

# Hackmatack Playhouse's *Burt and Me* Showcases Music of Burt Bacharach and Hal David

by Steve Hrehovcik

A talented cast launches the 41st theater season at the Hackmatack Playhouse in Berwick with a lively production of the new musical *Burt and Me*. Written by Larry McKenna, the show features more than two dozen well-known songs by composer Burt Bacharach and lyricist Hal David.

The story follows the musical misadventures of a shy and insecure high school student, Joe Madson, played with energy and verve by Jerard James Craven. Throughout the show, Craven speaks and sings with conviction directly to the audience to reveal Joe's innermost dreams, fears and anxieties.

Moving the plot along are memorable Bacharach/David hits made popular by musical artists Dionne Warwick, B.J. Thomas, The Carpenters and others. Songs include "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head," "I'll Never Fall in Love," "One Less Bell to Answer," "Do You Know the Way to San Jose," "Promises Promises," "I Say a Little Prayer," "Close to You," "What the World Needs Now" and many more.

With the help of the memorable songs, Joe reveals how awkward he is around girls but loves basketball and the music of Burt Bacharach. When the all-boy Catholic school Joe attends joins an all-girl Catholic school, he meets Lacey Turner, played by Samantha Bagdon.

Bagdon's clear, melodic voice adds meaning to her songs and her convincing performance makes us understand her attraction to Joe. Emotional sparks fly between Joe and Lacey, and, of course, the teenagers fall in love.

Joe's pal, Jerry Landis, played by Ned Donovan, couldn't be more different from Joe. Donovan gives a confident portrayal of a macho, audacious and secure guy, especially around girls. While Jerry provides tips to Joe about how to win the affection of girls, he finds some of his strategies don't always work, which adds to the fun.

Playing not-so-hard-to-get with Jerry is Lacey's best friend, Sally. Portrayed by perky and animated Samantha St. Onge, Sally becomes a major influence in Lacey's love life through her lively renditions of songs and dance numbers.

Returning to Hackmatack for his eleventh season is Scott Smith who plays two roles. With his powerful voice and performance, he captures

the character of a nurturing father to Joe and the strict disciplinarian, Father DeJoseph, choral director at the Catholic school.

Urged on through songs and production numbers, Joe and Jerry team up in an effort to unlock the mysteries of the girls, as Lacey and Sally commiserate about their affections for the boys. Soon they all graduate from high school and move on with their lives, only to discover each couple belongs together.

Members of the ensemble, Adam MacDougall, Fran Bechtold and Abby Langsted play a variety of roles and add their skilled voices to the harmony of the ensemble numbers.

MacDougall has some particularly comical moments as the piano player reacting to Joe and Lacey singing "I'll Never Fall in Love Again." Bechtold becomes the personification of a strict nun monitoring the closeness of dancers at the school's prom. As a living pin-up poster of Angie Dickinson, the personification of Joe's fantasies, Langsted makes a stunning visual image.

Another Hackmatack veteran returning for her eleventh season is director Sharon Hilton, who also did the musical staging. Hilton keeps the pace lively and makes good use of the multiple levels in the colorful set.

Several cast members also serve as technical and crew members. In addition to playing Joe, Craven is

the set designer, Bechtold is the costumer and Langsted is the stage manager.

Musical director Kathy Fink on piano, along with Greg Bechtold on trumpet and George Reagan and Jose Duque on percussion give Bacharach rhythmic compositions just the right support for the actors.

Executive producer Michael Guptill continues to bring talented cast and crew members to the Hackmatack Playhouse. He carries on a summer theater tradition started in the converted barn in 1972 by his father Carlton Guptill.

The next Hackmatack show is Rodgers' and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma*, followed by *Hairspray* and *Boeing, Boeing*.

This Hackmatack production of *Burt and Me* is the only one in New England this year.

*Burt and Me* runs Wednesday to Saturday through June 30; curtain time is 8 PM. There are matinees at 2 PM on two Thursdays, June 21 and 28.

Tickets range from \$18 to \$25 for adults; students and children \$10. FMI and tickets, call 698-1807 or visit [www.hackmatack.org](http://www.hackmatack.org).



Starring in Hackmatack's *Burt and Me* are front, left to right, Samantha St. Onge, Samantha Bagdon, Jerard James Craven, Ned Donovan; at rear is Scott Smith. photo by Steve Hrehovcik

## BULL and CLAW

Route  
Lun  
Sunda

**Excerpts from reviews posted on Trip Advisor**

We were so taken with this restaurant that we ate there two consecutive evenings. The food was excellent. Service... was exceptional. **4/2012**

Not only is this place reasonably priced... you get great atmosphere and wonderful service. The lobster was steamed to perfection, the prime rib was medium rare, which was exactly what I ordered, and even the homemade mashed potatoes were excellent... We left full and satisfied. **3/2012**

**Senior Menu Age 55+ \$7.95**  
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