

MIDNIGHT ANNOUNCES PLAYS FOR 25TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

The Midnight Company, celebrating its 25th Anniversary Season in 2022, is announcing its lineup of productions for this landmark year.

Midnight will open with ANOMALOUS EXPERIENCE by the Company's Artistic Director, Joe Hanrahan, running May 5-21 at the .ZACK theatre, 3224 Locust. (The play was originally scheduled at the Kranzberg Black Box, but the venue has changed.) Inspired by true events, the play is designed as a public lecture from a respected psychiatrist. He's been dealing with professional ridicule for his research into the phenomenon of Alien Abduction. In the course of the play, he will present two patients who, in very different ways, have been victims of their perceived abductions. While he's not exactly sure what's going on, the psychiatrist is convinced that something real, something profound, is happening to these people and to our world. Hanrahan said "The recent recorded sightings by military pilots and renewed government interest in UAPs provide the current backdrop for this modern ghost story." ANOMALOUS EXPERIENCE will be directed by Morgan Maul-Smith. Recently she directed ON GOLDEN POND at Kirkwood Theatre Guild and EARWORM by Shualee Cook at Tesseract, and she's also directed in Montana at Missoula Childrens Theater.

Midnight's second show of the season will be RODNEY'S WIFE by Richard Nelson, directed by Joe Hanrahan, running July 7-23 at The Chapel. The play is set in Rome, 1962. Rodney is a fading American movie star, brought over to star in one of the first Spaghetti Westerns. With him is his (second) wife, his daughter from his first marriage and his sister, whose husband, Rodney's agent, just died, leaving her grasping on to her brother, getting into the middle of everything happening to his family. This powerful yet delicate 2004 play won critics' raves, with New York's Time Out saying "Nelson plunks his characters down at the crossroads of erotic tension and family guilt," citing its echoes of "the closely observed simplicity of Chekhov" as well as "the eloquent bitterness of Albee." Hanrahan said, "Rome in 1962 was the most exciting city in the world. The playwright has taken the passion and lust for living characteristic of the time and place, and infused it into a tumultuous day and a half in the lives of these characters." The cast will include Kelly Howe as Faye (RODNEY'S WIFE), Rachel Tibbetts as Eva (Rodney's sister) and John Wolbers as Rodney. The Italian villa set will be designed and lit by Bess Moynihan, with costumes by Elizabeth Henning.

The final show of the season will be ST. LOUIS WOMAN, written and directed by Joe Hanrahan, running October 6-22 at the .ZACK. The show tells the stories of women who inspired and helped forge the legendary history of St. Louis music, and then spread that sound around the world. The One-Woman Show with Music - performed by St. Louis singer/actress LAKA - begins with "Frankie And Johnny" and "St. Louis Blues", two songs that put St. Louis on the musical map. And continues with characterizations and songs of Willie Mae Ford Smith (the Godmother of Gospel), Josephine Baker, Billie Holiday (who didn't live in St. Louis, but played often at the Plantation Club, a hotspot on Delmar Boulevard in the 40's, where the best black musicians of the day entertained white audiences), Tina Turner and more. Their abilities to rise above their troubled beginnings in a racially divided city and time, and to pour their souls into memorable song, provide the narrative for an exhilarating, inspiring show. Hanrahan said "The first time I heard LAKA sing, I knew I wanted to work with her. We talked of collaboration, and it led to ST. LOUIS WOMAN. It's our take on great music that came out of St. Louis, and the legendary women who made it."

The Midnight Company made its debut in 1997, with a production of Eric Bogosian's POUNDING NAILS IN THE FLOOR WITH MY FOREHEAD at the original home of the Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis. Since then the Company has presented 50 productions, most new to St. Louis, along with several original scripts written by Hanrahan. Their seasons have included such modern classics as WAITING FOR GODOT, SKYLIGHT, GIVE 'EM HELL HARRY and A JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG, and featured noted contemporary playwrights Wil Eno, Conor McPherson, Steven Dietz, Daniel MacIvor and Mickie Maher.

David Wassilak formed the Company with Hanrahan in 1997, and was part of the group till his departure in 2007. Sarah Whitney then joined Midnight in 2010 as Associate Artistic Director, and directed many of its productions till she left the Company in 2020.

The Company has performed in a variety of spaces - recently at the venues of the Kranzberg Arts Foundation and The Chapel - and productions in the past have been presented at spaces of The Missouri History Museum, Christ Church Cathedral, The Duck Room at Blueberry Hill, The Philadelphia Fringe Festival, The Jesse James Farm in Kearney, MO, Stray Dog's Tower Grove Abbey, Winter Opera, pubs including McGurk's, Dressel's and The Great Grizzly Bear (and former pubs such as The Monocle and Cafe Balaban/Herbie's Vintage 72), former tv production studios Technisonic and Avatar, the former venue St. Marcus Theatre, Carrie Houk's former Maplewood Acting workshop HH Studio, and warehouses at The Lemp Brewery, plus a production at The historic Learning Center (formerly the Wednesday Club) for The Tennessee Williams Festival, and several appearances at both the St. Louis Fringe Festival and the St. Louis Theatre Crawl.

While at the Post-Dispatch, theatre critic Judy Newmark wrote, "The Midnight Company have gone out of their way to demonstrate that theatre is an art, not a building...their imagination and refusal to accept conventional limits can teach something to all of us, in theatre or not."

A visit to the website, MidnightCompany.com, offers a look at all previous Midnight shows, including photos, graphics, video, and reviews, and there's a Blog with commentary on influences on the group's work, decisions on choosing the plays they present, takes on trends in St. Louis theatre, the Women We Love series and much more.

Photos: Morgan Maul-Smith, director of ANOMALOUS EXPERIENCE photo: Rachel Bailey
Kelly Howe in RODNEY'S WIFE photo: Todd Davis
LAKA in ST. LOUIS WOMAN photo: Todd Davis