

Mysteries of the Human Spirit: March Plays at CTE/TAM Drama

With the CTE Season for 2009-10 off to a great start in the fall and with a wonderful Winter One Act Festival behind, TAM audiences can look forward to a variety of plays to finish out the year. Starting in March, two plays will offer a contrast between a new work and a classic: *The Miracle*, by Lin Coghlan, and *The Seagull*, by Anton Chekhov. Both plays deal with subtle aspects of the human spirit in two completely different settings. The contrast should provide audiences with a peek into different lives and other “worlds” that will stir an appreciation for the mystery of being human.

The original play scheduled for the early March timeslot, by CTE alumni playwright Ben Snyder exploring the Palestinian Israeli conflict, has been postponed to the 2010-11 season to allow further script work and planning. *Miracle* was a back up choice that fulfilled the need for a play concerning a contemporary issue (a returning soldier from Iraq who impacts his community) that was an “ensemble” show offering each actor the challenge of playing multiple parts.

The Miracle (March 2-6) is a play first produced at the National Theatre in London in their New Connections series, specifically aimed at young audiences, commissioned from well-known UK playwrights such as Coghlan, who’s from Dublin. The play reflects her Irish roots of storytelling and love for the mysterious aspects of life. The story follows Veronica Sheehan who has a gift for “visions” that is often misunderstood in her community. When a canal breaks its banks and a holy statue bursts up through the floor of Veronica’s bedroom, no one is more surprised than she. With the enthusiastic support of her best friend Zelda, she sets about using her newfound skills to help her ailing community, as the townspeople find themselves longing unknowingly for something magical to come into their lives. Like *Saint Joan* (George Bernard Shaw) in which a visionary heroine finds herself battling skeptical authorities, Coghlan suggests a miracle is simply an event that creates faith and shows that human progress often depends on the irrational.

Guest Artist Julia McNeal (*Ti Jean Blues*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Living Out*) directs an ensemble cast including Shoshana Cantor, Melissa Levin, Ellie Kim, Kate Suppes, Rachel White, Nicole Woodworth, Karleen Schuldt, Caleb Dorfman, and Zoe Nero with second year students Liam Burk, Gabe Marino, and Morgan Hill. Stage Managers are Kelly Bertenthal and Katya Baker Levine. Student designers include Sarah Schwartz, Peter Wallace, Mary De Cuir, Allison Curtis, Lauren Ashe and Vanessa Calderelli.

All performances are at 7:00 PM in the Caldwell Theatre, March 2-6. Tickets are available when the Box Office opens one hour before performances. Seats are claimed on a first-come, first-served basis when the theatre opens at 6:30 PM. Students/ Senior Citizens are \$5 and Adults are \$12. For more information visit CTE's website: www.ctetam.org. *The Miracle* is intended for audiences that are high school age and above.

Watch for the March Whole Tam Family to see information about *The Seagull* (March 24-28), Chekhov's classic play, directed by guest artist Joe Lucas (*Grimm Tales*, *The Bald Soprano*) that explores mysteries of the heart and the artistic mind.

-- Susan Brashear