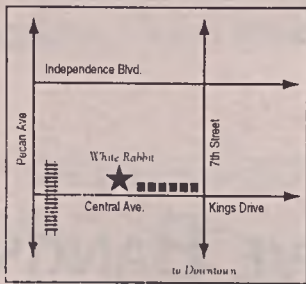


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Q Culture

The 1998-99 Theatre Season

The 1998-99 Broadway Lights Series at the North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center has finally produced what it has promised for years: the best of Broadway, brought to Charlotte. Past seasons have been a mixed bag of major shows and ho-hum flops; this season, the largest ever brought to Charlotte, contains six major shows, one additional major show making a return engagement, and one revival that boasts a major star.

Peter Pan October 13-18, 1998 Ovens Auditorium. Cathy Rigby returns to the stage in the role that brought her fame...whatever fame there can be had following a gymnastics career and a stint as a feminine hygiene spokesperson. This is possibly the weakest show of the season, but it will be popular with families. Tinkerbell in the Queen City!

Riverdance November 10-22, 1998 Belk Theater. You have probably seen the PBS special and maybe even the spinoff "Lord of the Dance." This Irish music, song and dance sensation has been selling out engagements worldwide and is set to play two weeks in Charlotte. Some people love this Celtic dance troupe, others are seriously irritated by them. Either way, it is a major event and will certainly sell out.

Bring In 'Da Noise/Bring In 'Da Funk January 12-17, 1999 Belk Theater. George C. Wolfe directed this tour of the Broadway sensation that won four 1996 Tony Awards. Chronicling the history of dance in African-American culture, this show has been stunning audiences for two years. Get ready for some of the best dancing seen in Charlotte!

Chicago February 9-14, 1999 Ovens Auditorium. Roxie, Velma and "All That Jazz." This revival has been taking Broadway and the country by storm. There is this big conspiracy to convince the public that this was an eagerly-anticipated revival of a major work by Kander and Ebb, but the truth is less...Hollywood and more Broadway. This show was barely appreciated when it premiered, and the revival was expected to be only a mild splash. But all of a sudden the world's headlines began to mirror this show's plot in an eerie fashion, which made people watch long enough to realize that the score is fantastic. Get your honey some tickets for Valentine's Day and treat him or her to some of the sexiest dancers in the skimpiest clothing imaginable.

Footloose March 9-14, 1999 Ovens Auditorium. Yes, that *Footloose*. Kevin Bacon and all. Contrary to what common sense may dictate, this show has been getting raves on its pre-Broadway tour. All of the original songs from the film have been kept, and nine new songs have been written for the stage version by Dean Pitchford (*Fame*) and Tom Snow. Walter



by Brian D. Holcomb
Q-Notes Staff

The Actor's Theatre of Charlotte makes this issue's Q-Culture Recommends largely because it tends to be an under-appreciated company. Their productions can, in fact, vary in quality, but their choice of shows and the aspirations of the company make them far more successful than any individual production may belie. The selections for this season show vision and a great deal of daring. Additionally, each of this year's productions is recommended for mature audiences which will absolutely drive the now-diminished "Gang of Five" crazy.

Zara Spook and Other Lures September 3-20. Possibly the biggest hit of the 1997-98 Actor's Theatre Season was *Stanton's Garage*. Joan Ackermann, the playwright of that hit, is responsible for this comedy with a bizarre twist. This *Thelma and Louise* meets *Dorf on Fishing* has three women driving to New Mexico for a women's bass fishing competition. Battling furiously for the championship and their marriages, these women make use of their trickiest

Theatre • Art • Music

Bobbie, one of Broadway's hottest new directors, has maneuvered this show from screen to stage with well-received results.

Sunset Boulevard June 22-27, 1999 Belk Theater. Are you ready for your closeup? Well, if your boyfriend will stop hogging the mirror, then maybe you will be. Get out your turban and your cigarette holder and prepare for the Charlotte premiere of the latest Andrew Lloyd Webber spectacle. This new tour has kept the sets, costumes, etc. and has Petula Clark to boot. The music is lush, the lyrics are...forgettable, but the story is a classic.

Rent July 27-August 1, 1999 Belk Theater. If you don't know about this show, then you really need to get out of the house more. I could list all of the awards that it has won, but that would grow tiresome. Let's just say that it has won a lot. And you will love it. Or if not, you will never say so out loud for fear of looking like an idiot. This show will also sell out, but the good news is that twenty seats are reserved for sale on the day-of-show at a discounted price. Technically, they are for students, but...

Stomp April 27 - May 2, 1999 Ovens Auditorium. Back for a return engagement, this popular eight-member troupe makes music with all sorts of bizarre things, and look great while doing it.

Charlotte Repertory Theatre

Charlotte Repertory Theatre Kicks off its 22nd season this month. Charlotte's professional theatre company has become the darling of many in the lesbian/gay community by producing such past hits as *Falsettos* and *Angels In America*, and by drawing the ire of the "Gang of Five." Some past seasons have been a bit sketchy: there was the darkest season imaginable, filled with hostages in Lebanon and impotent Vietnam vets, and then there was the season that was just a bit too light and fluffy. This one has hit it right on the mark, combining crowd favorites and recent critical hits. You will be sure to hear many of your friends talking about the great show that they saw last night.

Picasso at the Lapin Agile September 16-27. This LA and Off-Broadway hit was written by comedian and actor Steve Martin. It concerns a fictional meeting between the young Pablo Picasso and the young Albert Einstein, before either had made their mark on the world, but both were full of bravado. The Lapin Agile is a Paris bistro that marked the scene of their verbal sparring.

A Tuna Christmas December 2-13. This crowd-pleasing holiday hit should be high on your list of things to buy tickets for. It is the day before Christmas in Tuna, TX, and the whole town (played by only two actors) is going crazy over the yard-decorating contest, which is being sabotaged by an unknown assailant. And, of course, there has to be a disastrous production of *A Christmas Carol*. Enough camp humor to make you think you're watching a Bette Davis film.

Taking Steps January 20-31. Alan
See SEASON on next page

lures, and sometimes catch more than they counted upon.

Kindertransport October 22-November 8. This play follows one girl along the kindertransport, a little-known operation designed to carry Jewish children out of Nazi Germany. Naturally, many children lost contact with their families and identities after being "saved." This play deals with the ordeal survived by one seven-year-old girl.

Jungle Rot February 11-28. This hilarious comedy is an irreverent send-up of *Macbeth*, set against the CIA's attempts to take over the government of the Congo during the Eisenhower administration. Between the American government and the Congo natives, there are enough zany characters to fill an evening several times over.

Dream of a Common Language May 20-June 6. Perhaps the most impressive selection of the season, this play deals with a woman's struggle for artistic equality in 19th Century Paris. Based upon an actual event, the protagonist scandalizes French artistic circles by wanting to paint a nude...although it is a common subject for male artists and she herself is a popular model. Stabbing straight to the heart of the definitions of art and equality, this play has the potential to be the highlight of the Charlotte season. ▼