

'Big Meal' expected to bring big laughs

By KATE DAY SAGER
Olean Times Herald

OLEAN — The dialogue and interaction between characters in Olean Community Theatre's "The Big Meal" comedy may bring big laughs when the show is staged Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Palmer Opera House in Cuba.

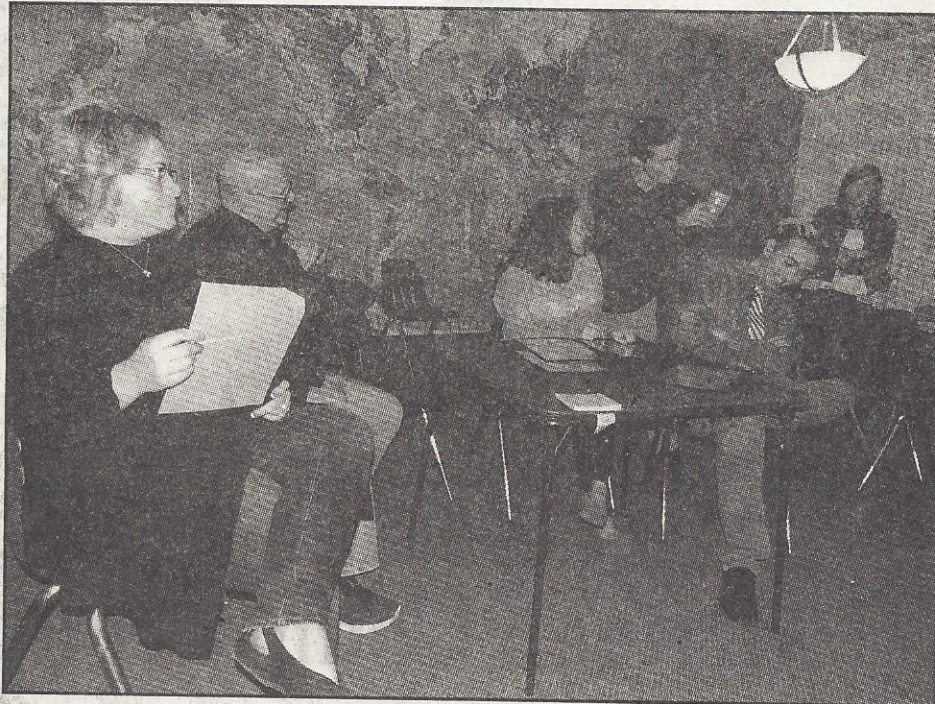
The show, directed by community theater veteran Ken Roberts, will be staged at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday and at 2:30 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$8 for senior citizens and students.

Assistant director Jessica Anderson said the production and actors have been doing very well with the various roles they will each perform.

"There are bits that are very, very funny and bits that are very, very poignant," Anderson said. "It's shaping up well. We've got a great cast who are really doing fantastic things on stage."

She said the show, which has some mature language, is suggested for older children and adults.

"If you've ever been to a family dinner, you're going to recognize something in the show," Anderson continued.



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Olean Community Theatre performers Andee Cole Higley (from left), Paul Nelson, Jennifer Rickert, Skylar Schapp, Tim Hollamby and Madison McClelland rehearse a scene from "The Big Meal" at Archbishop Walsh Academy earlier this week. The comedy will be staged Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Palmer Opera House in Cuba.

"Everyone can relate to something ... the bratty kids or the drunk grandfather who says off-colored things."

Originally staged in an off-Broadway theater, the production won writing awards for its creativity. The show is set in a contemporary, suburban restaurant located somewhere in America on a typical night. According

to a play synopsis, two of the characters, Sam and Nicole, have their first meeting at the restaurant, and the "sparks fly." The tale spreads across several generations of a modern-day family, "from first kiss to final goodbye."

Performer Tim Hollamby said he has enjoyed tackling the script and the different characters he is portraying.

"When we got the script, it was crazy," Hollamby admitted. "The way it was written was not like any script I've read before, so that was kind of cool. It's definitely been the most challenging show I've ever been a part of."

"But it's been so much fun. It's been therapeutic to come and laugh at everybody every night. I think everyone will love

it."

Roberts selected the play for the theater company after he came across it during his research.

"It's written in a very strange way," Roberts explained. "It's not written like a regular script where Joe says his line and Mary says her line."

Instead the dialogue is written so each line is intended to be said over other individuals' lines.

"If we do it right, it will sound just like a typical family at a restaurant, where nobody is listening to anyone else and everyone is talking," Roberts said.

Roberts and Anderson said the set will be simple, with tables and chairs to represent the eatery where the play takes place. There will also be a small spotlight on one section of the restaurant. Theater group member Mary Kay Worth has noted the show is the first comedy produced by the theater company in several years.

While the play is written as a one-act show, it is being staged by the theater company as two acts to give the audience a break.

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