

The top half of the front page of an oversized (11x17") newsletter is shown for two different issues of the Spotlight, written, designed and produced by Peggi Ridgway for Musical Theatre West, of La Mirada and Long Beach, California.



SPOTLIGHT!

Vol. 3 No. 2
Summer 1997

West Coast premiere endears us to "Eleanor", first lady of the world

MTW theatergoers are in for a special treat when *Eleanor—An American Love Story* takes the stage, July 11-27, at La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts. Sparkling with humor, pathos, drama and heart, Eleanor Roosevelt's journey from a shy, insecure girl to the most influential woman of our time captures us with excitement and energy, irony and humor. Fascinating characters, including FDR, Teddy Roosevelt, and Teddy's daughter Alice step off the pages of history to entertain us with their wit and wisdom.

Eleanor was first commissioned in 1982 by Theaterworks, USA, a New York company producing theater for children. Called *First Lady* at that time, it was a one act play with only five characters, which followed the success of *Teddy*, a young people's musical story about Teddy Roosevelt by the same authors. *First Lady* toured the US from 1982 to 1985 and gave a special performance at The White House for the *Eleanor Centennial* in 1984. The Village Theatre in Issaquah, Washington commissioned the full length musical, *Eleanor*. It premiered there in September 1987 and played to sold-out audiences. In 1992, *Eleanor* was presented at the annual New York Festival of the National Alliance of Musical Theatre in New York. It also enjoyed a ten-week run at Marriott's Lincolnshire Theatre, near Chicago, in 1995.

This West Coast premiere features a well-crafted score by Thomas Tierney, lyrics by John Forster, book by Jonathan Bolt and is directed by John Homan. Details on the production can be found on page 2.



Clockwise from top left: *Eleanor* stars Tony



SPOTLIGHT!

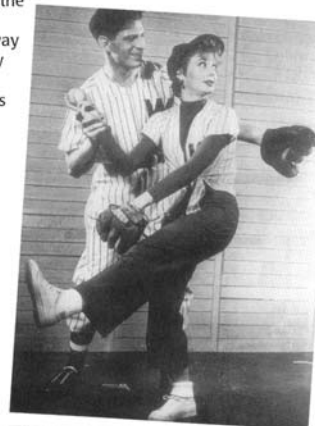
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Damn Yankees Opens July 12

Damn Yankees will be the second show of our 43rd season, playing July 12-28 at the La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts. The show first opened on Broadway in May 1955, directed by the legendary George Abbott with choreography by Bob Fosse. It ran for 1019 performances and starred Ray Walston and Gwen Verdon. The show won eight Tony awards: Best Musical, Best Actress (Verdon), Best Actor (Walston), Best Featured Actor (Russ Brown) and Best Score, Direction (Abbott) and Choreography (Fosse). *Damn Yankees* was written by the song-writing team of Richard Adler and Jerry Ross, who wrote the award-winning *The Pajama Game* a year before. (It too ran for more than 1000 performances.) Both *The Pajama Game* and *Damn Yankees* had Abbott and Fosse at the helm and both were produced by the same optimistic young producers — Frederick Bisson, Robert Griffith and Hal Prince. Several

Joe. Critics found much to fault in the rewritten libretto, but audiences still responded to the sheer entertainment value found in this energetic musical comedy. The show is still doing well on tour starring Jerry Lewis.

The Musical Theatre West production stars Alan Young as the devilish Mr. Applegate, John Ganun (direct from the New York revival) as Joe Hardy and Mindy Wild as the temptress Lola, along with 30 other talented and energetic performers.



Stephen Douglass and Gwen Verdon in *Damn Yankees* (1996)

The New Yorkers Hailed by Critics



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