

## RECENT REVIEWS

### A CHRISTMAS CAROL @ THE McCARTER THEATRE



...excellent special effects.. **sensitive direction...** spirited choreography. It's Rob Ashford's third time with the show and Unger's sixth, but neither is remotely stale. See *A Christmas Carol* for the entertainment, the spectacle, and the message. - THE STAR LEDGER

The current adaptation on McCarter's stage is directed by Michael Unger who surprises everyone with new insights. Unger's production permits us to use our intelligence to watch as Scrooge's meanness turns first to distress and then to humanity. This was the best yet — **And, while we are at it, when is some other regional theater in the area going to discover the magic that Unger exudes?** - PRINCETON PACKET



As the huge cast of the **gorgeous** revival of *A Christmas Carol* got a well- deserved standing ovation. It's a **magical evening**, even for those who've seen it before. **Director Michael Unger always manages a few changes, a few new takes that surprise and delight as much as those special moments audiences have come to treasure.** - THE TIMES OF TRENTON



The big theatrical crowd pleaser of the holiday season... **It has the size and feel of the best Broadway family musicals.** This *Christmas Carol* has visually stunning, oversized sets and wondrous stage effects. Audiences will find the tone here pitch perfect. - TALKIN' BROADWAY

### THE RINK @ THE CAPE PLAYHOUSE (STARRING LESLIE UGGAMS & JANET METZ)

Nothing says nostalgia like an old-fashioned roller-skating rink, right? So you might guess that "The Rink" -- would tend toward the schmaltzy. Nothing could be further from the truth. A heartrending undercurrent begins to insinuate itself - that bittersweet thread persists right through to the gentle shocker of an ending. **Director Michael Unger has delivered a musical with quirky, captivating charm** that is reminiscent of the debut of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" at Barrington Stage two summers ago, which he also helmed. That offbeat phenomenon quickly found a home on Broadway. This show has the potential to make a comparable leap. - BOSTON GLOBE

In its current production at the Cape Playhouse, the 1984 musical *The Rink* proves to be as durable as a mirror ball... **fresh and arresting.** In fact, **if there's any fairness in the world, this show will eventually find its way back to Broadway.** It takes considerable legerdemain to balance a story of family dysfunction with the periodic upbeat numbers that a musical needs to stay afloat. Fortunately, director **Michael Unger never lets the pace flag or the tone go maudlin.** So do what you can to catch this stellar production of *The Rink* during its short run. - THEATREMANIA



### DIE FLEDERMAUS @ THE SARASOTA OPERA COMPANY

"Die Fledermaus," is quite simply a delicious feast for both eyes and ears. Superb stage direction by Michael Unger included physical comedy and pratfalls executed cleanly with great effect. The cast managed to keep pace with both the musical and acting demands brilliantly. - SARASOTA HERALD TRIBUNE

This production is **effervescent, delicious and totally delightful, bringing joyful guffaws in the theatre and happy hums outside.** Michael Unger, in his Sarasota Opera debut, has artfully walked the dangerously thin line between broad comedy and philosophical observations. "*Die Fledermaus*" is a tightrope walk. **Unger is gloriously surefooted.** Broad comedy and slapstick are an important part of this operetta. It's hard not to cross the line from inventiveness to shtick. Unger succeeds in keeping his singing actors on the right side. Their mugging is natural and their mannerisms are fresh. He also manages to highlight each character, blurring the others like a good film director, so the proper person is always the center of attention in a given scene. **Best of all, he never lets the comedy get in the way of the music and the singing.** - LONGBOAT OBSERVER

Stage director, Michael Unger, has created scenes of high comedy including prat-falls and reactions that arrive so rapidly that the blink of an eye can cause you to miss a high-slapping highlight. This production of "Die Fledermaus" is **truly ebullient and a finer production is hard to imagine.** Do whatever is necessary, but get tickets for this opera. You will have the time of your life. - VENICE GONDOLIER

### CALIGULA @ THE NEW YORK MUSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL



This big, brash show has received a lot of attention at the festival, and for good reason: it rocks, in that unapologetic way that favors volume over content and spectacle over subtlety. **Michael Unger, the director, handles the traffic nicely and keeps it all balanced on several tightropes at once: the show is almost camp, almost parody; almost funny, almost a tragedy.** - THE NEW YORK TIMES

Caligula has emerged as the **hottest ticket** at this year's inaugural New York Musical Theatre Festival. This daring new show ...is a crowd pleaser in the making. This is dark territory to be sure and with the help of director **Michael Unger's admirably kinetic staging,** Svejcar highlights the majesty in Caligula's madness and its seductiveness. This show is almost certainly bound for a life beyond a festival setting [where] *Caligula* is sure to rock even harder than it does now. - BROADWAY.COM



**From the start, Caligula feels like a winner.** The well-paced (Michael Unger directed) show has **hardly a weak moment.** With some fine-tuning, *Caligula* should soon be ready for the big time. - BACKSTAGE.COM

## MICHAEL UNGER

DIRECTOR (S.S.D.C.)

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### DIRECTOR

A CHRISTMAS CAROL	Annual Production	McCarter Theatre
THE RINK	Starring Leslie Uggams & Janet Metz	The Cape Playhouse, MA
THE 25 <sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE	World Premiere	Barrington Stage Company (Berkshire Eagle #1 Pick)
BEHIND THE LIMELIGHT	World Premiere	New York Stage & Film & NYMF
TINY DANCER		Prince Music Theatre
DIE FLEDERMAUS		Sarasota Opera
CALIGULA	World Premiere – Audience Award	Theatre at St. Clements NYMF
La GIOCONDA	World Premiere	Clurman Theatre, Theatre Row, NY
RETRIBUTION	Off Broadway – World Premiere	The Lambs Theatre
HAVEN: The Musical	World Premiere	Gindy Auditorium, L.A.
MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS		St. Louis MUNY
LOVE'S FIRE	Top Ten Pick	Asolo Conservatory
NOISES OFF		New Harmony Theatre
ON THE RAZZLE		Babcock Theatre, University of Utah
TRIUMPH OF LOVE		Weston Playhouse
SCHOOL FOR WIVES		Weston Playhouse
KISS ME KATE		The Depot Theatre
THE MIKADO		The Depot Theatre
BOY GETS GIRL	Guest Director	American Academy of Dramatic Arts
JOKING APART	Guest Director	AADA
THE THREE SISTERS	Guest Director	AADA
DANCING AT LUGHNASA	Guest Director	AADA
LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST	Guest Director	AADA
BURIED CHILD	Guest Director	AADA
I'LL BE SEEING YOU	World Premiere	Kimmel Center (Philadelphia)
CHANGES OF HEART	BRAVO Best Pick Award	Barrington Stage Company
CLEAVAGE AND SMOKES	Taper Too -- Premiere	Mark Taper Forum
LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES	French Language Production	Sanford Meisner Theatre
IN PERPETUITY... UNIVERSE	Guest Artists (Group 27)	Juilliard
STILL	World Premiere	Generation Productions
CRIMES OF THE HEART		Blowing Rock Stage
STEEL MAGNOLIAS	Guest Artist	Freed Center for the Arts
GAME OF LOVE & CHANCE	French Language Prod.	The Arclight Theatre
CRIES FROM THE MAMMAL HOUSE	American Premiere	The Limelight Playhouse
TAMING OF THE SHREW		The Complex Theatre, LA
THE BLAIR ARCH PROJECT	Princeton Triangle Club	McCarter Theatre
Various Musical Revues	Guest Director	AMDA

### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

STEEL PIER	Scott Ellis, Dir.	Richard Rodgers Theatre
KING DAVID	Mike Ockrent	New Amsterdam Theatre
A CHRISTMAS CAROL	Mike Ockrent	Madison Square Garden
BURIED CHILD	Gary Sinise	Brooks Atkinson / Steppenwolf
EYES FOR CONSUELA	Terry Kinney	Manhattan Theatre Club
CLOSER THAN EVER	Richard Maltby, Jr.	Cherry Lane
A CLOCKWORK ORANGE	Terry Kinney	Steppenwolf Theatre
THE NIGHT THEY RAIDED MINSKYS	Mike Ockrent/Susan Stroman	Reading
PICKET FENCES	Kristoffer Tabori	20th Century Fox, CBS-TV
ROMEO AND JULIET	Kristoffer Tabori	L. A. Shakespeare Festival

### TRAINING

Ithaca College – B.F.A. (cum laude), Actors Center, Circle in the Square, Steppenwolf, Actors Institute, Wynn Handman

### REFERENCES (Call for contacts)

Susan Stroman, John Kander, Gary Sinise, Mark Waldrop, Richard Maltby, Jr.  
Terry Kinney, David (Tommy) Thompson, Steve Stettler, Mara Isaacs

# MORE REVIEWS OF PRODUCTIONS DIRECTED BY MICHAEL UNGER

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

(McCarter Theatre, Princeton, NJ)  
ANNUAL PRODUCTION

"... an evening in which the perfect balance of Dickensian fidelity and modern theatricality has been achieved. The production will leave you gasping in admiration and on your feet cheering. Oh yes, perfection." - Princeton Packet

"The entire evening soars. Poignant... Touching... Scrooge's final scene with Tiny Tim will bring tears to many eyes... still has the ability to surprise, charm, and - best of all - enormously affect even the Scroogiest of theatergoers." - Newark Star-Ledger

"...brilliantly directed by Michael Unger. At the end of a glorious two hours of spectacle and joy we are left with the final image - the heart sings even as the eyes tear." - Princeton Packet



(Josh Rose & John Christopher Jones)

"...a superior production of this perennial chestnut. Director Michael Unger has polished the production so it runs like a well-oiled music box that continues to astonish." - Home News Tribune

A dazzlingly imaginative production... strikes extraordinarily effective balance between the somber and the sublime. Mr. Unger's clever, resourceful staging presents a cornucopia of delightful surprises, both human and supernatural bringing together this mammoth production with ease and grace." - Town Topics

"McCarter Theatre's *A Christmas Carol*, has arrived, and what a luscious feast it is! ...a superb cast with gracefully detailed, warmly naturalistic direction by Michael Unger. A gigantic, remarkable two-hour adventure. A spectacular production..." - Trenton Times

"McCarter's *A Christmas Carol* makes a lasting impression. Memorable are the sets by Ming Cho Lee and the surprises he and the director, Michael Unger, offer in the special-effects department. They underscore why theatre can be so much more powerful than film. These days, when movies use computer images to create whatever reality is needed, it's only a live illusion onstage that can generate a 'How did they do that?'" - New York Times

## THE 25<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

(Barrington Stage Company, MA)

...one of the funniest, sweetest and quirkiest small-scale musicals to come along in a long time. A splendid cast, terrific music and savvy writing and direction, - Variety

A new musical created by a team of divine madmen & women. This production moves smoothly and effortlessly across an impressive setting.



- Berkshire Eagle

Two hours of solid laughter. A splendidly staged premiere... - TheatreMania

## SCHOOL FOR WIVES

(Weston Playhouse, VT)



(Sam Lloyd, Clark Gessner, John Seidman, Philip Kerr, David Heuvelman, Valorie Hubbard, Stacey Branscombe, Rob A. Wilson)

"The Weston Playhouse has a superb production of *School For Wives* currently on their stage. (When I say superb, I want you to know that I sent e-mails about the performance to 40 or so friends the next day, a first for me.) The company came in only slightly shy of a laugh a minute. They were perfect.

The sets were wonderfully telescoped into one another, with enough doors, trapdoors and windows to pop into or through that the audience kept wondering where the actors would appear next - and laughing when they did.

Director, Michael Unger, has produced an amazingly clear-sighted realization of the play. Kudos to him for the work he did with the actors. It was truly wonderful. And thanks to the playhouse for restoring Moliere to their stage in such a spry, sly production." - Shelburne News

"The current Weston production is a highly polished exercise in farce. Assisted by a brilliant Richard Wilbur translation, director Michael Unger has crafted an evening of theatre that is quite funny and employs many broad farcical bits of action. A handsomely constructed evening of theatre." - The Brattleboro Reformer

"The Weston Playhouse, finishes off its stellar season with a vibrant showing of Moliere's *School For Wives*. Director, Michael Unger, has made excellent use of Richard Wilbur's classic poetic translation. Even the very serious moments are not allowed to drag. This *School* boasts a magnificent, practical set -- perhaps the most inventive construction of this season. Weston again finds itself ending on a note of triumph." - Bennington Banner

## MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS

(The MUNY, St. Louis, MO)



(Jack Freimann, Natalie Bram, Erin Dowling, Emily Loesser, Kim Lindsay, Don Stephenson, Georgia Engels & Jo Loesser)

"The dances fill the stage, the trolley number is fully realized and the finale goes all-out for a spectacular period look. ...director Michael Unger draws many good performances from a cast of MUNY favorites." - St. Louis Post-Dispatch

"As the director, Michael Unger elicits the best efforts from the strong cast, as well as the Muny stage and production staff as a whole... I highly recommend this production of *Meet Me In St. Louis*." - KDHX Radio

"An ideal night of St. Louis memories and a totally wonderful show for the entire family." - KMOX Radio

## NOISES OFF (New Harmony Theatre, IN)



(Tom Roland, Allison Nega, Paul Whitthorne, Nick Toren, Sue Cella, Craig Dudley, Stacey Branscombe, Janet Metz and Jeb Brown)

"In this production of *Noises Off*, armed with Frayn's map, director Michael Unger, follows through with a frothy, frenzied, breathlessly funny evening of folly. The entire cast plunges through the show's polyrhythmic choreography of door-slamming entrances and exits, axe, cactus and sardine attacks with abandoned precision." - Evansville Courier & Press

## RETRIBUTION

(Lambs Theatre, Off-Broadway)

"... provocative and unrelenting. If you don't hang on to your seat, you'll be swept away by the surprisingly gripping and dynamic performances. A play that is worthy of your attention." - WQXR Radio

"Michael Unger keeps [the play] moving briskly toward a surprise conclusion." - NY Post



(Jenna Stern, Dennis Christopher & Jack Laufer)

"...a sensitive approach to highly-charged material and there are moments in which *Retribution* takes on a theatrical electricity." - NY Citysearch.com

"...the dramatic scenes at the end of *Retribution* are shattering." - In Theatre

## INCONSTANT LOVERS

(CHANGES OF HEART)

(Barrington Stage Company, MA) BRAVO Best Pick '97/98



(Ali Marsh and Steve Memran)

"*The Inconstant Lovers* is currently being given an interesting and thought-provoking production at Barrington Stage. The play's director has artfully walked the dangerously thin line between broad comedy and philosophical observations. He moves his cast well and has incorporated a number of sight gags that are fully unexpected and are, therefore, effective. He has also employed some very nice directorial touches. There is much to enjoy and ponder." - Berkshire Record

"*The Inconstant Lovers* is a gem, a treasure, a delight... bent on hilarity. This is a visually stunning production. Scheming triumphs and burlesque is alive and well." - Tri-State Compass

"Mr. Unger makes his costume comedy into a very modern play including two of the funniest period dresses I have ever seen... you have to see it to believe it." - Columbia Independent

## THE MIKADO

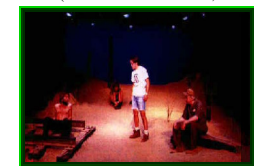
(The Depot Theatre)



(Michael Scott Harris, Amy Fitts & Allison Hiroto)

"...staged with color and elegance, much light humor and pointed satire that has been updated to include references to current events, the evening unfolds with an exciting freshness. Director Michael Unger's expert touch is evident everywhere and he has another show of which he can be justifiably proud. The entire evening is a display of exciting talent, a simple but effective set with its quick changes and the attractively authentic costumes -- and you watch beauty unfold before your eyes." - Glens Falls Post Star

## STILL (Generation Productions, Chicago, IL)



(Daniel Meyer, Dawn Maxey, Darin Anthony and Roy McCall)

"Brilliant. Two thumbs up. Go and check it out." - Q 101 Chicago

"An intriguing psychological thriller given an engrossing world premiere in a disturbing and driven production, tightly directed by Michael Unger. Uniformly excellent performances... stunning, this production verges on a knockout... a beautiful creation" - Gay Chicago Magazine

"Provocative... compelling... lurid..." - Press Publications  
"A thrill a minute, a phantasmagoric romp through the psyche." - Reactor Magazine

## TAMING OF THE SHREW

(The Complex, Los Angeles, CA)

"...a fun and energetic handling of the Bard's tale... Unger and his strong cast dance through a slapstick romp that will surprise those who think Shakespeare was all stiff collars and soliloquies... an exceptional cast." - LA Reader



(Alison Elliott & Ami Rothschild)

"...a terrific cast of exuberantly youthful actors in Unger's finely tuned adaptation of Shakespeare's bawdy romp. A very funny and readily comprehensible production." - LA Weekly