

RIVERBENDER.COM

The Third Time Is Still Has Its Charm

October 5 2020 2:59 PM

ALT ALTON LITTLE THEATER
Presents

**Oct. 23rd-25th
AND
Oct. 29-Nov. 1st,
2020**



**the
miracle
worker**

**By William Gibson
Directed by Kevin Frakes**

ALTON - Alton Little Theater will produce the classic family drama, THE MIRACLE WORKER for eight performances October 23rd through November 1st, having also produced the play in 1966 and again in 1989.

The remounting of the show was originally encouraged by the Illinois Theater Association as a possible showcase for the State, Regional and National Competition in 2021; however the COVID Pandemic saw the cancellation of the State's planned Convention in January 2021 and the National Convention scheduled for June in Louisville, KY is still in question.

ALT's Artistic Director Kevin Frakes decided to move ahead with production after speaking with local families who were looking for creative and safe outlets for their children to participate in Live Theater.

Indeed, Kya Wonders (of Granite City) takes on the iconic role of Helen Keller and her real life brother, Ian, will portray Helen's older half brother, James Keller. Joining that family duo is Kristi Doering, Theater teacher and Director for Alton High School (playing Aunt Ev) and her daughter Sophie playing Helen's playmate "Martha".

Frakes stresses that the cast of 17 actors "have all become family" as they take on the challenges of mounting a "very big show" with all the added precautions of masking during rehearsals and staging a very physically and emotionally demanding show on a huge multi-level set.

Frakes wife, Anne, portrayed Annie Sullivan in 1989 and Executive Director, Lee Cox was part of the show in 1966 and 1989 - and both state that it is "always a little tug at the heart to hope that a new production will bring the magic they remember from previous productions directed by Dorothy Colonius and Diana Enloe".

Frakes well knows the "awesome responsibility" of restaging a "classic" and yet want his cast of 17 actors to benefit from the production values that were not possible in earlier days. Emily Schneider, relatively new to ALT audiences, became the "perfect" choice for Annie Sullivan and the 1880's story set in Alabama is created by more new and veteran talents, like Jake Tenberge and Shawn Chevalier. . Frakes and Cox have been discussing new staging ideas for months and have both embraced the play's message that the "inability to see" has meanings well beyond physical blindness. The

Keller family and the audience both take a journey that explores the notion of healthy love and confronting overwhelming hardship --which may just be the best messages for folks to embrace during the backdrop of current events.

Frakes and Cox also understand the imperative to represent "real" historical figures accurately and respectfully and began their renewed research on Helen Keller's life months ago. Lee loves the "hunt" for authentic-looking costumes and set decor and was so fortunate to create a relationship with the t. Louis Repertory Theater and Webster University's Prop and Costume Departments, who will be furnishing vintage furniture for ALT's production. Grand Ball Costumes in Charleston, Illinois, will be lending a hand with costumes and local businesses in the Riverbend have been more than happy to help out with decor and prop items.

Even though State regulations limit the seating possibilities currently in place that meet criteria for social-distancing and safety precautions, the ALT Board of Directors endorsed the decision to proceed with mounting the drama, the second show in the six-show 87th Season. Michael Cox, ALT's Ticket Chairman, says only about 600 people may be able to see this production --but they NEED to see THIS SHOW! he continues,

This show represents everything that is great about ALT.....new production staff members like Shea Maples are involved in staging and the Board knows that the show may not even break even finally, but is worthwhile to provide the creative outlet that young and older thespians need and Kevin and Lee and Dennis Stevenson (Lighting Director) are working long hours to make sure THIS production becomes a favorite memory for a whole new generation of theater-lovers.

Tickets are available by calling 618-462-3205 or

<http://www.altonlittletheater.org>.