**JERRY GRETZINGER STARS**

**IN NEW KARAOKE MUSICAL**

SALEM, NY -- Fort Salem Theater presents the world premiere of a new Karaoke Musical for one weekend only, July 13-15. WNYT news anchor Jerry Gretzinger stars as genetic scientist Bobby Stein in the musical comedy, *Frank and Stein,* an homage to the two-hundredth anniversary of the publication of Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein.*

In the original musical, written by Gretzinger and the Fort's artistic director, Jay Kerr, Stein is a scientist by day and Frank Sinatra wannabe by night, singing karaoke Sinatra tunes at the Salem Bowl, an operation headed by his underworld-connected uncle. Gretzinger's character is obsessed by wanting to sound like Sinatra, not unlike the news anchor himself. "Well, I don't actually want to sound like Sinatra," Gretzinger says, "but I really do love singing his music." Corroborating that assertion are the three Sinatra-based Fort Salem produced concerts that Jerry has been performing all over the Capital Region in the last few years, including "Mostly Frank," "Sinatra 101," and "The Rat Pack in Vegas."

Sinatra songs help tell the story and tie the show together in a modern form, the jukebox musical, along the lines of *Jersey Boys* and Carole King's *Beautiful.* Stein's Uncle Tony, played by Salem attorney Don McPhee, sees his nephew's obsession to sound like Sinatra and devises a plan to use the scientist's genetic research to infuse some Sinatra DNA into the young singer. So what if it involves Uncle Tony visiting Sinatra's grave in Palm Springs to get the necessary cells.

Observing and objecting to the transformation are Stein's wife, Nancy ("Sinatra had a wife named Nancy, too," Stein observes), played by Jessica O'Keefe; his star-struck and amorous boss, Mary, played by Greztinger's real-life wife, Erin; Shelley Blakely, a local health reporter, played by Ann Marie Acquilano; and Stein's cousin, Vince ("not Cousin Vinnie"), played by Dave O'Keefe.

"Bobby Stein becomes a monster," notes co-author Kerr, who is also directing the show. "Not quite the monster created by Dr. Frankenstein, but every bit as much a monster as Sinatra was at his darkest and most self-obsessed."

The show had been gestating for about eighteen months and came together this winter through a series of collaborative FaceTime phone calls, rewrites, and serious negotiations. "I guess it's a sure sign of a successful collaboration when each writer believes the other guy won most of the arguments," says Kerr. "Of course, in the end Jerry's going to say whatever he wants to when he's on stage, because he's there and I'm not."

Gretzinger and Kerr have been working together since 2009, when Benita Zahn, Jerry's co-anchor on Channel 13's "Live at 4" newscast, brought him with Jessica Layton to Fort Salem, resulting almost immediately in the formalized formation of The Singing Anchors. "We performed at Fort Salem, MacHaydn Theatre, the Racino, the Museun of Dance and all the best libraries around," says Gretzinger, "until Jess moved to Channel Two in Manhattan. Now Benita and I do a show called, 'Side by Side,' and, of course, I still do my Sinatra shows."

*Frank and Stein: A Karaoke Musical* plays one weekend only, July 13-15, with shows Friday and Saturday at 8 PM and Sunday at 2 PM. A Farm-to-Table Dinner Theater option at Gardenworks Farm is available for Saturday evening, with advance reservation required. Information and tickets are available on the theater's website (fortsalemtheater.com) or by calling the box office at (518) 854-9200.