and "It Happened One Night."

His feuding twosome consists of Zachariah (James Knight), a fumbling but fervent young Civil War re-enactor; and Carla (Kelly McAndrew), a Type A urban journalist and proud Yank. Zach, who drives a cab when he's not hitching up his uniform grays, is obsessed with the symbolism of Appomattox, the fated place in Virginia where Gen. Robert E.

## DETAILS

### "Alive and Well"

**When:** Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 7 p.m.; Thursdays-Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 and 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 and 7 p.m., through April 25

**Where:** Old Globe's White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

**Tickets:** \$29-\$62

**Phone:** (619) 234-5623

**Online:** [TheOldGlobe.org](http://TheOldGlobe.org)

Lee and his Rebel army agreed to lay down arms in April 1865.

Carla, meanwhile, is more obsessed with her BlackBerry, and with thoughts of how she's going to survive her stint with this somewhat slovenly Southerner. She's stuck with him because she has accepted a magazine assignment to follow Zach as he searches for a mysterious wandering spirit known as the Lonesome Soldier.

Their quest is intended to retrace the path of Lee's retreat, in those final days before the Confederate hero accepted Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's terms of surrender. But thanks to Zach's balky compass, they get lost in the Virginia woods, one of the more apt metaphors for Finkle's motif of a divided America still struggling to find its way.

Robin Sanford Roberts' inventive set brings a nice sense of whimsy to the staging; it's dominated by a huge relief map of central Virginia, complete with raised contour lines that double as benches and stair-steps. The layered beige plateaus at first re-

semble something out of the Dakota Badlands, but once the concept becomes clear, they serve the play well as a reminder of the heights and valleys encountered by characters and country.

Knight plays Zach with a disarming charm, and makes the most of Finkle's funniest scenes. In one, he lies on the ground with belly distended and arm protruding awkwardly, demonstrating "the bloat" — a re-enacting technique meant to mimic the condition of a soldier who's been dead a few days.

"I give great bloat," he brags to Carla, explaining that for him it's something like meditation.

It's not clear, though, why Zach needs to be such a drama queen, crying at the drop of a (meticulously authentic) hat. That pitiful side of him makes the apparently budding romance between him and Carla seem quite a bit less likely.

It might be, too, that there just isn't as much chemistry as there could be between the two actors. McAndrew (a San Diego-bred actor) gives Carla an entertaining edge of squeamishness and disdain for Zach's seriously uncouth ways. She's also game for some goofy fun, as when she gets buzzed on Zach's moonshine and does a not-ready-for-MTV performance of Joni Mitchell's "All I Want."

She doesn't quite come off as a tried-and-true Northerner, which might be one reason that friction between the two — a much-needed component of this sort of romcom scenario — doesn't quite pop. The repeated



**Kelly McAndrew is Carla Keenan and James Knight is Zachariah Clemenson in Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy "Alive and Well" at the Old Globe's White Theatre. *Craig Schwartz***

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In fact, a lot about these two doesn't quite ring true. She apparently has never heard the phrase "stick in your craw"; he knows all about Charlie Rose but is mystified by a reference to Georgia O'Keeffe. For the entire play, the two also refer to each

other as "Mr. Clemenson" and "Ms. Keenan" — a nice device if this really were a 1940s movie, but not so easy to picture anyone doing today.

In a way, the two end up as "farbs" of flesh-and-blood people, to borrow the re-enactors' term for something not quite authentic.

"Alive and Well" is still authentically funny at times and in fits

and starts gets its message of how tension still defines America.

When Carla and Zach finally reach Appomattox — and some level of connection with each other — Carla still insists: "This is never going to work."

To which Zach replies: "Well, here we are."

It's not a whole lot, but it's a start.

## ‘United we aren’t’ seems to define ‘Alive and Well’

By [James Hebert](#), UNION-TRIBUNE THEATER CRITIC

Saturday, March 27, 2010 at 12:04 a.m.



/ Craig Schwartz

Kelly McAndrew is Carla Keenan and [James Knight](#) is Zachariah Clemenson in Kenny Finkle’s romantic comedy “Alive and Well” at the Old Globe’s White Theatre.

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His feuding twosome consists of Zachariah (James Knight), a fumbling but fervent young Civil War re-enactor; and Carla (Kelly McAndrew), a Type A urban journalist and proud Yank. Zach, who drives a cab when he’s not hitching up his uniform grays, is obsessed with the symbolism of Appomattox, the fated place in Virginia where Gen. [Robert E.](#) Lee and his Rebel army agreed to lay down arms in April 1865.

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## THEATER REVIEW

# Globe's 'Alive and Well' shows few signs of life

BY ANNE MARIE WELSH

For the North County Times

Maybe it's the scary polarization gripping the country right now. Or the racially tinged threats of violence in our political discourse. Or maybe it's just the shallow script, but playwright Kenny Finkle's new comedy "Alive and Well," now at the Old Globe, isn't very funny.

Especially after intermission, there are laughs aplenty in this preposterous romantic comedy. But they don't add up to a coherent play about the North-South, blue-red, or male-female divide. Trading in the opposites-attract school of psychology that animated Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew" and "Much Ado About Nothing," all of Restoration comedy, and many American film classics, Finkle sends Zach, a foolish and sentimental Civil War re-enactor, and Carla, a cynical New York reporter, through the Virginia trails and forests that led to the surrender at Appomattox.

She's being paid to write a piece about the legendary "lonesome soldier," sometimes spotted along Robert E. Lee's retreat trail out of Petersburg. He's being paid to help her authentically re-create the journey that led to the Confederate surrender and the reunification of the country.

Along the way, we hear amusing bits about the battles fought by Civil War re-enactors themselves, over costumes, meals and housing. Zach believes in total authenticity; thus he and Carla wear itchy-looking wool uniforms, carry minimal supplies, and have no way to communicate with the outside world.

Theoretically, the contrived setup forces them to confront each other and themselves. But that only happens when Carla gets rip-roaring drunk on his moonshine, and her emotional truth-telling leads to a similar soul-baring for him.

Zach, a cabdriver by profession, is supposedly an idealist whose fixation on the Civil War and the beauty of Appomattox has something to do with the beauty of "two heroes" saving the union. Or so we learn in some final speechifying.

Carla, on the other hand, is a closet artist still grieving a family death and seeking love in all the wrong places.

They're basically cardboard characters; in the glimmers of real life we get from the production, the chances of two such people actually getting together is zero.



**James McKnight and Kelly McAndrew star in "Alive and Well" at the Old Globe.** Photo courtesy of Craig Schwartz

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**WHERE** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, San Diego

**TICKETS** \$29-\$62

**INFO** 619-234-5623  
[www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org)

James McKnight plays the lanky, sometimes likable Zach, and Kelly McAndrew the bossy, uptight Carla. Both actors are accomplished pros, and both have appeared to better advantage at the Globe before. Artistically they're mismatched here, more like a mother and son, with virtually no chemistry between them.

Director Jeremy Dobrish met the challenges involved in staging an on-the-road script in the Globe's in-the-round Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. Robin Sanford Roberts' fanciful design helped, too. The action unfolds on a topographical map of the retreat trail, with movable units, and for one scene, a cabin with a fireplace, bed and bearskin rug.

Despite the usual strong production values at the Globe, when a two-person play has an implausible relationship and inauthentic banter at the core, it's tough to deliver a show that's actually "Alive and Well."

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## THEATER REVIEW: 'Alive and Well' shows few signs of life

- Story
- Discussion

By ANNE MARIE WELSH - For the North County Times | Posted: March 31, 2010 10:00 am | No Comments  
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Craig Schwartz James McKnight as Zachariah Clemenson and Kelly McAndrew as Carla Keenan in the World Premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, *Alive and Well*, at The Old Globe

Maybe it's the scary polarization gripping the country right now. Or the racially tinged threats of violence in our political discourse. Or maybe it's just the shallow script, but playwright Kenny Finkle's new comedy "*Alive and Well*," now at the Old Globe, isn't very funny.

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"Alive and Well"

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Kelly McAndrew (as Carla) and James Knight (as Zachariah) in the Old Globe production of "Alive and Well." (Photo by Craig Schwartz)

### **War-time Romcom**

**THE SHOW:** “Alive and Well,” a co-world premiere, at the Old Globe

“Alive and Well,” alas, is neither. A flawed play in a flawed production.

It seems that the primary interest of playwright Kenny Finkle was trying his hand at a romantic romp in the mold of “It Happened One Night” or “My Man Godfrey,” with their hard-boiled dolls doing battle with a diametrically opposed male; the quippy conflict leads inexorably to love. The Civil War part just appears to provide an untried setting, for no deeply discernible reason.

Zachariah (James Knight, charming and likable) is a Civil War re-enactor, a coarse, rugged kind of guy who chews loudly, with his mouth open (that’s how we first see him). Zack’s (mis)match is Carla (Kelly McAndrew), a Yankee city-girl (though, except for her Blackberry, there’s absolutely no way to know that. McAndrew’s look screams Girl Next Door – down to the ponytail).

Why a man with machismo, ensconced in a macho Southern culture, would be a big old crybaby is beyond credulity. But it’s only the first of many cognitive-emotional stretches in the piece.

Carla's supposed to be a feminist – but she loves James Bond movies. And she's a journalist who says she's not good at asking questions, and admits that she hasn't done any prep for this assignment. Oh, and while we're talking realism, what freelancer gets \$5,000 sight-unseen for a magazine piece, with \$2,500 provided up-front?

So, here's the setup: Carla's an out-of-work writer who's been hired to spend a week tracking down an elusive Lonesome Soldier, the oldest living Civil War veteran, and Zachariah is to be her guide. Wait a minute! Wasn't the Civil War over in 1865? Since the play is set in the present, that would make this Confederate 165 years old. Didn't that cross Carla's mind? Or is she too self-absorbed (yes!) to do the math?

Of course, they get off to a bad start. On first sight, she criticizes his eating habits; very refined manners on her part. She is, overall, an annoyingly persnickety type who can never be wrong – about anything. She looks down on him and his country ways. Then his compass goes kerfloey (can that really happen?) and they get lost and stranded in a storm. Conveniently, they've both just been dumped by their mates. But even at the end, there's little real chemistry or connection between them.

Perhaps they're supposed to be emblematic of the North/South divide. They're not. He's way too hypersensitive and weepy, and she's too... unbelievable (except when she gets drunk on his moonshine; that's McAndrew's finest and most credible moment, by far). There are many character inconsistencies. He's a cab driver ("I do re-enactments to feel alive"), who keeps a journal and uses words like "snarky" and "ironical," but has no idea who Georgia O'Keefe is. And she never heard of "hardtack."

For the journey, she wants to use her GPS and stay in hotels that have WiFi. He's all for roughing it, so she can get a real feel for this "sacred" land, and for the significance of the surrender at Appomattox, where they're headed (about 100 miles away). But when they get there and view the little courthouse, there's no payoff. We aren't given enough to make us understand why he's so impassioned by this place, and why she becomes so enamored of his passion. Speaking of passion, there's no romantic payoff. It's fine, and cute, that she keeps interrupting his attempts to kiss her, but can't they finally get the job done at the end, so we get a little closure, too?

Even the couple's comeback contest (of the "You're so stupid..." variety) is uninspired, and features nothing but old, worn "rankouts." This "Anything You Can Do" competition scene might've been a lot more imaginative if Finkle had actually come up with his own fresh, new comebacks.

There are problems with the direction as well. Jeremy Dobrish doesn't make the greatest use of the arena stage. It seemed like every time Zack was slobbering over food, it was directed at just one side of the house. Same side as when he helpfully removes Carla's clothes, when she's too drunk to do it herself. Fortunately, we were seated on that side. But I think other theatergoers missed some of the good stuff. And how about that rifle? How'd it appear at the end, when it didn't seem to be with them in the cabin after the storm?

The production values, as always at the Globe, are excellent. Robin Sanford Roberts' set is attractive, layers of sandstone (isn't that more of a Southwest look, with flat mesas rather than rolling hills?), representing both a relief map and a landscape, nicely lit by Michael Gottlieb. The costumes (Shelly Williams) seem authentic, but McAndrews' outfit doesn't do her any favors.

I'm all for theater collaborations – this is a co-world premiere with Virginia Stage Company in Norfolk. But the play isn't sufficiently dramaturged or fleshed-out, and it isn't ready for primetime at a world-class theater. This would be misstep Number Four for the Globe in less than a year, from “The First Wives Club” to “Sammy,” and more recently, “Boeing-Boeing” and now, “Alive and Well.” It's becoming increasingly evident that our oldest and most venerated theater needs a more active literary management team or play selection committee or a full-time artistic director. Or all three. A similar point, a [call for artistic vision](#) at our high-profile SoCal theaters, was recently made in the Los Angeles Times. The time has come.

**THE LOCATION:** The Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre at the Old Globe, Balboa Park. (619) 234-5623; [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org)

**THE DETAILS:** Tickets: \$29-\$62. Tuesday-Wednesday at 7 p.m., Thursday-Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 7 p.m., Saturday-Sunday at 2 p.m., through April 25

# SAN DIEGO READER

April 1, 2010

CALENDAR

## THEATER REVIEW

JEFF SMITH

**Alive and Well** by Kenny Finkle

**Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre**, Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

**Directed by Jeremy Dobrish;** cast: Kelly McAndrew, James Knight; scenic design, Robin Sanford Roberts; costumes, Shelly Williams; lighting, Michael Gottlieb; sound, Paul Peterson

**Playing through April 25;** Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Matinee Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. 619-234-5623.



"I'm not drunk, Ms. Keenan, I'm pacified."

\*\*\*

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the last living Confederate (either a ghost or he's found the Fountain of Youth) — hangs out somewhere along General Lee's westward retreat from Petersburg to Appomattox. As they rough it and lose their way, differences (she's cold and always right; he's romantic and weepy) dissipate.

The writing's occasionally

funny. After a quaff or twain of moonshine, Zach assures Carla, "I'm not drunk, Ms. Keenan, I'm pacified." But like so much of the Old Globe's timid play selection of late, it's almost all surface and merely aims to please.

Except for an air-conditioning system that still overcompensates — shivering patrons cover floor vents with their programs — the new Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre struts its stuff with *Alive and Well*. Robin Sanford Roberts's set, lit from numerous angles by Michael Gottlieb, is a bas relief topo map of the Blackwater River area around Lynchburg. Mesas become tables and chairs; at other times Carla and Zach loom over the land like symbolic giants. Shelly Williams's gray Confederate uniform for Zach and Union navy blue for Carla look authentic (and appropriately itchy).

Kelly McAndrew and James

Knight sustain a nice byplay as the unlikely couple. But, except for a funny game of comebacks, the weak second act dwindles into two long speeches in which the pair blurs differences. In a third, equally facile speech, both gaze at sunlit Appomattox and hope the country can accept differences as well.

Next time: Cygnet's *Sweeney Todd*: hottest show in town. ■



## But I Am No One

By [Jeff Smith](#) | Published Wednesday, March 31, 2010

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The writing's occasionally funny. After a quaff or twain of moonshine, Zach assures Carla, "I'm not drunk, Ms. Keenan, I'm pacified." But like so much of the Old Globe's timid play selection of late, it's almost all surface and merely aims to please.

Except for an air-conditioning system that still over-compensates — shivering patrons cover floor vents with their programs — the new Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre struts its stuff with *Alive and Well*. Robin Sanford Roberts's set, lit from numerous angles by Michael Gottlieb, is a bas relief topo map of the Blackwater River area around Lynchburg. Mesas become tables and chairs; at other times Carla and Zach loom over the land like symbolic giants. Shelly Williams's gray Confederate uniform for Zach and Union navy blue for Carla look authentic (and appropriately itchy).

Kelly McAndrew and James Knight sustain a nice byplay as the unlikely couple. But, except for a funny game of comebacks, the weak second act dwindles into two long speeches in which the pair blurs differences. In a third, equally facile speech, both gaze at sunlit Appomattox and hope the country can accept differences as well.

**Alive and Well** by Kenny Finkle

**Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre**, Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

**Directed by Jeremy Dobrish**; cast: Kelly McAndrew, James Knight; scenic design, Robin Sanford Roberts; costumes, Shelly Williams; lighting, Michael Gottlieb; sound, Paul Peterson

**Playing through April 25**; Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Matinee Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. 619-234-5623.

## SAN DIEGO

Regional Reviews by Bill Eadie

### *Alive and Well*

Old Globe Theatre

Also see Bill's review of [Sweeney Todd](#)

We don't have too many Civil War re-enactors in San Diego, I would guess. We do, however, have plenty of people who have either written a romantic comedy screenplay or who aspire to write one. Add Kenny Finkle, author of *Alive and Well*, to that list.

Mr. Finkle's two-character play, at the Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre through April 25, pays loving tribute to romantic comedy conventions, perhaps too loving. In some ways it seems as though *Alive and Well* was designed to feature the quirky mismatch of types that Hollywood producers love to feature in films.

The play opens in Petersburg, Virginia, where journalist Carla Keenan is about to embark on a 100-mile westward journey across the central part of the state. The trip would replicate Robert E. Lee's retreat from the Union forces commanded by Ulysses S. Grant, a retreat that would end in surrender in the small town of Appomattox. Leading the trip is Zachariah Clemenson, a Civil War re-enactor and taxi driver who is not only familiar with the history of the surrender but who has claimed to have seen "the lonely soldier," a ghost who supposedly still patrols the route.



**Kelly McAndrew and  
James Knight**

Our protagonists "meet ugly," do not travel well together, and then are thrown together by exigency (they become lost and a rainstorm suddenly flares up). They push apart but then, as romantic comedy conventions dictate, they reunite in time for a closing tableau.

If this plot summary implies to you that not much goes on, you'd be right. And, what does go on seems derivative: an entire half hour of act one is devoted to a plotline that is remarkably similar to one from the Frank Capra film "It Happened One Night," which starred Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert. Mr. Gable's famous line from *Gone With the Wind*, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn," makes an appearance as well.

So, what is Mr. Finkle doing with his two hours of stage time? Cracking jokes. Some of them are actually pretty funny. Do the jokes make up for the plot? Yeah, sort of.

Performances by San Diego native Kelly McAndrew as Carla Keenan and James Knight as Zachariah Clemenson help a lot as well. Under Jeremy Dobrish's supple direction, Ms. McAndrew and Mr. Knight embody their characters, provide the requisite fireworks, and time their one-liners for maximum effect. I also admired the production (including Shelly Williams' Civil War-era uniforms that become the butt of some of the jokes, Michael

Gottlieb's lighting design that creates small playing spaces within the not-so-large White Theatre stage, and Paul Peterson's subtle but effective sound design). I was struck by the creativity of Robin Sanford Roberts' scenic design (for example, a bed pulls out of a rocky area), but the overall effect reads as "Arizona," not "Virginia."

The Old Globe is giving *Alive and Well* a co-world premiere production (along with the Virginia Stage Company). I won't go so far as to call it dead-on-arrival as a play, but it might work better in the film medium it so clearly venerates.

The Old Globe presents *Alive and Well* by Kenny Finkle. Performances March 20 - April 25, 2010, at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre on the Old Globe campus. Tickets (\$29 - \$62) available from the box office at (619) 23-GLOBE, or online at [The Old Globe's website](#).

Directed by Jeremy Dobrish with Robin Sanford Roberts (scenic design), Shelly Williams (costume design), Michael Gottlieb (lighting design), Paul Peterson (sound design), and Moira Gleason (stage manager). With Kelly McAndrew (Carla Keenan) and James Knight (Zachariah Clemenson).

*Photo: Craig Schwartz*

See the [current season schedule for the San Diego area](#).

- [Bill Eadie](#)

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## Entertainment :: Theatre

### Alive and Well

by Steve Heyl  
EDGE Contributor  
Thursday Apr 1, 2010



James Knight as Zachariah Clemenson and Kelly McAndrew as Carla Keenan in Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, *Alive and Well* at The Old Globe  
(Source: [http://theoldglobe.org/pressphotos/alive\\_and\\_well\\_press.html](http://theoldglobe.org/pressphotos/alive_and_well_press.html))

EMAIL PRINT SHARE

In theater as in the movie business, Spring is a time for romantic comedies. With their light plots, one-liners, and a cadre of expected elements, these are the perfect complement to longer days and pastel fashions. For its Spring collection, The Old Globe in San Diego is presenting a co-premier of a new entry to the genre called **Alive and Well**. This two-person show has all the elements a successful romantic comedy must have.

The first element any successful romantic comedy must have is characters from different worlds. For instance, in *Roman Holiday*, Audrey Hepburn is a princess and Gregory Peck a reporter. In *Alive and Well* we have Carla, a big city reporter from the North, and Zach Clemenson, a small town Southern cab driver and passionate Civil War re-enactor. Carla has taken an assignment to write about a Civil War era ghost that supposedly haunts the route Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee took from Petersburg to Appomattox Virginia where Lee ultimately surrendered to Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Zach has been assigned as her guide and resource for local and historical background information.

The next required element is a journey. In *It Happened One Night*, Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable have to get from Miami to New York without being caught by the tabloids. In *Alive and Well*, Zach insists that the only way to truly understand the importance of Lee's march is to retrace his steps: one hundred miles, on foot, in uniform, with only the food and supplies that soldiers of the period would have had. To Zach, anything less is "farb" - inauthentic, like the "fake garb" that less passionate Civil War buffs might wear.

Another required element is an unrequited opportunity for sex. In *Working Girl*, Harrison Ford takes a very drunk Melanie Griffith home but he sleeps on the couch. It would not be a spoiler to say there is a similar situation for Zach and Carla in *Alive and Well*.

Playwright Kenny Finkle has taken these requisite elements and crafted a delightful hike through familiar yet occasionally unexpected territory. Finkle's works have been primarily produced by regional theater, but I predict we will be seeing him on



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Broadway in a few years. His script for *Alive and Well* includes many Southernisms (Carla trying to correctly pronounce "Norfolk") and snappy double entendres (Zach finds some logs for the fireplace and Carla says "Thank you for getting wood"). When dealing with Southern characters, many writers fall to the temptation to portray Southern culture as inferior; in Finkle's script, he pokes fun at and respects both Zach's and Carla's worlds equally.

Director Jeremy Dobrish makes full use of the in-the-round stage in this smaller theater at The Old Globe complex. The set that scenic designer Robin Sanford Roberts created is a stylized contour map of central Virginia and this give Dobrish plenty of levels on which to have the actors play to each of the audience seating areas.

In any two-hander, both actors must be excellent. Fortunately, both are. Whether delivering a polite but sincere line like "Mr. Clemenson, we are not friends" or channeling her past as the 'high school comeback queen', San Diego native Kelly McAndrew shines as Carla. The very handsome James Knight give Zach a native Southern drawl that never sounds like an 'accent,' and his physical comedy is spot on. They say timing is everything in comedy; he know when to stop his 'bloat' pose (you have to be there) one second before you think it's gone on too long.

Almost by definition, you know how a romantic comedy will end. Whether it's Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan, Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable, or Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn, in the final scene they will declare their love for each other. So the measure of a romantic comedy is how engaging the journey. The journey that is *Alive and Well* is well worth taking, and that's not farb.

***Alive and Well** continues through April 25 at the Old Globe theater in San Diego. For more information visit the*

*A computer geek by day, one of Steve's evening loves is San Diego theater (the other is his husband of 20 years), which he enjoys sharing with others (theater, not the husband).*

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"Alive and Well"

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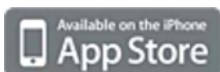
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## Review of 'Alive & Well'



### The Old Adage, "Opposites Attract" Still Holds True

**Friday, March 26, 2010**  
**Sheryl and Harvey White Arena Stage**  
**Old Globe Theatre Complex**  
**San Diego, California**

By Palm Springs Guides Theatre & Cinema Critic/Reviewer, Jack Lyons  
 Photos by Craig Schwartz

Twentieth century Sociologist Robert F. Winch proposed the "opposites attract" theory, arguing that people are attracted to those whose needs conversely match their own. What's true in physics is an absolute requisite for the world of theatre and cinema. Besides, it makes for more interesting and entertaining productions. And, oh boy, how we humans love competition and especially so, when it comes to romance and the war between the sexes.

"Alive & Well," a new romantic comedy by Kenny Finkle, crackles with the electricity of competition, gotcha zingers and sexual tension, as two self-assured characters vie for supremacy in the great debate concerning the how and the why of male/female attraction.

The story by playwright Finkle is a familiar one where two people from different cultures and of opposing personalities are thrown together and immediately clash. It's fun to watch as each continually maneuvers for point-of-view one upmanship with killer "comebacks." (Sounds a little like the Adam and Eve story after the apple-eating thing).

Carla Keenan (Kelly McAndrew) a down-on-her-luck Northern reporter/writer is gathering research material for an article she has been hired to write on the illusive "Lonesome Soldier — the oldest living Civil War veteran." Assisting her is Zachariah Clemenson (James Knight) a roughish, Southern Civil War re-enactor with a passion for all things, well ... Civil War. As they hike along the route of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's retreat from Petersburg to Appomattox, Virginia, the culturally star-crossed pair find much more of interest than either bargains for, and in the process discover that the state of Virginia, is indeed, for lovers. (As old bumper stickers promoting the state some years ago proclaimed).



Finkle's not introducing "breakthrough" material here. The two-hander "boy meets girl" premise is as old as the hills. What we are seeing, however, are two attractive and talented actors going "*mano-a-mano*" with clever dialogue delivered with clarity in warp-speed time. The audience knows what lies at the journey's end. The fun and interest in "Alive & Well" is what takes place along the way.

Under the workman-like direction of Jeremy Dobrish, actors McAndrew and Knight get a chance to sparkle in their straight-into-the-eyes, nose-to-nose verbal confrontations.

We've all seen scenes like this before, but McAndrew and Knight bring a freshness to their roles, giving off strong whiffs of pheromones in the process, which gives a boost to their attraction to one another — even if they don't know it at the time.

In the technical department, the Old Globe theatres — The Main Stage, and the Sheryl and Harvey White arena stage — have few equals when it comes to their "state of the art" technical arsenals. However, this is the second production I've seen in the White arena venue, and I've frozen both times. Certainly the tech staff can solve the air conditioning problem and prevent audience members from catching pneumonia while attending a performance. The air roars from under each seat with such a vengeance, many in the audience had to seek the assistance of the theatre manager, asking her to please turn down the ice-making machine.

As the old joke goes, "Besides that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?" Well, as a Palm Springs-based critic/reviewer, I'm a big fan of San Diego theatre (it's only a two-hour drive) and I did indeed like the production, despite the December in late March-like weather inside the theatre.

"Alive & Well" runs through April 25th.

For more [about San Diego's Old Globe Theater](#), click here.

*Palm Springs Guides* Theatre & Cinema Critic/Reviewer **Jack Lyons** is a member of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the Writers Guild of America, West and Screen Actors Guild and is interested in all things "show biz." An entertainment journalist, TV, radio and theater reviewer/critic seen locally in the Coachella Valley on channel My13 KPSE-TV on "Desert Entertainment This Week." [To visit Jack's blog, click here.](#)



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## San Diego Arts

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ALIVE AND WELL At The Old Globe Theatre

*The battle in the wilderness*

**By Welton Jones**

Posted on Fri, Mar 26th, 2010

Last updated Fri, Mar 26th, 2010

Beatrice and Benedict are bedraggled but alive and well in backcountry Virginia, this time refighting the Civil War in Kenny Finkle's *Alive and Well*, now on view at the Old Globe's White Theatre.

She is a writer commissioned to do a story about a legend of a "Lonesome Soldier" who haunts the battlefields near Appomattox. He is a dedicated battle re-enactor hired to be her guide. At least that's the story as two set out bickering along the trail of Robert E. Lee's final march into surrender.

She is a tiresome harridan, always right about everything, who insists on professional correctness. He is a imitation redneck nit-picking the details of his hobbyist's compulsion. Obviously a couple of tedious losers who will eventually explode and expel each other.

And yet... They *are* cute. And they do each show hints of an intelligence driving a passion.

Before they've really even started their hundred-mile hike, any typical audience will have decided they're two harmless sweetie-pies who deserve each other. And thereafter it becomes a question of how long it takes before *they* realize as much.

It worked for Shakespeare in *Much Ado About Nothing* and it worked for Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert in *It Happened One Night* and it works here, too. The fun is the journey, not the obvious destination.

Whence all this cuteness? Despite those opening personas, we find that she is a lover of good whiskey, celebrity gossip, horror fiction and Joni Mitchell. And he is a romantic dreamer who cries too easily, a self-styled "road kill of history" who keeps a journal and is far more prim than she.

See? What a pair of sweethearts.

It is to Finkle's credit that he maintains interest beyond cute. There's not much to the story: The "Lonesome Soldier" seems plenty implausible even without pondering that he's have to be at least, oh, 160 years old. And what magazine is going to hire a laid-off newspaper arts writer to do such a piece for \$2,500, anyway?

(Yes, please give specific contact info!)

The quality of the reporting is at least as dubious and the guiding. These two really are babes in the woods. What's fun are the itchy wool uniforms, the battle over the cell phone, the formal put-down contest and, especially, the rainy night in the spooky, deserted cabin when she finally agrees to take a slug from the jug to get warm and soon finds herself too tipsy to get those wet clothes off herself...

Well, that's the intermission and things certainly start moving thereafter, right up to the off-delayed clinch outside the tiny court house where history was made.

Kelly McAndrew looks like a belligerent creampuff stuffed into Union blues while James Knight is whip-thin and sexy-ironic in his Confederate gray. They work together with the grace and precision of a dance team, choreographed by director Jeremy Dobrish, who knows how to suggest a trek without bothering to move out.

A major asset to the proceedings are the fiendishly accurate costumes by Shelly Williams, who captures the stench of obsession and splashes it over every stitch.

The scenery, by Robin Sanford Roberts, is ingenious but puzzling in that it suggests the mesas of New Mexico more than the Virginia woods. Michael Gottlieb is the latest lighting designer struggling to find and control the idiosyncrasies of the new Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, a nice place to see a show.

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## 'Legally Blonde' legitimately entertains, especially teenage girls

By Jenna Long, The Daily Transcript

Thursday, April 1, 2010



Talk about a girly musical.

Comedic musicals, by nature, typically have a feminine appeal, but the Civic Theatre's "Legally Blonde " with its infectious "Omigod You Guys" anthem, takes the genre to a whole new level. Not that that's a bad thing.

It's actually a super-cute, feel-good "movical," following the popular 2001 hit film's plot precisely, proving itself worthy of the Broadway stage in 2007 and currently entertaining London's West End audiences. If there were ever a more seamless way to get your impatient teenage daughter excited about the dramatic arts ... I don't know that one exists.

Becky Gulsvig plays Elle Woods, a bubbly UCLA sorority sister who follows her ex-boyfriend to Harvard Law to get "serious" and win him back. In the process, she manages to astound her fellow students with an array of bright pink outfits, beauty tips and even some newfound knowledge of the law.

Uplifting, upbeat music and lyrics by Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin carries the story on a permanently positive note, with impressive performances by Gulsvig and her mentor-turned-love-interest Emmett, played affectionately by D.B. Bonds. A hilarious standout cameo by UPS delivery-man Kyle, portrayed by Ven Daniel, who wins raucous applause simply with his "walking porn" swaggering entrances. Plus, the show finds the perfect way for Elle's spunky SoCal sorority sisters to not disappear as she transfers coasts, by making them the "Greek chorus" in her head -- which allows for several extra-entertaining dancing, singing treats.

Just as Elle discovers throughout her journey to stay true to herself (and her wardrobe), "Legally Blonde" never parades as something it isn't, while delivering a heavy dose of high-pitched feminine fun. The over-the-top nature of the show leads to some overplayed gay and lesbian stereotypes, but as long as that doesn't get to you, it's a surefire show to be entertained.

### 'Alive and Well' elusively cliché

While "Legally Blonde" manages to throw its title in your face with a major number by the same name -- complete with a "Legally Blonde Remix" -- The Old Globe's show-in-the-round, "Alive and Well," has one of those titles you can't quite connect to its unique-on-the-outside, mainstream-on-the-inside story. A label that falls somewhere in the middle of blatant and "What? Why...?" would be ideal.

This straight play's plot concerns Zach (James Knight), a present-day Civil War enthusiast and re-enactor, leading reclusive reporter Carla (Kelly McAndrew) on a Virginia expedition to find the legendary apparition, the Lonesome Soldier. Knight's numerous oddities make for an affable -- if improbable -- persona, while McAndrew's uptight journalistic integrity just irritates, even when she has her conventional "I'm only fun when I'm drunk" episode.

The set, designed immaculately by Robin Sanford Roberts, uses the limited arena space of the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre to its fullest extent, selling the illusion of miles of wilderness terrain within a few hundred square feet of stage space.

Kenny Finkle's plot appears to present a never-before-seen set up, but the mismatched couple's "let's agree to disagree" mantra falls completely flat with endless back-and-forth bickering and compulsory arguments, even an amusing "comeback contest" can't sell the romantic tension that's supposed to be evident. We get it -- you're complete opposites forced to deal with each other's crazy ways; just pretend to fall in love already so we can go home.

That being said, this jaded outlook did not seem to be the presiding opinion of Tuesday night's audience, which generally seemed to buy into the incompatible couple's romantic journey -- with a few brave (misguided) souls even standing up to applaud the actors' performances.



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The humorous banter that is "Alive and Well"'s backbone, while predictable, is steady and intimately pleasing to those looking to feel something they've felt before. A love story that's overly familiar at its core, yet seen in a fresh setting (like the backwoods of Virginia), actually complements the plot's idea of trying to re-enact a moment in our nation's history that's long gone, but not nearly forgotten by those who wish to relive it.

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*"Legally Blonde" plays at the Civic Theatre through April 4. "Alive and Well" plays at The Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre through April 25.*

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# SAN DIEGO DOWNTOWN NEWS

April 2010

## 'Alive and Well' provides a Civil War battleground (of the sexes)

By CHARLENE BALDRIDGE | DOWNTOWN NEWS

Kenny Finkle's "Alive and Well," playing at the Old Globe through April 25, is a formulaic romantic comedy that strives unsuccessfully to deliver a meaningful message about our divided country. It's as if someone along the road to its co-world production (Virginia Stage Company and The Old Globe) decided such a message, tacked on at the 11th hour, would make the piece relevant beyond its obvious entertainment quotient.

The situation is fun. The actors are attractive and loaded with opposites-attract chemistry. The writing is glib and funny in a Yankee meets yokel way.

Big city writer Carla Keenan is on assignment in Virginia. Her guide is Civil War re-enactor Zachariah Clemenson, clad in rebel mufti. Fetchingly, she wears a Union army uniform as the two set out on her objective: to find the "ghost of the lonesome soldier" that's been seen around these parts, and write a story about him.

Zachariah, for whom the Civil War never ended, explains the sightings thus: "The people of this region have invented their own Sasquatch."

He insists that Carla can never write her story properly unless they walk 100 miles to Appomattox, where Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered. Carla insists she'd rather rent a car and sleep in hotels with Internet connections and free breakfasts. Zachariah will have none of it: she must walk in the shoes of a soldier, eat hard-tack and drink moonshine.

She is tough; he is tender though implacable, and soldier she does, hard-tack and moonshine too. The inevitable

SEE **ALIVE**, Page B13



Kelly McAndrew as Clara and James Knight as Zachariah in Kenny Finkle's "Alive and Well," playing at the Old Globe.  
Photo by CRAIG SCHWARTZ

### ALIVE

CONTINUED FROM Page B1

happens: sexual if not intellectual attraction grows while Zachariah guides Clara, unharmed, out the other side of her challenges, which include his broken compass and a violent storm.

Kelly McAndrew and James Knight are delightful as the ill-suited couple. They seem to relish performing this mindless fluff; their improbable pairing is like the Beverly Hillbilly meets college-educated, smartass Vanity Fair writer. As she declares at the outset, Carla is never wrong and never apologizes. Zachariah is equally stubborn. It's a perfect setup for a war and a throwback to once-popular battle of the sexes film and television.

It's as if Finkle purposefully wrote a play that would appeal to theatergoers of a certain age, who will have an enjoyable evening despite their better judgment.

New York director Jeremy Dobrish zestfully stages "Alive and Well" with fine period feel. Robin Roberts' set is facile and Shelly Williams' costumes are appropriately stressed and sweat-stained. Michael Gottlieb is lighting designer and Paul Peterson is responsible for sound.

"Alive and Well" continues at 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; and 7 p.m. Sundays through April 25 in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Old Globe, Balboa Park, \$29-\$62, [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org) or (619) 23-GLOBE.

# GAY & LESBIAN TIMES

April 15, 2010

## THEATER

### Ah, those gender wars

by Jean Lowerison

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CREDIT PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ

James Knight as Zachariah Clemenson and Kelly McAndrew as Carla Keenan in the World Premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, 'Alive and Well,' at The Old Globe through Sunday, April 25.

ing an itchy period costume or suffering all the discomforts of the time, including sleeping outside on the ground and downing hardtack snacks. But Zach insists, and that promised \$2500 for the story wins out.

This is an odd couple, to say the least, and though these are enormously attractive actors – Knight in particular maintains an endearing down-home presence throughout – a romance strains credulity, even when they get lost and take refuge in an abandoned cabin as shelter from the driving rain, and Carla lets down her guard enough to reminisce about making S'mores as a kid.

In fact, the whole enterprise seems contrived, though the constant mutual snarking that ends in an amusing but pointless formal put-down contest does at least enliven the proceedings for a while.

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It all seems pretty farb (re-enactors-peak for inauthentic).

*Alive and Well* plays through Sunday, April 25, at the Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. Shows Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m.; Saturday at 2 and 8 p.m.; Sunday at 2 and 7 p.m. For tickets, call 619-234-5623 or visit [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org). ●

# theater

## Ah, those gender wars

BY JEAN LOWERISON

Published Thursday, 15-Apr-2010 in [issue 1164](#)

### 'The Heidi Chronicles'

Heidi Holland (Kristianne Kurner) got in on the ground floor of the women's movement in the '70s, but that didn't protect her from a droopy social life and an eventual admission that her life was as empty as those she imagines her unliberated sisters' to have been.

New Village Arts Theatre dusts off Wendy Wasserstein's somewhat musty 1989 Tony- and Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Heidi Chronicles* for a run through Sunday, April 25, directed by Amanda Sitton.

Beginning with the all-too-familiar agony of a high-school dance in 1968, *The Heidi Chronicles* follows Heidi and her buddy Susan Johnston (Jacque Wilke) through the end of the '80s "me decade," by which time Dr. Holland is an authority on art history, specifically women in art history. Along the way are visits to a women's consciousness-raising group, talk of Esalen and bra burning and having it all.

Oh, and men. Heidi never seems to find the right guy, but she does bounce between two types: Scoop Rosenbaum (John DeCarlo), on-again-off-again lover and male chauvinist par excellence (and he has the effrontery to marry someone else), and Peter Patrone (Brian Mackey), cute, sweet and gay.

Sitton has added a nice touch: she's chosen to put talented local musician Linda Libby onstage to sing with guitar and keyboard the music of the times (Janis, the Beatles, Sam Cooke) specified in the script.

Kurner is effective as Heidi, though one does wonder why she seems so determined to be unhappy. Maybe it's that dreary dress she wears through the decades.

Wilke is a stitch as sidekick Susan, who gets it better than Heidi does. Running as fast as she can to keep up with the times, Susan finally notes that "By now I've been so many people I don't know who I am, and I don't care. Blaming anything on being a woman is just passé."

Mackey's Peter is exactly right for the role – funny, sympathetic, committed to his pediatric practice and accepting of others.

DeCarlo's Scoop is the kind of guy you love to hate – but can't help enjoying a conversation (or, apparently, a roll in the hay) with. Kelly Iversen, Frances Regal and Sunny Smith play an assortment of characters well.

Tim Wallace's minimalist set works well enough, and kudos to Brian Townsend for the projections on the back wall.



New Village Arts Theatre dusts off Wendy Wasserstein's somewhat musty 1989 Tony- and Pulitzer Prize-winning 'The Heidi Chronicles' for a run through Sunday, April 25.

CREDIT: PHOTO BY ADAM BRICK



James Knight as Zachariah Clemenson and Kelly McAndrew as Carla Keenan in the World Premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, 'Alive and Well,' at The Old Globe through Sunday, April 25.

CREDIT: PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ

This play is best seen by those who weren't there, to whom it may be a revelation. To old ladies like me who were, the best thing about it is Heidi's sad realization at the end: "I don't blame any of us. It's just that I feel stranded. And I thought the whole point was that we wouldn't feel stranded. I thought the point was that we were all in this together."

*The Heidi Chronicles* plays through Sunday, April 25, at New Village Arts Theatre. Shows Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; matinees Saturday at 3 and Sunday at 2 p.m. For tickets, call 760-433-3245 or visit [www.newvillagearts.org](http://www.newvillagearts.org).

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## "ALIVE AND WELL" (OR NOT SO WELL) PREMIERES AT GLOBE

March 30, 5:11 PM - [San Diego Theater Examiner](#) - Carol Davis



Kelly McAndrew and James Knight in Kenny Finkle's "Alive and Well"  
Craig Schwartz

By Carol Davis, San Diego, California

Remember the Clark Gable/Claudette Colbert 1934 comedy “It Happened One Night”? Well Kenny Finkle’s “Alive And Well”, currently making its Co-World premiere with Virginia Stage Company, Norfolk, Virginia at the Old Globe Theatre in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, reminded me of that movie.

Here’s the caper for the movie: “A spoiled socialite escapes her domineering father who is trying to annul her recent marriage to her fortune hunting new husband (her father disapproves) only to run smack dab into an out of work newspaper reporter on the bus back to New York to reunite with her love. Once recognizing the socialite, he promises to reunite the couple, only if she agrees to give him an exclusive story. Otherwise, he threatens, he will return her to her domineering father and collect the ten thousand dollar reward on her head.

One thing leads to another on their journey to find her lost love. Of the more memorable is the hitchhiking scene that shows them on the road hoping to get a lift. When the cars whiz by him, she steps up and hikes her skirt up to her knees to help in the effort. There is also a motel scene in which they pretend to be husband and wife in order to save money that's strictly for laughs. Well, I'm sure you guessed the outcome. It has been hailed as one of the 'greatest romantic comedies to go down in movie history'. You may still be able to rent it.

They say imitation is the highest form of flattery. "Alive and Well" looks similar to 'IHON' but it's a far cry from it. That was my first reaction, though, after leaving the theatre on opening night of the Globe's production. (I love the old Black and Whites.)

Here's Finkle's caper in "Alive and Well": Carla Keenan (Kelly McAndrew) is a big city (read New York?) reporter without a beat to cover and with lots attitude. Zachariah Clemenson (James Knight) is a Civil War 're-enactor' when not driving a cab. He lives in Norfolk, Virginia. In his spare time he hires himself out as a scout or 're-enactor' who takes curious folks looking for some added value news about the Civil War on long treks across central Virginia under the guise of looking for 'a Lonesome Soldier' - the oldest living Civil War Veteran (I believe the oldest living WWI veteran recently passed away). He has shown himself to Clemenson several times, or so he says.

We meet up with them in a diner in Wakefield, VA. As he scarves down some scrambled eggs, etc. she tries to figure him out. She talks, he eats. She's the one who answered the add to write a documentary about 'The Lonesome Soldier', she goes on. It's to be published in some yet to be identified paper and she got a \$2500 advance, she continues. He nods, they compare their differences. She's skeptical, he reassures.

He finishes his meal convincing her that he's the real deal and the Lonesome Soldier actually exists. He gets out his 'trusty' compass and off they go into the wild blue yonder to seek out this 'Lonesome Soldier' story.

They schlep, sans any modern day conveniences such as her BlackBerry (Carla is addicted to hers) and in full and authentic Yankee and Confederate uniforms and gear (Shelly Williams). According to Clemenson they will travel along the 100-mile path Confederate General Robert E.

Lee followed when he retreated from Petersburg to Appomattox in 1865, on foot. Zachariah is absolutely in love with the beauty of Appomattox.

Carla and Zach trudge along through the woods on their long hike while they continue the battle of North and South. She is true blue Northern Yankee and he is smothered in Southern Comfort (he makes his own bootleg he confesses), easy as he goes. She's tough as nails never letting her guard down, he sobs over a broken relationship. Her love life is nothing to write home about and his just went down the drain. He drinks, she complains. He's an idealist she's a realist. She wants to drive, he insists on hiking.

Sounds like a setup for the perfect romantic comedy, one of those opposite attracts kind, except they try too hard and none of it rings true.

Some might say it's the journey not the destination that counts. True or not, this journey takes too long (let's blame it on Zach's broken compass) and accomplishes too little so that by the time they reach Appomattox and the truth is out about this Lonesome Soldier myth, the actual story turns out to be 'much ado about nothing'.

Both actors try to convince, but there is little or no chemistry between the two to make that happen. Maybe by now, some light went on, but on opening night nothing clicked in. Of the two, Knight is the more convincing except when he sobs uncontrollably about a letter he holds from his ex telling of their breakup.

Some of the scenes are pretty funny especially when they get caught in a downpour one night and her Union jacket gets soaked and so itchy she begins to tear it off.

That's when they stumble into some remote cabin (Robin Sanford Roberts) and she takes a swig of his homegrown brew finishing it off to the last drop, setting the scene for the first romantic encounter. He helps her take her jacket off; she's too woozy from the booze and they both fall unconvincingly on to the bed. Unfortunately we had to wait until just before intermission to get that part of the story moving.

To director Jeremy Dobrish's credit, he is able to make a little something out of very little. With some prodding and creative thinking we are led to believe that they are making some sort of headway toward their destination, but are actually walking in circles. Robin Sanford Robert's set is designed to give that impression with a map outline of central Virginia in the center of the stage with raised step like platforms used as seats, beds, benches and tables.

Both McAndrew and Knight do yeoman's work showing that the North/South battle lines are clearly outlined before the trip even begins. If that's the playwright's intention, he achieved it. When compared to our present day political climate, Finkle just might be on to something: put each side in a remote cabin in a remote part of the country where no one can interrupt, give them enough booze, let them duke it out until they come to their senses and then send them on a long hike to Appomattox for a reality check.

Finkle's main story, the romance part of it needs a bit more refining, clarification and perhaps some culling. There are some cute and clever insights in "Alive and Well" but not enough to carry a two-act play as it now stands however, but it's a good beginning.

See you at the theatre.

Dates: March 25<sup>th</sup> – April 25, 2010

Organization: The Old Globe Theatre

Phone: 619-234-5623

Production Type: Romantic Comedy

Where: 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

Ticket Prices: \$29 -\$62.00

Web: [wwwTheOldGlobe.org](http://wwwTheOldGlobe.org)

Venue: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre

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## BEHIND THE SCENES

by Jenni Prisk

Email Jenni

Hello everyone! Lovely drop of rain this week! Everything looks very green and fresh. And it looks that way on our stages too.

### My 2 Cents

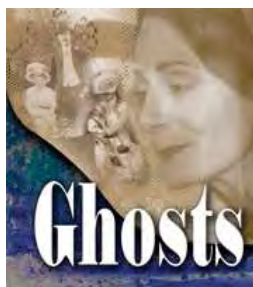
*Alive and Well*, is well, alive and running in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre through April 25. It's a quirky play, pitting a big city reporter against a young man who loves to reenact the Civil War against each other and the environment in their quest for the ghost of a soldier...or is it each other? Kelly McAndrew and James Knight play Carla and Zacharia. McAndrew, a San Diego native, brings a freshness, clarity and charm (with an edge!) to Carla. Knight plays Zach with a simple, straightforward touch, yet also with a fervor for the days of yore. They are wary of each other until they get caught in a torrential downpour and take refuge in a cabin where they become closer, and share more about their lives and losses. The play, by Kenny Finkle, is not memorable, but the talented actors give it life and laughter. Jeremy Dobrish directed.

James Knight and Kelly McAndrew. Photo Craig Schwartz



Now onto *Speech and Debate* by Stephen Karam at Diversionsary, running through April 11. As the title would suggest, it's a wordy piece about three young people in Salem, Oregon who typify most of our youth today in that they have every piece of e-technology and know how to use it, not always wisely! Howie (Markuz Rodriguez, languid and loose) trolls the sex-chat rooms, Solomon (Kevin Koppman-Gue, passionate and private about his sexual orientation) and quirky, kinky, insecure Diwata (Rachael VanWormer) as the online diva who (thinks she) knows it all and prefers to turn every situation into a monologue or dramatic performance. And rearing his ugly head through all the mayhem is the unseen pedophile. Wendy Waddell, rounds out the cast as both a teacher and reporter. There's a good lesson in this play, but it could be told in a shorter time. Jason Southerland directed.

And finally to *Sweeney Todd* at The Theatre in Old Town, through April. First let me begin by saying that I am not a fan of Stephen Sondheim's music therefore I am at a disadvantage before the show begins! The grim set (Sean Fanning) fills the whole stage and slowly the demon barber of Fleet Street is described through song by a very good chorus. Todd, who has changed his name, returns to London for revenge following the disappearance of his wife and daughter Johanna. He meets the demonic Mrs. Lovett who draws him into her parlor, then to her upper floor, then inextricably into her life, and that's where the whole bloody story takes a turn. Deborah Gilmour Smyth is a wondrous Mrs. Lovett. Full of sensual and sensible barbs and innuendoes, she imbues the role. Sean Murray (who co-directed with James Vasquez) plays Sweeney Todd as a melancholy, disappointed character whose only excitement comes when he has a new head to shave. I would like to have seen more of the demon in him. The supporting cast is very good. Singing standouts: Kurt Norby, Tom Zohar, Jacob Caltrider and Ashley Fox Linton. The musicians (directed by Charlie Reuter) are unseen but satisfying. It's a grand production of a perennial favorite.



### Behind the Scenes with the Bard

Now that it's April, we can say that *The Taming of the Shrew* at The Theatre, Inc. opens this month. Yikes! That must be why we are adding props and scenery and fighting! Well, it is about a taming. It's scary when we decide we are ready to put down our scripts, and there we are, naked, in the middle of a scene with absolutely no idea what comes next! Or as I did the other night while rehearsing Act II, knew I had a line, so used one from Act III! We are all very comfortable with each other now, which is just as well as there is a lot of trust needed in this physical comedy. I am learning such a lot from Sandra Ellis-Troy about stage "business" and characterization. We eat a lot too!

Director Doug brings us fruit, but we seem to go for the popcorn, hot tamales, chocolate and cookies! It's a blast!

### Theatre News

OnStage Playhouse presents *Into the Woods*, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, book by James Lapine, directed by James M. McCulloch, musical direction by Kirk Valles. April 2 through May 1, 2010.

*Legally Blonde* runs at the Civic from March 30 - April 4, 2010 (that's Easter Sunday folks.) This show has garnered much kudos on Broadway.

Coronado Playhouse's *Cinderella* takes the stage April 23-May 30<sup>th</sup>. The award winning creative team that brought you last summer's critically acclaimed *West Coast Premiere of The It Girl* is at the helm of this

# Alive And Well

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She: I never apologize cause I am never wrong.  
He: Neither am I!

Is this any way to start a relationship? Well, in the world of romantic comedies it is. Think of all the great screen couples whose road to love began with out-and-out hatred, or at least some good old-fashioned dislike. Think Gable and Colbert in *It Happened One Night*, Crystal and Ryan in *When Harry Met Sally*, or last year's Reynolds and Bullock in *The Proposal*. Couples like these carry on a great tradition begun perhaps by Will Shakespeare in *The Taming Of The Shrew*, or who knows, maybe from as far back as Adam and Eve.

Playwright Kenny Finkle adds one more memorable couple to the list in his terrific new stage romcom, *Alive And Well*, now getting its co-World Premiere (in collaboration with Virginia Stage Company) at San Diego's Old Globe Theater. The couple in question are straight-laced Yankee reporter Carla Keenan and good ol' Southern boy Zachariah Clemenson, forced by circumstances to share each other's company for ten days under the hot Virginia sun.

Starchy blonde Carla, strapped for cash, has answered an ad on Craigslist to write an article on *The Lonesome Soldier*, rumored to be a vagabond Confederate grayback still fighting the Civil War in the hills of Virginia. Her guide for the duration is a lanky, bearded Southerner who drives a cab for a living but does Civil War reenactments "to feel alive."

If you, like Carla, have no idea what a Civil War reenactment is, here's the 411, courtesy of Wikipedia. "American Civil War reenactment is an effort to recreate the appearance of a particular battle or other event associated with the American Civil War by hobbyists known as Civil War reenactors." Zachariah is a Civil War reenactor, and proud of it.

At their first meeting at a local diner, Carla sets down the ground rules, one of which is that there will be no first names. She will be Ms. Keenan. He will be Mr. Clemenson. "We are not friends," she insists.

From the get-go, Zach and Carla (I'll stick with first names for the sake of brevity) couldn't be more mismatched. He believes disagreements make this country great. She thinks that's what's wrong with it. She certainly doesn't get his sense of humor. (The man says "gour-METT" for "gourmet" because he likes the way it sounds, and keeps mispronouncing it once he realizes how much it irritates her.) She, on the other hand, doesn't appreciate it when he corrects her pronunciation of Norfolk. It should be NAH-fuk, he explains, which she finally, grudgingly repeats (with a deliberate accent on the FUK.) It's not that Carla is a complete stick-in-the-mud. She confesses to being a fan of the James Bond pix, particularly of "the Roger Moore years," something which she is "not open to discussing" with Zach. Later, though, when her cell phone rings with the James Bond Theme, it's clear that her fandom is of the decidedly geeky sort.

Conveniently, both Zach and Carla are single, though in the former's case, it's only since this morning. That's when his on-again-off-again girlfriend Regina dumped him once again, and to make matters worse, called him a pig—in a letter—and all because of his reenactments!

Following a tabletop demonstration of the fall of Appomattox using salt and pepper shakers and a bottle of Tabasco sauce, Zach shows Carla where the last sighting of the Lonesome Soldier was, and explains their plan of action. They're going to walk 100 miles in ten days. No matter that Carla would rather stay in comfortable hotels and drive. That would be "farb," i.e. as inauthentic as the "fake garb" that polyester reenactors wear. Thus, they will both wear authentic Civil War uniforms, his gray, hers blue.



And so "Mr. Clemenson" and "Ms. Keenan" embark on their ten-day trek to Appomattox, scene of Lee's surrender to Grant.

Playwright Finkle wisely keeps Carla's thawing to Zach's considerable charms from happening too quickly. She's not at all sympathetic to Zach's tendency to tears, which he calls "sensitivity." When a misreading of his compass gets them miles off course and Zach blubbers, "This is pathetic! I'm pathetic!", you can almost hear Carla thinking, "Damn right you are!"

But little by little things do begin to change, on both their parts. She's "badass and fearless" in an electric storm, and he's impressed. In a drunken getting-ready-for-bed scene, sparks of a very different sort begin, oh so slightly, to ignite, and the "comeback contest" that ends Act One is akin to foreplay, albeit of the romantic comedy sort.

Anyone who doubts the happy ending in store for our Red-State/Blue-State couple has not seen his or her fair share of romcoms. As in the really great ones, the fun is in the getting there, with director Jeremy Dobrish keeping the pace swift and the performances just heightened enough to be comedic gems.

For someone portraying a character seemingly born without a sense of humor, Broadway vet (and San Diego native) Kelly McAndrew gets laughs aplenty, and it's fun indeed to see her stiffen every time Zach does something purposely designed to get on her nerves. Later, as Carla begins to loosen up under the influence of one of the many flasks of homemade moonshine Zach has brought along for sustenance, McAndrew lets us see the bit of mush Carla keeps hidden deep inside, and in the comeback contest, the actress demonstrates great comic timing. By the end, we begin to see just why Zach might find this sour Northerner a bit of a sweetheart after all.

As for James Knight's performance as Zach, the actor is so darned charming and sexy that it's a wonder Carla doesn't rip off his clothes and go for it at their first meeting, but I digress. What we have here is a highly talented young performer with great comedic chops, the ability to cry real laugh-getting tears, authenticity, and loads of charisma. And he's got a whole bunch of Shakespeare credits to boot—so keep an eye out for that name.

Robin Sanford Brown's great in-the-round set is a relief map of the part of Virginia where Zach and Carla are making their trek, which transforms quite amazingly into an abandoned lodge—double bed, bear rug and all. Michael Gottlieb's terrific lighting runs the gamut from bright Virginia sun to lightning flashes in a room lit only by a fire in the hearth to one of the most exquisite fade-outs I've seen on stage. Paul Peterson's sound design sets the mood perfectly with bluegrass-county-civil war tunes, and some nicely scary peals of thunder. Shelly Williams' costumes are a darned authentic pair of Civil War uniforms, McAndrews' nicely tailored to fit her decidedly unsoldierlike curves. The production stage manager for Alive And Well is Moira Gleason.

Regional theaters across America are likely to take to Alive And Well as much as they have to Finkle's Indoor/Outdoor. And that goes for those in the North as well as the South, as the playwright takes no sides in Carla and Zach's battle between Yankee and Confederate. No raunchier than a PG movie yet with a sophistication that belies its lack of overt sex or even sexual innuendo, Alive And Well is a delight from its start to a finish that may well put a tear or two in your eyes even as a smile lights up your face.

The Old Globe Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Balboa Park, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego. Through April 25. Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:00. Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00. Saturdays at 2:00 and 8:00. Sundays at 2:00 and 7:00. Reservations: 619 234-5623 [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org)

--Steven Stanley  
March 28, 2010

Photos: Craig Schwartz

THE SHOW: Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy *Alive and Well* directed by Jeremy Dobrish, a co-production with Virginia Stage Company continuing at the Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre **through April 25**

THE STORY: Big city writer Carla Keenan is on assignment in Virginia, researching the illusive Lonesome Soldier, who's been spotted somewhere between Petersburg and Appomattox, where Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant in 1865. The Lonesome Soldier is a Rebel ghost, a reminder in the larger scheme of things that the war between the Blue and the Gray has never ended. It hasn't ended for Zachariah Clemonson, a Virginia denizen who drives taxi for a living and spends his spare time doing Civil War re-enactments. With a \$2,500 advance in her pocket and Zachariah as her guide, Clara sets off to do the research needed to write her story. She wants to stay in hotels with Internet connections and free breakfasts; he insists the only way to get the real story is to walk the walk--in the shoes of the Rebel army. Thus the conflict is set up: She a go-by-the-book, uptight woman who fancies she has scruples; he, an uncouth yokel who delights in turning her crank. She packs a cell phone; he,hardtack, rifles and moonshine.



His compass fails, there is a horrific storm, she is frightened, they find a cabin, and she warms herself with moonshine. Need I say more?

If this sounds like a set up for unlikely romance, it is. Formulaic? You bet. Fun? To a point. It all depends upon one's tolerance for the situation as it begins to become repetitive. Finkle writes funny dialogue and we all need a comedy now and then. But the plot is every Doris Day film, every *Beverly Hillbillies* sitcom. My major objection beyond frivolity is the play's attempt to be relevant by underscoring the ways our nation is still divided against itself, as if standing at Appomattox and pondering the fact that Lee and Grant conceived the nation as one and indivisible could somehow cure all our ills.

THE PERFORMERS, Kelly McAndrew and James Knight, are adorable in these throwback roles. Contrary to what a male colleague wrote, I think the actors have good chemistry. Quite apparently they have a good time performing this mindless, undemanding (of the audience) show. What is sad is that their talents are wasted as are the Globe's resources and director Jeremy Dobrish.



*James Knight as Zachariah Kelly McAndrew as Carla Photo: Craig Schwartz*

THE PRODUCTION: Robin Sanford Roberts's scenic design provides a map and bas relief of Virginia, though the narrowness of the "steppes" made me a bit nervous. Shelly Williams' costumes grew appropriately sweaty and distressed as the trek wore on, perhaps the only realistic elements in one's theatrical evening. Paul Peterson (sound) and Michael Gottlieb (lighting) conjured up a fine storm.

THE LOCATION: **through April 25**, 7 pm Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays; 8 pm Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 pm Saturdays and Sundays; Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org) or (619) 296-8044.

BOTTOM LINE: Worth a try for those in need of fluffiness

Globe’s ‘Alive and Well’ fails by formula

theatre review

By Patricia Morris Buckley  
SDUN Theatre Critic

As a long-time fan of romantic comedies, either in movies or the theater, I know the basic rules about the genre. Yet the Old Globe Theatre’s production of Kenny Finkle’s “Alive and Well” clings to these rules so tightly, there isn’t any romance or comedy left in it. All we’re

“ALIVE AND WELL”

Through April 25  
Old Globe Theatre  
Tickets: \$29-\$62  
23-GLOBE  
TheOldGlobe.org

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Zach has been hired to be her guide and he takes the job seriously, insisting that they wear period costumes (the itchy kind), travel without cell phones (throwing hers in the bushes) and sleep in the woods (and

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This is a two-person play that begins when Carla, an uptight city reporter, meets Zach, a sentimental



James Knight as Zachariah Clemenson and Kelly McAndrew as Carla Keenan re-enact a clichéd courtship in the world premier of Kenny Finkle’s romantic comedy, “Alive and Well,” through April 25. (Craig Schwartz)

the stink that comes with that choice). Carla loathes the idea, but loves the big advance she’s received and so she goes along with Zach.

So of course they bicker. A lot. Then she gets drunk and lets down her inhibitions around him, almost leading to a kiss. Then they bicker some more,

secrets and more are revealed, they continue their journey and finally their romance begins. It’s all totally textbook, so much so that the audience can predict every single plot device well in advance. While that might be said of many rom-coms, it’s the other elements and the lightness of the nudge toward coupledness that makes one such a great, satisfying pleasure. That’s exactly what this one lacks.

Instead we get a long series of monologues. Characters that aren’t very interesting. A plot that’s 60 minutes long in a two-hour show. However, there is one wonderful speech in the last 10 minutes of the show where Zach talks about how for many countries that experience a civil war the two factions are rarely able to rejoin as one – and then how that was possible for the USA in the way Lee surrendered and Grant negotiated the peace. And, of course, we know he’s not just talking about the country, but also Carla and Zach.

If only the rest of the play had that same witty wordplay, subtle themes and honest emotion (never once did I believe Zach’s whining about his girlfriend breaking up with him). The actors, Kelly McAndrew and James Knight, gamely try to make the play work, but it’s really beyond them to bring

see Well, page 20

FROM PAGE 16  
WELL

these cardboard characters to life or to give them real chemistry – absolutely essential for any romantic comedy.

Shelly Williams’ costumes not only look authentic, but also show the dirt of the trail as they progress. Set designer Robin Sanford Roberts’ map-like floor is fun, but elements such as the pull-out bed from a hill are so clever that they distract from the story. Lighting designer Michael Gottlieb gives us a breathtaking moment only possible in the theater-in-the-round by projecting the view from the hill on each of the four walls.

Director Jeremy Dobrish does well with making us feel we’ve traveled far, even though we’ve only taken a few spins around the stage. But the journey that we really crave has to begin with the play itself and it is dead on arrival. ♦

◦ Uncategorized

# Globe's 'Alive and Well' fails by formula

Posted by admin on 4/16/10 • Categorized as Balboa Park, Theater

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SDUN Theatre Critic



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Zach has been hired to be her guide and he takes the job seriously, insisting that they wear period costumes (the itchy kind), travel without cell phones (throwing hers in the bushes) and sleep in the woods (and the stink that comes with that choice). Carla loathes the idea, but loves the big advance she's received and so she goes along with Zach.

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### **“Alive and Well”**

**Through April 25**

**Old Globe Theatre**

**Tickets: \$29-\$62**

**23-GLOBE**

**[TheOldGlobe.org](http://TheOldGlobe.org)**

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## **“ Alive and Well ”**

**The** new Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre in-the-round is once again showing its merits with a production of **Kenny Finkle's ALIVE AND WELL**, directed by **Jeremy Dobrish**, playing nightly from Mar 20<sup>th</sup> thru to April 25<sup>th</sup> at the **Old Globe**. With Scenic and Costume Designs by **Robin Sanford Roberts** and **Shelly Williams** respectively,

**ALIVE AND WELL**, features actors **James Knight** and **Kelly McAndrew**....and, takes place in Central Virginia (between St. Petersburg and Appomattox).

(As noted) **ALIVE AND WELL** carries on this grand tradition of a contentious courtship, one that has been charming audiences for centuries. That shouldn't be surprising. It has always been entertaining to watch two apparently mismatched people battle-it-out, for nearly two hours, only to realize what we in the audience suspected from the beginning: that they are, as Cole Porter once wrote, "*fated to be mated*".

James McKnight and Kelly McAndrew



(per R. Hampton) **ALIVE AND WELL** is a riveting yarn about a cab driver, ZACHARY, who is entranced by 'civil war reenactments' ... a simple soul, ZACH (**James McKnight**) has evolved into a social moralist...giving life to the meaning and consequences of the battle of Appomattox. He is also in pursuit of the *lonesome soldier*, one gathers is his enigmatic spirit. The other person in the play is CARLA (as played by **Kelly McAndrew**) – an unemployed female journalist, who says reporters are being laid off, no matter the skill level. So, she is in desperation, and has replied to an ad in Craig's List, which offers \$5,000 to walk/hike through the various battle fields, as a *soldier of the North*. She is to record her journey and experiences for

a magazine. ZACH will be her guide, and will assist in providing historical data!

Their journey together becomes quickly skewed when it is revealed ZACHARIAH has become lost. Since he is unmasked, he refers to himself as a 'loser' and begins to weep. Other of his personal problems then come tumbling out, such as the fact his girl friend has broken up with him again...and he also like to 'tipple'... ZACH is rife with personal problems! On the surface CARLA looks very much together. However, as things get a little tough, and she is rain-soaked and tired, her own 'truths' begin to reveal themselves. Helping this along is a *flask* she is invited to take a 'swig' from, in order to warm up. Her lips turn blue. She readily endorses ZACH's home-made brew, comparing it to a favorite vintage whiskey she has kept for special occasions. The whiskey enables her to see ZACH in a different light, and romantic sparks begin to fly between the two of them. Actor **James Knight** does a wonderful job in his portrayal; he convincingly uses a country, almost hillbilly accent to marvelous advantage. He jabbers constantly in hyper-verbal fashion, similar to desperation in a child try to express itself. The tension between ZACH and CARLA grows...then at fade out, as their lips come closer, closer together....the stage darkens....adding to the romantic tension reigning throughout.



(As further noted) With its snappy dialogue and clever character development, **ALIVE AND WELL** establishes CARLA and ZACH as a classic romantic comedy team in its first five minutes. She is the hard-boiled Type-A city girl tied to her Blackberry, he is the whiskey-swigging good ol' country boy living largely in the past. These two, with their Union and Confederate uniforms, the food each one orders and the way they eat it, all quickly distinguish them as two people headed for a blow-up... and, then a match-up, with the promise of a lot of laughter along the way!



Look to see the **Old Globe** bringing in a 2004 Tony Award Nominee for Best Actress – **Tovah Feldshuh** in **GOLDA'S BALCONY** On April 28<sup>th</sup> – May 30<sup>th</sup>. For ticketing, call ...

(619) 23-GLOBE, or go online at

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

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# FEATURES

March 21, 2010

## 'Alive and Well' has roots in a famous death

### DETAILS

#### "Alive and Well"

Old Globe Theatre

**When:** Now in previews.

Opens Thursday, runs Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 7 p.m.; Thursdays-Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 and 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 and 7 p.m. (no matinee today), through April 25

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By James Hebert

THEATER CRITIC

It's just possible that Kenny Finkle's exit from Ford's Theatre was the hastiest since John Wilkes Booth stage-dove from the place's balcony in 1865.

As it happens, the two retreats — by the playwright and the presidential assassin — are weirdly related. They're also linked to the Old Globe Theatre's "Alive and Well," which opens this week (and is, of all things, a romantic comedy, but stay with us).

As the playwright tells it, he was commissioned about five years ago by Ford's — the Washington, D.C., location of Abraham Lincoln's fatal 1865 shooting, and now home to regular stage productions — to write a play about the night of the assassination.

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**Zachariah (James Knight) and Carla (Kelly McAndrew) are reluctant companions in "Alive and Well," which playwright Kenny Finkle calls a throwback to old-style romantic comedies.**

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of acts, he laughed a lot, he got shot in the head. I said, 'I don't really know how to make a play

SEE Finkle, E6

### FINKLE

CONTINUED FROM E1

#### The Civil War is a major factor in 'Alive and Well'

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So instead, Finkle focused the piece on Booth — which apparently was not what the theater had in mind. The play got as far as a single reading; its first

scene had Booth jumping from the balcony, yelling, *'Sic semper tyrannis!'* (the assassin's famous Latin proclamation against tyrants).

"Really, I think if they could have fired me right at that moment, they would have," Finkle says. "But they had to wait the 45 minutes until the play was finished."

Finkle didn't actually flee, and he admits with a laugh that he wasn't technically fired, either. Instead, he walked away after declining a chance to rewrite.

Yet the short-lived commission proved "extraordinarily fruitful," because the research behind it paved the way for "Alive and Well," a play set in modern times but steeped in dramas and traumas that stretch back to the Confederacy.

The two-character work, directed by Jeremy Dobrish, is a co-world premiere with Virginia Stage Co., where it had a run last fall. Its story involves a magazine reporter named Carla (Kelly McAndrew) and a Civil War re-enactor named Zachariah (James Knight), who've been

reluctantly paired to search the South for a mysterious figure known as the Lonesome Soldier.

"People claim he's a bona fide veteran of the Civil War," Finkle says. "He may be a ghost, he may be a living person, they don't know. So, she's been hired to try and find this guy, and Zach has been hired to be her guide, because he knows the land really well."

Along the way, the cynical Northerner and the devoted son of the South work up their own little civil war. Finkle describes the play as a throwback to old-style romcoms, and the setup does seem reminiscent of Hollywood classics such as "It Happened One Night" and "The Philadelphia Story."

Finkle found prime inspiration, though, in modern accounts of the Civil War's legacy in the South. Especially pivotal was "Confederates in the Attic," Tony Horwitz's 1998 book whose topics rove from war re-enactors to "Gone With the Wind" to continuing racial frictions.

"What (Horwitz) sort of found, and where the name comes from, is that the Civil War is alive and well in America," Finkle says. "We're still living it."

Though Finkle is hesitant to generalize, he perceives "a lot of sentiment (among Southerners) that we're just taking a break from the war. Some people say they would never go to the Appomattox Court House (site of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's capitulation), because as long as they don't go there, they don't have to believe the South surrendered. Things like that."

For Southerners and Northerners alike, there's also the reality that "unlike any other war, the Civil War happened on our soil. So that history is such a direct line to who we are, where we came from. All the issues that were part of the Civil War are still things we're coming to terms with."

"People can say: 'My great-great-granddaddy fought right here. And we have the flag he carried into battle hanging in our living room.' Those things aren't abstract."

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stract about re-enactors, those serious souls who meticulously mimic the war experience, right down to the dying.

"Zachariah tells us he's famous because he can do 'the bloat,' which is what happens to soldiers when they die and have been left for a couple of days," says Finkle. "(The armies) didn't know so many people were going to die, so they didn't have a way of disposing of bodies."

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In the world of re-enactment, the cardinal sin is "farb," which Finkle describes as "a mix of two words, 'fake' and 'garb,'" although there are differing accounts of its derivation.

"Re-enactors say to each other, 'Look at that guy; he looks farby.' He doesn't look authentic. It's a super-important thing. Like, the skinnier you are, (the better), so you look as though you haven't eaten."

This all can sound a little goofy to outsiders. As Finkle puts it: "We think these people are kind of funny, like (characters from) a Renaissance fair."

"But it's really coming from a totally different place than that. It's coming from a real need to preserve and remember what happened in our country. And specifically in the South, where the history is so alive. They really feel they're the keepers of



Kelly McAndrew and James Knight stage their own little civil war – and navigate the wars of romance as well – in "Alive and Well."

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And a play seems as good an excuse as any to poke around in that particular attic. It's worth remembering that Booth himself was a stage performer who actually had appeared at Ford's Theatre.

His last act there failed to leave 'em laughing. "Alive and Well" at least has a better shot at that.

**James Hebert:** (619) 293-2040; jim.hebert@uniontrib.com; blog: houseseats.uniontrib.com; Twitter: jimhebert

## ‘Alive and Well’ has roots in a famous death

By [James Hebert](#), UNION-TRIBUNE THEATER CRITIC

Sunday, March 21, 2010 at 12:03 a.m.



/ Photo courtesy of The Old Globe.

Kelly McAndrew and [James Knight](#) in rehearsal for the World Premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, *Alive and Well*, at The Old Globe March 20 - April 25.

### DETAILS

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## THEATER

# Politics and romance at play in new 'Alive'

BY PAM KRAGEN  
pkragen@nctimes.com

Back in the 1860s, America was sharply divided politically, with Southern conservatives harshly critical of a liberal Northern president who wanted to extend basic human rights to the poor and underprivileged. Sound a bit familiar?

It sure did to Kenny Finkle, whose play "Alive and Well" opens in previews Saturday at the Old Globe. The romantic comedy — a co-premiere with Virginia Stage Company — is a contemporary love story between a big-city Northern newspaper reporter named Carla Keenan and a Southern cab driver named Zachariah Clemenson, who moonlights as a Civil War re-enactor.

Zach and Carla's personal and political differences mirror those of the Confederates and Union troops as the pair get hopelessly lost on Lee's Retreat Trail (the road Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee rode to surrender to Union Gen. U.S. Grant at the Appomattox Court House in April 1865, ending the Civil War). Four years earlier, no one could have imagined that North and South would reunite, and love seems unlikely to bloom between Carla and Zach, but it does. Could today's Blue Dog Democrats and tea partiers be far behind?

"Alive and Well" premiered in Virginia last September and the Philadelphia-born Finkle, 38, is re-

## "Alive and Well"

**WHEN** previews, 8 p.m. Saturday through Wednesday; opens March 25 and runs through April 25; showtimes, 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays

**WHERE** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, San Diego

**TICKETS** \$29-\$62

**INFO** 619-234-5623  
www.theoldglobe.org

working elements of the script for its San Diego premiere. He talked about the play in a phone interview from his New York home last week.

**Question:** Did you do a lot of research on the Civil War before you wrote this play?

**Answer:** Yes. Actually, it started back in 2004 when I was commissioned by the Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C., to write a play about the night Lincoln was assassinated. After doing lots of research, I realized the real drama of the night was John's (Wilkes Booth) story, not Lincoln's. Lincoln was not an active character. All he did was sit there, laugh a lot and get shot. So I decided to write the play from John's point of view.

**Q:** I'm guessing that did not go well.

**A:** The board hated it. It was heartbreaking for me at the time, because I really wanted it to work. Then when Virginia Stage did



James Knight and Kelly McAndrew rehearse a scene for the Old Globe's premiere of "Alive and Well." Courtesy photo

another of my plays, they asked me to come back and I told them that I'd done all this research on the Civil War and I'd like to take another crack at it. But this time I was interested in writing about how we're still such a divided country. Now it's not North versus South, but liberals versus conservatives. How can we still be united when we're so divided?

**Q:** How did this play evolve?

**A:** The first draft of "Alive and Well" had 20 characters including Zach and Carla, and it was a drama. Every time we did a reading, the audience would perk up whenever Zach and Carla were on-stage, and then they'd get sullen when they'd leave. So we decided to pare it down to the two characters everybody liked.

**Q:** How did you come up with the idea of having Zach be a re-enactor?

**A:** Re-enactment seems weird, but it comes from a

passionate desire to preserve history. That's a good metaphor for a bouncing-off point of the differences in America. We have this difficult reporter from the North who's always thinking about art and culture and the future, and this reenactor from the South, who is a steward of America's history.

**Q:** Your play was described in Virginia as being in the spirit of "Romancing the Stone" and "The African Queen." Were you trying to create an "opposites attract" romance in that style?

**A:** I was trying to write a romantic comedy in the classic and best sense of the words. They're often really cheesy, though. I wanted to honor that tradition but use the style to tell a bigger story. Katharine Hepburn is amazing, and I see a lot of her in Carla. She's that sort of woman. Anyone who

.....  
See 'Alive,' 22

## 'Alive'

Continued from Page 20

loves those sorts of movies will enjoy my homage to them in this play.

**Q:** I understand that some of your on-site research made it into the play?

**A:** I was obsessed with seeing the Appomattox Court House, and I asked a woman to come with me on a day trip and we got lost traveling on all these little country roads. Eventually we made it there by sunset, and I found it to be a very moving place where the surrender occurred.

We stood there and looked out over the valley and I thought about what it means to surrender. Why do we feel that surrender means we're letting go of something? It could be the most powerful thing we can do. Lee didn't want to surrender, but he realized this was the greatest thing he could do for his country.

**Q:** As serious as that sounds, this play

is a comedy. How do you make these serious subjects funny?

**A:** I've written five or six plays and they tend to be comedies. It's natural for me. I see the world through a funny lens. I don't try to write jokes. The humor, for me, comes out of the characters. My voice has been growing and I've been allowing myself to go deeper, but comedy is my point of view. I see the world with a lot of humor and joy.

**Q:** Is the version of the play Globe audiences will see any different from the Virginia version?

**A:** Yes I've been doing a lot of rewriting. When I watched the play onstage, I felt that the character of Carla wasn't as fully developed as Zach, so I'm working on that. There was also an ashram scene that I cut out because I didn't think it was necessary. I'm also trying thematically to make sure the play is full of hope, joy and love, and that it connects to my big idea, which is how can we as Americans continue to hear each other when we have such huge differences?

## Playwright bridges red and blue divide in 'Alive and Well'

By PAM KRAGEN - [pkragen@nctimes.com](mailto:pkragen@nctimes.com) | Posted: March 17, 2010 9:22 am |



James Knight and Kelly McAndrew, seen here in rehearsal, star in the Old Globe's world premiere production of Kenny Finkle's "Alive and Well," opening in previews March 20. Photo courtesy of the Old Globe

Back in the 1860s, America was sharply divided politically, with Southern conservatives harshly critical of a liberal Northern president who wanted to extend basic human rights to the poor and underprivileged. Sound a bit familiar?

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and a Southern cab driver named Zachariah Clemenson, who moonlights as a Civil War re-enactor.

Zach and Carla's personal and political differences mirror those of the Confederates and Union troops as the pair get hopelessly lost on Lee's Retreat Trail (the road Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee rode to surrender to Union Gen. U.S. Grant at the Appomattox Court House in April 1865, ending the Civil War). Four years earlier, no one could have imagined that North and South would reunite, and love seems unlikely to bloom between Carla and Zach, but it does. Could today's Blue Dog Democrats and tea partiers be far behind?

"Alive and Well" premiered in Virginia last September and the Philadelphia-born Finkle, 38, is reworking elements of the script for its San Diego premiere. He talked about the play in a phone interview from his New York home last week.

**Question: Did you do a lot of research on the Civil War before you wrote this play?**

**Answer:** Yes. Actually, it started back in 2004 when I was commissioned by the Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C., to write a play about the night Lincoln was assassinated. After doing lots of research, I realized the real drama of the night was John's (Wilkes Booth) story, not Lincoln's. Lincoln was not an active character. All he did was sit there, laugh a lot and get shot. So I decided to write the play from John's point of view.

**Q: I'm guessing that did not go well.**

**A:** The board hated it. It was heartbreaking for me at the time, because I really wanted it to work. Then when Virginia Stage did another of my plays, they asked me to come back and I told them that I'd done all this research on the Civil War and I'd like to take another crack at it. But this time I was interested in writing about how we're still such a divided country. Now it's not North versus South, but liberals versus conservatives. How can we still be united when we're so divided?

**Q: How did this play evolve?**

**A:** The first draft of "Alive and Well" had 20 characters including Zach and Carla, and it was a drama. Every time we did a reading, the audience would perk up whenever Zach and Carla were onstage, and then they'd get sullen when they'd leave. So we decided to pare it down to the two characters everybody liked.

**Q: How did you come up with the idea of having Zach be a re-enactor?**

**A:** Re-enactment seems weird, but it comes from a passionate desire to preserve history. That's a good metaphor for a bouncing-off point of the differences in America. We have this difficult reporter from the North who's always thinking about art and culture and the future, and this re-enactor from the South, who is a steward of America's history.

**Q: Your play was described in Virginia as being in the spirit of "Romancing the Stone" and "The African Queen." Were you trying to create an "opposites attract" romance in that style?**

**A:** I was trying to write a romantic comedy in the classic and best sense of the words. They're often really cheesy, though. I wanted to honor that tradition but use the style to tell a bigger story. Katharine Hepburn is amazing, and I see a lot of her in Carla. She's that sort of woman. Anyone who loves those sorts of movies will enjoy my homage to them in this play.

**Q: I understand that some of your on-site research made it into the play?**

**A:** I was obsessed with seeing the Appomattox Court House, and I asked a woman to come with me on a day trip and we got lost traveling on all these little country roads. Eventually we made it there by sunset, and I found it to be a very moving place where the surrender occurred. We stood there and looked out over the valley and I thought about what it means to surrender. Why do we feel that surrender means we're letting go of something? It could be the most powerful thing we can do. Lee didn't want to surrender, but he realized this was the greatest thing he could do for his country.

**Q: As serious as that sounds, this play is a comedy. How do you make these serious subjects funny?**

**A:** I've written five or six plays and they tend to be comedies. It's natural for me. I see the world through a funny lens. I don't try to write jokes. The humor, for me, comes out of the characters. My voice has been growing and I've been allowing myself to go deeper, but comedy is my point of view. I see the world with a lot of humor and joy.

**Q: Is the version of the play Globe audiences will see any different from the Virginia version?**

**A:** Yes I've been doing a lot of rewriting. When I watched the play onstage, I felt that the character of Carla wasn't as fully developed as Zach, so I'm working on that. There was also an ashram scene that I cut out because I didn't think it was necessary. I'm also trying thematically to make sure the play is full of hope, joy and love, and that it connects to my big idea, which is how can we as Americans continue to hear each other when we have such huge differences?

"Alive and Well"

When: previews, 8 p.m. Saturday through Wednesday; opens March 25 and runs through April 25; showtimes, 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays -Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays

Where: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, San Diego

Tickets: \$29-\$62

## Classic romantic comedies fuel 'Alive and Well'

BY DIANA SAENGER

Contributor

Mixing historic re-creations of the Civil War with classic romantic comedies seems a far stretch, but playwright Kenny Finkle was so inspired by the idea he wrote the play "Alive and Well." The romantic comedy now at the Old Globe March 20 through April 25, pits a big city reporter in need of some good fortune against a roughish Civil War re-enactor with anything but romance on his mind.

While researching the Civil War in conjunction with another writing assignment, Finkle got the inspiration for "Alive and Well."

"When I looked at the past in the context of today, a lot of the issues that were happening during the Civil War are still present today," Finkle said. "We seem to be so divided yet we're still one country."

Classic films used as reference points for "Alive and Well" are "African Queen" and "It Happened One Night."

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"The smart and quick dialogue of those films is fun and a real influence on my play," Finkle said. "Like those movies, in my play I enjoy seeing how far we can push these mismatched lovers before they have to get together."

Finkle's plays include "Indoor/Outdoor" (Off Broadway); "Bridezilla Strikes Back" (co-written with Cynthia Silver); "Transatlantica" (The Flea Theater) and "Josh Keenan Comes Out to the World" (Philadelphia Gay and Lesbian Theatre Festival and Hangar Theatre School Tour). He feels he's a storyteller because he thinks people want and need to hear

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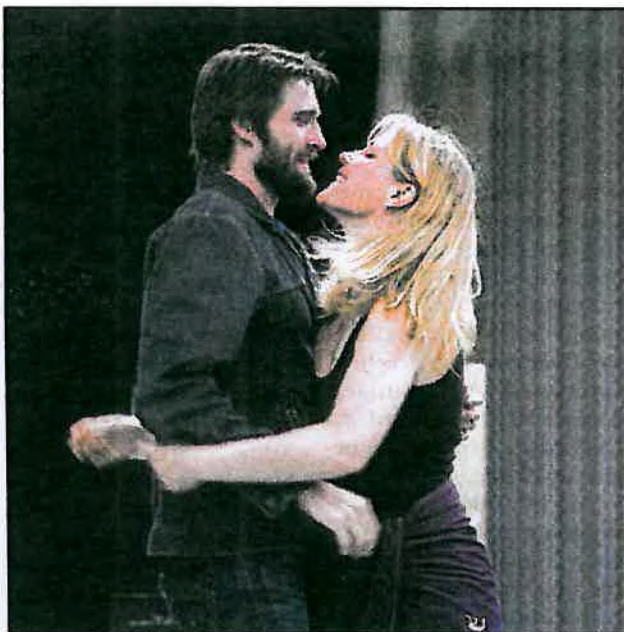
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Comedy is a difficult genre to pull off, especially one based on a romance. Many of Finkle's plays are based on comedy. His humor, he said, comes from his family. "My grandmother was a funny lady. She had a little perverse sense of humor and is very goofy. My father also was funny and enjoyed laughing. They both helped form how I see the world."



**James Knight and Kelly McAndrew rehearse for the world premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy 'Alive and Well' at The Old Globe Theatre.** COURTESY OF THE OLD GLOBE

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# LA JOLLA LIGHT

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Classic romantic comedies fuel Finkle's *Alive and Well*

Mar 24, 2010

By Diana Saenger

- La Jolla Light

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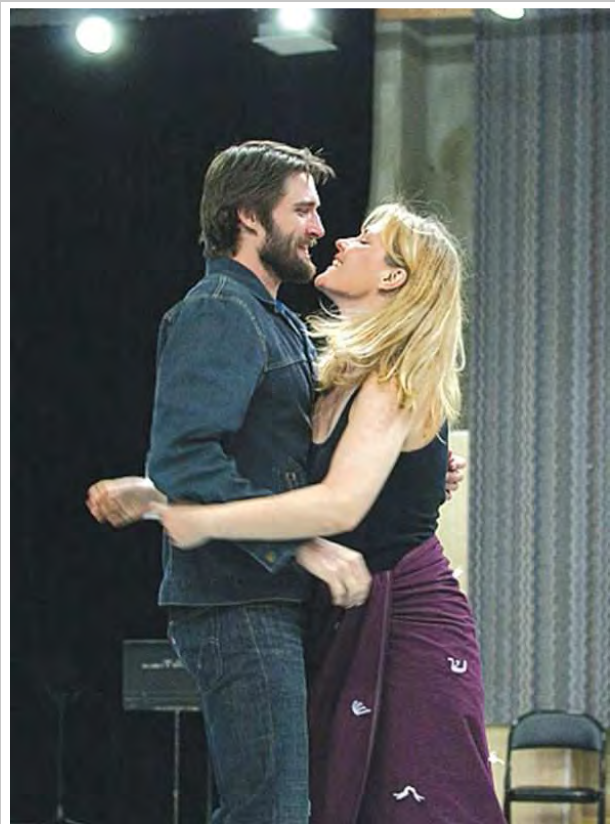
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James Knight and Kelly McAndrew rehearse for the world premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, '*Alive and Well*' at The Old Globe Theatre.

Photo by: Courtesy

"In the Civil War setting, I had fun creating these interesting characters," Finkle said. "Zach is a Civil War reenactor excellently played by James Knight ("Measure for Measure," "Hamlet"). His foil is Carla, beautifully portrayed by Kelly McAndrew ("Sight Unseen"). They've both appeared at the Globe and are part of a very collaborative team. I wanted actors who could continue to help me develop the play, and they both have helped with that process."

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**Diana Saenger**

Diana Saenger is a freelance writer for the La Jolla Light. To make comments about articles, contact [talkback@lajollalight.com](mailto:talkback@lajollalight.com).

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# SAN DIEGO DAILY TRANSCRIPT

March 19, 2010

## March brings a healthy dose of local theater



### Drama Desk

By Jenna Long

March is a thriving month for San Diego theater, with several large-scale productions set to open in the next two weeks.

The Old Globe stages the Broadway comedy hit "Boeing-Boeing" by Marc Camoletti, playing in the Old Globe Theatre from March 13 to April 18. In the Globe's new arena-style space, the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, the world premiere of Kenny Finkle's "Alive & Well" will run from March 20 to April 25.

Cygnets Theatre's long-awaited suspense musical — Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney

Todd" — arrives at the Old Town Stage March 18 to April 25.

Next up, San Diego Repertory Theatre features "A Weekend with Pablo Picasso," playing from March 21 to April 11. The production is written by and starring Herbert Siguenza of "Culture Clash" fame.

Diversionary Theatre brings San Diego sex, secrets, performance-art blogs and blackmail with Stephen Karam's "Speech and Debate," opening March 25 and playing through April 11.

Lyric Opera San Diego launches Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance" on March 26, a family-friendly adventure that plays through April 11.

And to finish off the jam-packed month, Broadway/San



*Photo courtesy of The Old Globe*

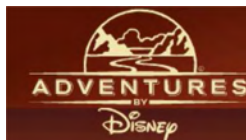
(L-R) James Knight and Kelly McAndrew in rehearsal for the world premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, "Alive and Well," opening on the Globe's revamped arena-style stage March 20.

Diego presents the popular Broadway-movical, "Legally Blonde," at the Civic Theatre from March 30 through April 4.

With so many dynamic theatrical options to choose from, what are you waiting for?

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## James Knight, Kelly McAndrew Set For Globe's ALIVE AND WELL



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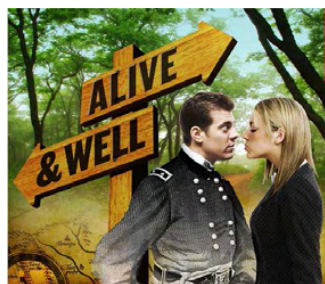
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by visiting the Box Office.

Alive and Well tells the tale of Carla Keenan, a big city reporter down on her luck, and Zachariah Clemenson, a roughish Civil War re-enactor, who set out on a quest in Virginia to find the elusive Lonesome Soldier - the oldest living Civil War veteran. As they hike along the path of Confederate General [Robert E. Lee](#)'s retreat from Petersburg to Appomattox, the mismatched duo find much more than either bargained for and discover that Virginia is - indeed - for lovers.

[James Knight](#) will play Zachariah and [Kelly McAndrew](#) will play Carla. The creative team features [Robin Sanford Roberts](#) (Scenic Design), [Shelly Williams](#) (Costume Design), [Michael Gottlieb](#) (Lighting Design), [Paul Peterson](#) (Sound Design) and Moira Gleason (Stage Manager).

Kenny Finkle's play Indoor/Outdoor received its Off Broadway premiere at the DR2 in Union Square. The play has also been produced at Trinity Repertory, [Colony Theatre](#), Virginia Stage Company, Portland Stage, Water Tower and Hangar Theatre (world premiere) and was selected for Smith and Kraus' Best Plays of 2006 anthology. His other plays include Bridezilla Strikes Back (co-written with Cynthia Silver; NY Fringe Festival and Zephyr Theatre), Transatlantica ([The Flea Theater](#)) and Josh Keenan Comes Out to the World (Philadelphia Gay and Lesbian Theatre Festival and Hangar Theatre School Tour). His plays have been workshopped and developed at The [Atlantic Theatre Company](#), Second Stage, [Williamstown Theatre Festival](#), HotINK and Portland Stage among others. He is a recipient of a NYFA fellowship, was awarded University of Illinois' Inner Voices prize and has received commissions from [Ford's Theatre](#), Virginia Stage Company and TheatreworksUSA.

[Jeremy Dobrish](#) has directed several shows Off Broadway including Judas and Me (New York Musical Theatre Festival), Spain ([MCC Theater](#)) and Election Day ([Second Stage Theatre](#)). His regional credits include [Barrington Stage Company](#), [Goodspeed Musicals](#), Hangar Theatre, North Shore Music Theatre, NY Stage and Film, [Eugene O'Neill Theater](#) and [Village Theatre](#). Dobrish's other credits include Curious George (TheatreworksUSA), Fringe Festival, New York Musical Theatre Festival and Summer Play Festival. He has served as an Artistic Associate at [Second Stage Theatre](#), and was the Artistic Director of Adobe Theatre Company for thirteen years, for which he has written and/or directed over 20 plays. His plays include Notions in Motion, The Handless Maiden, Blink of an Eye, Superpowers and Orpheus & Eurydice (Adobe Theatre Company) and Eight Days (Backwards) ([Vineyard Theatre](#)).

[James Knight](#) was last seen at the Globe in Measure for Measure and Hamlet. In New York, Knight has worked for Mint Theatre Company, Theatre for a New Audience, New York Classical Theatre Company and toured with New York's [Aquila Theatre Company](#) across America and Germany. He has worked at various theaters across the country including Portland Center Stage, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Pioneer Theatre Company, Utah Shakespearean Festival, [Alabama Shakespeare Festival](#), Heart

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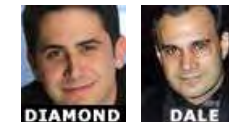
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of America Shakespeare Festival, Southwest Shakespeare Company, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Kansas City Repertory Theatre and Two River Theater Company. Knight is a frequent participant to the Wordbridge Playwrights Laboratory and a member of Generous Company.

[Kelly McAndrew](#) previously appeared at the Globe in [Sight Unseen](#). Her Broadway credits include [Maggie in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof](#). She has been seen Off Broadway in [Still Life \(MCC\)](#), [Lyric is Waiting \(Irish Repertory Theatre\)](#), [Trout Stanley \(Culture Project\)](#), [The Cataract \(The Women's Project\)](#), [Greedy \(Clubbed Thumb\)](#), [Topsy Turvy Mouse \(Cherry Lane Mentor Project\)](#) and [Book of Days \(Signature Theatre\)](#). McAndrew's regional credits include [Holiday \(Olney Theatre\)](#), [Helen Hayes](#) nomination for Best Actress), [The Miracle Worker](#) and [The Great White Hope \(Arena Stage\)](#), [Talley's Folly \(The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis and Cincinnati Playhouse\)](#), [Proof \(George Street Playhouse\)](#) as well as world premieres at [The Huntington Theatre Company](#), [CENTERSTAGE](#), [Denver Center Theatre](#), [Berkshire Theatre Festival](#) and [Arizona Theatre Company](#). Her film and television credits include [Everybody's Fine](#) (with Robert DeNiro), [Superheroes](#), [New Guy](#), ["Law & Order"](#), ["Law & Order: SVU"](#), ["Gossip Girl"](#) and ["As the World Turns."](#)

TICKETS to [Alive and Well](#) are currently available by subscription only. Single tickets go on sale on March 7 at noon and can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](#), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. Performances begin on Mar. 20 and continue through Apr. 25. Ticket prices range from \$29 to \$62. Performance times: Previews: Saturday, Mar. 20 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday Mar. 21 at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, Mar. 23 at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday, Mar. 24 at 7:00 p.m. Regular Performances: Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m., and Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Discounts are available for full-time students, patrons 29 years of age and under, seniors and groups of 10 or more.

LOCATION: [The Old Globe](#) is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. There are numerous free parking lots available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available (\$10). For additional parking information visit [www.BalboaPark.org](#).

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## James Knight, Kelly McAndrew to Star in *Alive and Well* at Old Globe, Directed by Jeremy Dobrish

 By: **Dan Bacalzo** · Feb 18, 2010 · San Diego

James Knight and Kelly McAndrew will star in the world premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, *Alive and Well* in a co-production from the Old Globe Theatre and Virginia Stage Company. The play will run in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre March 20-April 25, with an opening on March 25. Jeremy Dobrish will direct.

*Alive and Well* tells the tale of Carla Keenan (McAndrew), a big city reporter down on her luck, and Zachariah Clemenson (Knight), a roughish Civil War re-enactor, who set out on a quest in Virginia to find the elusive Lonesome Soldier -- the oldest living Civil War veteran.

The creative team will feature Robin Sanford Roberts (scenic design), Shelly Williams (costume design), Michael Gottlieb (lighting design), and Paul Peterson (sound design).

Finkle's other plays include *Indoor/Outdoor* and *Bridezilla Strikes Back* (co-written with Cynthia Silver). Dobrish is currently helming *Signs of Life* in New York, where he has also directed numerous plays including *Judas and Me*, *Spain*, and *Election Day*.

For more information, visit [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org).


 Jeremy Dobrish  
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## Knight and McAndrew Cast in Old Globe Premiere of Finkle's *Alive and Well*

By [Kenneth Jones](#)  
18 Feb 2010

James Knight will play Civil War re-enactor Zachariah opposite Kelly McAndrew as reporter Carla in the Old Globe Theatre's world premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, *Alive and Well*, March 20-April 25 in San Diego.

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Casting was announced on Feb. 18. Directed by Jeremy Dobrish, *Alive and Well* will run in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. Opening is March 25.

*Alive and Well* is a "co-world premiere" produced in collaboration with Virginia Stage Company.

According to Old Globe, "*Alive and Well* tells the tale of Carla Keenan, a big city reporter down on her luck, and Zachariah Clemenson, a roguish Civil War re-enactor, who set out on a quest in Virginia to find the elusive Lonesome Soldier — the oldest living Civil War veteran. As they hike along the path of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's retreat from Petersburg to Appomattox, the mismatched duo find much more than either bargained for and discover that Virginia is indeed for lovers."

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(sound design) and Moira Gleason (stage manager).

Kenny Finkle's play *Indoor/Outdoor* received its Off-Broadway premiere at the DR2 in Union Square. The play premiered at Hangar Theatre and was later selected for Smith and Kraus' "Best Plays of 2006" anthology. His other plays include *Bridezilla Strikes Back* (co-written with Cynthia Silver; NY Fringe Festival and Zephyr Theatre), *Transatlantica* (The Flea Theater) and *Josh Keenan Comes Out to the World* (Philadelphia Gay and Lesbian Theatre Festival and Hangar Theatre School Tour).

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Knight was last seen at the Globe in *Measure for Measure* and *Hamlet*.

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Tickets are currently available by subscription only. Single tickets go on sale March 7 at noon and can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office.

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## Alive and Well, a Romantic Comedy With a Civil War Twist, Begins World-Premiere Run March 20 in CA

By [Kenneth Jones](#)

20 Mar 2010

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James Knight and Kelly McAndrew in rehearsal for *Alive and Well*  
photo by courtesy of The Old Globe

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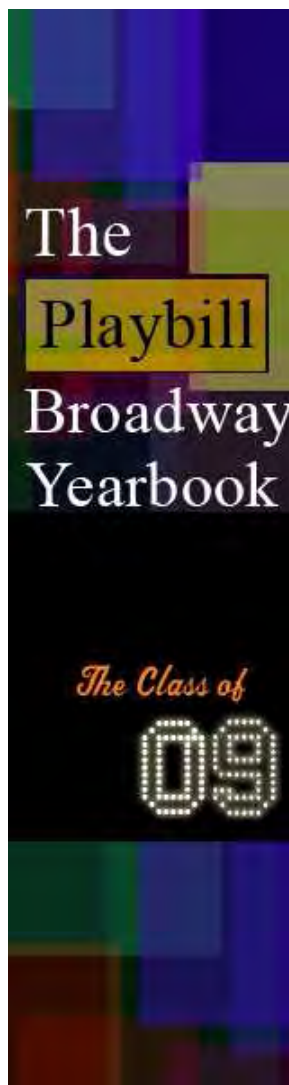
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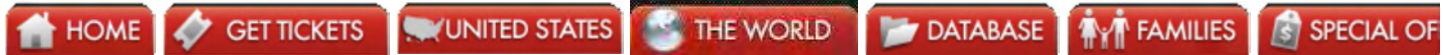
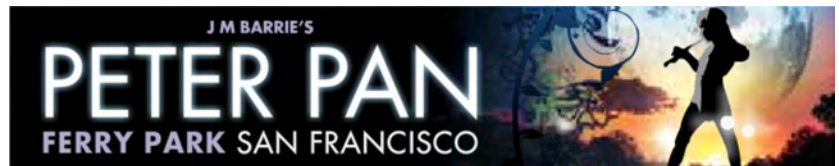


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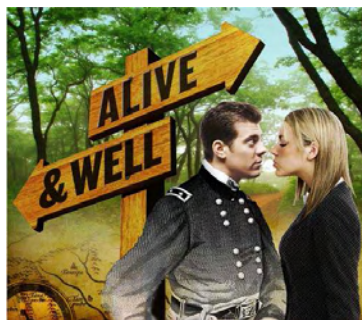


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Saturday, March 20, 2010; Posted: 02:03 AM - by [BWW News Desk](#)

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Executive Producer [Lou Spisto](#) today announced the cast and creative team for the World Premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, *Alive and Well*. Directed by [Jeremy Dobrish](#), *Alive and Well* will run in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre March 20 - April 25. Previews run from Mar. 20 - Mar. 24. Opening night is March 25 at 8:00 p.m. *Alive and Well* is a co-World Premiere produced in collaboration with Virginia Stage Company. Tickets are currently available by subscription only. Single tickets go on sale March 7 at noon and can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone

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[Jeremy Dobrish](#) has directed several shows Off Broadway including *Judas and Me* (New York Musical Theatre Festival), *Spain* ([MCC Theater](#)) and *Election Day* ([Second Stage Theatre](#)). His regional credits include [Barrington Stage Company](#), [Goodspeed Musicals](#), Hangar Theatre, North Shore Music Theatre, NY Stage and Film, [Eugene O'Neill Theater](#) and [Village Theatre](#). Dobrish's other credits include *Curious George* (TheatreworxUSA), Fringe Festival, New York Musical Theatre Festival and Summer Play Festival. He has served as an Artistic Associate at [Second Stage Theatre](#), and was the Artistic Director of Adobe Theatre Company for thirteen years, for which he has written and/or directed over 20 plays. His plays include *Notions in Motion*, *The*

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TICKETS to Alive and Well are currently available by subscription only. Single tickets go on sale on March 7 at noon and can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](#), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. Performances begin on Mar. 20 and continue through Apr. 25. Ticket prices range from \$29 to \$62. Performance times: Previews: Saturday, Mar. 20 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday Mar. 21 at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, Mar. 23 at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday, Mar. 24 at 7:00 p.m. Regular Performances: Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m., and Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Discounts are available for full-time students, patrons 29 years of age and under, seniors and groups of 10 or more.

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Monday, March 22, 2010; Posted: 02:03 PM - by [BWW News Desk](#)

ADD THIS

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[James Knight](#) was last seen at the Globe in *Measure for Measure* and *Hamlet*. In New York, Knight has worked for Mint Theatre Company, Theatre for a New Audience, New York Classical Theatre Company and toured with New York's [Aquila Theatre Company](#) across America and Germany. He has worked at various theaters across the country including Portland Center Stage, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Pioneer Theatre Company, Utah Shakespearean Festival, [Alabama Shakespeare Festival](#), Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, Southwest Shakespeare Company, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Kansas City Repertory Theatre and Two River Theater Company. Knight is a frequent participant to the Wordbridge Playwrights Laboratory and a member of Generous Company.

[Kelly McAndrew](#) previously appeared at the Globe in *Sight Unseen*. Her Broadway credits include *Maggie in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. She has been seen Off Broadway in *Still Life* (MCC), *Lyric is Waiting* ([Irish Repertory Theatre](#)), *Trout Stanley* ([Culture Project](#)), *The Cataract* (The [Women's Project](#)), *Greedy* (Clubbed Thumb), *Topsy Turvy Mouse* (Cherry Lane Mentor Project) and *Book of Days* ([Signature Theatre](#)). McAndrew's regional credits include *Holiday* (Olney Theatre, [Helen Hayes](#) nomination for Best Actress), *The Miracle Worker* and *The Great White Hope* ([Arena Stage](#)), *Talley's Folly* (The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis and [Cincinnati Playhouse](#)), *Proof* ([George Street Playhouse](#)) as well as world premieres at The [Huntington Theatre Company](#), CENTERSTAGE, Denver Center Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival and [Arizona Theatre Company](#). Her film and television credits include *Everybody's Fine* (with Robert DeNiro), *Superheroes*, *New Guy*, *"Law & Order," "Law & Order: SVU," "Gossip Girl"* and *"As the World Turns."*

*Alive and Well* is a co-World Premiere produced in collaboration with Virginia Stage Company. TICKETS to *Alive and Well* are currently available by subscription only. Single tickets go on sale on March 7 at noon and can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. Performances begin on March 20 and continue through April 25. Ticket prices range from \$29 to \$62. Performance times: Previews: Saturday, March 20 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday March 21 at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 23 at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday, March 24 at 7:00 p.m. Regular

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Performances: Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m., and Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Discounts are available for full-time students, patrons 29 years of age and under, seniors and groups of 10 or more.

LOCATION: [The Old Globe](#) is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. There are numerous free parking lots available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available (\$10). For additional parking information visit [www.BalboaPark.org](#).

The Tony Award-winning Old Globe is one of the country's leading professional regional theaters and has stood as San Diego's flagship arts institution for 74 years. Under the direction of Executive Producer [Louis G. Spisto](#), [The Old Globe](#) produces a year-round season of 15 productions of classic, contemporary and new works on its three Balboa Park stages: the 600-seat [Old Globe Theatre](#), the 250-seat Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre and the 612-seat outdoor Lowell Davies [Festival Theatre](#), home of its internationally renowned Shakespeare Festival. More than 250,000 people attend Globe productions annually and participate in the theater's education and community programs. Numerous world premieres such as *The Full Monty*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *A Catered Affair*, and the annual holiday musical, *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, have been developed at [The Old Globe](#) and have gone on to enjoy highly successful runs on Broadway and at regional theaters across the country

Photo credit: [Craig Schwartz](#)



Alive And Well Poster



[Kelly McAndrew](#) and [James Knight](#)

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## PHOTO CALL: Finkle's *Alive and Well* at the Old Globe

By [Matthew Blank](#)  
 22 Mar 2010

James Knight and Kelly McAndrew star in the Old Globe Theatre's world premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, *Alive and Well*.

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**"A magnificent idea... A new essential for anyone who loves & follows today's theater scene."**  
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According to Old Globe, "*Alive and Well* tells the tale of Carla Keenan, a big city reporter down on her luck, and Zachariah Clemenson, a roguish Civil War re-enactor, who set out on a quest in Virginia to find the elusive Lonesome Soldier — the oldest living Civil War veteran. As they hike along the path of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's retreat from Petersburg to Appomattox, the mismatched duo find much more than either bargained for and discover that Virginia is indeed for lovers."

Jeremy Dobrish directs.

Here is a look at the production:

[View the Entire Photo Gallery](#)

James Knight and Kelly McAndrew  
 Photo by Craig Schwartz

Tickets can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office.

Inside Track: **Singers on Sondheim: Day 1, Streisand**

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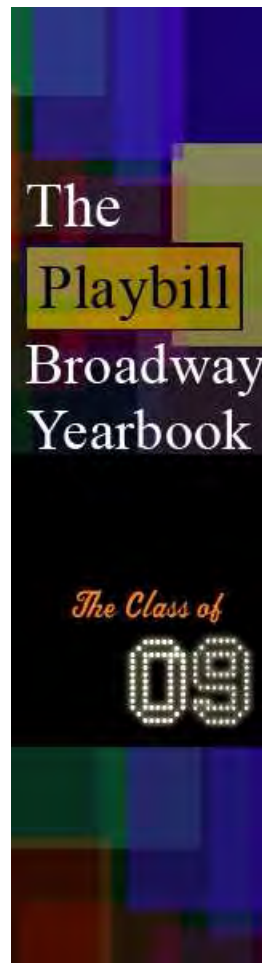
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## Alive and Well, a Romantic Comedy With a Civil War Twist, Gets World Premiere March 25

By [Kenneth Jones](#)  
25 Mar 2010



James Knight and Kelly McAndrew in *Alive and Well*  
photo by Craig Schwartz

James Knight plays a Civil War re-enactor named Zachariah opposite Kelly McAndrew as reporter Carla in the Old Globe Theatre's world premiere of Kenny Finkle's romantic comedy, *Alive and Well*, opening March 25 after previews from March 20 in San Diego.

Directed by Jeremy Dobrish, *Alive and Well* plays in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. Performances play to April 25.

\*

*Alive and Well* is a "co-world premiere" produced in collaboration with Virginia Stage Company.

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According to Old Globe, "*Alive and Well* tells the tale of Carla Keenan, a big city reporter down on her luck, and Zachariah Clemenson, a roguish Civil War re-enactor, who set out on a quest in Virginia to find the elusive Lonesome Soldier — the oldest living Civil War veteran. As they hike along

the path of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's retreat from Petersburg to Appomattox, the mismatched duo find much more than either bargained for

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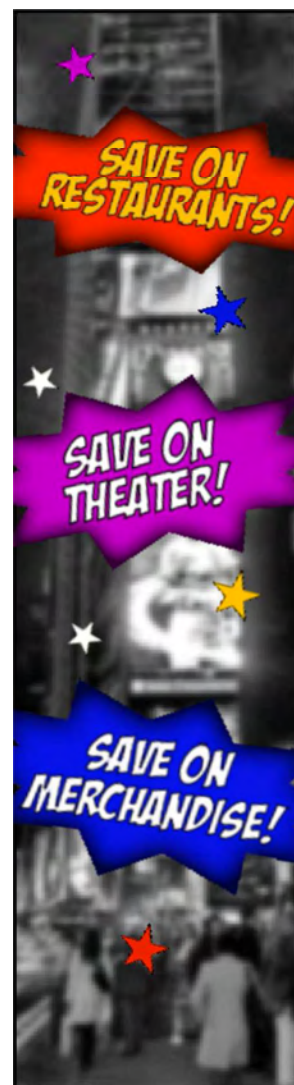
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and discover that Virginia is indeed for lovers."

The creative team features Robin Sanford Roberts (scenic design), Shelly Williams (costume design), Michael Gottlieb (lighting design), Paul Peterson (sound design) and Moira Gleason (stage manager).

Kenny Finkle's play *Indoor/Outdoor* received its Off-Broadway premiere at the DR2 in Union Square. The play premiered at Hangar Theatre and was later selected for Smith and Kraus' "Best Plays of 2006" anthology. His other plays include *Bridezilla Strikes Back* (co-written with Cynthia Silver; NY Fringe Festival and Zephyr Theatre), *Transatlantica* (The Flea Theater) and *Josh Keenan Comes Out to the World* (Philadelphia Gay and Lesbian Theatre Festival and Hangar Theatre School Tour).

Dobrish has directed several shows Off-Broadway including *Judas and Me* (New York Musical Theatre Festival), *Spain* (MCC Theater) and *Election Day* (Second Stage Theatre).

Knight was last seen at the Globe in *Measure for Measure* and *Hamlet*.

McAndrew previously appeared at the Globe in *Sight Unseen*. She has been seen Off-Broadway in *Still Life* (MCC), *Lyric is Waiting* (Irish Repertory Theatre), *Trout Stanley* (Culture Project) and *Book of Days* (Signature Theatre).

Tickets can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the box office.

Inside Track: **Singers on Sondheim: Day 2, Cook and LuPone**



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## Spotlight on community theatre

### Reviews and Previews by Diana Saenger

With the beautiful spring season comes energy to get out of the house and sample some of San Diego's fine opportunities. Our city is lucky to have some of the finest theatrical stages in the country. Their shows, many award winning or world premiere – feature entertaining and interesting subjects with wonderful casts and amazing design teams. Here's a look at some of the plays now open or arriving soon.

#### Cygnnet Theater Company

Anyone who has not seen a theatrical production of the Tony award-winning *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* should put the Cygnnet Theater Company's production on their list immediately. In the hands of this professional company, the show is an absolute delight. The story about a barber who takes revenge on all who sit in his chair is artfully played out through exquisite performances, an amazing score and very talented singers. It's marvelous! Now – May 9, 4040 Twiggs Street, (Old Town) San Diego, (619) 337-1525, [www.cygnnettheatre.com](http://www.cygnnettheatre.com)

#### La Jolla Playhouse

In *Surf Report*, Judith is faced with a demanding surfer-turned-venture capitalist boss, an underachieving husband and a wannabe artist daughter, as she swims against the tide in her upwardly mobile ambitions clash with her family's needs. Annie Weisman (*Be Aggressive*), once again captures our

Southern California coastal vibe in this funny and poignant play that examines the sacrifices we make — or avoid — for our family. Playing June 15 – July 11. For more information call (858) 550-1010, [www.lajollaplayhouse.org](http://www.lajollaplayhouse.org).

#### North Coast Repertory Theatre

Written in 1881 and starring Jonathan McMurtry, *Ghosts* is a gripping tale of secrets and lies written as an expose of what Ibsen saw as the sexual hypocrisy of Victorian society. It remains hauntingly modern as it deals with issues and subject matter still relevant in our time. Presented in North Coast Rep's intimate setting, this haunting tale of unrequited passion, revelation and reconciling the truth is sure to be a powerhouse. *Ghosts*, is playing now – May 2. A celebration of a time of itinerant radio unfolds in *The Voice of the Prairie* opening May 26. Fun abounds in the San Diego Premiere of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* opening June 30. For more information on the theses shows call (858) 481-1055 or visit [www.northcoastrep.org](http://www.northcoastrep.org).

#### Old Globe Theatre

This romantic comedy, in the spirit of *The African Queen* and *Romancing the Stone*, tells the story of a mismatched pair. Carla, a big city reporter from the North, must reluctantly work with Southern tracker and Civil War re-enactor Zach to research her story. In their quest, they exasperate each other and find much more than either bargained for. *Alive & Well* is an entertaining joy ride that will make even skeptics



Mrs. Lovett (Deborah Gilmour Smyth) and Sweeney Todd (Sean Murray) work off some anger in Cygnnet Theater Company's production of "*Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*"  
Photo credit: Daren Scott

believe in true love. *Alive & Well* runs now – April 25. *Golda's Balcony* runs April 28 – May 30 and stars four-time Tony Award nominee Tovah Feldshuh and follows the trajectory of the life of Golda Meir from Russian immigrant to American schoolteacher to a leader of international policies as the fourth Prime Minister of Israel. For more information on the theses shows call (619) 23-GLOBE or visit [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org).

#### San Diego Repertory Theatre

*A Weekend With Pablo Picasso*, a one man show focused on the love of Picasso's work

runs now – April 18. The 17th Annual Lipinsky Family San Diego Jewish Arts Festival begins June 1 and is a celebration of Jewish creativity in musical, theatre and dance. The season's last scheduled

production is *The Reduced Shakespeare Company's The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* opening June 11. For more information on these shows call (619) 544-1000 or visit [www.sdrep.org](http://www.sdrep.org)



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## Romantic comedy playing at Old Globe

SDGLN Staff | Mon, 03/22/2010 - 10:55am | [Login to bookmark or comment](#)

SAN DIEGO – “Alive and Well,” Old Globe’s co-world premiere with Virginia Stage Company, is now on stage through April 25 at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre.

The romantic comedy by Kenny Finkle is directed by Jeremy Dobrish.

James Knight play Zachariah Clemenson and Kelly McAndrew portrays Carla Keenan.

Carla, a big city reporter from the North, must reluctantly work with Southern tracker and Civil War re-enactor Zach to research her story as she searches for the oldest living Civil War veteran. In their quest, they exasperate each other and find much more than either bargained for.

### Insight seminar

Monday, March 22, at 6 p.m.

Seminar series features a panel of artists from the current show. FREE.

### Out at the Globe

Thursday, March 25, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

An evening for GLBT theater lovers with a hosted wine and martini bar, and appetizers. Tickets: \$21 (Show sold separately.)

### Thank Globe It's Friday

Friday, March 26, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Friday pre-show bash includes wine, martinis, appetizers, dessert and live music. \$21. (Show sold separately.)

### Post-show forums

Tuesday, April 6 and 13, and Wednesday, April 21

Discuss the play with members of the cast following the performance. FREE.

### Box office hours

Noon to final curtain Tuesday through Sunday. American Express, Discover, MasterCard and VISA accepted. (619) 234-5623.

### Location

The Old Globe is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. Free parking is available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available for \$10. For parking information, visit [www.BalboaPark.org](http://www.BalboaPark.org).

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James Knight play Zachariah Clemenson and Kelly McAndrew portrays Carla Keenan.

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## [Culture Lust](#)

# Culture Lust Weekend: Air, IndieFest, and MCASD Downtown

By [Angela Carone](#), [Meredith Hattam](#)

March 25, 2010

I've started to wean myself off of [Molly watch](#), mostly because it would be very sad if I stayed in all weekend watching Molly feed her babies rabbit. Next thing you know, I'll start taking in cats and wearing crazy hats to the grocery store, muttering about Molly as I shuffle down the wine aisle. To stave off such eccentricities, I'll try to do everything on this list over the weekend!

### ART



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Credit: Lux Art Institute

Above: "Bucket with Abstraction" by Robert Lobe.

NYC sculptor Robert Lobe and his one-with-nature creations move into the [Lux Art Institute](#) this weekend, and we can't wait to see him in action. He'll be there 'till April 24th, so stop by and catch the making of his bucolic repoussé explorations.

Pop, lock and drop it while dabbling in good karma at [Culture Shock](#) this Saturday from 3 'till 9. The popular studio will host Dance 4 Haiti, featuring master classes from the likes of Leslie Scott (who's shimmied for Beyonce and P Diddy), Culture Shock founder Angie Bunch, and Jabbawockeez (America's Best Dance Crew's first-season winner) member Eddie Gutierrez.

## THEATER

Swashbuckling scallywags and beards galore can be found in North Park this weekend, and though that doesn't sound like anything new, it is – [Lyric Opera San Diego](#) will present its production of "The Pirates of Penzance" at the Birch North Park Theatre, debuting this Friday. As the close to its 31st season, expect plenty of high-seas song and swordfights galore in the Gilbert and Sullivan classic. A pirate's life, indeed.



Above: The Old Globe will debut "Alive and Well" this weekend.

Journalism and The Civil War: the rom-com? The [Old Globe](#) will run previews of "Alive and Well" this week, NYFA award-winner Kenny Finkle's serendipitous tale of a foxy newshound and a Civil War re-enactor on the hunt for the legendary Lonesome Soldier (aka the oldest living Civil War vet). As expected, that's not all they find on their trek. Previews start this Saturday.

Take a breather from the 9-to-5 grind with the [Cygnet Theatre's](#) first-ever comedy night, debuting this Tuesday night at 7 in their Old Town HQ. Plenty of Margaritas and performances from Vicki Barbolak ("Who's Minding the Store"), Jimmy Burns ("Live from Here") and Scott Wood (who's an alum of Comedy Central) will be on hand.

Stephen Karam's "Speech And Debate" features "sex, secrets, performance-art blogs and blackmail" set in Salem, Oregon. If that's not enough to get you to the [Diversionary Theatre](#) this Saturday for its opening, how about this: the play was inspired by the transcript of an online chat between the former mayor of Spokane, Washington and a gay teenager. It's also one of the year's most in-demand productions – catch it before Hollywood does (a screenplay is currently in the works with Overture Films).

## FILM

Brush up on your water-saving skills while enjoying a night at [The Loft](#) as the [Surfrider Foundation](#) presents *The Cycle of Insanity: The Real Story of Water*, a punchy animated short crafted by Surfrider reps as part of their new program, Know Your H2O. The Monday night screening also celebrates World Water Day; get there by at 6 for the show.

They've stood up to the county's demolition derby for 40 years, and this Monday at the Old Town Theatre, the [Save Our Heritage Organisation](#) (SOHO) will celebrate with a screening of "Forty Years of Historic Preservation in San Diego County." Directed by UCLA film alumni and S.D. native Dan

# SAN DIEGO JEWISH JOURNAL

March 2010

**SDJJ** | what's goin' on

by eileen sondak • [nsondak@gmail.com](mailto:nsondak@gmail.com)

## arts for all

With Stephen Sondheim's classic horror musical "Sweeney Todd," gearing up for a March opening, a new Broadway show making its way to the Civic Theatre, the Old Globe offering a world premiere and a Tony Award-winning play on its two indoor stages, and Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance" making for a swashbuckling show at Lyric Opera San Diego, local audiences can expect a delightfully diverse theater scene in March.

The Old Globe's jet-propelled "Boeing Boeing" will land on the Globe's Main Stage March 13 for a laugh-filled stay through April 18. This high-flying comedy focuses on a successful architect living in Paris and trying to juggle his romantic adventures with three flight attendants with a little help from his housekeeper. The affairs run into some turbulence when the ladies change their flight plans.

The Globe's new Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre will present the world premiere of Kenny Finkle's "Alive and Well," a comedy "about life, liberty and the pursuit of romance." This tale of a mismatched pair takes audiences on another romantic joy ride. The new comedy (a co-premiere with Virginia Stage Company) will open March 20 and keep Globe-goers in stitches through April 25 with its unlikely protagonists: a Southern tracker/Civil War re-enactor and a big city reporter from up North.

Romance is in the air at the San Diego Opera March 13-21. "Romeo and Juliet" will feature real-life husband and wife duo Stephen Costello and Ailyn Perez as the star-crossed lovers in this timeless tragedy. Maestro Karen Keltner will bring her mastery of the French repertory to the podium when this Shakespeare tale plays out on the stage of the Civic Theatre with lavish costumes and sets.

Lyric Opera San Diego has a special offering March 6 — a concert by Priti Gandhi. You can enjoy a champagne reception with the concert or just the performance alone. Either way, this promises to be a memorable event for Lyric Opera fans.

Lyric Opera will feature the first Gilbert and Sullivan musical of its

2009-2010 season March 26, when the troupe unveils its production of "The Pirates of Penzance." "Pirates" is one of the most popular Gilbert and Sullivan shows in the repertory, and it features J. Sherwood Montgomery in one of his signature roles as Major General Stanley. Samoyards will not want to miss this merry mix of softhearted pirates, inept police and a bevy of maidens in distress. You'll have until April 11 to catch this staging of the operatic masterpiece.

Lyric isn't the only arts organization reviving "The Pirates of Penzance." The Welk Resort Theatre has scheduled an extended run of the beloved classic March 11-May 2. You can indulge in a buffet lunch or dinner at the Welk's nearby Canyon Grille with every performance of this rollicking ode to old-time buccaneers and dim-witted maidens. The Welk's production of "I Do! I Do!" winds down its run at the Escondido-based dinner theater March 7.

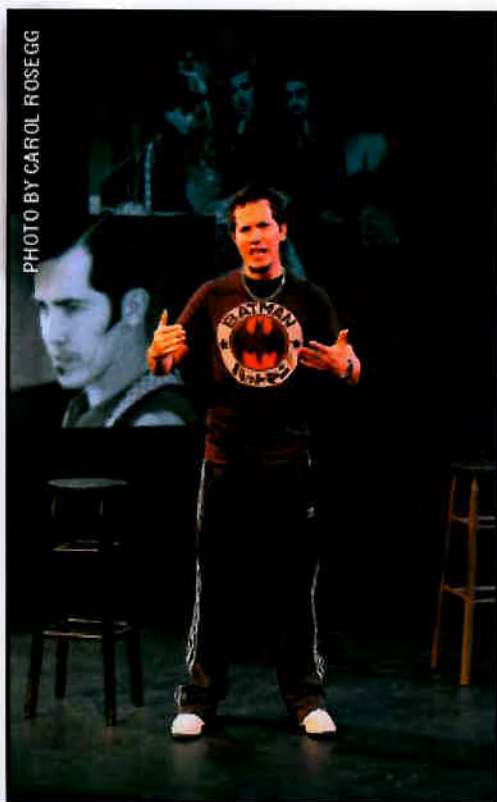
Cygnat Theatre will bring back the demon barber of Fleet Street March 18. Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd," a musical masterwork that takes place in Victorian England, is chilling, suspenseful and side-splittingly funny. Its mix of the macabre and the humorous is a one-of-a-kind for the musical genre, and it's sure to mesmerize audiences

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PHOTO COURTESY THE OLD GLOBE THEATRE



The Globe's new Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre will present the world premiere of Kenny Finkle's "Alive and Well" March 20-April 25.



The La Jolla Playhouse will offer a two-week special engagement beginning March 4 titled "John Leguizamo Diary of a Madman."

at the troupe's Old Town Theatre through April 25.

Broadway San Diego returns to the Civic Theatre March 30-April 4 with the hit show "Legally Blonde The Musical." Based on the hilarious film "Legally Blonde," the show is about a UCLA sorority girl who gets dumped by her boyfriend for someone "serious." That triggers a transformation in the blond beauty that takes her all the way to the halls of justice. This smart and funny musical is bound to be a success on its first visit to San Diego.

The La Jolla Playhouse has a Page-to-Stage offering set to begin a two-week run March 4. This special engagement will feature the award-winning performer John Leguizamo in a new one-man show titled "John Leguizamo Diary of a Madman." This uncensored tour-de-force explodes with colorful characters and will keep audiences entertained at the Mandell Weiss Theatre through March 14.

North Coast Rep's production of "Little Women," a world premiere adaptation by Jacqueline Goldfinger, will run its course March 14. The show features period music to enhance its heartwarming family story (set in Massachusetts in the 1860s). NCR's collaboration with Mira Costa College for Shakespeare's "The Tempest" is also ending its run March 14. The play (featuring Jonathan McMurtry and directed by David Ellenstein) is part of the "Shakespeare on Campus" series.

The San Diego Symphony has a large and interesting assortment to offer aficionados this month. The music starts playing March 3, when pianist Kevin Cole performs an intimate Gershwin recital at Qualcomm Hall. Take the youngsters to the Family Festival March 7, when "Green Eggs and Ham," by the inimitable Dr. Seuss, gets symphony treatment. Philip Mann will conduct this family favorite. The Moscow State Radio Symphony Orchestra will perform a special event March 14, with Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 3, Polish, Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy, and the master's Piano Concerto No. 1 on the program. Alexei Kornienko will conduct, with Alexei Naboulin on piano.

Another special concert is slated for March 20 with Thomas Wilkins at the podium. This concert will feature works by Dvorak, Grieg, Bernstein/Harmon and Tchaikovsky. Folklorico dance is on the bill March 21, with the arrival of Ballet Folklorico de Mexico, an offering of the Symphony's Winter Pops program. Gershwin's "An American in Paris" is one of the masterworks on the program March 26-28, when Maestro Miguel Harth-Bedoya conducts. Andrea Overturf will perform on the English horn, and Calvin Price will play trumpet.

Also on this outstanding program are selections from Leonard Bernstein's "On the Town," Copland's Quiet City and "Porgy and Bess: Symphonic Picture." The Symphony Exposed Series will entertain audiences with "An American in Paris" March 25, with host Nuvi Mehta exploring Gershwin's style and musical influences.

Gershwin will be in the spotlight again when Marvin Hamlisch conducts "An Evening of George Gershwin," with Kevin Cole on keyboard

and vocals. This musical voyage through the Gershwin songbook is heading our way March 5-6. Winter Pops celebrates St. Patrick's Day with a Celtic Celebration at the Pops March 17. Matthew Garbutt will conduct this program of classical and traditional music from the Emerald Isle.

City Ballet will stage its ballet version of "Peter Pan" March 20-21. The production features flying, fantasy and a free pre-concert lecture prior to each performance. A champagne on-stage reception follows the Saturday evening performance.

La Jolla Music Society's Celebrity International Orchestra Series features the Marinsky Orchestra March 19. The orchestra (formerly known as the Kirov Orchestra) will perform an all-Russian program of Liadov, Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky. The Revelle Chamber Music Series will spotlight the versatile Orion String Quartet March 6 (with Peter Serkin on the keyboard), and March 7, pianist Jean-Frederic Neuburger will perform Chopin as part of the Discovery Series. On March 26, look for award-winning pianist Richard Goode to delight local music lovers, compliments of the La Jolla Music Society.

The Lamb's Players in Coronado has mystery and intrigue on the boards through March 21. "An Inspector Calls," directed by Robert Smyth, is a modern classic about a police investigation that takes unexpected turns. The fascinating show deals with moral responsibility and human relationships.

Mainly Mozart's Spotlight Series will perform works by Weber, Beethoven and Mozart March 26-28. David Shifrin will show off his virtuosity on the clarinet, and the Daedalus Quartet will join in on the exciting program.

J Company Youth Theatre continues its 17<sup>th</sup> season March 4-21 with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's masterpiece, "The Sound of Music." Joey Landwehr will direct this beloved musical about a high-spirited young girl and a widowed naval captain with seven children. The show takes place during the Nazi era, which gives a dark edge to the lilting musical. The show boasts a bevy of delightful songs as well as an unforgettable story. ✧

# PRESIDIO SENTINEL

March 2010

## THEATRE IN SAN DIEGO

### Old Globe Theatre

"Boeing-Boeing," by Marc Camoletti and Beverley Cross, is directed by Mark Schneider, it's an uproarious jet-propelled comedy that had audiences and critics cheering

in London and on Broadway. And, now it is coming in for a landing on the Old Globe stage.

Bernard, a successful architect living in Paris, thinks he can easily juggle his three flight attendant fiancées. It's all a question of timing and a little help from his trusted housekeeper who reluctantly plays romantic air traffic controller. When an old friend arrives and his three fiancées each change their flight schedules, his life hits some turbulence. Grab your boarding pass for a rollicking good time.

It opens March 18, and closes April 18.



"Alive and Well" by Kenny Finkle is a romantic comedy, in the spirit of "The African Queen" tells the story of a mismatched pair. Carla, a big city reporter from the North, must reluctantly work with Southern tracker and Civil War re-enactor Zach to research her story. In their quest, they exasperate each other and find much more than either bargained for.

"Alive and Well" is an entertaining joyride that will make even skeptics believe in true love.

It opens March 25, closes April 25.

Neil Simon's "Lost in Yonkers," has been extended for one week due to popular demand. The production will now run through Sunday, March 7. "Lost in Yonkers" stars Tony Award winner Judy Kaye and is directed by Scott Schwartz.

Neil Simon's most critically acclaimed work, "Lost in Yonkers" received both the Pulitzer Prize and the Tony Award for Best Play. Set in the summer of 1942, two young brothers, Arty and Jay, are left to live with their grandmother by their financially strapped father. The boys must contend with the dominating Grandma Kumitz who runs the family-owned candy store, their mentally-challenged Aunt Bella and her secret romance, and Uncle Louie, a small-time hood. A mix of both comedy and drama, "Lost in Yonkers" was hailed by the *New York Post* as "The best play Simon ever wrote."

The Old Globe is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office.

# NORTH COUNTY TIMES

March 18, 2010

PREVIEW SECTION

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## **"ALIVE AND WELL"**

Love, war and politics unite  
in Kenny Finkle's new play  
having its world premiere at  
the Old Globe this weekend.

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# SAN DIEGO READER

April 15, 2010

CALENDAR

## Calendar THEATER

### THEATER LISTINGS

#### **Alive and Well**

Is neither. Kenny Finkle's lightweight, relentlessly talky play pits a Yankee journalist, Carla, against rebel Zachariah, a Civil War reenactor. Zach's convinced that the last living Confederate soldier hangs out somewhere along General Lee's westward retreat between Petersburg and Appomattox. Carla needs a writing gig. As they lose their way their differences (she's cold and always right; he's romantic and weepy) dissipate. The writing's occasionally funny (after a quaff, or twain, of moonshine, Zach assures Carla, "I'm not

drunk, Ms. Keenan, I'm pacified"). But like so much of the Old Globe's timid play selection of late, it's almost all surface and merely aims to please. Kelly McAndrew and James Knight sustain a nice biplay as the unlikely couple. Except for a humorous game of comebacks, however, the weak second act dwindles into two long, undramatic speeches. Robin Sanford Roberts' set is a bas relief topomap. Shelly Williams' uniforms look authentic — and appropriately itchy.

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 8PM THURSDAYS, 8PM FRIDAYS, 2PM AND 8PM SATURDAYS, 2PM AND 7PM SUNDAYS, 7PM TUESDAYS, 7PM WEDNESDAYS, THROUGH APRIL 25.



*Alive and Well: After a quaff of moonshine...*