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It's quite remarkable that the St. Norbert College Music Theatre program is celebrating its 50th year this summer. I'm curious as to what the first production was.

Patti VandenBusch Albers '76

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August 2011

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

It's quite remarkable that the St. Norbert College Music Theatre program is celebrating its 50th year this summer. I'm curious as to what the first production was.

Patti VandenBusch Albers '76

Answer:

My dearest Patti,

Please accept my gratitude for your query. Many alumni undoubtedly share your curiosity about Music Theatre, as it has proven a most delightful tradition during its 50 years at our beloved college.

Through the vision of Dudley Birder, Music Theatre has staged Broadway musicals each summer since 1962, using local volunteer talent. With regard to your inquiry, the first musical presented was "Little Mary Sunshine," Rick Besoyan's playful nod to old-fashioned operettas.

In half a century, Music Theatre has presented 77 productions, with more than 650 performances before a total audience of some 400,000. It is quite difficult to quantify the community volunteers who have participated in one or more productions. A conservative estimate puts the number of actors, singers, dancers, stagehands, ushers, and hair and makeup personnel involved over the years at an impressive 4,000 to 4,500.

The college community is thrilled that Music Theatre is



Ask the Abbot

As the founder of St. Norbert College, and having a prime seat in the center of campus throughout the years, I, Abbot Bernard Pennings, hold the answers to many of your burning questions about the college.

[Submit Your Question](#)

presenting “The Phantom of the Opera” this summer. St. Norbert is one of the first institutions of higher learning to be granted rights to perform the production, which Broadway only recently released. The privilege is a testament to Music Theatre’s high quality and its volunteers’ enduring dedication.

Responses to “Ask the Abbot” questions are penned by St. Norbert College staff in the name of Abbot Bernard Pennings, O.Praem., who founded St. Norbert College in 1898.

St. Norbert College

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