



# The Prompter

THE NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF HOVEY PLAYERS

## Seeking Directors for Season 2005-06

We've barely started our current season, but we are already accepting play submissions for Hovey Players' next season, 2005-2006! It is requested, not required, that each director submit two contrasting plays for the Board's consideration. Please note that individuals may also submit plays without having to direct.

You may download the play submission form from our website at [www.hoveyplayers.com/season.html](http://www.hoveyplayers.com/season.html). Go to the bottom of the webpage and click onto the link to download. If you do not have access to the web, a form can be mailed to you. Please send your request to Hovey Players, c/o M. Aguilon, 105 Sharon Street #3, Medford, MA 02155 and a play submission form will be sent to you.

Please fill out an application for each play submitted. We ask that two copies of each play be sent with a self-addressed envelope and postage so that we may return your scripts to you. The deadline for submissions is February 1, 2005. Final decisions will be made by April 1, 2005.

Send scripts to:  
Hovey Players, Play Selection  
PO Box 540101  
Waltham MA, 02254-0101

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## Just Finished: *Scotland Road*

A stellar cast featuring Leigh Berry, Rachel Kline, Wayne Vargas and Phyllis Weaver was expertly blended with Lissi Engvall's direction and resulted in a delightful and always intriguing production of Jeffrey Hatcher's *Scotland Road*.

If you didn't have an opportunity to see this season's second production you surely missed out on a unique event. The opening visual effects (created and engineered by John MacKenzie) combined with both the haunting sound track and the beautifully poignant characterizations to create, in the words of the estimable Larry Stark, "...the eeriest time I have ever spent in a theater."

Hovey's long time director, Lissi Engvall—who has directed more plays than she can (or cares to) remember—carefully wove a stream of very short scenes into a delicate yet intense web, every twist of which called into doubt what happened before.

A play about self, that takes place where the past, reality and myth intersect, Hovey's voyage up *Scotland Road* was a trip not to be missed.

**Where To Find Us**  
**Abbott Memorial Theater**  
9 Spring Street at Joel's Way  
Waltham, MA

Reservations (781) 893-9171  
Green Room (781) 647-1211  
Website: [www.hoveyplayers.com](http://www.hoveyplayers.com)  
Email: [theater@hoveyplayers.com](mailto:theater@hoveyplayers.com)

**Mailing Address**  
Hovey Players, Inc.  
P.O. Box 540101  
Waltham, MA 02454-0101

## Interview with Jack Neary by Michelle Aguilon

Hovey Players is honored to produce *The Fall of the House of Usher* by local playwright, Jack Neary, in March 2005. Jack Neary's work has been seen at Hovey before, recently at Summer Shorts 2004 with *Keeper of the Curse*, *Beyond Belief* with the Lyric Stage Company in Boston, and many famous others. Mr. Neary's play is adapted from the short story by Edgar Allan Poe, who was also born in Massachusetts, specifically in Boston in 1809. We spoke to Mr. Neary recently to catch up with him.

### Where do you reside? Did you grow up here?

I live in Lowell, where I was born and raised. In fact, I live now in the house where I spent my formative years. It's the family house, owned now by me and my siblings. They all live elsewhere, but I stay here, manning the castle.

### What inspired you to start writing plays?

Writing plays is usually the first thing a dramatic writer tackles, before moving on to where the money is (in TV and movies). I knew I could write, and I was an actor, so naturally the two disciplines blended into playwriting for me. As far as inspiration for a particular play goes, I often write with an actor in mind. I'll work as a director with an actor and I'll see something in that actor which triggers a story I might want to tell, so I build the story around that actor. I wrote my first full-length play, *First Night* (soon to be presented at the Majestic Theatre in Springfield), with then-local actress Maryann Plunkett in mind. Before long, however, she was off to New York and a Tony (for *Me and My Girl*) so she wasn't available. Years later, though, when we brought *First Night* to New York, Maryann was on-board for about three weeks--until she became pregnant with her son Jamie. So--she never did the show.

### Which do you prefer writing? Comedies? Dramas? Why?

I have no preference as a writer. Both are difficult to write, for different reasons. Comedies are a challenge especially if the comedy is joke-based. I once wrote a four-page article for Dramatics Magazine on the process taken to achieve one specific laugh in my play *Jerry Finnegans Sister*. Bottom line--the goal is to write a stage piece that compels the audience to care about what happens next--act-by-act, scene-by-scene, line by line. If that's achieved in any genre, the playwright has something special.

***Keeper of the Curse* was a lot of fun and a favorite at Summer Shorts this year - about a crazed Red Sox fan trying to get rid of The Curse that he's been carrying around in his briefcase! Hovey's own Patrick Flanagan played the fan and Michael Corbett played Epstein, and it was directed by John MacKenzie who is directing *Usher*, too. Did you catch it? Even if not, how do you generally feel about the interpretations of your plays, given that you work so closely with them not only as a playwright, but also as a director and/or actor?**

An excellent question, by the way...

I did not see *Curse* at Hovey, nor did I see another reading of it by Gloucester Stage earlier this year. I directed the production of the play at the Boston Theater Marathon in April, featuring Andy Dolan and Chris Loftus.

My reaction to seeing my plays directed by people other than myself has been mixed. When I find somebody who "gets" my stuff, I'm elated. Often, though, I find that directors don't achieve the balance of storytelling and joke-achieving that's needed to make the plays work. When I see a play of mine staged by another director, I'm often encouraged by the audience's reaction to the story. Most of the time, audiences care about what happens and stay involved. But if I'm watching one of my joke-oriented plays and the laughs aren't there, it's...painful. I like to say that the characters in my comedies are funny because they ARE funny--and the characters usually KNOW they're funny. Not the actors--the characters. And often, this is missed by directors. In the case of something like *Usher*, which has only a few laughs, what may be most important from a theatre's standpoint is casting. Casting actors who understand the characters, who understand the characters' place in the story, and who know how to translate that understanding of the playwright's intent to the audience--that makes all the difference. Directors shouldn't have to impose a character on an actor. The actor should be able to present the director with an interpretation he or she can mold into an integral part of the production.

### What inspired you to write this adaptation? Are you a big fan of Poe?

I can't say I'm thoroughly versed in Poe, nor can I speak in any way as an expert on him. But, I am fascinated by thrillers onstage, and I thought the *Usher* story was one that could and SHOULD be adapted (again) with a theatre audience in mind. The short story itself is dense and open for all kinds of interpretations. I decided that a theatre audience might be interested in the story if it were clearly presented as a 1930's-style detective thriller. All the aspects of the complicated Poe tale are included in this adaptation, but I think it has a distinctive theatre flavor to it. It's also a show for adults, as the story is a story for adults.

### What are you currently working on?

A number of projects, as is the case with me most of the time, as I try to eke out a living in theatre. I just staged my adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* for the Foothills Theatre in Worcester. On December 14, I go into rehearsal as director of my aforementioned play *First Night* for a January production at Danny Eaton's Majestic Theatre in West Springfield. I'm working on another rewrite of my *Beyond Belief*, which was presented at the Lyric Stage last year and at CityStage in Springfield earlier this year. I have high hopes for the script. I think it's kinda commercial. And finally, I'm working again with Spiro Veloudos and Rebecca Low at the Lyric Stage on my play *Kong's Night Out*, which is a show biz comedy that takes place in the hotel room next to the room where the Fay Wray character is whisked away by Kong from the bed, and on that same night. We've already done a reading at the Lyric, and the hope is to consider it for a production in the 2005-6 season.

**John MacKenzie will direct *The Fall of the House of Usher*. The production performs March 11, 12, 18, 19, 24, 25 & 26, 2005 at 8:00 pm and March 20, 2005 at 2:00 pm.**

## Hovey Players Gratefully Acknowledge Your Generous Support!

The Hovey Players gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for their generous financial support. These thoughtful donations allow us to bring quality, affordable theater to the community. This list includes all donations received from October 1, 2003 to December 1, 2004. If you have any questions, or would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please contact us.

### **Benefactors (\$200-2,000)**

Anonymous  
Joseph Lombardi

### **Angels (\$100-199)**

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Eric Houghton and Erika Foin  
Dan Taylor and Joan Smith  
Ralph Tomao  
David and Joyce Wilbourn

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Lissi Engvall  
Margaret Lowe

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John Murtagh  
George Sauer  
Constance Tonner

### **Friends (\$5-49)**

Lynn Armstrong  
Sidney and Rita Bourne  
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Hugo DeAngelis  
Patricia Howard  
Jeanine Leonard  
Martin and Dian Lerman  
Lucille LoPresti  
Stephen and Barbara Low  
Michelle Mulvaney  
Jean Roche  
Phyllis Weaver  
William and Judith Webb

If you have sent us a contribution and aren't on the list, please contact us so that we can gratefully recognize your support.

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## **Auditions: *The Fall of the House of Usher* by Jack Neary**

Adapted from the story originally written by Edgar Allan Poe. Directed by John MacKenzie. Auditions dates are Sunday, January 16, 2005 at 2:00 pm and Monday, January 17, 2005 at 7:00 pm. The audition will consist of readings from the script. Please bring a resume and a photo (any size will do). Email the director at [john\\_mackenzie@netzero.net](mailto:john_mackenzie@netzero.net) if you plan to audition and indicate "USHER AUDITION" in the subject box.

All roles are open:

Michael Shaughnessy (40's-60's)  
James Brookfield (mid-30's)  
Roderick Usher (mid-30's)  
Madeline Usher (mid-30's)  
Fiona (20's)  
Dr. Tremblay (50's-60's)  
Claire (15)

Setting:

Boston, mid-1930's. A police station interrogation room, and the sitting room of the Usher mansion. For more details and an excerpt from the script, see the Author's web page [www.jacknearyonline.com](http://www.jacknearyonline.com).

Plan on a minimum of three rehearsals per week starting within one week of casting. Performances are March 11, 12, 18, 19, 24, 25 & 26, 2005 at 8:00 pm and March 20, 2005 at 2:00 pm. Hovey Players is located at 9 Spring Street in Waltham, MA. Call (781) 893-9171 or visit [www.hoveyplayers.com](http://www.hoveyplayers.com) for more information.

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Hovey Players, Inc.  
P.O. Box 540101  
Waltham, MA 02454-0101

**NOW APPEARING...*Five Women Wearing the Same Dress* by Alan Ball.  
Directed by Gordon Ellis. Produced by Jeremy Medicus.**

PERFORMANCE DATES: Performances are January 14, 15, 21, 22, 27, 28 & 29, 2005 at 8:00 pm and January 23, 2005 at 2:00 pm.

THE STORY: "It's just basic human nature to be a real degenerate every now and then. And you ought to be able to do it without the whole world looking down its nose at you..." It is through this somewhat twisted prism that we join playwright Alan Ball, Academy Award winning writer of *American Beauty* and creator of the HBO series *Six Feet Under*, as he examines the role and nature of today's modern woman. Working from traditional stereotypes, Ball attempts to tear down our preconceived notions of what makes a lady by slowly chipping away at these timeworn images in a steamrolling comedy that is at times both shockingly raw and deeply moving. During a grand, Southern wedding reception, five bridesmaids seek refuge from the sterile ceremonies below by locking themselves in an upstairs bedroom. Now uninhibited by a need to act lady-like, the women soon discover that in addition to an almost universal dislike for both the bride and the dresses she has made them wear, they each share a desire to break from the traditional molds of womanhood. Secrets are shared, hopes and dreams revealed, and fears exposed, as each of the five struggle with the battle between social expectation and individual satisfaction, all while baring their thoughts on everything from relationships to sex to the naming patterns of make-up. Cast includes: Rachel Carney; Gail Bishop Nessman; Sara Jones; Mary Kate Rod; Melissa Sine and Edwin (Ted) Batch. Crew includes: Jeremy Medicus - Producer; Ronni Marshak - Assistant Producer; Gordon Ellis - Director; Matthew Silverstein - Stage Manager; Kimberlie H.O. Jones - Costumes; Ben Aldrich - Set Designer/Master Carpenter; Jonathan Kemble - Lighting Designer; Jerry Bisantz - Publicity; Michelle Aguillon - House Manager; Eric Houghton - Web Support.

For ticket reservations...please call (781) 893-9171, or visit [www.hoveyplayers.com](http://www.hoveyplayers.com). You may also order tickets online at [www.hoveyplayers.com](http://www.hoveyplayers.com). Tickets are \$15.00 for adults, \$13.00 for seniors and students.