Welcome!
A Message to Our Alumni

Hello, alumni! As ROC Players approaches its five-year anniversary, we have started looking for ways to stay in touch with you and anyone else who has an interest in ROC Players. We aim to send out a newsletter twice a year for the time being. We also plan to start a musical theatre group on The Meliora Collective, where we will post newsletters and updates. This will be an excellent way for alumni to connect with our current membership. Although the group is still in progress, we encourage you to activate your Meliora Collective account and keep an eye out for our group that will hopefully be up and running at some point this semester. The Meliora Collective is accessible to all current students and alumni.

We are now able to invest more time in alumni relations due to a donation ROC Players received in Fall 2019. Because of the donation, we’ve been able to begin discussing more performance opportunities for the group and improving the quality of our mainstage musical each semester. In addition, the e-board position of Fundraising Chair has now changed to Advancement Chair. The Advancement Chair can spend time connecting our alumni with our current members while overseeing the fundraisers that still help ROC Players. This shift was only possible because ROC Players doesn’t have to rely as heavily on fundraising as we did before.

Members of the ROC Players executive board met with our donor, alumna Patty VanAllan ’74, during Meliora Weekend this past fall. She is incredibly supportive of ROC Players and all student theatre at the University of Rochester. We were also lucky enough to have time to talk about ROC Players and what it means to each of us, and to hear stories about what University of Rochester theatre was like before the current theatre groups were formed. A picture from our meeting is shown above.

Thank you to all our alumni for creating the foundation of ROC Players. We’re so excited to begin the process of gathering our alumni network. Please feel free to reach out to any of the current executive board listed at the end of the newsletter if you have questions or ideas for this process.
Member Spotlight
An Interview with a Current Member

To keep you updated on the current atmosphere of ROC players, we interviewed member Rachel Young ’23 about her experience with the club. Rachel has been a member since the beginning of her freshman year this past fall.

What’s your major?
“I’m majoring in Brain and Cognitive Science with either a double major or minor in American Sign Language.”

What’s your favorite musical?
“My all-time favorite musical is Next to Normal, with Falsettos being a close second. That being said, my favorite musical at any moment is usually whatever show I’m working on!”

How have you been involved in ROC Players?
“Last semester (Fall 2019), I played Amos Calloway in Big Fish. This semester (Spring 2020), I am looking forward to being an assistant stage manager for The Spitfire Grill! This is extra exciting for me, because I have wanted to stage manage for years now and am so grateful to finally have the opportunity!”

What is one thing ROC Players has helped you with?
“ROC Players gave me a near-immediate home at U of R. Every- one on ROC Players is so down-to-earth and welcoming that, just a couple weeks into my first semester, I knew I had found my place. ROC Players gave me assurance that I chose the right school to spend my next four years at.”

Looking Back
A Review of Past Shows

(1) The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
(2) The Last Five Years
(3) Next To Normal
(4) Into the Woods
(5) Spring Awakening
(6) Cabaret
(7) Bright Star
(8) Big Fish

And next... The Spitfire Grill
Work on The Spitfire Grill is beginning already. We can’t wait to see what our future shows bring to ROC Players!

What’s your favorite ROC Players memory so far?
“It’s mid-November and we’ve just finished closing night of Big Fish. Everyone is exhausted from a strenuous, albeit amazingly fun, week. Before we can relax, we have to strike the space. Everyone is given a job, as we finally get into the groove, the fire alarm goes off. Ok, well that’s a kink in our schedule. Everyone evacuates and heads over to wait in a nearby building. We wait. And wait. And wait. And, instead of going back to their dorms, everyone stays. Fast-forward an hour later and the fire alarm is still going off. At this point, it’s maybe 12:30am. Finally we are allowed back into the building and, instantaneously, everyone gets back to work, as if we weren’t supposed to be done hours ago, as if we weren’t all exhausted. This camaraderie and dedication to our craft inspired me immensely and makes me so proud to call myself a ROC Player.”

Upcoming Highlights and Ideas for 2020

The Spitfire Grill
Our mainstage production will be performed the evenings of April 3 and 4, and for a matinee on April 4. The performance will take place in the May Room on the fourth floor of Wilson Commons.

Another Performance Opportunity
The ROC Players executive board and general membership are currently discussing ideas for extra performance opportunities. To accommodate our growing membership, we’ve discussed ideas such as a dream role cabaret or an in-concert show in addition to our mainstage performance. Though this discussion is still in the early stages, we hope to offer more opportunities to our members in the near future.

5th Reunion
To celebrate ROC Players’ five-year anniversary next school year, the executive board is planning to host a reunion event at Meliora Weekend 2020, October 1-4. We haven’t worked out our specifics details yet, but we are excited to offer our alumni and current members an opportunity to meet up for ROC Players’ first big anniversary. We will provide details when they become available, but we encourage you to plan to see us for Meliora Weekend!

Director Spotlight
An Interview with our Current Director

Our spring 2020 show, The Spitfire Grill, will be directed by Emily Tworek ’20. Emily has been a member of ROC Players since her sophomore year. She’s been an actor, costume designer, and director for previous ROC Players shows. She has also served on the executive board as both business manager and artistic director. Emily is ROC Players’ first two-time director; she also directed Cabaret in Fall 2018. One thing Emily plans to bring to the show is a very immersive set. She wants to really bring the audience into the world of the characters. Emily is most excited to bring the lesser-known story of The Spitfire Grill to the University of Rochester campus; she believes that the show, “gives a great opportunity to spread a message of kindness, forgiveness, and community when we could all use more of that in our lives.”

The Spitfire Grill follows the story of three women in the small town of Gilead, Wisconsin. When newcomer Percy arrives in town, she begins working at the Spitfire Grill where she quickly becomes friends with Hannah and Shelby, the other two women working there. When Percy discovers that Hannah has been trying to sell the Grill, she and Shelby come up with the plan to start an essay contest where the best essay writer will be awarded the Spitfire Grill. The show displays themes of forgiveness and acceptance as each character comes to terms with parts of their past they are ashamed of. The Spitfire Grill will be performed on April 3 and 4.

Big Fish
Our Fall Semester Show

This past fall, ROC Players produced Big Fish. Directed by Anne Boatman ’20, Big Fish pushed ROC Players’ technical boundaries in many ways. The magical themes of this show gave us the opportunity to explore different styles of costumes, sets, and blocking. Costume designer Emily Tworek ’20 included a mermaid tail, a witch costume, and many more magical elements. We even had an actor, Levi Sunday-Lefkowitz ’22, on stilts as he played “Karl the Giant.” The designers incorporated projections to show the different stories lead character “Edward Bloom” (Casey Brentnall ’20) told. For one scene, balloons rose out of the river in the middle of the stage after staying hidden for all of Act One. As usual, we were so proud of all our members who worked on the show.

“Just a couple weeks into my first semester, I knew I had found my place.”

– Rachel Young ’23
Outside Performing

**ROC Players Activities Outside of the Mainstage Production**

As much as we all love our mainstage productions, ROC Players has started trying to involve general membership who are not currently working on the production through social events and other opportunities. With how busy the average University of Rochester student is, many of our members need to take a semester off from working on a show from time to time, but they still want to remain active in the group. This school year, the executive board has made a bigger effort to offer other opportunities to general membership, such as frequent social events and more interactive weekly meetings. Led by our social chair Victoria Bebber ’20, ROC Players has gone apple picking, ice skating, had movie nights, and had mixers with other theatre groups such as TOOP. This allows members to remain active for the semester even when they cannot commit to the mainstage production. These social events and more interactive meetings make ROC Players feel more like a club and provide a fun environment for all our members. In addition to social events, our active members hear about theatre opportunities during our meetings. Some of these opportunities have been hosted by other members, such as Emily Twerek’s ’20 theatre resume workshop last semester. We love being able to offer so much to our membership and are constantly looking for ways to improve everyone’s experience in ROC Players.