The Diary of Anne Frank

1 comment
Twelve performances of *The Diary of Anne Frank* come to the Lab Theater on April 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26 (which is a 2 p.m. matinee performance) and 30, and on May 1 and 2, 2015. Set in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam and depicting a family and acquaintances hidden in the sealed-off upper rooms of an office building, this is Anne Frank’s story of captivity, fear, and the burgeoning of a hopeful and beautiful spirit. In the indomitable words of Anne Frank, “I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart.” In this section, you will find articles about the play, playwright, director and upcoming production of the show at the Laboratory Theater of Florida (posted in date order from oldest to latest).

Tickets are available from the theater’s website, [www.LaboratoryTheaterFlorida.com](http://www.LaboratoryTheaterFlorida.com), or by calling 239.218.0481. There will also be an opening night reception, starting at 7:15 p.m. Tickets are $12 for students and $22 for adults at the door. The theater also offers Thursday night discounts to seniors and military, at $18.50 per ticket. Seating is limited.

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‘Anne Frank’ actress likes being compared to hummingbird on speed (04-18-15)
In a recent story about *The Diary of Anne Frank*, 13-year-old star Kaycie Lee was described as flitting “frenetically around the small warren of on-stage rooms like a hummingbird on speed.” Kaycie loves the simile. “I’ve had a page from Anne’s diary earmarked for months,” writes Kaycie in a comment she posted to the story. “Friday, 29 October 1943. Outside you don’t hear a single bird, and a deathly, oppressive silence hangs over the house and clings to me as if it were going to drag me into the deepest regions of the underworld... I wander from room to room, climb up and down the stairs and feel like a songbird whose wings have been ripped off and who keeps hurling itself against the bars of its dark cage. ‘Let me out, where there’s fresh air and laughter!’ a voice within me cries.”

Since winning the role of Anne Frank a year ago, Kaycie has lived with the diary. In fact, she has studied all three versions of Anne Frank’s journal. The effort translates into an on-stage passion and verve the audience cannot help appreciate and admire, and one of the factors that makes her performance is so darn compelling.

See above for play dates, times and ticket information.

Q & A with ‘Diary of Anne Frank’ actor Matthew DeNoncour (04-17-15)
Playing now through May 2 at Lab Theater is *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The role of Otto Frank is played by Matthew DeNoncour. I recently caught up with Matthew by telephone after rehearsal Wednesday night for a Q&A.

TH: *What is it like playing Otto Frank?*

MDN: I love everything about the character and the story, but what I appreciate most is the opportunity to work with such a talented cast and crew. And [director] Annette Trossbach has been tremendous.

TH: *What’s the biggest challenge in playing a character like Otto Frank?*

MDN: Although I started acting while I was in high school, this is the first time I have ever played a real person. There is video of Otto Frank which shows his mannerisms, how he walked and the sound of his voice. I’ve been tempted to study the footage, but Annette’s
vision of this play is to remain true to the script. So I have read the diary, but I didn’t go any further than that in bringing Otto Frank to life.

TH: In some instances, there could be a wide discrepancy between the way Otto Frank really was and the way his daughter saw him.

MDN: That’s true. Anne always views her father in a very warm light, but the character of Otto Frank is also a creation of the playwrights. Otto chose the publisher and the playwrights, and he even edited the script.

TH: In fact, Otto Frank brought in Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett for the specific purpose of giving his daughter’s diary a sunnier, feel-good spin after he fired the original playwright, Meyer Levin, for producing a reputedly dark and less sanitized drama that Frank went to court to ban from production.

MDN: The real Otto Frank was strict and severe. Goodrich and Hackett portrayed him in a much better light. But the arc of this character does break at the end. It just took a lot for him to finally give in to the stress.

TH: So the Otto Frank the audience sees on stage is true to the diary and Goodrich/Hackett script?
MND: Yes. In fact, the props, set and lighting design all follow the stage directions [which Goodrich and Hackett provide in the script] very closely. It’s been a unique experience to work with a director who follows stage directions to a tee, and it has worked out incredibly well with so many people on stage at the same time, moving about a very crowded set.

TH: Does the script give the director and actors any latitude for using their own vision or creativity in interpreting the script?

MDN: There’s a place in Scene 2 where I put away the ledgers I’m looking over and play cards with Edith. The stage directions just say “Otto and Edith play cards,” but Annette had us smile at each other in a way that shows more of the relationship the couple shared.

TH: Which was?
MDN: I don’t think they were in love with each other anymore [in the way two people share passion when they first fall for each other]. But she is dear to him, and he’s the loving patriarch to her and Anne and Margot. I think Edith loved him more than he did her.

TH: Do you have a favorite scene?

MDN: I really enjoy the scene where Anne wakes up screaming from a nightmare and I’m tasked with comforting her. She’s talking about herself and how she wants to be a nice person and as a father, I’m thinking, “Here’s my daughter having so many emotions she can’t control.” And there’s a line where I tell her that there’s only so much a parent can do and then you have to do the rest to form your own personality. That really resonates with me.

TH: And with any parent sitting in the audience.

MDN: There’s a lot in this play for the audience to take away with them. If they are looking for a history lesson, they’ll find a World War II story. But it’s really a story about how eight people got
along in a cramped space as told by a 13-year-old girl, and it’s my hope that the people who see the play leave inspired to do some digging and self-education to learn a little more. That’s what I’ve done. It’s a moving story.

TH: What’s next?

MDN: [Laughing.] I haven’t thought past the next rehearsal, the next performance. I’m new to Southwest Florida. I only moved here three months ago and joined the cast only eight weeks before the opening as a replacement for the original Otto [who took a job somewhere else and had to move away]. But it’s so nice to work with people who get along and respect each other, I hope to stay involved with Lab Theater.

Prior to moving to Florida and debuting at Lab Theater, Matthew DeNoncour’s onstage credits included the
roles of Archie Kramer in *Summer and Smoke*, Dr. Woody Zellner in *The Distinguished Physician’s Society*, Etienne in *A Flea in Her Ear*, Eddie Ryan in *Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?*, Daddy in *The American Dream*, Professor Williard in *Our Town*, Dumain in *Love’s Labours Lost*, Artie Shaugnessy in *The House of Blue Leaves*, and Doc Caius in *Merry Wives of Windsor*. His off-stage credits include Lighting Designer in *Angels in America Part I*, for which he received a TAG Award nomination, director in *Side by Side by Sondheim*, and Lighting Director in *Floyd Collins: The Musical*, for which he also received TAG Award and OEA Award nominations.

See above for lay dates, times and ticket information.

Spotlight on ‘Anne Frank’ actress Rowan Stafford (04-15-15)

On stage now through May 2 at Lab Theater in the River District is *The Diary of Anne Frank*. In it, Rowan Stafford plays the role of Anne Frank’s older sister, Margot.

It’s hard to steal scenes when you play the role of a quiet, self-effacing sidekick, but Stafford plays Margot with such elegant distinction that it is easy to find yourself watching her to the exclusion of the other actors.
schlepping about the set. She is more like that dancer in the background or the chorus line whose movement, extension and bearing draws the eye away from the lead dancer or prima ballerina.

As this is a play based on Anne’s diary and Anne is, therefore, the center of attention in all but a handful of scenes, Margot is relegated for the most part to helping her mother prepare and clean up after meals and soothe Edith Frank’s justifiably hurt feelings each time Anne pushes her aggrieved mother away or verbally slaps her down. Oh, there’s the tender scene where Margot solicitorly squires Anne as she dresses for a “date” with Peter van Daan, the only boy around. But except for one astonishing away-from-the-action moment, Margot is like a pilot fish, efficiently attending to her sister, her mother and the other occupants of the cramped attic loft of benefactor Miep Gies. In that stage-left moment, though, Stafford treats us to a look that reveals the panicky teen beneath the steady sidekick mask that she shows to the outside world.
As Anne and Peter chat stage right about life, love and first kisses, Margot enjoys a rare moment alone in her sister’s vacated room. There, she moves about compulsively before sitting on the bed, back ramrod straight against the wall helping Margot to tamp down her rising anxiety as betrayed by her trembling legs. The whole low-light scene is over in a mere matter of seconds, and Stafford does not utter a syllable. But this understated actress says as much with a few movements about the pressures of living in close quarters under the constant threat of aerial bombings and discovery than her sister’s entire diary or the 2½ play that is based upon the journal. Now that’s powerful.

Rowan Stafford became involved in theater at the age of seven, participating in local children’s classes, summer camps and signing lessons. She has competed in Jr. Thespians. Her acting credits include the roles of Wendy in *Peter Pan* and Hermia in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, as well
as ensemble performances in *Thoroughly Modern Mille, The Addams Family* and *13: The Musical*. Her next role will be in *Shreck, Jr.* at Florida Rep. Her favorite activity is reading and the gregarious, out-going teen loves to meet new people and try new tasks.

Lab Theater is located at 1634 Woodford Avenue in downtown Fort Myers. See above for play dates, times and ticket information.

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13-year-old ‘Anne Frank’ actress Kaycie Lee very much in demand (04-14-15)

On stage now through May 2 at Lab Theater is *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The lead in this show is played by 13-year-0ld Cape Coral student Kaycie Lee.

“She is a very strong actor who is going places,” director Annette Trossbach told *Florida Weekly* theater critic Nancy Stetson last week. It’s true. Kaycie is very much in demand right now. In the days leading up to *Anne Frank’s* April 10 opening, she and her mom had to make an impromptu junket to Miami for auditions for roles on a Nickelodian series and CBS pilot. “She has a casting director in Miami who really likes her,”
explains Kaycie’s mom, Karen Maynard. “We asked him not to call this month because

Anne Frank is Kaycie’s priority right now, but he felt the opportunities were too good to pass up.”

While Kaycie is a gifted stage actor, she really wants to be in film. Appearances on Nickelodian and CBS would certainly serve as important stepping stone along that gilded pathway.

“Kaycie actually earned a part on a new HBO series called Valor,” Maynard discloses. “She beat out a large group of actresses to win the role, but then the show was cancelled at the last minute.” But Kaycie’s resume contains several other enticing credits. She won at Stars of Tomorrow in the dramatic category, performed at the Command Performance in 2014 and received a Platinum Award in the national Turn-It-Around Tour for her performance in Joan of Arc. And an indie film in which she appeared won an award at a recent film festival.

Lab Theater audiences are quickly discovering why Kaycie is attracting so much buzz. Kaycie does not just play the part of Anne Frank, she is Anne Frank. She is tireless, bouncing off walls and running around the crowded living quarters in which she and her family are forced to hide out, much to the adults’
vexation. She wraps her doting dad around one finger while ignoring her disciplinarian mother, just like any teenage girl might do – then or now, there or here. And she flirts awkwardly with the boy next door (or, in this case, on the other side of the loft), just like any inexperienced, boy-crazy young girl might do.

But it is in the larger moments when her talent bubbles to the surface. When the air raid sirens wail. When the night terrors come. When she stands up to the adults in the room or surprises them with thoughtful gifts during their Chanukah celebration. It is during these scenes that she reaches into the depths of her own psyche and taps into something intuitive to give a nuanced performance that is as timely as it is timeless.

The depth and range of emotion that Kaycie brings to the part is no happy accident. Since being cast in the lead a year ago, Kaycie has immersed herself in the story, Anne’s diary and the period during which she
wrote it. Not only has she devoured all three versions of the diary, she has studied documentaries on the Holocaust, dragged her mother to the Holocaust Museum in Naples and attended a talk at a university that was given by Shoah survivors. She even tried to obtain a video of the 1997 Broadway play starring Natalie Portman, but couldn’t obtain a copy from the National Archive.

While she admits to being horrified by what she read, heard and saw (“humanity’s destructive urge … to rage, murder and kill” to quote Anne Frank herself), these experiences enabled the 13-year-old to better appreciate Anne Frank’s unshakable belief that in spite of it all “people are truly good at heart.”

Of course, Kaycie Lee believes in the goodness of the human spirit just as fervently as Anne Frank did. Her
conviction is grounded in her own Faith. She is not Jewish, but she is nonetheless sensitized to life issues by her family’s medical missionary work among people less privileged. Coming from this vantage, Kaycie says, “What really struck me about Anne Frank was her optimism, positive attitude and hope for a better future.”

“But because her own future was so uncertain, she was forced to live in the moment and appreciate what little she had,” Kaycie sagely adds. “I think everyone could benefit from doing that more.”

It is to share messages like these that Kaycie yearns to do serious roles in film, television and on stage. “I don’t just want to entertain people. I want to improve people’s lives and the communities in which they live.”

To give Kaycie the latitude to attend auditions, rehearsals and performances like Anne Frank, her mom home schools her. But in addition to the classwork that Maynard assigns, Kaycie also has three acting coaches who
keep her busy learning her craft. And when she is not studying her lessons, memorizing lines or in rehearsal, Kaycie reads scripts for fun, breaking them down and envisioning how she would stage the play and how the actors would interact with each other on stage. It is not something her mother encourages. In fact, Maynard would rather her daughter do the things that other kids her age do.

“It’s a different kind of world,” muses Maynard, who cops to a good deal of ambivalence when it comes to Kaycie’s choice of acting as a career. “I’m not sure I want that for her, but she’s so passionate [about acting] that she just drags me along with her.”

Kaycie does that with audiences too.

You can see what the buzz is all about for yourself at Laboratory Theater of Florida where, through May 2, Kaycie Lee is Anne Frank.

See above for play dates, times and ticket information.

Lab Theater’s ‘Diary of Anne Frank’ so much more than just story set in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam
On stage now through May 2 at the Laboratory Theater of Florida is *The Diary of Anne Frank*. While set in 1942-44 German-occupied Amsterdam, this play is less about the Nazi-era or the Holocaust than it is about the group dynamic that evolves among eight people who are forced to live together in a cramped and claustrophobic loft they could not leave for a period of time they could not control or even know. The story is all the more compelling because it is told by a sometimes precocious, often incredibly insightful teenager who morphs right before the audience’s astonished eyes from petulant child into budding woman trying to come to terms with her emerging sexuality.

Most plays (and books) are recounted in the third person objective point of view which challenges the playwright (or author) to provide an accurate, unbiased depiction of each
character’s personality, traits and motivations. But as is true of any memoir, Anne Frank’s diary entries are written in the first person subjective. As a result, the Otto, Edith and Margot Frank, the van Dussens and Dr. Dussel who appear on stage are caricatures of Anne’s making, and we experience them through the filter of Anne’s eyes and emotions. Because she idolizes her father, Otto is portrayed by Matthew DeNoncour as a loving, even doting dad who functions within the larger group as evenhanded guide and peacekeeper. By contrast, Ellice McCoy’s Edith Frank comes across as cold, distant and selfishly preoccupied with her discomfort and fears for her own personal safety.

Credit 13-year-old Kaycie Lee with remaining true to her character throughout the demanding two and one-half hour performance in which she shoulders the burden of delivering the majority of lines and emotional gravitas. Not once does she betray even the slightest doubt in her father’s leadership even after the curmudgeonly Dr. Dussel questions Frank’s passive acceptance of the danger in which the group finds itself when their presence is discovered by a thief who is ransacking the offices one floor below their hiding place. Not once does she show even the slightest affection or warmth for her mother, even after her dad and sister admonish her for cruelly shutting her mother out of her life.

But the audience cannot help but wonder why Otto Frank doesn’t even ask the group’s protectors (Miep and
Mr. Kraler) if they can find the group another hiding place or provide a plan of escape, or feel Edith Frank’s pain and exasperation over her daughter’s callous indifference and outright antagonism. Rather than deny this reality, director Annette Trossbach encourages the audience to explore the dichotomy between the ways in which Anne portrays her parents, sister, the van Daans and Dr. Dussel and the people they actually are. She accomplishes this in a very clever way.

Rather than black out the rest of the set when Anne interacts stage right with ersatz boyfriend Peter van Daan (played by Marcos Martins) or stage left with Margot (played by Rowan Stafford) or Dr. Dussel (played by Dave Yudowitz), Trossbach has Light and Sound Tech Rosie DeLeon keep a soft light on the other actors.

And so we the chance to glimpse a warm, smiling Edith animatedly
contemplate her next discard during a game of Gin Runny with her husband and the seemingly nonplussed Margot Frank’s calm and collected façade give way to a frenzied bout of OCD which the trembling teen vainly employs in order to tamp down her own spiraling anxiety and sense of suffocation.

Trossbach and Set Designer Ken Bryant also do an excellent job drawing the nexus between the group’s deteriorating mental state and the cramped quarters in which they are forced to take refuge. Anyone who has ever spent a week in a stuffy motel room with their family during a rainy

vacation or been snowed in for a long weekend knows how easy, even inevitably nerves fray, tempers flare and trivial slights and transgressions are blown all out of proportion. It requires no footnote, aside or other explanation how and why Kaycie Lee’s Anne Frank irritates the adults and sets the audience on edge as she flits frenetically around the small warren of on-stage rooms like a hummingbird on speed. But Trossbach does something else to accentuate the impact that these tight confines have the group’s psyche and temperament. She has the cast scurry about in low light between scenes, moving set pieces, placing props and finding their places while a voiceover of Kaycie Lee reading excerpts from Anne’s diary plays in the darkness, subtly but effectively drawing the audience out of their seats and into the middle of the elevator-car-sized attic that serves as the group’s entire universe.
And to signify that the group’s universe is drab, drear and colorless, Trossbach, Bryant and company have banished all color from both cast and set. While the content and theme of this play may contain fifty shades of gray, the set, props and even the actors’ hair color is cast almost exclusively in black and white (which is why the accompanying photographs have been produced in grayscale rather than color). The effect is as powerful as a summer thunderstorm, as chilling as a moonless winter night.

Lab Theater and this cast of actors entertain on myriad levels. Together, they provide the audience an epic amount to see, hear and ponder as the performance winds inexorably to its bitter, heart-rending denouement. Even here, Trossbach eschews the easy out. Rather than marching high-stepping swastika-adorned Gestapo on stage to take the occupants into custody, Trossbach metaphorically expresses the impending destruction of the group’s world and very lives through the theatrical device of off-stage sounds of gruff-voiced SS breaking down doors, overturning furniture and smashing glassware as the frightened family and friends ready themselves to say goodbye to the loft, their world and each other.
Whether you merely need a reminder of the need to live more in the moment and not to take life for granted, are intrigued by the Big Brother aspects of the story, or you just want to experience exceptionally well-crafted theater in a cozy, quaint setting that coincides companionably with the set created on stage, go see The Diary of Anne Frank. The production won’t disappoint – even though we all know in advance how the story ends. For while Anne Frank did not survive the Nazi death machine, her words and spirit undeniably have. And it is her words and the eternal message of hope she imparts that come across with every line of dialogue, every studied facial expression and every scripted movement of this able and dedicated cast of actors.

See above for remaining play dates, times and ticket information.

‘Diary of Anne Frank’ sponsors seek to encourage tolerance and social understanding (03-20-15)

In April, Lab Theater will be producing *The Diary of Anne*
Frank. The award-winning theater would not be able to produce this play without the generous support of the greater Fort Myers community.

Lee County students are studying The Diary of Anne Frank in their schools. Holocaust-explicit History/Social Studies and English/Language Arts are state content standards. Encouraging young people to experience a live theatrical production of this play not only enriches their understanding of the Holocaust but also exposes those young people to the theater, a place where we all seek reflections of ourselves on the stage which help us to take stock of our own lives. For all of these reasons, the Meisenberg Family is sponsoring students’ attendance at the play.

Further sponsorship of this production comes from Fort Myers couple Ella Nayor and Jeff Cull. Nayor’s support of Holocaust- and tolerance-based education is well-known in Southwest Florida. She regularly speaks and engages audiences – especially those of school and college age – to consider bias and intolerance and its effects in our lives. Nayor’s book Faces of Tolerance: Everyone Counts is being used locally and nationally as a resource in tolerance education. Her book details the lives of some Holocaust survivors living in Florida. The book also features interviews with people who have been marginalized or faced intolerance and prejudice. Included are the homeless and disabled, and victims of homophobia and racism.
“It is my dream that through this work, we will spark thought and enlightenment about intolerance and hatred,” Nayor says. “If we start taking the time to see each other as people all belonging to one human family, we can begin to live more peacefully as a planet.”

Written by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, the stage adaptation of the book won both a Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize for Drama. The playwrights are also known for screenplays that include *It’s a Beautiful Life, Father of the Bride*, *The Thin Man*, and *Easter Parade*. Of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The New York Daily News* says, “there is so much beauty, warm humor, gentle pity…this is a fine drama.”

The Laboratory Theater chose to present this play in April 2015 to help remember the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and death camp. The theater will welcome community members to join the cast in “talk-back sessions” after select performances. Here, Nayor and Holocaust survivors and a WWII liberator will speak about their work and experiences in facing intolerance and bigotry. There will be opportunity for patrons to share and discuss their thoughts and ideas about creating a more accepting and loving world for all.
‘Diary of Anne Frank’ is riveting story of human frailty and courage, captivity and fear, and eternal hope (03-17-15)

Anne Frank began a diary when she turned 13, just days before she and her family went into hiding in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam. Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett transformed her story into a stage play that won both a Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize for Drama. The play opens at Laboratory Theater of Florida on April 10. The Diary of Anne Frank will do more than merely remind you of the horrors of war. A riveting commentary on human frailty and courage, captivity and fear, the play is a tribute to hope and one little girl’s grace during the most desperate of times which she encapsulated in this immortal entry in her journal: “I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart…”

“I have not gotten through a rehearsal yet without giant belly laughs or crying,” says Lab Theater Artistic Director, who directs the production. “It is a constantly-shifting story, so beautifully written, and providing truthful glimpses into the lives of eight people in hiding and their two Dutch helpers, all seen through the eyes of an exceptional child.”
Those eight people included Anne’s family and two acquaintances, who hide from the Gestapo in the sealed-off upper rooms of an office building. With very little contact with the outside world, they learn to live together in tight quarters. They laugh, they pray, they study algebra and do crossword puzzles. And they indulge hope that the war is coming to an end and they will once again feel the sunshine on their faces.

Otto Frank was the leader of the group, and he will be played by Matthew DeNoncour, who recently moved to Fort Myers from New York City. “I am honored to be working with an extremely talented cast and crew on this production of The Diary of Anne Frank,” DeNoncour states. “The script is so beautifully written. What makes this already-emotional story even more compelling is that it is based on true experiences of real people struggling to survive the human atrocities during World War II. I cannot wait to share that story and experience with the Fort Myers community.”
Anne Frank will be played by actor Kaycie Lee, who is just 13 years old. “Every character in the play is a different side of yourself in these circumstances,” Kaycie shares. “It is so beautiful; it has changed my view on life.”

Further cast members are Ellice McCoy, Rowan Stafford, Alyssa Mehrberg, Faith Deterding, Jack Weld, Aricka Shuck, Marcos Martins, Dave Yudowitz, and Mike Dinko.

Actor and director Ken Bryant has designed an intricate set for the production that dramatically portrays the cramped attic rooms that were occupied by the Franks and their compatriots. (Bryant’s previous set designs for the theater have included Amadeus, Five Kinds of Silence, and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.) Other production team members include Connie Keller, Deborah Kik, Sandra Kaseta, Patti Chamness, Mike Dinko, Erik Stafford, Dianela Gil, and Lauren Redeker.

Lab Theater issues call for furniture, community support in recreating the hideaway of Anne Frank and her family (02-03-15)
The Laboratory Theater will be presenting *The Diary of Anne Frank* in April through May of this spring. The 1958 play won the Pulitzer Prize, the Tony Award, The Critic’s Circle Award and virtually every other coveted prize of theater. Its presentation is timed to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II and Days of Remembrance ceremonies in Washington, D.C. and across the nation.

The Laboratory Theater plans a unique production and needs community support in order to realize its goal of recreating the living areas of the actual annex in Amsterdam onstage for the show. The living areas include the dining room, partial kitchen, and small living space which also doubled as the sleeping area for Mr. and Mrs. Van Pels, who shared the annex with the Frank family from 1942 until their arrest in 1944. Cabinetry, appliances, linens, mismatched 1930s furniture
Artistic Director Annette Trossbach will direct the moving drama, which will star 12-year old Kaycie Lee as Anne, Ryan Murray as Mr. Frank, Lisa Kuchinski as Mrs. Frank, and a host of other talented, local actors. Theater-goers will remember shows previously directed by Ms. Trossbach’s such as *Agnes of God*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Hamlet*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Help building the intricate set, help collecting furniture, donations of money will all be gratefully accepted by the theater. Please contact the director at director@laboratorytheaterflorida.com to get involved in this special project, or call 239.218.0481.

Lab Theater founder and artistic director Annette Trossbach to direct ‘The Spirit of Anne Frank’ (11-17-14)
Coming to the Lab Theater in April is Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett’s *The Spirit of Anne Frank*, and the production will be directed by Annette Trossbach, founder and artistic director of the Laboratory Theater of Florida and the Gulf Coast Shakespeare Festival. Classically trained at the innovative East 15 Drama School in London, U.K., Annette has worked with Margaret Walker (*Oh What a Lovely War*), international combat choreographer Mike Loades, director Terry Johnson, Alasdair Ramsey and actor Tony Scannell. She directed in England and Germany before moving to the United States. She is a 2010 recipient of the *Gulfshore Business 40 Under 40 Award* and a two-time *Zelda Fichandler Award* nominee. Last season she directed *Miss Witherspoon* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*.

She is starring this season in *My Brilliant Divorce*, a one-woman show in which she plays 20 separate characters. Among some of the other favorite roles she has
played are Sylvie in *Intimate Exchanges*, Yelena in *The Wood Demon*, and Netta in *Cavalcade*. Annette has been teaching theater and acting skills for more than 20 years and is teaching a class in physical character creation for the theater this season. At Laboratory Theater of Florida, she and her company continue the East 15 focus of teaching core theatrical skills such as character development, stagecraft, combat, textual analysis, voice and physicality to new actors of all ages.

She thanks Lab Theater members, the City of Fort Myers, her family and her amazing Board of Directors for their continued support of the theater’s mission to both educate and entertain.

One Response to “The Diary of Anne Frank”

1. Kaycie Lee says:
   April 17, 2015 at 2:58 pm

   Thank you for your kind, kind review! I love that you wrote, “she flits frenetically around the small warren of on-stage rooms like a hummingbird on speed.”

   The below is from a page in Anne’s Diary that I have had earmarked for months and I wanted to share it…

   Excerpt:
   Friday Oct 29th 1943
   Outside you don’t hear a single bird, and a deathly, oppressive silence hangs over the house and clings to me as if it were going to drag me into the deepest regions of the underworld… I wander from room to room, climb up and down the stairs and feel like a songbird whose wings have been ripped off and who keeps hurling itself against the bars of its dark cage.”Let me out, where there’s fresh air and laughter!” a voice within me cries.

   reply

Leave a Reply

   Name (required)

   Mail (will not be published) (required)
Tom Hall is both an amateur artist and aspiring novelist who writes art quest thrillers. He is in the final stages of completing his debut novel titled "Art Detective," a story that fictionalizes the discovery of the fabled billion-dollar Impressionist collection of Parisian art dealer Josse Bernheim-Jeune, thought by many to have perished during World War II when the collection's hiding place, Castle de Rastignac in southern France, was destroyed by the Wehrmacht in reprisal for attacks made by members of the Resistance operating in the area.
A former tax attorney, Tom holds a bachelor's degree as well as both a juris doctorate and masters of laws in taxation from the University of Florida. Tom lives in Estero, Florida with his fiancee, Connie, and their four cats.