

BACKSTORY



BY ARTHUR MILLER

ALL MY SONS



Your behind-the-scenes look at TimeLine productions

YESTERDAY'S STORIES.
TODAY'S TOPICS.

TimeLine
Theatre Company

a message



Dear Friends,

Welcome to TimeLine's lucky 13th season—and to our first production in more than a decade in a venue other than our Wellington Avenue home. With our production of Alan Bennett's *The History Boys* continuing there, we're thrilled to take a short jaunt south to set up shop at the Greenhouse Theater Center on Lincoln Avenue and launch our 2009-10 season.

TimeLine's new season offers four plays of tremendous heart and hope and guts, as well as a look at some defining moments of the 20th century—moments of art and beauty, of friendship and understanding, of innovation and exploration. And we begin with one of the most prominent and outspoken voices of that century, Arthur Miller.

Over the last year, as trust in many institutions and public figures was severely corroded, we were fascinated anew by Arthur Miller's timely themes of business ethics and man's responsibility to more than just himself.

All My Sons—inspired by a newspaper article Miller's mother-in-law read—has been beloved by our company for years. As we talked about the conversations we wanted to engage you in this season, this play leaped to the forefront, seeming more prescient than ever.

Over the last year, as trust in many institutions, corporations and public figures was severely corroded and our nation's moral compass repeatedly questioned, we were fascinated anew by Miller's timely themes of business ethics and man's responsibility to more than just himself.

All My Sons transports us back more than 60 years, while sparking debates that parallel ones that have raged recently in homes and from bully pulpits—and continue still. The play's themes were perhaps most resonant on January 20, on the grandest stage: President Barack Obama, in his inaugural address, echoed Miller with his call for “A new era of respon-

sibility—a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly. ... That is the price and the promise of citizenship.”

That notion of responsibility permeates *All My Sons*, with Miller capturing a defining aesthetic of World War II's “Greatest Generation” of Americans. Despite a nation torn apart and suffering, there was an unwavering understanding of the price of citizenship, a price that far too many paid with the ultimate sacrifice.

Miller implores us to reconsider the shared contract—to family, community, country and beyond—that defined that generation, and we're eager to ignite this conversation as our 2009-10 season begins.

We'll return to our home on Wellington Avenue for our remaining three productions: *When She Danced*, Martin Sherman's gorgeous and hilarious portrait of

legendary dancer Isadora Duncan; “*Master Harold*” ... and *the Boys*, the beautiful and haunting masterpiece of South African playwright Athol Fugard; and *The Farnsworth Invention*, the latest work by Aaron Sorkin, which chronicles the race to invent and patent the first television.

We hope TimeLine will be a place where you not only

will come to see innovative, moving theater this season but also will want to join in a dialogue about our place in history and how the stories of yesterday reverberate today. Whether you join that exchange in a post-show discussion or a conversation in our lobby (perhaps continuing it at a nearby watering hole) or go online and comment in our blog, “Behind the ‘Line,”

or via Facebook or Twitter, we want to hear how these plays impact you, and we hope you'll share your thoughts.

I am delighted to welcome you to our 2009-10 season—and to get our conversations started with Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*.

Best,

Special Events and Resources

the conversation

At TimeLine we look forward to engaging our audience in conversations inspired by our productions. We hope you will participate in our special events and check out the array of additional resources and online communities available.

SUNDAY SCHOLARS

After the show on **Sunday, Sept. 13** is Sunday Scholars, a one-hour panel discussion featuring experts talking about the play's themes and issues. Moderated by TimeLine Board member Peter H. Kuntz, **admission is free**. Visit timelinetheatre.com to learn more.

COMPANY MEMBER DISCUSSION

The heart of TimeLine is our Company members, who shape the artistic vision and choose programming for the organization. On **Sunday, Sept. 27**, join them for a free post-show discussion.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS

On **Thursdays, Sept. 3, 10 and 17; Sundays, Sept. 6 and 20; and Wednesday, Sept. 23**, stay for free post-show discussions moderated by a TimeLine Company member and featuring members of the production staff and cast.

DRAMATURGY

A **study guide** and much more is available online at timelinetheatre.com.

BLOG AND MORE!

Visit our blog, **Behind the ‘Line**, for behind-the-scenes insight and conversation with TimeLine staff and artists. Find the blog via timelinetheatre.com.



For all the latest news, become our fan on Facebook (**TimeLine Theatre Company**) and follow us on Twitter ([@timelinetheatre](https://twitter.com/timelinetheatre))!

the playwright

Born October 17, 1915 to prosperous Jewish parents in New York City, Miller's early years were spent in relative luxury—his father owned the successful Miltex Coat and Suit Co., which, at its peak, boasted 800 employees. But after the stock market crash in 1929, the Millers sold their apartment overlooking Central Park and moved to Brooklyn. After graduating from high school in 1932 Miller began working as a clerk in an auto parts warehouse on Tenth Avenue and West 63rd Street, a dingy building that later would be cleared to make way for the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

After hearing about the University of Michigan's manageable tuition (\$65 a semester) from a friend, Miller sent off an application in hopes of escaping life at the warehouse. He was rejected due to lackluster grades. In 1934, he reapplied and was granted conditional acceptance.

Arthur Miller and Marilyn Monroe on their wedding day, 1956, with Miller's parents Isadore and Gussie. (Arthur Miller: His Life and Work by Martin Gottfried)

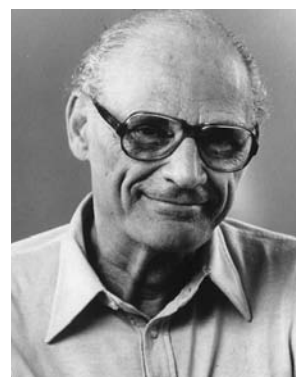
Miller's first Broadway play closed after four performances. It was not until the opening of *All My Sons* in 1947 that he was catapulted onto the national scene.

Originally a journalism student, Miller wrote articles for *The Michigan Daily* and used his elective credits to enroll in a playwriting class. By the time he graduated from the U. of M. in 1938 with a degree in English, Miller had been showered with the school's most prestigious writing awards, including the Hopwood Award (prize \$250) for his first play, *No Villain*. He left Ann Arbor a confident playwright and became an employee of the Federal Theater Project to finance his career.



But success after college did not come easily. Miller wrote a series of unsuccessful plays (for theater and radio), and, in 1940, he wrote his playwriting professor a letter of despair and doubt, decrying his abilities and premature success. His personal life, though, was faring better: He married Mary Grace Slattery, his college girlfriend, that same year.

In 1944, Miller's first Broadway play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, opened to disappointing



Arthur Miller.

reviews and closed after four performances. It was not until the opening of *All My Sons* in 1947 that Miller was catapulted onto the national scene. The play won a Tony Award for Best Authored Play, and also the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award (beating out Eugene O'Neil's *The Iceman Cometh*).

After the success of *All My Sons*, his career took an exponential turn: In 1949, *Death of a Salesman* won both the Tony Award for Best Play and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. In 1953, *The Crucible* earned Miller a third Tony Award for Best Play, despite widespread controversy over the script's "anti-Americanism."

Meanwhile, his personal life was falling apart: In 1955, for his 40th birthday, his wife kicked him out of

their home because of his highly publicized affair with actress Marilyn Monroe. In 1956, Miller divorced Slattery and married Monroe, amid intense media attention and rumors of the couple's uneven intellects.

That same year Miller was questioned in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee, accused of being a Communist. He maintained his innocence but was blacklisted and held in contempt of Congress for refusing to hand over the name of a friend, supposedly a Communist. The ruling was reversed two years later.

Miller and Monroe divorced in 1961, and he married Inge Morath, an Austrian photographer. Morath died in 2002.

Miller wrote 17 plays, but his later work never achieved the same level of success as his earlier blockbusters, though *Broken Glass* (1994) did win the Tony Award for Best Play.

Miller received the John F. Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1984 and a special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1999. He died Feb. 10, 2005 in his home in Roxbury, Conn., of congestive heart failure.

TIMELINE:

Political/cultural history 1929-1947

- **October 1929** The United States' stock market crashes, marking the start of The Great Depression.
- **September 1930** The National Social German Workers' Party (Nazi Party) wins enough votes in Germany's election to make it the country's second-largest political party.
- **February 1932** Duke Ellington records "It Don't Mean a Thing (If it Ain't Got that Swing)."
- **November 1932** Franklin Delano Roosevelt is elected President of the United States. He will be re-elected in 1936, 1940 and 1944.
- **March 1932** Charles Lindbergh's baby is abducted.
- **January 1933** Adolf Hitler is elected Chancellor of Germany.
- **March 1933** The Enabling Act gives Hitler full dictatorial power in Germany.
- **July 1934** Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss is assassinated by Austrian Nazis.
- **January 1934** F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* is published.
- **September 1935** With the passage of the Nuremberg Race Laws, German Jews are stripped of their rights.
- **August 1936** African-American athlete Jesse Owens wins four gold medals in track and field competitions at the Olympic Games in Berlin, the first American to do so.

the inspiration

In 1944, Arthur Miller's then mother-in-law offhandedly mentioned an article she had read in an Ohio newspaper about a war profiteer whose daughter had turned him into federal officials for selling faulty machinery to the United States Army before running away from home. "By the time she had finished the tale, I had transformed the daughter into a son and the climax of the second act was full and clear in my mind," Miller wrote in the 1957 introduction to his latest play collection.

"Everybody knew a lot of illicit fortunes were being made, a lot of junk was being sold to the armed services, we all knew that. All the rules were being violated every day, but you didn't want to mention it." —Arthur Miller

As the legend goes, a few minutes later his mother-in-law asked her playwright son-in-law where he usually got the ideas for his stories. "I just pick them up," he replied, "here and there." In an interview with BBC-TV a half-century later, Miller said the young woman in

the story became a man in *All My Sons* simply because "I didn't know much about girls then."

While the specific case to which Miller's mother-in-law was referring is in question, there were numerous companies indicted by the



Planes in an aircraft production plant, circa 1942.

Truman Committee that could have sparked *All My Sons*. The most highly publicized was the indictment of Wright Aeronautical Corp. in Lockland, Ohio, a subsidiary of the giant Curtiss-Wright Corp. In 1943, the plant, which produced airplane engines, was ac-

cused of manufacturing leaky, defective engines, falsifying inspections and destroying records to cover up its wrongdoing. Until the scandal, Curtiss-Wright had been among the most prosperous companies of the wartime era, boasting the second highest number of government war contracts in the country. Accused of overstating the corruption at the Lockland plant, Truman responded, "The facts are that they were turning out phony engines and I have no doubt a lot of kids in training planes have been killed as a result."

The Government's Effort to Control Profiteering

The United States' government was acutely aware of the massive demands it was making on American industry. As early as 1940 the government

already had doled out \$10 billion in defense contracts. President Roosevelt, a staunch opponent of war profiteering, was caught between the nation's criti-

cal need for materiel and his aversion to the acquisition of extreme wealth in wartime. "The American people will not relish the idea of any American citizen growing rich and fat in an emergency of blood and slaughter and human suffering," he said in 1938.

The initial tactic employed to simultaneously restrain war profits and garner much-needed federal revenue was the Excess

Profits Tax, which is levied on companies flourishing during a war. Anything above a 10 percent return of invested capital would be considered excess profit attributed to the war effort and therefore subject to heightened taxation (up to 90 percent in 1942). Though morally sound, it is ironic that the tax seemed to reward inefficiency and discourage mass production at a time when the country most needed efficiency and increased production.

Despite pressure from his government to compromise with big business,

FDR was still committed to his moral instinct that companies should not rake in cash while soldiers gave their lives across the ocean. There had to be some way to legalize profiteering, or at least ensure that no company was succeeding in spite of inefficiency, mismanagement or internal corruption. If the government could not directly control war profits, the least it could do was make certain that the prospering companies were clean, honorable businesses that were just as venerable as the soldiers to whom they supplied materiel.



President Franklin Roosevelt, pictured giving one of his wartime speeches. (World War II Day By Day)

- **July 1937** Amelia Earhart's plane goes down in the Pacific Ocean during an attempted around-the-world flight.
- **December 1937** Walt Disney's animated movie *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is released.
- **September 1938** Hoping to avoid war, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain appeases Hitler over Czechoslovakia and the Sudetenland.
- **November 1938** During Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass), members of the German Nazi Party destroy more than 7,500 Jewish businesses, 250 synagogues and kill almost 100 Jewish civilians.
- **May 1938** Congress establishes the House Un-American Activities Committee.
- **February 1938** Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* opens on Broadway. The play wins the Pulitzer Prize later that year.
- **October 1938** Orson Welles' radio play *The War of the Worlds* incites national hysteria after millions of listeners mistake it for a real news broadcast.
- **September 1939** Germany invades Poland; World War II officially breaks out in Europe.
- **April 1939** New York City hosts the World's Fair.
- **December 1939** The movie *Gone with the Wind*, starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable, premieres in Atlanta.
- **May 1940** Germany invades France, Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands. Winston Churchill becomes prime minister of the United Kingdom.

The Truman Committee

The Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program (nicknamed The Truman Committee in honor of its no-nonsense chairman, Harry S. Truman) is a study in governmental efficiency and productivity. Its aim was not so much to sniff out war profiteers as it was to uncover incompetence, waste and corruption.

Truman believed the war effort was essentially being strangled by America's inability to produce materiel on large scale, that the Axis powers would only be defeated by an overwhelm-



Senator Harry S. Truman in 1942 at a session of the U.S. Senate's special committee to investigate the national defense program. (Harry S. Truman Library, National Archives and Records Administration)

ing arsenal of ships in the water, tanks on the ground and planes in the air.

In 1941, Truman and his team embarked on a legendary road trip, traveling more than 10,000 miles to visit military bases, plants, small-town factories and corporation headquarters.

Between 1941 and 1948, the Truman Committee called almost 1,800 witnesses to hundreds of hearings and issued more than 50 reports. The committee's findings indicted hundreds of companies and undoubtedly saved the lives of thousands of soldiers who might have otherwise perished from defective materiel—and millions of taxpayer dollars.

The Truman Committee was hailed as a grand success, and its chairman praised for his determination and meticulous management skills. The committee catapulted Truman, then a Missouri senator, to political stardom and primed him for his future role as president.

Other Scandals Uncovered by the Committee

Wright Aeronautical Corp. was not the only big business to fall from grace during the wartime production boom.

In 1943, Carnegie-Illinois Corp. was indicted for producing faulty steel after the S.S. Schenectady snapped in two and sank off the coast of Portland, Oregon only hours after it had been delivered to the Maritime Commission. The sinking was blamed on a

steel plate inside the ship that was brittle, weak and in no condition to hold the added weight of hundreds of men. The Truman Committee took over the case and discovered that Carnegie-Illinois, a branch of the giant U.S. Steel, had supplied the substandard steel. Officials at Carnegie-Illinois had knowingly delivered the materiel to the Maritime Commission and falsified test records to avoid investigation.

Another company was Anaconda Wire and Cable Co. Its Marion, Ind., plant was indicted for selling defective communication wire and other combat wire, even though its officials well knew that the use of such wire would endanger the lives of men serving in the Army. By the time Anaconda was indicted in 1942, the company had been mass-producing faulty communication wire for two years.

“The American Dream is the largely unacknowledged screen in front of which all American writing plays itself out—the screen of the perfectibility of man.”

—Arthur Miller

The term “The American Dream” was first coined by writer/historian James Truslow Adams in 1931, just as Miller was finishing high school in Brooklyn. “The American Dream,” Truslow wrote, “is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.”

Though perhaps a departure from its original meaning, the phrase is now closely associated with the idea of ownership and financial stability and conjures images of well-manicured homes much like the Keller's in *All My Sons*. Over time the phrase even has taken on a kind of glossy reputation, as if to imply its own inherent impossibility.

All My Sons is, to a certain extent, a critique of this dream and an indictment of those who clamor to achieve it without first paying credence to the morals on which such a society must be built.

The idea is also critiqued in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, the first going after the American Dream's shallow materialism, the second attacking the assumption that the dream is available to any American.

A family reunited with their son, circa 1945. (Frederic Lewis, Inc.)



- **September 1940** Registration for the draft becomes mandatory under the Selective Training and Service Act.
- **May 1941** Joe Dimaggio, the fabled “Joltin’ Joe” of the New York Yankees, starts his 56-game hitting streak.
- **December 1941** The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor forces America into World War II.
- **April 1942** Japanese-Americans and Japanese nationals are sent to internment camps.
- **June 1942** The mass gassing of Jewish prisoners begins at the Auschwitz concentration camp.
- **March 1943** Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* opens on Broadway.
- **May 1943** Nazi SS soldiers crush the Jewish uprising in the Warsaw ghetto.
- **June 1944** On D-Day, Allied forces land on five beaches along the coast of Normandy in France, beginning the liberation of Europe.
- **February 1945** President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, meet at the Yalta Conference in the Ukraine.
- **April 1945** President Roosevelt dies; Vice President Harry S. Truman is sworn in as president. Adolf Hitler commits suicide.
- **May 1945** Germany surrenders to the Allies.
- **August 1945** The United States drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, leading Japan to surrender. World War II ends.

the history

January 29, 1947 *All My Sons* opens on Broadway at the Coronet Theatre in New York and runs for 328 performances. It is directed by Elia Kazan and stars the young Karl Malden as George Deever. The production wins the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award (beating Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*) and Tony Awards for Best Authored Play and Best Direction of a Play.

1948 A film adaptation is released; it stars Burt Lancaster as Chris Keller.

1950 A radio play is broadcast, featuring the character of Steve Deever in a speaking role.

1958 The play is adapted for television by Stanley Mann.

1985 Chicago's Body Politic Theater presents the play in the upstairs theatre at 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., with Roger Mueller appearing in the role of Chris Keller.

1986 A made-for-TV movie is released, starring Aidan Quinn as Chris Keller and Joan Allen as Anne Deever.

1987 A major Broadway revival wins the Tony Award for Best Revival.

1997 The Roundabout Theatre Co. in New York City mounts a 50th anniversary production.

2008 Another Broadway revival opens with John Lithgow as Joe Keller, Dianne Wiest as Kate Keller, Patrick Wilson as Chris Keller and Katie Holmes as Anne Deever.



Above (from left): Arthur Kennedy, Karl Malden, Beth Merrill, Ed Begley and Lois Wheeler from the original cast of *All My Sons*; Katie Holmes and John Lithgow in the 2008 Broadway production; Roger Mueller and Erik Hellman during rehearsal for TimeLine's production.

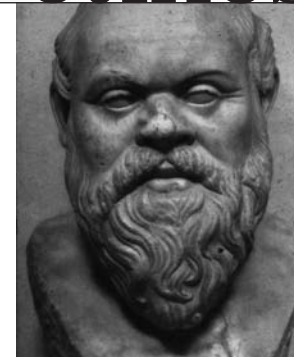
Left (from left): Erik Hellman, Janet Ulrich Brooks and Cora Vander Broek run a scene during rehearsal for TimeLine's production.

the ethics

In *Crito*, an early Platonic dialogue, Socrates declines to escape and opts to accept his pending death sentence, the reason being that he is socially obligated to do so. Socrates argues that he is the product of the laws of Athens and owes his education, citizenship and life to the order and civility of Greek society. One of the tenets of the society in which he had chosen to live is that criminals must be punished. Socrates ultimately was unwilling to step outside that social contract, even to save his life.

This idea of a social contract is at the center of *All My Sons*. "The concept behind it was that Joe Keller was both responsible for and part of a great web of meaning, of being," Miller said in 1999. "A person who violates it in the way he did has done more than kill a few men. He has killed the possibility of a society having any future, any life. He has destroyed the life-force in that society."

Helen Fein, a sociologist and historian who speaks frequently on the topic of modern genocide, coined the phrase "universe of obligation," which she has defined as "the limits of the common conscience; those



A bust of Socrates, artist unknown.

whom we are obligated to protect, to take into account, and to whom we must account."

Her phrase is a derivative of the centuries-old Social Contract Theory, the idea that by living within a civilized, functioning society, we inherently subscribe to certain moral obligations and rules that, if broken, will shatter the very foundation on which the society is built.

In *All My Sons*, Joe and Chris Keller operate under different assumptions when it comes to their respective obligations and who falls inside and outside the sphere of their social contract.

John Donne espouses the same idea in his famed poem "No Man is an Island": "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind." Donne's poetic rendering of the Social Contract Theory has become known as the Concept of Human Solidarity.

▪ **March 1945** Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* opens on Broadway.

▪ **March 1946** Ho Chi Minh is elected president of North Vietnam.

▪ **December 1946** The United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is founded.

▪ **May 1947** The state of Israel is created.

▪ **April 1947** Jackie Robinson, the first African-American to play in major league baseball, joins the Brooklyn Dodgers.

▪ **May 1947** President Truman signs The Truman Doctrine into law, authorizing monetary and military aid to countries struggling against Communism.

▪ **June 1947** Secretary of State George Marshall outlines a plan for U.S. aid to rebuild Europe, known as The Marshall Plan.

▪ **July 1947** President Truman signs the National Security Act of 1947, creating the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Security Council.

▪ **August 1947** After 150 years of British colonial rule, India gains independence.

▪ **November 1947** The House Un-American Activities Committee votes to hold the "Hollywood 10" in contempt of Congress. They are blacklisted by Hollywood movie studios the next day.

the interview

TimeLine Artistic Director PJ Powers (PJP) interviews actor Roger Mueller (RM), who makes his TimeLine debut as the patriarch Joe Keller in *All My Sons*.

(PJP) You've had a very impressive career in Chicago working in both musical theatre and plays. How did you first break into the Chicago scene, and what's kept you here?

(RM) It was an independent production of *Miss Lonelyhearts*, adapted and directed by Frank Galati, that kicked things off in the 1970s. We performed it at Holy Covenant Church at Diversey and the El, right in the sanctuary—quite an evocative setting. Frank gave me the shot and it was a very well-received piece. Got some nice breaks at the Forum and Marriott theaters. Then some of the most precious time was spent as a company member at Body Politic Theater.

I was blessed to marry my college love, actress Jill Shellabarger, and family was an avid hope for us both. This town had the blossoming theatre culture, plus voice-over, industrial work, even some radio dramas that were being done into the early 1980s. All those elements contributed to what could be considered a pretty “normal” life, taking into account what we try to do for a living.

(PJP) Any shows stick out to you as favorites?

(RM) There's no doubt that *1776* always stands out no matter where or when. I've had a few opportunities to play John Adams, but no better time than alongside Jill as Abigail at Drury Lane Oakbrook in 2000. It's such an artful piece of storytelling—you're sitting in a theatre in the United States and yet you sit on the edge of your seat terrified about if the United States will ever come to be. It's clever, touching and painfully sobering. The response of the audience isn't merely for the actors. It's across time—hailing the risks of the historic humans at our nation's infancy.

(PJP) You've got quite a theatrical family. Is everyone involved in the business?

(RM) Mentioned my wife Jill, who has had an active career, with time off to bear and nurture our four children (sounds like a lot, but we had twins—a boy and a girl—right off the bat). She recently did *Driving Miss Daisy* at First Folio. Matthew the twin has been very busy at theaters in Colorado, and also writes

and plays music. Abby the twin, after a fine beginning in Chicago, moved to New York and just closed *Les Misérables* as Fantine in Pennsylvania. Jessica has been busy in *Curtains* at Drury Lane and getting ready for *Animal Crackers* and *A Christmas Carol* at Goodman. Andrew could be the wisest, just graduating from Michigan in linguistics (not theatre!), though he couldn't resist playing Feste in *Twelfth Night* this summer at the university. You'd think they'd know better!

(PJP) This isn't your first experience with *All My Sons*, having played Chris in the Body Politic production in the 1980s, in the same building on Lincoln Avenue that we're performing in now, no less! What was that experience like?

(RM) What a delight to have been included in that tightly knit concoction of characters and artists. It truly was one of those few events you point at and say, that was a life-changer. Pauline Brailsford forged us into a unit behind Jim O'Reilly and despite the pain and torment of the play, none of us ever wanted to leave that backyard.



(PJP) And now, returning to the play in 2009, has your impression of the play—or of the role of Joe Keller—changed at all?

(RM) Without a doubt. Just the reality of having two grown sons of my own has to reshape you. Haven't figured it all out yet, but there was such *hope* with Chris, despite his war experience. He's striving when he has the revelation thrust on him. I remember thinking that the anguish would be so draining and being surprised at how energized I felt after a performance. Joe is another challenge entirely. Trapped by a horrendous flash gamble, he has to delude all to get by, until eventually sentenced by his own flesh and blood. It takes a toll.

(PJP) How do you think Joe Keller compares to the other famous leading men of Arthur Miller—guys like

Willy Loman, John Proctor and Eddie Carboni?

(RM) Haven't had the privilege to work on any of the others, so I don't mean to over-simplify. But where Eddie exists obsessed, Proctor makes his misstep and then tries to force the truth, but is swallowed in the vortex, and Willie is adrift in a maze of illusions, regrets, unworthiness ... Joe is a larger-than-life workman who makes the crucial bad choice in a pinch. He takes the chance to cling to what he's made, but the results aren't just bad or illegal, they are fatal.

(PJP) Is it fair to characterize Joe as a “tragic hero”?

(RM) It's tough to say “hero.” His devastation is as grand and tragic as a classic character, but his devotion to his self-lie makes him perhaps a “tragic soul.” His doings/flaws certainly require that he “pay.”

(PJP) At TimeLine we tend to be research freaks behind-the-scenes with our dramaturgical work, and it's always interesting to see those actors who thrive on it and those who prefer to focus on script work. Has research played a role in your creation of Joe Keller?

(RM) Dramaturg Whitney Dibo gave us photos, advertisements reflecting not just “looks,” but attitudes of the time (like competition in business), explanations of idioms/references—impressive and helpful work. Every time I re-look at the packet I see something connected to where we are in rehearsal at that point.

(PJP) Why do you think this play has been revived often in its 60-year history? What does it have to say today?

(RM) Isn't that the proof of a well-written play? Not only its longevity, but when you start to work at it, the myriad levels that continue to appear. So many vital lessons. Truth is not relative, it is a reality—regardless of what antics the law or courts are put through—and the archetype of justice is as active now as it was when the Greeks gathered on their hillsides to view their great epics.

backstage

“In a world of lunacy and violence, it’s not philosophy and theology tomes, but theatre, as TimeLine does it, that gives me insight and understanding, and at times even hope, about the world in which we live.”

— History Maker Bernie Holicky, on why he supports TimeLine

TimeLine Theatre is thrilled to recognize Bernard Holicky, the generous sponsor of the extension of *The History Boys*. *The History Boys* is the longest-running production in TimeLine’s history, and the decision to further extend that popular production was not made lightly. It takes tremendous resources to run the show each night, but Bernie’s leadership and his willingness to support the extension made the risk of an extension worth taking. Partially as a result of his generosity, the show is running for an additional 10 weeks, allowing more than 5,000 more patrons to experience a quintessential TimeLine production.

“Bernie Holicky represents everything we can hope for in an audience member—he’s passionate, enthusiastic, opinionated, eager to dive into our research materials, and endlessly cu-

rious to explore the world of our plays,” said TimeLine Artistic Director PJ Powers. “Equally important—and always appreciated—is Bernie’s steadfast support, not only by making financial contributions, but also by being an ambassador for the work TimeLine is doing, bringing friends to the theatre and spreading the word about our mission and productions. He is a treasured patron and part of the TimeLine family.”

Bernie is a life-long lover of theatre, and in the summer of 2009 celebrated his 32nd annual pilgrimage to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario, Canada. He has been an enthusiastic subscriber and generous donor of TimeLine for seven seasons, and counts our productions of *Hannah and Martin*, *The Children’s Hour*, *Dolly West’s Kitchen*, and yes, *The History Boys*, among his favorite theatrical experiences.



(From top) History Maker Bernie Holicky with Company Member Juliet Hart at Step Into Time: Wintergarten Varieté earlier this year; Images from some of Bernie’s favorite TimeLine productions: Hannah and Martin and Dolly West’s Kitchen.

Event Recap: Donor Breakfast

Nearly two dozen donors joined the Company members and staff of TimeLine Theatre for our Donor Breakfast on May 31, 2009. This group came together to sip mimosas, nibble pastries and celebrate our many accomplishments of the 2008-09 season. Artistic Director PJ Powers and Managing Director Elizabeth K. Auman also gave attendees the insider scoop on plans to come for 2009-10, while toasting them for the many goals they helped TimeLine achieve during 2008-09.

A new benefit for the 2008-09 season, the Donor Breakfast was created as a way to thank our generous donors giving \$500 for the support they give to TimeLine Theatre. TimeLine offers many exciting behind-the-scenes benefits to our donors. To make a gift or learn more about the benefits of giving, please contact Lydia Swift at (773) 281-8463 x26 or email lydia@timelinetheatre.com

The Benefits of Making History

An important part of TimeLine’s mission is to make history come alive on stage. Each season hundreds of individuals generously donate to this mission, making the work on our stage possible. To those patrons, we offer many benefits, including exclusive opportunities to go behind-the-scenes and gain insider access to the art.

Some of the exciting benefits of giving include:

- Invitations to Opening Night performances and celebrations;
- Signed production posters;
- Invitations to intimate parties with artists and staff, including our popular Dessert on Stage, and Donor Play Reading events;
- Access to the private donor ticketing hotline;
- And much more!

Benefits differ depending on your level of contribution. To learn more about our giving levels and the benefits listed above, or to make a contribution in support of our 2009-10 season, visit us at timelinetheatre.com/donate

BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

Dramaturgy @ Historical Research by Whitney Dibo

Written by Whitney Dibo, PJ Powers, Lindsey Becker, Lydia Swift and Lara Goetsch

Edited by Karen A. Callaway & Lara Goetsch

Photography and Graphic Design by Lara Goetsch

All My Sons Photo by Ryan Robinson

Backstory is published four times each season.

Pictured on front cover (from left): Scenic model by scenic designer Jack Magaw; director Kimberly Senior; actor Mark Richard; actors Roger Mueller and Janet Ulrich Brooks; and actor Juliet Hart.

Pictured on back cover (from left): Actor Cora Vander Broek; costume renderings by costume designer Lindsey Pate; actor Erik Hellman; actor Rebecca Buller; actors Erik Hellman, Cora Vander Broek and Janet Ulrich Brooks; and actor John Byrnes.

Our Mission:

TimeLine Theatre presents stories **inspired by history** that connect with today’s social and political issues.

Our collaborative artistic team produces provocative theatre that engages, educates, entertains and enlightens.

the play



August 31 – October 4, 2009

previews 8/27 - 8/30

by **ARTHUR MILLER**

directed by
KIMBERLY SENIOR

A landmark classic from the legendary author of *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible*, this 1947 Tony Award winner for Best Play returns to the Chicago stage for the first time since an acclaimed Broadway revival last season. In the wake of World War II, a middle-class American family struggles with loss, love and an explosive secret from the past in this powerful drama about business ethics and responsibility.

Cast

Erik Hellman*: *Chris*
Roger Mueller*: *Joe*
Janet Ulrich Brooks: *Kate*
Rebecca Buller: *Lydia*
John Byrnes: *Frank*
Juliet Hart: *Sue*
PJ Powers: *George*
Mark Richard: *Jim*
Cora Vander Broek: *Ann*

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

Production Team

Jack Magaw, U.S.A.:
Scenic Designer

Lindsey Pate:
Costume Designer

Charles Cooper, U.S.A.:
Lighting Designer

Christopher Kriz: *Original Music & Sound Designer*

Susana Pelayo:
Properties Designer

Whitney Dibo:
Dramaturg

Ana Espinosa:
Stage Manager

James Ogden:
Production Manager

Those designers and scenic artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, IATSE Local 829, AFL-CIO.

Location

All My Sons is performed at the Greenhouse Theater Center, Downstairs Mainstage, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

AUGUST 2009

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SEPTEMBER 2009

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER 2009

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
				1	2	3
4						

- Regular Performance**
- Preview Performance**
- Opening Night *Sold Out***
- Post-Show Discussion** with cast & production crew **Free**
- Sunday Scholars** a one-hour post-show panel discussion with experts on the themes and issues of the play **Free**
- Company Member Discussion** a conversation with TimeLine's Company members **Free**

SHOW TIMES

PREVIEWS 8 PM
(except 7 pm on 8/30)

OPENING NIGHT 7 PM

WEDNESDAYS & THURSDAYS 7:30 PM

FRIDAYS 8 PM

SATURDAYS 4 PM & 8 PM

SUNDAYS 2 PM