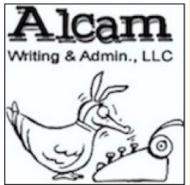


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More of the Best of the Valley

July 26, 2018

'Annie' helps Scarpas' Youth CONNecTion celebrate 35 years

SHELTON - On July 27, when Center Stage Theatre opens its summer production of *Annie* at Shelton High School, the theater will be celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Youth CONNecTion.

In 1983, Gary and Francesca Scarpa founded the Youth CONNecTion, a summer theatre group for high school and college students.



Each summer since, the Youth CONNecTion has presented a major musical in Shelton.

The Youth CONNecTion became an integral part of the full-time non profit theater Center Stage in 2005.

The theatre also presents cabaret events and theater education, directed by the Scarpa's daughter Gina.

The summer production kicks off each new Center Stage season consisting of five full scale productions.

"We're kind of reliving the life of my parents," said Francesca. "My father was a prominent opera conductor in New Haven and conducted throughout both Italy and the United States. My mother was his partner in opera and a well-respected voice teacher, so my sister and I grew up in the theater. The same has been true for our children."

In addition to productions with Center Stage and the Youth CONNecTion, the couple has also directed productions with drama clubs at Shelton High School, Amity High School, and the Quinnipiac University Theater.

"Theater has permeated every aspect of our lives, and it is the glue that has kept our marriage relationship strong," said Gary. "There has never been a year, in our 42 year marriage, when we weren't directing multiple productions".

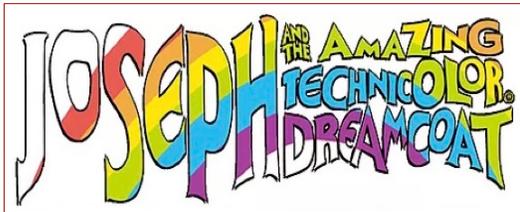
"Forty-two years is a long time, but working as a creative team for all these years has helped us to grow together artistically, intellectually, spiritually, and politically very much in the same direction."

"The gratifying nature of creating live theater has not changed for us," said Francesca. "We love our work with the Youth CONNecTion, and seeing thousands of kids pass through our doors over the decades."

"With each new play comes a new adventure," said Gary."



2018



1999



2010



2015



2005



1992



1984



2007

Annie will play at Shelton High School at 7 p.m. on July 27, July 28, August 4, and August 5 and at 2 p.m. on August 5.

Tickets are \$30.00 for adults and \$15.00 for students and may be purchased by calling the Center Stage box office at 203-225-6079 or by visiting www.centerstageshelton.org

Center Stage Theatre, Inc. is a non-profit, 501-(c)3, organization. Its purpose is to enhance the cultural environment within its community; to present high quality theatrical productions at affordable prices; to encourage growth and education through the performing arts; and to provide a means for interested adults, teens and children to experience and participate in various aspects of live theater.

