

ED FLETCHER'S EARLY BIRD DINNER THEATRE

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200 South McMullen Booth Road, Clearwater, FL 33759
www.EarlyBirdDinnerTheatre.com

Special Interest:

- "Funny Money"
- 2 Actor Spotlights
- Summer Show
- 2010/2011 Season

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According to Lee Clark Zumpe of TBN Weekly, Ed Fletcher's production of "Funny Money" "blends subterfuge with slapstick."

If you haven't seen this current production yet, make sure to come before we close on June 20, 2010.

"Funny Money" is a classic British farce written by Ray Cooney, the author of previous Early Bird hits, "Out of Order" and "Run for Your Wife."

The show first premiered in London in 1994, and was later adapted for film in 2006, starring Chevy Chase and Penelope Ann Miller.

When mild mannered accountant, Henry Perkins, accidentally picks up the wrong briefcase, he discovers it contains a huge amount of money. Henry sees this as his one chance to change his life and free himself and his wife from a rather ordinary existence.

While his wife, Jean, is expecting a quiet night at home, celebrating Henry's birthday with their friends Vic and Betty Johnson, Henry is plotting their departure from London to a life of luxury. Barcelona,



Cast: (Seated) Michael DuMouchel, Jonelle Meyer, Rick Kistner, Barbara Anthony; (Standing) Tracy Borgatti, Joe Johnson, Jennifer Sloane, Brent Ballard.

Bali . . . it doesn't matter where they go, as long as they keep the money and get out of town before it's too late.

Jean responds with hysterical bewilderment, downing one drink after another in a frantic attempt to calm herself, while pleading with Henry to turn in the briefcase.

Of course, as Lee Zumpe notes in his review, "Nothing ever goes as planned in a farce, though, does it?"

A parade of obstacles threatens to ruin Henry's plans. Two police detectives, a taxi driver, the mysterious and dangerous Mr. Big, and multiple layers of mistaken identities fly

across the stage increasing Jean's hysteria and wreaking havoc with Henry's plans.

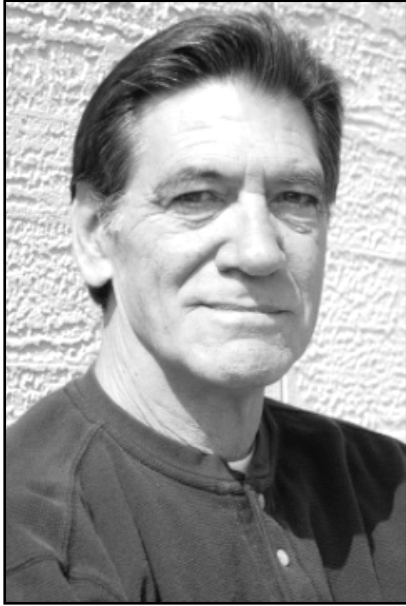
Artistic Director, Robin New has put together a quality cast whose characters will take you on a very wild and funny ride.

"Funny Money" is a comic delight!!! Call soon for reservations before this great show closes on June 20, 2010.

See you at the show!

**For Reservations
Call
727-446-5898**

ACTOR SPOTLIGHT: Michael DuMouchel



Michael DuMouchel

People choose to become actors for a variety of reasons. For some actors, however, it's more than a choice. It's a lifelong passion. And once that passion is tasted, "it grabs you by the throat and never lets go," says veteran actor and director, Michael DuMouchel.

Michael was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and graduated from High School there. However, because Michael's father was in the Air Force, the years in between were spent moving across this country and abroad. Most of the bases also had community theatres where Michael's father, in addition to his Military service, acted and directed. A talented man and former USO performer, Bob DuMouchel also sang and painted. He was a strong influence in his son's passion for theatre. Michael's sense of professionalism and dedication developed naturally from his passion for theatre.

Michael first began acting when he was about twelve years old.

His father was directing the comedy "Time Out for Ginger," and gently dared Michael to audition. Michael went to that audition and got the part on his own merit. From that moment on, all Michael wanted to do was act. Acting was something he could do well, and he liked doing it. Michael states his career philosophy simply, "If you don't like what you're doing, don't do it!"

When the family moved back to Grand Rapids in Michael's senior year of High School, there were two community theatres. One was a theatre in the round that operated in the summer, and the other was a theatre that ran shows during the fall and winter months. Michael worked at both theatres. When asked what his theatre experiences meant to him at that point in his life, Michael gave this example. On graduation day from High School, there was also a dress rehearsal for "No Time for Sergeants," in which he was playing Will Stockdale. Michael chose to attend the dress rehearsal over his graduation. What he didn't know was that the director had arranged for a local TV crew to attend the dress rehearsal. The District Superintendent of Schools was also in attendance, and presented Michael with his diploma during the television broadcast! A nice example of how following one's heart can set things right.

In addition to his father, Michael worked with some good actors and directors in those early years, who taught him well. One director, in particular, instilled in Michael the importance of focus and learning as much as one can about their craft. In fact, Michael called that director

some thirty years later to thank him for how much he realized that he'd learned from him.

Michael moved to Florida in 1969 and continued acting, in addition to working different jobs ranging from construction to retail sales and restaurants. In the late 1970's he started his own theatre company. Their first show was "The Oldest Living Graduate." In a touching twist of fate, Michael directed his father in this show. While Bob DuMouchel had directed his son's first performance, Michael was to direct his father's final one.

The theatre company had several locations over the years, and Michael became well versed at producing, directing and set design, in addition to acting.

Michael also worked at American Stage as a technical and artistic director. He spent five years at Showboat, as an actor, technical director, set designer, master carpenter, and Equity assistant stage manager. Michael has also acted at Stageworks in Tampa. In fact, Michael DuMouchel has probably worked at every theatre in the Tampa Bay area!

What keeps him acting after all these years? It's his passion, and Michael will be the first to say that he's always learning more about his art. "In every play I do, acting or directing, I learn something from everyone involved," says Michael. He adds, "As an artist, I'm never really satisfied and that compels me to continue growing and increasing my knowledge base."

We hope you are thoroughly enjoying Michael's performance as Henry Perkins in Ed Fletcher's current production of "Funny Money."

ACTOR SPOTLIGHT: Brent Ballard



Brent Ballard

On more than one occasion, we have overheard patrons compare Brent Ballard to actor and comedian, John Cleese. Whether it's his humorous facial expressions or his onstage mannerisms that draw this comparison, it's a good one. Brent is a natural comedian, who uses his sense of humor both on stage and off. When asked where he was born and raised, Brent quipped, "Mayberry RFD."

In fact, Brent was born in Ironton, Ohio and grew up in Coal Grove, Ohio. He graduated as Valedictorian of his class at Dawson Bryant High School. A self-proclaimed gypsy at heart, Brent attended various institutions of higher education, finally earning his BSBA in Marketing and Accounting at Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky.

Brent's first taste for performing came at the age of five. "At the drop of a hat, I would break into the Speedy Alka Seltzer Theme Song,"

says Brent with a laugh.

His first real theatrical experience came a few years later in a community theatre production of "Laura." That was when Brent realized he was hooked on acting.

Since then, Brent says he has run the gamut from community theater, commercials, voice-overs, infomercials, extra work, indie films, musicals, interactive murder mysteries and audience participation melodramas.

Brent spent ten years in Dallas, Texas at the Pocket Sandwich Theatre whose stock in trade were riotous melodramas. He also served on the Board of Directors there, in addition to acting, directing, food service manager, and was jumped in as a waiter and bartender when needed.

While living in Ohio, Brent was the artistic director of his own dinner theatre where he produced shows under his company name Chrystal Productions. Brent says that this venture was a successful one. "Even in Mayberry," he adds, "Which had never seen anything like it before."

Over the years, Brent has held several different jobs in addition to his theatre life. From accounting to catering, and from bartending to retail, Brent has had some interesting job experiences to draw upon for his acting career.

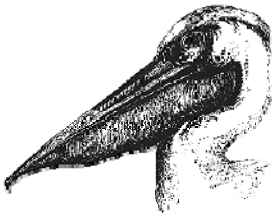
Brent prefers to do comedies and musicals. Some of his favorite shows have been the role of Count Dracula in "Dracula: The Melodrama;"

Jacques Brel in "Jacque Brel is Alive and Well;" Dr. Scott in "The Rocky Horror Picture Show;" and Teddy Brookstone in "There's a Burglar in my Bed." The last show was at the Early Bird, and was Brent's first bedroom farce, which he says, was a truly delightful experience.

When asked about any anecdotes he wanted to share, Brent displayed his irreverent sense of humor. "So far, I have had two exciting brushes with fame. I met Rita Hayworth, in her pre-Alzheimer's days; and I once entertained Sonny Bono in my home in Dallas, in his pre-skiing accident days!"

What is it about the experience of acting that keeps Brent hooked? He says that it's the immediate gratification of the laughter from the audience, "I hope there's laughter with comedies! Please," he adds with a laugh. Brent also finds gratification from meeting and working with a wide variety of fascinating personalities he has found in the theatre world. Last, but not least, Brent says, "There is also the hope that all the memorization and mental stimulation that actors endure might help prevent senility." He pauses for a moment, and then asks, "What was I saying?"

Brent is clearly a natural born comedian. His recent roles at Early Bird have proven to be a delight for the audiences. The feeling is mutual for Brent, who says, "All the shows I've done at the Early Bird Dinner Theatre have been awesome, both the actors and the patrons." He is grateful to Ed Fletcher and Robin New for casting him.



Early Bird Dinner Theatre

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Make sure you check our website often for upcoming news.

Earlybirddinnertheatre.com

**Producer
Ed Fletcher**

**Artistic Director
Robin New**

KITCHEN WITCHES Rehearsals Have Begun

After a brief summer intermission from June 21 to July 14, 2010, Early Bird will be presenting *The Kitchen Witches* by Caroline Smith.

Isobel Lomax and Dolly Biddle are two mature cable-access cooking show hostesses, who have hated each other for thirty years, ever since Larry Biddle dated one and married the other.

When circumstances put them together on a TV show called *The Kitchen Witches*, the insults are flung harder than the food!

Dolly's long-suffering TV-producer son, Stephen, tries to keep them on track, but as long as Dolly's dressing room is one inch closer to the set than Isobel's, it's a losing battle, and the show becomes a ratings smash, as Dolly and Isobel top both Martha Stewart and Jerry Springer combined.

This funny show was the winner of the 2005 Samuel French Canadian Play Contest.

Artistic Director, Robin New, has put together a fabulous cast that includes: Midge Mamatas, Jennifer Sloane, Ian McCallum and Barbara Anthony.

***Kitchen Witches* opens July 15 and runs until September 5, 2010.**

Get Your Ducks in a Row for Our 2010/2011 Season

Funny Money from April 29 to June 10, 2010.

Kitchen Witches from July 15 to September 5, 2010.

Lovers and Other Strangers from September 9 to October 31, 2010.

How the Other Half Loves from November 4 to December 26, 2010.

NEW!!! The Dixie Swim Club from January 6 to February 27, 2011

NEW!!! Sex Please, We're Sixty from March 3 to April 24, 2011

NEW!!! Don't Dress for Dinner from April 28 to June 19, 2011

For more information and details of upcoming shows, please visit our website:

Earlybirddinnertheatre.com

Patron Corner:

If you'd like to tell us about some special memories you've had at the theatre or want to tell us about one of your favorite shows, just send us an email at

newsletter@earlybirddinnertheatre.com

We look forward to hearing from you!!!

Jennifer Sloane
Editor, Early Bird Newsletter