

Theater artists gather to protest war on Iraq

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
STAFF WRITER

When Gillian Eaton heard about the international theater community organizing to take a stand against a war in Iraq there was no question she wanted to be part of it. Since she teaches in the Hilberry graduate program at Wayne State University in Detroit, it was easy to talk her colleagues into putting on a staged reading of Aristophanes' classic war comedy *Lysistrata* on Monday, March 3.

Theater artists in more than 350 communities in 33 countries will gather to participate in the *Lysistrata* Project. Locally, 60 actors from the Performance Network in Ann Arbor, the Purple Rose Theater in Chelsea, Jewish Ensemble Theatre in West Bloomfield, and Meadow Brook Theatre in Rochester will read the play at the 1,100 seat Bonstelle Theatre on the campus of Wayne State University. A smaller version of the project takes place at the Furniture Factory in Detroit.

Admission to the Bonstelle reading is \$5 with proceeds going to Freedom House, an asylum for political refugees from all over the world. The evening opens with Matt Watroba singing at 7:30 p.m.

Admission to the 8 p.m. Furniture Factory reading is \$5 with proceeds going to MADRE, a non-profit international women's human rights organization working in conflict areas.

"We're doing it because it's a way to find solidarity with people who don't believe war is the only answer," said Eaton, an actress with the Royal Shakespeare Company in London for many years before moving to Plymouth. "We want to bring awareness about the human casualties of war. Just by doing something you feel you're not being passive. We want to all stand together in one place."

"The play itself is very naughty. It's one of the most anti-war plays ever written. Athens and Sparta are at war and the women get together and decide to withhold sex. They're also in charge of the treasury which means they affect the flow of money as well."

Annette DePetris believes the play is as relevant today as when Aristophanes wrote it more than 2,400 years ago. Conceived by New York actors Kathryn Blume and Sharon Bower, the *Lysistrata* Project aims to make the Bush Administration aware of the growing opposition to a war on Iraq.

"It's a large group of women in theater coming together," said DePetris who along with her husband Jeffrey Nahan is involved in the project. DePetris is director of theater at the Roeper School in Bloomfield Hills. Nahan is director of theater at Detroit Country Day School in Beverly Hills.

"In a world swirling out of control, we want to protest the war," said DePetris "For the Bush Administration to know that we believe war is



Gillian Eaton played an instrumental role in bringing the *Lysistrata* Project to the Bonstelle Theatre on the campus of Wayne State University in Detroit.

LYSISTRATA PROJECT

What: Local actors stage a reading of Aristophanes' anti-war comedy. The production is part of an international theater artists protest against a war on Iraq

When/Where: Monday, March 3 - 7:30 p.m. at the Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave. near the corner of Mack and 8 p.m. at the Furniture Factory, 4126 Third St., Detroit

Admission: \$5 suggested donation. Proceeds from Bonstelle production go to Freedom House, a sanctuary for political refugees. Proceeds from Furniture Factory production go to MADRE, a non-profit international women's human rights organization working in conflict areas.

For more information: Visit www.lysistrataproject.com.

To volunteer: As an usher or parking attendant or to distribute literature or donate money for the Bonstelle production, call Amy Lynch at (313) 577-7899

not an alternative. I hope the message we send is one of hope."

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Local musicians take stage to benefit intimate Trinity House

There's nothing like live music in an intimate setting. And that's the mission at Trinity House Theatre in Livonia where a concert to benefit the venue is set for Saturday, March 1.

"The theater is a very intimate environment. Picture seeing a concert or a play in your living room," said Bill Keith, spokesman for the 90-seat theater, which has been in existence for 22 years. Founded by Paul Patton and members of Trinity Baptist Church, it was incorporated as a separate non-profit arts organization in 1986.

Trinity House focuses on singer-songwriters in the folk genre with some representation of jazz and rock, said Keith. "The theater's mission is to enrich and enliven the communities of southeastern Michigan through brave, truthful and necessary works of art."

Slated to perform at the benefit concert are local musicians Stewart Francke of Huntington Woods, Jim Roil of Ann Arbor, Jim Bizer of Detroit, Jan Krist of Royal Oak and Lucy Webster and Ralston Bowies, both of Grand Rapids.

Francke, a well known local musician who has received numerous Detroit Music Awards, will be performing songs from his most recently released *Wheel of Life*.

Jim Bizer's music is a blend of humor and catchy melodies with monster guitar playing and vocals. Bizer was selected as a finalist in the Kerrville Folk Festival's "New Folk" songwriting competition in 2000. Last summer, he released *Closer To The Surface*.

Jan Krist is a Trinity House favorite who began writing and singing songs in local folk clubs in 1980. She received praise at the Kerrville Songwriting



Stewart Francke will perform songs from his recently released "Wheel of Life."

BENEFIT CONCERT

What: Showcase of local musicians in a concert to benefit Trinity House Theatre.

When: Saturday, March 1, doors open 7:30 p.m., concert starts at 8 p.m.

Where: Trinity House Theatre, 38840 W. Six Mile Road, Livonia.

Tickets: \$15 (\$12 for Trinity House members), call (734) 464-6302 or visit www.trinityhouse.org.

Competition in 1991 and released her first album of songs, *Decapitated Scarecrows*, in 1992. Over the years, she has won numerous Detroit Music Awards, including Outstanding Acoustic/Folk Recording in 2002 for

Outpost of the Counterculture. Krist plans to perform songs from her most recent release *Wounded Me Wounded You*.

- Staff writer Nicole Stafford

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