

# ADVANCE

OCTOBER 1-7, 2015



'Nose' job: Saloon  
gets a face-lift  
PAGE 4



Art alfresco: Fence  
Show in the frame  
PAGE 12



Sci-fi flick: 'Martian'  
new in theaters  
PAGE 14

ADVANCE WEEKLY ENTERTAINMENT | STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

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## Knocking it outta the park

WCT opens the season  
with a crackerjack  
production of  
'Damn Yankees'  
**PAGE 8**

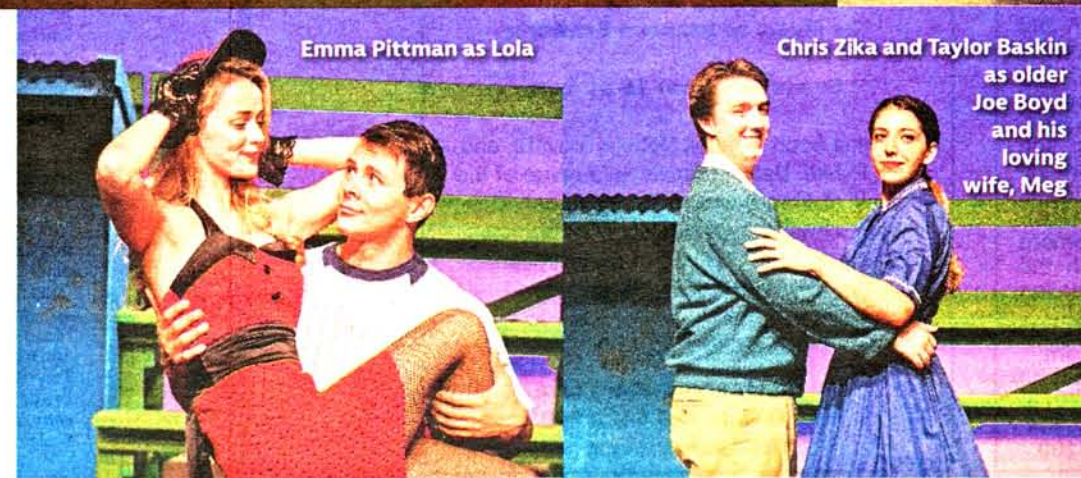


# 'Heart' and soul

See Joe Hardy go to the Devil in Wagner College's crowd-pleasing 'Damn Yankees'



Tyler Roberts and Jonathan Quigley leap high for their teammates as rapturous fans look on in Wagner College Theater's production of "Damn Yankees." (PHOTOS BY KAREN O'DONNELL)



By Rob Bailey | bailey@siadvance.com

**T**he bases are loaded with potential musical magic: Wagner College Theater's "Damn Yankees" has hit the Main Hall Theatre.

Based on Douglass Wallop's novel "The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant," this Tony-winning musical features a home-run score by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross with book by George Abbott and Wallop.

WCT's production opened Wednesday night and runs through Oct. 11.

"It's a great family show," says director Mickey Tennenbaum, who also helmed WCT's production of "Spamalot," in February. "It's not just for people who like baseball. That's the situation, but the story is really about heart. It's about love."

## HOME STAND

*Presented by the Wagner College Theater Department.*

**Where:** Main Hall Theatre at Wagner College, One Campus Road, Grymes Hill.

**When:** Sept. 30-Oct. 11; Performances are Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m., with matinees Saturday at 2 p.m.; added Sunday matinee Oct. 11.

**Tickets:** Single tickets are on sale with price ranges for children, senior and adult tickets. Wagner students attend free with current ID. Located in Main Hall, the WCT box office can be reached at 718-390-3259 or boxoffice@wagner.edu. Hours: Monday-Friday, noon-4 p.m.

Set in the diamond days of the 1950s, "Damn Yankees" finds middle-aged baseball fan Joe Boyd trading his soul to the Devil (aka Mr. Applegate) for a chance to lead his fave Washington Senators to the pennant over the hated Yankees, only to realize belatedly the true worth of the life he has left behind.

"Whatever Lola Wants" and "Heart" are just two Broadway standards featured in the Faust-meets-fast-pitch score penned by Adler and Ross ("The Pajama Game").

New Springville native Joe O'Malley knocks it out of the park as Applegate, Tennenbaum said: "He's a tremendously talented character actor. He's smart and he just takes direction really well."

The featured WCT cast: The aforementioned O'Malley (Applegate), Jesse Pimpinella (Joe Hardy), Emma Pittman (Lola), Chris Zika (Joe Boyd), Staten Island native Taylor Baskin (Meg Boyd), Island native Joshua Sottile (Rocky), Nick Manna (Smokey), Courtney McGowan (Gloria Thorpe), Greg Ippolito (Van Buren), Noah Bridgestock (Vernon), Adam Goldenberg (Mr. Welch), Becca Barrett (Sister) and Katie Quann (Doris).

The WCT ensemble: Nicholas Barakos, Bobbi Baricella, Addi Berry, Brianna Brice, Jacob Cowan, Tatiana Ericksen, Kyle Johnson, Sabrina Kalman,

Dean Marino, Nick Mestakides, Jonathan Quigley, Alec Reiss, Tyler Roberts, Sydni Session, Mackenzie Shay and Clint Maddox Thompson.

The WCT creative team: Rusty Curcio (choreography), Matthew Hosmer (music direction), Richard Kendrick (set design), Kurt Alger (costume design), Vicki Neal (lighting design), Richard Kroth (sound design) and KT Sanders (production stage manager).

Some "Damn" history: "Damn Yankees" opened at Broadway's 46th Street Theatre (now the Richard Rodgers) on May 5, 1955, winning seven 1956 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, starring Ray Walston, Stephen Douglass and Gwen Verdon, with choreography by Bob Fosse. Warner Brothers' 1958 film version starred Gwen Verdon and Ray Walston, with heartthrob Tab Hunter as Joe Hardy.

A 1994 Broadway revival starred Victor Garber, Jarrod Emick and Bebe Neuwirth, and was nominated for the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Revival of a Musical. WCT previously presented "Damn Yankees" in 1979 and 1998.

Co-composer Adler was awarded an honorary doctorate of music and theater by Wagner College in 2003. Adler's stepson, Charles Shipman, says that Adler particularly treasured that degree, which hung on his wall for the rest of his life. Adler passed away in 2012.

In the end, "Damn Yankees," Tennenbaum stressed, is just as much about love as it is about sports: "When this older man becomes a young baseball player, he loves baseball, but he really misses his wife."