

CURT DALE CLARK: **THE MUSIC MAN**

BY PAULETTE OBOYSKI



Curt Dale Clark as Professor Harold Hill in *The Music Man*, 2015

Courtesy of Roger Duncan Photography

Curt Dale Clark is the gracious Artistic Director of the Maine State Music Theater (MSMT) located in Brunswick, Maine. Curt is an award-winning actor, singer, dancer, playwright, lyricist and director. He first arrived at MSMT to act as the Beast in their 2005 summer production of *Beauty and the Beast* and later accepted the Artistic Director position in 2013.

The Artistic Director is the person with overall responsibility for the selection and interpretation of the works performed by a theater company. Curt relates, “When I first came here, I fell in love with Brunswick and MSMT. I acted many seasons here including the year when they asked me to take the Artistic Director position on an interim basis. This theater has a special quality about it—board members, the people that surround it,

people from the town—they make actors feel like stars. The minute that I became Artistic Director, I realized that this was me—that I wanted to do this.”

When he is not in Brunswick, he lives part-time in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with his husband, Marc Robin, who is the Artistic Director at the Fulton Theater in Lancaster. They are apart for about 7 months out of the year due to their job locations. Curt has collaborated with Marc on 15 children’s musicals as co-lyricist and writer. Marc also visits Brunswick and has directed MSMT shows such as *Ghost* in 2016.

Presently, Curt does not act in many MSMT productions due to his demanding job as Artistic Director. But, at the end of last summer he did appear in Portland as the Irish Tenor in the MSMT/Portland Stage Theater collaborative production of *The Irish and How They Got that Way*; which extended both theaters’ respective seasons. Marc Robin directed the show.



The Irish & How They Got That Way

Courtesy of Roger Duncan Photography



Courtesy of Annie Rose Photography

Clark as the Beast

Curt Dale Clark was born and raised on a farm in Pecatonica, Illinois. He loves his hometown and goes back to visit as often as he can. His father is Dale Clark, who is a retired farmer/tool and dye man. His mother, Kaye Clark, still works for an Illinois financial company. Curt is the youngest of four children. He has two brothers, Cory and Brad and a sister, Teri. His family still lives in Illinois.

He graduated with a degree in sales and marketing from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. One of the many acting schools where he studied was Chicago's Old Town School. He has appeared in countless numbers of theater productions across the USA. Some of his signature roles are Harold Hill in *"The Music Man"* and Javert in *"Les Misérables"*.

Maine State Music Theater is in its 59th year. Victoria Crandall of Wiscasset, Maine founded MSMT in 1959 when she was 50 years old. It was first called the Brunswick Summer Playhouse and it is still located in the Picard Theater on the Bowdoin College Campus, where the troupe presents its summer season. In the 1970's it became a non-profit in order to develop its intern program to train young artists in theater crafts. The name was changed to Maine State Music Theater in 1988. Bowdoin College is a partner and lessor of MSMT.

The MSMT Board of Trustees is a working board of 23 people who help *guide and promote the theater.*

Stephanie Dupal has been an employee of MSMT for 24 years. Since 2013, as Managing Director, she has shared co-leadership responsibility of the theater with Curt. She is responsible for the business and financial end of the organization. Together they exceed their job descriptions.

Dupal states, "There is nobody on this planet that is more enthusiastic and has more energy for MSMT than Curt Dale Clark. He loves what he does, he loves the community, and he loves the theater. When he is here, he is working 24/7 for MSMT. His personality and his determination are just perfect for his position. He makes sure that the artistic product is the best that we can ever produce and that the relationships with the community are



The MSMT property

Courtesy of MSMT and Victor Oboyski

Courtesy of MSMT and Victor Oboyski



MSMT Trustees & Staff

great, which enables me to work on the business end of the organization. I could not ask for a better partner to work with.”

The MSMT Board of Trustees is a working board of 23 people who help guide and promote the theater, make contributions, and volunteer to assist with projects and special events and even help maintain the MSMT properties. Pat Scully is the President of the MSMT Board of Trustees and is the CEO of Bernstein Shur, a law Firm in Portland where he is a practicing attorney.



President of MSMT
Board Patrick J Scully

Scully relates, “MSMT has been around for almost 60 years and it has a long history of providing fabulous musical theater in the mid-coast area. But what is fascinating, is what Curt has done since he has led MSMT as its Artistic Director. We have consistently strong shows. The quality of the productions and every interaction

that people have with the theater has been enhanced just because Curt has such high standards, expectations, and unlimited energy. Curt has done a fabulous job of getting out into the community and spreading the message about MSMT and building support and alliances with local businesses.”

Scully concludes, “As a result, our subscriber base has gotten



Curt Dale Clark and Stephanie Dupal

Courtesy of MSMT
and Victor Oboyski

stronger; our advertiser and sponsorship base has gotten deeper. The overall quality of the productions and the quality of the talent is very close to that of Broadway. We have sold more subscriptions this year than ever in our history. So, we know that even before the curtain rises for the first show, that we are going to have a successful season.”

MSMT uses local options as much as they can, such as purchasing supplies from area vendors. Last year, they partnered with Brunswick’s Curtis Memorial Library for a “Story and Song” event in which Curt presented excerpts from source material and sang songs from two MSMT kids shows: “*Sleeping Beauty*” and “*Alice in Wonderland*”. In June and July 2016, the Curtis Library featured an MSMT “Collaboratory” exhibition, which showcased the theater’s past, present and future, including theater memorabilia.

The MSMT Company Manager position is a multi-faceted job, which is held by Kathi Kacinski, who has fabulous red hair.

2017 Season Shows

Always Patsy Cline

Guys and Dolls

Grease

Newsies

The All Night Strut (with Portland Stage)

Monday Concert Series: The Hank Band, The Who’s
Tommy, The Taffetas

Theater for Young Audiences: *Sleeping Beauty* and
Alice in Wonderland

For more information

visit www.msmt.org or call (207) 725-8769



Curt Dale Clark at MSMT Office



Courtesy of MSMT
and Victor Oboyski

She states that she is the human resources manager who, among many various tasks, arranges travel, housing and organizes daily calendar rehearsals as well as hospitality functions for the summer staff, talent and interns. Actor's Equity Association has rules in which the talent can only be housed within ¼ mile from where the theater and rehearsal hall is located. So she must arrange all the living accommodations right within the town of Brunswick for the large group of summer staff who are here for the very short 14-week season.

Curt and the MSMT group have made a big effort to enhance the facilities at Elm Street, which is where the administrative offices are located. MSMT now has entirely renovated housing on the upper floor of the Elm Street building and the two buildings that they own in town for additional housing. They are in the process of acquiring a third house. Several hundred people come to Brunswick in the summer to work on the shows and MSMT has to find places to house them. Although they try to hire local as much as possible, many of them come from away.

Curt explained that when the actors first come to town, there are no sets or costumes, but the summer crew immediately starts working round the clock and the show gets put together almost in an instant. "My partner, Stephanie and I have to work hard to get the talent to come here the first time. But—we never have to try the second time. They always want to come back. It makes for a special occasion for the actors when the townspeople stop to express their appreciation."

Every year, 20-30 young theater apprentice artists are selected by MSMT to receive an intensive training in their respective crafts and get the opportunity to study with the best professionals in the business. At the end of the season, they produce their own show at the theater.

One of the largest challenges for Maine State Music Theater is that they only have nine full-time employees. None of them have one job. Curt relates, "I am, at times, the janitor, gardener, window washer, mechanic, etc. If we hired all the people that we needed to do the things that need to get done, we wouldn't exist. MSMT has an army of volunteers including the Angels."

Carol Hammond, Director of Marketing and Communications for MSMT, states, "Our volunteer auxiliary, The Angels, form the

Curt Dale Clark is truly Brunswick's "Music Man". Along with his partner, Stephanie Dupal, he has enlisted a battalion of *creative and generous people* to help produce *award-winning musicals* for the pleasure of their patrons.

core of our ushering volunteers, and also transport cast members to and from the airport, distribute posters and brochures throughout Maine, and provide food and support for the stage crew during show changeover weekends. They do a ton. Most are seniors."

A large part of Curt's job is raising money. He and his staff apply for grants and appeal to sponsors and individual patrons. MSMT is completely non-profit and everything that they make goes back into the company. Their capital campaign is the largest fundraiser.



Courtesy of MSMT and Victor Oboyski

2016 MSMT Interns

John Wasileski with Highland Green Overview

Courtesy of MSMT and Victor Oboyski



One of MSMT's biggest sponsors and patrons is John Wasileski, the founder of Highland Green (HG) 55+ Active Adult community in Topsham and Ocean View at Falmouth Retirement community. Many people who live in these places share John's passion and attend MSMT's productions. You will see HG's and Ocean View's prominent displays in the MSMT lower lobby.

Wasileski says, "Curt Dale Clark is a consummate professional with a great sense of humor and everlasting spirit with an indomitably positive attitude. I always leave a meeting with Curt, or when seeing him on stage, with a smile on my face and a quickening of my step. We became the premier season sponsor in 1989 and that is a role that we have had ever since then. We do not intend to relinquish this sponsorship."

Curt Dale Clark is truly Brunswick's "Music Man". Along with his partner, Stephanie Dupal, he has enlisted a battalion of creative and generous people to help produce award-winning musicals for the pleasure of their patrons. Together they have shaped a well-run organization with a strong endowment. This ensures that MSMT can exist for many years to come.

MSM