



WORLD PREMIERE: Scott Bakula, as a washed-up movie star seeking a comeback on Broadway, stars in "Dancing in the Dark" opposite Mara Davi's snooty ballerina. The production at the Old Globe is under the direction of Gary Griffin. Photographs by CRAIG SCHWARTZ. The Old Globe

THEATER REVIEW

Watch for plot holes

'Dancing in the Dark,' a 'Band Wagon' redo, has story problems but also a talented cast.

By CHARLES McNULTY
Times Staff Writer

SAN DIEGO — They sure don't remake 'em like they used to.

"Dancing in the Dark," the theatrical adaptation of the MGM classic "The Band Wagon," gives the 1953 backstage movie musical an extensive face lift. And as often happens with radical cosmetic surgery, the outcome isn't born-again youthfulness but fragrant artificiality.

The Old Globe production, which is receiving its world premiere under the direction of Gary Griffin, sets out to improve Vincente Minnelli's film without preserving what was special about it.

The screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green — clearly the work's Achilles' heel — attempted to dramatically string together the old hits from the original "Band Wagon," a landmark 1931 revue that songwriters Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz made in collaboration with George S. Kaufman. If the newly devised scenes didn't add up to a satisfying story, it was partly because Comden and Green's contract wasn't renewed and the movie was patched up with an extended dance-theater sequence that gives a fair indication of what the Academy Awards ceremony might have been like if the writers strike hadn't been settled.

Still, "Dancing in the Dark" has a lot to live up to. The swank choreography of Michael Kidd and Oliver Smith is legendary. And who could hold a candle to Fred Astaire as Tony Hunter, the light-footed Hollywood has-been trying to regain Broadway glory, and

Cyd Charisse as Gabrielle Gerard, the prima ballerina launching her limbs onto the Great White Way?

The rechristened stage version features a book by Douglas Carter Beane that tries to smooth out the movie's plot while making the most of the memorable music, particularly the anthem MGM exhausted to the grave, "That's Entertainment," a tune Schwartz and Dietz wrote for the film.

Unfortunately, Beane's script seems as unfinished as his predecessors'. His characters aren't sharply introduced, and he over-complicates the romantic business. The humor has riotous moments but doesn't know when to quit. And sometimes the story just doesn't make sense.

Tony (Scott Bakula) has returned to New York from L.A. with nothing in his possession but a couple of priceless paintings, poor guy. His career has gone bust. He's lost his Bel-Air mansion. And he's ancient history as far as the younger generation is concerned.

Jeffrey Cordova (Patrick Page), an oh-so-serious English actor, wants the thrill of directing and starring in a musical blockbuster. He's decided Lily Martin (Beth Leavel) and Lester Martin (Adam Heller) — Comden and Green's thinly veiled surrogates — will write the show. Paul Byrd (Sebastian La Cause) will choreograph. And Tony will make it his comeback vehicle.

So far, so good. Unluckily for everyone, Jeffrey decides to revamp Lily and Lester's crowd pleaser into an arty retreat of Faust, casting himself as a pitchfork-carrying devil. Paul wants his girlfriend, Gabrielle (Mara Davi), a snooty ballet star, to play the ingenue, which isn't such a bad idea except that she can't stand her leading man. And to top it off, Lily has fallen in love again with Tony, which naturally bums out her husband. It also doesn't delight



TONY WINNER: Beth Leavel performs in a scene with Adam Heller.

Dancing in the Dark

Where: Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego

When: 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 8 p.m. Sundays

Ends: April 13

Price: \$52 to \$79

Contact: (619) 234-5623

Running time: 2 hours, 45 minutes

Tony, who has taken a shine to Gabrielle, even though she keeps storming away from him in a huff.

Such daffy developments are a penny a pop. Musical comedies, of course, traditionally come overstuffed with inanity. But the successful ones have an emotional through-line that can withstand a whole Marx Brothers festival of horseplay.

Beane hasn't managed to funnel the material's variety show energies into a convincing plot, so it's exceedingly diffi-

cut to stay connected. The only real thing happening here is in the commitment of Griffin's talented cast.

Leavel — a Tony winner for her performance in "The Drowsy Chaperone" — is especially good as the smart creative dame with a heart, and Page provides a freshly human take on the egomaniacal thespian who has lost touch with everything but his passion for the stage.

Bakula is more singer than dancer, so don't expect a modern-day Astaire, who in any case doesn't exist. Sadly, the jerkiness of the show keeps us from understanding Tony, the aging matinee idol, who's constantly being asked to supply another needlessly explosive reaction. Bakula can't help but get lost in the shuffle. Davi's Gabrielle is drowned out by the hubbub. Her character is at most a cipher who can pirouette. How anyone is supposed to root for her romance with Tony is a mystery.

To judge by Griffin's work on "The Color Purple," big splashy scenes are his specialty. And this is where he excels with choreographer Warren Carlyle, whose broad, tap-heavy palette strives more to please than enchant.

Only rank amateurs could ruin "Triplets," the famous bit in which miniaturized adults sing about how hard it is to be one of three bawling babies. And "New Sun in the Sky," the radiant standard that closes the first act, fills one with enough brightness to resist ducking out after intermission.

But the most imaginative numbers are those that are shown from a backstage vantage. We're granted only a partial view, but we're swept up not just in the intermittent beauty but also in the atmosphere of histrionic love and craziness that lies behind their creation.

Charles McNulty

North County Times

Preview Section

March 20, 2008

With a nip and tuck, 'Dark' could dance its way to Broadway

PAM KRAGEN
STAFF WRITER

In the Old Globe's world premiere musical "Dancing in the Dark," a troubled musical named "The Band Wagon" bombs in an out-of-town try-out and needs a complete overhaul before it can make it to Broadway.

That's surely not the case, though, for "Dancing," which with just a few tweaks has got the goods to succeed on the Great White Way. A good old-fashioned musical with contemporary humor, big-wow dance numbers and a strong cast (particularly the secondary leads), "Dancing" is the kind of smart crowd-pleaser that Broadway doesn't make anymore.

Bookwriter Douglas Carter Beane adapted "Dancing" from the 1953 film "The Band Wagon" starring Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse. The score by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz boasts classics like "That's Entertainment," "A Shine On Your Shoes" and "By Myself," but the music is only one of the things that makes "Dancing" so entertaining.

"Dancing" is a musical for musical lovers. The time-hopping show-within-a-show is an affectionate spoof of Broadway musicals and the torturous process every musical goes through in its journey to the stage.

Beane's own experiences and his love for theater's unsung heroes (songwriting teams, chorus boys and girls and stage managers) brings a depth to the characters and story you don't usually see in today's glossy, cookie-cutter jukebox shows. And a wealth of theatrical insider jokes will delight true Broadway babies.

The musical still needs shaping. Its choppy first act has too much exposition and takes too long to get to the point. Some of the more-dated "let's put on a show" numbers (like "I Love Louisa" and

REVIEW

"Dancing in the Dark"

When: 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; through April 20

Where: Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego

Tickets: \$52-\$79

Info: (619) 234-5623

Web: www.theoldglobe.org

"Rhode Island Is Famous for You") could be easily cut. And the character development for the musical's central star — a prickly film idol played by "Quantum Leap"/"Star Trek" star Scott Bakula — doesn't hit its stride until the better-written and more-entertaining second act.

In "Dancing," pompous British Shakespearean actor Jeffrey Cordova assembles a theatrical dream team to make a musical that he plans to direct and star in on Broadway (circa 1953) — including fading film star Tony Hunter, Tony-winning musical-writing team Lester and Lily Martin and modern-dance choreographer Paul Byrd. But the dream becomes a nightmare in short order.

Tony and Lily have a tortured past (he deserted both her and Broadway for Hollywood 19 years earlier and is returning only because his film career has stalled); with the return of Lily's former love, her jealous husband, Lester, takes to the bottle; Jeffrey wants to turn the light-hearted romantic musical into a pretentious fire-and-brimstone update of "Faust"; the choreographer devises outrageously provocative dance numbers; and Tony and his much-younger leading lady, the choreographer's girlfriend Gabrielle, can't stand each other.

Faced with a seemingly unfixable turkey on their hands, the producers pull out of "The Band Wagon," and it's up to Tony to pull the battling creative team back together and come up with the money to turn this lemon into lemonade. The musical jumps back



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRAIG SCHWARTZ

Beth Leavel and Adam Heller in "Dancing In the Dark."

in time to the '30s when Tony, Lily and Lester were the toast of Broadway, and then jumps surprisingly in the future for a bittersweet finale. Director Gary Griffin does well at keeping the pacing swift and the time shifts clear, and musical director Don York draws a lush retro sound from the orchestra.

Beane wrote "Dancing" in honor of the late songwriting team Betty Comden and Adolph Green (the original screenwriters of "The Band Wagon"), and it's their autobiographical characters in the story — Lily and Lester — who steal the show in "Dancing." Tony-winner Beth Leavel and Adam Heller get two of the show's best numbers — "The Pitch," an elaborate musicalized run-through of their work-in-progress, and the romantic duet "Sweet Music." Leavel is terrific as the brainy, been-there/done-that lyricist and has natural chemistry and warmth with the nebbishy Heller.

And Patrick Page, as the

big-headed Jeffrey, is marvelous with his vainglorious husky-amber speaking voice (think James Lipton of "Inside the Actor's Studio" without the tongue planted firmly in cheek) and his easy, polished musical chops.

As Tony, Bakula re-creates the character he's famous for on television — a warm, charming, down-to-earth and likable Everyman. The only problem for Bakula is that the audience doesn't get to see this guy until the second act, because the first-act script makes him bland and one-dimensional.

Bakula earned a Tony nomination in 1988, but his singing and dancing skills are no match for the Broadway's best cast around him. Beane writes around Bakula's limita-



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRAIG SCHWARTZ

Mara Davi and Scott Bakula in the Old Globe's world premiere musical "Dancing in the Dark."

► 'DARK'

Continued from 15

tions, though, having Tony dismiss his own dancing skills with the lines: "kinda gawky, kinda tall, I just hoof."

Bakula's also twice the age of his leading lady Mara Davi (as Gabrielle), but this is also smartly defused in some self-deprecating lines from the get-go.

Davi, by the way, sings like an angel and dances like a dream. And thanks to Bakula's innate likability, their second-act May-December romance isn't too hard to buy.

Sebastian La Cause doesn't do much with the underwritten character of the avant-garde choreographer Paul Byrd.

Benjamin Howes is endearing as Hal, the stage manager and Jeffrey's long-time partner. And sweet Jacob ben Widmar leads the 11-member ensemble in the

small role of Teddy, the dance captain.

Warren Carlyle's choreography is a hoot, particularly the intentionally terrible avant-garde dance numbers. John Lee Beatty created the simple but effective slide-on/slide-off sets and theatrical poster walls (which easily fix the time period during the flash-forwards and flash-backs). David Woolard created costumes, Brian Ronan created sound and Ken Billington designed the lighting.

The musical that Jeffrey, Tony, Lester and Lily create in "Dancing in the Dark" is a work in progress, but it becomes a triumph in the end. Life could imitate art for "Dancing" as well, if Beane can rework the show's first act, do a little score-tightening and redefine Bakula's character.

Then, like the fictional "Band Wagon" in the script, they just might end up with a hit on their hands.

arts & entertainment

REVIEW



PHOTOS: CRAIG SCHWARTZ
LOVE AT FIRST STEP: Mara Davi and Scott Bakula play a young dance diva and a former screen idol searching for a rebound on Broadway in The Old Globe Theatre's world-premiere musical "Dancing in the Dark," based on the MGM movie "The Band Wagon."

'DANCING IN DARK' WALTZES TO SUCCESS

New musical is a clever and affectionate homage to the magic of showbiz.

By PAUL HODGINS
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

I'm sure the folks who run San Diego's Old Globe don't need to be reminded of the rich ironies that could attend their world-premiere production of Douglas Carter Beane's "Dancing in the Dark." They probably have nightmares about the newspaper headlines: "Life Imitates Art in New Show About a Bad Musical."

Relax, guys. You've got a winner on your hands. Beane, a master at making something tired and old delightfully new — his musical "Xanadu" succeeded by celebrating and transcending the awfulness of the 1980 roller-disco film — chooses a more worthwhile cinematic inspiration here, and treats it with affection, respect, and nary a touch of mockery.

Betty Comden and Adolph Green's "Band Wagon" (1953) isn't as well-known a movie musical as their "Singin' in the Rain" (1952), but it shares the latter's backstage plot. It starred Fred Astaire as Tony Hunter, a former Broadway hooper who went to Hollywood, found fame, then came back to his roots as his star began to fall. Scott Bakula takes on Astaire's duties here, so the role, in deference to Fred, doesn't require the services of a once-in-a-generation dance genius.

What lures Tony back from Hollywood to New York (besides bankruptcy) is an offer from Jeffrey Cordova (Patrick Page), a hammy British stage superstar who decides he wants to slum it for his next project and direct a musical. Cordova has gathered some first-rate talent for his project: the songwriting team of Lester and Lily Marton (Beth Leavel and Adam Heller) and moody choreographer Paul Byrd (Sebastian La Cause), whose death-obsessed work is described as "like Martha Graham, but without the laughs." (Imagine Danny Kaye's "Choreography" number from "White Christmas" and you'll get the picture.) Byrd, a cynical opportunist, insists he'll take the job only if they use his company and feature his star-girlfriend, Gabrielle (Mara Davi).



Unfortunately for Cordova, Tony and Lily have a romantic history. He had promised to return from Hollywood after making one film and resume his theater career — and, presumably, the romance. Neither promise was kept, and the Martons aren't happy to be teamed with a heartbreaker/Tinseltown traitor.

But like true professionals, the team forges onward. Lily and Lester hang out a proletarian story about a shoeshine man who persuades his richest customer to help him pretend he's a fabulous success in order to impress his small-town Louisiana girlfriend.

Cordova overlays a pretentious Faustian theme on the Martons' modest story. Byrd takes off on a tangent with a pretentious second-act ballet.

The result, predictably, is disaster. Bickering follows an out-of-town performance in which everything goes horribly wrong.

Of course, everything turns out right in the end, and everyone finds romantic happiness too: New couples are born, old ones make up. There's even a tender tip of the hat to same-sex relationships — something I can't recall in a Fred Astaire

UNEASY COLLABORATORS: Tony Award-winner Beth Leavel and Adam Heller play a married but unhappy songwriting team.

'Dancing in the Dark'

Where: Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego
Continues: Through April 13, 7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 8 p.m. Sundays
How much: \$52-\$79
Availability: Good
Length: 2 hours, 45 minutes
Suitability: Teens and adults
Tickets: 619-234-5623
Online: www.oldglobe.org

thespian who's only dimly aware of the concept called Other People. But he turns out to be surprisingly generous, and Page brings out that unexpected charm in the second act.

La Cause and Davi make a troubled couple as Paul and Gabrielle. We know it's only a matter of time before she leaves Paul for Tony, but Davi convinces us that her character is truly torn.

The songs of Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz, one of Broadway's most elegant and gifted teams, are displayed to advantage in director Gary Griffin's efficient if unadorned staging. There are some standouts; Page's reverent delivery of "Dancing in the Dark"; Bakula, Heller and Leavel yucking it up in a classic vaudeville number, "Triplets"; a pitch-perfect Ziegfeld parody called "Rhode Island Is Famous for You." Choreographer Warren Cariyle has an enviable eye for the pretentious excesses of the Robbins/Balanchine/Graham styles, and music director Don York ably leads a full-sounding band in the pit. Arranger Eric Stern's overture is spine-tingling and perfectly Old Broadway.

But the biggest bows go to Beane. With "Dancing in the Dark," he pays tribute to both the departed giants of a fading era and the sacred rituals and battles of theatrical creation. This is a must-see show for anyone who has lived through a trying rehearsal period or wished they were a fly on the wall when the director screams, "You're fired!"

CONTACT THE WRITER:
714-796-7979 or
phodgins@ocregister.com

musical.

Beane departs from the movie in several respects. His play-within-a-play is a bona fide Golden Age mini-musical, complete with the themes and tropes of the era. It's one of many marks of his superb craftsmanship.

Though Bakula is no Fred Astaire, his musical-theater chops are impressive enough. He has a smooth, masculine presence, and he finds just the right tone for the part. Tony is a mixture of big-star bravado, simmering self-hatred and, underneath it all, the wholesome heart of a decent guy who just wants to do the right thing. Bakula pulls it off with ease.

Leavel, who won a Tony for her work in "The Drowsy Chaperone," captures and lends convincing detail to a Lily, who's a showbiz archetype: the pushy working-class New Yorker who, despite her success, yearns for respectability. Heller does well, too, as Lester, who struggles with his jealousy of Tony and his weakness for the bottle.

Page leaves no piece of scenery unchewed as Jeffrey, and makes the most of a pleasant surprise. At first, Jeffrey seems like a self-absorbed

DANCING IN THE DARK

(OLD GLOBE; 604 SEATS; \$79 TOP)

SAN DIEGO An Old Globe presentation of a musical in two acts with book by Douglas Carter Beane, music by Arthur Schwartz, lyrics by Howard Dietz, based on the MGM musical "The Band Wagon," written by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, produced by permission of Warner Bros. Theater Ventures. Directed by Gary Griffin. Music director, Don York. Choreography, Warren Carlyle. Sets, John Lee Beatty; costumes, David Woolard; lighting, Ken Billington; sound, Brian Ronan; music supervisor, arranger, Eric Stern; orchestrations, Larry Hochman; production stage manager, Daniel S. Rosokoff. Opened March 13, 2008. Reviewed March 14. Running time: 2 HOURS, 40 MIN.

Tony Hunter Scott Bakula
Gabrielle Gerard Mara Davi
Lester Marton Adam Heller
Hal Meadows Benjamin Howes
Paul Byrd Sebastian La Cause
Lily Marton Beth Leavel
Jeffrey Cordova Patrick Page

With: Jacob Ben Widmar, Brandon Bieber, Robin Campbell, Angie Canuel, Rachel Coloff, Dylis Croman, Nicolas Dromard, Adam Perry, Eric Santagta, Kiira Schmidt, Branch Woodman, Ashley Yeater.

Musical numbers: "That's Entertainment!" "Triplets," "The Pitch," "Got a Bran' New Suit," "By Myself," "Something You Never Had Before," "You and the Night and the Music," "You and the Night and the Music" (reprise), "I Love Louisa," "New Sun in the Sky," "Louisiana Hayride," "Something to Remember You By," "Rhode Island Is Famous for You," "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "Sweet Music," "Something You Never Had Before" (reprise), "A Shine on Your Shoes," "Dancing in the Dark," "That's Entertainment!" (reprise).

By BOB VERINI

That's Entertainment!" the anthem of the classic 1953 MGM tuner "The Band Wagon," asserts: "A show that is really a show/Sends you out with a kind of a glow." But what if it sends you out scratching your head? That means there's work to be done on the road, which as it happens is both the plot and now the mandate of "Dancing in the Dark," Douglas Carter Beane's uneven adaptation of Betty Comden and Adolph Green's original screenplay, world-premiering at the Old Globe.

Beane's reworked "Xanadu" balanced a horrid movie's outline with a pleasingly self-referential tone at once mocking and celebrating the source material. But the Fred Astaire/Cyd Charisse starrer boasts a solid structure, with strongly defined characters.

Beane and helmer Gary Griffin upend and reroute the film's contours confusingly, until it becomes unclear whether they are trying to complete what Comden and Green left unfinished, improve on it or set



Mara Davi and Scott Bakula try a little soft shoe in the tuner "Dancing in the Dark," based on the MGM musical "The Band Wagon."

it aside altogether.

Pic told of largely forgotten Hollywood hooper Tony Hunter, looking to repackage himself in a thoroughly modern musical penned by old pals Lily and Lester Marton under the aegis of Jeffrey Cordova, a flamboyant visionary auteur in the Orson Welles mode. When Cordova's pretentious modern-day "Faust" lays an egg, Tony is elected to helm an old-fashioned smash-hit revue employing the Arthur Schwartz/Howard Dietz songbook, which leaves him free to romance young prima ballerina

of their meeting and never gets a clear moment to bond romantically with him — with the ecstatic title tune having become just another production number.

While Leavel, Heller and Davi labor to sell their roles as if they made sense, Sebastian La Cause has an interestingly sinewy presence as choreographer Paul, even if the character's disloyal antics strain credulity. As self-absorbed mayfly Jeff, a serenely assured Patrick Page sails in for periodic quips and sails out with the show under his arm.

But Bakula, winded by the dances and jockeying between snob and schlub personas, seems pained and uncomfortable as a character whose relationship to showbiz lacks definition. Tony needn't be portrayed as an inept pushover to dramatize the enormous difficulties of wrangling a musical show. (No more cohesive than the film's revue, Lily and Lester's opus is a convoluted yarn about Louisiana hillbillies and Gotham socialites.)

Though sung with gusto to Larry Hochman's exciting orchestrations, the Schwartz/Dietz songs aren't always used to best effect: Corny "Louisiana Hayride" gets the full treatment, while "That's Entertainment!" makes little impression, and "Rhode Island Is Famous for You" should go back to the drawer whence it came.

Show stunts on visual pizzazz, with Warren Carlyle's dances lacking build and excitement. John Lee Beatty's filmy drapery and primary-colored setpieces seem somehow incomplete, while Ken Billington's lights cast odd shadows downstage.

Certainly there's too much talent around for "Dancing in the Dark" not to offer pleasure. And Beane is still able to knock off one-liners with the best of them. But references to Laurette Taylor and sitzprobes are aimed over the head of most theater mavens, let alone the public. Too many decisions smack of in-jokes or sheer whim.

There's no reason this reconstituted "Band Wagon" can't soar once it jettisons its extraneous and self-contradictory elements. But "Dancing" is some distance from finding its footing, despite the finale's admonition to "Admit we're a hit and we'll go on from there." Not yet.

Certainly, there's too much talent around for the Old Globe's 'Dancing in the Dark' not to offer pleasure.

Gaby with whom he clashes until they go dancing you-know-where.

Thin, yes, but straightforward and logical.

Beane's alterations tug at the delicate fabric. Tony (Scott Bakula) has become a testy Oscar-winning thesp with no apparent reason to do a musical, especially alongside the erstwhile revue partners he resents (Beth Leavel and Adam Heller, virtually impersonating Comden and Green).

Inconsistencies abound and nag. Gaby (appealing Mara Davi), reconceived as a modern dancer, oscillates among shy gamine, pretentious artiste and stage-savvy soubrette, depending on momentary story needs. Though ostensibly a longtime Tony Hunter fan, she's sniping at him within seconds

REVIEWS ON THE WEB

For reviews of the following productions, go to Variety.com/legitreviews

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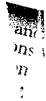
RESIDENT

Carousel Court Theater, Chicago
Engaging Shaw Lumina Theater, Long Branch, N.J.
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Rated 'G'

Local kids tell us
what they think
about what's out there

ONSTAGE



'Dancing in the Dark'

Continues through April 20 at The Old Globe. Tickets/information: (619) 23-GLOBE (234-5623) or theoldglobe.org

BY DAVID DIXON

Review: "Dancing in the Dark" is a musical based on the classic film "The Band Wagon." The music is timeless with hits like "That's Entertainment," "Triplets" and "New Sun in the Sky" that will keep the audience smiling. The story is generic at times, but it always gives a wink to the audience. The show has such a giddy energy that it is almost impossible to dislike.

The cast is nearly flawless. You know that every member of this cast is having a great time bringing the show to life. Their amazing ability to act, dance and sing will keep the audience applauding.

"Dancing in the Dark" is planning to go to Broadway after it leaves The Old Globe. I really hope that it does. Audiences will love its message about why the ensemble loves the theater. The only thing holding it back are some very mild flaws. One of the final scenes taking place in modern times is not really needed, even though the finale is sweet and sentimental. There also might be too many reprises of "That's Entertainment" in the opening section.

Despite these two small problems, "Dancing in the Dark" is a great theater experience for anyone. Now, that's entertainment!

My rating: A.

- VALERIE SCHER, RATED "G" EDITOR

SAN DIEGO
Reader

April 10, 2008



Dancing in the Dark

Dancing in the Dark

The Old Globe's world premiere, based on the MGM movie *The Band Wagon*, has miles to go before it reaches Broadway but already offers considerable entertainment. Playwright Douglas Carter Beane writes three-dimensional one-liners: they are funny; always, often painfully, true; and perfect for the character the moment they're uttered. The musical comedy, about the near impossibility of making a musical comedy, also boasts the original's great songs, including the iconic "That's Entertainment" and the title song. There are good bits: as when Adam Heller and (the hilarious) Beth Leavel, as comedy writers, pitch their idea to potential cast and backers. They blitz with manic urgency and stop the show as well. The cast performs on John Lee Beatty's minimalist, backstage/on-stage set. Patrick Page, clear-voiced Mara Davi, and Scott Bakula do quality work. Though it ran for almost three hours, the opening night performance felt cramped, however. Numbers got truncated, and knock-your-socks-off entertainment — the *raison d'être* of the original — often got shoved aside for plot and character development. It feels strange to say this, because plays get deservedly clobbered for lacking these qualities, but the revised book is trying for depths and motivations that weigh the show down. New scenes fill in back-story and dull the pace and whimsical "anything can go" tone. The production pulsed forward and needed to get out of its own way.

Worth a try.

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. THURSDAYS, 8 P.M. FRIDAYS, 8 P.M. SATURDAYS, 2 AND 8 P.M. SUNDAYS, 2 AND 7 P.M. TUESDAYS, 7 P.M. WEDNESDAYS, 7 P.M. THROUGH APRIL 20.

"Insight Seminar: The Glass Menagerie"

Artists from all phases of the *Glass Menagerie* production process meet with patrons in "lively exchange of ideas and insights" to enhance the theatergoing experience. Seminar concludes with informal champagne reception. 619-234-5623. Monday, April 14, 6:30 p.m.; \$3-\$5. The Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way. (BALBOA PARK)

Putting on a show, putting up a front and putting on dancing shoes

by Jean Lowerison

Dancing in the Dark

Hollywood used to steal from Broadway. Lately the progression seems to be going in the other direction.

Douglas Carter Beane, currently riding high on Broadway with *Xanadu*, adapted from the disastrous 1980 film and directed by La Jolla Playhouse artistic director Christopher Ashley, tries it again with the musical film classic *The Band Wagon*. Beane's adaptation, *Dancing in the Dark*, is in Broadway try-out and has been extended through April 20 at the Old Globe Theatre, directed by Gary Griffin (*The Color Purple*).

A celebration of the stage musical, the backstage plot of *Dancing in the Dark* has Shakespearean actor Jeffrey Cordova (a wonderfully pretentious Patrick Page) announcing that he wants to direct a musical.

"How hard can it be?" he sniffs, hiring Comden and Green stand-ins Les and Lily Morton (Adam Heller, Beth Leavel) to write the book and songs for the show, and asking former musical comedy actor-gone-Hollywood Tony Hunter (Scott Bakula) to star.

Tony, whose star has gone into decline, takes the gig. In a script conference, Jeff seizes on Lily's mention of the star "selling his soul" for a hit show to envision "a modern version of Faust."

"Maybe I didn't tell it right," Lily laments. True to the basic film plot, *Dancing in the Dark* becomes an amusing tug-of-war between Jeff's *auteur* approach and the rest of the cast, who know what a musical should be. Beane has added backstory, especially between Lily and Tony, to deepen the characters.

Griffin has a crack technical team, with a clever set by John Lee Beatty, great lighting by Ken Billington and intelligent sound design by Brian Ronan that doesn't blow you out of the building.

The cast is outstanding as well. Page (Broadway's "Grinch" for the last two seasons) and Tony-winning Leavel (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) are my favorites, but all are excellent. Big kudos to Warren Carlyle for his terrifically inventive choreography, and to the outstanding 10-piece pit band.

The original *Band Wagon* was a musical revue which premiered on Broadway in 1931—a collection of skits and musical numbers with songs by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz. The 1953 film became an instant classic, thanks in part to the dance magic of stars Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse.

And now, with a few tweaks and deletions, *Dancing in the Dark* should have a good run on Broadway.

On opening night, the show ran nearly three hours including intermission. That has likely been tightened by now. (If not, I have a few suggestions: the "Triplets" number has history, I know, but it's silly and lacks relevance to the show. And the last sequence, 55 years in the future, is a waste of time.)



Patrick Page, Mara Davi and Scott Bakula with the ensemble of The Old Globe's world-premiere musical *Dancing in the Dark*, based on the MGM movie *The Band Wagon*. Photo by Craig Schwartz.

Get your tickets now. This will almost certainly be a hit on the Great White Way.

Dancing in the Dark plays through April 20 at the Old Globe Theatre. Shows Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. For tickets call 619-23-GLOBE or visit www.theoldglobe.org.

March 27, 2008

Old Globe's 'Dancing in the Dark' a musical delight; La Jolla Playhouse holding summer acting conservatory for high school students

By Alice Cash

Presently there are two shows in San Diego that have a dancing vibe going on right now! But trust me, they are completely different!



Alice Cash

A combined version of "Curtains" and "A Chorus Line," "Dancing in the Dark," now playing at the Old Globe through April 20, is another backstage musical comedy. In the show, prominent Shakespearean actor Jeffrey Cordova organizes a creative team with himself in the helm as director; the Martha Graham-esque

ren Carlyle.

Directed by Gary Griffin (you might know him as the director of "The Color Purple," which is coming to Broadway San Diego next season www.broadwaysd.com), the show was very creative and had some very cute laughs. Going to Broadway soon, this is definitely a must-see for San Diego audiences, just to experience the whole Broadway feel. At almost three hours long, the musical will hopefully be cut back during the out-of-town previews, but it will totally work on the Great White Way. If you love classical musical theatre, you'll love this show. You can call (619) 234-5623 or go online to www.oldglobe.org for more information!

Five unmarried sisters in Ireland in 1936 live together, and all have drastic choices to change their lives within the show "Dancing at Lughnasa," now playing at New Village Arts. When the sisters' brother, Jack, comes back from Africa, the Catholic sisters try to help him get better as he is suffering from malaria. One sister, Kate, emphasizes Catholicism calling on their brother's pagan views. Another sister, Rose, who is mentally handicapped, is tricked into going off with a man she thinks loves her. Yet another sister, Maggie, must come to terms with herself and why she was never loved. The sister Chris has a son out of marriage and lives for the day when her lover comes back to see her, and Agnes must choose between happiness and family. Each of these characters has choices and they must take one on their journey, which is why the play was so appealing to watch.

The play is told from the point of view of Chris' son Michael, played by Joshua Everett Johnson. As he tells it, he is all grown up, but as the sisters interact with him he pretends to be his younger self, which is excellently staged. Johnson's monotonous voice keeps you enthralled with subtle hints of emotion behind it. Kristianne Kumer plays the sister Kate, the eldest and the leader of the group with great physicality and voice quality. Grace Delaney played Maggie and PJ Anbey played Rose — both were stellar. Amanda Morrow played Agnes with fabulous facial expressions and was very believable. Rose was played by Amanda Sitton who went through a wide range of emotions with and without her lover played by Manny Fernandes, who danced right out onto and off the stage. And Charlie Riendeau played the mixed-up brother Jack. The entire cast was very strong and very powerful.

The set was a cute little cottage and a garden taking you into the picturesque peasants' home, designed by Nick Fouch. Mary Larson designed the beautiful 1930s costumes. Ashley Jenks designed the lights, and the sound design with beautiful music was by Joshua Everett Johnson (also a part of the cast).

Directed by the award-winning Esther Emery (the playwright for "Rhubarb or How to Play with a Roller Girl," which

was recently playing at the Moxie), this powerful piece will definitely have your heart wrenched. If you're up for a dramatic and emotional piece, you'll love this amazing story. You can call (760) 433-3245 or go online to www.newvillagearts.org to get more information!

The prestigious La Jolla Playhouse holds an intense acting conservatory every summer for high school students. It is for six weeks and aimed at students who want a career in professional theatre. The teaching artists are from all over the U.S. and are all professionals in their areas of study from improv, commedia del arte, movement, voice, Shakespeare, contemporary scene study, to yoga. It really helps you determine if this is the life you want to lead. They are currently accepting applications and auditions are April 5, 12 and 13. You can find out more about this by calling (858) 550-1070 or going to www.lajollaplayhouse.org for more information.

Theater review

— from a teen perspective

modern dancer Paul Byrd as the choreographer, Hollywood star Tony Hunter as the leading man, and partners Lester and Lily Marton (always the Tony and never the Pulitzer) to write the show. What first starts out as a great new comedy, "The Bandwagon," that Lester and Lily are writing, turns into a modern day Faust and tells the story of the triumphs and struggles of putting on a show.

Patrick Page plays the flamboyant Shakespearean director who crazily drafts in the other performers. Page totally steals the show with his "bad Shakespeare" interpretation and fabulous comic timing. Scott Bakula, who has a great voice, played Hollywood Tony. Paul Byrd is played by Sebastian La Cause who captures the attitude of the choreographer and finds his "20-minute" ballet to be the only thing salvageable from the misconstrued version of Faust. Adam Heller and Tony Award-winner Beth Leavel played married writing partners Lester and Lily Marton, with fantastic physicality and expressions. Mara Davi played Gabrielle Gerard. The very talented ensemble was composed of great dancers and singers who brought lots of energy to the musical!

The costumes were beautifully designed by David Woolard with a 1930s feel. One feature of the set that was especially cool was the fact that the front curtain featured different old graphics of theatres in New York City, designed by John Lee Beatty. The lights were great, taking you from on the stage to behind the scenes by Ken Billington, and the sound was designed by Brian Ronan. The choreography caught the Old-Broadway feel with new a new level of energy created by War-

LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS

April 10, 2008

Too much of a good 'Dancing' thing

By CHARLENE BALDRIDGE | VILLAGE NEWS

The Old Globe's current world-premiere musical, "Dancing in the Dark" (based on the 1953 MGM film "The Band Wagon") is really too much of a good thing, crammed with songs by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz, performances in which, no matter how scintillating, border on tedium as time goes by.

Granted, book writer Douglas Carter Beane created enough of a second act that it is now more than a revue without book (Betty Com-

den and Adolph Green's contracts expired before the film script was complete). However, one questions the wisdom of adding additional numbers from the Schwartz/Dietz songbook when the film score was already chock-a-block with numerous splendid tunes, including "That's Entertainment," "Dancing in the Dark," "By Myself," "I Love Louisa," "Louisiana Hayride" and "A Shine on Your Shoes."

"Louisiana Hayride" didn't work in the film. For numerous reasons, it still doesn't work, despite tap choreography by Warren Carlyle

and perhaps especially its transfer to Park Avenue in the show within a show, which concerns a Wall Street shoeshine boy who convinces his Southern sweetheart he's a successful financier.

The musical's plot concerns Tony Hunter (Scott Bakula), a bankrupt, has-been film actor that left New York as a youngster and made it big in Hollywood. Classical actor Patrick Page is a tremendous asset as Jeffrey Cordova, a ham Shakespearean actor who decides he wants to stage a musical, then imposes the plot of "Faust" on the frothy, fun book. Brilliantly, Beane commences the show's action with a scene in which the too-long-of-tooth Cordova plays Hamlet, which leads into the backstage musical number "That's Entertainment," as Cordova introduces his musical collaborators to one another.

Lily and Lester Martin (Beth Leavel and Adam Heller), whose characters are based on Comden and Green, are the songwriting

SEE 'DANCING,' Page 13

'DANCING'

CONTINUED FROM Page 12

team; Gabrielle Gerard (Mara Davi) is the leading lady and girlfriend of the pretentious modern dance choreographer Paul Byrd (marvelously hunky Sebastian La Cause), whose work, in one of the show's funniest lines, is said to be "like Martha Graham without the laughs." Sweet-voiced Benjamin Howes delivers an affecting portrayal of Jeffrey's factotum and lover, Hal, a character created for the stage musical.

Leavel and Davi are extraordinary singer/dancers. Particularly admired is Davi's lustrous lower register and Leavel's scene with Bakula in which she hopes to rekindle their youthful love affair: Heller's nebbish, truly good man is appealing. The boys and girls of the singing/dancing ensemble create characters as well as dance and sing exceptionally well, accompanied by a 12-piece band in the pit. Larry Hochman's orchestration is way too brassy at times.

The first act moves by fits and starts, and the musical waits too long for the now-culminating number "Dancing in the Dark." In the film it was the Central Park-set



Mara Davi and Scott Bakula in the Old Globe's "Dancing in the Dark," through April 20 in Balboa Park.

PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ

number in which film stars Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse (who played Tony and Gabrielle) unforgettably fell in love. Likable as Bakula is, he is charged with the unenviable and perhaps impossible task of dispelling our memory of Astaire; his detachment, his moves and his delicious savoir-faire.

With cuts and a few miracles, "Dancing in the Dark" might make

it to Broadway.

Before *Village News* viewed "Dancing in the Dark" March 19, the Old Globe announced an extension through Sunday, April 20. Performances take place at 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays; and at 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. For information, visit www.theoldglobe.org or call (619) 23-GLOBE. ☞

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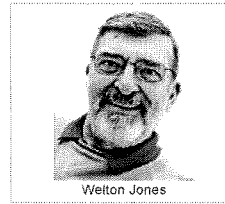
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San Diego Arts

"Dancing in the Dark" at the Old Globe Theatre

All those songs!
 By Welton Jones
 Posted on Mar 14 2008
 Last updated Mar 14 2008



"Dancing in the Dark," the new musical at the Old Globe Theatre, launches itself vigorously with an act curtain saturated in nostalgia and an overture to die after.

(Given a bottomless trunk of Arthur Schwartz-Howard Dietz songs like "By Myself," "You and the Night and the Music," "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "A Shine On Your Shows," "That's Entertainment" and the title tune, what would you expect? Well believe me, overture-writing being the quaint and all-but-lost craft that it is now, this could have been something sad and sodden but, thanks to either Larry Hochman's orchestrations or Eric Stern's arrangements, it is instead a sparkling cascade of dear tunes served with deep love and solid respect.)

The bad news is that the show which follows isn't yet at the same level. The good news is that it's never really bad, either.

This is a musical for true believers and slaves of the passion. It's a backstage story based on a legendary movie ("The Band Wagon") adapted from the early Broadway revue of the same name. It's packed with theatrical and dance in-jokes (Did somebody mention Arthur Laurents?) and sticky with all the standard sentimentality. The only thing resembling a bad guy is the modern-dance choreographer ("Martha Graham without the laughs," a line that REQUIRES quoting.) who doesn't get it.

It's an assemblage sprung from the brain of Douglas Carter Beane, last seen fashioning a successful Broadway show out of the fabled film flop "Xanadu." That's the sort of labor that begets rueful tales such as this one, in which collaborators rip each other's artistic flesh just out of audience view, whilst cooing publicly about their creative bliss.

Well, I might as well say it. What this show lacks that its two predecessors had is Fred Astaire. That's all.

It always seemed kind of a dumb part even with Astaire playing it: Broadway kid heads for Hollywood, forgetting his roots, until he hits the skids back east trying for a comeback in a misguided project which only he, finally, can save. It's just hard to believe Astaire as a flop.

Scott Bakula, who has been wallowing in Hollywood himself recently but who I remember from an under-rated Broadway show called "Romance/Romance," is in the Astaire role and, since his song and dance is pretty standard stuff, he's free to make a bit more of the part, which, acting-wise at least, he does.

The Broadway "Band Wagon" (New in 1931!) was just a collection of Schwartz-Dietz songs. For the 1953 film, Betty Comden and Adolph Green were imported by MGM to write a real book which they did, featuring themselves (as played by Nanette Fabray and Oscar Levant) and Astaire as, well, sort of HIMself. (This kind of

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endless rummaging in distant origins seems inescapable, given the nostalgic thrust of the show.)

For the present version, Beane has fluffed up the story and cut back on the choreography, seeking to mount more a real play than just a framework for hanging up songs. Admirable ambition, but he just takes the little story too seriously. Everybody knows it's tough to create a hit show. But everybody also knows that a musical with songs like this is going to end happily.

Actually, this one ends with an odd coda set 50 years later, with Bakula as creaky grandpa, which then segues into first an movie-style linked-arm march of the principals to "That's Entertainment" followed by a finale stolen directly from "A Chorus Line" which was itself, of course, stitched together from decades of musical numbers stretching at least back to the original "Band Wagon" and...

Whew! Just an awful lot of show biz schmaltz here.

The ensemble, under Gary Griffin's direction, is attractive, enthusiastic and game. Patrick Page is a naughty pleasure as a self-important Brit; Mara Davi is appealing as the ingénue; and Paul Byrd impressive as the surly dance master.

I wish I liked Adam Heller and Beth Leavel better as the creative team but competent is reassuring at the stage where this show is right now, still finding its feet.

John Lee Beatty's scenery is presently rather too reliant upon bland drapery and random wagons. Except for some heavy whimsy in specialty girls' outfits, David Woolard costumes appear rented from a tux shop. Ken Billington helps his design colleagues with nimble, knowing illumination.

What's really working, though, is the music, with Don York conducting what sounds like a lot more than 12 players. The arrangements, resting so comfortably on the splendid bones of the basic score, are so ideal that they give the rest of the show a goal worth clawing towards.

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Organization : Old Globe Theatre

Phone : 619 234-5623

Production Type : Play

Region : Balboa Park

URL : www.oldglobe.org

Venue : Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego

About the author: Welton Jones has been reviewing shows for 50 years as of October 2007, 35 of those years at the UNION-TRIBUNE and, now, six for SANDIEGO.COM where he wrote the first reviews to appear on the site. More by this author.

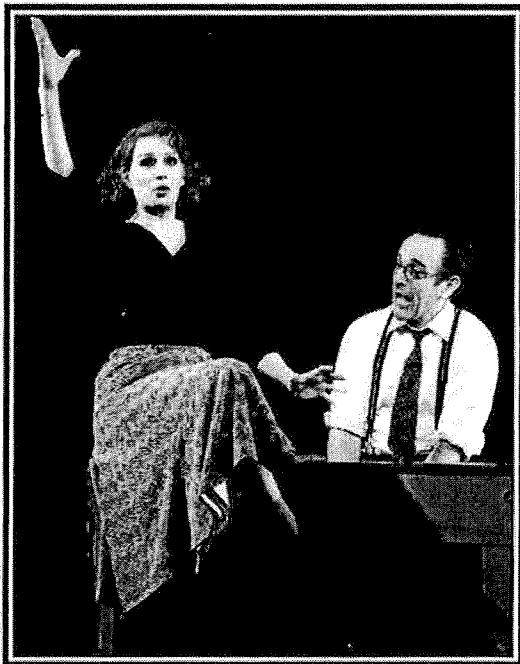
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April 9, 2008

THEATRE



Gabrielle (Mara Davi, left) and Tony (Scott Bakula) grin and bear their relationship in The Old Globe Theatre's *Dancing in the Dark*.

Second things first

ALL THE WORLD'S A SET IN
OLD GLOBE THEATRE'S VERY
GOOD *DANCING IN THE DARK*

BY MARTIN JONES WESTLIN

When the 1953 movie musical *The Band Wagon* came out on DVD three years ago, film critic Roger Ebert gave his take on a set of interviews with the surviving cast members. Their recollections, he said, suggest this was an unhappy shoot, colored by personal problems on and off the set. The ambivalence between stars Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse; the fractious relationship between director Vincente Minnelli and wife Judy Garland; actor Jack Buchanan's painful dental surgery: All reportedly contributed to the wet blanket that saturated rehearsals. "Still," Ebert concluded, "a great musical emerged from the shambles, just as it does in the story."

I'm not so sure *The Band Wagon* is a great musical in the historical sense, but it's a lot of fun. It pokes genteel humor at its Broadway cousins and their casts, whose personal struggles collide to create the same

pal that may have hung over that soundstage. That's the cool thing about The Old Globe Theatre's *Dancing in the Dark*—it's not only based on *The Band Wagon*, it downright replicates the contentiousness and angst that mark Broadway behind the scenes. Just like the movie, this is much more than a romp through the wiles and ways of the live stage. There's a pool of flesh-and-blood characters with flesh-and-blood problems here, and they all get their measure of respect through some masterful writing and one magnificent flesh-and-blood scene design.

Fading movie-idol dancer Tony Hunter (Scott Bakula) is feeling the effects of overexposure and a public that stifles a yawn at the mention of his name. Desperation sends him to Broadway amid hopes of a comeback in a modest comedy—but pretentious director Jeffrey Cordova (Patrick Page) will promptly overreact, hiring prima ballerina Gabrielle Gerard (Mara Davi) to co-star. The fur flies before long, but romance and the kindred Broadway spirit will help settle it. A pretty darn good show is at hand after all.

Nothing terribly exciting on paper, I agree—but author Douglas Carter Beane has thought of just about everything subtextually, from the grueling relationship between playwrights Lily and Les Martin (Beth Leavel and Adam Heller) to Hunter's wide-ranging back-story. Director Gary Griffin finds a lot to play with in such breadth, but he distorts several of the milder passages by treating them with equal exuberance (there's a potentially hilarious scene in which *Macbeth* is briefly confused with *Brigadoon*; it needs some serious toning down). Arthur Schwartz's music and Howard Dietz's lyrics occasionally suffer from the same problem, but music director Don York shrewdly treats those intervals with kid gloves, muting them in the process.

And, oh, for John Lee Beatty's *set*, which might as well be listed in the cast of characters. The pieces slide, dart and converge exactly as the mood dictates—and in no case do they seek to inject themselves into the story so much as comment on it from afar. Beatty has created an absolutely brilliant backdrop, the thrust of the finest technical effort I've seen at The Globe in the last five seasons.

Bakula, 53, is every bit as lithe and youthful as he was in his *Quantum Leap* TV days more than 15 years ago—the figure he cuts is hardly that of a has-been like Tony. But that quality also keeps Tony above the fray, anchoring the other characters' pretense and despair and, thus, their believability. This is a very good piece with some splendid technical treatments, easily worthy of its recently extended closing date. **CB**

This review is based on the opening-night performance of March 20. Dancing in the Dark runs through April 20 at The Old Globe Theatre mainstage, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. \$52-\$69. 619-23-GLOBE.

Write to marty@sdcitybeat.com and editor@sdcitybeat.com.

Globe revives blockbuster '50s musical with 'Dancing'

By Eileen Sondak

FOR THE EAST COUNTY CALIFORNIAN

You couldn't dream up a better recipe for success than the one used to create "Dancing in the Dark" — the Old Globe's brand new Broadway-bound musical comedy.

The show was based on "The Band Wagon," a blockbuster 1950s movie starring Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse. That classic is still considered one of the greatest movie musicals of all time. Add to the mix, the million dollar songs that propel the plot. Among the hummable tunes are "That's Entertainment," "A Shine on Your Shoes," and the show's title song, "Dancing in the Dark."

Then — to put frosting on the cake — there's the legendary ballroom dance sequence from the film. That alone could keep audiences happy. After all, ballroom dancing is back on top of the charts, thanks to the popularity of "Dancing with the Stars." In fact, drop-dead choreography is the most appealing ingredient in "Dancing in the Dark."

Warren Carlyle's striking dance designs keep the show jumpin' — and the famous ballroom dance episode, isn't the only dancing on tap. The choreography abounds with high-voltage tap and modern ballet routines, and dance buffs will relish every minute of it.

"Dancing in the Dark" (slated to light up the Old Globe's Main Stage through April 13) is old-time entertainment in a fresh new package. Gary Griffin (who directed "The Color Purple" for Broadway) is behind this project — and he'll be



Photo by Craig Schwartz

Beth Leavel in the new play.

taking "Dancing in the Dark" all the way to Broadway. Perhaps, the show will need a bit of tweaking before it travels to the Great White Way, but it's already a crowd-pleaser — so start making plans to see it while it's still in San Diego.

The world-class cast of this vintage back-stage musical includes Tony Award-nominee Scott Bakula as Tony Hunter. Hunter was a star in Hollywood, but his career in 'Tinsel Town' is on the skids. His former partners don't exactly welcome him with open arms when he tries to pick up the pieces. Those are a few of the

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

backstage bickerings in the story, but since this is a '50s-style musical comedy, there's always a happy ending.

Playwrights Lily and Lester Marton (played by Beth Leavel and Adam Heller) are the partners. They also serve as alter egos for the film's original writers (Betty Comden and Adolph Green) — and you couldn't find better casting for the roles than this talented duo.

Leavel can sing up a storm, and she's a first-rate comedienne. Heller is funny even before he opens his mouth.

The other zanies in this comic crockpot are Jeffrey Cordova the stuffy English Shakespearean actor (played to the hilt by Patrick Page), Gabrielle (Mara Davi), and dance-maker for the play-within-the-play Paul Byrd (Sebastian LaCause). They infuse the story with a little more spice. Cordova is a real stand-out in the funniest role in the piece — and his haughty delivery is a



Photo by Craig Schwartz

Scott Bakula and Mara Davi in The Old Globe's world-premiere musical "Dancing in the Dark," based on the MGM movie "The Band Wagon."

scream.

Naturally, the period costumes play an important role in this production, and designer David Woolard decked the cast out with a

delightful array of outfits (including the traditional top hat that was Astaire's trademark).

The Globe struck gold with "Dancing in the Dark," and local audiences should get out and enjoy it while it's here in town. True, the production has everything but the kitchen sink thrown into the second act — but even if the numbers don't further the story, they entertain. As a result, everyone goes home happy.

Old Globe's 'Dancing in the Dark' delivers

By José A. López

"Dancing in the Dark" is a loving tribute to musical theater and to the actors, writers and dancers who toil to bring entertainment to life.

Receiving its world premiere at the Old Globe Theatre through April 4, the play is a crowd-pleaser.

Written by Douglas Carter Beane, the musical draws from "The Band

Wagon," the 1953 MGM movie starring Fred Astaire. That's the movie which, most notably, gave the world "That's Entertainment!" and other popular show tunes.

It stars Scott Bakula (who returns to the theater after starring on television's "Quantum Leap," and "Enterprise") as Tony Hunter, a fading Hollywood star who is lured back to New York to cash in on his notoriety.

At the center of his return is Jeffrey Cordova, a pompous Shakespearean actor who believes he can manufacture a hit show by reuniting Hunter with his former writing and performing partners, Lily (Tony Award-winner Beth Leavel in a show-stealing performance) and Lester Martin (Adam Heller).

Though the Martins still harbor some resentment toward the friend they feel abandoned them, they sign on to the project, certain that a high-profile play may help them win a Pulitzer Prize.

What they come up with is "The Band Wagon," a musical about a New York shoeshine boy from Louisiana who enlists the help of his most loyal client for a scheme to let the folks back home believe he's made it in the Big Apple.

Under the direction of Cordova (played exuberantly by Patrick Page, whose Broadway credits include a stint as the Grinch in the Dr. Seuss Christmas classic) what starts out as a straight-forward, earnest play turns into a post-modern take on Faust.

It even includes a hilariously hedonistic modern dance number, after Cordova enlists the help of It-choreographer Paul Byrd to give the show an edge. Byrd signs up, but not before securing that his dancer girlfriend, Gabrielle Getard (Mara David), is hired on as the lead actress.

The wheels fall off the wagon quickly, and it's up to Hunter to take the reins and try to save the show, and



Mara David and Scott Bakula play the lead roles in 'Dancing in the Dark,' a new musical based on the MGM movie 'The Band Wagon' playing at the Old Globe Theatre through April 4.

possibly find true love.

The idea of a play within a play is an old device, but there is something refreshing in the way "Dancing in the Dark" handles the conceit.

Most notably, the play doesn't contain a hint of irony. It treats the musical — even one as nonsensical as the glimpses we get of "The Band Wagon" — with reverence.

In a way, the play is the polar opposite of Beane's "Xanadu," his 2007 Broadway hit that sends up the critically reviled 1980 film starring Olivia

Newton John and Gene Kelley in his final role.

In the program notes, Beane says he adapted "Dancing in the Dark" with a greater respect than what he had "Xanadu."

Beane was good friends with Betty Comden and Adolph Green, who wrote the screenplay to "The Band Wagon." With "Dancing in the Dark," Beane is expanding on their work.

"There are plenty of places where I make a point of referencing Betty and Adolph's life and shows and perform-

ing style," Beane states. "And these moments are done with the utmost love."

Another achievement of the show is how easy it is for all audiences to enjoy the behind-the-scenes look of life in the theater. There are some scenes that will resonate more fully with theater insiders, but there are enough with general appeal.

Through it all, the play celebrates the history of the musical, from the 1920s reviews to the more modern number such as "Cats" and "Phantom of the Opera."

The point, Beane says, is to show that musicals do not lack depth or meaning.

"The Band Wagon" is about a man returning home. It is about a loner becoming part of the community for the first time. It is the prodigal son, bruised and broken and returning to his real life," Beane said. "And it has a great hayride number!"

The show is directed by Gary Griffin, who most recently directed "The Color Purple" on Broadway. The music is by Arthur Schwartz and the lyrics by Howard Dietz.

The show is being primed for Broadway and is certainly worth watching in San Diego.

Tickets range from \$52 to \$79 and can be obtained by calling the box office at 619-23-GLOBE.

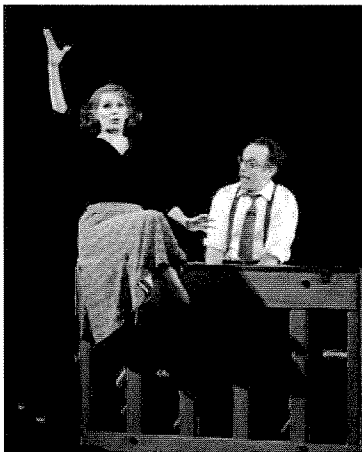


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Dancing in the Dark

Book by Douglas Carter Beane
 Adapted from the Original Screenplay "The Band Wagon" by Betty Comden and Adolph Green
 Directed by Gary Griffin
 Music by Arthur Schwartz
 Lyrics by Howard Dietz
 The Old Globe, San Diego
 March 4 – April 13, 2008
<http://www.oldglobe.org/>



Beth Leavel and Adam Heller. Photo: Craig Schwartz.

What a relief. Writer Douglas Carter Beane (*As Bees in Honey Drown, Xanadu*) lifts a weight from your shoulder from the get go. He obviously has taken apart the original 1953 MGM screenplay "The Band Wagon", which this musical is based on, and has pieced it back together in a completely different and clever way. While the movie contains wonderful music and dance numbers, the story was somewhat compromised when the original writers' team, Betty Comden and Adolph Green ("Singing in the Rain"), lost their studio contract halfway through the project.

In this stage version, acclaimed snobby British actor/director Jeffrey Cordova (Patrick Page) is looking for a new challenge: directing a Broadway musical. To accomplish this task, he hires writing couple Lester and Lily Marton (Adam Heller and Beth Leavel) and the has-been Hollywood actor Tony Hunter (Scott Bakula). To this group, he adds a dancing leading lady Gabrielle Gerard (Mara Davi) and her modern dance choreographer boyfriend Paul Byrd (Sebastian LaCause). There is no lack of conflict between these characters which delights Cordova: "That's how we create great art!" Despite the tensions, everyone gets excited about the project and decides to work together: after all "That's Entertainment!" Things turn a little sour when Cordova has the brilliant idea that the musical piece they're about to create should be a modern interpretation of *Faust*. We know there is trouble around the corner when the Martons pitch their opening song whole heartedly and Cordova dramatically announces "I like the idea of the song..., but I don't want the song."

Patrick Page (Broadway's *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*) as Jeffrey Cordova, is an absolute delight. His comedic timing and snootiness are perfect. He is joined by the wonderful Benjamin Howes who plays his multitalented right hand man ("and the left, too"), stage manager Hal Meadows. To some, it may come as a surprise that *Quantum Leap* TV star Scott Bakula can sing and dance. In fact, Bakula is returning to his musical theatre roots, having started his career in New York in 1976. He earned a Tony nomination in 1988 (*Romance/Romance*) and recently enjoyed a successful run in *Shenandoah* at Washington, D.C.'s Ford Theatre. His partner, the very adorable and talented Mara Davi (*A Chorus Line, The Drowsy Chaperone*) gets to showcase her recently acquired modern dancing abilities. But in this play within a play scenario, the writers steal the show. Tony Award winner Beth Leavel (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) and Adam Heller as Lily and Lester Marton, give incredible and magical performances. I found myself wishing the show were even more centered on these two characters.

Director Gary Griffin (*The Color Purple*) and his team of designers did a beautiful job honoring Douglas Carter Beane's rewrite. The show flows well between flash-backs, rehearsals, back and on stage perspectives. The audience will enjoy the numbers that made the movie a success, such as "That's Entertainment", "Triplets", "I Love Louisa", "Louisiana Hayride", "A Shine on your Shoes" and "Dancing in the Dark", among others. Choreographer Warren Carlyle, with the help of a very solid ensemble, explores the extremes of his art, going from a wonderfully ridiculous and humorous modern ballet to the very touching and romantic "Dancing in the Dark" number. Costume designer David Woolard also gives us a precious gift in "Rhode Island is Famous for You", with costumes I can only describe as fantastic "eye candy."

In the end and for the pleasure of audiences to come, *Dancing in the Dark* could very well become Broadway's tribute to two of Douglas Carter Beane's idols, Betty Comden and Adolph Green and the crazy creative world they lived in.

Patricia Humeau



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Mid-day advice to go with last night's lasagna.

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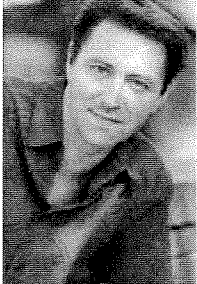


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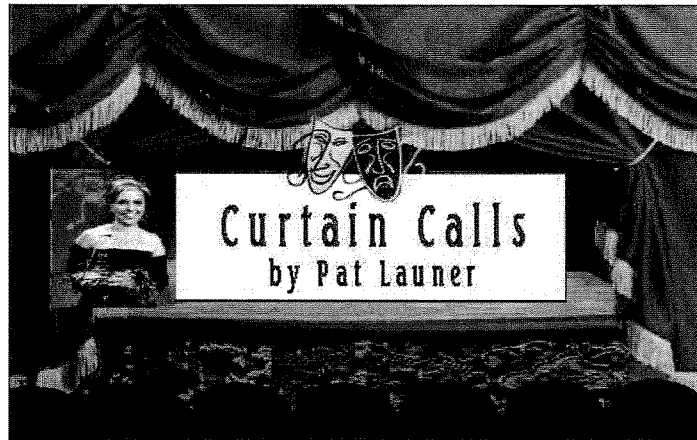
*Actor
in the Spotlight*

Tom Andrew



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"CURTAIN CALLS" #235

3/21/08

A world premiere, as anyone can attest,
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Pat Reviews		
Dancing in the Dark	Cuckoo's Nest	News & Views
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Jumping on The Band Wagon

THE SHOW: *Dancing in the Dark*, adapted from the classic 1953 MGM musical, "The Band Wagon," which was based on a 1931 musical theater revue; both contained the superb songs of composer Arthur Schwartz and lyricist Howard Dietz

THE STORY/THE BACKSTORY: *The Band Wagon* revue had no plot to speak of, only skits written by playwright/humorist George S. Kaufman, to link the Schwartz & Dietz songs sung by Fred Astaire and his sister Adele, among others. Schwartz and Dietz added new songs for the film, including the show-stopper, "That's Entertainment" (presented here with *all* its ingenious lyrics). The screenplay was written by famed lyricists Betty Comden and Adolph Green, who'd just penned "Singin' in the Rain."

But MGM ran out of money, and they couldn't finish the script. So the second half of the movie is just a mishmash pastiche, with a bevy of great Dietz & Schwartz songs crammed into a play-within-a-play musical revue in out-of-town tryouts. It only worked because of its stellar cast: Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse, Oscar Levant, Jack Buchanan and Nanette Fabray. Nonetheless, the film garnered three Academy Award nominations, including Best Music and Best Writing (story and screenplay). It was rated #17 on the American Film Institute's list of the 25 Greatest Movie Musicals.

Now along comes playwright Douglas Carter Beane (who hit paydirt last year with his stage adaptation of the trashy 1980 movie "Xanadu"), to take "The Band Wagon" back to its stage roots.

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- Nat. Comedy
- New Village Arts
- New Vision Theatre
- Nonsense Prods
- North Coast Rep.
- North County Pros
- N Park Vaudeville
- OnStage Playhouse
- Patio Playhouse
- PowPAC
- Peter Pan Jr.
- Playwrights Project
- Poorplayers Theatre
- Pow Cen Perf. Arts
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- SD Actors Theatre
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- SD Junior Theatre
- SD Rep Theatre
- Sledgehammer
- Starlight Theatre
- Stone Soup Theatre
- Talent To aMuse
- Theatre in Old Town
- TheatreSports
- UCSD Theatre
- USD Theatre
- Vanguard Theatre
- Vantage Theatre
- Women's Rep.

The plot (which is considerably expanded – and the second act even makes sense now!) focuses on Tony Hunter, a stage actor who went to Hollywood, made it big and then lost it all (except a few priceless paintings). He's been lured back to New York, and is encouraged by the pompous, hammy, English actor Jeffrey Cordova to make a comeback in a musical that Jeffrey intends to star in and direct (his first musical!). Lily and Lester Martin, former stage partners of Tony's, whom he hasn't seen in 18 years, are set to write the script. Beane has added a youthful love-match between Tony and Lily, and he uses that to insert certain songs (like the hilarious "Triplets") as flashbacks to their earlier sketch-musical-comedy performances. Meanwhile, Jeffrey takes the Martins' lighter-than-air, frothy musical, and turns it into a dark, dour disaster, a musical riff on Faust. For a choreographer, he's hired Paul Byrd, a pretentious, modern dance *artiste* who insists that Gabrielle, his leading lady on and offstage, play the lead. She doesn't get along with Tony (though, in an odd/uncomfortable Beane addition, she was the former President of the Scranton chapter of the Tony Hunter Fan Club). So, this mess of a show, "The Band Wagon," flops in out-of-town tryouts. Lily still pines for Tony. Tony's attracted to Gaby, and Gaby is drawn to Tony. Jeffrey, whose eyes go in other directions, finally realizes he's in over his head. Tony, formerly a loner, rejoins the human race, takes charge of the show, restores it to its original comic state, wins Gaby, loses Paul and rejoices in the loving reunion of Les and Lily. All's right with the (theater) world, and everyone gets to sing "That's Entertainment" again.

THE PLAYERS/THE PRODUCTION: The production is great fun, and it begins, in true Broadway style, with a 4-minute overture, magnificently arranged (Eric Stern) and artfully played by a 12-instrument 'orchestra' (conductor/music director, Don York). The scenic design (John Lee Beatty) is aptly theatrical, too; it's all about lights and curtains. Marquee lights frame the stage; curtains are repeatedly dropped and draped and beautifully lit (Ken Billington), magically changing our perspective from backstage to onstage to audience. The sound (Brian Ronan) is crisp and the costumes (David Woolard) are period-perfect, and over-the-top for a chorus-girl number, "Rhode Island is Famous for You." That lobster costume, referred to in the script, is a killer, but the whole number can go; it's more extravagant than necessary and doesn't advance the story in any way. The plot of the play-within-a-play, as conceived by Lily and Les, is silly enough to justify two wacky songs that have no business being here: the Germanic beer-fest "I Love Louisa" and the tap-dancing, yee-haw "Louisiana Hayride." Beane's script makes all this a little less far-fetched than the film; it's all so energetic and endearing, we go along for the (hay)ride (but why, oh why, is said hayride performed in formal attire? That looks so wrong).

The principals are all terrific, though alas, there's no Fred Astaire at the center. As Tony, Scott Bakula is an engaging performer, and he can acquit himself acceptably in a tap number. But he's no dancer, and he's outshone by his triple-threat compadres. Big-voiced, high-kicking Beth Leavel, Tony Award-winner for *The Drowsy Chaperone*, is a knockout as Lily; she's got superlative comic, dancing and vocal chops. As her partner, Adam Heller gets some of the best lines, which are also suitably chewed (like the scenery) by funnyman Patrick Page (whom Jack O'Brien directed as the *Grinch* on Broadway, where he also played Scar in *The Lion King* and Lumière in *Beauty and the Beast*). Mara Davi (also from the Broadway production of *The Drowsy Chaperone*) has a lovely voice and presence as Gabi. And Benjamin Howes gets one poignant backstage moment as Hal, Jeffrey's adoring assistant, wishing he were onstage dancing, too. Director Gary Griffin and choreographer Warren Carlyle put them all through their paces, with the help of a versatile ensemble. The outrageously oversexed modern dance number is especially delicious.

The Theatre's Below Have

Resilience of the Spirit

Human Rights Festival

You could try to impose some gravitas, consider it a tale of a prodigal son, or a loner becoming a team player, reconnecting to his roots and his heart. But there really isn't very much *there* there. It's bubbly, it's frothy, it's a good old-fashioned light-hearted musical that's sheer entertainment.

ion theatre

THE LOCATION: The Old Globe Theatre, just extended, through April 20

BOTTOM LINE: Best Bet

Poway Center for Performing Arts



A Night in the Nuthouse

THE SHOW: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, based on the 1962 cult novel by 'Merry Prankster' Ken Kesey. The best-seller was adapted as a play in 1963, by Dale Wasserman (*Man of La Mancha*), at the request of Kirk Douglas, who starred in the original Broadway production, along with young Gene Wilder (as Billy Bibbit). A decade later, Wasserman, very unhappy with the 'written by committee' outcome of his initial effort, revisited the play, decreasing the cast and the length (from three acts to two); the revival ran for more than 1000 performances in 1971. In 1975, the film version was released (Wasserman was not involved) and close on the heels of "Easy Rider" and "Five

Easy Pieces," became another star vehicle for Jack Nicholson. According to Wasserman interviews, Kesey thought Nicholson was wrong for the lead role, "and stuck to that opinion even after the movie was released." Kesey was also reportedly so incensed by the change in the storytelling perspective (away from Chief Bromden's first-person narration) that he sued the producers. Nonetheless, the movie won Oscars for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Actor and Best Actress.

OnStage Playhouse

The title comes from a nursery rhyme Kesey's grandmother used to recite to him:

Vintery, mintery, cutlery, corn, Apple seed and apple thorn.

SAN DIEGO
Reader

April 3, 2008

Dancing in the Dark

The Old Globe's world premiere, based on the MGM movie *The Band Wagon*, has miles to go before it reaches Broadway but already offers considerable entertainment. Playwright Douglas Carter Beane writes three-dimensional one-liners: they are funny; always, often painfully, true; and perfect for the character the moment they're uttered. The musical comedy, about the near impossibility of making a musical comedy, also boasts the original's great songs, including the iconic "That's Entertainment" and the title song. There are good bits: as when Adam Heller and (the hilarious) Beth Leavel, as comedy writers, pitch their idea to potential cast and backers. They blitz with manic urgency and stop the show as well. The cast performs on John Lee Beatty's minimalist, backstage/onstage set. Patrick Page, clear-voiced Mara Davi, and Scott Bakula do quality work. Though it ran for almost three

hours, the opening night performance felt cramped, however. Numbers got truncated, and knock-your-socks-off entertainment - the *raison d'être* of the original - often got shoved aside for plot and character development. It feels strange to say this, because plays get deservedly clobbered for lacking these qualities, but the revised book is trying for depths and motivations that weigh the show down. New scenes fill in back-story and dull the pace and whimsical, "anything can go" tone. The production pulsed forward and needed to get out of its own way.

Worth a try.

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. THURSDAYS, 8 P.M. FRIDAYS, 8 P.M. SATURDAYS, 2 P.M. AND 8 P.M. SUNDAYS, 2 P.M. AND 7 P.M. TUESDAYS, 7 P.M. WEDNESDAYS, 7 P.M. THROUGH APRIL 20.

SATURDAY
March 15, 2008



THE SAN DIEGO
UNION-TRIBUNE

THEATER REVIEW

'Dancing' finds its comedic rhythm

James Hebert
ARTS WRITER

The song "That's Entertainment!" is an American classic; who knew it also was the world's most potent ad jingle, or maybe some kind of theatrical Viagra?

In the Old Globe Theatre's seriously fun new musical, "Dancing in the Dark," Patrick Page plays a suave director who seduces first a writing team, then a leading man, then a snobby choreographer in to doing a musical together, simply by trotting out a few bars of the tune.

He could charm snakes with that number, or sell snake oil (maybe even to charmed snakes), and writer Douglas Carter Beane does a canny job of pitching this bit of Broadway rah-rah with both a knowing wink and an adoring grin.

In sum: "Dancing in the Dark" makes the sale. It's a bit long, the



Adam Heller and Beth Leavel in the Old Globe's production of "Dancing in the Dark." Sean M. Haffey / Union-Tribune

second act starts to wander, the look is a work in progress and lead-character questions may linger. But it'd still be a surprise not to see this show make its way to New York, just like its own musi-

cal-within-a-musical (only with a less tortured development process).

It works in good measure be-

SEE **Globe, E11**

GLOBE
CONTINUED FROM E1

Beth Leavel
as Lily is a
'singing dream'

cause Beane has done something stunning with Betty Comden and Adolph Green's screenplay to the 1953 backstage musical "The Band Wagon," made sense of it.

Because of studio complications, the duo behind "Singin' in the Rain" never got to finish the "Band Wagon" script, so the last part of the Vincente Minnelli-directed movie wound up a mishmash of production numbers set to the tunes of composer Arthur Schwartz and lyricist Howard Dietz ("Dancing in the Dark" among them).

Beane strings them into parallel love stories that are sweet and believable, even as they hopscotch from the hokum of "Louisiana Hayride" to the can-do pep of "A Shine on Your Shoes" to the vinegar-laced vaudeville of "Triplets."

In one of many art-imitates-life touches, film-TV star and onetime Tony Award nominee Scott Bakula plays Tony Hunter, a former theater type who went Hollywood and now comes shuffling back. He gets an icy greeting in New York from his ex-stage partners, writers Lily and Lester Marton (Beth Leavel and Adam Heller), stand-ins of a sort for Comden and Green.

But the extravagantly vain Jeffrey Cordova (Page) insists they work together again, and he brings in the celebrated modern dancer Gabrielle Gerard (Mara Davi) and her Sventerelli of a squeeze, choreographer Paul Byrd (Sebastian La Cause). They all make for an "A" team, as in animosity, acrimony, antipathy.

Jeffrey seals the show's doom by seizing on Lily's throwaway plot remark about a "deal with the devil" and reconceiving the work as a wildly misguided modern take on "Faust," a disaster in its out-of-town tryout (though a hoot in its brief appearance on the Globe stage).

Tony and team then have to



The cast of the Old Globe Theatre's production of the musical comedy "Dancing in the Dark." Sean M. Haffey / Union-Tribune photos

played the part in the film, she was some 20 years younger than Astaire; the gap between Davi and Bakula appears closer to 30 — a concern because of the romantic story line to follow.

As impressive as this cast is, though, Page threatens to run away with the show as the fearlessly self-beating Jeffrey. He gets many of the best lines, and seems to revel in playing off his own glittering Shakespearean résumé (though he also was the Grinch in the Globe-sprung Broadway show). This might be a career-maker if Page wasn't so established already.

After the giddy, slap-bang pace of the first act, where Beane condenses practically half the movie into the first couple of numbers, the second act feels stuck in New Haven (site of an out-of-town tryout). The number "Rhode Island Is Famous for You" is as much sight gag as song (though with seriously witty costumes), and with-

three hours this might be a place to trim.

Throughout, Beane salls in so many great lines it seems like cheating to quote them; the crack about turning producers up and leaving "with both sets of books" is just one that got big laughs on opening night.

Warren Cariye's choreography has old-fashioned panache, and Griffin directs with a winning sense of backstage life — check the touching scene where Jeff's dutiful, self-effacing right-hand man, Hal (ele-

gantly engaging Benjamin Howes), quietly mimics the dancers' moves from just behind the curtain.

Pleading his case for one awful ballet number, Byrd (a perfectly haughty La Cause) says critics will love it.

"But not just critics — people!" People — and others — oughta love this show, too.

James Hebert: (619) 293-2040; jim.hebert@uniontrib.com

DETAILS

"Dancing in the Dark"

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 13.
Where: Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park.

Tickets: \$52-\$79

Phone: (619) 234-5623

Online: TheOldGlobe.org



Scott Bakula dons top hat during a dress rehearsal for "Dancing in the Dark."

Los Angeles Times

ARTS & MUSIC

CALENDAR

PLAYWRIGHTS ON WRITING

Imagine me . . . a team player!

Sunday, March 9, 2008

Adapt other people's work? Ugh, how desperate. . . . And then I met Betty and Adolph.

BY DOUGLAS CARTER BEANE
Special to The Times

WHEN I was a young writer and wore a pencil behind my ear without a hint of irony, I swore a great many things. One was that I would never adapt anything. My ideas would spring anew from my dramatic imagination and the world would rejoice — though never quite as loudly as I would. I assumed that the desire to adapt came to older writers in a moment of intellectual bankruptcy. When the well runs dry, let's look at ole Aristophanes.

What did occur with me was entirely the opposite. As I grew more confident as a writer and as my own style became more recognizable, I was eager to explore the paths started by other writers. It was a peculiar

(See Beane, Page F7)



SEAN MASTERSON
PLAN B: Douglas Carter Beane was working on a project when a friend asked if he'd ever considered an adaptation of the 1953 Comden & Green musical "The Bandwagon." And a new project was born.

Taking on the 'Bandwagon' challenge

(Beane, from Page E1)

opportunity to spend time in the room with other writers. Even ones recently deceased. Before we sound like an M. Night Shyamalan rewrite, let me start at the beginning. I was well into my first bit of stage adaptation, a musical with the unlikely name of "Xanadu." Now "Xanadu" had the distinction of being a well-known property but also well known as the cripple of young film careers. In musical book writing circles we call this a lose-lose situation. Happily, I had been a single gay man in New York for a substantial amount of time and knew well how to play this hand.

As I spent my day eschewing Shubert Alley scorn for attempting to bring the Olivia Newton-John piece to life (as one of my downtown friends called it), I received a phone call from my theater pal Jack DePalma. With a rattle in his voice, special only to men over 40 who have dedicated their lives to the American musical theater, Jack asked if I had considered doing a stage version of the classic MGM film "The Bandwagon."

An irresistible project

OW. "The Bandwagon" is a tricky property in that it is beloved by those in show business, but it's not as well known by regular folks. So it's really won't sell tickets on its name recognition. Lose-lose. Of course, I was drawn to it like a moth to a flame. Also, the film has a legion of highly intellectual fans who seem unafraid that — and here's a good one — the original screenplay is unfinished. No, really: MGM wouldn't renew the screenwriter's contract, so they just filmed specialty numbers to finish the film. So no matter what I did to fulfill this unrealized work, a barrage of attacks would come from people who knew a lot of very big words. Again, lose-lose. I was smitten.

So I put aside the Electric Light Orchestra of "Xanadu" for a bit and took a few moments of contemplation for "The Bandwagon." First, there is the score by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz,

Holy moly, it's a thing of wonder. And many original Dietz theater lyrics, pulled from various scores to sew together "The Bandwagon," had been so sanitized by the Freed Unit that to hear them would set the audience on its ear.

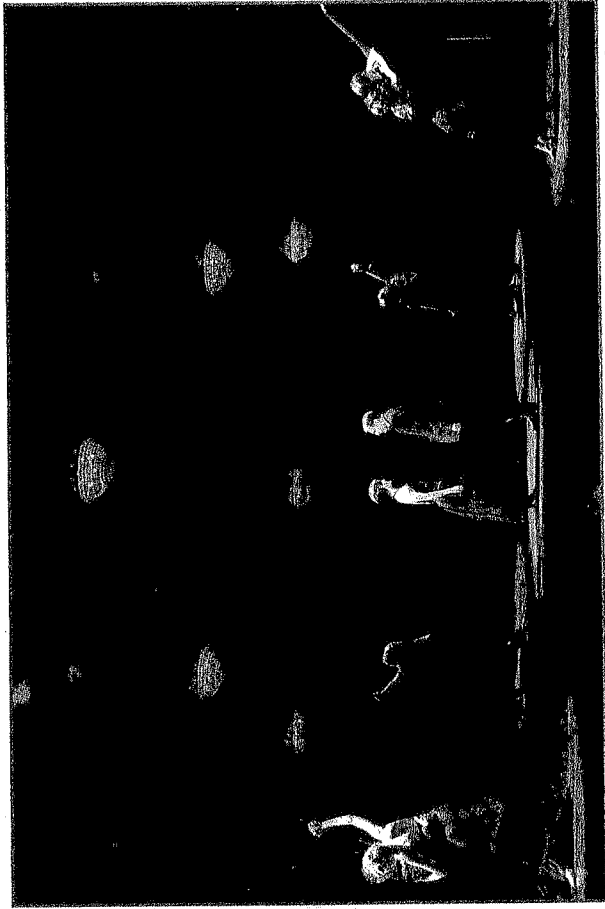
At a first reading of my script using the original lyrics, I heard the audible gasp from the audience when, in "I Love Louisa," the known movie lyric, "Ach when I choose 'em, I never wanna lose 'em" was replaced with the 1931, "Ach when I choose 'em, I like a great big bosom." Also, in "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plans," the '50s version of "I overlooked that point completely before the big affair began" became the original, "I'm glad I bought these blue pajamas, before the big affair began."

That was exciting. I must admit, but it wasn't my initial draw. It was the chance to work on something started by the great team of Betty Comden and Adolph Green. This astonishing writing couple, never married or romantically involved, set a precedent for loopy yet sophisticated entertainment from the '40s all the way to the '90s. They are spoken of with the utmost respect in theater circles for their sublime musicals, namely: the big three New York shows: "Bells Are Ringing," "On the Town" and "Wonderful Town."

Movie fans gush when you say their names, starting with the screenplay for "Singin' in the Rain" and winding up with the "Barkleys of Broadway" and "Good News," then they cry and say something unintelligible about "It's Always Fair Weather."

It is impossible for me to tell you how much Betty and Adolph meant to me, artistically and personally. I first met them back when I had a little theater company down on Wooster Street in SoHo. Our second production was the 1929 comedy about songwriters, "June Moon," which they both attended on separate occasions. Betty first, looking like a visiting head of state of some elegant nation. She approached me after the show, showed out a hand for me to shake and said: "When you do plays like this, it makes me want to come down to your theater and lick stamps."

one you serve," Betty sang as



A DREAM REALIZED: Marra Davi and Scott Bakula in the world-premiere production of "Dancing in the Dark" in San Diego.

CHAG SCHWARTZ

happily as she sang, "New York, New York! It's a helluva town!" Adolph once came to a fundraiser, and as each song was sung he happily shouted out the composer, the year it was published and the show it was from.

You see, they weren't just creators, they were enthusiasts — they just seemed delighted that anyone ever had gotten the notion of putting on a play or writing a song. As I get older, I do notice that almost anyone can create something. But to have that much delight in creativity itself — that takes a certain breed of cat.

One day I woke up and NPR was playing "Just in Time," and I knew the world had suddenly taken a step toward taste or either Betty or Adolph had died. Taste did not win that day, but it was a small victory over announced the passing of Adolph. At his memorial service, the curtain went up, and there was Betty. She said that she never felt quite so alone.

And it was around this time that I got my call from twinkling-in-the-voice Jack DePalma. The Bandwagon, huh? Himmmmm.

Theater people love "The Bandwagon" and only with sterling persistence by the show's producers and a few completely prestigious British directors (most notably, the British director of "The Phantom of the Opera" who presented "The Phantom of the Opera" in the West End).

But there is a sky joke about it. Theatering team, Lily and Lester Marton (played to perfection by Ne-

nette Fabray and Oscar Levant), through a bickering married couple, is almost certainly based on Comden and Green. Comden and Green writing themselves into a screenplay. What if I look that all the way? What if we talked about their early days in Greenwich Village and did a revue, just like Betty and Adolph did with Judy Holiday and Leonard Bernstein in a group called "The Revuers."

What if the way the writers pitch the story to the director and the stars was like their famous two-person Broadway show, "A Party With Comden and Green." What if the show-within-a-show was along the lines of "Bells Are Ringing" or "Wonderful Town?"

All systems go

O rights were assembled, and word came back from Betty that she was looking forward to seeing a first reading of what I had come up with. She also sent the original shooting script, which had a few cut scenes and was a huge help in filling out the story.

I was about halfway through the second act when I received word that Betty had passed away. As I finished the new book, it oddly took on a feeling of mortality and choices and lives in the theater.

When we began work on "Dancing in the Dark" in San Diego, an odd sort of feeling that I was not alone in the process took hold. Comments would come for a turn of phrase or a plot twist. "That's

thing."

Beane wrote the plays "The Little Dog Laughed" and "As Bees in Honey Drown" and the film "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar." He is developing a television series with Lorne Michaels for NBC.

March 9, 2008

JUMPING ON 'THE BAND WAGON'

Based on the classic backstage musical, Globe's 'Dancing in the Dark' hopes to catch a ride to Broadway



Sean M. Haffey / Union-Tribune

DETAILS

'Dancing in the Dark'

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 13

Where: Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

Tickets: \$52-\$79

Phone: (619) 234-5623

Online: oldglobe.org

By James Hebert
ARTS WRITER

Orson Welles on roller skates. Fred Astaire gone disco. Catwoman as chorus girl.

Spend a few minutes in the weirdly intermingled world of Douglas Carter Beane — whose musical "Dancing in the Dark" sees its world premiere Thursday at the Old Globe Theatre — and all manner of showbiz images start to blend and blur.

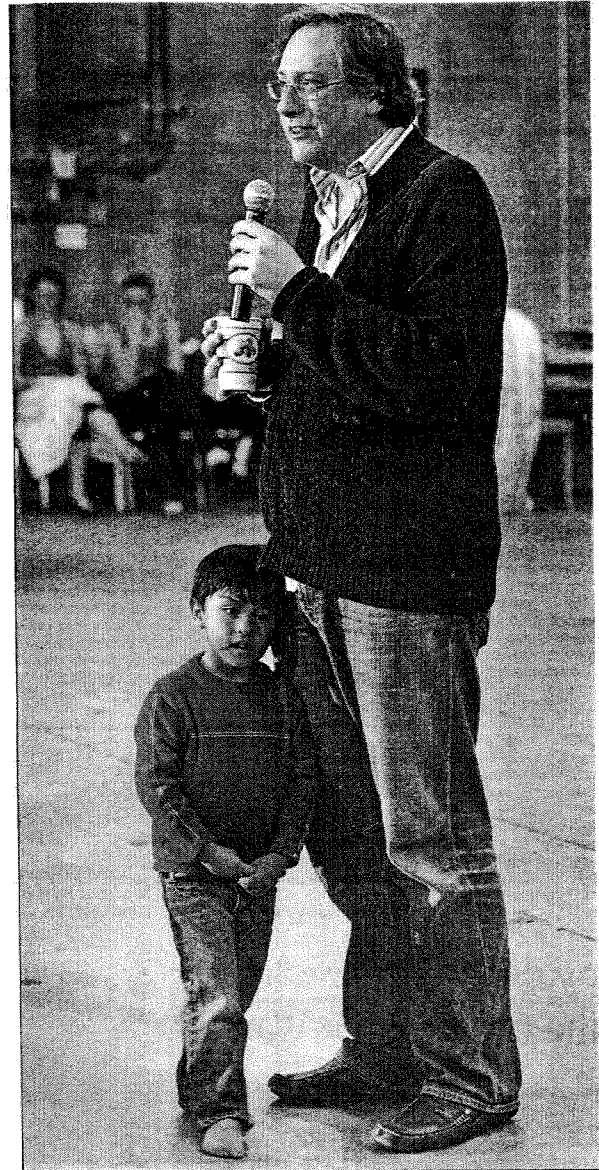
Example: "Xanadu" is the title of Beane's current Broadway hit, a satirical musical. He adapted it from the 1980 film of the same name, a mess of a movie that was steeped in roller disco and gave Gene Kelly his last film role.

Now, for the Old Globe, Beane has adapted another movie musical, Vincente Minnelli's 1953 "The Band Wagon." That film starred Astaire — Kelly's main rival as big-screen dance icon. (Julie Newmar, later to be TV's Catwoman, appeared as a dancer; she also helped inspire Beane to write the 1995 movie "To Wong Foo Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar.")

If all goes well, this show also will hit New York. The Globe has received commercial enhancement money to get "Dancing in the Dark" — the season centerpiece — up on its feet, with an eye toward Broadway.

And as it turns out, the Globe gig puts Beane in a perfectly fitting place. When Welles made "Citizen Kane" in 1941, he used structures around the Balboa Park theater as stand-ins for his title character's estate. Which was named, naturally, Xanadu.

"So it all comes together in one big harmonic



Writer Douglas Carter Beane (with an assist from his son, Cooper) talked up the Old Globe's world-premiere musical "Dancing in the Dark" at a rehearsal sneak peek. The adaptation of the 1953 movie "The Band Wagon" stars Scott Bakula (far left in photo at left) in a role originally played by Fred Astaire. Nancee E. Lewis / Union-Tribune

SEE 'Dancing,' E2

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Play is more of a celebration than a satire

convergence," says Beane with a big grin as he chats at the Globe's rehearsal hall — a Gana-dude in Xanadu. "It was all meant to be."

Now, forget all that. Because as much buzz as Beane has received for "Xanadu," the writer says "Dancing in the Dark" is a different kind of creation entirely.

Unlike his campy "Xanadu," the new work, Beane says, keeps tongue out of cheek, celebrating more than satirizing. To Beane, "Xanadu" was "a particular kind of show that people hadn't seen in New York for a while. It was along the lines of Rodgers & Hart musical — a very sophisticated but very silly ooke at anything classic."

(In another one of those mystical connections, it was directed on Broadway by Beane's old pal Christopher Ashley, now artistic director of La Jolla Playhouse — where "Xanadu" sits the stage in November.)

But after it became a surprise hit, he sensed a perception that this is what Doug Beane always loes; it's just campy and silly."

"So, with this I said: 'I want to spin it and make it the opposite of that, and see how deep, how rich, how serious I can get, as if it's a straight play within the confines of 1952,'" his show's main setting.

Show about a show

Beane has adapted Betty Comden and Adolph Green's "Band Wagon" screenplay, and the show also invokes the original songs of composer Arthur Schwartz and lyricist Howard Dietz.

The most famous of those is "That's Entertainment," but other key numbers include "Louisiana Hayride," "Shine on Your Shoes" and "Triplets."

Like 1952's "Singin' in the Rain," also written by Comden and Green (and starring Kelly), "The Band Wagon" is a classic backstage musical — a show about show business. Its plot evolves around Tony Hunter, a former stage darling who went Hollywood but whose star is starting to fade.

He's asked by his theater

pals, the married writing team Lester and Lily Marton (stand-ins for Comden and Green), to come back and star in their new musical comedy.

But after Tony signs on, the show's self-serious director, Jeffrey Cordova, decides to turn the piece into a mawkish modernization of "Faust."

He further complicates matters by bringing aboard the prima ballerina Gabrielle Gerard and her snooty Svengali of a husband, the choreographer Paul Byrd. When the show goes south, the reluctant Tony has to step into the breach.

As Tony — the part played by Astaire — the Globe has cast Scott Bakula, best-known for starring in TV's "Quantum Leap" but also a veteran stage performer. Beth Leavel, a Tony-winner in 2006 for "The Drowsy Chaperone," plays Lily, joined by another "Drowsy" alum, Mara Davi, as Gabrielle.

Patrick Page — Broadway's Grinch in the Globe-sprung holiday show — plays Jeffrey, with Adam Heller as Lester and Sebastian La Cause as Paul.

With director Gary Griffin ("The Color Purple"), Beane has worked to change the feel of the show-within-a-show that develops after the "Faust" debacle.

In the film, that creation is not really a show at all. It's a vaudeville-style revue, a bunch of randomly collected numbers that belies the fact many of the songs had been recycled from previous movies and stage shows.

"It's just comedy numbers and comedy sketches," Beane says. "Like a 'Carol Burnett Show,' basically."

Somehow, Beane reveals, he has woven these disparate numbers into some kind of intelligible story.

"There's actually dialogue before and after," he says. "You see how they all make sense as this kind of fun story."

Big shoes

Given how many movies have taken the conveyor belt to Broadway of late, it might be surprising that "The Band Wagon" hasn't been adapted sooner.

One reason, Beane suggests, is that name at the top of the movie's cast. Who could step into Fred Astaire's shoes?

"A number of people thought about doing this and did not, because they could not get



Adam Heller, Beth Leavel and Scott Bakula (left to right) run through the number "Triplets," from the Old Globe's new musical "Dancing in the Dark." *Nancee E. Lewis / Union-Tribune*

past the idea of Fred Astaire," Beane says.

Before Comden died in 2006, she told Beane she had thought about doing a stage version with a "Toni" — a female actress, instead of Tony, just to sidestep the Astaire question.

"But I just decided from the beginning: What if he's not a dancer?" Beane says. "What if he's just a musical-comedy person? It's more about the actor going off to Hollywood and being washed up, and trying to do theater again. That's what was interesting to me."

Cue Scott Bakula, who was familiar with the movie but is decidedly not trying to be the next Fred. That's one reason he hasn't watched the film since landing the lead role.

"I just thought, you know what, there's no reason for me to look at it for the dancing, because there's only one Fred Astaire," Bakula says. "There's nothing I'm going to try to do better than him, or imitate, be-

cause you just can't.

"They're approaching it in a very fresh way, and I think I can stay with that and just treat it as a new, original musical, which is how we're all kind of pushing it."

That said, Bakula's musical-theater talent might surprise people. In fact, it happens just about every time he does a stage show.

"They say, 'We didn't know you danced. We just saw you on that show 'Quantum Leap,'" Bakula says.

"(And I say), 'Well, did you see the 'La Mancha' episode? Did you see when I sang 'Imagine'?"

"I think maybe sometimes people sitting in their living rooms never really know what's real and what's not real. Was he really playing the piano, was he really singing, was he really dancing? Was that really him?"

"When they see you doing it live, it kind of lands."

Stepping into the role played by Cyd Charisse, Davi has a similar issue. But the conception

of that character has shifted as well, playing to Davi's strengths.

Instead of a ballerina, Gabrielle is now a modern dancer with the Paul Byrd company. Davi has classical training but also a talent (and enthusiasm) for tap, along with other forms.

"So this is actually really exciting for me to do modern dancing for the first time on-stage," Davi says. "They say in the show: 'It's Martha Graham, but without the laughs.' Which actually gives the audience more laughs."

"Because it's so serious. Every dance piece Paul Byrd does is about death. It's so fun

to be a part of."

What turns the show-within-a-show of "Dancing in the Dark" into something more like a hall of mirrors is that it revolves around an out-of-town tryout of a musical. Which is precisely what "Dancing in the Dark" is.

Louis G. Spisto, the theater's executive director, can appreciate the parallels.

"It's very much what we do in San Diego and at the Globe," he says. "These are very fragile works that are coming to us. Producers and creatives trust us with their baby, if you will. They entrust it to our technical staff and our audiences to bring this thing to life."

"So, the out-of-town process is very much what we're about."

For Beane, reveling in the weirdness and neuroses of creating a new musical is not just fun but cathartic. He has slipped in lines and scenes that come straight from his experiences in past productions — such as the time an actress "freaked out about a hem length."

Even when show people are dealing with real troubles — drinking problems, romantic entanglements — the lack of perspective can be breathtaking. And deliciously theatrical.

"It's always about your little world," Beane says. "And the idea I could juxtapose that with the moment when everyone's lives are truly falling apart — that you could have someone coming in and saying: 'If someone does not talk to me about my gloves!'"

"That's how theater always is. Everyone's trauma is slightly different."

March 6, 2008

Bakula hops on the bandwagon for Globe's world premiere 'Dancing' musical

PAM KRAGEN
STAFF WRITER

Playwright Douglas Carter Beane knows all about low expectations. When he adapted the dreadful 1980 movie musical "Xanadu" for the stage last year, he surprised skeptical critics with a fresh, self-deprecating book that turned "Xanadu" into one of the year's biggest Broadway successes.

But there aren't any low expectations connected with Beane's latest world premiere musical, "Dancing in the Dark," which opened in previews this week at the Old Globe Theatre. Based on the 1953 MGM musical "The Band Wagon," with a new book by Beane, a classic 1930s score by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz and starring veteran television actor Scott Bakula ("Quantum Leap," "Star Trek: Enterprise"), "Dancing" has a good-buzz factor that has been humming ever since it was workshopped in New York last March.

"This is a show we're very, very excited about," said Lou Spisto, the Old Globe's executive producer and CEO. "When you take the music of Dietz and Schwartz and combine that with Douglas Carter Beane, you've got something. After the workshop, we knew he had to jump on the bandwagon, so to speak, because it was a show we couldn't afford to pass up."



Playwright Douglas Carter Beane, director Gary Griffin and Old Globe CEO/Executive Producer Lou Spisto discuss the musical.

"The Band Wagon" started in 1931 as a Broadway musical revue starring a young Fred Astaire in his pre-Hollywood days. It was remade into a film musical by director Vincent Minnelli in '53, with Astaire reprising his performance as Tony Hunter, a washed-up movie star returning to Broadway in a troubled new musical that runs aground during an out-of-town try-out. The film's score included "That's Entertainment," "A Shine On Your Shoes"



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SANDY HUFFAKER

Patrick Page looks on, left, as Mara Davi and Scott Bakula rehearse a dance scene for the Old Globe premiere of "Dancing in the Dark," now playing in previews.

"Dancing in the Dark"

When: Previews today through Wednesday; opens March 13 and runs through April 13; showtimes, 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays

Where: Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego

Tickets: \$52-\$79

Info: (619) 234-5623

Web: www.theoldglobe.org

and "Dancing in the Dark," among others.

"The Band Wagon" was a huge box office success in the '50s, but its book — penned by "Singin' in the Rain" writing team Betty Comden and Adolph Green — was never finished, because MGM canceled Comden and Green's contract midway through the project. In the story, Tony Hunter's musical is sabotaged when the pretentious actor hired to direct the show, Jeffrey Cordova, tries to layer on serious dramatic intentions. Comden and Green even wrote themselves into the film script — as the married playwriting team, Lester and Lily Martin — who ultimately salvage the show for Broadway with a hasty rewrite.

To finish the film, Minnelli discarded the plot halfway through the shoot and turned the second half of the movie into a series of dazzling musical numbers. While this worked in Hollywood 55 years ago, Beane knew it wouldn't work on the Broadway stage, so a new script — and a new show name, to reflect the changes — were in order. Beane said he was drawn to the "Band Wagon" project because he knew the late Comden and Green personally and wanted to pay homage to their "love, life and spirit."

"They were the kind of glamorous Upper West Side people who showed up at all the Broadway openings over the years. This was also a chance for me to write about the life that I live in the theater. It's about working on shows with problems and the stories and experiences we all have in the theater," said Beane, whose other Broadway credits include the Tony-nominated play "The Little Dog Laughed" and the off-Broadway hit "As Bees in Honey Drown."

Beane's "Dancing in the Dark" is a mix of old and new. He rescued the smarter, more complicated song lyrics from the '31 stage revue, added two songs cut from the film as well as some other numbers from the Dietz-Schwartz catalog, and developed a time-hopping script that begins in the mid-1950s and flashes back to the '30s, where we learn that Tony and Lily were once in love until he deserted her for Hollywood. Beane said he expanded the Lester/Lily subplot to honor Comden and Green, and he has fattened up some chorus boy and girl parts with real-life details from the young actors appearing in

► 'DANCING'

Continued from 17

the Old Globe staging.

Since rehearsals began at the Old Globe last month, Beane said he's been doing major rewrites, including scrapping the first two scenes to move the first act along. "I'll change anything that doesn't work — that's the whole theme of this show, anyway."

While most of the major musicals at the Old Globe in recent years have been pre-Broadway tryouts, Spisto said this version of "Dancing in the Dark" is still a work in progress.

"It's not a show with a spe-

cific date on Broadway," Spisto said. "We're building an extravagant production for the Globe, but this is not the finished project. The producers want to see the material developed as much as we can at this stage."

When it came to casting, Beane and director Gary Griffin ("The Color Purple") decided to follow the art-imitates-life theme by finding an actor (like Tony Hunter) who started on Broadway, went on to success in Hollywood, and was returning to his musical theater roots.

While Bakula is best known as a television actor, he got his start in theater, moving to New York from his St. Louis home in 1976. He earned a Tony nomination in

1988 for "Romance/Romance" and returned to the musical stage two years ago with an acclaimed run in "Shenandoah" at Washington, D.C.'s Ford Theatre and a run last spring in "No Strings" at L.A.'s Freud Playhouse.

At a dance rehearsal two weeks ago, the gregarious Bakula, 53, easily ran through cascades of quick tap steps and high kicks and said he's worked hard to get back into "show shape" for "Dancing in the Dark." The L.A.-based father of four said he was enthusiastic when asked to join the project last fall.

"This is the ultimate experience for an actor," he said. "In film and television you get some rehearsal time, but in the theater you get the chance to really meet new people in a very exposed and intimate environment, then hand it over to an audience. You invest all that time in the show, and if it works and the audience is with you, there is nothing like it on earth."

Bakula said he's enjoyed the development process at the Old Globe.

"In old-fashioned musicals, the characters are often caricatures, and the challenge has been to make them real people with real problems," said Bakula, who's known for playing likable average Joes with issues on TV. "Tony is a guy who has a history and problems, and as we've gone through the rehearsal process, we've tried to build in more and more depth to the character based on the experiences we're having every day."

Yet while fine-tuning the script has been a primary focus of the Globe staging, Bakula said the music is what audiences will remember. "These songs really hold up. The ballads have very sophisticated lyrics and phrasing. It's amazing to me that even after 77 years, these songs



Scott Bakula is best known as a television actor, he earned a Tony nomination for a musical role in "Romance/Romance."

feel so fresh and new."

Bakula's favorite number is the gentle duet "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," which he performs with Patrick Page (who starred as the Grinch on Broadway for the past two years), who plays director Cordova ("It's about the relationship we have and it's got an easy, great feeling to it").

The musical also stars Tony-winning actress Beth Leavel ("The Drowsy Chaperone") as Lily; Adam Heller as Lester; and Mara Davi as Tony's love interest, Gabrielle.

Beane describes "Dancing in the Dark" as an old-fashioned, "jazz-hands" style musical with big dance numbers and a peppy, funny script that tells the stories of real people. Spisto said he thinks Globe audiences will be thrilled with the result, and the now-blazing ticket sales are a reflection of that.

"Audiences in San Diego love being in on the ground floor for a new musical," Spisto said. "They get to see a Broadway-caliber show for a third of the price they'd pay in New York, and they get to see the birth of new material. Our audiences love stories with heart, and this one has not only a great script with heart but exceptional music as well. We know this production will work."



Patrick Page

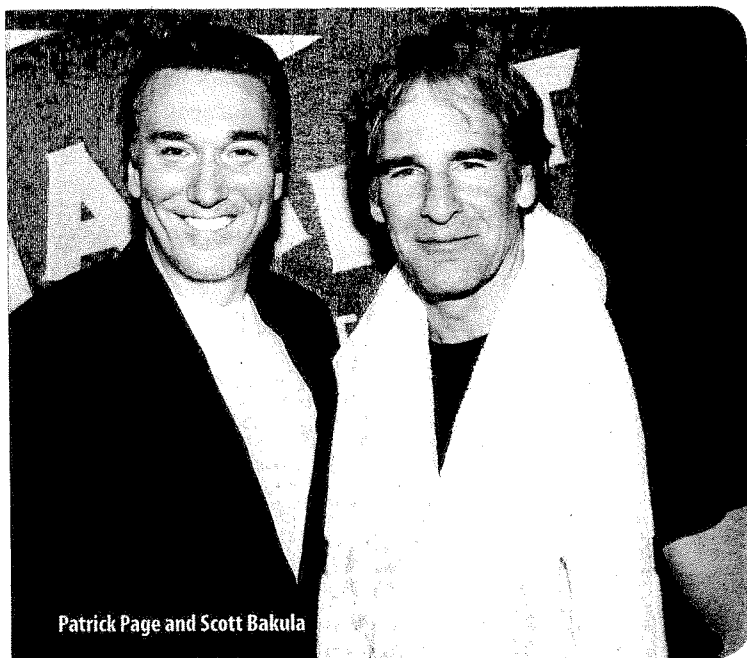


One of the most-loved MGM musicals of all time is *The Bandwagon*. The film was made in 1953 at the zenith of an era in studio showmanship. Those film musicals buffy know exactly what I'm talking about. Musicals are an acquired taste...you either love them or...you know what I mean.

The Old Globe is presenting a revitalization of *The Bandwagon* now titled *Dancing in the Dark* on March 4. This world-premiere aspires to flesh out the original movie by retelling the initial premise of a fading Hollywood star that looks to Broadway for a career job. The character of Tony Hunter (Scott Bakula) encounters a director (Jeffrey Carroval) played by Patrick Page. What ensues is the cornerstone for *Dancing in the Dark*, and as the timeless song "That's Entertainment" proudly proclaims... "The world is a stage; the stage is a world...of entertainment!"

Reconstructing *The Bandwagon*
As *Dancing in the Dark*
An Interview with

Patrick Page



Patrick Page and Scott Bakula



Patrick Page (Jeffrey Cordova), Mara Davi (Gaby Lester), and Scott Bakula (Tony Hunter) rehearsing the musical number "I'll Be Home for Christmas"

Rage: You're playing the role of Jeffrey Cordova. Please explain a bit of your director's vision in adapting *The Band Wagon* to the stage.

Patrick Page: As you know, it's based on *The Band Wagon*, but it really is a whole new musical. So, I guess that is the first kind of conception is that we're dealing with these characters that, by and large are the ones that we meet in the movie and they are in the same situations that we saw in the movie...but we just know much, much more about them. The relationships are much deeper and more real in *Dancing in the Dark*. The stakes are very high, so we really get to know Jeffrey and Hal and Lily and Lester and Gaby and Tony in a way that we don't in the movie.

Rage: Please tell me about working with director, Gary Griffin.

PP: Gary Griffin is just an incredible director. He is really guiding it to really make them real people. So, it doesn't have the clichés of "Let's put on a show!" But, it's really what we go through as artists, when we try to put on a show like this. The tensions and the love affairs... everything that actually really happens, it's as close as I've seen to any show, to what it really is like. Gary is really making it very specific about the truth of it.

Rage: This new touch of realism is very exciting.

PP: It's very exciting to me too. I know when I was first thinking, "Oh, there doing a musical of *The Bandwagon*, that it would be very easy for it to be sort of superficial," It's not. It's still funny as hell. In fact, I hate to say, and I adore the movie but, it's a thousand times funnier than the movie.

Rage: The musical still takes place in the early 1950s?

PP: Yeah, Douglas Carter Beane is just probably the best comic writer working today. He just is brilliant! The lines that I am given are just like gifts, you know...what actor couldn't make that funny?

Rage: You are a noted Shakespearian actor. Now, in *Dancing in the Dark*, your role of Jeffrey Cordova is full of the bravado of Shakespeare while being over the top at the same time.

PP: I've done my share of Shakespearian comedies, but lately it's been tragedies. It's lovely to do something like this. The last two Shakespeare plays I did were *Macbeth* and *Othello* playing Iago and I'm doing a production of *Hamlet* right after this, so it's a lot of tragedy. So, it's great to kind of play with that in this and use it to have fun.

Rage: How is the chemistry with the other actors? You have a tremendous cast.

PP: That is the really beautiful thing. The fact of the matter is we get together to do these things, to have fun and make people laugh, make people smile...so it's really not worth it if you're all in the rehearsal room not having fun and making each other smile. We have a cast of just the very nicest people, I've ever met.

It starts with the top gun which is Gary Griffin and Warren Carlisle who is the choreographer and Scott Bakula, who is the nicest guy in the world. So, they really set the tone.

Rage: Please tell me about the new incarnation of Tony Hunter. Fred Astaire played him in the film musical and now, Scott Bakula takes the reins of this role.

PP: I think what's great about Tony Hunter in *Dancing in the Dark*, the new musical, is that he's a real leading man. I mean, as much as we all love Fred Astaire, it was always a bit of a stretch to say that Cyd Charisse instantly fell "head over heels" in love with him. With Scott Bakula... he walks out and you go, "oh yeah, he's a movie star!"

You really get the impression that Tony Hunter does movies, he's got legions of fans, and he's done some musicals... but that's not all. Still, his career is dwindling down, that's not changed.

Rage: How is it working with such quality songs crafted by Arthur Swartz and Howard Dietz? Their music has lasting appeal for over 70 years, now.

PP: I was saying to Scott, the other day... you keep waiting in the script for that song that isn't brilliant. You get to one number and then it's the next and the next and the next... whichever one, you've rehearsed last, sticks in your head. I mean, they are brilliant melodies. We don't have a lot of melody on Broadway anymore.

We got a lot of great, great musicals, but that thing of where you go out afterwards humming. I know it's a cliché but if the last thing you rehearse, that's in your head. If the last thing you rehearsed was "That's Entertainment," that's in your head. Whatever it is, each one is more brilliant than the last.

Rage: It sounds like everything that is being done to bring *Dancing in the Dark* to stage will do nothing but invigorate the original film musical of *The Bandwagon*, while honoring it's original core, at the same time.

PP: I think so. It's very exciting.

Come out for a little

DANCING IN THE DARK

Based on the classic MGM
musical "The Band Wagon"

BY MARGIE M. PALMER

O n March 4, The Old Globe theater in San Diego will present the world-premiere musical *Dancing in the Dark*, based on the classic MGM movie, *The Band Wagon*.

"[*The Band Wagon*] is a great theater story," explains Douglas Carter Bean, who adapted the popular 1958 screenplay for the stage production. "It's a story I loved—the ways in which I knew I could put my input into it. The screenplay was never really finished, which is why the movie just stops and ends with all sorts of numbers. The big difference between *The Band Wagon* and *Dancing in the Dark* is that because there are two acts, you get to spend a lot more time with the characters."

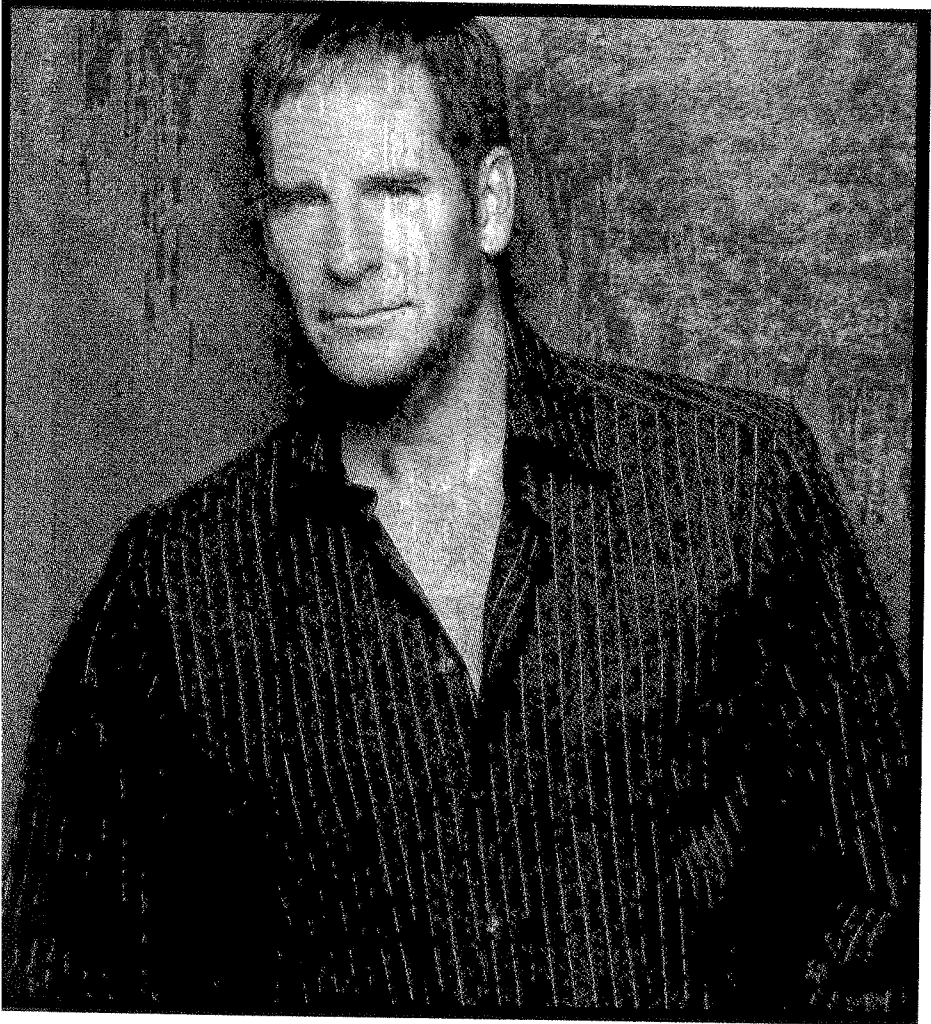
For those unfamiliar with the film, the story goes something like this: Tony Hunter is a Hollywood star with a career on the wane. Jeffrey Cordova is a Shakespearean actor-manager with a

taste for high art. Together they team up with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that's strictly "entertainment."

Continued Bean, "The show is basically about a group of theater folks who take a show out of town to try it out before it goes to New York. The director has a concept that's deep and dark, and it flops. Everyone runs away saying what a horrible disaster it is, until the actors jump in and save the show."

Golden Globe winner and multi Emmy-nominated stage and screen star Scott Bakula (*Quantum Leap*, *American Beauty*) will play the role of Tony Hunter. Patrick Page (who just wrapped up his second season playing the title role in the Broadway production of *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*) will portray the role of Jeffrey Cordova, and Tony Award-

— continued on page 66



Scott Bakula makes 'quantum leap' to San Diego

Scott Bakula made his Broadway debut in 1983, playing the role of Joe DiMaggio in the production *Marilyn: An American Fable*. Five years later he starred in the Broadway musical *Romance/Romance*. His performance earned him a Tony Award nomination, which garnered the attention of Hollywood casting agents and ultimately landed him the lead role in the critically acclaimed television series *Quantum Leap*. During the show's run, Bakula earned a Golden Globe award, three Golden Globe nominations, and four Emmy nominations for Best Actor. He also won five consecutive Viewer's For Quality Television Awards for Best Actor in a Quality Drama Series.

Since the series ended, Bakula has kept himself busy with other projects, including voicing Danny Cat in the animated movie *Cats Don't Dance*. He has also appeared in a number of films, including *Major League: Back to the Minors*, *American Beauty* and the Lifetime original movie *Blue Smoke*. He has also been featured on several television series, including *Boston Legal*, *The New Adventures of Old Christine*, *State of the Union*, *American Body Shop* and *Star Trek Enterprise*.

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feature dancing in the dark

— continued from page 64

winner Beth Leavel (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) will play Lily.

Dancing in the Dark will also be highlighted on March 20 during the next installment of *Out* at the Globe, an evening for gay and lesbian theater lovers as well as the entire community.

“Out at the Globe began in 2004 as part of the Globe’s outreach to the LGBT community,” relates Becky Biegelsen, Public Relations Director for The Old Globe, “although the events are open to all patrons.”

Out at the Globe events feature a pre-show reception at the Globe with appetizers, a hosted wine and martini bar, backstage tours, door prizes, a pre-show mixer, as well as guest speakers/artists—all adding an interactive component to the theatre-going experience.

“Pre-show events, like *Out* at the Globe, meet a real need for Old Globe theater-goers,” adds Ed Hastings, Audience Development Manager at The Old Globe. “They provide a social element you won’t find once the performance begins, making it even more fun to bring friends to the theater (or meet new ones). They also solve the perennial question: where do we eat? And where else can you find a glass or two of wine or martinis, plus dinner and dessert for \$19? In addition, arriving early for the event makes parking in Balboa Park that much easier. The Old Globe’s pre-show events allow audience members the chance to simplify their life, and have fun while doing it!

“A buffet dinner, wine, martini (vodka or traditional), and dessert will be provided [for the



Tony Award-winner Beth Leavel will play Lily.

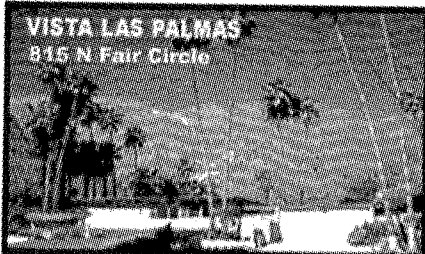
Patrick Page will portray the role of Jeffrey Cordova.

March 20 event],” Hastings continues. “Door prizes often include Old Globe tickets, memorabilia, bottles of wine and restaurant vouchers.

As a special treat, attendees will be able to enjoy a performance by Swell!—The ensemble from the Gay Men’s Chorus of San Diego.

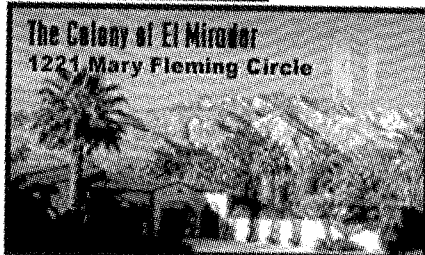
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'Out' attendees can join the festivities before attending either *Dancing in the Dark*, the world premiere musical starring Broadway and Hollywood star Scott Bakula, or the west coast premiere of *The American Plan*, an intriguing tale from Richard Greenberg, the playwright who gave San Diego audiences the smash hit play *Take Me Out*."

If You Go—DANCING IN THE DARK, at The Old Globe theater in San Diego, Tuesday, March 4 - Sunday, April 13. Part of their Out at the Globe series targeting LGBT theater-lovers, *Dancing in the Dark* stars Scott Bakula. The March 20 installment of Out at the Globe is sponsored by *The BottomLine* magazine and Heaven Sent Desserts. For more information on *Dancing in the Dark*, *The American Plan*, Out at the Globe, or to purchase tickets, call 619.23.GLOBE or visit their website at oldglobe.org.

History of the Globe

The Old Globe theatre was built in 1935 for the presentation of abridged versions of Shakespeare's plays as part of the California Pacific International Exposition. At the conclusion of the exposition in 1937, a non-profit producing corporation, the San Diego Community Theatre, leased the theater and adjacent buildings from the city of San Diego (an arrangement that continues today) and renovated the theater for ongoing use.

On December 2, 1937, the remodeled Old Globe opened with a production of John Van Druten's *The Distaff Side*. In the cast was a young actor named Craig Noel, whose presence as an actor, director and artistic leader would guide the theater's growth through more than five decades of continuous production, and whose role as Founding Director continues to this day.

On March 8, 1978, an arson fire destroyed the landmark Old Globe Theatre. While plans to rebuild the Globe were put into action, the immediate need for a space to produce that summer's San Diego National Shakespeare Festival resulted in the construction of the Festival Stage, an award-winning outdoor theater.

In January 1981, the theatre's board of directors established the Globe as a year-round professional company, initiating more than a decade of extraordinary growth. In 1982, the new 581-seat Old Globe Theatre opened with a production of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

When the Festival Stage was destroyed by another arson fire in 1984, the new 612-seat Lowell Davies Festival Theatre was constructed in 1985. A decade later, a fundraising campaign retired the debt from the two fires and financed a major reconstruction and remodeling project, unveiling an enhanced rehearsal and administrative complex, box office, gift shop, pub and landscaped plaza.

The Old Globe has been home to the most acclaimed national artists, designers, directors and playwrights in the theater industry. More than twenty productions produced at The Old Globe have gone on to play on Broadway and off-Broadway and continuing this tradition, The Old Globe's production of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* was nominated for 11 Tony Awards in 2005, and the 2000 production of *The Full Monty* garnered 10 Tony Award nominations for its successful Broadway run.

The Old Globe annually produces 15 mainstage productions from all periods and styles, ranging from Shakespeare to an ongoing emphasis on the production of new works, and an annual family musical, *Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas!* With a current operating budget of approximately \$17 million, the Globe is one of San Diego's largest arts institutions, its leading arts employer, and among the nation's top-ranked regional theatres. More than 250,000 people annually attend Globe productions and participate in the theater's education programs and outreach services.

— Source: oldglobe.org

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'Quantum Leap' star set for 'Dancing'

Quantum Leap" star Scott J. Bakula will lead the cast of the world-premiere musical "Dancing in the Dark," the Old Globe Theatre has announced.

The production also will feature Patrick Page, who played the title role in the Globe-sprung Broadway show "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" and Beth Leavel, a 2006 Tony-winner for "The Drowsy Chaperone."

Bakula, who starred for five seasons on the time-traveling TV show "Leap," has numerous other television and film credits (the movie

"American Beauty" among them) and earned a 1988 Tony nomination for his role in "Romance/Romance."

He'll play Tony, a fading Hollywood star, in "Dancing in the Dark," based on the 1953 movie "The Band Wagon." The musical has a book by Douglas Carter Beane ("Xanadu"), adapted from Betty Comden and Adolph Green's screenplay. Music is by Arthur Schwartz, with lyrics by Howard Dietz. Gary Griffin directs. Previews begin March 4.

- JAMES HEBERT

ARTS NEWS

There might be 'Dancing' in the aisles

A familiar song title now festoons the next movie-based musical getting its world premiere at the Old Globe. Instead of "The Band Wagon," the show written by Douglas Carter Beane, with direction by Gary Griffin, will be called "Dancing in the Dark."

The new musical, set to open in early March, is set to the Schwartz and Dietz tunes that made the MGM movie with Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse so tunefully popular.

That's a song "known around the world and represents the glory days of blockbuster MGM movie musicals upon which this new stage version is modeled," said Old Globe executive director Lou Spisto, noting that the show will include romance, comedy and dance numbers, all of which made changing the title make sense to the artistic collaborators.

— ANNE MARIE WELSH

A positive reception

More kudos are greeting "Hairspray" and its director, Jack O'Brien, this time for the London production and a reportedly ebullient cast. The show opened

Tuesday night at the Shaftesbury Theatre on the West End.

"The mystery about this ebullient and good-hearted show is that it has taken so long to arrive in England," wrote Charles Spencer in the *Daily Telegraph*. He said the show was less slick than on Broadway, but had an even bigger, more raucous heart.

Simon Edge of the *Daily Express* felt that the "joyous West End version makes it obvious why it swept the board at the (2003) Tony Awards." The *Daily Mail* critic liked it too, saying its exuberance "smothers all resistance."

And like the others, Benedict Nightingale of the *London Times* saluted O'Brien for his "deliciously fluid direction." He also gave special praise to the authors of the "Hairspray" book, Thomas Meehan and Mark O'Donnell, calling their writing a celebration of "difference."

Meehan and O'Donnell happen to be in La Jolla right now, preparing their second, early rock-era musical derived from a John Waters film for a Playhouse premiere (see cover story).

— ANNE MARIE WELSH

Poway arts center hosts 'spirit party'

As a gift to Poway, the Poway Center for the Performing Arts Foundation is throwing an appropriately themed "Earth, Wind & Fire" spirit party next week.

Backstage



PAM
KRAGEN

The Witch Creek fire practically consumed the arts center and it destroyed many Poway and Rancho Bernardo homes. So, to help lift the community's spirits, the foundation has decided to turn its Nov. 17

concert by the Al McKay Allstars into a "pay what you can" musical part.

All unsold tickets to the concert on the morning of Nov. 17 will be offered to the public (beginning at 10 a.m.) on a "what you're able" basis. Tickets to the show now are \$45 for adults and \$5 for children. Center officials are asking ticket-buyers to donate \$25, if they can, for tickets to help cover the show's booking costs.

The Al McKay Allstars will present an evening of music by Earth, Wind & Fire. The concert begins at 8 p.m. Nov. 17 at the Poway arts center, 15498 Espola Road. For information, call (858) 748-0505.

Here are a couple of other fire-related donations and fundraisers:

■ Live Nation donated 500 tickets to the Maroon 5 concert at San Diego State University's Cox Arena on Friday to the American Red Cross. Those tickets are being distributed to local fire victims.

■ Pop star Gwen Stefani donated all of her personal ticket proceeds for a concert last weekend at Cox Arena to the San Diego Foundation for the aid of fire victims. "Living in Orange County, (San Diego) has always been like a second home to me. When I heard about the devastation of the fires at first I felt I should cancel my show out of respect but then it occurred to me there might be a more useful solution," Stefani said in a statement.

■ "Legends" — a concert featuring '50s, '60s and '70s singers Trini Lopez, Al Wilson, Jody Reynolds, Dodie Stevens and Jewel Aikens — will be held at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 29 to benefit firefighters injured during the recent fires. Organized by Dave Richards and the Rev. Tim Zemanek, the concert will be held at Fallbrook High School's Bob Burton Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at Major Market in Fallbrook. Call (760) 451-9801.

■ "Rockin' for Relief," a free community concert organized by new Poway resident Kathy Yuhl, will showcase the bands Paradise, featuring Jack Ramsey, and Full Circle. The concert will be held from 1 to 5

p.m. Saturday in Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road. Admission is free but concertgoers are asked to make a donation to the Poway Rotary Foundation's Fire Fund.

■ The San Diego Visual Arts Network, Zhibit.org and Synergy are co-hosting an online benefit exhibition to raise money for local artists who have lost their homes and studios. "Fire and Rebirth," an all-media show that will be "exhibited" online in January, will award a total of \$1,000 in cash prizes to winning artists.

The exhibit will donate all artwork entry fees (\$20 for the first submission, \$10 for each work thereafter, per artist) to support Synergy's San Diego Emergency

Artist Support League. Submissions are being accepted through Dec. 24. Winners will be announced on Jan. 4. For entry details, visit zhibit.org/artcompetition/fire-and-rebirth.

■ ■ ■
The Old Globe sends about one show to Broadway every year, and 2008's candidate may be in the starting blocks.

The Globe announced Monday that it will produce the world premiere of "Dancing in the Dark," a musical revamp of the Broadway classic "The Band Wagon," from March 4 to April 13.

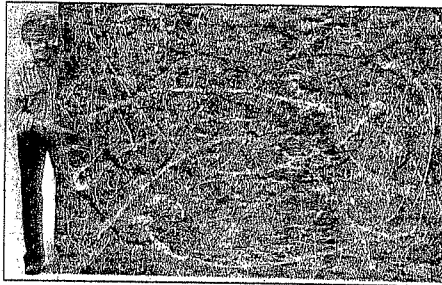
Originally scheduled to be staged as an adaptation of the original "Band Wagon," the musical project went through so many changes during a workshop in New York this summer that its creators decided to change the show's name. "Dancing in the Dark" features a new book by Douglas Carter Beane ("Xanadu," "The Little Dog Laughed"), the original score by Arthur Schwartz (music) and Howard Dietz (lyricist) and direction by Gary Griffin ("The Color Purple").

"The Schwartz and Dietz tune 'Dancing in the Dark' is a song title known around the world and represents the glory days of blockbuster MGM movie musicals upon which this new stage version is modeled," said Old Globe Executive Director Lou Spisto. "Dancing in the Dark" is about romance, comedy, wonderful dance numbers — all the things that make a great musical, and changing the title made sense to everyone involved."

The show revolves around Tony Hunter, a Hollywood star with a career on the wane, and Jeffrey Cordova, a Shakespearean actor-manager

with a taste for high art. Together they team up with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities, including a prima ballerina, to create a new musical that's strictly entertainment. The score includes such classic songs as "That's Entertainment" and "A Shine on Your Shoes."

■ ■ ■
A self-proclaimed Dumpster-diver who has taken on the art world to prove that a painting she bought for \$5 is a near-priceless Jackson Pollock original will speak about her



Teri Horton poses with her disputed painting.

adventures in the art world at the Solana Beach Library next week.

Teri Horton, the 70something former truck driver whose story has

been profiled on CBS' "60 Minutes" and in an HBO documentary, will talk about her long battle to authenticate a paint-spattered canvas she purchased at a Bakersfield thrift store as an original Pollock abstract masterpiece. The East Hampton, N.Y., native has enlisted a team of lawyers and forensic experts to prove her case to art dealers, museums and wealth collectors. If she can authenticate the painting, Horton hopes to sell the work for \$50 million.

The lecture, sponsored by the Friends of the Solana Beach Library, will be presented at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at the library, on the campus of Earl Warren Middle School, 155 Stevens Ave. Admission is free but seating is limited, so call (858) 755-1404 for reservations.

■ ■ ■
Premiere Productions has extended its run of "Blithe Spirit" at the Broadway Theater in Vista by another week.

Originally scheduled to close last Sunday, high ticket demand led the producers to add another weekend of performances.

The show will now run through Sunday and Premiere is offering a special buy one-get-one-free ticket deal for all remaining seats. For tickets, call (760) 806-7905.

Pam Kragen is the entertainment editor of the North County Times.

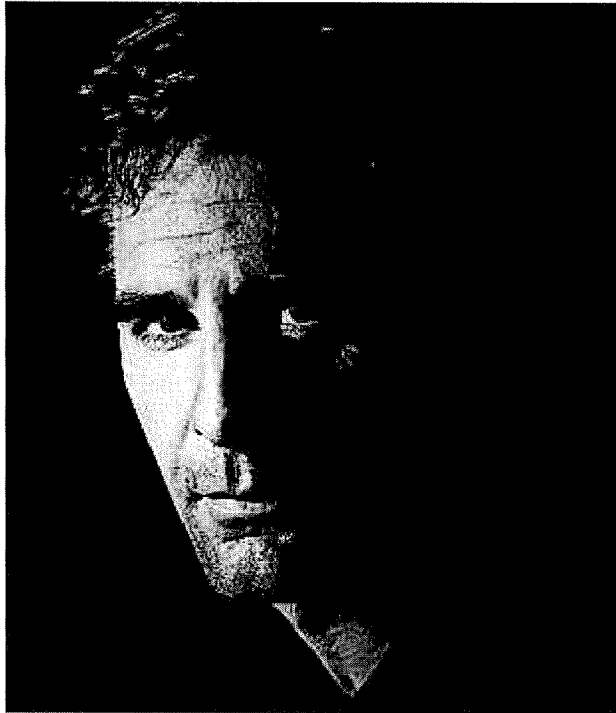
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Scott Bakula to star in new musical

January 28th, 2008 · 1 Comment · posted by phodgins



In Southern California, if a star finds a sudden interest in the stage, there are two schools of thought about their motivation:

- 1) Their film/TV career has hit a speed bump and they have more time on their hands than they know what to do with
- 2) They've decided they want to get "serious" about their craft again

Whether you're a proponent of the first theory, the second, or neither, there's no denying it's a pleasure to see **Scott Bakula** on stage. The guy's a Tony nominee, but I haven't seen him in a SoCal theater production until recently. He delivered a surprisingly powerful performance last fall as a

tormented Midwestern conservative Christian at the **Geffen Playhouse** in Jane Anderson's "**The Quality of Life.**" He'll tackle a second meaty role this spring at San Diego's **Old Globe** in the world premiere of Douglas Carter Beane's musical, "**Dancing in the Dark.**" Details are in the Old Globe's press release after the break.

Executive Producer **Lou Spisto** of the **Old Globe** is pleased to announce casting for the upcoming world-premiere musical "**Dancing In The Dark,**" with book by **Douglas Carter Beane** ("Xanadu," "The Little Dog Laughed"), adapted from the screenplay by **Betty Comden and Adolph Green**, music by **Arthur Schwartz**, lyrics by **Howard Dietz**, and directed by **Gary Griffin** ("The Color Purple"), produced by Permission of Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures, Inc., running in the Old Globe Theatre March 4 – April 13.

Golden Globe-winner and multi Emmy-nominated stage and screen star **Scott Bakula** (*Quantum Leap*, *American Beauty*) will play the role of Tony Hunter. **Patrick Page** (who just wrapped up his second season playing the title role in the Broadway production of "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!") will portray the role of "Jeffrey Cordova," and Tony Award-winner **Beth Leavel** ("The

Drowsy Chaperone”) will play “Lily” in this delightful new musical based on the classic MGM movie The Band Wagon.

The complete cast includes Mara Davi as “Gabrielle,” Adam Heller as “Lester,” Benjamin Howes as “Hal” and Sebastian LaCause as “Paul.” Ensemble members include: ClydeAlves, Rachel Coloff, Dylis Croman, Nicolas Dromard, Cara Kjellman, Adam Perry, Eric Santagata, Kiira Schmidt, Jacob Ben Widmar, Branch Woodman andAshley Yeater.

“Dancing In The Dark” revolves around Tony Hunter, a Hollywood star with a career on the wane, and Jeffrey Cordova, a Shakespearean actor-manager with a taste for high art. Together they team up with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that’s strictly “entertainment.” With a delightful **Arthur Schwartz/Howard Dietz** score packed with such classics as “A Shine on Your Shoes,” that quintessential ode to show business “That’s Entertainment!,” and the title song, “Dancing in the Dark” – made famous by **Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse** in the film’s memorable dance sequence – this world-premiere musical comedy will have audiences dancing in the aisles!

Tickets are available by calling (619) 234-5623, online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting The Old Globe Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

 Stumble it!

This entry was posted on Monday, January 28th, 2008 at 11:18 am and is filed under Theater by Paul Hodgins. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.



STAGE TO SCREENS: Chats with Debbie Allen, Scott Bakula and Chita Rivera

By Michael Buckley
09 Mar 2008

*

Two decades after his most recent Broadway appearance (in *Romance/Romance*, for which he received a 1988 Tony nomination), **Scott Bakula** is taking a not-quite-"Quantum Leap" back to musical theatre.

Considered by many to be one of the nicest people in show business, Bakula stars in the world-premiere engagement (March 4-April 13) of *Dancing in the Dark* at San Diego's Old Globe. Might the show transfer to New York? Says Bakula, "That's what they've talked about since day one."



Mara Davi with Scott Bakula in rehearsal.
photo by Sandy Huffaker

Douglas Carter Beane has adapted Betty Comden and Adolph Green's Oscar-nominated screenplay for "The Band Wagon" (1953). The popular M-G-M movie starred Fred Astaire as dancer Tony Hunter who, because of his fading film career, agrees to co-star with a ballerina (Cyd Charisse) in a Broadway musical.

Writers of the show are two of his friends (Nanette Fabray, Oscar Levant) — a team not unlike Comden and Green — and the director's a theatrical Renaissance man (Jack Buchanan). Playing those respective roles at the Old Globe are Bakula, Mara Davi, Beth Leavel, Adam Heller, and Patrick Page. Among those also in the cast are Sebastian LaCause, Benjamin Howes and Jacob Ben

Widmar.

Has Bakula seen the movie? "Yes, but not for a long time." I'd read that Bakula plays more a singing, rather than dancing, Tony Hunter, but he tells me: "I'm Tony Hunter, the singer *and* the dancer. I do a fair amount of dancing, but no one's Fred Astaire.

"Elements of the story are the same, but it's deeper. It has a new creative energy. Douglas has had the freedom to go in and, with Gary [Griffin, who's directing], flesh out the story, especially in the second act, so that it isn't just number after number [as might be said of the film]."

Featured in "The Band Wagon" score, by Howard Dietz (lyrics) and Arthur Schwartz (music), are songs first written for eight of their Broadway revues. Two songs deleted from the movie ("Bran' New Suit," "Sweet Music") have been reinstated. Numbers from Dietz and Schwartz shows were added: "Something You Never Had Before" (from *The Gay Life*) and "Rhode Island Is Famous for You" (*Inside USA*). "The Girl Hunt" ballet, danced by Astaire and Charisse in the movie, has been eliminated.

Due to his TV exposure, one could count Bakula among the most readily recognized actors. With which character do most people associate him — Sam Beckett, the "Quantum Leap" scientist (1989-93), or Jonathan Archer, the "Star Trek: Enterprise" captain (2001-05)? "Both," he replies, "but 'Quantum Leap' probably carries the day."

Each week, time-traveler Beckett leaped year to year, into the body of a different person, in order to improve matters. His guide was Al, a hologram, played by Dean Stockwell, with whom Bakula remains friends: "He's a good man."

"Quantum Leap" earned Bakula four Emmy nominations, and as many Golden Globe nods (winning the latter award in 1992). The actor directed three of the 96 episodes, and sometimes sang on the series. A 1989 show had him performing songs from *Man of La Mancha*. "That one had John Cullum and Janine Turner — before they did 'Northern Exposure' [their 1990-95 series] — and Michele Pawk was in it, too."

"Boston Legal" (in February) featured Bakula singing "Once Upon a Time" and playing piano. It reunited him with Candice Bergen, with whom he did 13 "Murphy Brown" episodes (1993-96). "Candice is a love, and great to work with." Will he appear again on "Legal"? "You never know. [Laughs] I didn't die at the end."

Shenandoah, "with John Cullum as the star, was the first Broadway show I ever saw." A few years later, Bakula made his professional stage debut in the musical "at a North Carolina dinner theatre. I've appeared in the show several times, playing various roles. I did it on the old straw-hat circuit, with John Raitt one year, and Ed Ames, another; a couple of national tours; twice at Paper Mill Playhouse." In 2006, at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., Bakula graduated to "the lead role of Charlie."

Following a turn as an understudy in *Is There Life After High*

School?, Bakula's Broadway debut occurred as baseball's Joe DiMaggio in 1983's short-lived *Marilyn: An American Fable*. Does it bring back any memories? He laughs. "Many, but they're way too long."

On April 8, 1995, Bakula appeared as J. Bowden Hapgood, opposite Madeline Kahn (Cora Hoover Hooper) and Bernadette Peters (Fay Apple), in a Carnegie Hall benefit concert of the Stephen Sondheim-Arthur Laurents musical *Anyone Can Whistle*. Angela Lansbury, who had originated the Hooper role, narrated.

Recalls Bakula, "It was extraordinary! It was almost impossible to step back and appreciate what was going on. I knew Bernadette, and had met Angela a few times, but I didn't know Madeline. She's greatly missed. It was wonderful to share that rare and magical night with her."

Born in St. Louis, MO, Bakula's the father of four. Daughter Chelsy and son Cody are the children of his marriage to Krista Neumann; Wil and Owen are his sons with actress Chelsea Field. Do any of them plan to follow in Dad's footsteps? "They all love [the business] in different ways, but I don't know what they'll end up doing."

His most recent musical theatre experiences include a May 2007 engagement of the Richard Rodgers-Samuel Taylor musical *No Strings* at UCLA's Reprise!, and *An Evening with Scott Bakula*, a January 2008 benefit concert for the restoration of Ford's Theatre.

Film appearances include 1999's Oscar-winning Best Picture, "American Beauty," in which Bakula and Sam Robards played Kevin Spacey's neighbors, a gay couple named Jim and Jim. His next TV stint is five episodes of "State of the Union," a sketch-comedy series, co-starring Tracey Ullman, that starts March 30 on Showtime.

Claims Bakula, "The Old Globe engagement [of *Dancing in the Dark*] gives us a great opportunity. It's a very big show, with a lot of numbers, and really great actors." Saying that it would be great to have him back on Broadway, Bakula laughs, and responds, "I hope to get there."

*

About the Movie: Hugh Fordin's book "M-G-M's Greatest Musicals: The Arthur Freed Unit" devotes a chapter to "The Band Wagon." The author writes that it was producer Freed's idea to create a picture (scheduled to be called "I Love Louisa") around the Dietz and Schwartz catalogue, and that he hired Comden and Green to do so.

Freed assigned Vincente Minnelli to direct. He and Minnelli subsequently asked Alan Jay Lerner to supply (sans credit) the narration for "The Girl Hunt" (a Mickey Spillane-spoof) detective ballet. Jose Ferrer inspired the director's role, which was declined by Clifton Webb. Though Webb sang and danced on Broadway (including three Dietz and Schwartz revues), he never did either on the screen.

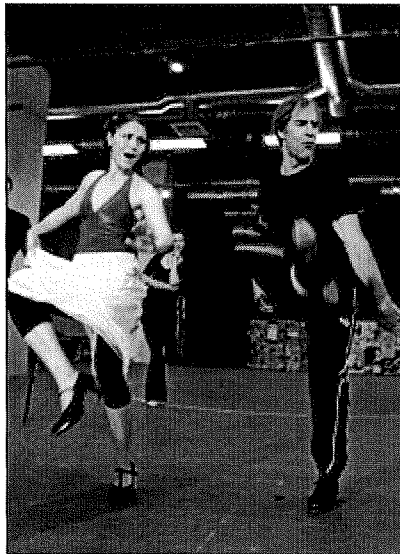
Edward G. Robinson and Vincent Price were considered, but on Webb's recommendation the part went to Britain's Jack Buchanan. Fordin also states that when Freed wanted a new song for the finale, Dietz and Schwartz took only a half-hour to write "That's Entertainment!"

*



"The Band Wagon" Has a New Shine on Its Shoes in *Dancing in the Dark* March 4-April 13

By Kenneth Jones
04 Mar 2008



Mara Davi and Scott Bakula in rehearsal.

Sandy Huffaker

Drown) for this new stage version, officially opening March 13 in California.

The troupers of the new musical *Dancing in the Dark* — based on the M-G-M picture "The Band Wagon" — begin "waltzing in the wonder of why we're here," as the song goes, March 4 at The Old Globe in San Diego.

Tony Award nominee Scott Bakula, star of TV's "Quantum Leap" and Broadway's *Romance/Romance*, plays song-and-dance man Tony Hunter, a role created by Fred Astaire in 1953 but reinvented by librettist Douglas Carter Beane (*Xanadu*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *As Bees in Honey*

Tony Award nominee Beane previously told Playbill.com that Tony Hunter has been revised for *Dancing in the Dark* (as have other elements of the source material): Now, Tony is more Bing Crosby showman than Astaire athlete, Beane said.

The backstage musical, directed by Gary Griffin (*The Color Purple*) and choreographed by Warren Carlyle (an Encores! veteran), plays a world premiere run at The Old Globe through April 13.

Like the beloved movie musical before it, *Dancing in the Dark* has music by Arthur Schwartz and lyrics by Howard Dietz, drawing on their songbook of musical numbers they wrote for Broadway revues in the 1930s. "That's Entertainment" was written for the movie, and remains a major anthem in *Dancing in the Dark*. Beane said that other songs from the catalog of the late songwriting team have been interpolated into the show (including "Something You Never Had Before" from the 1961 musical *The Gay Life*).

Expect the film's famous numbers, including "A Shine on Your Shoes," "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "Louisiana

Hayride," "I Love Louisa," "Triplets" and more.

*

The musical draws on the picture's original screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. The writers' studio contract ended in the middle of the project, which is the reason why the second half of the picture seems to turn into a montage-filled revue, Beane said. The playwright told Playbill.com that his goal is to honor "Betty and Adolph" and flesh out stories, deepen characters and marry music to moments. The lengthy "detective ballet" at the end of the film (apparently partly created by Alan Jay Lerner) is not in the new stage version.

As previously reported, the principal cast also includes Sebastian LaCause (*The Rocky Horror Show, Once Upon a Mattress* and *Chicago*) as Paul Byrd, a modern-dance choreographer; Mara Davi (*A Chorus Line, The Drowsy Chaperone*) as modern dancer Gaby, who is crossing over into musicals and catching the eye of Tony; Tony Award winner Beth Leavel (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) and Adam Heller (*Make Me a Song*) as Lily and Lester Marton, performers and musical comedy writers — think Comden and Green — who are old pals of Tony's; and Patrick Page (*The Lion King, How the Grinch Stole Christmas*) as Jeffrey Cordova, the artsy legit director who turns a traditional musical into a pretentious mess.

Benjamin Howes will play Hal, the stage manager, a role "built up" in the show; and Jacob Ben Widmar will play a chorus boy named Teddy, based on Ted Hook — the chorus boy turned restaurateur.

The troupe also includes Rachel Coloff, Dylis Croman, Nicolas Dromard, Cara Kjellman, Adam Perry, Eric Santagata, Kiira Schmidt, Branch Woodman and Ashley Yeater.

According to The Old Globe, "In *Dancing in the Dark*, Tony Hunter is a Hollywood star with a career on the wane. Jeffrey Cordova is a Shakespearean actor-manager with a taste for high art. Together they team up with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that's strictly 'entertainment.' With a score packed with classics like 'A Shine on Your Shoes,' that quintessential ode to show business 'That's Entertainment!,' and the title song, *Dancing in the Dark* is the musical comedy that will have audiences dancing in the aisles."

Music supervisor is Eric Stern, music director is Don York and orchestrator is Larry Hochman. The design team includes scenic designer John Lee Beatty, costume designer David Woolard, lighting designer Ken Billington, sound designer Brian Ronan. Stage manager is Dan Rosokoff.

Bakula is a 1988 Tony Award nominee as Best Actor in a Musical for *Romance/Romance*, and a Drama Desk nominee for *3 Guys Naked From the Waist Down*. The four-time Emmy Award nominee starred in TV's time-traveling series, "Quantum Leap" (for which he won a Golden Globe Award), "Star Trek: Enterprise" (as Capt. Jonathan Archer) and was Murphy Brown's beau on the sitcom "Murphy Brown."

At Ford's Theatre in 2006, he starred as the patriarch Charlie Anderson in *Shenandoah*. On Jan. 18 he performed a concert in Washington, DC, to benefit the historic Ford's Theatre. Bakula's other Broadway credits are *Marilyn* (he played Joe DiMaggio) and *Is There Life After High School?*

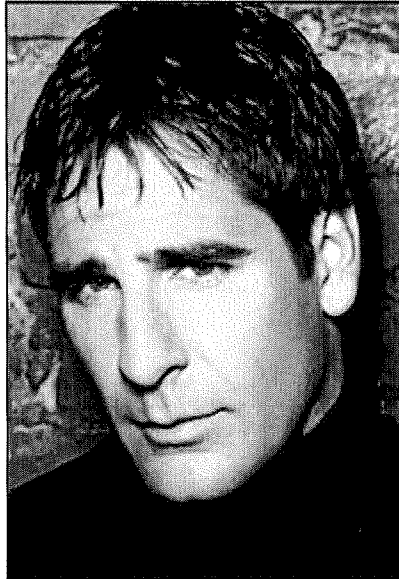
The Old Globe is at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. For more information call (619) 23-GLOBE or visit www.TheOldGlobe.org.

**Send questions and comments to the [Webmaster](#)
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A "Leap" Onto "The Band Wagon": Bakula Stars in *Dancing in the Dark*

By Kenneth Jones
25 Jan 2008



Scott Bakula

Tony Award nominee Scott Bakula, star of TV's "Quantum Leap" and Broadway's *Romance/Romance*, will play song-and-dance man Tony Hunter in *Dancing in the Dark*, the new stage musical based on the movie "The Band Wagon."

Bakula takes the role of the faded showman played by Fred Astaire in the 1953 picture, a favorite of movie musical fans. The show's librettist Douglas Carter Beane previously told Playbill.com that Tony has been somewhat reinvented for *Dancing in the Dark* (as

have other elements of the source material): Now, Tony is more Bing Crosby showman than Astaire athlete, Beane said.

The musical, directed by Gary Griffin (*The Color Purple*) and choreographed by Warren Carlyle (an Encores! veteran), makes its world premiere at The Old Globe in San Diego March 4-April 13. Rehearsals begin Jan. 25.

The musical draws on the picture's original screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. The writers' studio contract ended in the middle of the project, which is the reason why the second half of the picture seems to turn into a montage-filled revue, Beane said. The playwright of *As Bees in Honey Drown* and *The Little Dog Laughed* told Playbill.com that his goal is to honor "Betty and Adolph" and flesh out stories, deepen characters and marry music to moments. The lengthy "detective ballet" at the end of the film (apparently partly created by Alan Jay Lerner) is not in the new stage version.

As previously reported, the principal cast will also include Sebastian LaCause (*The Rocky Horror Show*, *Once Upon a Mattress* and *Chicago*) as Paul Byrd, a modern-dance choreographer; Mara Davi (*A Chorus Line*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*) as modern dancer Gaby, who is crossing over into musicals and catching the eye of Tony; Tony Award winner Beth

Leavel (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) and Adam Heller (*Make Me a Song*) as Lily and Lester Marton, performers and musical comedy writers — think Comden and Green — who are old pals of Tony's; and Patrick Page (*The Lion King*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*) as Jeffrey Cordova, the artsy legit director who turns a traditional musical into a pretentious mess.

Benjamin Howes will play Hal, the stage manager, a role "built up" in the show; and Jacob Ben Widmar will play a chorus boy named Teddy, based on Ted Hook — the chorus boy turned restaurateur.

The troupe also includes Clyde Alves, Rachel Coloff, Dylis Croman, Nicolas Dromard, Cara Kjellman, Adam Perry, Eric Santagata, Kiira Schmidt, Branch Woodman and Ashley Yeater.

Dancing in the Dark has music by Arthur Schwartz and lyrics by Howard Dietz. Music supervisor is Eric Stern, music director is Don York and orchestrator is Larry Hochman. The design team includes scenic designer John Lee Beatty, costume designer David Woolard, lighting designer Ken Billington, sound designer Brian Ronan. Stage manager is Dan Rosokoff.

Bakula is a 1988 Tony Award nominee as Best Actor in a Musical for *Romance/Romance*, and a Drama Desk nominee for *3 Guys Naked From the Waist Down*. The four-time Emmy Award nominee starred in TV's time-traveling series, "Quantum Leap" (for which he won a Golden Globe Award), "Star Trek: Enterprise" (as Capt. Jonathan Archer) and was Murphy Brown's beau on the sitcom "Murphy Brown."

At Ford's Theatre in 2006, he starred as the patriarch Charlie Anderson in *Shenandoah*. On Jan. 18 he performed a concert in Washington, DC, to benefit the historic Ford's Theatre. Bakula's other Broadway credits are *Marilyn* (he played Joe DiMaggio) and *Is There Life After High School?*

According to The Old Globe, "In *Dancing in the Dark*, Tony Hunter is a Hollywood star with a career on the wane. Jeffrey Cordova is a Shakespearean actor-manager with a taste for high art. Together they team up with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that's strictly 'entertainment.' With a score packed with classics like 'A Shine on Your Shoes,' that quintessential ode to show business 'That's Entertainment!,' and the title song, *Dancing in the Dark* is the musical comedy that will have audiences dancing in the aisles."

For more information visit www.TheOldGlobe.org.

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Douglas Carter Beane Lovingly Steers "Band Wagon" to Create *Dancing in the Dark*

By Kenneth Jones
23 Dec 2007



Douglas Carter Beane
Greg Kalafatas

The classic 1953 M-G-M movie musical, "The Band Wagon," will have a special new shine on its shoes when it premieres in March 2008 in San Diego as a Broadway-aimed stage musical, *Dancing in the Dark*.

Librettist Douglas Carter Beane (*The Little Dog Laughed*, *Xanadu*) told Playbill.com that the one-time Fred Astaire vehicle — about a washed up movie hooper returning to the stage — is being dramatically deepened for its new life: Characters are fleshed out; additional songs from the catalog of composer Arthur Schwartz and lyricist Howard Dietz have been added; and the retooled plot is a grand homage to the craft and showbiz savvy of late screenwriter-librettists Betty Comden and Adolph Green.

"The difference between this and *Xanadu* is total," Beane said. "I went into *Xanadu* going, 'I really dislike this movie — let me try to make it something wonderful,' but with 'The Band Wagon,' I really revere this movie. It's really a beautiful movie musical. And, yet, because I'm a writer and look at it that way, I see that there are faults in it."

Comden and Green wrote the picture's screenplay, but, said Beane, their studio contract ended before work was finished. As adaptor for *Dancing in the Dark*, Beane draws on the film's existing screenplay; Comden had sent him a copy before she died.

"The thing that drew me to it was the chance to further something of Comden and Green, and really give them their due because I love them so much," Beane said.

Gary Griffin (*The Color Purple*) will direct the 1952-set *Dancing in the Dark* (the title is drawn from the famous song by Dietz and Schwartz), to bow at The Old Globe in San Diego March 4-April 13, 2008. Barry and Fran Weissler plan to shepherd it to a commercial future.

The stars — including those playing the respective Astaire- and Cyd Charisse-created roles of Tony Hunter and ballet dance Gabrielle — have yet to be officially announced, though Tony Award winner Beth Leavel recently said she'll play musical comedy writer Lily Marton (created by Nanette Fabray). Adam Heller (*Make Me a Song*) is expected to play composer-husband Lester Marton (created by Oscar Levant).

According to The Old Globe, "In *Dancing in the Dark*, Tony Hunter is a Hollywood star with a career on the wane. Jeffrey Cordova is a Shakespearean actor-manager with a taste for high art. Together they team up with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that's strictly 'entertainment.'"

Beane said that fans of the picture will note that the second part of the film is a string of splashy musical numbers — as if the characters had created a revue. Entertaining though they are, these show-within-a-show tunes make little sense in the plot and are not connected by any dialogue scenes.

An ambitious hard-boiled detective jazz ballet (with Astaire as a Mickey Spillane-type) is tacked on as the finale. "The huge ballet [and its incidental dialogue] was not written by Comden and Green at all," Beane said. "It's by [uncredited] Alan Jay Lerner."

In the film's central plot, Tony Hunter reunites with old writer pals to star in a new stage musical, agrees to work with an arty director, a chilly choreographer and a ballet star with no musical comedy background. Beane said he set out to steal the screenplay's setup "and then create a second act, and deepen and understand the characters more."

Beane spoke with Betty Comden about the project before she died. "She did send to me the original screenplay, which had passing references to things that were really interesting to me — like that Lily had dated Tony Hunter before she married Lester," Beane explained. "I thought that was really interesting. [In the film] they are fighting for no reason — suddenly the collaborators are fighting. The reason they're fighting is because he feels she's falling in love with him again. And there's [a plot point] about Lester being an alcoholic. Those were interesting things that I wanted to play with, and make it a rich musical theatre experience."

The movie is generally considered one of three great color M-G-M musicals from the 1950s, including "Singin' in the Rain" and "On the Town." Fans can rest assured that most of the film's score will be heard in *Dancing in the Dark*, though numbers may be reassigned.

The title number, a sensuous and wordless getting-to-know-you dance between Astaire and Charisse in Central Park, will include

Dietz's lyrics when it plays on stage.

Except for "That's Entertainment," all the songs in the film "The Band Wagon" were culled from Dietz and Schwartz musicals of the 1930s — some of which starred Astaire and sister Adele.

Dancing in the Dark will also include D&S songs *not* heard in the picture: Expect "Something You Never Had Before" from *The Gay Life* (1960), as well as "Fatal Fascination" from *Flying Colors* (1932) and "Rhode Island is Famous for You" from *Inside U.S.A.* (1948). Songs cut from the film, "The Band Wagon" — "Sweet Music" and "Got a Bran' New Suit" — will also be used.

(It should be noted here that that the script/score, like those for any new musical with Broadway hopes, is a work in progress — written in ink, not yet set in stone.)

The film score includes D&S classics "A Shine on Your Shoes," "Something to Remember You By," "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "Triplets," "You and the Night and the Music," "By Myself," "New Sun in the Sky," "Louisiana Hayride" and more.

"In every instance I found the original theatre lyrics, which are ten times better than the movie lyrics, because they're not watered down," said Beane. "They're actually much more dark and interesting."

So, he illustrated, "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan" (which was first heard in 1929 and was later cleaned up) will offer the lesser-known line, "Why did I buy those blue pajamas before the big affair began?"

Beane observed, "Dietz and Schwartz have sort of fallen by the wayside a little bit, and they are up there with Rodgers and Hart and Irving Berlin and Cole Porter. They are the finest of the revue composers — their stuff is so good and so strong."

As in the film, *Dancing in the Dark's* major plot tension will still be classical art vs. pop culture, represented by highfalutin' British director Jeffrey Cordova seeking to turn a breezy musical comedy into a turgid, modernist work.

"They start with a sort of Comden and Green musical, and it becomes a Marc Blitzstein musical, and they try to pull it back to a Comden and Green musical," Beane explained. "[Jeffrey] is stuck in the Marc Blitzstein world." The show Lily and Lester intended is "a mix of *Bells Are Ringing* and *Wonderful Town*."

Beane also revealed that there is a flashback sequence that shows the roots of the relationship between Tony, Lily and Lester, in the 1930s. The trio performed as a Depression-era Greenwich Village act — a nod to Comden and Green's post-NYU work writing and acting as The Revuers, with Judy Holliday. The fictional pals later made a splash on Broadway in an imagined show called *I Love Louisa*.

"It's got a lot of me in it as well," Beane said of this newly re-conditioned "Band Wagon." "We've done a lot of readings, and I'm most excited that people are *moved* by it. It becomes about

why we choose to do theatre, and why we choose this particular life, and how the history of the past is tied into the choices we make in the present."

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Scott Bakula Takes On Former Fred Astaire Part

By T'Bonz
 March 2, 2008 - 8:34 PM

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Dancing in the Dark, starring Scott Bakula opens March 4th in San Diego's Old Globe Theater.

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Mar 2 - Lindelof On 'Star Trek XI' Date Change And Its Effects
 Release date change for 'Star Trek XI' puts movie in position to be summer crowd-pleaser.

As reported by Fox6 San Diego, *Dancing in the Dark* opens this week with Scott Bakula playing the lead role of Tony Hunter, a Hollywood star whose career is waning and who returns to New York to create a new musical. The musical is based on the movie *The Band Wagon*. It is directed by Gary Griffin and choreographed by Warren Carlyle.

Mar 2 - Scott Bakula Takes On Former Fred Astaire Part
 Former Captain Archer to play song-and-dance man in theatrical production of 'Dancing in the Dark'.

Discussing his character Tony's motivations for returning to New York, Bakula said, "He started there and it's about him rediscovering his roots and rediscovering what makes him happy and what creatively makes him happy."

Mar 2 - Bana Found 'Star Trek XI' Role Irresistible
 Why Eric Bana accepted 'Star Trek XI' role. Plus: Bana as Henry VIII in 'The Other Boleyn Girl'.

The Old Globe has a reputation for success. "The Old Globe has this incredible reputation of doing new work and new work that is successful new work and new work that moves on," said Bakula. Twenty-one of the musicals that have debuted there have made it to Broadway.

Mar 2 - Bruce Greenwood On The Defensive
 Strict security has 'Star Trek XI's' Christopher Pike a bit on edge.

Bakula hopes that the San Diego audiences are just as excited by the production as the cast is. "...When you're working with an audience...it's a team kind of situation. It's a remarkable experience and it's the ultimate in performing."

Mar 2 - New Federation Captain Cast for 'Star Trek XI'
 Fahan Tahir to play heroic Federation Captain.

To see the video, head to the link located here.

Feb 29 - Yeichin And Cho On 'Star Trek XI'
 'Star Trek XI' actors discuss working on established franchises.

Discuss this news item at Trek BBS!
 XML Add TrekToday RSS feed to your news reader or My Yahoo!
 Also a CSI: Crime Scene Investigation fan? Then visit CSIFiles.com!

Feb 29 - Retro Review: Shades of Gray
 As Riker's central nervous system is attacked by a deadly microbe, Pulaski tries to stimulate his memories to ward off the effects.

Find more episode info in the Episode Guide.

Feb 29 - LeVar Burton on 'Roots' and 'Star Trek'
 Former Geordi LaForge discusses his most influential acting roles.

Feb 29 - Carolyn Porco To Keep 'Star Trek XI' Real

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'Star Trek XI' scientific consultant beams onto 'Star Trek XI'

Feb 29 - Lindelof on 'Star Trek XI'

'Star Trek XI' producer on the storyline of 'Star Trek XI' and 'Star Trek's' appeal.

Feb 27 - Child Spock Cast

Twelve-year-old cast for 'Star Trek XI' as third Spock.

Feb 27 - 'Star Trek: New Frontier' Comics Unveiled

10th Anniversary of 'New Frontier' to be celebrated with five-part comic continuation of the series. Plus: 'Star Trek: The Next Generation: Intelligence Gathering' artwork.

Feb 27 - Vintage Roddenberry Audio Interview

Gene Roddenberry describes creating 'Star Trek' and 'Star Trek: The Motion Picture'.

Feb 27 - News Bullets

Shatner on 'Star Trek XI', Competition for 'Star Trek XI', Poster, Bana shaves head

Feb 26 - 'Star Trek XI' Casting News

Two more actors set for 'Star Trek XI'; one role known, one unknown.

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Guide

Old Globe's 'Dancing in the Dark' reworks classic movie musical



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06:19 PM PST on Thursday, February 28, 2008

By FIELDING BUCK
The Press-Enterprise

Fred Astaire's "The Band Wagon" was about the madness that goes on trying to open a Broadway musical. Now a stage version of the 1953 film is days from opening at The Old Globe in San Diego.

Renamed "Dancing in the Dark," it stars "Quantum Leap's" Scott Bakula in the Astaire role and a lot of Broadway talent.

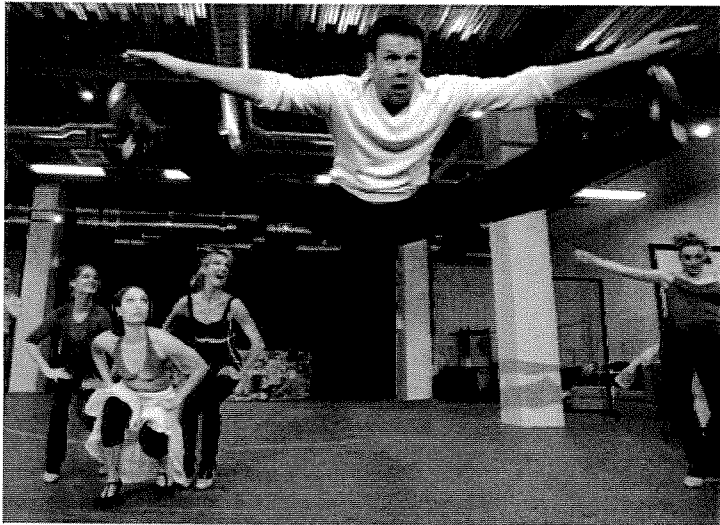
Among them is Beth Leavel, a Tony Award winner for "The Drowsy Chaperone." She said, in a phone interview on her lunch break during rehearsals, that it's like life imitating art and art imitating life.

"The Band Wagon" was a light comedy directed by Vincente Minnelli. The score consisted mostly of existing songs by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz.

Astaire played a washed-up movie star who returns to live theater, overcomes a lot of backstage madness and falls in love with a ballerina. Leavel's role, as a writer, was played by Nanette Fabray.

Among Leavel's numbers is "Triplets," in which she and Bakula play babies in enormous bonnets, and "That's Entertainment," in which chorus members hoist her on a ladder.

Story continues below



Special to The Press-Enterprise
Dylis Croman, left, Mara Davi, Angie Canuel, Nicholas Dromard and Ashley Yeater rehearse for The Old Globe's world-premiere musical, "Dancing in the Dark."

"It's the same songs, but the book has been explored deeper. And the relationships that are in 'The Band Wagon' have really been fleshed out more. They have more dimensions and more history. It's not just singing and dancing," said Leavel.

"In this musical, my character, Lily, was in love with the Fred Astaire/Scott Bakula character. So there's all sorts of interesting baggage."

Story continues below



Beth Leavel has a starring role in "Dancing in the Dark."

Leavel said she won't have much chance to check out San Diego until the show opens.

"I feel like I've been in the basement of the Old Globe for 4 ½ weeks. Rumor has it that it's a really beautiful city. But you know those invisible fences that your dog has? I feel like I'm in my fence. And I haven't quite gotten out of my collar area yet. ... Rumor

has it there's even an ocean nearby!"

"Dancing in the Dark" is written by Douglas Carter Beane, whose "Xanadu," a spoof of Olivia Newton-John's 1980 roller-disco musical, is running on Broadway and will come to La Jolla Playhouse in the fall.

Leavel said this project is completely different.

"It's probably the antithesis of what 'Xanadu' is. Nothing's being sent up here. It's all just really truthful storytelling.

"That's why I think -- I'm speculating -- that's one of the reasons they wanted to rename it from 'Band Wagon.' Because it really is different. It is our 'Dancing in the Dark.' "

'Dancing in the Dark'

When: Tuesday-April 13

Where: The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

Tickets: \$52-\$79. www.oldglobe.org

“A” THE A LIST

The top 25 things to do
in San Diego each month!

April 3 Fashion Bash

The girls of Sassy City Chicks are back with a spring Fashion Bash to beat all others. Held at The Witherby, the shopping extravaganza is a bargain-buyer's dream, featuring discounts of up to 80 percent on designer jeans, makeup, jewelry, handbags and more. 5 to 10 p.m. 526 Market Street, downtown, 310-265-3903; www.sassycitychicks.com.

April 3 Wine Styles Blind Tasting Wine Olympics

While the competition in Beijing doesn't heat up until summer, Olympic fever is in full force at Wine Styles in Encinitas. The wine retailer hosts its Blind Tasting Wine Olympics, giving wine lovers the opportunity to put their taste buds to the test, guessing grape, style and color for a variety of prizes. 5 to 7:30 p.m. 191 North El Camino Real, 760-633-0057; www.winestyles.net/encinitas.

April 4-6 Home Design and Landscape Expo

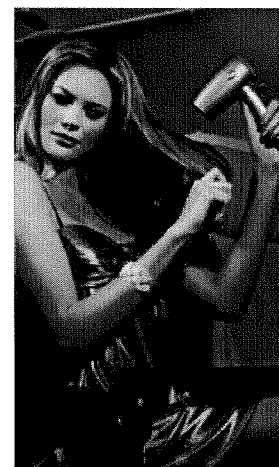
If you've ever watched HGTV or dreamed of an extreme home makeover, this is the event for you. Held at the San Diego Convention Center, this three-day expo features more than 350 exhibitors in home design and décor, outdoor living and home remodeling and renovation, as well as guest appearances from HGTV stars and other celebrity renovators and designers. Free admission will be granted to those affected by the recent wildfires. April 4, noon to 8 p.m.; April 5, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and April 6, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. 111 West Harbor Drive, downtown, 800-765-3976; www.sandiegodesignexpo.com.

April 8 Whittard of Chelsea Tea Party

Learn how to sip tea like a true Brit at this traditional English tea party hosted by Tea Master Giles Hilton at the new Whittard of Chelsea boutique at Horton Plaza. Signature English teas will be served with a variety of classic British pastries. 5 to 7 p.m. Horton Plaza, Level 1, downtown. RSVP to 617-797-2595 or dana@zemackpr.com. www.whittard.co.uk.

April 11 Frederick's of Hollywood

Another new boutique is opening its doors with a celebration at Horton Plaza. Guests at the grand opening party for Frederick's of



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Hollywood will receive free boy shorts, complimentary cocktails and 20 percent off all purchases. 6 to 9 p.m. Horton Plaza, Level 3, downtown, 310-265-3903; www.westfield.com/hortonplaza.

April 11-12 California Wine Festival

"Reds, Whites and Blues" are the main event at this two-day event, which offers the opportunity to taste hundreds of California wines, regional craft brews and gourmet food from local chefs and artisan food vendors. The two-day event kicks off with a Sunset Rare and Reserve Wine Tasting, featuring live jazz, a live wine and luxury lifestyle auction, more than 40 premium wines, champagne and food samples. April 11, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Manchester Grand Hyatt, One Market Place, downtown. The following day also includes live and silent auctions and live entertainment. 1 to 4 p.m. Embarcadero Marina Park North, downtown, www.californiawinefestival.com.

April 11-13 Art Alive

San Diego Museum of Art welcomes back spring with its 27th annual event, featuring beautiful floral arrangements inspired by the museum's art collection. Special events, including a members' preview, lily luncheon, family arts workshop, champagne celebration and Art Alive gala, are held at various times throughout the weekend. 1450 El Prado, Balboa Park, 619-696-1999; www.sdmart.org/artalive.html.

April 11-13 Head to Toe Women's Expo

For the fifth year, this popular three-day show returns to the Del Mar Fairground for a weekend of shopping, pampering, makeovers, inspirational speakers and more. More than 200 vendors and exhibitors will present their goods and services at this "ultimate day out for women." April 11-12, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; April 13, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. 2260 Jimmy Durante Boulevard, 619-491-0677; www.sdfair.com.

April 12 Whale of a Weekend Treasure Hunt

Where You Want to Be Tours pairs with environmental artist Wyland to challenge San Diegans to explore their hometown like never before in this treasure hunt among San Diego hotspots. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. 619-917-6037; www.wheretours.com.

April 12 Bluegrass Day

It's full blooms and bluegrass at the Flower Fields in Carlsbad during this daylong music festival presented by the North County Bluegrass and Folk Club. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. 5704 Paseo del Norte, 760-431-0352; visit.theflowerfields.com.

April 12 Valentino at Valenti

The grounds of the Valenti Estate and Saddle Club in Rancho Santa Fe will transform into a fashion lover's paradise during this fund-raising event for The Children's Village, an under-construction home for more than 200 homeless and foster children in San Diego's East County. The event features a fashion show by Italian designer Valentino, live and silent auctions, fine dining and a performance by legendary musician Chubby Checker. 858-759-9239; www.valentifoundation.org.

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12

April 12-May 18 The Glass Menagerie:

Emmy award-winning actress Mare Winningham takes the stage in Balboa Park as the star of the Old Globe's production of the Tennessee Williams classic *The Glass Menagerie*. Various times. 1363 Old Globe Way. 619-234-5623. www.theoldglobe.org.

13

April 12-23 Aida

San Diego Opera brings the Verdi epic opera *Aida* to the Civic Theatre stage for five performances. Unseen in San Diego since 2001, this year's production welcomes a Verdi specialist, American soprano Indra Thomas, in her San Diego debut. Fans can meet the singers, conductors and director of *Aida* at a free panel discussion in the Beverly Sills Salon at the Civic Theatre April 3rd at 5:30 p.m. The opera is performed at various times. Third Avenue and B Street, 619-533-7000; www.sdopera.com.

14

April 13 Taste of the Nation

The nation's premier culinary benefit to end childhood hunger makes a stop at San Diego's Hotel Solamar, featuring the fine food of more than a dozen local restaurants, including Addison, Anthology, Jade Theatre and Oceanaire. 3 to 6 p.m. 435 Sixth Avenue, downtown, 949-481-7792; www.tasteofthenation.org.

15

April 17 Flight Night at Top of the Plaza:

The popular happy hour event returns for the first time this year to Horton Plaza's Napa Valley Grille. Guests will enjoy wine, appetizer specials, entertainment, fashion previews and prize giveaways. 5:30 to 8 p.m. Horton Plaza, Level 5, downtown, 619-238-5440; www.napavalleygrille.com/sandiego.

16

April 19 Taste of Uptown/Hillcrest

Grab your appetite and a group of hungry friends and head to this walking tour of Hillcrest restaurants. For just \$30 per person, participants will have the opportunity to sample the specialties of more than 40 restaurants. A new sidewalk sale coincides with this year's event. Noon to 4 p.m. Will call is at Fifth and Pennsylvania avenues. 619-233-5008; www.mcfarlanepromotions.com.

17

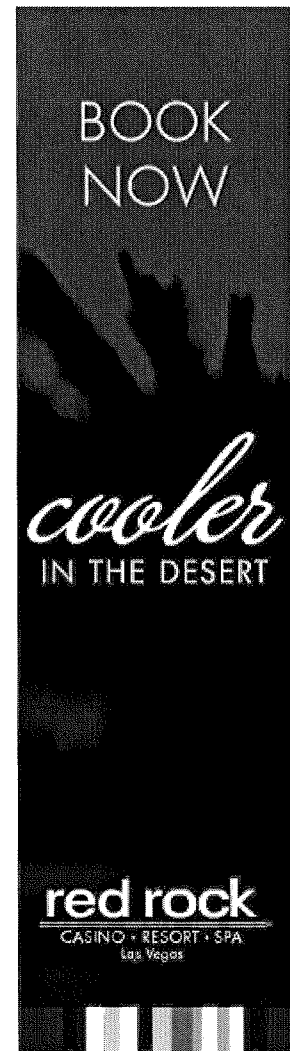
April 19-20 Oceanside Days of Art:

More than 100 artists—from painters and potters to sculptors, singers and dancers—converge on this northern San Diego County beach town for two days of visual, performing and musical arts. This free weekend event also includes a high school art show, hands-on art activities, food and fun for the entire family. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Civic Center Plaza and Pier View Way, Oceanside. 760-433-3632. www.oceanside-days-of-art.org.

18

April 20 EarthFair

If you haven't yet gone green, it's easy to get started at this environmental fair and Earth Day celebration. Produced by hundreds of volunteers, this 19th annual event features more than 200 exhibitors, food, entertainment and an eco-friendly expo, offering tips for living a greener life. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Balboa Park, 858-272-7370; www.earthdayweb.org.

April 20 Fallbrook Avocado Festival

19

It's all about the mighty avocado at this family-friendly street fair, featuring guacamole and avocado-dish contests, culinary demonstrations, avocado art and more. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Main Street, Fallbrook, 760-728-5845; www.fallbrookca.org.

20

April 22 Tapenade Argentinean Wine Dinner

The venerable La Jolla restaurant presents 90-point and above wines from Argentina at this Tuesday evening wine dinner. 6:30 to 9 p.m. 7612 Fay Avenue, 858-551-7500; www.tapenaderestaurant.com.

21

April 23 Women's Global Network

The Young Professionals Group of this nonprofit organization encourages women to clean out their closets for a cause at this fashion fund-raiser and networking event at Bar West in Pacific Beach. Highlights include appetizers and cocktails as well as a look ahead at the latest fashion trends displayed by local models. 6 to 9 p.m. 959 Hornblend Street, 760-635-5785; www.wgn-global.com.

22

April 26 Vintage Wine Auction and Wine Tasting

The Museum of Photographic Arts' 10th annual Vintage events conclude with this popular wine-focused fund-raiser, featuring fine wines from the cellars of local collectors, appetizers from San Diego Urban Kitchen, and live and silent auctions for wine, photography and luxury lifestyle items. 6 p.m. 1649 El Prado, Balboa Park, 619-238-7559; www.mopa.org.

23

April 26 That Beatles Sound

The Museum of Making Music in Carlsbad celebrates the Fab Four in its special exhibition "That Beatles Sound: Recording @ Abbey Road." An opening celebration spotlights the technology and equipment behind the legendary group's music. 7 p.m. 5790 Armada Drive, 760-438-5996; www.museumofmakingmusic.org.

24

April 26-27 Art Walk

More than 350 artists will display their works and wares for nearly 100,000 art lovers at this weekend art festival. The streets of Little Italy come alive with exhibitors, art demonstrations, performers and the presentation of the ArtReach Bench Project, a bench-painting fund-raiser to support the arts in elementary schools. Volunteers are still needed to make this popular event a success. Noon to 6 p.m. 619-615-1090, www.artwalksandiego.org.

25

April 26-27 Encinitas Street Fair

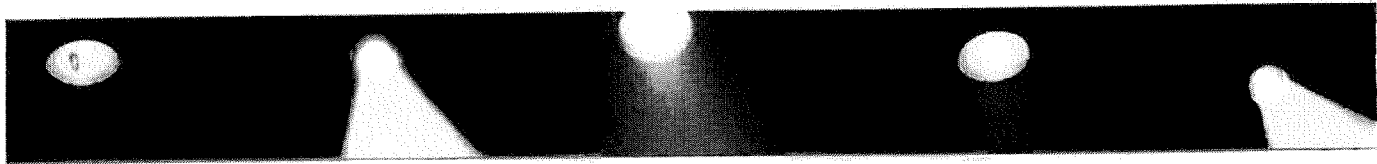
This energetic seaside town celebrates its 25th annual street fair with 450 arts and crafts vendors, four live stages with a variety of musical acts, children's rides and a Karl Strauss beer garden. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Highway 101 between D and J streets, 760-943-1950; www.encinitas101.com.

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by [illegible]

arts alive in april

The April calendar is brimming over with special events, including a new dancework from the critically-acclaimed Malashock Dance company, the San Diego Opera debut of Indra Thomas in Verdi's "Aida," and the San Diego Museum of Art's annual "Art Alive" show – which brings the bloom of floral art to the museum for a brief stay. To many, this once-a-year event is the unofficial start of spring.

John Malashock unveiled his world premiere, "Stay the Hand" in the Malashock Dance Studio as a work-in-progress in March. On April 5, you can see the polished production in all its glory at the North Park Theater. Malashock, a four-time Emmy-winner, collaborated on this ambitious project with the renowned Persian-Jewish composer Yadegari. They have created a stunning fusion of dance, music, vocals (by Yadegari), poetry, and design.

"Stay the Hand" mines the powerful cultural traditions of the ancient world to reconcile the difficult times we live in. The piece is an emotional intermingling of art forms and expressions that ultimately conveys an optimistic vision of compassion and harmony. Opening night festivities will include VIP seating and a champagne dessert reception at the chic new Urban Solace restaurant. "Stay the Hand" will run through April 13.

The Old Globe's "Dancing in the Dark" will continue through April 13, so be sure to see this musical extravaganza before it takes off for a Broadway run. This homage to the MGM musical "The Band Wagon" abounds with vintage songs like "That's Entertainment," and gives audiences a live look at the memorable dance sequence Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse immortalized on film.

On April 12, the Globe will continue its

"Classics Up Close" series with Tennessee Williams' masterpiece, "The Glass Menagerie. This enduring classic will make its home at the Cassius Carter until May 18, with Emmy Award-winner Mare Winningham in the lead.

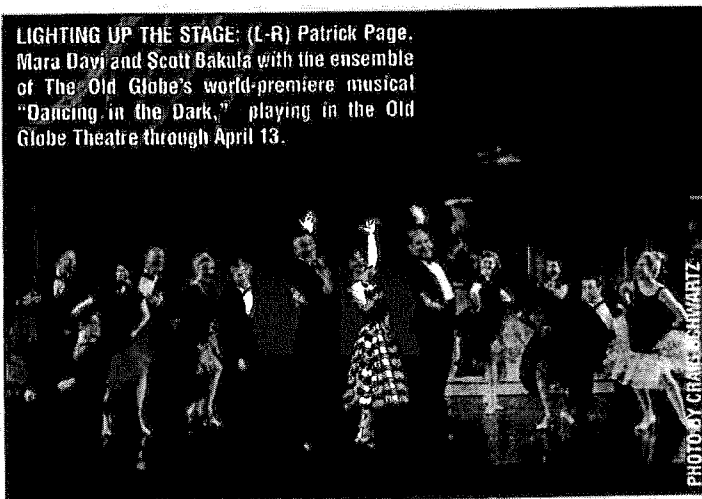
The North Coast Rep will bark back to 1938 for a production of "Mornings at Seven" by Paul Osborn. The charming comedy (set in a small Midwestern town) is an American chestnut about hope, love and families. The play was recently revived on Broadway, and it will play at the North Coast Rep from April 12-May 11.

The San Diego Opera's production of Verdi's "Aida" is coming our way April 12 for a welcome run at the Civic Theater through April 23. To bring the passionate and stunningly beautiful music to life, the company acquired Indra Thomas to sing the leading role. Thomas acknowledged, "Musically and dramatically, it is a huge challenge because of the legacy of great artists..." However, this newcomer to the San Diego Opera scene comes with a powerful legacy of her own and "pitch-perfect" vocal ability.

The La Jolla Playhouse will get an early start on its new season with the West Coast premiere of Moises Kaufman's "33 Variations" – which settles into the Mandell Weiss Theater April 8. The music

■ **The Old Globe's "Dancing in the Dark" will continue through April 13, so be sure to see this musical extravaganza before it takes off for a Broadway run.**

LIGHTING UP THE STAGE: (L-R) Patrick Page, Mara Davi and Scott Bakula with the ensemble of The Old Globe's world-premiere musical "Dancing in the Dark," playing in the Old Globe Theatre through April 13.





SDJJ | what's goin' on



of Beethoven propels the plot (which focuses on Beethoven's fascination with a trivial waltz and a modern-day musicologist obsessed with determining the reason). The show has been described as "utterly absorbing." This unusual offering will enjoy a run at the Playhouse through May 4.

The San Diego Symphony's Winter Pops series starts the ball rolling on April 4 and 5. The program will feature Ben Vereen as he sings "Sammy Davis, Jr." On April 6, the Symphony will be cooking up another Family Festival – with "Cooking Up Music" as its provocative title. Pre-concert activities for children (including a musical "petting zoo") make these Festivals popular family fare.

The Jacobs' Masterworks series returns on April 25–27, when Maestro Jahja Ling conducts a program that stars soprano Nicole Cabell and the San Diego Master Chorale. Excerpts from Grieg's

Peer Gynt and the world premiere of *The Fiery Furnace* by Kellogg make this a concert you won't want to miss.

The Lamb's is putting the final touches on a San Diego premiere by David Mamet. "The Voyage Inheritance" (Mamet's adaptation of the suspenseful drama by Granville-Barker) will debut on April 4 for a run extending through May 18. Deborah Gilmour Smyth is directing this engrossing classic.

The newly renovated Balboa Theater may be the newest theatrical venue in town, but it's already one of the busiest. The April slate includes the Spring Concert by the San Diego Men's Chorus (April 12), a kids-oriented program titled "Classics for Kids Family Concert: Going Green" (April 13), and Classics for Kids School Day Concerts April 15 – 17.

The La Jolla Music Society will bring *Europa Galante* to Sherwood Auditorium on April 5. Violin virtuoso Fabio Biondi will conduct and perform. Mark your calendar for April 11 when Maestro Gerard Schwarz returns to Symphony Hall for a concert with Nadia Salerno-Sonnenberg and the Seattle Symphony. Dance buffs can look forward to a visit from Limon Dance Company April 18, courtesy of the Society. That one-night stand is slated for the North Park Theater.

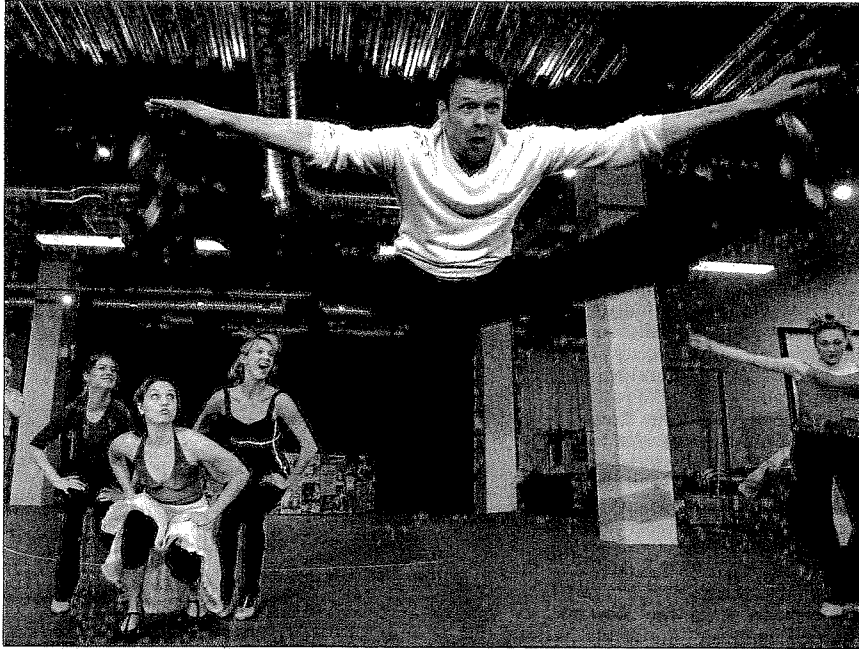
San Diego Junior Theater continues its 60th season in Balboa Park with a production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat." The show begins April 25 and will remain on tap through May 11.

The California Center for the Arts in Escondido will present The Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet and Orchestra April 5. Their performance includes highlights from "Sleeping Beauty," "Swan Lake" and "The Nutcracker." Shidara delivers its thrilling rhythms April 6, with Japanese folk drumming and plenty of physical hi-jinx.

Mainly Mozart's 12th annual Spotlight Series will feature The Altenberg Trio of Vienna this month. The program on April 4 is set for the Neurosciences Institute, followed on April 6 by performances in Carlsbad and The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe. On April 25, a concert of Dvorak will take place at the Neurosciences Institute. The program will move to the Inn at Rancho Santa Fe on April 27.

Diversionary Theater's "Bluebonnet Court" (a co-production with Moxie Theater) continues until April 13. For more on this production, see page 44.

The San Diego Natural History Museum's "A Day in Pompeii" is another cultural blockbuster. This exhibition of priceless artifacts (a West Coast premiere) includes 250 artifacts uncovered from beneath 30 feet of volcanic material in that once-cosmopolitan city. ✧



SPECIAL TO THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Dylis Croman, left, Mara Davi, Angie Canuel, Nicholas Dromard and Ashley Yeater rehearse for The Old Globe's world-premiere musical, "Dancing in the Dark."

Love, dancing found in the 'Dark'

BY FIELDING BUCK
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Fred Astaire's "The Band Wagon" was about the madness that goes on trying to open a Broadway musical. Now a stage version of the 1953 film is days from opening at The Old Globe in San Diego.

Renamed "Dancing in the Dark," it stars "Quantum Leap's" Scott Bakula in the Astaire role and a lot of Broadway talent.

Among them is Beth Leavel, a Tony Award winner for "The Drowsy Chaperone." She said, in a phone interview on her lunch break during rehearsals, that it's like life imitating art and art imitating life.

"The Band Wagon" was a light comedy directed by Vincente Minnelli. The score consisted mostly of existing songs by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz.

Astaire played a washed-up movie star who returns to live theater, overcomes a lot of backstage madness and falls in love with a ballerina. Leavel's role, as a writer, was played by Nanette Fabray.

Among Leavel's numbers is "Triplets," in which she and Bakula play babies in enormous bonnets, and "That's Entertain-

'Dancing in the Dark'

When: Tuesday-April 13

Where: The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

Tickets: \$52-\$79. www.oldglobe.org

ment," in which chorus members hoist her on a ladder.

"It's the same songs, but the book has been explored deeper. And the relationships that are in 'The Band Wagon' have really been fleshed out more. They have more dimensions and more history. It's not just singing and dancing," said Leavel.

"In this musical, my character, Lily, was in love with the Fred Astaire/Scott Bakula character. So there's all sorts of interesting baggage."

Leavel said she won't have much chance to check out San Diego until the show opens.

"I feel like I've been in the basement of the Old Globe for 4½ weeks. Rumor has it that it's a really beautiful city. But you know those invisible fences that your dog has? I feel like I'm in my fence. And I haven't quite gotten out of my collar area yet. ... Rumor has it there's even an



Beth Leavel has a starring role in "Dancing in the Dark."

ocean nearby!"

"Dancing in the Dark" is written by Douglas Carter Beane, whose "Xanadu," a spoof of Olivia Newton-John's 1980 roller-disco musical, is running on Broadway and will come to La Jolla Playhouse in the fall.

Leavel said this project is completely different.

"It's probably the antithesis of what 'Xanadu' is. Nothing's being sent up here. It's all just really truthful storytelling.

"That's why. I think — I'm speculating — that's one of the reasons they wanted to rename it from 'Band Wagon.' Because it really is different. It is our 'Dancing in the Dark.'"



*Actor
in the Spotlight*

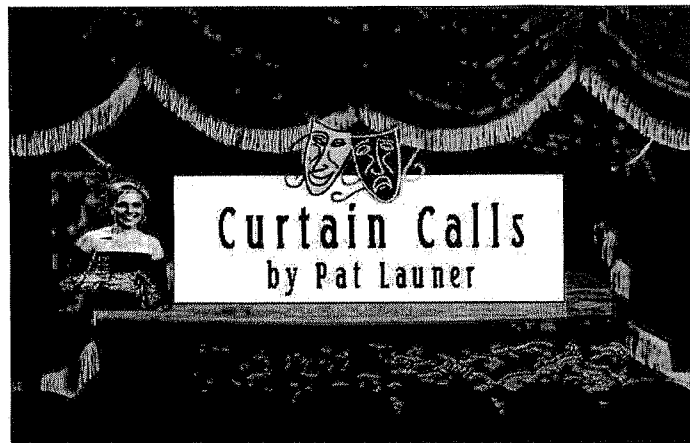


Jerry Young

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"CURTAIN CALLS" #232

2/29/08

What's a feminine predilection?
And what's a Permanent Collection?
Can Rhubarb make a fine perfume?
And will life end in a Tick, Tick... BOOM?

Pat Reviews			
Permanent Collection	Rhubarb	A Doll House	Floyd Gaffney
Readings	A Little Levity	Pat's Picks	News & Views

.. Jumpin' on the Band Wagon... Last week, the **Old Globe** staged a media event as a preview of their upcoming, most-likely Broadway-bound musical premiere, **Dancing in the Dark**, based on an MGM classic, the 1953 Fred Astaire/Cyd Charisse movie musical, "**The Band Wagon**." We were introduced to director Gary Griffin (*The Color Purple*) and librettist Douglas Carter Beane (*The Little Dog Laughed*, *Xanadu* – about which he said: "A Huge hit... Go figure!"). Beane was drop-dead hilarious. He recalled (in a spot-on New York accent) the words of Adolph Green (who wrote "Band Wagon's" screenplay with his partner Betty Comden) on the subject of the movie's plot: "Paper thin! Paper!" Beane said he's expanding the characters and going back to the original lyrics by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz which, he said, are "smarter, darker, more intelligent and dirtier" than those in the film.

The musical is about working on a show with problems, a disastrous out-of-town tryout that gets changed, fixed and finally brought to life. "We're living the experience," said director Griffin. "It has become our show, our stories, kind of like *A Chorus Line*," said Beane. "I started as a kid doing community theater in Pennsylvania. Now I want to plead my case that the life I chose is valid and special." Both men applauded the Globe for the warm welcome and hearty support. "It's *haimish*," Beane said, invoking the Yiddish word for 'homelike.' (He told me that, though he's not Jewish, he considers Yiddish to be the language of the theater, just as French is the language of love). "There's something about this city," Griffin added. "The Park, the environment – it allows the work to be fertile. And there's a spirit in the theater space: the audience-actor relationship is intimate and warm; it's welcoming and loving... the best home to find the most powerful life for this show." Golden Globe winner **Scott Bakula** (star of TV's "Quantum Leap" and Broadway's *Romance/Romance*) and the rest of the cast ran through several high-spirited numbers, which included tap dancing and comedy. This show should have something for everyone.



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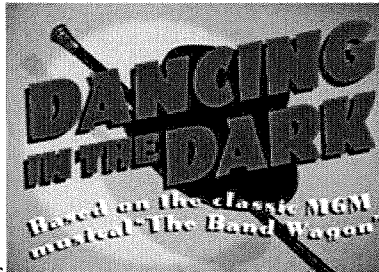
Bakula Jumps on the *Band Wagon*

Opening Tuesday at the Old Globe Theater in San Diego, the play *Dancing in the Dark* features a mighty odd mixture of pedigree.

Sunday, March 2, 2008 at 9:35 PM

By FilmStew Staff

It's written by Douglas Carter Beane, the man who gave us the 1980 Olivia Newton-John roller disco classic *Xanadu*, long before today's fashion of turning such properties into Broadway musicals. And yet it's based on the 1953 film *The Band Wagon*, which was nominated for three Academy Awards, including Best Original Screenplay, in which Fred Astaire starred as a washed up Hollywood actor trying to revive his career on the New York stage.



OldGlobe.org Photo

Welcome to the kooky cocktail that is *Dancing in the Dark*, a new play running March 4th through April 13th at San Diego's Old Globe Theater, starring *Quantum Leap*'s Scott Bakula in the Astaire role. He plays in the production opposite Beth Leavel, a recent Tony Award winner for *The Drowsy Chaperone*.

Nothing to do with the '84 Bruce Springsteen song

"It's the same songs, but the book has been explored deeper," Leavel tells the *Press Enterprise*. "And the relationships that are in *The Band Wagon* have really been fleshed out more. They have more dimensions and more history. It's not just singing and dancing."

This means of course that theatergoers will get to hear once again one of the all-time classics of musical theater, the number "That's Entertainment," not to mention enjoy the sight of Bakula and Leavel in bonnets for the "Band Wagon" riff. It's unclear why the producers of this show chose to change the title to *Dancing in the Dark* (the name of another song in the book), since most people younger folks today will associate that rubicon with a 1984 song by rocker Bruce Springsteen.

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HOLLYWOOD'S MASTER STORYTELLERS
IN HOLLYWOOD with Lisa Johnson
HOLLYWOOD SPIN by Richard Horgan



Send your love in four-part harmony

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, the members of the Music Men Chorus are tuning up for their annual offering of singing valentines.

Backstage



KRAGEN

Chorus quartets will hit the road on Feb. 14 to deliver vocal valentines (two love songs in four-part harmony), personalized cards and balloon bouquets. Fees range from \$35 to \$55. To order, call (760) 443-8561.

The singing valentines campaign is a major fundraiser for the locally based a cappella chorus.



NCT FILE PHOTO

Music Men Chorus members will be delivering singing telegrams next month.

Actor Scott Bakula, star of the television series "Star Trek: Enterprise" and "Quantum Leap," will lead the cast of the world premiere musical "Dancing in the Dark," set to open March 4 at the Old Globe Theatre in Balboa Park.

Based on the classic MGM movie musical "The Band Wagon," "Dancing in the Dark" will feature a new script by Douglas Carter Beane ("Xanadu," "The Little Dog Laughed") with the original 1931 score by Arthur Schwartz, lyrics by Howard Dietz and direction by Gary Griffin ("The Color Purple").



Scott Bakula

Bakula will play a Hollywood star who teams up with a Shakespearean actor-manager to write a new musical. The score's well-known hits include "A Shine on Your Shoes" and "That's Entertainment!"

The cast of "Dancing in the Dark" will also feature Patrick Page, who has played the Grinch in the Broadway production of "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas" for the past two years, and Tony Award-winning actress Beth Leavel ("The Drowsy Chaperone") as Bakula's love interest.

"Dancing in the Dark" will run March 4 to April 13. For information, visit www.theoldglobe.org.

Jazz fans will get a star-studded evening of music, and all for a good cause, Wednesday when the Valley Center/Pauma Music Boosters host the 11th annual Jazz Benefit Concert at Valley Center High School.

The concert will feature a performance by the San Diego All Stars

Jazz Band, along with performances by the Valley Center Middle School Thunderhawk Jazz Band, Valley Center High School's Jazz Jags and the advanced and jazz choirs. Music begins at 6 p.m. with the 18-member All Stars Jazz Band taking the stage at 7:15 p.m.

Concert tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. And for \$10 more, patrons can buy a backstage pass that entitles them to a hosted reception in the school's black box theater. All proceeds will benefit the schools' music programs. For information, call (760) 749-2888.

Members of San Diego County's circus community are mourning the death this month of Ottavio Patrick Canestrelli. A longtime member of



Longtime local circus performer Ottavio Canestrelli died earlier this month at the age of 37.

Fern Street Circus and the Lindley Lopez Circus. Canestrelli took his own life and died at the age of 37.

Canestrelli, and his twin Oreste, were eighth-generation circus artists. Ottavio started performing at age 4 as a snake charmer, then grew into the starring role in his family's teeterboard act.

His family worked at SeaWorld San Diego for 10 years, and he worked as an acrobatic clown and trainer at Fern Street Circus for 15 years, and as a teacher at Lindley Lopez Circus in San Diego before he moved to Chicago two years ago to live closer to his 13-year-old daughter. In recent years he had been touring internationally, said friend Cheryl Lindley of Lindley Lopez Circus, who added that she believed Canestrelli suffered from depression.

"He was a great guy," Lindley said. "He knew so much about the circus and he cared so much about the art and his family. It's a very, very sad time for everyone."

A memorial service for Canestrelli was held in Oceanside last weekend.

San Diego Opera opened its 2008 season last weekend with the return of Richard Wagner's "Tannhauser," but an announcement earlier this month shows that the company is al-

February 28, 2008



Patrick Page, Mara Davi and Scott Bakula prepare for the world premiere of 'Dancing in the Dark,' a new musical based on the MGM movie 'The Band Wagon.' Photo provided

'Quantum Leap' star at Old Globe

'Dancing in the Dark' playing through April 13

By **José A. López**

For its upcoming production of "Dancing in the Dark," a world-premiere musical that launches March 4, the Old Globe Theater is turning to Hollywood.

And not only because the show — running through April 13 — stars Golden Globe-winning actor Scott Bakula, who is well-known to television audiences for his portrayal of Dr. Sam Beckett in "Quantum Leap."

The play is based on the classic MGM movie "The Band Wagon," which featured Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse and popularized the song "That's Entertainment."

The comedy revolves around Tony Hunter (Bakula), a fading Hollywood star and his snooty manager, Jeffrey

Cordova (Patrick Page, who has played the title role in the Broadway production of "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!"). Together, they team up with an assortment of theatrical personalities and try to come up with an entertaining show.

Rounding out the cast is Beth Leavel as Lily. Leavel won a Tony and a Drama Desk award for Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her portrayal of the lead in Beatrice Stockwell in "The Drowsy Chaperone."

The play is directed by Gary Griffin, who made his Broadway debut with the musical based on Alice Walker's "The Color Purple."

Tickets to the show are available by calling the theater at 619-23-GLOBE or by going to the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

January 31, 2008

Old Globe to present world-premiere musical 'Dancing in the Dark' starring Scott Bakula

CEO/Executive Producer Lou Spisto of the Tony Award®-winning Old Globe is pleased to announce casting for the upcoming world-premiere musical *Dancing In The Dark*, with book by Douglas Carter Beane (*Xanadu*, *The Little Dog Laughed*), adapted from the screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, music by Arthur Schwartz, lyrics by Howard Dietz, and directed by Gary Griffin (*The Color Purple*), produced by Permission of Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures, Inc., running in the Old Globe Theatre March 4 – April 13.

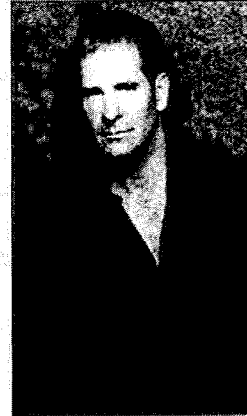
Golden Globe®-winner and multi Emmy®-nominated stage and screen star Scott Bakula (*Quantum Leap*, *American Beauty*) will play the role of "Tony Hunter." Patrick Page (who just wrapped up his second season playing the title role in the Broadway production of Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*) will portray the role of "Jeffrey Cordova," and Tony Award-winner Beth Leavel (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) will play "Lily" in this delightful new musical based on the classic MGM movie *The Band Wagon*.

Dancing In The Dark revolves around Tony Hunter, a Hollywood star with a career on the wane, and Jeffrey Cordova, a Shakespearean actor-manager with a taste for high art. Together they team up with

a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that's strictly "entertainment." With a delightful Arthur

Schwartz/Howard Dietz score packed with such classics as "A Shine on Your Shoes," that quintessential ode to show business "That's Entertainment!," and the title song, "Dancing in the Dark" – made famous by Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse in the film's memorable dance sequence – this world-premiere musical comedy will have audiences dancing in the aisles!

Tickets are available by calling (619) 23-GLOBE, online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting The Old Globe Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.



Scott Bakula

**PHOTO CALL: *Dancing in the Dark* Waltzes Into San Diego**

By Matthew Blank
March 11, 2008

Dancing in the Dark, a new stage adaptation of the MGM picture *The Band Wagon*, kicked off its world-premiere production March 4 at The Old Globe in San Diego.

With an official opening scheduled for March 13, the show features music by Arthur Schwartz and lyrics by Howard Dietz, drawn from their songbook of tunes written for various films and revues in the 1930s. The original screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green has been revamped for the stage by playwright Douglas Carter Beane.

Dancing in the Dark stars Tony Award nominee Scott Bakula in the Fred Astaire role of Tony Hunter. The principal players also include Sebastian LaCause as modern-dance choreographer Paul Byrd, Mara Davi as modern dancer Gaby and Patrick Page as artsy legit director Jeffrey Cordova. Tony Award winner Beth Leavel and Adam Heller are featured as the musical comedy writing team of Lily and Lester Marton. Gary Griffin directs.

The Old Globe is located at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. For more information visit www.TheOldGlobe.org.

Here is a glimpse at the production, which runs through April 13:



Patrick Page, Mara Davi and Scott Bakula with the ensemble

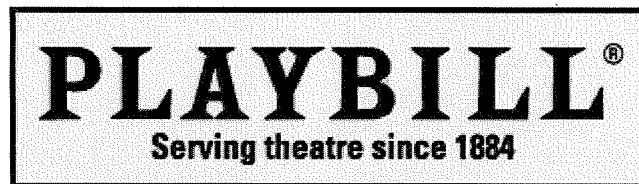


Beth Leavel and Adam Heller



Mara Davi and Scott Bakula

All photos by Craig Schwartz



**That's Entertainment: Bakula, Davi, Heller,
Leavel, Page Open in *Dancing in the Dark* March
13**

By Kenneth Jones
March 13, 2008

Dancing in the Dark, another bright-eyed musical comedy that seeks to prove there's no people like show people, opens March 13 at The Old Globe in San Diego, following previews from March 4.

Scott Bakula, Mara Davi and the other troupers of the new musical based on the M-G-M movie classic, "The Band Wagon," are under the direction of acclaimed director Gary Griffin, whose work has been seen in Chicago, London and on Broadway. He staged Broadway's *The Color Purple*, which is now on tour. Warren Carlyle, a veteran of *Encores!*, choreographs the '50s-set backstage musical.

Griffin and Carlyle have been shaping a book by Tony Award nominee Douglas Carter Beane (who draws on the 1953 screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green) and a score by masters of the Broadway musical comedy revue form, lyricist Howard Dietz and composer Arthur Schwartz.

(There are so many levels of showbiz context here that you need a folding chart. *The Band Wagon* was a 1931 Broadway revue by Dietz, Schwartz and George S. Kaufman that starred Fred and Adele Astaire and featured the song "Dancing in the Dark." The film "The Band Wagon" starred a fiftysomething Fred Astaire as a former Broadway star and washed-up movie-musical actor — patterned after Astaire himself — who returns to Broadway in a show called *The Band Wagon*. The movie's songs were drawn from Dietz & Schwartz's '20s and '30s revue catalog, and included songs from *The Band Wagon*, *Three's a Crowd*, *The Little Show*, *Flying Colors*, *Revenge With Music*, *Between the Devil* and more. Meanwhile, the new stage version of the property charts the creation of a Broadway-bound musical called *The Band Wagon*.)

The movie's central anthem, "That's Entertainment," was written specifically for the picture — and remains in *Dancing in the Dark*.

Tony Award nominee Scott Bakula, star of TV's "Quantum Leap" and Broadway's *Romance/Romance*, plays the Astaire role of Tony Hunter, who has been reinvented by Beane (*Xanadu*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *As Bees in Honey Drown*) for this new stage version. He's now much more of a Bing Crosby-style performer.

The principal cast of *Dancing in the Dark* also includes Sebastian LaCause (*The Rocky Horror Show*, *Once Upon a Mattress* and *Chicago*) as Paul Byrd, a modern-dance choreographer; Mara Davi (*A Chorus Line*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*) as modern dancer Gaby, who is crossing over into musicals and catching the eye of Tony; Tony Award winner Beth Leavel (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) and Adam Heller (*Make Me a Song*) as Lily and Lester Marton, performers and musical comedy writers — think Comden and Green — who are old pals of Tony's; and Patrick Page (*The Lion King*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*) as Jeffrey Cordova, the artsy legit director who turns a traditional musical into a pretentious mess.

Benjamin Howes plays Hal, the stage manager, a role "built up" in the show; and Jacob Ben Widmar plays a chorus boy named Teddy, based on Ted Hook — the chorus boy turned restaurateur.

The troupe also includes Rachel Coloff, Dylis Croman, Nicolas Dromard, Cara Kjellman, Adam Perry, Eric Santagata, Kiira Schmidt, Branch Woodman and Ashley Yeater.

Music supervisor is Eric Stern, music director is Don York and orchestrator is Larry Hochman. The design team includes scenic designer John Lee Beatty, costume designer David Woolard, lighting designer Ken Billington and sound designer Brian Ronan. Stage manager is Dan Rosokoff.

Dancing in the Dark plays its world-premiere run at The Old Globe through April 13.

*

Beane previously told Playbill.com that other songs from the catalog of the late songwriting team have been interpolated into the show (including "Something You Never Had Before" from the 1961 musical *The Gay Life*).

Expect the film's famous numbers, including "A Shine on Your Shoes," "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "Louisiana Hayride," "I Love Louisa," "Triplets" and more.

Betty Comden and Adolph Green's studio contract ended in the middle of the movie musical project, which is the reason why the second half of the 1953 picture seems to turn into a montage-filled revue, Beane said. The playwright told Playbill.com that his goal is to honor "Betty and Adolph" and flesh out stories, deepen characters and marry music to moments. The lengthy "detective ballet" at the end of the film (apparently partly created by Alan Jay Lerner) is not in the new stage version.

According to The Old Globe, "In *Dancing in the Dark*, Tony Hunter is a Hollywood star with a career on the wane. Jeffrey Cordova is a Shakespearean actor-manager with a taste for high art. Together they team up with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that's strictly 'entertainment.' With a score packed with classics like 'A Shine on Your Shoes,' that quintessential ode to show business 'That's

Entertainment!,' and the title song, *Dancing in the Dark* is the musical comedy that will have audiences dancing in the aisles."

Bakula is a 1988 Tony Award nominee as Best Actor in a Musical for *Romance/Romance*, and a Drama Desk nominee for *3 Guys Naked From the Waist Down*. The four-time Emmy Award nominee starred in TV's time-traveling series, "Quantum Leap" (for which he won a Golden Globe Award), "Star Trek: Enterprise" (as Capt. Jonathan Archer) and was Murphy Brown's beau on the sitcom "Murphy Brown."

At Ford's Theatre in 2006, he starred as the patriarch Charlie Anderson in *Shenandoah*. On Jan. 18 he performed a concert in Washington, DC, to benefit the historic Ford's Theatre. Bakula's other Broadway credits are *Marilyn* (he played Joe DiMaggio) and *Is There Life After High School?*

The Old Globe is at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. For more information call (619) 23-GLOBE or visit www.TheOldGlobe.org.

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THEATERMANIA

FOR THEATER EVERYWHERE

<http://www.theatermania.com/story/13155?>

Reviews

Dancing in the Dark

Reviewed By: **Rob Stevens** · Mar 17, 2008 · San Diego

San Diego's Old Globe Theatre has launched many musicals on their way to Broadway in the past two decades, most recently *A Catered Affair*, but it remains to be seen if there's a bright future for *Dancing in the Dark*, playwright Douglas Carter Beane's hit-and-miss adaptation of the beloved 1953 MGM musical *The Band Wagon*.

The show's action, which now takes place in 1953, is placed in motion by egomaniacal Shakespearean actor/director Jeffrey Cordova (Patrick Page), who is looking to expand his horizons to the more financially rewarding musical stage. To that end, he arranges a backstage meeting with down-on-his-luck Hollywood musical star Tony Hunter (Scott Bakula) and the award-winning husband and wife team of Lester and Lily Martin (Adam Heller and Beth Leavel).



Mara Davi and Scott Bakula in *Dancing in the Dark*
(© Craig Schwartz)

However, there is bad blood between the threesome, as we see in flashbacks to their early success as revue performers 19 years earlier. Tony left for Hollywood, promising to come back to the stage and to Lily, his then-lover, but he never did. Lester married Lily on the rebound, and while their writing partnership has been successful, their marriage has never seemed as solid. Tony's return brings up old feelings in Lily.

As outlined in the musical number of "The Pitch," Lily and Lester's plot for the new show tells of a poor shoeshine boy who tries to impress his visiting Louisiana girlfriend by passing off a millionaire skyscraper builder and his friends as his own. Artistic differences over the project rear their ugly head when Cordova gets sucked into the avant-garde mode by Paul Byrd (Sebastian La Cause), the modern dance master he hires as choreographer. Soon, Lily's simple story becomes a musical version of *Faust*.

Beane has succeeded in giving the show a second act with plenty of conflict by having the playwrights' marriage go on the rocks, yet the script still feels unfinished. Many of the

songs seem to have just been thrown into the mix, but do not necessarily progress the show's plot. However, two of the MGM film's highlights, "Triplets" and "I Love Louisa," fit perfectly into the 1930s flashback scenes. On the downside, there seem to be as many reprises and continuations of songs than there are songs themselves.

Gary Griffin's direction is solid, but staid and boring, and choreographer Warren Carlyle's dances run the gamut from tap to modern to ballet and ballroom. The title song's staging, with chandeliers overhead and glorious ball gowns, is classy, but too little too late. Ultimately, what this show needs is a director with Jeffrey Cordova's flair or Susan Stroman's inventiveness.

The show's saving grace is the top-drawer cast. It's particularly great to see Bakula back to his theatrical roots, in really fine voice with graceful dance moves and lovely comic timing. He makes "By Myself" sound new and fresh. Mara Davi, as Paul's ballerina lover and Tony's leading lady Gabrielle, is a real triple threat -- and delivers a deeply felt performance. Page chews the scenery with great elan and nearly steals the show; but Leavel ties him with her magnificent deadpan comic flair. The chorus of singers and dancers really has the feel of a theatrical troupe out on the road, trying to pull a troubled show together.

While *Dancing in the Dark* sometimes lives up to its famous tune, "That's Entertainment," it needs to be more consistently entertaining before making its move to the Great White Way.

[close]

Night & Day

March 20, 2008

PLAYBILL

For contact information on these shows, please cross reference with accompanying directory. For more Playbill listings, go to utstreet.com.

THEATER/OPERA

CRITIC'S CHOICE

'The American Plan' Richard

Greenberg's story of power games and thwarted love at a Catskills resort in 1960 gets a delicate, well-acted staging in its West Coast premiere. Kim Rubinstein's direction finds a deft balance of comedy and melancholy, and while the coda feels a bit out of place, the play's rich atmosphere and sharp dialogue make for an involving combination. *Closes March 30. Old*

Globe Theatre's Cassius Carter Centre Stage. (James Hebert)

'Dancing in the Dark' Douglas Carter Beane (the wit behind Broadway's hit 'Xanadu') adapts the '53 movie "The Band Wagon" with both a knowing wink and an adoring grin, and while the show needs trimming and sharpening it's still a lot of old-fashioned fun. The score (and orchestra) do justice to Arthur Schwartz/Howard Dietz classics - "That's Entertainment" and the title tune among them. Beth Leavel is a singing dream, and Patrick Page and Mara Davi also shine, with Scott Bakula solid enough as a trouper gone Hollywood. *Closes April 13. Old Globe Theatre. (Hebert)*

'A Shayna Maidel' Two Jewish sisters reunite in New York after the Second World War. Rose, who left Poland in time, is a chic career girl. Lusia has survived a concentration camp, and Jessica John's exquisite portrayal makes her the glowing heart of this beautifully realized production. David Ellenstein directed, and every detail impeccably evokes the '40s, from Marty Burnett's set to Jeanne Reith's costumes to Chris Luessmann's sound design. *Closes Sunday. North Coast Repertory Theatre. (Janice Steinberg)*



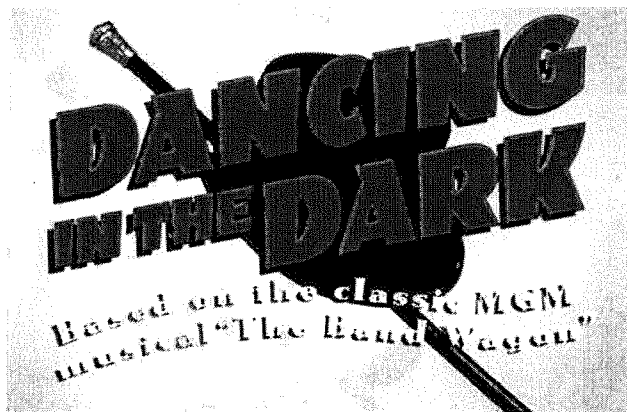
'DANCING IN THE DARK' The Old Globe presents this comedy about a Hollywood star with a dying career and an actor-manager with good taste in art who team up to create a new musical that's strictly entertainment. "Dancing in the Dark" runs through April 13. *Craig Schwartz*

March 2008

Best Theatre Company: The Old Globe

(Runner-Up: La Jolla Playhouse)

Situated in beautiful Balboa Park, The Old Globe theatre complex enchants visitors with its magical setting. With 15 first-rate productions, featuring professional casts in three theatres all year round, The Old Globe has achieved a global reputation. All periods and styles of plays are produced, from Shakespeare to *Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas*. The Globe takes great pride in its emphasis upon development of new work, and it has sent a stellar stream of plays to Broadway, notably *The Full Monty* and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. In fact, more than 20 productions originating at The Old Globe have gone on to Broadway or off-Broadway. The current *Dancing in the Dark*, a new musical based on the 1950s MGM film *The Band Wagon*, opens March 4 and runs through

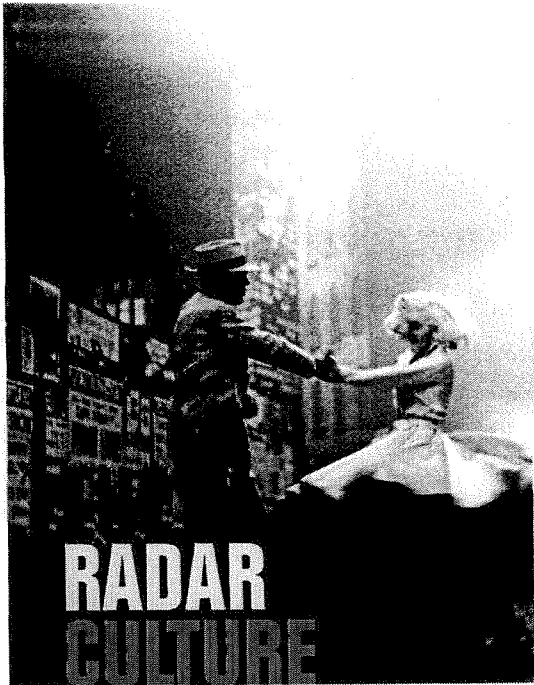


April 13. Don't be surprised if it has an afterlife in New York. Audiences seek excellence at these theatres, and that's what they get. After all, the Globe may be 73 years old, but it's just getting started. (619/231-1941, www.oldglobe.org)

— Jane Shioni

RIVIERA

March 2008

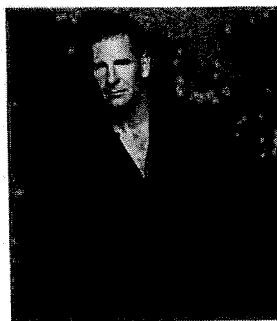


**RADAR
CULTURE**

BY ANIVAMARIA STEPHENS



DARK AGES From far left: Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse in *The Band Wagon*; The Old Globe's version of Astaire; *Quantum Leap*'s Scott Bakula; one heck of a large woman from the original.



DON'T CALL IT A COMEBACK! *The Old Globe's newest Broadway bid offers a double whammy of cult status: Quantum Leap and Xanadu*

Has-beens have a habit of making a comeback in showbiz—if not in real life, then at least onscreen. In MGM's 1953 musical comedy *The Band Wagon*, Fred Astaire plays Tony Hunter, a dapper but aging film star. To revive his career, Hunter joins up with a small Broadway production, only to clash with its pretentious director and diva female lead. Throw in some extravagant song-and-dance numbers, and—as Astaire croons in one of the hit tunes from *The Band Wagon*—"That's Entertainment!"

The Old Globe has Broadway-bound ambitions of its own this month when it premieres *Dancing in the Dark*, a screen-to-stage adaptation of *The Band Wagon*. "The Old Globe did a reading of this work in New York about a year ago and fell in love with it," says Louis G. Spisto, executive producer at the Globe. "The team attached is extremely exciting."

That lineup includes Chicago-based director Gary Griffin, who made his Broadway debut in 2005 with *The Color Purple*, as well as librettist Douglas Carter Beane, who wrote the book for the stage musical adaptation of *Xanadu*. And cult TV fans will love the principal—Scott Bakula, former star of *Quantum Leap*.

"I knew the movie *The Band Wagon* really well," claims Beane. "I've rented it many times. I'm so old it would show up in revival houses. And if it happened to be showing late on KPBS, we'd stay home. I never use this word, but it was splendid!"

Despite his appreciation for the original, Beane always believed that *The Band Wagon* could be dramatically improved. For one thing, he explains,

the film "stops dead about midway through." The original writers, the legendary (and late) Betty Comden and Adolph Green, abandoned the script when their contracts expired. The film's second half is a string of tenuously related dance sequences.

Beane, whose quick wit suits this production, has fleshed out the central story with details only hinted at in the film. He's also turned a theatrical eye to topics left unspoken in the '50s, when cheerful optimism masked serious issues, from gender tensions and alcoholism to the communist scare. "I've found a way to be incredibly respectful of the original," Beane adds. "But [*Dancing in the Dark*] is its own beast. It doesn't feel old, but it does feel like another era."

Spisto emphasizes that this new interpretation—which takes its name from one of the film's original songs by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz—will still offer everything longtime fans adore. "It's about the theater," Spisto says. "The out of town, the backstage, the rehearsal, the glamour and the glitz..."

And, of course, it's about choreography and timeless showtunes, which younger generations are hip to thanks to TV shows like *So You Think You Can Dance* and *American Idol*. If all goes well, *Dancing in the Dark* might just pull off a modern-day showbiz miracle and give an old classic a big comeback. ■

Dancing in the Dark, March 4-April 14 at the Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Call 619.234.5623 or visit www.oldglobe.org.

FRONTERA

March 5, 2008

En la línea

FRONTERA

Miércoles 5

AGENDA
SAN DIEGO



Concierto

Jazz en el parque
En Museo de Arte de San Diego
10 >> 169.00
17:30 horas



MUSICAL

Dancing in the Dark

The Old Globe,
Balboa Park
19:00 horas

62 a 79
dólares

March 6, 2008

Old Globe presents world premiere musical 'Dancing in the Dark'

The Tony Award®-winning Old Globe will present the world-premiere musical "Dancing In The Dark," based on the classic MGM movie *The Band Wagon* at the Old Globe Theatre now through April 13.

Golden Globe®-winner and multi Emmy®-nominated stage and screen star Scott Bakula (*Quantum Leap*, *American Beauty*) will play the role of "Tony Hunter." Patrick Page (who recently wrapped up his second season playing the title role in the Broadway production of *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*) will portray the role of "Jeffrey Cordova," and Tony Award-winner Beth Leavel (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) will play "Lily Martin."

Dancing In The Dark revolves around Tony Hunter, a Hollywood star with a career on the wane, and Jeffrey Cordova, a Shakespearean actor-manager with a taste for high art. Together they team up with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that's strictly "entertainment." With a delightful Arthur Schwartz/Howard Dietz score packed with such classics as "A Shine on Your Shoes," that quintessential ode to show business "That's Entertainment!," and the title song, this world-premiere musical comedy will have audiences dancing in the aisles!

Tickets are available by calling (619) 23-GLOBE, online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting The Old Globe Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

Southern California

Life50

March 2008

Wednesday, Mar. 5

PHOTO

"Dancing in the Dark." Tony Hunter (played by Scott Bakula) is a Hollywood star with a career on the wane. Jeffrey Cordova is a Shakespearean actor-manager with a taste for high art. Together they team with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that's strictly "entertainment." The Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through Apr. 13. Times vary. \$52-\$79. 619-234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

March 3, 2008

Old Globe Theater:

Next-- "Dancing in the Dark," a world premiere musical based on the MGM film "The Band Wagon,"
March 4 – April 13, 2008.
Balboa Park, (619) 23-
GLOBE.



Dancing in the Dark 1: (l-r, front) Patrick Page, Mara Davi and Scott Bakula with the chorus of The Old Globe's world-premiere musical, DANCING IN THE DARK photo by Sandy Huffaker.

March 27, 2008

'Dancing in the Dark' makes world premiere at The Old Globe through April 20

By Whitney Youngs

If you've ever seen the 1953 film "The Band Wagon" you can't help but wonder what exactly went on in the heads of script writers Betty Comden and Adolf Green when they wrote the second half of it. Well, in all actuality, nothing. That's because the famed writing duo never finished the script due to the end of a writers' contract with the MGM studio.

In any case, one of the film's songs, "Dancing in the Dark," became a hit and eventually made its way into the Great American Songbook. It has been recorded by the likes of Ella



Adam Heller

Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Artie Shaw, Bing Crosby and Diana Krall, among others.

The song—which was first featured in the 1931 revue of "The Band Wagon"—now shares its name with a comedy musical now playing at The Old Globe. "Dancing in the Dark" is essentially the theatre adaptation of the film "The Band Wagon" that starred Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse.

Scott Bakula, remembered by television enthusiasts as the star of the early 1990s sci-fi series "Quantum Leap," is a Tony-nominated actor within the

Broadway scene, and stars in the local production. Bakula plays a song-and-dance Hollywood man past his prime, Tony Hunter, who teams up with Jeffrey Cordova (Patrick Page), a Shakespearian actor-manager who has a penchant for high art productions. Directed by Gary Griffin ("The Color Purple"), "Dancing in the Dark" makes its world premiere at The Old Globe and runs now through April 20.

"It's a show about all of these different minds trying to create a musical written by a couple, Lily and Lester Marton, who are married to each other," said Adam Heller who plays the role of Lester Marton.

"Dancing in the Dark" is somewhat of a homage to Comden and Green thanks to the playwright Douglas Carter Beane, who drafted the book for it by fleshing out the story and adding more depth to the characters.

"Douglas was there the whole time [during rehearsals] constantly rewriting, shaping,

tailoring it, really, to this company," said Heller.

The Martons are actually inspired by the popular script-writing team of Comden and Green. Heller, a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, has appeared on Broadway in productions such as "Victor/Victoria" and "Les Miserables." Beth Leavel, who made her Broadway debut in 1980 in the production "42nd Street" and won a Tony for her work in "The Drowsy Chaperone," plays the role of Lily.

"They were themselves performers, though they were not married in real life," said Heller of Comden and Green. "It's a tribute to these people, along with lyricist Howard Dietz and composer Arthur Schwartz. It's a show within a show, and the stress that it creates for each individual, but also the joy it brings along the way."

For more information visit www.theoldglobe.org.

Los Angeles Times

March 13, 2008

DON'T MISS

For more listings, go to
calendarlive.com; to submit a
listing, *calendarlive.com/submit*.

Theater Openings

TODAY

Dancing in the Dark Scott Bakula heads the cast in the musical comedy based on the MGM classic film "The Band Wagon." The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, **San Diego**. Today-Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat., 2 and 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 and 7 p.m.; Tue.-Wed., 7 p.m.; next Thu., 8 p.m.; ends April 13. \$52-\$79. (619) 234-5623.

North County Times

Preview Section

March 13, 2008



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRAIG SCHWARTZ

Old Globe's 'Dancing in the Dark' musical opens today

The Old Globe presents the world premiere of "Dancing in the Dark," Douglas Carter Beane's adaptation of the classic MGM musical "The Band Wagon," featuring "Star Trek" star Scott Bakula. The musical opens tonight and runs through April 13. Performances are at 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays at the Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park in San Diego. Tickets are \$52 to \$79. Call (619) 234-5623.

March 30, 2008

Light will continue to shine on 'Dark'

The Old Globe Theatre will keep the lights on for "Dancing in the Dark" an extra week.

The theater has announced that the world-premiere musical, originally set to close April 13, will be extended through April 20.

"Dancing in the Dark" is "Xanadu" writer Douglas Carter Beane's adaptation of the 1953 film "The Band Wagon," a backstage musical that starred Fred Astaire, was scripted by Betty Comden and Adolph Green ("Singin' in the Rain") and featured music and lyrics by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz.

The show stars Scott Bakula in the lead role, along with Beth Leavel, Patrick Page, Mara Davi and Adam Heller.

Tickets for the additional week of performances are on sale now: (619) 234-5623 or TheOldGlobe.org.

— JAMES HEBERT

Not the Last Dance

Old Globe announces extension
of *Dancing In The Dark*

Due to popular demand, The Old Globe announced a week-long extension to the run of its exciting world-premiere musical *Dancing In The Dark*, based on the classic MGM movie *The Band Wagon*, with book by Douglas Carter Beane, adapted from the screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, music by Arthur Schwartz, lyrics by Howard Dietz, and directed by Gary Griffin, produced by permission of Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures, Inc.

Dancing In The Dark revolves around Tony Hunter, a Hollywood star with a career on the wane, and Jeffrey Cordova, a Shakespearean actor-manager with a taste for high art. Together they team up with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that's strictly "entertainment." With a delightful Arthur Schwartz/Howard Dietz score packed with such classics as "A Shine on Your Shoes," that quintessential ode to show business "That's Entertainment," and the title song, this world-premiere musical comedy has audiences dancing in the aisles.

Additional performances include: April 15 at 7 pm; April 16 at 7 pm; April 17 at 8 pm; April 18 at 8 pm; April 19 at 2 pm and 8 pm; and April 20 at 2 and 7 pm. *Dancing in the Dark* must close on April 20 to make room for the Globe's next world-premiere production, *Hershey Felder's Beethoven, As I Knew Him*.

If You Go—*DANCING IN THE DARK* at The Old Globe theater, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park, San Diego. Now through April 20. Tickets are \$69 each and are available by calling 619.23.GLOBE, online at TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting The Old Globe Box Office. For more information visit theoldglobe.org.

Corridor*News*

March 27, 2008

OLD GLOBE EXTENDS DANCING

"Dancing in the Dark," a new play based on the musical "The Band Wagon," has been extended through April 20 at the Old Globe Theater. Directed by Gary Griffin, the cast is led by actor Scott Bakula who plays Tony Hunter, a Hollywood star with a waning career who teams up with his actor-manager to create a new musical. Tickets range from \$52 to \$79 and can be obtained by calling the theater at 619-23-GLOBE or going to www.TheOldGlobe.org.

NORTH PARK NEWS

April 2008



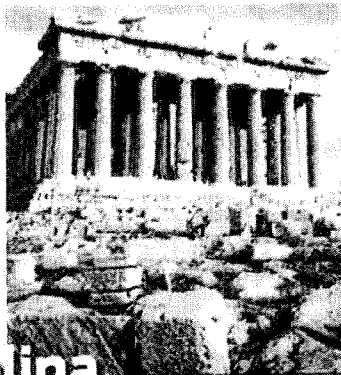
Scott Bakula has left the bridge of "Star Trek Enterprise" to kick up his heels and take a "Quantum Leap" to helm the starring role in "Dancing in the Dark" (here with costar Mara Davi) at the Old Globe Theatre. Based on MGM's "The Band Wagon" and taking the movie's best-known song for its title, the new musical is stepping out in San Diego for a run to Broadway. Through April 13. \$52-\$79. 231-1941 theoldglobe.org.

FRONTERA

March 13, 2008

En la línea

AGENDA
SAN DIEGO



José Molina

Grecia, Secretos del Pasado
Museo de Historia Natural
de San Diego
De 10:00 a 17:00 horas

Exhibición de arte



Centro de arte y cultura
de Bonita
10:00 a 15:00 horas
Gratis



MUSICAL

'Dancing in the Dark'
The Old Globe, Balboa Park
20:00 horas

62.79 dólares

March 28, 2008



THE OLD GLOBE

Scott Bakula and Mara Davi in The Old Globe's world-premiere musical DANCING IN THE DARK, based on the MGM movie "The Band Wagon," with book by Douglas Carter Beane; music by Arthur Schwartz; lyrics by Howard Dietz; directed by Gary Griffin, playing in the Old Globe Theatre March 4 - April 13; photo by Craig Schwartz.

March 27, 2008



THE OLD GLOBE

SCOTT BAKULA AND MARA DAVI IN THE OLD GLOBE'S
world-premiere musical **DANCING IN THE DARK**,
based on the MGM movie "The Band Wagon,"
with book by Douglas Carter Beane; music by Ar-
thur Schwartz; lyrics by Howard Dietz; directed
by Gary Griffin, playing in the Old Globe Theatre
March 4 - April 13; photo by Craig Schwartz.

April 3, 2008

OLD GLOBE EXTENDS DANCING

"Dancing in the Dark," a new play based on the musical "The Band Wagon," has been extended through April 20 at the Old Globe Theater.

Directed by Gary Griffin, the cast is led by actor Scott Bakula who plays Tony Hunter, a Hollywood star with a waning career who teams up with his actor-manager to create a new musical. Tickets range from \$52 to \$79 and can be obtained by calling the theater at 619-23-GLOBE or going to www.TheOldGlobe.org.

FRONTERA

April 9, 2008

En la línea

AGENDA
SAN DIEGO



Concierto **Moenia**



Dónde: House of Blues
20:00 horas
30.00 a 45.00 dólares
Sólo mayores de 21 años
(619) 299-2583

Teatro



Dancing
Dónde: Old Globe Theatre
19:00 horas
52 a 79 dólares
(619) 234-5623

"Dancing in The Dark"
[ダンシング インザ ダーク]

フレッド・アステア主演のミュージカル映画を舞台化

Dancing in the Dark /
Photo by Sandy Huitaker



⑤&⑥ かつて一世を風靡したトニーも、今や落ち目のハリウッドスター。そんな彼をブロードウェイ時代の親友夫妻が新作ミュージカルコメディの主演に誘う。NYに着いたトニーは、夫妻の新作「バンド・ワゴン」を手に興奮するが、プロデューサーの意向が妨げとなって…。

① THE GLOBE THEATRES (Old Globe Theatre), 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park / 619-239-2255 (T)。期間—4/13(日)迄。上演—火・水曜: 7pm、木・金曜: 8pm、土曜: 2pm & 8pm、日曜: 2pm & 7pm。チケット—\$52 ~ \$79。http://www.oldglobe.org