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One Man Show "TRU" to Feature Seasoned Local Actor

Written By **Matthew Russell Henrickson**

If you have ever been to one of the three main community theaters in Gilroy and Morgan Hill, chances are good you have seen Bill Tindall performing on stage or at the very least seen his influence from behind the scenes that enhanced the production of the show.

Bill arrived on the scene when he and his partner opened their interior design business, Brotin Design, in 1987. Bill's interest in theater was sparked by working through a healing process after losing his partner of 27 years in 2005. His debut stage appearance was in "Boeing, Boeing" for Pintello Comedy Theater (PCT) in 2007. His first appearance on stage for South Valley Civic Theater (SVCT) was in "Arsenic and Old Lace," also in 2007. His first appearance on stage for Limelight Actors Theater (LAT) was in "Norman, Is That You?" during their inaugural season in 2011. The wheels of theater were turning, and they have not stopped.

Since 2007, Bill has remained actively involved with community theater. His first role as a producer was for SVCT's "Annie Get Your Gun" in 2009, and again for "The King and I" in 2010. He also spent two years on SVCT's board of directors and has been influential in using his interior design experience to assist with countless shows as a set dresser, set designer and production advisor.

His appearances on stage for PCT, SVCT and LAT have garnered rave reviews; not just from audience members, but from local theatrical critics as well. He counts among his favorite roles played on stage as those he portrayed in LAT's "A Tuna Christmas" and "Red, White and Tuna." He relished the challenge of playing multiple roles on stage in both shows.

Currently Bill is working on the SVCT production of "TRU" opening in January. "TRU" is a one-man play about the life of Truman Capote. Adapted from the words and works of Capote, "TRU" takes place in the writer's New York City apartment during the week before Christmas, 1975. An excerpt from Capote's infamous novel "Answered Prayers" has recently been published in *Esquire Magazine*. "The author's friends, who recognized the characters as thinly veiled versions of themselves, have turned their backs on the man they once considered a close confidant."

Bill first saw "TRU" on Broadway as a concept play in the 90's. He saw a 2013 production of the play in Palm Springs and became fascinated with the idea of portraying Truman Capote. After two years of his courting the board of SVCT, the show was put on their 2015/2016 calendar. The play is produced by Scott Lynch. Direction is by Carol Harris, with assistant direction by this author.

You can catch Bill's performance as Truman Capote starting January 15th. "TRU" runs for six performances on Friday and Saturday nights. For details on dates, times and purchasing tickets in advance, go to the SVCT website, svct.org.

Entertainment: Local resident to play writer Truman Capote in SVCT's first one-man show

Bill Tindall says many challenges in playing unique part

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South Valley Civic Theatre is trying something new with the performance of its first one-man show. "Tru" is a 1989 play by Jay Presson Allen that ran for 297 performances on Broadway. It will be performed by Morgan Hill resident Bill Tindall for six special engagement shows starting Jan. 15.

The play is adapted from the words and works of the author Truman Capote.

Morgan Hill resident Bill Tindall will play the writer on a set at the Community Playhouse that represents Capote's New York City apartment the week before Christmas 1975. Alone and lonely one night, Capote soothes himself with pills, vodka, cocaine, and chocolate truffles and muses about his life and career in a two-act monodrama.

Morgan Hill Life asked Tindall about the unique play and how he came to perform the role as the famous celebrity writer.

Photo courtesy Bill Tindall

"Tru" is an unusual show for SVCT. What prompted SVCT to perform this unusual play, especially with the fact in only features one actor?

While I am not a spokesperson for SVCT, I think they felt "Tru" would offer a new and certainly unusual diversion from their usual fare. I offered the idea of this show to several board members a couple of years ago as a very entertaining but low cost production to fill their season. "Tru" is a simple one-set production and, of course, only has one actor. Presenting this iconic American writer to the audiences of South County also appealed to the creative taste of the board. Truman Capote was not only a master of the written word but a tragic figure that filled the headlines in the mid and late '70s.The story gives a glimpse at a life of brilliance, excess and addiction, everything you want in a great play.

Truman Capote was a brilliant writer who degraded into drugs and alcoholism and disturbing rifts with other celebrities. What prompted you to take on the challenge of portraying him?

I first saw "Tru" in the 1990s. The actor Robert Morse brought the character to life on Broadway, earning a Tony nomination. I have seen the several other productions of the show over the years. The emotional roller coaster the character takes the audience on is an actor's dream — and playing this real person offers challenges that fictitious characters don't. Interpreting his appearance and physicality adds a whole different layer to the portrayal. And while I knew it wouldn't be easy, I never believed it would be this mountainous a task.

What was your acting process of discovering the character of Truman Capote for the play?

The idea of playing this part came after doing two of the productions in the "Greater Tuna" series. In these shows I played 11 of the 22 characters, along with my co-actor Kevin Heath playing the other 11. Developing all the characters, four women, seven men, in this "quick change" high energy frolick gave me confidence to finally tackle "Tru." I then started watching YouTube videos of Truman Capote being interviewed on talk shows from the late '60s into the '70s. He was as outrageous as he was intelligent. Everyone in the production have become enthralled in Truman's life and escapades. Reading and researching the man and his life helped me create the character you will see. My directors Carol Harris and Matthew Hendrickson have been emotional taskmasters, molding every aspect of the character I present and making this an incredible experience for me.

How would you describe the play in terms of what struggles Capote is going through psychologically and with his use of drugs and alcohol?

The play is set in the New York apartment of Truman Capote on Christmas Eve. The audience becomes the confidants of Truman's stories, rants and delusions as he indulges his addictions. He engages them, spilling all his emotions, fears and hopes and finally leaving them in shock in their own emotions.

Photo courtesy www.pinterest.com

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How might you encourage people in the South Valley to attend a performance of "Tru"?

I hope everyone who comes to the show will prepare with some simple research on the man and his life. The trip they will be taking on is worth the effort. It is an adult show that will make you think and want to learn more about the author. All of us working on the show have become Capote junkies, wanting to know more about this man who wrote two of America's greatest literary works: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" and" In Cold Blood."

Around Town with Robert Airoldi *(An excerpt)*

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By Robert Airoldi

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Bill Tindall as "Truman Capote"

Bill Tindall is a hit in his one-man show "Tru" now playing at the Morgan Hill Playhouse. A unique production of the South Valley Civic Theatre, the producers decided to give the popular Morgan Hill actor a chance to do something new with the performance. The 1989 play by Jay Presson Allen was a runaway success that ran for 297 performances on Broadway. We got a sneak peek of Tindall's embodiment of the strange and brilliant American writer Truman Capote. The set is a brilliant representation of Capote's New York City apartment the week before Christmas 1975. A rear-screen projection brings it all to life with a panoramic "live" view of the New York skyline. Alone and lonely one night, Capote soothes himself with pills, vodka, cocaine, and chocolate truffles and muses about his life and career in a two-act monodrama.

"The emotional roller coaster the character takes the audience on is an actor's dream — and playing this real person offers challenges that fictitious characters don't," Tindall told us. "Interpreting his appearance and physicality adds a whole different layer to the portrayal. And while I knew it wouldn't be easy, I never believed it would be this mountainous a task."
The play continues Jan. 22, , 23, 29 and 30. Visit South Valley Civic Theatre's website at www.svct.org for details and to purchase tickets to see this entertainment and emotionally-vivid play.

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