

This Side of the Hill Players



by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc. present

# BLEACHER BUMS

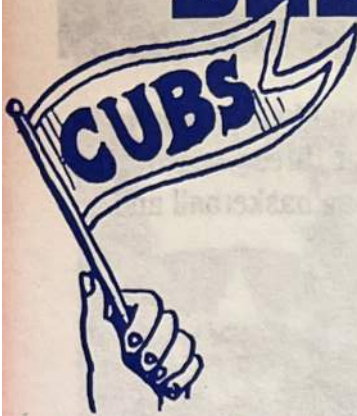


by Joe Mantegna and the  
Organic Theatre Company

directed by  
Eric Shapira



# BLEACHER BUMS



Conceived by Joe Mantegna

Written by:

Roberta Custer, Richard Fire, Dennis Franz, Stuart Gordon, Josephine Paoletti, Dennis Paoli, Caroline Purdy-Gordon, Michael Saad, Keith Szarabajka, and Ian Williams.

Revised and rewritten by Richard Fire

Directed by Eric Shapira

---

## THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

|                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Melody</b> .....        | Victoria Mann         |
| <b>Greg</b> .....          | James Morin           |
| <b>Zig</b> .....           | Lee Wolfe             |
| <b>Decker</b> .....        | Al Murphy             |
| <b>Richie</b> .....        | Fred Scott            |
| <b>Marvin</b> .....        | Tony Mullen           |
| <b>Cheerleader</b> .....   | Matt Scordelis        |
| <b>Rose</b> .....          | Lana Mountford        |
| <b>The Kid</b> .....       | Jackson Allen Gardner |
| <b>The Guard</b> .....     | Ed Vignos             |
| <b>The Announcer</b> ..... | David Keane           |

## Time and Place

The action takes place in the Wrigley Field bleachers,  
Chicago, Illinois, mid-summer, 1989.

A nine-inning comedy performed without an  
intermission. There is a seventh-inning stretch.



# The Crew

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Director</b> .....                  | Eric Shapira   |
| <b>Assistant Director</b> .....        | Chuck Danskin  |
| <b>Stage Manager</b> .....             | Susan Bassin   |
| <b>Assistant Stage Manager</b> .....   | Betty Camp   |
| <b>Properties</b> .....                | Sandy Bostow   |
| <b>Costumes</b> .....                  | Edress Schubert  |
| <b>Sound</b> .....                     | Valerie Clear  |
| <b>Set Design</b> .....                | Jean-Claude Langer, Eric Shapira   |
| <b>Set Construction/Decor</b> .....    | Jean-Claude Langer, Eric Shapira<br>Chuck Danskin, Steve Charlton, Larry Mohr<br>Paul Anable, Tony Mullen, Ed Vignos |
| <b>Lighting</b> .....                  | Ron Thomas   |
| <b>Sound Effects</b> .....             | Tony Mullen  |
| <b>Photographer</b> .....              | Gordon Kloess  |
| <b>Poster and Program Design</b> ..... | Bruce Marion   |
| <b>Program Coordinator</b> .....       | Margaret Harris  |
| <b>Ad Sales</b> .....                  | Bob Rogers   |
| <b>House Manager/Hospitality</b> ..... | Stan Aitken  |



# ENTERTAINMENT

6B

Half Moon Bay Review

Wednesday, Jan. 26, 1994

## 'Bleacher Bums' rallies, but fouls

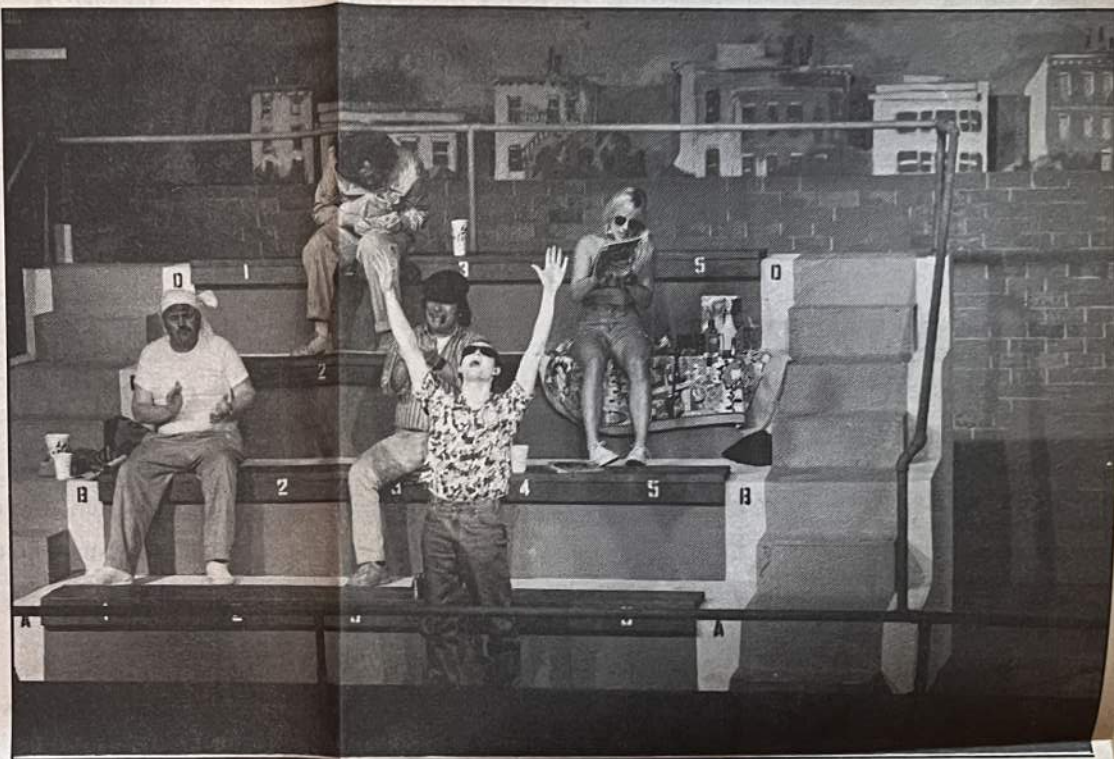
By EMMA LITTLE  
Special to the Review

"Bleacher Bums," a one-act comedy by Joe Mantegna and the Organic Theatre Company, opened this weekend at the Mel Mello Center for the Arts. Directed by Eric Shapira, this play in nine innings follows the triumphs and travails of nine diehard Chicago Cubs fans through the ups and downs of a home game.

Set in the bleacher section of Chicago's Wrigley Field, the piece is loaded with potential hilarity but is sadly marred by spotty, inconsistent performances. Not unlike the much-beloved Cubbies, the cast starts out on a fairly strong footing, loses its momentum somewhere along the line, manages a rally but ultimately falls short. While every member of the cast sports some fine moments, "Bleacher Bums" fouls out as lines are flubbed, voices fail and key cast members are forced to haul out the drag nets in a valiant effort to carry the rest of the cast. A good portion of which doesn't seem to possess the ability to sustain their performances through the long, read L-O-N-G single act.

Of notable exception is the thoroughly engaging performance of James Morin, who commutes from San Jose to grace the Players stage with a gleeful rendering of infectious, diehard Cubs fan Greg. Delightful from the get-go, Morin's performance charms.

Returning to the TSOTHP stage is Lee Wolfe, taking a flier as the consummate sporting man Zig. Wolfe's strong presence and well-turned performance as the hardcore wager monger pulls his cast-



Jennifer Cheek / Review

Enthusiastic Greg (James Morin) and other Chicago Cubs fans react to the game in This Side of the Hill Players' "Bleacher Bums", showing Friday and Saturday nights through Feb. 5 at the Mel Mello Center for the Arts. A Jan. 30 matinee is scheduled at 2 p.m. Seniors get a \$4 discount off the regular price for tickets purchased at the door.

mates through more than one slump in the performance.

Matt Scordelis, gonzo Cubs cheerleader, burns up a whole lot of stage space. Unfortunately his exuberance also fried his vocal chords to a seemingly painful degree, rendering him all but voiceless by the seventh inning. Hopes are high that Scordelis will actually make it through the run without a pinch hitter, but rumor has it that his voice was shot even in dress rehearsals. This is too bad. The cast needs his enthusiasm to help carry them over more than

one slow spot.

Tony Mullen plays a remorseless Marvin nicely, and Victoria Mann delivers some lovely moments as the piece progresses. But at the end of the day it was Morin, Wolfe and Scordelis who seem to bear the lion's share of helping the remainder of the cast through the production.

Certainly Cubs fans, and a few theater patrons, understand disappointment and will forgive the weaknesses, focusing as a true fan will on the high points of the game. Another great set, this time

designed by Jean-Claude Langer and Eric Shapira, provides a tremendously convincing backdrop to the action. Being allowed, no, actually encouraged to eat popcorn in the theater was a winner. And the Morin, Wolfe and Scordelis threesome was truly a joy to watch, much more fun than another sporting contest held this past weekend that I'm still too upset to discuss.

"Bleacher Bums" will run on Friday and Saturday nights through Feb. 5 with a Sunday matinee at 2 p.m. on Jan. 30.



# ENTERTAINMENT

Wednesday, Jan. 19, 1994

## Take me out to the play game

By STACY TREVENON  
Half Moon Bay Review

The Great American Pastime comes to the theater in "Bleacher Bums," a play in nine innings presented by This Side of the Hill Players opening Friday at the Mel Mello Center for the Arts.

Written by Joe Montegna and the Organic Theatre Company, the play is based on the original "bleacher bums," the rowdy but warmhearted Chicago Cubs fans who hunkered down in Wrigley Field's left field bleachers in the 1940s to root, heckle, yell, bet on everything they could think of and enjoy the camaraderie. In the late 1960s the raucous Bums were relocated to right field when the left field bleachers became the family seating section.

One of those original Bums was Joe Montegna. The play opened in Chicago in 1977 and went on to Broadway. In 1989 it was revised, and the Players are presenting this revised version, which pits the Cubbies in another doomed duel with the St. Louis Cardinals.

Over nine innings, a lot of interaction and detailed betting on everything imaginable take place on the giant bleacher that dominates the stage. There's Zig (Lee Wolfe), a hardcore Cubs fan who has made betting his avocation, and his wife Rose (Mountford), a closet Cubs fan whose consternation over his betting leads to surprises for both. There's Melody (Victoria Mann) a blonde bombshell who's out to soak up some rays and snag a guy in the bleachers.

Champion slob Richie (Frederick Scott) is trying desperately to win a bet that he can get Melody's phone number and to fit in despite an appalling lack of social skills. Young, blind Greg (James P.

It's an exploration of an ongoing subculture, full of subplots, mild but loud epithets, rollicking humor and occasional poignancy, said assistant director Chuck Danskin.

Rounding out the colorful Bums is Matt Scordelis as the lustily heckling cheerleader, Jackson Gardner as The Kid, and Edward Vignos as the guard poised to wade in when the rabble rousing goes over the top. David Keane lends his booming voice as the announcer, calling the plays from an onstage booth overlooking the bleachers.

All baseball's rooting and gusto, punctuated by the smack of bat on ball, are packed into "Bleacher Bums." The audience is invited to

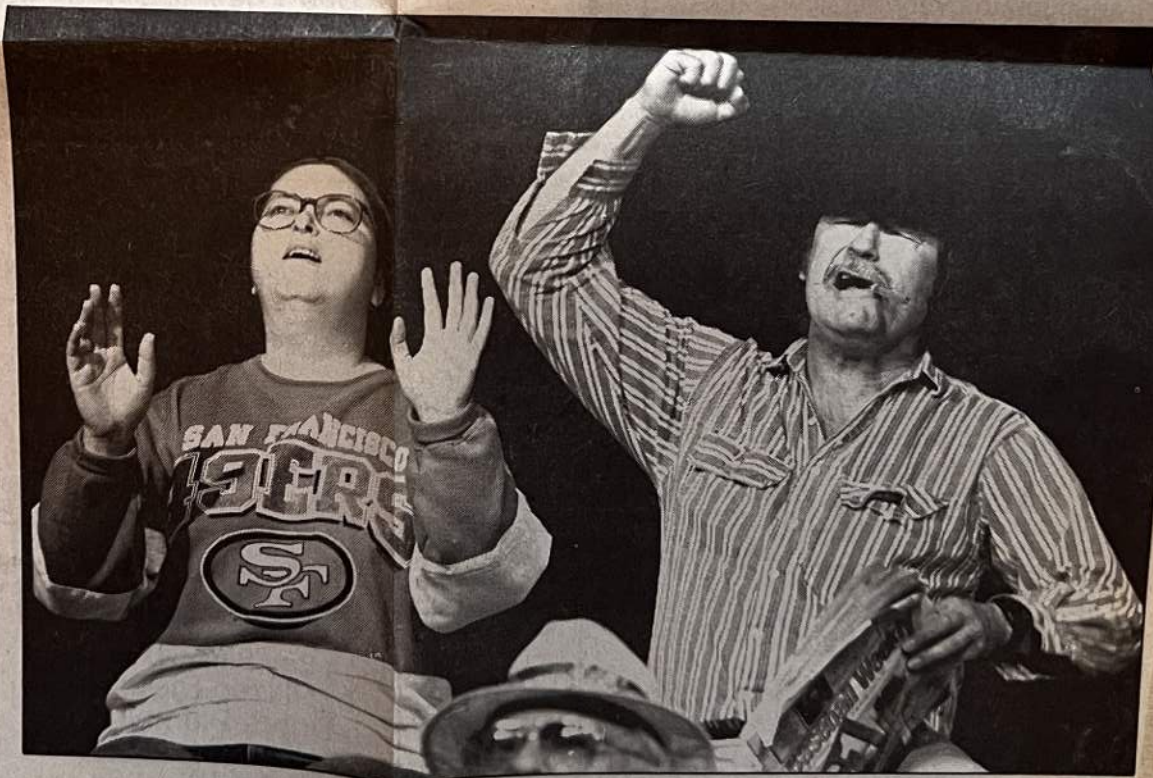
sing "The Star Spangled Banner" at the beginning of the game and join the rapt Bums in "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" during the 7th-inning stretch. The flavor of the ballpark is brought home by old concession-stand favorites such as peanuts and popcorn, available before and after the show. Backing the bleacher is a painstaking replica of the Chicago skyline behind Wrigley Field. Cubs caps, banners, cards and baseballs are everywhere.

Eric Shapira, who recently directed the Coastside Variety Showcase, notches a double play as director of "Bleacher Bums". He and Jean-Claude Langer designed the series of wall panels

that create Chicago behind the stadium. He hopes to have an opening-night reception, sponsored by the Shore Bird Restaurant, that will mix ballpark snacks and champagne.

"I hope (audiences) enjoy being in the bleachers with these people," he said. "Anyone who's ever played Little League should really get a kick out of this play."

"Bleacher Bums" will run at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings through Feb. 5, with two Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. on Jan. 23 and 30. Tickets are available at Bay Book and Video, Eriksen Gallery and at the door. For information call the Players at 726-0998.



Lana Mountford (a 49ers fan as well) and Lee Wolfe cheer on the Chicago Cubs during "Bleacher Bums", opening Friday at the Mel Mello Center for the Arts.

Jennifer Cheek / Review