

LORD LEEBRICK



TWO YOUNG MEN
ONE WILD DREAM

two decades of good drama

BY ANNA GRACE

Randy Lord and Chris Leebrick rolled into town in 1992, their old Buick Park Avenue packed with the worn clothing and stratospheric expectations of young artists. They were fresh out of college and bubbling with an ambitious plan: to create a first-class theater that features only the best actors, produces timeless plays and keeps ticket prices well within the range of us mortals.

Twenty years later and that plan is still unfolding. With another wildly successful season under its belt and on the brink of opening a new space downtown, Lord Leebrick Theatre Company is celebrating its past accomplishments, while still looking toward the future.

LEEBRICK AND LORD

Like so many great artistic ventures, Lord Leebrick Theatre owes much of its vibrancy to the unabashed, idealistic egoism of the young. “The origin of LLTC was pure selfishness,” says Lord. “A couple of college buddies wanted to advance their growth as artists and make a nice living off that art in the process.”

Local actor Dan Pegoda remembers the buzz around the new boys in town. “These two cats, just a couple of young Turks wanting to put on and be in some cool shows,” recalls Pegoda, who contributes comics to *EW*. “I remember trying to figure out what Shakespeare character Lord Leebrick was, until I finally got the joke.”

With names like Lord and Leebrick, what choice did they have but to use them for a theater? But it was about more than just a healthy love for the family appellation, Lord says.

“Naming the company after ourselves, while many considered this an arrogant and self-centered move,” he explains, “expressed a buck-stops-here mentality. No one had to wonder who was ultimately responsible for the integrity of our productions, who should be the recipient of any glory or criticism. And there was plenty of both to go around.”

Lord’s partner in drama reiterates the scope of their original expectations. “Randy and I had grandiose visions when we were in the initial planning process for the company, and we thought really big things were gonna happen quickly,” says Leebrick. “Then the reality and the hard, hard work set in, and we would look back at those grandiose visions and laugh at our naiveté. It takes time and hard work,” he adds.

Hard work and hard times — such as when Leebrick had his costume stolen before opening night and ended up performing in the dirty old shoes the thief had left in place of the white sneakers he snatched. Leebrick notes that they could “literally fill a book of good stories about the early years.” During the second season, the guys actually started living in the theater.

“Times were tight and we could save money by only paying for one rent,” Leebrick recalls. “I had always wanted to get as close to my art as possible, and that certainly did it. I ended up living at the theater three years to the day — sleeping on a futon, cooking on a hot plate and showering at my gym. Quite bohemian it was.”

DAN PEGODA,
MARY BUSS AND
CAMERON CARLISLE
IN HEDDA GABLER

