

For Immediate Release



Spotlight Theater Offers Two Shows for the Price of One!

Spotlight Theater has been to hell and back! Our fifth season commenced in October 2010 by lighting a fire under audiences with our original adaptation of Jean-Paul Sartre's **NO EXIT** about three damned souls doomed to torture each other for all eternity, and now we're back to challenge audiences with more rare, riveting and relevant drama...and more bang for your buck! **Spotlight's** winter production is two shows for the price of one! For the price of one fourteen dollar ticket (twelve dollars for students & seniors), as part of **Spotlight's** continuing mission to mount rare and challenging productions of both classic and new material, theatre-goers will be treated to performances of Pulitzer Prize winner Tennessee Williams' **SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER**, and award-winning writer Gary Sunshine's *As Takes A Bride*, together in one evening of compelling entertainment!

Tennessee Williams, author of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Night of the Iguana* and many other classics of the stage, wrote **SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER** along with another play *Something Unspoken* and originally presented them together under the title *Garden District*, but the former, better-known work is most often produced alone these days. Its subject matter, lurid, and controversial in it's time to say the least, brought titillated movie fans in by the droves to see the three time Academy Award-nominated film adapted by Gore Vidal and Williams himself, and starring Katharine Hepburn, Elizabeth Taylor and Montgomery Clift. While the appearance of Liz Taylor in a semi-transparent bathing suit as the film's mascot, certainly didn't do anything to discourage the male population from seeing the film, Vidal credited the film's success to critic Bosley Crowther who wrote a scathing review denouncing the film as the work of degenerates obsessed with rape, incest, homosexuality, and cannibalism: Vidal believed the salacious review did far more to help the film's success than to harm it. The show's success continued far into the future, leading to the play's Broadway debut and an Emmy-nominated telefilm version. The story revolves around the death of Sebastian Venable, beloved son to wealthy matriarch Violet Venable. How did he die? That's precisely what his vigorously determined mother intends to find out, with greedy relatives hovering round her like vultures, waiting for what they hope is coming to them. But the only witness is Mrs. Venable's niece Catharine whom she is convinced is completely, mentally unbalanced and hence not to be believed. But with the threat of lobotomy and the application of truth serum, the truth will out...for better or for worse...What really happened last summer will shock audiences as much as it does

Sebastian's "mourners"...

SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER is directed by Bernie Jablonski, known for his directorial work with the Chicago Heights Drama Group including *Agnes of God*, *Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Crucible*, *Inherit the Wind*, and *The Glass Menagerie* among others, as well as for his role as a teacher of Intro to Theatre, Performing Arts, Film Study and Mass Media and other classes at Marian Catholic High School in Chicago Heights. Jablonski expresses his enthusiasm for helming **Spotlight's** production saying "I was asked to direct **SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER** by **Spotlight Theater**, and was excited at the opportunity. I have always liked the macabre nature of the piece, and am looking forward to bringing all the gory melodrama out without the appearance of gore on the stage." Jablonski goes on to discuss his interest in playwright Williams' penchant for basing characters or elements of characters on himself and his family: "Having directed *The Glass Menagerie* last year, I am also intrigued in exploring the stage psyche of Tennessee Williams' sister again. In *The Glass Menagerie* we saw her as a delicate, vulnerable creature, but here we see her apparently in need of a severe intervention, a lobotomy, which Williams' real-life sister actually did go through. I think Tennessee comes across in the character of Sebastian-is he being destroyed? Sacrificed? Can we ever be just ourselves, without being absorbed by others?" But Mr. Jablonski's important contribution to the show aside, a play is more than just the director's vision and this director says of his cast, "I really have a great cast; and I'm not just saying that, as directors are often wont to do; who are not only good with the accent work, but also with psychological depth and meaning. It is nice to work with a cast that...understands the fundamentals of acting such as motivation and playing objectives...are very flexible in taking direction, and also good at collaboration while respecting the role of the director."

But all this is only half the story...the other half belongs to *Al Takes A Bride* by Gary Sunshine. While **SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER** is often performed alone nowadays, **Spotlight Theater** would rather give theatre-goers more for their money; and with the addition of *Al Takes A Bride* to the bill, we believe we've done that and more, having found an excellent companion piece to Williams' one-act; a sentiment echoed by Jablonski and **Spotlight Theater's** president Jane Cox who calls the pairing "a perfect fit," explaining that "Both pieces are lyrically haunting and both deal with controversial subjects which are still sadly relevant today. Although *Al Takes a Bride* is set in 1893, the story could easily take place in 2011." Based on a true, sensational, first of its kind news story, *Al Takes a Bride* is the story of a couple of young lovers from Memphis, Tennessee who face seemingly insurmountable odds and opposition in achieving their dream. Sounds like a familiar, almost cliché story at first glance, except that their dream is a simple and common one: to get married, and the year is 1893...and the lovers are named Freda and Alice.

One of the play's two directors is Rob Nosek, a graduate of Millikin University's Theatre program who has a varied theatrical history that includes lighting work for *Point Break Live* (the stage version of the 1991 Keanu Reeves & Patrick Swayze film), stage managing duties for the Chicago Heights Drama Group's *The Jungle Book*, one of many

appearances onstage in **Spotlight's The Night of The Iguana**, and the position of Assistant Technical Director for New Rock Theatre. In discussing the themes of the show he is co-directing Nosek says society has come "a long way in recent years in regards to women's rights, equality, LGBT understanding, and respect for our fellow brethren. Yet, persecution and prejudice is still common among certain towns, cultures, families, political factions, religions, and others who choose to judge. These forces rip apart individuals, families, friends, and above all, love." He continues by pointing out that the story the play presents "is a situation that relates to everyone, now...it's not just about two lesbians, not just about someone's desperate attempt for true love and blackmail, or the very obvious issues and discussions of LGBT lifestyles this show presents. The struggles here are universal in our life's search for liberty, peace, and the pursuit of happiness. It's America at face value and at its core."

Ken Schaefer, *It Takes A Bride's* other occupant of the director's chair brings another cornucopia of theatrical experience to the table having stage managed sundry productions including *City of Angels* among others for Bolingbrook's Theatre-on-the-Hill; having acted in that show as well as their *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, *Oklahoma!*, *Wizard of Oz*, and a number more for that group and others including **Spotlight's** productions of *Angel Street*, *Oliver!*, *Othello*, and **Play It Again, Sam** (which he also assistant directed), Geneva Underground Playhouse's *Play Ball* (the straight play the musical *Chicago* is based on), and *RENT* at the Paramount Theatre of Aurora. Nosek says of his fellow co-director "Ken and I are from two different backgrounds of theater and working together is interesting and rewarding." Schaefer emphasizes the cast's contribution saying "We have a small but talented cast who bring strong emotion and nuance to the characters. They have been a real treat to watch."

With gay marriage still opposed, and in fact illegal in most states, *It Takes A Bride* makes a timely and important statement, and is an equally important part of **Spotlight's** agenda to educate and promote open-mindedness and tolerance in the community; and coupled with **SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER**, it makes for a moving and powerful night of entertainment for intrepid theatre patrons.

Spotlight Theater Presents...

Tennessee Williams'

SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER

Directed by Bernie Jablonski of Park Forest, IL

Assistant Director: Jessica Wilson of Homewood, IL

By special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

--and--

Gary Sunshine's

It Takes A Bride

Directed by Rob Nosek of Tinley Park, IL and Ken Schaefer of Worth, IL

By special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.

One weekend only!!

Friday, January 28th & Saturday, January 29th at 7:30 P.M.
And the matinee: Sunday, January 30th at 3:00 P.M.
Doors open 30 minutes prior to show time.
Both shows together run a total of two hours with intermission.

In Tinley Park High School's Audion
6111 W. 175th St., Tinley Park, IL
Tickets: \$14 for adults or \$12 for seniors over 61 and students with ID.
Group rates available! (Call 708-941-8294 for rates)
Buy Tickets for **SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER** & *As Takes A Bride* now
at www.Spotlight-Theater.com (online purchase fees apply) or reserve them on our
24-hour Ticket Hotline at 708-941-8294 !

Two-Show Ticket: \$24

Gives the purchaser admission to both the shows remaining in this season. Two-Show Tickets are available by calling the Ticket Hotline or emailing us at tickets@spotlight-theater.com and providing the following information: your name, contact number or email address, and number of Two-Show Tickets you wish to purchase; or by sending a check or money order made out to "Spotlight Theater" along with your name and mailing address to: Spotlight Theater 16719 Lakewood Dr. #301, Tinley Park, IL 60477.

The Cast of **SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER**:

Betty Wigell of Flossmoor, IL as *Violet Venable*
Joanna Vaickuus of Oak Forest, IL as *Catharine Holly*
Holly Chernak of Alsip, IL as *Mrs. Holly*
Tara Peters of Bolingbrook, IL as *Sister Felicity*
Jessica Wilson of Homewood, IL as *Miss Foxhill*
Michael Dale Fisher of Tinley Park, IL as *Dr. Cukrowicz (Sugar)*
Andrew Wlos of Park Forest, IL as *George Holly*

The Cast of *As Takes A Bride*:

Jane Cox of Tinley Park, IL as *Alice Mitchell*
Nicole Fleming of Burbank, IL as *Freda Ward*
Rick Baiker of Chicago, IL as *Judge Ketterson*

Spotlight Theater is a recognized non-profit organization.