

Fall 10-17-2002

Marvin's Room

Department of Theatre, Florida International University

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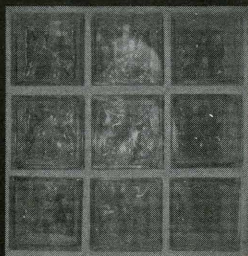
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FIU Theatre Presents



MARVIN'S ROOM

A play by Scott McPherson
Directed by Therald Todd



October 17-20 and 24-27, 2002

Studio Theatre, Wertheim Performing Arts Center

Drama Desk Award for Best Play

Dramatists Guild Hull-Warriner Award

John Gassner Award

Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway Play

From the Director

When a director chooses a play, he/she will inevitably be asked: "What do you like about this play? Why did you choose it?" To answer this question must I go back to my first encounter with the play. By the time I first read *Marvin's Room* I had heard enough about the play to have formed some pre-conceptions. I knew that it was about a woman caring for a dying father who finds out she may well be facing death herself. I also knew that when he wrote the play, the playwright's companion was dying of AIDS and that he himself was suffering from the same disease. As I sat down to read the play I fully expected a heavy dose of over-wrought emotion ending with a either a bleak conclusion or, what would be worse, a sentimental optimism-in-the-face-of-adversity message.

I discovered that my expectations were unfounded. Instead of bathos I found humor, not the black humor common in modern theatre, but rather a gentle humor based upon some very distinctive, very quirky but very believable characters. The play is full of emotion-laden situations, but there is no obvious emotionalism. The intensely emotion moments are written with an almost terse understatement which gives them a powerful impact through the skillful use of what we in the theatre call "subtext", the real meaning and emotion that lies beneath what is said. The ending could be called upbeat, but in an honest real life-like way, not in the form of phony. I ended my first reading with the vow "I am going to direct this play someday."

Now that the "someday" has come and after the close engagement of a rehearsal period, my belief in worth of the play has only been strengthened. It is a very special play that should speak to an audience in a simple, honest yet moving, and even profound way.

Therald Todd

About the Play

For every happy, "traditional" family, there's one that fits under the broad envelope of "dysfunctional" *Marvin's Room* is one of those plays that digs beneath the thinly-applied varnish covering the gaping holes in a series of sundered family relationships. What begins an apparently simple story of family interaction reveals a complex web of pain, guilt, and uncertainty.

You wouldn't think that a play about a gentle woman dying of cancer could be quite so funny and tender, but it is. Scott McPherson's play *Marvin's Room* debuted on stage in New York in 1991, and went off to receive many awards including the Dramatists Guild Hull-Warriner Award and the John Gassner Award. It is the Winner of the 1991-1992 Outer Critics Circle Award for best Off-Broadway Play and the 1991-1992 Drama Desk Award for Best Play.

Sadly, playwright Scott McPherson died shortly after this play became a hit in New York, but not before writing the screenplay for the movie that debuted in December 1996, starring Diane Keaton and Meryl Streep.

About the Playwright

Scott McPherson was born and raised in Ohio and in the early 1980's migrated to Chicago with his first play tucked under his arm. 'Till the fat lady sings, a partly autobiographical black comedy about a college boy returning home for his brother's funeral, the dysfunctional family vibe carried through in *Marvin's Room*. 'Till the fat lady sings, was produced in 1986 by Chicago's Lifeline Theatre.

In 1987, McPherson began working on separate projects, including character and dialogue studies based on his Florida relatives, and a one act about the business of AIDS testing-which would eventually merge to become *Marvin's Room*. McPherson found it difficult to write directly about AIDS and realized that he could use Bessie's medical predicament as a stand-in.

Audiences seemed struck most intensely by McPherson's quirky humor, which is expressed through his marginal characters.

Scott McPherson, the gay author of this award winning play, died resulting from AIDS on November 7, 1992.

MARVIN'S ROOM

By Scott McPherson

DirectorTherald Todd
Costume DesignerDaniela Schwimmer
ScenographerCraig Young
Voice and Speech CoachLesley-Ann Timlick
Technical DirectorDavid Whitlock

CAST

BESSIEKatie Perry
DR. WALLYMeshaun Labrone Arnold
RUTHCrystal Edn
BOBRamon Veunes
LEEKaren M. Garcia
DR. CHARLOTTESally G. Dane
HANKIvan R. Lopez
CHARLIEYecid Benavides
DIRECTORJennifer Rumberger
MARVINMatt Szymanski

SETTING

Action takes place in 1989 in Florida and Ohio.

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION

"Marvin's Room" is produced under special arrangement with Dramatist Play Service, Inc.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage ManagerCindy Cu
ASMLicett Benitez
Light Board OperatorIlena Alvarez
Sound Board OperatorMelissa Almaguer
Master ElectricianLina M. Echeverri
Assistant Lighting DesignerMichael Santos
Floor CrewIvanessa Henriquez, Gina Piedra
Prop RunLolliette Romero
Prop SupervisorAntonio Valcarcel
Costume Head CrewSusan Murray
Costume ConstructionWilfredo Marrero
Wardrobe CrewIrma Reyes, Fletcher McCune
House ManagerLisa Abreu
Ushers ...Marissa Diaz, Jessica Mendez, Lindsay Weinhold, Cristina Pla
Assistant Vocal CoachKatie Perry
Theatre and Dance ChairLeroy Clark
Business ManagerAbel Cornejo
Box Office ManagerGeraldine Alvarez
Department SecretariesMarianna Murray, Nathalie Brenner
Office AssistantFloribeth Arrautt
Poster DesignOn Cue Marketing



Florida International University

Department of Theatre and Dance

The Theatre program offers two degrees: a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA). The program is ideal in size, large enough to be able to offer a wide range of courses taught by varied, well-qualified faculty and to support an active production program, yet small enough that every student receives personal attention.

The Theatre and Dance Department has an active production program. We currently present four Main Stage and two Second Stage productions a year plus one Main Dance Presentation consisting of choreography by FIU Dance Faculty and several guests. In addition to the Department productions there are student produced shows presented by the Showcase Players.

The Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Performing Arts Center is home to both the Department of Music and the Department of Theatre and Dance it includes a beautiful 250-seat proscenium theatre, a large black box Studio Theatre, a costume shop, a scene shop, 2 dressing rooms and a green room.

We are now forming and seeking interested individuals to help organize Friends of FIU Theatre. This is an excellent opportunity to help us enhance the programs and facilities at FIU. Some of the goals include acquiring new furniture for the Green Room, framing posters from previous productions, putting on fund-raising events and generating community involvement.

If you are interested in learning more about the program or becoming a friend of FIU Theatre, please call or write for more information.

Florida International University
Department of Theatre and Dance Wertheim Performing Arts Center
University Park Campus, PAC 131
Miami, FL 33199
Phone (305) 348-2895 Fax (305)348-1803
Theatre Box Office: (305) 348-3789

Upcoming Productions

Catch our next show "A Streetcar Named Desire"

Marvin's Room

By Scott McPherson
Directed by Therald Todd
October 17-20 and 24-27, 2002

A Streetcar Named Desire

By Tennessee Williams
Directed by Leroy Clark
November 14-17 and 21-24, 2002

MOUTH OF THE RIVER

Written and Directed by Patrica Dolan
December 6-7, 2002

HOT L BALTIMORE

By Lanford Wilson
Directed by Wayne E. Robinson, Jr.
February 6-9 and 13-16, 2002

Mosshead

By William Whitehurst
Directed by Leroy Clark
February 20-23, 2003

Celebrate the Classics with FIU Dance

February 27-28, 2003
Main Stage Theatre

Trojan/Courage

Directed by Phillip Church
April 3-6 and 10-13

Brown Bag Workshops

Catch a new play before it goes to Broadway! These lunch-time workshops can be seen on the first Friday of every month in DM 150. Free and open to the public.

CALL THE BOX OFFICE TODAY FOR TICKETS
(305) 348-3789

KC/ACTF XXXIII

Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival XXXIII

Presented and Produced by

the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Supported in Part by

The Kennedy Center Corporate Fund,

The US Department of Education,

Delta Airlines, and

The National Committee for the Performing Arts

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

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KC/ACTF regional festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KC/ACTF national festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of 2001.

Last year more than 900 productions and 18,000 students participated in the American College Theater Festival nationwide. By entering this production, our department is sharing in the KC/ACTF goals to help college theater grow and to focus attention on the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

Up-coming FIU Theatre Productions

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

Directed by Leroy Watson Clark

November 14-17 and 21 -24, 2002