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## spotlight

### Dirty Rotten Scoundrels Cons Its Way Into Cleveland!

There are no government officials from Nigeria involved, no Irish sweepstakes tickets that you didn't buy, and no Belgian treasury checks awaiting you if you send in a little money to process the claim. No cons like that—no sir! Oh, you'll be taken for a ride in **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS**, but you'll love it.

Remember the comedy in musical comedy? Remember well-structured, hummable songs with witty and catchy lyrics? Remember still chuckling as you leave the theater? Well, it's all here, folks, and that's no con!

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*The Dirty Rotten Scoundrels Touring Company. Photo by Carol Rosegg*

There are no government officials from Nigeria involved, no Irish sweepstakes tickets that you didn't buy, and no Belgian treasury checks awaiting you if you send in a little money to process the claim. No cons like that—no sir! Oh, you'll be taken for a ride in **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS**, but you'll love it.

Remember the comedy in musical comedy? Remember well-structured, hummable songs with witty and catchy lyrics? Remember still chuckling as you leave the theater? Well, it's all here, folks, and that's no con!

The national tour of the scheming hit Broadway musical DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS is coming to the Palace Theatre at Playhouse Square as part of the KeyBank Broadway Series June 12-24. DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS reunites **David Yazbek** (music and lyrics) with Tony Award winners **Jack O'Brien** (direction) and **Jerry Mitchell** (choreography), the Tony-nominated team behind *The Full Monty*. The raucous new musical comedy features a book by **Jeffrey Lane** that has kept audiences laughing, humming, and guessing to the very end since it opened on Broadway.

DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS, an adaptation of the 1988 film previously adapted from the 1964 film *Bedtime Story*, centers on two con men living on the French Riviera: the suave and sophisticated Lawrence Jameson, who makes his lavish living by talking rich ladies out of their money; and a small-time crook named Freddy Benson, who swindles women by wakening their compassion with fabricated stories about his grandmother's failing health.

After meeting on a train, they unsuccessfully attempt to work together only to find that this small French town isn't big enough for the two of them. So, they make a bet: the first one to swindle \$50,000 from a young heiress triumphs, and the other must leave town. What follows are a series of schemes, masquerades, and double-crosses in which nothing may ever be exactly what it seems.

DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS opened on Broadway in March, 2005, to rave reviews. *The New York Times*' Ben Brantley called it "The most eagerly awaited new musical of the season." Clive Barnes of the *New York Post* raved "A knockout punch to Broadway's funnybone! One of the liveliest, funniest, best-performed musicals in years. Super-smart and superior in every way." And Terry Teachout (*The Wall Street Journal*) proclaimed, "I know funny when I see it, and this show is a perfect hoot! A big hit."

Leading the cast are **Tom Hewitt** (Lawrence Jameson) and **D.B. Bonds** (Freddy Benson). Hewitt has appeared on Broadway as the title role in *Dracula, The Musical*; as Frank N. Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show*, for which he was nominated for Tony and Drama Desk awards; and as Scar in *The Lion King*. Other Broadway credits include *The Boys from Syracuse*, *School for Scandal* and *The Sisters Rosenzweig*. He has toured as Officer Lockstock in the national tour of *Urinetown*. His other credits include Off-Broadway, award-winning regional theater, and television.

Bonds has appeared on Broadway in *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Les Miserables*. His Off-Broadway credits include *The Last Five Years* and *The Ark*; he has also been in the national tours of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Les Miserables*.

Find out why DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS is "musical-comedy heaven...and one of the most deliciously funny, smashing shows of the last 20 years."

And that's no con.

### ***Synopsis and Musical Numbers***

## Act One

As the show opens, it is summer in Beaumont Sur Mer, a glamorous resort on the French Riviera. The season is just beginning for the town's leading citizen, Lawrence Jameson, a debonair British con artist posing as the deposed prince of a fictitious country. Targeting wealthy women who are all too happy to finance the prince's mission to regain his throne, Lawrence sees it as a fair exchange for the fantasies of adventure and romance he has to offer (***The Only Game in Town***).

Lawrence learns that his domain has been invaded by a clever young American con artist nicknamed "The Jackal." Returning from a banking trip to Switzerland, he comes face to face with his so-called competition in the person of Freddy Benson, a small-time drifter passing himself off as a selfless Red Cross worker trying to raise funds to help his ailing grandmother. Posing as a shy dentist, Lawrence befriends Freddy, who is all too happy to offer him his insights into the mysteries of women, while in the background, Lawrence's latest conquest, Muriel Eubanks, leads a song praising the prince's charms (***What Was a Woman To Do?***).

Back on the train, Lawrence makes quick work of Freddy, sending him on a fool's errand into the Straits of Gibraltar and bids him farewell. Through a chance encounter with Muriel, Freddy realizes he has been duped and starts planning a little revolution of his own.

Freddy tracks Lawrence down to his villa, takes one look around and realizes that this is the life for him (***Great Big Stuff***). A little cajoling, a little blackmail, and Freddy convinces Lawrence to take him on as his protégé, despite the warnings of Andre, Lawrence's right hand man, who also happens to be the town's Chief of Police (***Chimp in a Suit***).

As part of Freddy's education, he observes the prince's wooing of Oklahoma oil heiress Jolene Oakes. Unfortunately, Jolene is a bit more feisty than Lawrence had anticipated. Just a girl who can't hear no, she has already started planning their wedding and life together out on the prairie (***Oklahoma?***). Realizing he must find a way to dampen Jolene's ardor, Lawrence enlists Freddy's help and introduces his intended to his little brother, the mad Prince Ruprecht (***All About Ruprecht***). The ploy is successful, and Jolene hurries back home.

The next day Lawrence and Freddy are celebrating their spontaneous partnership at Beaumont's Grand Hotel. The harmony is short-lived, however, as the two soon quarrel. Realizing Beaumont isn't big enough for both of them, they make a bet – the first man to extract \$50,000 from a selected female target will stay on as the reigning prince, while the other must leave town. The challenge set, the only question is "Who's the mark?" The answer comes with the arrival of Christine Colgate, a beautiful, young (and fatally clumsy) heiress known as the American Soap Queen, out for her first taste of life on the Riviera (***Here I Am***).

That night at the casino Lawrence is back in his guise as the prince. He is about to introduce himself to the Soap Queen when he is interrupted by a young American soldier in a wheelchair – Freddy in his new role of Sgt. "Buzz" Benson. It seems that Buzz has a rare psychological condition, having been emotionally paralyzed from the waist down ever since discovering his fiancée's infidelity with the brass section of the orchestra on TV's "Dance USA." His only hope for a cure would be through the care of the eminent

psychiatrist, Dr. Emil Shuffhausen of the Shuffhausen Clinic in Vienna. Unfortunately, the doctor's fee is beyond his reach -- \$50,000.

Christine is deeply touched by the brave soldier's story and assures him that when the time comes he'll have the money. As the two head off to write a letter to the doctor, Lawrence emerges from the shadows. Having overheard Freddy's con, he realizes that the teacher has underestimated the pupil and tries to find a way to turn the game back in his favor.

Up in her hotel suite, Christine begs Freddy not to give up hope (***Nothing is Too Wonderful To Be True***). She heads down to the front desk to send off the letter to Vienna, when a miracle occurs. She rushes back to Freddy with the most wonderful news in the world: Guess who she ran into in the lobby, who just happens to be staying at this very hotel? None other than Dr. Emil Shuffhausen! As the curtain falls on Act One, the door opens and the good doctor enters. It is Lawrence, complete with a smile and a Viennese accent. He is back in the game (***The Miracle***).

## Act Two

As the second act begins, Dr. Shuffhausen cheerfully embarks on his examination of "Sgt. Benson." He pokes, prods, and beats the poor, psychologically paralyzed soldier with a switch, as Freddy struggles to maintain his charade (***Ruffhousin' Mit Shuffhausen***). To Christine's delight, Lawrence agrees to take on the case.

Down in the hotel lobby, the trio runs into Muriel Eubanks, who has returned, unable to leave the romantic fantasies of Beaumont behind. Shuffling between the personas of the doctor and the prince, Lawrence realizes the game is in danger of collapsing and enlists Andre to romance Muriel while he gets away. Although Andre is at first shy and awkward, Muriel is more than happy to instruct him in the art of seduction (***Like Zis/Like Zat***).

As they tour the night spots of the Riviera, Lawrence begins his "treatment" of Freddy. He tells Christine that the more fun they have, the more Freddy will want to leap out of his wheelchair and join them (***The More We Dance***).

Later that night, Lawrence learns that Christine is not an heiress at all. She was named "The American Soap Queen" in a jingle contest and has been selling off the prizes to pay his \$50,000 psychiatric fee. Touched by her sweetness and generosity, he tells Freddy that the bet is off. Freddy accuses Lawrence of going soft and proposed a new bet—whichever can seduce Christine first will stay on in Beaumont Sur Mer, while the other leaves town. Lawrence agrees but refuses to participate – he will simply bet that Freddy fails.

Freddy goes to Christine's hotel suite and confesses his love for her. If only she'd love him back, he believes he'd be able to walk again (***Love Is My Legs***). As he miraculously rises from his chair and staggers into Christine's arms, the bet seems to be won, when Lawrence appears and whisks Freddy away.

As the sun is rising, Lawrence realizes he must get Christine safely away from Freddy and takes her to the train station. His walls beginning to crumble, he reluctantly watches her go and wonders how all this happened

***(Love Sneaks In).***

Back at the hotel Andre and Muriel awaken from a night of romance and too much champagne. Although clearly drawn to each other, neither is able to take that final step, and the temporary lovers prepare to part. Freddy appears under Muriel's balcony and learns from Andre that Christine is gone; he has lost the bet. He rushes to Christine's empty room and is about to give up in despair when Christine returns – she really is in love with him. As they prepare to consummate their relationship, Freddy revels in his victory. Christine emerges in her nightgown, and they move together. Unfortunately, the heat of the moment and Christine's natural clumsiness prove too much for them, as the two rush together, accidentally clunk heads, and Freddy is knocked out ***(Son of Great Big Stuff)***.

Christine arrives at Lawrence's villa in tears. She tells him that she and Freddy made love and fell asleep. When she woke up, she found that he had absconded with all her possessions – including Dr. Shuffhausen's \$50,000 fee. Ashamed and contrite, Lawrence decides to make up for Christine's losses, puts the money in a briefcase and sends her away. She quickly returns; she can't take this, it doesn't belong to her. Besides, she'll always have something from him worth so much more. As she leaves, Freddy is brought in by the police. The two men accuse each other of backstabbing and double- dealing ***(The Reckoning)***.

At the Beaumont Airport, Andre is about to see Muriel off, when they are finally able to admit their true feelings. They discover the fantasy they have been seeking has been there all along in each other, and they decide to build a life together.

The season over, Lawrence realizes it may be time to give up the game for good, as he and Freddy reflect on their adventures together ***(Dirty Rotten Number)***. But is this really the end or just the beginning of a new scam? Find out when DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS arrives at Playhouse Square.



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*The Dirty Rotten Scoundrels Company. Photo by Chris Bennion*

We have a great time with Lawrence Jameson and Freddy Benson in **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS**. These scoundrels have a lot of fun with their “marks,” the ladies they wow, woo and win. But we have to remember it’s all a game—not quite so evil when seen in the context of a musical comedy.

A **confidence trick** or **confidence game**, also known as a **con, scam, grift, bunko** or **flim flam**, is an attempt to intentionally mislead a person or persons (known as the “mark”) usually with the goal of financial or other gain.

The **confidence trickster, con man, swindler, grifter, scam artist** or **con artist** often works with one or more accomplices called “shills,” who help manipulate the mark into the con man’s trick or dishonest plan. In a traditional confidence trick, the mark is led to believe that s/he will be able to win money or some other prize by doing some task. The accomplices may pretend to be random strangers who have won and benefited from successfully performing the task, and this gives the mark a false sense of confidence in his/her ability to win as well. However, the con man is actually in control, and the mark will usually be stunned to discover that they have lost their wager or money. In more general use, the term *con* is used for any fraud in which the victim is tricked into losing money by false promises of gain.

Most confidence tricks exploit the greed and dishonesty of their victims. Often, the overconfident mark tries to out-cheat the con artist, only to discover that he or she has been manipulated into losing from the very beginning.

However, some tricks depend on the honesty of the victim. In a common scam, as part of an apparently legitimate transaction, the victim is sent a

worthless check, which the victim then deposits. The victim is then urged to forward the value of the check to the trickster as cash, which they may do before discovering the check bounces. Another recent scenario has the victim recruited as a “financial agent” to collect “business debts.” Paper checks are not always involved: funds may be transferred electronically from another victim.

Sometimes con men rely on naïve individuals who put their confidence in get-rich-quick schemes, such as “too good to be true” investments. It may take years for the wider community to discover that such investment schemes are bogus, and usually it is too late, as many people already have lost their life savings.

### **Well-Known Cons**

Cons (or con games) have been around for a long, long time; in fact, these games which use confidence in the sense of “trust” date from the mid-1800s. There’s nothing really new under the sun, but some of the more well-known cons have been somewhat updated.

**Three Card Monte; The Three-Card Trick; Follow the Lady; Find the Lady** is, except for the props used, essentially the same as the probably centuries-older **shell game** or *thimblery*. The trickster shows three playing cards to the audience, one of which is a queen (the “lady”), then places the cards face-down, shuffles them around and invites the audience to bet on which one is the queen. At first the audience is skeptical, so the “shell” places a bet and the scammer allows him to win. This is sometimes enough to entice the audience to place bets, but the trickster uses sleight of hand to ensure that they always lose, unless the con man decides to let them win to lure them into betting even more. The mark loses whenever the dealer chooses to make him lose.

**The Spanish Prisoner Scam**, and its modern variant, **The Nigerian Money Transfer Fraud**, take advantage of the victim’s greed. The basic premise involves enlisting the mark to aid in retrieving some stolen money from its hiding place. The victim sometimes goes in believing that he can cheat the con artists out of their money, but anyone trying this has already fallen for the essential con by believing that the money is there to steal. In the newer version, the victim is told he or she has won a large lottery prize in another country and that, in order to collect the funds, legal or other fees of several thousand dollars are required in advance. The victim pays the fees but never sees the supposed winnings.

**The Pigeon Drop**, featured in the film *The Sting*, involves the “mark” or “pigeon” assisting an elderly, weak or infirm stranger to keep their money safe for them. In the process, the stranger (actually a confidence trickster) puts his money with the mark’s money (in an envelope, briefcase, or sack) with which the pigeon is then entrusted. The money is actually not put into the sack or envelope, but is switched for a bag full of newspaper, etc. The pigeon is enticed to get away with the con man’s money through the greed element and various theatrics, but actually the pigeon is fleeing from his own money, which the con man still has—or has handed off to an accomplice.

**The Fiddle Game** is a variation of the Pigeon Drop. A pair of con men work together, one going into an expensive restaurant in shabby clothes, eating, and claiming to have left his wallet at home, which is nearby. As collateral, the con man leaves his only worldly possession: the violin that provides his

livelihood. After he leaves, the second con man swoops in, offers an outrageously large amount for such a rare instrument, then looks at his watch and runs off to an appointment, leaving his card for the mark to call him when the fiddle-owner returns. The mark's greed comes into play when the "poor man" comes back, having obtained the money to pay for his meal and redeem his violin. The mark, thinking he has an offer on the table, then buys the violin from the fiddle player (who "reluctantly" sells it for, say, \$5,000). The result is the two con men are \$5,000 richer (less the cost of violin), and the mark is left with a cheap instrument.

**Insurance Fraud** is a scam in which the con artist tricks the mark into damaging, for example, the con artist's car, or injuring the con artist (in a manner that the con artist can exaggerate). The con artist fraudulently collects a large sum of money from the mark's insurance policy, even though he intentionally caused the accident.

**Online Casino Scam** is a newer type of scam, dealing with online gambling. Many websites post advertising about a math student who has discovered a method or program to beat online casinos; the method is nothing but a variation of the "martingale" that is proven not to work. To improve the scam, the advertiser cites anonymous people that are supposed to have won using this method. The method can reportedly be purchased for a low price, considering the sum that could be won back.

**Phishing** is a modern form of scam in which the artist communicates with the mark, pretending to be from an official organization that the mark is doing business with, in order to extract personal information that can then be used, for example, to steal money. In a typical instance of phishing, the artist sends the mark an e-mail pretending to be from a company, such as eBay. This e-mail is formatted exactly like e-mail from that business, and will ask the mark to "verify" some personal information at their website, to which a link is provided. The website itself is also fake but designed to look exactly like the business' website. The site will contain an HTML form asking for personal information such as credit card numbers. The mark will feel compelled to give this information because of words in the e-mail or the site stating that they require the information again, for example, to "reactivate your account." When the mark submits the form, the information is sent to the scammer.

This list, of course, is only a sampling. Confidence games are continually evolving and subject to many variations and refinements. As David Maurer, in his book *The Big Con* puts it: Con games never remain stationary. The principle may be old, but the external forms are always changing, for con men know they must adapt their schemes to the times. This is especially true of the big con. A good grafter is never satisfied with the form his swindle takes; he studies it constantly to improve it; as he learns more about people, he finds a way to use what he has learned.



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*Drew McVety and Hollis Resnick. Photo by Chris Bennion*

The “con” has long been a staple of entertainment. We delight in watching the con artist craft the scheme, and we feel secure in thinking that we would never be as gullible as the mark in the book, play or movie we are enjoying.

But what about real life? Can you spot a con artist or con game? Most of us think we can – that we’re too smart to fall victim to one of the leading crimes in our country today. The sad reality is, generally, that it’s not that easy. Con artists rob all kinds of people of millions of dollars every year. Cons, scams and frauds attempt to victimize us with false promises of miracle cures, financial security and fabulous prizes. Remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Here are some tips to help prevent you from becoming a victim.

- Never give a caller your Social Security number, credit card information, bank account number, or phone card number over the phone. It’s illegal for someone to ask for these types of numbers to verify a prize or gift.
- Beware of 900 numbers. If you call a 900 number to claim a “prize,” you might end up paying for the call. Understand all charges prior to making the call.
- Don’t allow an aggressive con artist to pressure you into making a quick decision. Demand information in writing by mail. Also, get a

second opinion. Ask family, friends, and/or neighbors what they think about the offer.

- You have the right and the power to say NO. If the caller makes you wary, be assertive and end the conversation. Con artists often prey on the trusting, polite nature of people and the excitement over receiving a prize or bargain. You can prevent a crime and financial loss by saying no and hanging up the phone.
- Don't buy health products or treatments that promise quick cures or a single product that cures many illnesses.
- Look closely at offers that come in the mail. Con artists often use official-looking forms and language. You are not obligated to respond to an offer you did not initiate.
- If you have lost a loved one and you receive a call asking for payment for something they ordered or purchased prior to their death, do not make payment before investigating.
- Beware of cheap home repair work, especially if it is initiated by door-to-door soliciting. The con artist may do an incomplete job, use less than appropriate materials and untrained workers, or simply take your deposit and never return. Never pay with cash. Never accept offers from someone who "just happened to be in the neighborhood." Always check their credentials, work history, and licenses prior to contracting services.
- If someone rips you off or you detect a fraud or con game, call the police, the consumer protection office, and/or the District Attorney's office.
- Don't be embarrassed to make the call. Very few frauds are actually reported, which leaves the con artist free to victimize others.



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**Instructions:** Click the answer button to see the correct answer.

1. Who played Freddy Benson in the movie version of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*?
  - a. John Lithgow
  - b. Norbert Leo Butz
  - c. Michael Caine
  - d. Steve Martin

2. Where is Beaumont Sur Mer, the setting of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*?

- e. French Riviera
- f. The Caribbean
- g. An island off the coast of Brazil
- h. New England

3. Which of these movies also features a con game?

- i. Catch Me If You Can
- j. Ocean's Eleven
- k. The Sting
- l. All of the above

4. In *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, Christine Colgate is known as?

- m. Miss America
- n. The American Soap Queen
- o. an American soap opera star
- p. The Queen of Clean

5. What persona does Freddy take on to help Lawrence scare off Jolene Oakes?

- q. The Jackal
- r. Dr. Shuffhausen
- s. Prince Ruprecht
- t. Andre

6. Which of these musicals also features a con game?

- u. Showboat
- v. Cats
- w. Light in the Piazza

x. The Music Man

7. How much does the winner of the bet between Freddy and Lawrence have to swindle from Christine Colgate?

- y. \$50,000
- z. \$500,000
- aa. \$500
- bb. \$5,000



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*The Dirty Rotten Scoundrels National Touring Company.  
Photo by Chris Bennion*

Who wouldn't like to trade a few of Ohio's winter months for the French Riviera. The sun, the sand, the glamorous life...the con artists? Let's just forget about the con artists for now and concentrate instead on the places we can go each winter on France's southeastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

**Nice** – This city famous for its beaches is located near the border of Italy. This is the location of "Carnaval." The French equivalent of Mardi Gras, "Carnaval" is a wild, 10-day celebration featuring daily parades, concerts, and street theatre that dates back to the Middle Ages.

**St. Tropez** – This modern version of a medieval town is most popular for the line of yachts along the wharf and the facing line of terrace cafes, divided by a parade of strolling tourists and slow-cruising, expensive cars. St. Tropez became "St. Trop" when show business people, artists, and writers all fell under the spell of this charming little port in the 1950s.

**Toulon** – This fortress and modern town is the principal naval base of France, serving as the headquarters of the Mediterranean fleet. This designation also leaves the town filled with hundreds of sailors wandering the streets.

**Menton** – Close to the French/Italian border, the town is nicknamed "La perle de la France: (*The Pearl of France*)". It is also the host of the popular Menton Lemon Festival every February.

**Cannes** – Renowned for its artistic community and its international festivals, Cannes combines the cosmopolitan aura of a small city with the relaxed attitude of a seaside resort. Besides the international film festival, “Festival de Cannes,” Cannes hosts other festivals for classical music, media, guitar, café-theater, fireworks, dancing, and puppetry.

**Marseille** – Founded by the Greeks more than 2600 years ago, Marseille is the oldest city in France. Bustling and brash, it is the largest port in Europe after Rotterdam. Large and industrial, it nevertheless boasts a unique heritage and enjoys a spectacular setting along the Mediterranean. Its majestic island-studded bay and its Calanques, rocky inlets and lagoons, are world-famous.

**La Croix Valmer** – With its seven naturally sandy beaches, La Croix Valmer is known for the quality of its swimming waters. Gigaro Beach is one of the greatest, and is considered the most famous of these beaches.

**Cavalaire** – A paradise for sailors, it is an idyllic coastal resort that offers translucent waters and spectacular seabeds in an unspoiled environment. This town boasts a magnificent 3-kilometer long beach.

**Le Verdon** – Similar in nature to the Grand Canyon, the cliffs of the “Gorge du Verdon” are unique in Europe and are one of the greatest tourist attractions in Provence.

**Beaumont Sur Mer** – The setting of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*



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I am not one given to hyperbole, generally speaking, but this guy knows everything! Well, okay, maybe not everything, but everything about theater, musicals and the stars who inhabit that world. Joe Garry

Former Cleveland State University theater professor Joe Garry is often referred to by the folks at Playhouse Square as “America’s Theater Professor,” and the title is as accurate as can be. I had a chance to talk with Joe not too long ago, and discovered that this affable, knowledgeable man is basically a walking encyclopedia of theater—past and present.

Joe conducts the Broadway Buzz Pre-Show Talks before each show that is part of the Key Bank Broadway Series, as well as Post-Show Chats with the Cast following Thursday evening performances. “It’s like 16 lectures for each show,” he explains about “the pre-show talks, and two [the post-show chats] that can go in just about any direction!”

“We never know if all the cast members will take part in the post-show chats, but during *Legends!* everyone came out, including Joan Collins and Linda Evans. They were delightful, and the several hundred audience members who stayed had a wonderful time with them, as well as with an exceptionally talented supporting cast.”

The post-show chats can be somewhat free-wheeling, but the pre-show talks are all Joe, and all golden. He takes about a half-hour with them, and uses every minute. “It’s amazing how the time flies,” he says, “but I always have plenty to say!”

He explains background, storylines, characterization, genre identification, and more; if it sounds like it’s just a boring college class lecture, you couldn’t be more incorrect. “I’ve had almost 40 years directing and teaching, I do lots of reading and research, and I try to focus on a different aspect or approach for each show. You have to remember that many of the audience members taking part in these come to each show, so I try to mix it up with specific given areas that are different from show to show.”

I remind him that I have seen his pre-show talk for *Spamalot* and his *Master Moments* interview with Chita Rivera, and that I was amazed at his delivery with little or no reference to notes. “Well,” he continues, “it goes back to the research, of course, and the fact that I’ve directed hundreds of plays and musicals.”

Traveling has been a blessing, too, to his theater experience and knowledge. “I get to New York several times a year to keep current with Broadway and off-Broadway offerings, I go to Europe, especially London, each year for two weeks, I spend at least a week at Stratford every year, and I travel to the West Coast as well.”

“I just want to give the audience plenty of information so that they can make their own judgments. I point out things that they should watch for or be aware of, but I don’t always tell them why. It stands to reason that the more you educate the audience, the more they appreciate the show.”

Joe has a somewhat different approach to the post-show chats. “Obviously, these are more audience-generated, or cast-oriented, so I have to shape the format a little differently.” If the questions don’t come easily, it’s up to Joe. “I’ll definitely bring up things such as how the actors work—

individually or with each other—and always keep in mind the different things for each show that *could* be discussed.”

“With Joan Collins and Linda Evans—as well as the rest of that fun cast—the questions came easily, and their responses were just what the audience wanted: fun, funny and just what you’d expect. People still wondered about Krystal and Alexis, and the actresses couldn’t have been more gracious and funny with their answers.”

Joe has been handling both pre-show and post-show duties for several years now, all part of the Broadway Buzz events presented by the Arts Education Department at Playhouse Square, but he has enjoyed an even longer relationship with Playhouse Square. In fact, we all owe some gratitude to Joe for his part in the saving and restoration of the Playhouse Square theaters in the early 1970s. “I am so proud of *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* that I directed back then. It ran for two-and-a-half years during that time, and really was the catalyst for the theater restoration project. We staged it as a cabaret in the State lobby, and it became Cleveland’s longest running show. Later on I did an original musical version of *Alice in Wonderland* in the lobby of the Palace with the clever title of *Alice at the Palace*, and after that I directed a Cole Porter review in the Palace.”

In between hundreds of directing assignments, Joe has also staged concerts for stars such as Marvin Hamlisch, Sarah Vaughn, Bobby Short, Ray Charles, Betty Buckley and Rosemary Clooney. “The late Audrey Hepburn’s final tour for UNICEF was mine, too, but it was extra special because we were able to kick it off right here in Cleveland.”

For five years, he and David Frazier have been performing on the Cunard and Seabourn cruise lines with entertainment they have written themselves. “David sings and performs, while I’m more the moderator or narrator of these dramatic vignettes and songs. It’s all original stuff that we relate to the destinations of the ships.” Again he stresses the need to entertain the ships’ audiences while giving them information to make their own choices and judgments as to what to see and what to do at their ports-of-call.

And if that weren’t enough, these two talented men have a television program called *Odysseys and Ovations*, an arts program shown throughout the country on PBS stations except, ironically, in Cleveland. “What we’re trying to do with it,” he explains, “is enhance the arts through travel, and, conversely, enhance travel through the arts.”

### ***Pre-Show Talks/Post-Show Chats***

Broadway Buzz host **Joe Garry** is eager to welcome you to **Pre-Show Talks** before each performance of **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS**. Join us in the Idea Center at Playhouse Square for our free Pre-Show Talks one hour prior to each performance and enjoy complimentary coffee while you hear the inside scoop on the show.

The Idea Center is located just two doors west of the Allen Theatre at 1375 Euclid Avenue.

Catch our **Post-Show Chats with the Cast** following Thursday evening performances (**June 14th** and **21st**).

