

Big Band on the Beach



PHOTOS BY MATT WUNSCH



The University of Rhode Island Big Band, led by Joe Parillo, tears into swing and jazz tunes every Monday night from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at The Narragansett Town Beach North Pavilion Clubhouse, Route 1-A, Narragansett. One of the biggest crowds of the season

attended this past Monday to check out the music. There is a suggested donation of \$5 at the door, an absolute bargain considering the talent of the players involved.



Theatre By The Sea brings in NYC's Bundonis for upcoming *Scoundrels*

By MATT WUNSCH

SOUTH KINGSTOWN—Theatre By The Sea will close out the 2009 season with *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, which runs Aug. 14 through Sept. 6. Actor Al Bundonis is taking a hiatus of sorts from his work in Manhattan to play the role of Lawrence Jameson in *Scoundrels*. *Timeout* caught up with him via email earlier this week.

MW: You've been working in the Off-Broadway musical *Sessions*. What has that experience been like for you playing the role of Baxter?

AB: I love Baxter. He is a wonderful character and creating him was a lot of fun. *Sessions* is a fantastic musical, both touching and humorous, about a psychiatrist and his patients. Baxter is a man who is trying to come to terms with his relationship with his father. Unlike Baxter, I had a great relationship with my father. He passed away a few years ago, and *Sessions* gives me the opportunity to spend time with him on a nightly basis. I miss him. He was one of my biggest fans. I'm the man I am today because of him, and *Sessions* allows me to pay him back for that.

MW: How are you able to take time off from that production to take on the Theatre By The Sea project? How does that work logistically?

AB: Being part of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* is just too great an opportunity to pass up. The producers of *Sessions* agreed with that. I had been with the show since it began in 2007 and had never taken a vacation or a sick day, so I had some time coming to me. I'm grateful that I have been granted a leave to come out to Matunuck



Al Bundonis stars as Lawrence Jameson in Theatre By The Sea's production of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, on stage through Sept. 6.

and be a part of this truly exciting production.

MW: Have you ever worked at Theatre By The Sea before, and if not, how did you hear about the summer stock theatre in Matunuck?

AB: Theater By The Sea has an incredible reputation. It just celebrated its 75th year as one of the leading summer stock theaters in the country. I grew up in southeastern Connecticut, and TBTS was always part of what drew me into the business.

It was a blow to the industry when they closed their doors a few years back. Bill Hanney,

Amiee Turner and Joel Kipper have given Southern Rhode Island a huge gift by reopening the doors. It's an honor to be performing on the same stage that Marlon Brando and Tallulah Bankhead once worked on.

MW: You play the role of Lawrence Jameson in *Scoundrels*. Many will remember Michael Caine in that role alongside Steve Martin in the 1988 film. Have you revisited that film to check out how Caine handled the character or is it a completely different approach to Lawrence?

AB: Michael Caine is one of my favorite actors. But I am not trying to recreate his take on the role. The question I had to ask myself is whether I am playing Michael Caine or Lawrence Jameson. There is certainly my own spin on the character, but at the end of the day there is really only one way to play a self-centered, suave and debonair rogue! I'm fortunate to be playing opposite Jason Gillman in the Steve Martin role. He's an amazingly talented and hilarious guy. We have a blast trying to run each other out of town on a nightly basis.

MW: How have rehearsals been going? Are you ready the opening this weekend?

AB: We have been rehearsing for two weeks so far and the end result is incredible. All we need now is an audience to join in the fun. Amiee Turner has been great at letting Jason and I bring our own sense of humor to the roles. There are really exciting dance numbers choreographed by Chris Saunders. Dancing had never been my forte, but he has made me look like Barishnikov. The ensemble is unbelievably talented. I had to

make sure I knew what I was doing in rehearsal on a daily basis because they set the bar so high. The set is gorgeous and the costumes are amazing. I've walked through the costume shop every day watching a crew put together stunning costumes for this show. I saw the set for the first time yesterday. I broke out into a huge smile when I saw my villa on the French Riviera. I can't wait for audiences to have the same reaction.

MW: As a working actor, do you have a preference in specific genres—television, film or live theatre?

AB: Acting in front of a camera is intriguing, but nothing beats the thrill of being in front of a live audience. It's like hanging on for dear life. The train leaves the station at 8 p.m. and you have to be on it. Once the curtain goes up, there is no stopping. In other genres, you get the luxury of another take. You've often heard the phrase "the magic of live theater" and it truly is special. The audience is a character unto themselves. Hopefully they go on the journey with you. As actors, if we touch someone or make them feel the same emotions we are experiencing on the stage, then we have done our job well. We are telling a story, but we want the audience to actually feel something. It's one of the reasons I can't wait to have an audience for *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. It is non-stop entertainment. My biggest fear is that I will be laughing along with them.

For tickets and more information call 782-8587 or visit www.theatrebythesea.com.

Time Out Environment

■ **A Naturalist's Journal:** It's good to mow the green, green grass of home.

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FRIDAY

■ **Washington County Fair:** Through Sunday, Aug. 16. Rhode Island's largest agricultural event. Washington County Fairgrounds, Route 112, Richmond. Visit www.washingtoncountyfair-ri.com.

SATURDAY

■ **Fool's Rules Regatta:** 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Contestants have two hours to construct sailing vessels out of non-standard marine items on the beach. Town Beach at East Ferry, Conanicus Avenue, Jamestown. Call 423-1492 or visit www.jyc.org

SUNDAY

■ **Music at Java Madness:** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mary Ellen Casey makes her first appearance of the summer at Java Madness, Salt Pond Road, South Kingstown. For more information www.javamadness.com.

MONDAY

Tribeca at Coast Guard House: 3 to 7 p.m. Live music on the deck every Monday this summer from Tribeca at The Coast Guard House, Ocean Road, Narragansett.

AUG 19 Chris Barron & Time Bandits: 8:30 p.m. Lead singer for The Spin Doctors, Chris Barron, will perform with his new band, The Time Bandits at Hi Hat Lounge, Providence. Call 453-6500 or visit www.the-hihat.com.

AUG 20 Red Stick Ramblers at The Towers: 7 p.m. Music and Dancing takes place every Thursday night at The Towers, 35 Ocean Road, Narragansett. 782-2597 or visit www.thetowersri.com.