

Frankly Speaking

NEWS OF FRANK THEATRE • NOVEMBER - 2011

Frank Theatre continues it's 22nd season with

Ellen McLaughlin

AJAX IN IRAQ



PHOTO BY TONY NELSON

PERFORMANCE AND TICKET INFORMATION

- Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8:00 pm, Sundays at 2:00 pm. **NOTE:** The theatre seats ONLY 75 people, so please make reservations!
- Tickets are \$20 on Thurs and Sun; \$22 on Fri and Sat; \$2 discount for students, seniors, veterans and low-income. There's one Monday night performance on Nov. 21 (\$20).
- The performance on Nov. 19 will be audio-described.
- Call **612-724-3760** for info on group rates.
- Tickets can be purchased online at www.franktheatre.org, or by calling **612-724-3760**.
- Post-show panel discussions are Sunday, Nov. 6, 13 and 20.
- Pay what you can performance Sat. Nov. 5. Available at door only.



November 3-27, 2011

at the Playwrights' Center
Waring Jones Theater

2301 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Directed by Wendy Knox

Sound Design by Michael Crowell

Costume Design by Kathy Kohl

Lighting Design by Karin Olson

Set Design by Joseph Stanley

Dramaturgy by Steve Matuszak

Stage Managed by Glenn Klapperich



PARKING and DIRECTIONS TO THE THEATRE

located at the Playwright's Center, 2301 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis:

(Please double check on Mapquest or Google!)

FROM THE WEST:

Take I-94 east to the 25th Ave/Riverside Ave. exit. Turn right at the light at the end of the ramp. Go to the next light, which is Franklin Ave., and turn right. The Playwrights' Center is on the left side of the road at the intersection of 23rd Ave. and Franklin Ave.

FROM THE EAST: I-94

Take I-94 west to Riverside Ave/25th Ave. exit. At the second light, turn left. Go to Franklin, turn right. (see above).

FROM THE NORTH:

Coming in on 35W from the north, exit on Hiawatha, then take the Cedar Ave. ramp. Turn left on to Cedar, go to Franklin Ave. and turn right. The Playwrights' Center will be on your right side at 23rd Ave.

FROM THE SOUTH:

Head north on 35W, take the I-94 exit towards St. Paul, and exit at the 25th St./Riverside Ave. exit. Turn right at the light at the end of the ramp. Go to the next light, which is Franklin Ave., and turn right. The Playwrights' Center is on the left side at 23rd Ave.

“ Palace of the End... had its spellbinding area premiere by Frank Theatre... Emily Zimmer beguiles and repulses in a spitfire performance. Frank regular Patrick Bailey, in what is perhaps his best performance yet, emanates a visceral sense of paranoia. A sublime Taous Claire Khazem is understated yet riveting. Director Wendy Knox has guided three shattering performances across Thompson's vast emotional terrain...”

- StarTribune

ABOUT THE PLAY

Populated with Greek gods and contemporary soldiers serving in Iraq, **AJAX IN IRAQ** is a mash-up of Sophocles' classic play **AJAX** and stories from today's newspaper. Parallel narratives follow the Greek warrior Ajax, and A.J., a contemporary female soldier on duty in Iraq, both of whom are undone by the betrayal of a commanding officer. The intersection of their stories explodes the timeless struggle in making sense of the madness of war.



PHOTO BY TONY NELSON

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The cast includes many familiar Frank faces. **MARIA ASP** (**CABARET** and 20 other Frank productions), **TESSA FLYNN** (**CABARET**, **METAMORPHOSIS**), **LEIF JURGENSEN** (**CABARET**, **MOTHER COURAGE**, and other productions), **CHRISTOPHER KEHOE** (**METAMORPHOSIS**, **BY THE BOG OF CATS**), **TAOUS KHAZEM** (**PALACE OF THE END**, **MOTHER COURAGE**) join a whole pack of faces that are newcomers to Frank but familiar

on many other local stages: **DAWN BRODEY**, **JOY DOLO**, **KATIE GUENTZEL**, **RYAN HENDERSON**, **ADDIE PHELPS**, **RICH REMEDIOS**, **LOGAN VERDOORN**. The production is directed by **WENDY KNOX** with Set Design by **JOE STANLEY**, Costumes by **KATHY KOHL**, Sound Design by **MIKE CROSWELL**, Lighting by **KARIN OLSON** and Dramaturgy by **STEVE MATUSZAK**. Stage Managed by **GLENN KLAPPERICH**.

THE FRANK PANEL DISCUSSION

TALK BACK TO US!

Every Sunday following the matinee (except for our final performance), we invite you to stick around or come back and join us to wrestle with the ideas sparked by the play. We gather a panel of community members who have some experience with, or interest in, some aspect of the subject matter of the play; for this show, among our panelists are representatives of Veterans in the Arts and Veterans for Peace. We ask them to respond to the performance, and then we invite you to ask your questions and offer your comments. We're interested in YOUR ideas, and we're interested in your response to the play. These have proven to be fascinating, stimulating, and insightful conversations. They're free, they're casual, and we would love to have you. Stop by any Sunday during our run!



CRUMPET IS BACK!

THE SANTALAND

OF HOLIDAY FEELINGS

PERFORMED BY JOE LEWIS

Nov. 27-Dec. 30

at the Woman's Club of
Minneapolis

Tickets & info at
www.franktheatre.org

MAILING LIST OPT IN



Do you enjoy this newsletter? Would you like to keep receiving it in the mail or would you prefer an electronic version? We're happy to send it to you in whatever fashion you prefer, but we'd like to ask you to "opt in" if you'd like us to continue mailing it to you. Send a message to mail@franktheatre.org and let us know if you'd prefer to stay on our mailing list or if you'd rather have an electronic version (also available on our website). That will help us tailor our mailing to your preference, and not litter mailboxes with unwanted paper! Please let us know by Nov. 15.

Thanks for the help!

“ When Frank Theatre couldn't get the rights to a recent, critically-acclaimed adaptation of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, they decided to create their own. And what a fortuitous decision that was. The collaboration between Wendy Knox and her company has produced a truly idiosyncratic, brilliant and enthralling piece of work...”

— StarTribune



One of the rituals of fall, it's the **Frank Theatre Silent Auction on Nov. 12!** Join us for an evening of fun, frolic and celebration of all things Frank! Hobnob with other delightful Frank followers, sip on wine and other beverages, and nibble delicious nosh as you peruse the fabulous array of auction goods. Get yourself fired up and dive into the vicious auction bidding that will entitle you to bring home that funky item that you rightfully won! Pick up a couple of holiday gifts while you're at it, or just reward yourself—all while doing it in the name of charity as you help support your favorite intrepid Twin Cities' theatre! Join us for an evening of fun, and help us continue to be Frank! **\$65 for wine and hors d'oeuvres, the show, the auction, post-show champagne.** Tickets available online now at www.franktheatre.org, or by calling (612) 724-3760.

FEATURED RECIPE

Persian Stuffed Dumpling Squash with Rose Petals

This is the season for squash. Don't be scared off by the "exotic" ingredients here, like rose petals and saffron. Use them if you can—they're fantastic. (You can buy rose petals at specialty grocery stores, or dry your own—make sure they are pesticide free.) But if you don't have the items on hand, you'll still have a tasty treat without them. You can substitute wild rice or wheat berries for the rice; you can use any kind of dried fruit, really, and almonds or pecans can also stand in for walnuts. I promise you, it's delish!

6 sweet dumpling squash (or substitute acorn squash, or use bell peppers instead)	1/4 cup barberries or dried apricots
1/3 cup olive oil	1/2 cup dried, pitted tart cherries, coarsely chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper	1/4 cup dried apricots, minced
1 large yellow onion, diced	3 tablespoons dried rose petals, plus more for garnish
2 cloves garlic, minced	3/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
1 cup cooked basmati rice or barley	1 teaspoon saffron dissolved in 2 tablespoons hot water
1 cup walnuts, finely chopped	

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Neatly slice 1/2-1" off the top of each squash and set it aside. Check the bottoms to see if they're level. If not, slice off enough so that the squash will stand steadily. Scoop out the seeds, rub the inside and out with olive oil, season with salt and pepper, and place the squash in an oiled baking dish. Heat a skillet over medium heat and add 4 tablespoons of the olive oil, followed by the onion and sauté until lightly browned. Add the garlic, rice, walnuts, barberries, cherries, apricots, and rose petals. Stir well and continue cooking for 5 minutes, adding a little water if the mixture is dry. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Fill each squash with stuffing and replace the tops. Whisk together the orange juice, saffron water, and the remaining oil and pour over the squash. Cover tightly with a dish lid and bake for 25 minutes, basting occasionally with the juice. Uncover, baste, and bake until the squash is golden and tender, about 5 minutes more. To serve, transfer the squash to a platter and pour the liquid from the baking dish on top. Garnish with rose petals.

MISSION STATEMENT

Frank Theatre is a professional theatre company committed to producing unique work that stretches the skills of the artists who create the work while simultaneously challenging the everyday perceptions of the audience through the exploration of ideas and issues of social, political and/or cultural concern.

Frank Theatre was founded with the desire to produce work that provides opportunities for artists to grow, to stretch, to work outside of and beyond the typical opportunities provided by theatres with a greater commercial interest. The theatre has successfully pursued this goal through the consistent staging of works that require the actors, designers, and director to challenge themselves and each other.

The theatre is a Twin Cities'-based company, founded in 1989 by Artistic Director Wendy Knox. In its twenty-two year history, the theatre has staged 48 productions.

The theatre is committed to producing work that reflects the world in which we live.

Call Frank Theatre
at 612-724-3760
for tickets
& information.



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mail@franktheatre.org,

and we'll keep you cyberposted!

WHY THIS PLAY?

I have to thank Gary Briggie and Beth Cleary for bringing this play to my attention. This past summer, both of them, in the same 24 hours, sent me a link to a NY Times review of a production, nudging me to check it out. I read the reviews, thought it sounded interesting for Frank and made a mental note to look into it. Several weeks later, one of facebook's random suggestions flashed me a message suggesting that I become friends with Ellen McLaughlin, the playwright. I had met Ellen a hundred years ago, but I didn't know her agent, so I followed facebook's suggestion and zapped her a message, asking her to send me a copy of the script, which she did. I sat on it for a few weeks, but one night around 4 AM, as I battled insomnia during one of my father's hospital stays, I picked it up and began reading. And I couldn't stop. It's a fairly short play (the performance runs under an hour and a half), but even in those early morning hours, I zipped right through it. And in the end, I realized that Gary, Beth and facebook all deserved a big thank you. This was very much a Frank play.

Several things intrigued me, perhaps above all, the play's portrayal of women soldiers. Secondly, the beautiful links to Sophocles' classic Greek tragedy, AJAX, provide (as our smarty-pants dramaturg says) a "kind of subconscious to the contemporary story," emphasizing that contemporary objections to the current U.S. military engagements are echoes of struggles raised through the ages. The parallel stories of a Greek warrior and a contemporary soldier point to the impossibility of making rational sense of war, no matter what the context. As someone else put it, the play's "touchingly pro-soldier" stance raised an interesting distinction as we sought to bring these characters to life, that is, the difference between the role of a soldier and the politics of a nation. As we mark the 10th anniversary of our nation at war—longer than any other period in our history—the toll is mid-boggling: nearly 5,000 troops killed in Iraq, over 32,000 wounded, 125,000 civilian Iraqis killed, and over one trillion tax dollars spent. As the play shows us, the human toll is being borne, in no small part, by those on the front lines, and is exacerbated by the lack of a clear mission, a specific knowledge of WHY they are there. Interestingly, McLaughlin also includes the extraordinary character of Gertrude Bell, a British traveler, archeologist and diplomat who literally drew the borders and "midwived" the birth contemporary Iraq. A lone woman diplomat in the Middle East, she jostled with Churchill, spoke Arabic, helped write a constitution, and literally shaped the borders of the country. And she well knew the struggles within and around the country, which continue today.

The artistic challenge of weaving all of these pieces into a theatrical quilt has been a delight, especially with this great group of collaborators. AJAX IN IRAQ has provided a lens for us to view the world we live in today. As always, the process has provided a fascinating education about a critical part of our world, and forced an examination of so many issues, historical and contemporary. As with so many Frank projects, it has taken us on an interesting and illuminating journey. We hope you'll join us.

Wendy Knox, Artistic Director



PHOTO BY ANN MARSDEN



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FRANK
T H E A T R E

Nov. 3-27

at the Playwrights' Center

Tickets at
www.franktheatre.org
or (612) 724-3760

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Directed by Wendy Knox

Produced by special
arrangement with
PlayScripts, Inc.
www.playscripts.com