

## **Sam Hack directs Garson Kanin classic “Born Yesterday” at Clayton Community Theatre May 4-14**

**Media contact:** Nathan Schroeder, [media@placeseveryone.org](mailto:media@placeseveryone.org)

“Born Yesterday” is a post-World War II comedy-drama with themes of personal and political ethics, relationships and romance set in post-World War II Washington, DC.

The play runs May 4-14 at Clayton Community Theatre, Thurs-Sat at 8:00 pm and Sundays at 2:00 pm. Performances are at Washington University South Campus Theater, 6501 Clayton Road, Clayton MO. Tickets: \$15-\$20 at [BrownPaperTickets.com](http://BrownPaperTickets.com)

“Born Yesterday” has top credentials all around. The play, written by the great Garson Kanin, opened in 1946 in New York at the renowned Lyceum Theatre. It was later made into an acclaimed film starring William Holden and Judy Holliday, who also originated the leading role of Billie Dawn in the play.

Harry Brock (Joe O’Connor) is a scrap metal mogul. He is in town on business, and his business is to buy and bully a Senator and manipulate the political system for his own benefit. Brock is accompanied by his naïve mistress Billie Dawn (Heather Sartin). He recruits a local reporter, Paul Verrall (Mark A. Neels) to smooth out Billie’s social edges. The two fall in love instantly, but that’s not the only complication: What Billie learns about politics and history from the idealistic Paul enlightens and disillusions her about the nature of Brock’s livelihood.

“Born Yesterday is directed by Sam Hack, CCT artistic director. Hack previously directed both O’Connor and Neels in “The Lion in Winter,” presented by CCT in 2015.

“When ‘Born Yesterday’ was added to the CCT lineup at the beginning of 2016, we weren’t thinking about it in connection with current events, but we did see it as something that has some depth while being very, very funny,” said Hack. “I don’t want to underestimate how funny this play is. Nonetheless, the characters are real people in real situations – it’s not a cartoon. It’s very much a love story, a complex triangle. Billie is naïve in life but not love. Paul is the opposite. He shows Billie she has value as a person - not just a kept woman - that she has intelligence and depth – a whole self she didn’t know was there. It’s a Pygmalion story in that way.”

The production crew for “Born Yesterday” includes Nada Vaughn (producer), Erin Struckhoff (assistant director), Steve Myers (set design), Andrew and Zac Cary (set design and construction), Nathan Schroeder (lighting design and technical coordination), Jean Heckmann (costumes), Kati Castello Johnson (property master) and Marilyn Albert-Hack (production coordinator).

Additional members of the cast include Tom Moore as Brock’s legal and political adviser Ed Devery, Paul Schultz as Brock’s flunky and cousin Eddie Brock, Will Shaw as Senator Hedges and Cindy Duggan as Mrs. Hedges. Jack Janssen, Sarah Hirshfield, Drew Rydberg, Stefan Peterson, and Lucy Sappington fill out the cast as hotel staff.

Playwright Garson Kanin (1912-1999) is probably best known for his Hollywood screenplays, particularly Katharine Hepburn-Spencer Tracy collaborations such as Pat and Mike and Adam’s Rib. (Kanin’s wife, the celebrated actress Ruth Gordon, worked with him on many of the

screenplays.) Other Kanin milestones include directing the first stage productions of “The Diary of Anne Frank” (1955) and “Funny Girl” (1964), and the screenplays for the 1940 Cary Grant-Irene Dunne vehicle My Favorite Wife, and A Double Life (1947) starring Ronald Colman and directed by George Cukor. “Kanin should be much better known than he is,” said Hack. “He is one of the best writers of comedy we have ever had. He was and is an incredibly important man of theater and film, and this play is one of his best works, and that’s saying a lot.”

Sam Hack is well known throughout the St. Louis theatre community as one of the area’s most distinguished theatre educators. Sam retired from full-time teaching after more than two decades as theatre director at Hancock High School in St. Louis County. In a career of more than 40 years he has acted and directed with numerous professional and community theatre companies.

Since its founding in 1998, Clayton Community Theatre (CCT) has involved hundreds of individuals in productions that have played to consistently enthusiastic reviews. Performances are held on the Washington University South Campus in an outstanding 210-seat venue at 6501 Clayton Road, St. Louis, MO 63105. CCT operates as an independent community theatre company, and welcomes volunteer involvement. Visit [www.placeseveryone.org](http://www.placeseveryone.org).