

## LaRose is master of many trades

By Pam Kruse  
Doings Contributor

When it comes to performing, Judy LaRose is a master of many trades. In addition to being a versatile singer and actress, she is skilled in narration, characters, voice-over, dialects and musical comedy.

LaRose has appeared in stage plays, regional operas and commercials and in the print media. She has released a commercial-narration voice-over demo tape, which demonstrates her ability to sing popular jingles. For the past three years, she acted in a mock trial that has been used as an educational tool by the law firm of Kirkland and Ellis. She is a member of Actors Equity and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

LaRose believes in taking advantage of all types of performance opportunities. "My person lends itself to a lot of different media," she said. "I feel blessed that I can perform in any genre in which I'm called upon."

In the last year and a half, LaRose has performed at more than 50 corporate events, including ones at Bloomingdale's, the Fairmont Hotel, the Oak Brook Hills Hotel, Lake Point Tower and The Palmer House.

Her repertoire includes opera, operetta, classical, contemporary, folk, sacred and oratorio music. She tells stories in between songs and gets out into the audience. "I'm a singer who moves and touches," she said. "If I can make someone smile for a split second, then that's what I was there for."

She has been closing her shows with "Bring Him Home" from "Les Miserables," a song notorious for being performed by a male. "When I leave an audience, I want to leave them either feeling great or with thoughts that they can get in touch with later," she said.

LaRose's involvement at corporate events goes beyond performing. She often coordinates the talent that appears with her and has been known to get "everything from a piano to a 15-piece orchestra" for her set.

LaRose's success was anything but overnight. She danced as a young child and, although she knew she could sing at an early age, she kept it a "secret." It wasn't until a teacher asked her to audition, that she started doing musical theater in high school. And when an accident left her face disfigured, she took singing lessons to feel good about herself.

She attended the Chicago Musical College at Roosevelt University, where she won a music scholarship and earned several degrees. She taught music at Hinsdale Central High School and taught youngsters in voice in Arlington Heights and Berkeley.



LaRose

But, all during her teaching career, LaRose never stopped performing. She appeared in regional opera and as a church soloist. "When I was teaching, I didn't feel that I was sharing the best of my abilities," she said. "I learned far more from my students than they ever did from me."

Five years ago, LaRose left the teaching profession and took two years of acting classes, voice lessons and coaching. "I didn't know it at the time, but I was putting together a one-woman show with everything I was learning," she said.

LaRose is honing her skills at Northwestern University, Evanston, working on musical arrangements and a vocal demo tape and has plans to participate in a recording session with a major performer.

She said she has been fortunate

to work with "the best in the business" over the years. Her musical arranger is James L. Mack, president of the Chicago chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. Her accompanist is Melody Lord, second pianist for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

She works out six to eight hours a week to keep up her stamina and, if there's any time left, she spends it gardening, cooking, entertaining and preparing for her favorite time of year — Christmas.

She doesn't know exactly what her future holds. "I'm flexible enough to be able to go in whatever direction I'm led. ... I just listen to the voice within and take advantage of the performance opportunities that come my way," she said.

The Doings