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SHOTGUN PLAYERS PRESENT

A Seagull in the Hamptons

A Comedy in Four Acts
Freely Adapted by Emily Mann
Directed by Reid Davis

Berkeley— Spectacular egos, painful compromises, and burning desire. What more could anyone ask from a life of true drama? Finding the humor in the everyday misery, Emily Mann breathes fire into Chekhov's classic about a theatrical family that eats one of its own. *A Seagull in the Hamptons* begins performances March 24th and runs through April 25th at The Ashby Stage.

Chekhov's first play, *The Seagull* was his unabashed love letter to the theater. He wrote it with a transparency and force that still rattles the bones of the modern cannon. The piece is subtitled, *A Comedy in Four Acts*, and while the themes are certainly tragic – suicide attempts, unrequited love, a crushing and disabling family structure, both Chekhov and Mann mine humor from the truth of human longing. All of us have something that we want too badly, and hopeless desires, while painful up close, gain a raw comedic value from afar.

Emily Mann, Artistic Director of the McCarter Theater in Princeton, is one of this country's leading voices in provocative modern social commentary. Of her adaptation, Mann writes: "I wanted to blow off the dust that has covered up the fun, the humor and all the deep, deep drama of Chekhov's work. If I see another one of these *Seagulls* that doesn't get a laugh and everyone's in a corset, I'm going to scream."

A finely articulated balance between comedy and tragedy from beginning to end, *Seagull* is a play about the bright glint of potential, about thwarted talent, and the devastation of only getting part of the way there. It is a play about writers, performers, and the alternately hedonistic and tortured world they live in.

Mann's version of the classic Chekhov is not far from the original – the characters are easily recognizable, and they are haunted, dismantled and provoked by the same chain of events. Dramaturg Karl Soehnlein notes, "By arranging it all into a recognizable context, Mann gives us something more: a new frame in which we can watch this world come to life, and feel it as our own. Contemporary

touchstones help: Masha's snuff habit becomes Milly's chain-smoking. Konstantine's screed about the Moscow stage is recast as a rant against the Broadway box-office."

About her adaptation Emily Mann says "I always wanted to make it have the power I felt it had, but that I'd never seen on the stage. I know that what Chekhov wanted was for people to speak the way people really spoke. It can be very funny. Why? Because it's very, very truthful." Mann has adapted several of Chekhov's other plays, but it took years to work her way back to this powerful first effort. As a single mother raising a son and simultaneously trying to make her career in the theatre, the resonance of the story is finally retold in her modern gaze with the sardonic humility for which Emily Mann is famous.

A Seagull in the Hamptons will be directed by Shotgun Company Member **Reid Davis**, with Set Design by **Robert Broadfoot**, and Costume Design by **Victoria Livingston Hall**. Light Design by **Matthew Royce**, Sound Design by Erik Pearson and Properties Design by **Adriane Roberts**. Novelist **Karl Soehnlein** steps up as dramaturg.

The cast of *A Seagull in the Hamptons* features **Andy Alabran, Liam Callister, Beth Deichtman, Anna Ishida, Richard Louis James, Mark Manske, John Mercer, Alex Moggridge*, Trish Mulholland* & Kelsey Venter***.

*Member of Actors' Equity

CALENDAR LISTING

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WHEN: Previews Wednesday, March, 24th and Thursday, March 25th. Opens Friday, March 26th. Runs Wednesdays at 7PM, Thursday – Saturday at 8PM, and Sundays at 5PM through April 25th.

WHERE: The Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Avenue, Berkeley

TICKET PRICES: March 24, 25 & 27 are Pay-What-You-Can.

Opening Night Saturday, March 26th is \$30 with drinks and hors d'ouvres included after the show. Regular performance nights are \$15 on Wednesdays, \$20 on Thursday, \$23 Friday and Sunday, \$28 for Saturdays. Advance reservations strongly advised.

For press photos, please download images from our website, or contact

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