



Dante Hall Theater Presents The Atlantic City Theater Production of 'Steel Magnolias'

Opening Night Set for July 18

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Galloway Township, NJ- The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey's Dante Hall Theater Productions, in conjunction with the Atlantic City Theater, present the hilarious and deeply moving production of "Steel Magnolias" at Dante Hall, located at 14 N. Mississippi Ave. in Atlantic City.

Opening night is **July 18**, with performances Fridays and Saturdays, **July 18, 19, 25** and **26** at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinees on **July 20** and **27** at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 with discounts for seniors, children, and those associated with Stockton. To purchase tickets, call Dante Hall Theater at 609-347-2162 or visit www.stockton.edu/dante.

"Steel Magnolias" is a riotous, yet bittersweet comedy about the bond among a group of women in northwest Louisiana. Written by Robert Harling, based on his experience with his sister's death resulting from diabetes, the title suggests the "female characters are as delicate as magnolias but as tough as steel" as they deal with the trials and tragedies of life.

Atlantic City Theater was founded in partnership with Dante Hall Productions and The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey to bring a great theater experience to Atlantic City.

"Steel Magnolias" stars local theater favorites Deborah Jenkins of Beesley's Point, Andrea Zakheim of Margate, Deboraha Pruitt of Marmora, Victoria Page Biron of Egg Harbor Township, Jennifer Smith of Atlantic City, and Taylor Cawley of Cape May Court House.

Patricia Herron, a founder of Atlantic City Theater and Fool Moon Theatre, will direct the production.

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Jenkins, a founder of Shaken Not Stirred Players, has performed in numerous shows including "Footloose," "Bridgadoon," "Show Boat," "South Pacific" and Disney's "Beauty and the Beast."

Zahheim has performed in a wide range shows including "Legally Blonde," "Anything Goes," "Wizards of Oz," "The Miracle Worker," and most recently in Atlantic City Theater's "The Sunshine Boys," as well as in numerous television commercials and industrial films.

Pruitt has performed in "Nunsense," "Grease," "Hello Dolly" and acted as a choreographer for Avalon's Player's Children's Theater.

Biron has performed in "South Pacific," "Glass Menagerie," "Arsenic and Old Lace," "Pirates of Penzance," the Eagle Theater's production of "Steel Magnolias" and most recently in Atlantic City Theater's "The Sunshine Boys."

Smith has performed in "Play It Again Sam," "Blythe Spirit," "Crimes of the Heart," "Rumors," and the Barn Playhouse's production of "Steel Magnolias." A recent graduate of Stockton College, Cawley has performed in "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," "Tartuffe," "Much Ado About Nothing," "Seussical The Musical," and served as choreographer for "A Year with Frog and Toad" with Shaken Not Stirred Players.

Following the death of Harling's sister in 1985, a friend who is a writer advised Harling to write to come to terms with the experience. Harling originally wrote a short story to give his nephew an understanding of the child's deceased mother. In 10 days, the story evolved into a play performed Off-Broadway before being adapted for the "Steel Magnolias" movie in 1989.

Harling, maybe based on his short, dry experience in the field of law ("not many laughs in Brown v. Board of Education") felt it important to include the way the characters utilized humor and lighthearted conversations to cope with the seriousness of the underlying situations. Harling wanted the audience to have a true representation of what his family endured the experience.

Although a brand new theatre company, the Atlantic City Theater includes members who have decades of experience and have performed, directed, designed, and produced shows with South Jersey Regional Theater, The Gateway Playhouse, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Fool Moon Theatre, the Ocean City Pops, Margate Little Theatre, and Showmakers, among others. Atlantic City Theater plans to produce great comedies and dramas that entertain and stir the spirit.

Atlantic City Theater's next production will be A.R. Gurney's sophisticated comedy "The Dining Room" opening in October at Dante Hall Theater in Atlantic City.

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