THEATRE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

On behalf of our faculty, staff, guest artists and especially students, welcome to the 48th season of Festival Playhouse of Kalamazoo College! In conjunction with the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership, we present a series of provocative, humorous, and innovative plays that unite performance, text, and design, while exploring what it means to live (and not live) in a socially just world.

“Stuff happens … And it’s untidy, and freedom’s untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things.” These are the famous words of former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in April 2003, shortly after the United States invaded Iraq. In our Fall production and Michigan premiere, award-winning author David Hare pulls no punches in STUFF HAPPENS, which profiles the extraordinary events at the White House, at the United Nations, and all over the world leading to the U.S./Iraqi war. Besides Bush, Powell, Rice and Rumsfeld, other characters include Laura Bush, Tony Blair, and U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix. A play about international diplomacy, leadership, and credibility, most of all, in the author’s own words “STUFF HAPPENS is a history play which happens to centre on very recent history.”

In the Winter 2012 term, we present the riotous and outrageous political farce, CLOUD NINE by Caryl Churchill. Act One takes place in British colonial Africa and features a man playing the mistress of the household, a white actor playing a black servant, and a doll playing the well-behaved daughter. Act Two is 100 years later in London, but the characters have only aged 25 years, as they explore their sexual identities through everything from heterosexual adultery to bisexual incest. One of the sharpest, politized, and funniest plays ever written, The New York Times called the original Broadway production “an evening of inspired lunacy.” Caryl Churchill has emerged of one of the most successful, respected and insightful playwrights of her – or any – generation.

Spring term 2011 will see two productions: As part of our Senior Performance Series, senior Hutch Pimentel directs the Michigan premiere of BACK OF THE THROAT: “For the longest time Arab issues or Muslim issues just had not been on the radar” (playwright Yusef El Guindi.) “The subject was just ‘too edgy.’ Then came 9/11. Suddenly there were calls for plays.” A chilling black comedy, Back of the Throat tells a Kafkaesque story of two mysterious government agents who visit the apartment of Kaled, an Arab-American writer, for some “routine questioning.” What begins as friendly and humorous becomes uncomfortable, then menacing, and finally violent.

We close our season with the World Premiere of KAHANI – A New Play Devised by Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership Fellow and Guest Artist Director Irfana Majumdar and students of Kalamazoo College. Kahani is the Hindi term for “Story.” Based loosely on stories of Hindi 20th century writer Munshi Premchand and Rabindranath Tagore, ‘national’ poet of Bengal, as well as the stories of our students, KAHANI will use many different methods of Storytelling to explore the implicit power and hierarchical structures within the family and society. This truly interdisciplinary and international project from Theatre Arts, the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership, and Center for International Programs will also tour and perform at the Nirman School in India in July, 2012. As an ACSJL Visiting Fellow, Indian director, filmmaker, and theatre educator Irfana Majumdar will be in residence at Kalamazoo College from January through June 2012, teaching and directing.

We are proud that Kalamazoo College student playwrights will once again participate in the THEATRE KALAMAZOO NEW PLAYFEST, produced at The Epic Center in downtown Kalamazoo, February 11, 2012. We bring them to the stage as the highest gift we can ever offer to an audience: brand new work from the young artists of the future of our theatre.

As always, we feature the work of our “best and the brightest” in student-directed plays, young artists who support the great tradition at Kalamazoo College of students creating their own theatre in our Senior Performance Series. In addition to BACK OF THE THROAT, senior Kyle McCord will direct Israel Horovitz’s LINE in February 3-6, 2012 in the Dungeon Theatre.

As you can see from the above, we continue to strive to make the theatre experience at the center of the liberal arts environment: an intersection of knowledge, creativity, and education for our entire community.

Theatre that is always provocative. Theatre that is always thoughtful.

Thank you for choosing the theatre tonight!

Ed Menta
Professor & Director of Theatre
THE LENS OF HISTORY

BY DAVID LANDSKROENER (K'14), DRAMATURG

There exists a certain viewing device called the Lens of History. The Lens of History plays back everything that has ever occurred on this planet, the defeats and the victories, the deaths and the discoveries, the plagues and the resurrections, the destructions and the creations. Through its objective eye, the Lens of History lets us examine the past so we can recreate our planet's greatest triumphs in order to move into a time of peace and prosperity. But the Lens of History also shows us our mistakes, and how some of those mistakes continue to prevent us from moving into that age of virtue. In STUFF HAPPENS, the Lens of History trains specifically on the politicians and leaders who attempted to “clean up” Iraq, but in the process created an even bigger mess.

STUFF HAPPENS starts us off in a safe, peaceful United States under the government of a new President. The tranquility is suddenly shattered by the events of 9/11, and the government immediately jumps into action, awakening the Lens of History from its slumber. From here on out, The Lens of History begins to show the murky dealings and conferences and decisions of that time in a clear, objective light.

There are no heroes in this play. The Lens of History shows us that the people of the time are all conflicted characters, needing to make decisions of immense importance while under an enormous amount of pressure. George W. Bush is not a hero, but he is also not a villain. The same classification may be applied to Tony Blair, Colin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice, and everyone else involved in the invasion of Iraq. These are all people, people who made decisions that changed the world. The Lens of History shows us that some of those decisions were good. But it also shows that many, many of them were bad, and those bad decisions are the ones that contributed to the fractured world that we live in today.

The Lens of History gives us a clear view and a better understanding of our most recent history through David Hare's STUFF HAPPENS. Was the United States wrong for invading Iraq in the context that it did? Yes. Did it misuse its power? Yes. But that wrongdoing is in the past now, and we have to attend to the present, and the future. Stuff happens, and we have to deal with it. But with the Lens of History, we can prevent the stuff that happened in STUFF HAPPENS from happening again.

EMERITA PROFESSOR OF THEATRE ARTS
NELDA K. BALCH, 1916-2011

In addition to founding the theatre department at Kalamazoo College, and being a pioneer director and theatre educator in a field almost completely dominated by men, Nelda built the aesthetic foundation of the theatre program to which we still adhere until this very day. What she meant to theatre at Kalamazoo College can never be expressed in a just a few sentences, but we can say this: every class we teach, every rehearsal we have, and every play we stage at K in some way carries on Nelda’s legacy - a vision of theatre that always puts student learning first, and a vision of theatre that never compromises artistic integrity to “make things a little easier” for the audience. To this day we describe the theatre program as “Theatre that is always provocative. Theatre that is always thoughtful.” She touched the lives of so many artists and students and she is still guiding us today.
ARTISTIC STAFF

Director: Ed Menta
Costume Designer: Elaine Kauffman
Production Design: Jon Reeves
Video Design: Mary Mathyer
Dramaturg: David Landskroener
Assistant Director: Hutch Pimentel

THEATRE ARTS FACULTY AND STAFF

Department Chair and Performance: Karen Berthel
Director of Theatre: Ed Menta
Lighting Design: Lanford J. Potts
Director of Technical Theatre: Jon Reeves
Theatre Arts Coordinator: Michelle Connolly

GUEST ARTISTS AND VISITING PROFESSORS

Intro to Costuming and Design: Elaine Kauffman
Fundamentals of Acting (Winter): Liza Bielby
Community Dialogue (Spring): Irfana Majumdar
Director of KAHANI (Spring): Irfana Majumdar

FESTIVAL PLAYHOUSE COMPANY

Scene Shop Foreman: Kyle McCord
Box Office Manager: Michelle Connolly
Printer: Allegra Print and Imaging
Program/Poster Design: Brakeman Design

SPECIAL THANKS

Dobbs Optical
Dr. Daniel Kato, Political Science
Don Mack
Jaakan Page-Wood

The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival XLIV

Presented and Produced by
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KC ACTF). The aims of this national theatre education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theatre productions. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KC ACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KC ACTF programs involving scholarships, internships grants and awards for actors, playwrights, designers stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

A faculty colleague attends those productions that are entered on the Associate level. This includes a response session with the company following the performance. The director will be provided with a written response to the work, a copy of which will be forwarded to the regional chair. The response may be accompanied by nominations for awards, including the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship Auditions. An associate production is not eligible for tour to the festival, though the institution is eligible for all other awards.

Last year more than 1,200 productions were entered in the KC ACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theatre department is sharing in the KC ACTF goals to recognize, reward and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theatres across the nation.
PRODUCTION BIOS

R'AED AL SHDAIFAT (Iraqi Exile) is from Jordan. He left Jordan when he was 15 and attended an international high school in Canada. He has been fond of acting since he was a kid, so he is majoring in theatre to pursue his dream. He is very excited to play the part of the Iraqi exile in STUFF HAPPENS.

KATIE ANDERSON (Spotlight Operator) is a First-Year thinking of majoring in Theatre Arts, but she's not sure because she likes the sciences too. This is her first time participating in a production and she is also taking Scenic Design. She hopes to go into the arts, but with a scientific twist.

CALDER BURGAM (Bush) is a Senior, double majoring in Political Science and Economics. Before studying abroad at the London School of Economics, he performed in the Festival Playhouse in THE TEMPEST, THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN and RHINOCEROS. Outside of the play, Calder can be seen performing with Monkapult and Premium Orange. He would like to thank his friends and family for all their support throughout this quarter.

LAUREL BURGAM (Ensemble) is a First-Year looking at majoring in Visual Arts. She has been involved onstage for much of her life acting, singing and dancing. This year she can also be seen performing onstage with Premium Orange. She would like to thank her family and friends for all their support.

FIONA CAREY (Spotlight Operator) is a Sophomore hoping to major in Anthropology/Sociology. She has been involved with the Festival Playhouse in the past in technical positions and also onstage in DEFLOWERPANT MEMOIRS. Most recently she worked over the summer with a Northern Michigan theatre company, Parallel 45. She is thrilled to be back at K working on such a juicy play with such great people.

SOPHIE CAVANAUGH (Asst. to the Lighting Designer) is a First-Year student planning on majoring in Theatre at Kalamazoo College. She is thrilled to have this position on this production of STUFF HAPPENS.

KATHERINE CURLEY (Ensemble) is a Sophomore Psychology major who was last seen as The Police Officer in ALISON SHIELDS last fall. She is so happy to spend time with theatre people in the Nelda K.Balch Playhouse once again. Also, thanks mom.

ANNE FLETCHER (Assistant Stage Manager) is a Sophomore Theatre Arts and HDSR double major. She was last seen in a variety of roles in THE WHO'S TOMMY, from adorable lass to adorable drug-addled harlot. She is very excited to broaden her theatrical horizon this quarter.

ANITA GHANS (Rice) is a First-Year from El Paso, TX. She is interested in Social Sciences and Linguistics. This is her first production for Festival Playhouse. She is excited about being in this production.

GRACE GILMORE (Ensemble) is a First-Year at K. She is planning on majoring in Theatre Arts and is thrilled to be a part of this production. She is looking forward to being a part of this fantastic community. She would like to thank everyone involved and all of those who gave her this exciting opportunity.

MIRAE GUENTHER (Sound Board Operator) is a Senior Biology major. She loves being involved in Festival Playhouse productions such as her role on stage in TOMMY last spring and multiple crew positions for other past performances.

TAYLOR HARTLEY (Light Board Operator) is a Sophomore Art History major. This is her fourth show for Festival Playhouse.

CHEYENNE HARVEY (Kofi Annan/Ensemble) is a calm, collected First-Year who is excited to be involved in STUFF HAPPENS, even if she is mediocre at writing bios.

JANE HUFFMAN (Blair) is a First-Year student and an aspiring English/Theatre Arts major who looks forward to all of the exciting opportunities the K Theatre Department has to offer. She would like to thank all of her friends and family for the continual support.

SAMANTHA JOLLY (Ensemble) is a First-Year and STUFF HAPPENS is her first play for Festival Playhouse. She looks forward to working with all those involved in the theatre program in the coming years. She'd like to thank everyone who put time into this show, and her friends and family for encouraging her to continue theatre in college.

ELAINE KAUFFMAN (Costumer) has a B.S. from Western Michigan University in Fashion Design, including design classes at the American College of London, England. After taking a job in college managing the costume shop for the WMU Theatre Department, she began an unexpected career in costume design that led her to working for almost every theatre in Kalamazoo and several others in the Midwest including a company that did national touring productions of Broadway musicals. She has costumed over 200 shows in the last 14 years with a few of her favorites being CHICAGO, GIGI, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, HAMLET and JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOAT.

She has begun a clothing design business with a growing clientele in the area creating everything from custom-made kilts to wedding dresses. She will always have a great love for the theatre and is enjoying teaching and working with students here at K.

CAMDEN KRUSEC (Ensemble) is
a First-Year from Grand Rapids who plans to major in Psychology. He has been involved in theatre throughout much of his high school career, and is excited to kick off his college experience in theatre with STUFF HAPPENS.

DAVID LANDSKROENER (Dramaturg) is a Sophomore with an undecided major. He participated in K's production of TRINITY at the Theatre Kalamazoo New Play Festival and played in the band for THE WHO'S TOMMY. He wishes to thank God and all of the soldiers who have risked their lives in the Iraq War.

JOHN LEWIS (Ensemble) is a First-Year from Cincinnati, Ohio. STUFF HAPPENS will be his eighth production. When he's not in the playhouse he can be found partaking in shenanigans around campus.

SAM LINSTORM (Cheney) is a First-Year at K. Although this is the first time he has played a Vice President, he has played a number of other parts at his high school in South Haven. In his free time he draws, juggles, and plays both the saxophone and didgeridoo.

MARY MATHYER (Video Designer) is a Sophomore Theatre and Biology major. This is her fifth show for Festival Playhouse and she is excited to further explore the world of video and its incorporation into the theatre.

INDIGO MCCOLLUM (Camera Operator) is a First-Year who is interested in Biology, Theatre and Psychology.

ED MENTA (Director) Recent directing credits: FALLUJAH by Evan Sanders (National Student Playwriting and David Mark Cohen Award – Playwrights and Creative Teams, Chicago); ALISON SHIELDS by Joe Tracz (Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region III invitation and Distinguished Achievement for Original Work - Festival Playhouse); MOONCHILDREN by Michael Weller (University of Illinois Urbana – Champaign).

ABBY MINER (Video Operator) is a Sophomore from Chicago. She is a Political Science major with a Classics concentration. Her most recent theatre experience was an ASM for TONGUE OF A BIRD for Festival Playhouse last winter.

HUTCH PIMENTEL (Assistant Director) is a Senior Theatre Arts major from the south. He was most recently onstage in the Festival Playhouse's production of RHINOCEROS. He directed 4.48 PSYCHOSIS last spring and will direct BACK OF THE THROAT this spring. He would like to thank his family and friends for putting up with everything.

CAMERON SCHNEBERGER (Blix) is a First-Year and is ecstatic about participating in his first play with Festival Playhouse. While he is undecided about a major, theatre is an undeniable passion in his life. Cameron would like to thank Kjerstie Johanson for nurturing this passion for the last couple of years.

DANIEL SILVERMAN (Running Crew) is a pre-med Junior from Birmingham, MI. Last he was seen this previous spring in DOES THIS WOMAN HAVE A NAME? which was directed by Sam Bertken.

MARIANNE STINE (Wolfowitz) is thrilled to be performing once again on the Playhouse stage. A Senior double major in Theatre Arts and English. Her previous roles include Sister Felicity in SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER and Mrs. Watermelon in THE GLOAMING, OH MY DARLING. She'd like to thank her mother for never telling her to choose a more practical career path.

LYDIA STRINI (Video Operator, Master Electrician) is a Sophomore Theatre Major. This will be her fourth mainstage production for Festival Playhouse and her first time on stage.

EMILY WALSH (Ensemble) is a Sophomore Political Science major, and as a political junkie this play is a joy to be involved in! She's been in previous Festival Playhouse productions such as ALISON SHIELDS and TONGUE OF A BIRD. She would like to thank all those she loves both here and at home.

MIKEY WECHT (Running Crew) is a Sophomore Psychology major. He likes theatre, cats, exotic cheeses and his favorite role to play is Old Man Strong from URINETOWN.

JOSEPH WESTERFIELD (Powell) is a First-Year from Longview, WA planning to major in International Studies and Spanish. He is a boisterous individual hailing from Camden, NJ. He attended Central Catholic High School in Portland, OR. There he participated in theatre, Outdoor School Education, and became an Eagle Scout through the Boy Scouts of America.

SYLAR YOUNG (Ensemble) is a First-Year at Kalamazoo College. She has competed in speech contests and summer theatre productions since she was six.

MALLORY ZINK (Video Switcher) is a First-Year planning to major in International Studies with a minor in English and German.
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www.theatrekalamazoo.org

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IRVING BERLIN'S WHITE CHRISTMAS
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WINTER WONDERETTES
DECEMBER 2 - 31

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CIRQUE DREAMS HOLIDAZE
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UNIVERSITY THEATRE: WMU
AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY
NOVEMBER 10 - 20

NEW VIC THEATRE
CHARLES DICKENS
"A CHRISTMAS CAROL"
OPENS NOVEMBER 18

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NOVEMBER 4 - 6

AND MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR...
THEATRE KALAMAZOO NEW PLAYFEST
FEBRUARY 11, AT THE EPIC THEATRE, DOWNTOWN

Join us for the rest of Festival Playhouse’s upcoming 48th Season!

LINE by Israel Horovitz, February 3-6, 2012 (Dungeon Theatre)


BACK OF THE THROAT by Yussef El Guindi, April 26-29, 2012
(Dungeon Theatre)

KAHANI, a new play devised by guest director Irfana Majumdar and the students of Kalamazoo College, May 10-13, 2012