

**The Theatre of  
Western Springs  
Presents**



This program is partially  
sponsored by a grant from the  
Illinois Arts Council

***Fifth of July***

By Lanford Wilson

*Directed by Charles A. Berglund*

**Cast**

(in order of appearance)

**Kenneth Talley, Jr.**

..... **Jeff Miklos**

**Jed Jenkins**

..... **Tom Gess**

**John Landis**

..... **Jason McCargo**

**Gwen Landis**

..... **Jennifer Schmidt**

**June Talley**

..... **Nell Fisher-Agnew**

**Shirley Talley**

..... **Karen Arnold**

**Sally Friedman**

..... **Arlene Page**

**Weston Hurley**

..... **Rick Snyder**

**Setting**

The Talley Place, a farm near  
Lebanon, Missouri

**ACT I** Early evening, Independence  
Day, 1977

**ACT II** The following morning

There will be one fifteen minute  
intermission.

**Acknowledgments**

Produced with special permission  
from Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

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Advantage Home Medical Equipment  
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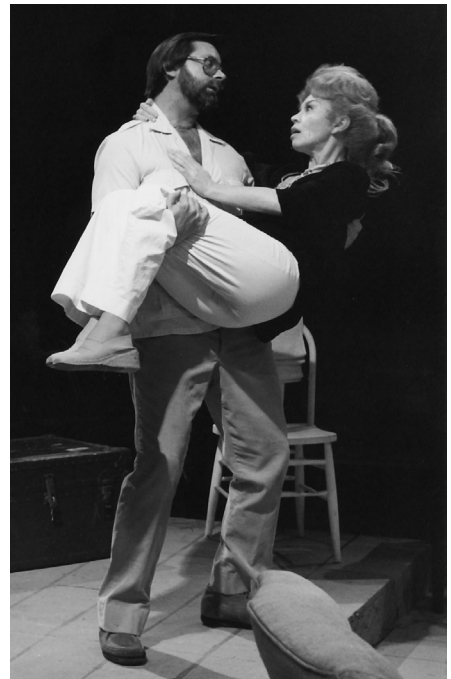
Colin Ashburn for his work and talent  
in providing Johnny Young a special  
voice that needed to be heard.

Hanger Orthotics and Prosthetics for  
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The Fruit Store, Western Springs and  
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cost with free delivery.

Phillips Flowers and Gifts, 47 S.  
Washington, Hinsdale, for generously  
providing and caring for the potted  
plants used in this production.

The photographs illustrating this  
program are from The Theatre of  
Western Springs' archives.



Denny Wise and Charron Traut in  
*The Mound Builders*  
TWS, February, 1982

## Director's Corner

By Charles A. Berglind

When working on a play like *Fifth of July*, one is constantly amazed and fascinated by its seemingly simple yet deep and profound ideas. Lanford Wilson introduces us to eight characters, each of whom has to deal with life changing issues. Set on the 4th of July, 1977 – a day of independence – and the day after, when that “independence” is put into practice, the play shows the characters making choices which indicate growth and maturity.

Told with love, insight and humor, *Fifth of July* relates the story of four survivors of the Berkeley anti-war movement of the 1960's when they reunite fifteen years later. The events of the Berkeley days reverberate in the lives of these individuals and in the lives of those around them,

Suggesting Chekhov – often used by Wilson as a model – *Fifth of July* presents characters who appear to be passive and languid while in truth they are passionate and vital. Casual conversation and idle chitchat disguise the depth of feeling and the conflicts that surface in fits and starts and ultimately burst forth in pain and recriminations. A whole range of hidden feelings is unmasked.

As you listen to and watch these characters, be touched by the humanity they possess. They make mistakes, they hide feelings, they are often hilarious and they are uncompromisingly real. Wilson has created eight distinct personalities who help and hurt, laugh and cry and aid us in understanding the complexities of the human condition.

## About the Director

Charles A. Berglind graduated from Studio in 2003. He has appeared in *Amadeus*, *Barefoot in the Park*, *The Boys Next Door*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Elephant Man* and *Around the World*



*in 80 Days*. He has also acted in and directed several productions in the area. At TWS, he directed Brecht's *The Exception and the Rule* and Ionesco's *The Lesson* for Directors' Workshop. He is a member of The Joseph Jefferson Awards Committee. He recently directed *A Streetcar Named Desire* for Wheaton Drama and will be looking for directing opportunities when this gig is over.

## Dramaturg's Diary

By Marion J. Reis

Although written first, *Fifth of July* (1978) is the third in a trilogy examining the Talley family of Lebanon, Missouri. Both *Talley's Folly* (1979) and *A Tale Told* (1981 – later revised and renamed *Talley and Son*) take place on July 4, 1944. Wilson was so taken by the characters in this first play that he was inspired to create a family history and, in the others, trace how it was culturally impacted by America's wars. The only character appearing in all three plays is Sally.

*Fifth of July* centers on a group of “flower children” formed on the Berkeley Campus in the 1960's. Fifteen years later they have come together at the Talley homestead: Ken Talley, who lost his legs in Vietnam and who owns the estate; his sister June; John Landis (these being the

three who grew up in Lebanon); and Gwen, now John's wife. Others include: Aunt Sally (née Talley) Friedman, seeking to find a suitable resting place for the ashes of her husband; June's daughter, Shirley, the last of the Talleys; Jed Jenkins, Ken's partner; and Weston Hurley, a composer/musician accompanying the Landises.

The characters harbor secrets, individually motivating what they say and do. Seemingly casual conversations – apparently minor and often funny – cover unspoken agendas. Ken wrestles with selling the house to avoid a local commitment to teach high school. Jed is planting a garden, nurturing the estate with a long-range vision. John and Gwen want to buy the house to use as a studio for Gwen, a copper heiress who is emotionally unstable and pursuing a career as a singer. John, her husband and manager, has eyes on her business operations as well. Shirley, the daughter, is asserting her independence and finding her destiny as one of a line of strong Talley women, namely: June, her single mother; and Sally, who bucked her family to marry Matt Friedman, a Jewish victim of Hitler's concentration camps. (Sally and Matt's is an extraordinary love story, fully explored in *Talley's Folly*.) The interrelationships of all the characters form an intriguing web as their reminiscences and attitudes take us back to the days of the Vietnam War protests and the host of other cultural changes that then wracked the traditional values and mores of America.

*Fifth of July* is rich with unspoken implication. It is one of the most coherent plays I have ever read. Every line contains either a foreshadowing

or a reference to a significant past event. It contains a treasure trove of allusions, topical references, cultural implications, symbolism, metaphor and innuendo. It contains much of the American ambience of its times – the California life-style, the formidability of the military-industrial complex and so on – but more fully, the ambience of its Midwest locality – a small town in rural Missouri called Lebanon (like Ozark, the actual hometown of the playwright), with the fireworks of its Independence Day celebration, its social pecking order and feuds, its rowdy adolescent boys, its funerals, and its local characters, like the high school superintendent, Mac, and the vindictive Reverend Poole.

The themes of this play are personal and individual, yet played out against the backdrop of recent American history. Their relative conformity or non-conformity to the cultural forces surrounding them is presented within a more universal set of human longings and ambitions. Each member of the group is, in some way or other, quite vulnerable, facing an uncertain future, struggling with commitment, and variously bearing heavy responsibilities to the ancestral home, the land, family tradition, and each other. As Ken's handicapped student, Johnny Young, put it in his vision of spacemen and the future:

*“After they had explored all the suns in the universe, and all the planets of all the suns, they realized that there was no other life in the universe, and that they were alone. And they were very happy, because then they knew it was up to them to become all the things they imagined they would find.”*

## ***Production Credits***

### **Director**

Charles A. Berglund

### **Stage Manager**

Denny Wise

### **Assistant Stage Manager**

Cathy Van Horne

### **Box Office Crew**

Ed Barrow, Lori B. Proksa, Patti Roeder, Marilyn Wilson

### **Costume Designer**

Danna Durkin

### **Costume Crew**

Cynthia Blaszak, Mary Ellen Druyan

### **Dramaturg**

Marion J. Reis

### **Hospitality Crew**

Hedy Bosch, Bonnie Hilton, Karen Holbert, Susan Waldschmidt

### **House Managers**

Dave Bremer, Rob Cramer, Joe Delaloye, George Dempsey, Harry Hultgren, Heinz Karplus, Jon Mills, Bill Rotz

### **Lighting Designers**

Mary Ellen Schutt, Tom Schutt

### **Lighting Crew**

Tom Frohnapfel, Jim Gary, Dick Jacoby, Martha Niles

### **Makeup Designer**

Mary Pavia

### **Makeup Crew**

Lori D'Asta, Mary Ellen Druyan, Darla Goudeau, Martha Niles

### **Program Production**

Denise Marie D'Asto

### **Properties Designers**

Dennis Hudson, Bill Love

### **Properties Crew**

Ed Belda, Bill Fitzgerald, Karla Hudson, Ann Marie Hultgren, Joe Jovanovich, Joyce Love, Mike Mallon, Mary Smith

### **Publicity Chair**

Ginny Richardson

### **Sandwich Sunday Crew**

Karen Arnold, Linda Cunningham,

Mark Cunningham, Arlene Page

### **Set Construction Chairs**

Mark Favoino, Tom Frohnapfel

### **Set Construction Crew**

John Mueller, Paul Roach, Fred Sauers, Peter Sonnenberg

### **Set Designer**

Kathy Cawthon

### **Set Design Mentor**

Archie Benfield

### **Set Painting Chair**

Cynthia Blaszak

### **Sound Designer**

Jack Calvert

### **Sound Crew**

Jim Gary, Betsy Stiles

### **Vocal Coach**

William Rush



Rob Nardini and Theresa Puskar-Marbach in  
*Book of Days*

TWS, February, 2009