

ARTS

Art donation

The Gund family of Cleveland has donated a \$15 million collection of Western art to Indianapolis' Eiteljorg Museum. It includes 57 bronzes, paintings, sketches and lithographs.

Putting on with the playwright hat

Woody Allen has written and will direct a new play "Second Hand Memory," opening off-Broadway at the Atlantic Theater Company on Nov. 22. In the cast: McKean, Martha Plimpton and Dominick Chianese.

Actors Cabaret of Eugene cast gets a chance to take a show on the road — to the mecca of the musical: New York City



WAYNE EASTBURN / The Register-Guard

From left: Amanda Fackrell, Michelle Sellers, Erica Jean Pierson, Laura Holden, Niki Pagniano and Jennifer Hill sing "42-32-42" from a musical about a beauty pageant for plus-size women called "Pretty Faces." The troupe has won a spot to perform the show in a festival of musicals next month in New York City.

Big Apple, big time

BY PAUL DENISON
The Register-Guard

They're going to fly to New York City on a Sunday and open a show off-Broadway on a Tuesday, with only one tech rehearsal in a theater they've never seen. They will be the only nonprofessional company performing as part of a "mammoth" new musical theater festival in a big city rife with theater pros and tough critics.

Are they scared? Yes — but confident, too, in themselves and in a show that they've had a strong hand in developing.

Are they excited? You bet. Interviewed during a rehearsal break last week, cast members of Robert Cabell's "Pretty Faces: The Large and Lovely Musical" used words such as "huge," "very exciting," "big," "amazing" and "dream come true" to express their enthusiasm about being chosen, from among 220 applicants, as one of 31 musicals to be staged during the New York Musical Theatre Festival, Sept. 13 through Oct. 3.

Actors Cabaret of Eugene's production of "Pretty Faces" will have a six-performance run at the 155-seat Revelation Theater, an off-Broadway venue where Equity companies from England and Canada also will be mounting shows.

All but two of the "Pretty Faces" cast members

were in the West Coast premiere production here in January.

"The stakes are higher," director Joe Zingo says of the upcoming New York performances. "We're all scared."

But they're not just sitting around trembling with excitement or trepidation. They've been in rehearsals aimed at focusing, deepening and tightening the show.

Beginning Friday they'll do six performances at Actors Cabaret to get ready — and to raise money — for their Big Apple adventure.

Zingo hopes the town will turn out to see the updated version, which will include new scenes and new songs, and to support the New York production.

PLAY PREVIEW

Pretty Faces: The Large and Lovely Musical

When: 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 2 p.m. Sundays, through Sept. 5

Where: Actors Cabaret of Eugene, 996 Willamette St.

How much: \$20 for show, \$34.95 for show and dinner; Sunday matinees \$20 or \$32.95 with brunch

Tickets: 683-4368; www.actorscabaret.org

Zingo and music director Jim Roberts have been working hard during the past three years to develop a Eugene-New York theater connection.

"When we're in New York," Zingo says, "we're not there to promote ourselves and Actors Cabaret but to promote the entire Eugene performing arts community as a good place to introduce and develop new work."

Their efforts have already paid off in two small East Coast-West Coast One-Act Festivals — the second took place last Thursday and Friday — and in Doug Stone's hit comedy "Sealed for Freshness," which had its West Coast premiere at Actors Cabaret in October 2003 and was revived for a 4-performance run in March.

Stone recently gave Actors Cabaret of Eugene the West Coast rights to "Sealed for Freshness," and he's writing another show especially for Eugene production.

But having Cabell's "Pretty Faces" selected as part of the New York festival is the biggest deal so far, not just for Roberts and Zingo but also for the eight cast members of this upbeat musical about a beauty pageant for plus-size women.

All of them see this as a dream coming true.

"This is a huge opportunity," says new cast member Michelle Sellers, "something to cross off my list

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"When I buy art it's because I like it, not because I think it's going to sell in Eugene."

— CYN DY DUERFELDT, OWNER | AFOIIFTEGAIIFPV