

SOJOURN

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production history

Hidden

April 17, 2002

Powerful Play Offers Hope Amid

Richard Wattenberg, Special Writer - The Oregonian

Prompted by a discussion with the organizers of "Anne Frank : A History for Today," the members of Sojourn Theatre have created "Hidden," a performance piece that wonderfully lives up to its subtitle, "A Poetic Documentary."

Written and directed by Michael Rohd, Sojourn's artistic director, and Laura Eason, artistic director of Lookingglass Theatre in Chicago, "Hidden" is a moving exploration of the sources of hate and bigotry. It was developed in collaboration with a cast that includes Sojourn company members Jono Eiland, Ryan Keilty, Jenn Van Nice, Hannah Treuhaft and Jules Bausch, as well as associate artist Bobby Bermea.

Performed in the Anne Frank exhibit theater in Lloyd Center, "Hidden" begins with Treuhaft speaking the remembered experiences of a Holocaust survivor. The play, however, does not limit itself to an examination of the catastrophic impact of Hitler's Final Solution but explores the social and psychological forces that made and continue to make inconceivable inhumanity conceivable; impossible events possible.

Working as a tightly wrought ensemble, the Sojourn company spotlights the ways that desperate need, fear and alienation continue to breed hatred and anger toward others who are different by virtue of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Narratives recounting Nazi atrocities, statistics relating the horrible frequency of violent crimes toward woman, and scenes probing the nature of American patriotism in the wake of Sept. 11 are carefully interwoven. The artists have successfully integrated spoken text, movement, sound, light and images into a powerful and coherent theater event.

The performance is scrupulously choreographed. Circular movement patterns emphasize the nightmarish cyclical nature of violence. Evocative pantomimed sequences recur throughout the performance with slight, if telling, variations. These repeating physical actions function as something akin to refrains pulling the entire production together. The result is a stirring and troubling performance that will incite thought.

And yet "Hidden" also suggests the possibility of hope. As individual actors rush to embrace each other toward the close of the play, we can't help but consider the importance of reaching across the differences that separate us.

To be sure, setting this theatrical performance in the Anne Frank exhibit theater and framing the performance with the narrative and personal confessions of a Holocaust survivor remind us that one way to bridge the space between human beings is to continue to tell the stories of what hate has done.

7:30 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays, through May 4, Lloyd Center, in the Ann Frank exhibit's theater; \$10; 971-544-0464.

April 5, 2002

Making a Statement Against Bigotry and Hatred

Ted Mahar - The Oregonian

In addition to the Anne Frank exhibit, various events, films and plays are also planned

Words written by a teen-ager hiding in Amsterdam in the 1940s have echoed around the world ever since they were published in 1947. They will reach new eyes and ears in Portland.

"Anne Frank: A History for Today," an exhibit in Lloyd Center from Monday through May 5, is aimed at middle-school children but offers displays and insights for all ages. The exhibit also provides the occasion for related projects with similar themes of bigotry and prejudice.

Anne Frank was one of millions of Jews killed in World War II in one of history's largest and most efficient extermination programs. People by the millions have died cruelly through the centuries, and the recent phrase "ethnic cleansing" and mass atrocities in Rwanda show that homicidal hatred is as alive as ever.

"We want to introduce Anne Frank to young people and reintroduce her to adults," said project director Helen Gundlach. "She was an incredibly special person, and her diary is unique for its literary quality and personal insights.

"But she is a starting point for us. Visitors go through her exhibit, through the bookstore and into the 'No Easy Road: Unlearning Discrimination in Oregon' exhibit. Right here in Oregon, victims of discrimination have been Native Americans, African Americans, Japanese Americans, gays and other groups. Anne is just one example of where prejudice can lead us and why we must fight it."

Other groups have organized performances, lectures and activities in concert with the exhibit as part of "Human Dignity Month." Here are some highlights:

EXHIBIT

"No Easy Road: Unlearning Discrimination in Oregon" -- The Northwest has a more unfortunate history of dangerous prejudice than many may recall. This exhibit details discriminatory practices that victimized several racial groups and gays in the past and shows that crimes rising from prejudice have increased in recent years.

Monday through May 5, located inside the Anne Frank exhibit at Lloyd Center. Same hours as Anne Frank exhibit: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays (open until 9 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays) and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays. Admission is free.

THEATER

"Hidden" -- Written and produced for its Anne Frank exhibit site, this Sojourn Theatre production deals with hate, bias and community complicity and how you don't have to be in Nazi territory to fear discrimination and violence because you belong to a particular group.

Opens April 11 and shows at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, through May 4. Admission is suggested \$10 donation; reserved seats available in advance at exhibit and Sojourn Theatre; 971-544-0464.



April 2002

Theatre Review: Hidden

Steffen Silvis - Willamette Week

As part of the Anne Frank exhibit at Lloyd Center, Sojourn Theatre has created a site-specific piece dealing with hatred's continuing virulence in society. The title is double-edged; the Sojourners are exploring both the shame and pain victims harbor, as well as the dark and irrational prejudices that lie hidden away in our own hearts. Created by the company under the artistic direction of Michael Rohd and Laura Eason from Chicago's Lookingglass Theatre, Hidden shares many of the same concerns that the socially-minded troupe able examined in Look Away and The Justice Project – in fact, each of these works provide a segment for this new piece. With the world spinning faster in chaos and petty but murderous squabbles, it's time we stop and take stock of our own participation in the madness. I wonder, how many Anne Franks have we starved to death in Baghdad?