

2011

Stage Center Theatre Newsletter- Oct. 2011

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SEASON 2011-2012

Stage Center Theatre

FALL STUDIO SERIES

The Gedanken Experiment

The Gedanken Experiment is an experiment carried out in thought only. A mental exercise, if you will, that is meant to consider a specific hypothesis, such as is there life after death. Where do we go? What happens to us, and does our life affect our afterlife? Do we have to answer for our actions? What if each of us was simply boiled down to our desires, our sins; our seven deadly sins? *The Gedanken Experiment*, a provocative new play in development by emerging playwright Rand Ringgenberg, asks all these questions and more.

O Come All Ye Faithful

O Come All Ye Faithful looks at a typical American family Christmas celebration; or maybe not so typical. The family comes together for the holiday to exchange a lot more than presents. A warm and touching play that will make you laugh and cry as the family struggles with their different points of view on religion, homosexuality, divorce, oyster stew, and how to win at monopoly.

Theatre as a Creative Process

The Gedanken Experiment and

O Come All Ye Faithful

by NEIU student
Rand Ringgenberg

Production Staff

Director- Donna Goering
Assistant Director- Kimberly Hong
Stage Manager- Yesenia Ortega
Creative Moderator- Nickolena Sellen
Graphic Artist- Sue Dunmore

The Gedanken Experiment Cast

L23-L86.....Shantez Tolbut
W37-I72.....Monte O'Quill
P54-S55.....Nickolena Sellen
S19-A90.....Michael Pullega
E68-I41.....Lolisa Hall-Lawhorn
G42-A67.....Daviel Bailon
Stage Director Reader.....Kimberly Hong

O Come All Ye Faithful Cast

Mother..... Pamela Snider
Ray..... Bruce Moore
Luke.....Osbaldo Antunez
Peter.....Blake Malley
Sue..... Elizabeth Krahulec

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAIN STAGE 7:30PM

Reservations: (773) 442-4274

The Odd Couple

By Neil Simon

October 20-22, 26-29

Twelfth Night

By William Shakespeare

December 1-3, 7-10

STUDIO SERIES 7:30PM

The Gedanken Experiment
and

O Come All Ye Faithful

By Rand Ringgenberg

October 7, 8, 14, 15

CHILDREN'S THEATRE

Ann and the Tiger Raja

November-December

Stage Center Theatre

A great time for family and friends of all ages, Stage Center Theatre also offers a great value on entertainment. Admission to all productions is **free for students, faculty, and staff** with a valid NEIU ID.

Main Stage

General Admission.....\$10

Seniors/Alumni/Students.....\$8

Children 6-12.....\$6

NEIU Student to Premiere Original Work in Studio Series

This fall, NEIU student and Communication, Media, and Theatre major, Rand Ringgenberg gets to see his name listed next to the likes of Neil Simon and William Shakespeare. The reason is that all three playwrights feature work in the Stage Center Theatre 2011-2012 season. Ringgenberg will premiere his one act play: *O Come All Ye Faithful* for the first time this October.

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(Continued from the front)

The play is set at Christmastime and "it's the struggle of a somewhat dysfunctional family, the mother wanting to bring everyone together, but the family is somewhat disjointed," Ringgenberg explains. Much of the central conflict revolves around Peter, a self-proclaimed homosexual and his divorced, conservative brother Ray. The family's tumultuous relationships unfolds over a game of Monopoly. "*O Come All Ye Faithful*," says the playwright, "shows that good might have a little bad in it and nothing is quite as simple as people make it." He hopes the audience will come away understanding that, "Just because we are all different, doesn't mean we can't get along."

Ringgenberg has held onto *O Come All Ye Faithful* for over six years. The play manifested after a difficult Christmas with his family. "Because of who I am and how I think, literally, there was an event and I was steaming mad and thought, Oh my God! This is a play." Channeling all of this Ringgenberg wrote *O Come All Ye Faithful* as a response based loosely on his own family.

In spring 2011, Professor Rodney Higginbotham approached Rand, asking to see some of his written material. After reading *O Come All Ye Faithful* Higginbotham offered Rand the opportunity to showcase the one act as part of the Stage Center Studio Series. Rand accepted and the revisions began. "I've revised it many times and people have read it and said it's a good first act...maybe seeing it up on its feet I might see it as a first act as well...that's what this process is all about." Revisions abound, the playwright morphed the work

into a polished one act. The Studio Series offers a space where students can take risks and begin to understand the process involved in creating an original work.

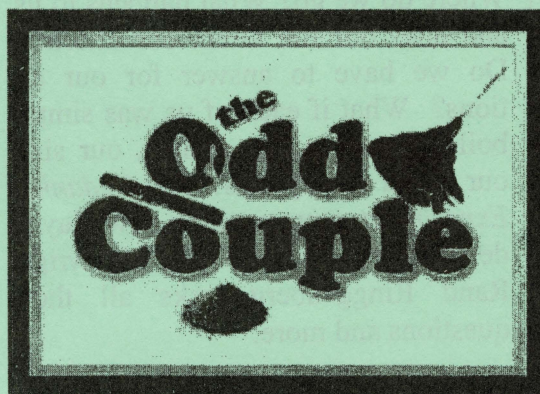
Come fall, it was time to cast *O Come All Ye Faithful* and mount a production. Donna Goering is directing and now Ringgenberg must let go of the reigns and allow the director to preen his piece for an audience. "I have to be quiet while I'm at rehearsal," says Ringgenberg, "as the playwright it's better if you take a step back and you're not at so many rehearsals." Casting for *O Come All Ye Faithful* allowed the playwright some creative control.

Goering let Rand be involved in the casting process. He says that hearing actors read his dialogue was surreal and exciting.

Now the playwright awaits the opening of *O Come All Ye Faithful*. Ringgenberg is no stranger to the stage, having acted in many Stage Center productions, but he says "this time it's just me, which is fantastic and horrifying. I feel very naked because it's all me. The core of it, whether you like it or you didn't like it." Ringgenberg says it's a lot of responsibility, but that's what the process is all about.

MAINSTAGE

The Odd Couple follows Felix, a compulsive neat freak who prefers the taste and value of his own home cooked meals and Oscar, a roguish slob who lives large and can't manage to save a penny. When Felix's wife kicks him out, the recently divorced Oscar proposes that Felix move in with him. The weekly poker game will never be the same. Join Speed, Vinnie, Roy, Murray, the Pigeon sisters and this delightfully odd couple in Neil Simon's comic classic.



The Odd Couple

By Neil Simon

Directed by Lisa Cantwell

Cast List

Speed.....Brad Cantwell
Murray.....John Baumeister
Roy.....Robert Babcock
Vinnie.....Brian Rogers
Oscar Madison.....Nick Shea
Felix Ungar.....Rand Ringgenberg
Gwendolyn Pigeon.....Jill Matel
Cecily Pigeon.....Ann Dernbach

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