



**Birmingham
Festival
Theatre**

presents

Hiding behind Comets

by Brian Dykstra

directed by
Stephen French

Performances are 8:00 p.m.
Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays
January 31 - February 16, 2008

Sunday matinee is February 10 at 2:30 p.m.

for reservations, call **933-2383**
or go online at **www.BFTonline.org**

Founded in 1972, Birmingham Festival Theatre is the city's oldest theatre producing contemporary and classic fare for adults. It is managed by an all-volunteer, working board of directors. BFT has staged more than 200 productions — involving more than 50 directors, 1000 actors, and 500 crew people — attended by almost 10,000 audience members.

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Hiding behind Comets

written by Brian Dykstra
directed by Stephen French

featuring

Troy - Jeff Campanela

Honey - Jessica Tyner Rushing

Erin - Audrey Hill

Cole - John Falkenberry

A small-town bar in northern California.
A night in late summer, 2001

there will be one 12 minute intermission

Set Design - Stephen French
Lighting Design - Jennifer Luck
Sound Design - Stephen French
Set Construction - Ed Gurney, Kristen French,
- Stephen French, Theresa
Gregory, Amy Smith
Stage Manager - Amy Smith
Light/Sound Operator - Amy Smith
Production Coordinator - Carl Sosnin

Originally Produced by Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park
Edward Stern, Producing Artistic Director
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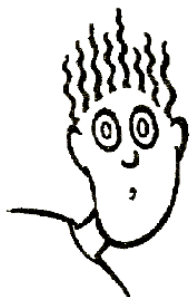
Originally Produced in New York City by 29th Street Rep and Darren Lee Cole

PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

BRIAN DYKSTRA (playwright) - *Hiding Behind Comets* saw its world premiere at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park during its 2004 Tony Award-winning season and then moved to NY for an extended run at 29th Street Rep. Brian was awarded the National Theatre Conference Playwright Award for *Hiding Behind Comets*. His play *Clean Alternatives* premiered Off-Broadway at 59E59 Theaters and then went on to win a Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and then on to the Kitchen Theatre Company in Ithaca, NY. This fall he returned to the Kitchen with a production of his play *STRANGERHORSE*. His critically acclaimed solo show, *Brian Dykstra: Cornered & Alone* received an extended Off-Broadway run and his latest solo show, *Brian Dykstra The Jesus Factor* is out on DVD and is running in NYC at The Barrow Street Theatre. Other productions include: *That Damn Dykstra (the boxed set)* and *Forsaking All Others* (Access Theater/NY), *Silence* (College of the Holy Cross, Stella Adler/NY & At Hand Theatre/NY) *Forsaking All Others* (Pentameters Theater/London, Powerhouse Theatre/Los Angeles--Dramalogue Critics Pick and LA Weekly Pick of The Week); *SexReligionPoliticsIsolationLove&Rage*, *Straight Up/Water Back* and *I Am/Lot's Wife* (West Bank/NY). Brian was 2005-06 Playwright Fellow with the Lark Play Development Center, has appeared on HBO's "Def Poetry" with his piece "Pushing Bush" and was awarded The Vault's *It's the End of the World As We Know It* Award for exceptional cutting edge artists who consistently take risks with their art. www.briandykstra.net

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Jeff Campanella (Troy) - *Hiding Behind Comets* is Jeff Campanella's first BFT production. He graduated from Auburn University this past December. Some of his favorite roles there included Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Wild Bill Hickok (*Deadwood Dick or the Game of Gold*), Rocky (*Rocky Horror Picture Show*), and the multiple characters he portrayed in Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*. For the next few months, Jeff is playing Tom Sawyer in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* at the Birmingham Children's Theatre. While not on stage, Jeff enjoys playing basketball and tennis, going to the beach, playing his harmonica, eating raw cookie dough, and spending time with his family and beautiful girlfriend Emily (brownie points never hurt).

PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

John Falkenberry (Cole) - John is delighted to return, after an absence of more than a year, for his seventeenth appearance on the BFT stage. He is especially pleased to work under the expert direction of Stephen French and with the very talented young cast of *Hiding Behind Comets*. John most recently appeared at BFT in the 2006 productions of *Line* (Fleming) and *Voice of Good Hope* (Strauss). Favorite BFT roles include the title role in *Jake's Women*, Bobby Gould in *Speed-the-Plow*, Rev. Eddie in *The Illuminati*, Byck in *Assassins*, and Captain Taylor in *A Soldier's Play*, where it all began. John also thanks his three cats, Edgar, Herschel and Boutros-Boutros Ghali, for waiting patiently each night for their post-rehearsal feeding.

Audrey Hill (Erin) - Audrey Hill is proud to be making her debut performance here at the Birmingham Festival Theatre. The 23 year-old is a University of Alabama alumna with a degree in Telecommunications and Film, as well as Theatre. She has previously starred in a number of short films, as well as a production of *The Vagina Monologues* at the University of Alabama.

Jessica Tyner Rushing (Honey) - Jessica is ecstatic to be involved in a second production at BFT. In her first BFT show, *Quills*, she played the role of "Madeleine." What a delight to work with such talented people. Thank you Stephen, Jeff, John, Audrey, Amy, and Jennifer! Tyner grew up right outside of Mobile and is currently a Music major at Birmingham-Southern College. There, she takes part in Concert Choir, Hilltop Singers, and BSC productions, such as *Urinetown* and *Young Zombies In Love*. She played "Hansel" in the school's opera, *Hansel and Gretel*, and will play the "Secretary" in *The Consul* this April.

Stephen French (Director) - *Hiding Behind Comets* marks Stephen's directorial debut at BFT, having recently appeared onstage as the tortured Ralph in *Frozen* and as the diabolical Marquis in *Quills*. Stephen has been directing and performing professionally for over 25 years and has directed such shows as *Big*



River, *Godspell*, *27 Wagons Full of Cotton*, several productions for Florida Children's Repertory Theatre and The Playwright's Roundtable, as well as interactive mystery dinner shows at The Comedy Club Stardome. A graduate of Auburn University, he has just recently returned to Alabama after spending over 10 years in Central Florida where he worked as an actor, director, improv performer, and producer almost everywhere that had a stage including playing Beetlejuice at Universal Orlando. Blessed (or cursed) with a wide variety of interests, Stephen also works in real estate and as a certified personal trainer. Thanks to Carl for introducing me to this fantastic script and to a truly amazing

PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

cast and crew for bringing it to life! Love, laughter, and happiness to my wife, Kristen and our sons, Bennett and Peyton.

Amy Smith (Stage Manager) - A graduate of Appalachian State University, Amy is a professional paralegal. She is a native of North Carolina where she participated in community theatre. She is very glad to be participating in her first theatre project in the Birmingham area.

Jennifer Luck (Lighting Designer) - A Birmingham native, Jennifer Luck has been working as a freelance lighting designer (occasionally scenic as well) for various theatre companies in the area since returning to her hometown a year ago. She is excited to have this opportunity to work on such an interesting and thought-provoking piece of theatre such as *Hiding Behind Comets*. While living in New York City, she collaborated on several new works with upwardly mobile directors and writers such as Pavol Liska, Harrison David Rivers, and Theresa Buchheister/Title:Point Productions. For more information about her credits or to see photographs of her work, please visit www.luckdesign.net.

A Note From the Director

What would you do if, in the span of a couple of hours, your entire world came crashing down around you? What if you found out family secrets you never should have known. What if a lazy, small-town night suddenly turned deadly? Troy and Honey are about to find out...

When I first read *Hiding Behind Comets*, I knew it was a show I had to bring to life on stage. I have always been drawn to stories that present ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances, particularly when these circumstances speak to our darkest fears. In this show, we see how these situations force the characters into fear, despair, and extreme violence. This play, which has only been produced a handful of times, presented the cast and me with an opportunity to explore the ideas of nature vs. nurture, sins of the father, atonement, and human nature in cases of extreme duress. It is an actor's play, with the characters taking the audience with them on a journey into terrifying possibilities and desperate reactions. This piece is fairly unique for the actors, in that the action of the play takes place in real time. There are no scene changes and no span of time passes between the actions of the play. It is an amazing opportunity to experience every change the characters go through as the plot unfolds.

I thank you, on behalf of the cast, crew, and Birmingham Festival Theatre for joining us for *Hiding Behind Comets*. You are the reason theatre thrives in Birmingham!

Stephen French, Director

Special thanks to

Kerri Edgeworth
Joan and Paul Goodwine
Kristen French

Barrister's Tavern
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COMING ATTRACTIONS

February 21 - 24, 2008

Elegies for Angels, Punks, and Raging Queens

[fundraiser for local AIDS organizations - purchase separate tickets]

by Janet Hood and Bill Russell

This collection of poems and songs reflects the lives of people who have died of AIDS. It was inspired by the Names Project Quilt and *Spoon River Anthology*. This piece will make you laugh and cry as you remember those you know who are affected by this scourge.

March 20 - April 5, 2008

The Tale of the Allergist's Wife

by Charles Busch

The playwright makes mirth out of misery in this comedic story of a New York culture vulture on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Marjorie Taub, a doctor's wife, is a devoted consumer of high culture: mornings at the Whitney, afternoons at Zabar's, evenings with Kafka. Plunged into a mid-life crisis of Medea-like proportions, Marjorie is shaken out of her lethargy by the reappearance of a fascinating and somewhat mysterious childhood friend, Lee. What exactly is Lee up to?

May 1 - 17, 2008

The White Rose

by Lillian Groag

In 1943, five students at the University of Munich and their philosophy professor were tried and convicted for their anonymous leafletting campaign calling for opposition to the Nazi regime. They called themselves "The White Rose." Each year in April, 10,000 white roses are distributed on the University of Texas campus in remembrance of the approximately 10,000 people killed each day at Auschwitz.

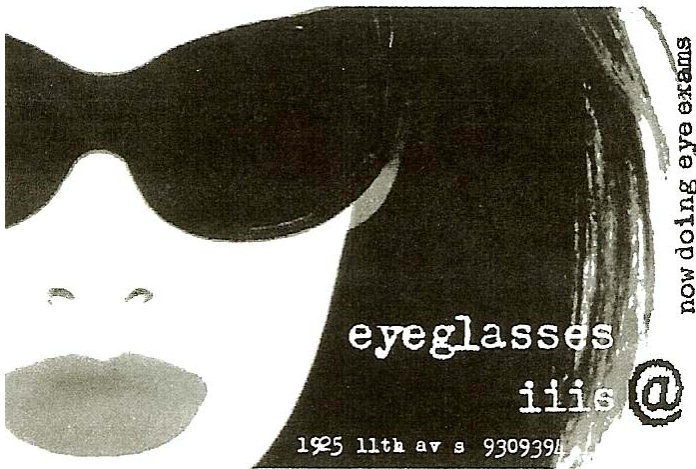
And finishing the season...

June 12 - 28, 2008

The Underpants

by Steve Martin

Steve Martin's adaptation of the original "wardrobe malfunction"! Humor and intrigue result from the failure of a fastener on a woman's undergarment. No, this isn't the Superbowl, but the instant fame and unusual consequences have Janet Jackson written all over it!



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