

John Moore

Day 114: Patty Mintz Figel is having (another) magical year, having just completed the first Colorado production of Joan Didion's one-woman monster, "The Year of Magical Thinking." Now she's playing an also-widowed Clairee in an all-star staging of "Steel Magnolias" for Senior Housing Options. Patty has conquered any number of seminal roles — as Mademoiselle Pernelle in Citystage Ensemble's "Tartuffe" in 1994; as Ruth in "Collected Stories" for the Mizel Arts and Culture Center in 2002; or how about her portrayal of Fonsia Dorsey in Paragon Theatre's 2008 "The Gin Game," a two-hander with Jim Hunt? She's won two best actress awards from Westword — first as one of Edward Albee's "Three Tall Women" for Germinal Stage-Denver in 2004, and again last year for her portrayal of Meg, the long-suffering wife of a brutal husband in Sam Shepard's "A Lie of the Mind," for the late Paragon Theatre. "The quality of truth and compassion that Mintz Figel brought to the role was crystal clear," Juliet Wittman wrote at the time. Even so, it would be hard for anyone to top the challenge she took on in April for Breckenridge's Backstage Theatre, playing a grieving writer trying to make sense and sanity out of the deaths of her husband and only child in "Magical Thinking." Hard to believe that not so terribly long ago, Figel was running a series of tennis centers. At age 50, she has often said, "I was hopelessly tired of being nice to people," so she started taking acting classes at Denver Center. Her first role was in "Inherit the Wind." Today — and we mean that literally because there will be a discounted performance this very night (Aug. 12) — she's back performing in the lobby of the Barth Hotel, where she previously played in two productions of "Hot L Baltimore" — 17 years apart. Presently, she is joined by Billie McBride, Rhonda Brown, Devon James, Rachel Fowler and Adrian Egolf in "Steel Magnolias," that ubiquitous Southern weeper about the camaraderie between six Bayou babes who gossip, needle and harangue one another through the best and worst of times at Truvy's Beauty Salon. This production is Senior Housing Options' annual summer fundraiser — a play staged right in the lobby of the Barth Hotel, where 62 low- or no-income seniors get housing and services. Showtimes: 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays — and tonight (Monday, Aug. 12) — through Aug. 24. Tonight's show costs just \$15-\$20. The Barth Hotel is located at 17th Avenue and Blake Street (1514 17th St.). Call 303-595-4464, ext. 10, for reservations, or go to www.seniorhousingoptions.org. Next up: Patty will be starring in "Vigil" for the Cherry Creek Theatre Company, opening Oct. 4.

- <http://www.facebook.com/l/jAQHsUywm/www.hotgirlswearingmysunglasses.tumblr.com>

From John Moore

John wrote: "Day 104: Pretty sure Louisiana will have never looked lovelier than when Adrian Egolf, above, is joined tonight by Billie McBride, Rhonda Brown, Devon James, Rachel Fowler and Patty Figel for the opening of "Steel Magnolias," that ubiquitous Southern weeper about the camaraderie between six Bayou babes who gossip, needle and harangue one another through the best and worst of times at Truvy's Beauty Salon. Adrian is a brazen one who comes from brazen stock. She grew up in Creede, 250 miles southwest of Denver, where her father last year turned down Johnny Depp's request to rent his house during the filming of "The Lone Ranger." Not because Dad had a premonition the film would be a flop -- because Dad would not allow Depp to smoke in his house. Adrian trained at the National Theater Institute, the American Academy for Dramatic Arts and the St. Petersburg Arts Academy. She made her Colorado mark with the hometown Creede Repertory Theatre before moving to Denver as part of a whole Creede tribe that has steadily worked on area stages since. Adrian's credits have included "God of Carnage" for the Off-Square Theatre in Jackson Wyo.; "Boeing, Boeing" Colorado Springs TheatreWorks; "Of Mice and Men" for the Colorado

Springs Fine Arts Center; Miners Alley Playhouse's "Present Laughter"; Buntport Theater's "Trunks," and "Romeo and Juliet" for the Denver Center Theatre Company. This production of "Steel Magnolias" is Senior Housing Options' annual summer fundraiser, a play staged right in the lobby of the Barth Hotel, where 62 low- or no-income seniors get housing and services -- and sometime wander into the action of the play. Showtimes: 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays. The Barth Hotel is located at 17th Avenue and Blake Street (1514 17th St.). Call 303-595-4464, ext. 10, for reservations, or go to www.seniorhousingoptions.org. Bring a fan. With these five actors sharing the stage -- it's going to be hot. Check out my full, award-winning blog, "Hot Girls Wearing My Cheap Sunglasses" (already awarded Westword Insiders Best of Denver's "Cheekiest Exploitation of Cheap Sunglasses and Invaluable Women" -- not really!) here: www.hotgirlswearingmysunglasses.tumblr.com. Senior Housing Options, Inc. Adrian Egolf Billie McBride Devon James Scrutchins Rachel Fowler Rhonda Brown Denver Westword Tito's Handmade Vodka Kat Valentine King"