

It's a Hit!

AspenDream Productions

There's no place like home." Those famous words from *The Wizard of Oz* are all too familiar. They also happen to be from the first play that Janice Luise-Lutkus ever performed. Two things definitely resulted from their utterance — the acting bug bit Luise-Lutkus, and the dialogue's sentiment has stuck with her. Today, from her home in Harwinton, Luise-Lutkus runs her own production company. A company she started, in a town she loves. This ambitious entrepreneur has surrounded herself with trained, studied actors; written numerous witty, unique scripts; and positioned herself within her community. The result is absolute entertainment. AspenDream Productions has been successfully amusing the masses for seven years. Like Dorothy in *Oz*, it is a dream come true for Janice Luise-Lutkus.

Luise-Lutkus studied Theater Arts at Uconn, and set off to be the star so many dream to be. She was soon acting regionally and in New York City, but stardom eluded her. This dynamic woman wasn't about to give up easily, instead she took advantage of her vast stage experience and her education and decide to take control of her own destiny. AspenDream Productions was born out of her unbridled passion for the craft of acting, her desire to utilize the wealth of talent she has found in Connecticut and her inherent need to entertain. Luise-Lutkus may be a one-woman show but AspenDream Productions is much, much more. Luise-Lutkus has gathered a troupe of highly trained professional actors who answer the immediate needs of their audience with their uncanny ability to rise to every occasion. Working with "loose" scripts, all written by Luise-Lutkus, the ensemble utilizes their craft to perform hilarious shows, filled with a charming array of characters.

First and foremost, there is Uncle Franco, the head of the mob clan, played by veteran actor/singer Sal Perugini. He is the life (and maybe death of the party). The quintessential bride and groom are riotously played by Tori Willey and Matt J. Saccullo respectively. The Godfather is portrayed by Tom Luise, in a performance you cannot refuse. If these characters sound familiar it's because they are the archetypes from which the various productions are based. They are also characters the audience embraces, literally. There are sixteen characters in the comedy wedding production, *For Better or for Worse*. Some of the more memorable include: Father O'Flasky, Luigi "the squeeze" Vendetta, Mario "one-minute" Mancini, and a personal favorite, Isabella Castratta.

Environmental Theater is arguably one of the most difficult genres to perform successfully. When done well, as in AspenDreams case, these shows are not-



ing short of remarkable — to adeptly engage the audience as part of the comedy is a task best left to the professionals. This is three-and-a-half hours of constant entertainment. There is even music, a DJ and dancing. These productions are choreographed! When done poorly, as in other cases, the show can lag, or actually stop for long periods of time; furthermore, the audience is often made to feel awkward and embarrassed by the actors. The crowd is usually left underwhelmed. Not so with AspenDream, here the talent is palpable. The performances are so memorable that Luise-Lutkus has cast many of her actors in industrial films, commercials and solo performances after they had been seen in one of her productions. (She is always looking for new talent as well. Auditions can be easily arranged.)

One secret to their success is their ability to adapt. This troupe of over twenty-two actors must know their characters intimately because depending on the setting or the occasion, the dialogue will change. The plot remains in tact, but the various nuances and situations may vary. Each script is uniquely written to every situation. This also assures the same show can never be seen twice. Yet another unique aspect of AspenDream: they never make comedy at the expense of any of the audience members. Their goal is to have the audience experience the evening as if they were real members of a mob family.

The audience changes dramatically too, AspenDream Productions performs for fundraisers, corporations, individuals, and yes, even weddings. They will tailor the cost to your event and budget. Currently, AspenDream Productions is getting ready for their largest audience yet, they will be appearing at the Aqua Turf, call for more details.

In her "spare" time, Janice Luise-Lutkus acts as the Executive Producer of the Warner Studio Theater in Torrington and is currently directing "Barefoot in the Park" for the Southington Community Theater. She is also listed under casting, producing and directing in Connecticut Film, Video and Media (ctfilm.com), and in American Women in Radio and Television. With all she has to be proud of, it is AspenDream Productions that brings her the most joy. **FX**

Current Shows:

For Better or For Worse — comedy wedding
Mobs Murder Mystery — interactive comic mystery
High Stakes (written by Karen Willy) — Uncle Franco hosts a poker tournament
An Evening with Uncle Franco — music and singing

Aspen Dream Productions, LLC

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