

SCR/PARTY PLAY with Ann Conway

'70S-THEMED BASH SALUTES AYCKBOURN'S 'TAKING STEPS' By Ann Conway

In a disco-ball whirl of '70s-era food, music and frivolity, First Nighters capped SCR's 44th season with a bash that saw them sipping Harvey Wallbangers, 'smoking' candy cigarettes, ducking into photo booths, tossing down mac 'n cheese and fish sticks and dancing to the pounding spins of a spirited DeeJay.

Nothing else would do for the post-performance celebration following the May 23 opening on Segerstrom Stage of British playwright Alan Ayckbourn's farcical *Taking Steps*, which is set in the Disco Era. Even SCR Artistic Director David Emmes was part of the party decor, dressed as he was in a '70s-era body-skimming plaid (Pierre Cardin) suit he'd donated two decades ago to SCR's wardrobe department. "I bought this in the '70s, gave it to the theater and it has been in two shows!" Emmes said as he mingled with the play's director, Art Manke, and the show's honorary producers Tom and Marilyn Sutton. "When I heard they weren't using it for this production, I decided to try it on and was amazed that it still fit!"

Quipped Emmes's wife, SCR Managing Director Paula Tomei: "He looks fabulous! As I always say, 'Once an actor, always an actor!'"

Playing a role in the two-hour plus satire about the lives and loves and mishaps of people going in and out of a multi-storied, haunted Victorian manse is a joyful yet demanding undertaking, observed actor Bill Brochtrup (Mark), best known to TV audiences as John Irvin on "NYPD Blue" and to SCR audiences as Henry in *The Real Thing*. "The stage is raked, very steep, in order to give the audience a better view, so it's like working on the deck of a ship—exhausting!" His newly honed British accent, which he finds hard to lose when he's off-stage, is holding him in good stead, however. "I am finding that people in stores treat you far more kindly when you speak with a British accent," he said, laughing.

Also receiving congratulatory handshakes for his role as the boisterous and hard-drinking Roland, was actor Rob Nagle, who wore an open shirt and a Virgo medallion to the high-energy bash which was played out in the lobby and on Ela's Terrace. It can't be easy to play a drunk on a raked stage. How does an actor do it?

"Let's just say my college years helped inform me," Nagle joked. "We're having a blast with this play," he added, speaking of himself and fellow actors, who included Louis Lotorto (Leslie), Emily Eiden (Kitty), Kasey Mahaffy (Tristram) and Kirsten Potter (Elizabeth). "We play off each other constantly and so, by the end of it, we're all exhausted!"

For Emmes, it was a night to celebrate the wonders of a glorious season and to look ahead to SCR's milestone 45th Season, which will feature plays such as *An Italian Straw Hat*, *The Heiress*, *Noises Off* and *King Lear*. "This year has been wonderful and we have a great season to look forward to, with some fabulous new plays and some great classics. We can't wait!"



Actor Bill Brochtrup, Honorary Producers Tom and Marilyn Sutton and actor Kasey Mahaffy



Actor Rob Nagle with Cheri and Rick Smetanka of Honorary Producer Haskell & White LLP

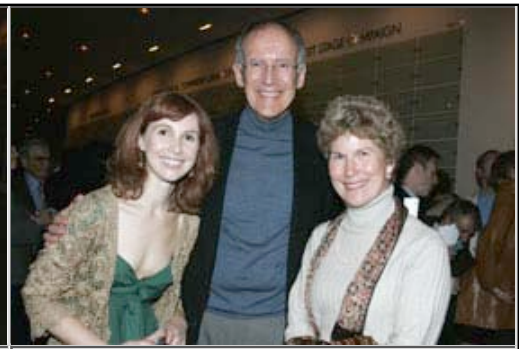


Tom Rogers, Sally Anderson, director Art Manke and Dee and Larry Higby

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S.L. and Betty Huang, Valerie Fearnis with Chelsea Clapper and James Fearnis (front).



Actor Emily Eiden and Dennis and Joanne Keith



Denise and Michael Moon in the photobooth



Elaine Krajonwski, actor Kasey Mahaffy and David Krajanowski



Actor Emily Eiden, Laurie Smits Staude, actor Kirsten Potter and actor Louis Lotorto (front)



Jeffrey McVey, Robin Carr and actor Rob Nagle



Marsha and Frank Easterboork, actor Bill Brochtrup and Linda and Tod White



Olivia Johnson and LaDorna Eichenberg



Actor Bill Brochtrup and stage manager Julie Haber (3rd and 4th from right) with SCR staff members and their guests in 1970s attire (and attitude).



Joanne and Dennis Keith and costume designer Angela Balogh Calin



'70s fare provided by Marks Catering



Nostalgic '70s treats from yoursweettooth.com. Pixie Sticks, candy mecklaces and pop rocks... oh my!

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