Show Business in Anton

It’s so stupid, but I love to act. It always feels like...something wonderful could happen.

—Lisabette

With sly references to Anton Chekhov’s *Three Sisters*, Jane Martin’s *Anton in Show Business* is full of theater industry jokes and insider references. However, *Anton in Show Business* is more than just a witty collection of characters and scenarios — it also offers critical commentary on the state of American theatre. The play’s main characters, three actresses who have come from notably diverse backgrounds and varying levels of success, find themselves thrust together in a small regional theatre in San Antonio, Texas. The experiences of this unlikely trio of women — Holly, Lisabette and Casey — spotlight considerable issues that continue to plague an aspect of theatre that some would just as soon forget — business. Nevertheless, Martin uses the plight of these “three sisters” to examine the troublesome idiosyncrasies of show business within this deceivingly irreverent, thought-provoking play.

The setting for *Anton in Show Business* is symbolic of the many regional theatres that launched in the 1960s and quickly evolved into venues for individual visionaries and collaborative groups. These theatres were often founded and guided by the desire to explore unknown playwrights, forgotten works and avant-garde forms. Today, major cities across the United States house a number of regional theatres whose production value and philosophies differ as greatly as the cities that surround them. Most of these nonprofit venues rely on season subscribers, donors, grants and federal funding to produce their seasons, yet they are increasingly facing funding reductions, declining ticket sales and rising operational costs. Thus, when Martin’s stage manager T-Anne says, “the American theatre’s in a shit load of trouble,” she’s not just voicing a subjective opinion: a recent nationwide survey revealed that the average regional theater covers only 45% of its annual expenses through ticket sales. Despite this daunting sign, the American theatre continues to (humbly) thrive. Case in point: in 2006, approximately 30.5 million seats were filled at regional theatre productions across the United States, resulting in an actual *increase* in the number of regional theatres that broke even or made a slight profit. Although such a statistic is far from ideal, it still speaks to the promise and potential of America’s regional theatres.

Into this world of artistic missions, tenuous finances and idyllic visions comes the three sisters of *Anton in Show Business*: Lisabette, the schoolteacher and pride of her hometown’s community theatre; Casey, who just opened her 200th show but still needs a day job to pay the rent; and Holly, who, as successful as she may appear, is still hoping for her “big break” into America’s most popular performance venue — film.
Lisabette’s sheltered, yet positive, experiences in the world of community theatre have left her unaware of the need to please investors. She enjoys performance and focusing on the artistic aspects of theatre, if only part time. Casey, on the other hand, knows the life of an Off-Off-Broadway actress all too well (Off-Off- and Off-Broadway are official subsets of the New York City theatre structure, classified by their house sizes as well as their locations). The Off-Off-Broadway theatres, in which Casey has continuously worked for free, provide jobs for actors, but work with limited resources that directly impact the size of production budgets, number of performances and available salaries. Casey has remained in New York for the work, but has become strained and weary from the lifestyle. The last “sister,” Holly, hopes to gain credibility as a featured stage actress and then transition from television to film. Many real-life television and movie stars pursue the same path in hopes of earning a reputation as a classical actor. A great number utilize this method with varying levels of success. Given the American obsession with celebrity and movie stars, it should come as no surprise that Holly has set her sights on Hollywood, using theatre as a means to an end.

Through these actresses, Martin offers us the opportunity to get an “insider’s view” of the American theatre, but from varying vantage points. In so doing, *Anton in Show Business* encourages us to do more than invest in the lives of these fictional characters for a single night of comedic entertainment: it also asks us to seriously consider “the business of art” versus “the business of show.”

— Rosemary Westbrook
Carissa Huizenga
Anton in Show Business
by Jane Martin

Director Jeremy Skidmore
Scenic Designer Daniel Iwaniec
Lighting Designer Jonathan Dillard
Costume Designer Franklin Labovitz
Sound Designer Michael Saltzman
Dialect Coach Jennifer Mendenhall
Dramaturg Rosemary Westbrook

FEBRUARY 12 - 21, 2009
ROBERT & ARLENE KOGOD THEATRE
CAST

T-Anne, Andwyneth, Don Blount
Lisabette
Casey
Kate, Ben, Jackey
Ralph, Wikéwitch, Joe Bob
Holly
Joby

Amanda C. Miller
Judith Ingber
Ali Grusell
Nevie Brooks
Lee Gerstenhaber
Liz Brown
Brooke Shoemaker

ENSEMBLE and UNDERSTUDIES

T-Anne, Andwyneth, Don Blount
Lisabette
Casey, Kate, Ben, Jackey
Ralph, Wikéwitch, Joe Bob
Holly
Joby

Joanna Maria Fortuna
Elizabeth Rose Mann
Hannah Swirnow
Rhea Smirlock
Alice Gibson
Sara Wright

SETTING

New York and Texas. Present day.

There will be one 15-minute intermission.
## ASSISTANT DIRECTORS AND DESIGNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set Supervisor</td>
<td>Carissa Huizenga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Directors</td>
<td>Katie Brown, Jessica Johnstone, Melissa Reed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Lighting Designers</td>
<td>Ariel J. Benjamin, Andrew Dorman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Costume Designer</td>
<td>Chelsey Schuller</td>
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## PRODUCTION AND STAGE MANAGEMENT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Coordinator</td>
<td>Cary Gillett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage Manager Advisor</td>
<td>David Kriebs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Manager</td>
<td>Courtney Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Stage Managers</td>
<td>Madison Bahr, Charleen Trimble</td>
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## COSTUMES

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Costume Shop Manager</td>
<td>Stephanie Shaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Shop Supervisor</td>
<td>Susan Chiang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drapers</td>
<td>Lisa Burgess, Susan Chiang, Emily Hoem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stitchers</td>
<td>Liz Brown, Angela Campbell, Jessica Crouse, Shana Ferguson, Maeve Kelly, Chelsea Kerl, Jackie Littman, Peter Park, Courtney Wood, Students of THET 284, THET 479 and THET 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardrobe</td>
<td>Ellentinya Dodd, Tonique Heaven</td>
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## ELECTRICS

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Manager of Electrics</td>
<td>Laura MacAdam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrics Coordinator</td>
<td>Jeff Reckeweg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>Josef Mensah and Students of THET 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Board Operator</td>
<td>Andrew Blau</td>
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## PROPERTIES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Properties Master</td>
<td>Tim Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhire Properties Crew</td>
<td>Madison Bahr, Devorah Gabai, Beverly Ginley, Cloin McIlvaine, Jose Nunez, Taylor Osborne-Smith and Students of THET 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties Construction Crew</td>
<td>Andrea Moore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRODUCTION STAFF

PAINTS
- Scenic Charge Artist: Ann Chismar
- Paint Crew: Trevor Cerbini, Zach Fernebok, Talia Henderson, Clare Jackson, Jessica Johnstone, Sam McMenamin, David Olson, Matt Sparacino, Mandy Yu and Students of THET 114

SCENE SHOP
- Technical Director: Rick Weinard
- Assistant Technical Director: Andrew Wallace
- Scene Shop Supervisor: Steve Cosby
- Overhire Set Construction Crew: Shane Wallis
- Set Construction Crew: Marin Bauman, Jayme Bell, Theresa Buechler, Claire Burson, Lex Davis, Aaron Holmes, Lydia Johnson, Kevin Meresca, Hector Norman, Rachel Parks, Hannah Swirnow, and Students of THET 114

SOUND
- Audio Shop Manager: Kristine Eckerman
- Audio Coordinator: James O’Connell
- Sound Board Operator: Victoria Sauter
- Sound Technician: Elias Schultzman
- Sound Crew: Students of THET 114

RUN CREW
- Stage Operations Manager: Bill Brandwein
- Run Crew: Justin Isett, Neil Lagola
DIRECTOR AND DESIGNERS

Jonathan Dillard (lighting designer), first-year MFA candidate in lighting design. Jonathan will also be assistant designer on The Winter’s Tale later in the semester.

Franklin Labovitz (costume designer), second-year MFA candidate in costume design. DC area credits include costume designs for The Olney Theatre Center, Imagination Stage, Studio Theatre Second Stage, Theatre J, Theatre Alliance, Catalyst Theatre Company, Rorschach Theatre, The Potomac Theatre Project, Solas Nua and The National Players. Upcoming shows include The Winter’s Tale (Kay Theatre) and Fever/Dream (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company).

Michael Saltzman (sound designer), junior theatre performance major. Kogod: The Distance From Here (Tim). Other UM productions: Polish Joke (director), Picasso at the Lapin Agile (Einstein), The Inescapable Us (director), Erasable Inc, Weekday Players. Outside productions: DC Fringe Festival’s The Naked Party (acting coach), DC Fringe Festival’s Breathe (Father), Howard University’s Joe Turner Has Come and Gone (Selig) and various other productions. Michael is a graduate of Duke Ellington School of the Arts.

Jeremy Skidmore (director) is currently the producer for the Source Festival, Washington’s original city-wide festival for the arts. For six years he served as the Artistic Director of Theater Alliance where he produced 22 productions in five years that garnered 22 Helen Hayes nominations. Among those that he directed were Blue/Orange, Gross Indecency, Mary’s Wedding, Slaughter City and Painted Alice. Elsewhere in the DC area, he has directed for Signature Theatre, Olney Theatre Center for the Arts, Everyman Theatre, Catalyst Theater Company, African Continuum Theatre, Rorschach Theatre and Keegan Theater. Outside of Washington, Jeremy has directed or produced in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, London, Galway, Tokyo, Macau and Tai Pei. Jeremy is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers and is a graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts.

Rosemary Westbrook (dramaturg) received her BA in Theatre from Maryland last spring. Her credits include stage manager on The Bridge of Bodies and Anima at Flashpoint, and The Ash Girl, The Colored Museum, and Aria da Capo at Maryland; assistant stage manager on 1984 at Catalyst Theater Company and Machinal at Maryland; and follow spotlight operator on Grey Gardens at the Studio Theatre.
ACTORS AND PRODUCTION STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

Madison Bahr (assistant stage manager), junior theatre production major. Kogod Theatre: Between Trains (assistant stage manager). Outside productions: In the Heart of America (production assistant), Crucible (props designer).

Ariel J. Benjamin (assistant lighting designer), first-year lighting MFA candidate. Kay Theatre: To Be Young, Gifted and Black (assistant lighting designer). UM Opera: A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Outside designs include: Black Comedy, Our Town, Two Room, and Frozen. Upcoming lighting design for The Illusion.

Nevie Brooks (Kate, Ben, Jackey), junior theatre performance and English double major. Kay Theatre: To Be Young, Gifted and Black (Ensemble), The Ash Girl (spotlight operator), Urinetown (wardrobe). Other UM productions: A Whitewash (Sympathetic Liberal White Girl), Kreativity, Weekday Players.

Katie Brown (assistant director), senior theatre performance major. Outside productions: Looking Glass Land (director), Brigadoon (dance ensemble), Kennedy’s Children (stage manager), Politics of Sleep (stage manager).


Joanna Maria Fortuna (Ensemble, T-Anne, Andwyneth, Don Blount understudy), senior theatre performance major, Theatre Patrons Fund Scholarship. Kay Theatre: To Be Young, Gifted and Black (Ensemble), The Ash Girl (wardrobe head). Kogod Theatre: The Physicists (wardrobe). Other UM productions: Kreativity.

Lee Gerstenhaber (Ralph, Wikéwitch, Joe Bob), sophomore theatre and communication double major. Other UM productions: Alice in Wonderland (Mad Hatter). Outside productions: Capitol Fringe Festival’s Through the Looking Glass (Violet, etc). Also a member of the university’s improvisational theatre group Erasable Inc.

Alice Gibson (Ensemble, Holly understudy), senior theatre performance major, Creative and Performing Arts Scholarship. Kogod Theatre: Between Trains (Madame A and Dr. Doctor), Filthy Rich (Anne Scott), The Physicists (Doktor Mathilde Von Zahnd), The Distance From Here (Jenn).

Ali Grusell (Casey), sophomore theatre performance major. Other UM productions: Shadow (Rachel), Lebensraum (Actor #3), Keepers of Shoppe (Lorna), and Erasable Inc. Outside productions: Studio Theatre’s Grey Gardens (light board operator).

Judith Ingber (Lisabette) senior theatre major and voice minor, Creative and Performing Arts Scholarship. Kay Theatre: The Ash Girl (Envysnake), Urinetown (Pennywise), The Green Bird (Smeraldina). Kogod Theatre: Between Trains (Mimi,

**Elizabeth Rose Mann** (Ensemble, Lisabette understudy) sophomore theatre performance and romance languages double major. This is Elizabeth’s first performance role at the University of Maryland and her second time working with the theatre department. She served as wardrobe crew for *To Be Young, Gifted and Black* in Fall 2008.


**Hannah Swirnow** (Ensemble, Casey, Kate, Ben, Jackey understudy), sophomore theatre performance and art history double major, President’s Scholarship. Other UM productions: Sketchup.

**Courtney Wood** (stage manager), senior theatre production major. Kay Theatre: *To Be Young, Gifted and Black* (assistant stage manager), *The Ash Girl* (assistant stage manager). Kogod Theatre: *Marisol* (assistant master electrician), *The Distance From Here* (assistant master electrician). Outside productions: *Lebensraum* (stage manager).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Produced by special arrangements with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.

The productions of the Department of Theatre offer training opportunities for all students. Casting is decided on the basis of ability, not race, ethnicity or gender, except in those instances where these elements are essential to the play or the character’s development.