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Steel Magnolias LIVE ON STAGE THE LOFT THEATRE NOV 5 - 29 TIX START AT \$25! HUMAN RACE THEATRE COMPANY

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'Steel Magnolias' Review – Human Race Theatre Company – Salon Sisterhood

November 11, 2015 by Russell Florence, Jr.

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Christine Brunner, Caitlin Larsen, Maretta Zilic, Julia Geisler and Patricia Linhart in STEEL MAGNOLIAS.. Photo: Scott J. Kimmins.

Those immensely engaging ladies of Truvy's Beauty Shop tug the heart and tickle the funny bone as evidenced in the Human Race Theatre Company's excellent production of Robert Harling's touching 1987 comedy "Steel Magnolias," the third presentation of the play the Race has produced in 26 years.

The gossipy chit-chat flows effortlessly and with great charm in this quaint, relatable tale set in Chinquapin, Louisiana over the course of two years concerning friendship, family, loyalty, illness, and the innate bonds of sisterhood. It's hard to completely erase memories of the play's 1989 film starring Sally Field, Julia Roberts and Dolly Parton among others, but director Heather N. Powell, in her mainstage Race debut, creates many winning moments of original authenticity sprinkled with bright and breezy comedy while accented by compelling tenderness and sincerity, particularly in the sentimental Act 2. Sure, there is a lot of fun to be had in the peppier Act 1, but Harling's script shines when attention focuses on the hardships women face and aspire to endure. "I'd rather have 30

minutes of wonderful than a lifetime of nothing special," says Shelby, a young woman who sacrifices her health for the chance to become a mother. Shelby's decision to give the gift of life is pivotal, but reiterates her greater desire as a woman to leave an indelible legacy on her own accord in spite of difficulty and the concerns of others.

Clothed in colorful, humorous '80s garb by Janet G. Powell and framed within scenic designer Eric Moore's terrific and spacious era-appropriate set, Powell's close-knit cast of six is a balanced mix of Race artists and newcomers. As bubbly Truvy, Christine Brunner, so grounded and loving, is a fantastic source of encouragement, support and sass. Maretta Zilic strikingly evolves from timidity to confidence as Truvy's assistant Annelle, a young woman with a mysterious past who ultimately finds her purpose in religion. Julia Geisler brings endearing sweetness and believably weary undercurrents to her very appealing portrayal of Shelby. Carolyn Popp, as Shelby's devoted mother M'Lynn, will have you completely teary-eyed in her passionate late Act 2 monologue detailing M'Lynn's fury and pain from experiencing great loss. Patricia Linhart, chipper and affectionate, is lighthearted and sophisticated as former mayor's wife Clairee. Caitlin Larsen, one of the finest chameleon actresses in the region, commands attention with hilariously earthy gusto as the hopelessly perturbed Ouiser, Clairee's bickering buddy.



Carolyn Popp, Christine Brunner, Caitlin Larsen, Julia Geisler, Patricia Linhart and Maretta Zilic in STEEL MAGNOLIAS. Photo: Scott J. Kimmins.

"Laughter through tears is my favorite emotion," says Truvy. As Harling's heartfelt exploration of mothers and children as well as wives and husbands transpires at the Race, in a production astute enough to be emotionally sound without resorting to melodrama, it is clear how viable this story and its characters remain. After nearly 30 years these Southern Belles still impress with delicately resilient finesse.

"Steel Magnolias" continues through Nov. 29 in the Loft Theatre of the Metropolitan Arts Center, 126 N. Main St., Dayton. Performances are 8 p.m. Nov. 11-14, 18-20, and 27-28; 2 p.m. Nov. 15, 22, 28-29; 7 p.m. Nov. 10, 17, 24-25. Act One: 75 minutes; Act Two: 60 minutes. Tickets are \$35-\$60 for adults, \$32-\$46 for seniors, and \$17.50-\$25 for students. Prices vary depending on performance date. Select side-area seats available for \$25 at all performances. For tickets or more information, call (937) 228-3630 or visit www.humanracetheatre.org or ticketcenterstage.com. Group sales: Contact Betty Gould at (937) 461-8295 or Betty.Gould@victoriatheatre.com

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RubiGirls The Show Must Go On!
 Saturday, Nov. 20th at 8pm
 Doors will open at 7pm
 General Admission \$10
 VIP Seating \$25

Dayton Theatre Shows

Fri 20	Sat 21	Sun 22	Mon 23	Tue 24	Wed 25	Thu 26
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Submit Events Full Calendar

- Friday Events November 20, 2015
- All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914 at Dayton Theatre Guild
 - Madame Butterfly at Schuster Performing Arts Center
 - The Human Race Theatre Company Presents 'Steel Magnolias' at The Loft Theatre

- Dayton Theatre Auditions
- Monday November 23, 2015
- Auditions for musical The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd at Dayton Playhouse
- Tuesday November 24, 2015



Carolyn Popp, Christine Brunner, Maretta Zilic, Patricia Linhart and Caitlin Larsen.
Photo: Scott J. Kimmins.

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About Russell Florence, Jr.
Russell Florence, Jr. is a member of The American Theatre Critics Association and The Drama League. In addition to his role as arts and culture editor of Dayton City Paper and theater critic for Dayton City Paper and Impact Weekly, he served as a Dayton Daily News freelance writer and editorial page contributor. He has also written features for such theater publications as Spotlight Ohio and The Sontheim Review. He attended over 30 Broadway/Off-Broadway productions during the 2014-15 season.

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 Auditions for musical *The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd* at Dayton DMM Article Calendar

November 2015

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- [Tipp City Players Community Theatre](#)
- [Town Hall Theatre](#)
- [Troy Civic Theatre](#)
- [Vandalia Youth Theatre Company](#)
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- [Wright State University Theatre Department](#)
- [Xenia Area Community Theater](#)
- [YS Kids Playhouse](#)
- [Zoot Theatre Company](#)



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Dayton Theatre News Feed

Tue, Jul 02, 2013
[Unscripted: Broadway Studio Behind The Scenes Day 7](#)
Renika Williams Broadway Studio Camp Counselor
During the VTA's Broadway Studio Camp, Scott Stoney led the Acting Master classes. Scott explains that there are three Acting Tools: Voice, Body, and Mind. He elaborates by explaining that acting is all of these aspects working together as one and that the actor is in control. Stoney asked the students after his explanation, "How is that different from an everyday human being?" He answered, "It is no different. Our craft consists of the very thing that makes us human." Acting is simply the study of human behavior and learning how to portray a character truthfully. Today's [...]
Source Victoria Theatre Association

Tue, Jun 25, 2013
[Unscripted: Broadway Studio Behind the Scenes](#)