



Thursday, February 6, 2003

MBT presents 'The Foreigner'

Discovering what other people really think may lead to fewer friendships, but certainly creates madcap adventure and outstanding entertainment when "The Foreigner" arrives at **Meadow Brook Theatre** (MBT) on Wednesday, Feb. 12. The production runs through March 9 at MBT, Michigan's largest professional theatre company, on Oakland University's campus.

Ted Raimi, of the popular television shows "Xena: Warrior Princess" and "Hercules: The Legendary Journeys," stars in this comedy about a socially phobic Englishman stranded in a Georgia fishing lodge. Hilarity ensues as he feigns to be a foreigner with no English skills. Charlie, the non-speaking Brit played by Ted Raimi, must maneuver through dangerous deception and trickery as fellow lodge guests are guarding their own secrets.

"The Foreigner" features playwright Larry Shue's trademark mistaken identities and mixed-up roles. The play premiered in 1983 at the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre where Larry Shue was playwright-in-residence. "The Foreigner" then went on to play Off Broadway at the Astor Place Theatre in 1984, when it garnered two Obie Awards and two Outer Circle Critics Awards. The work was produced at Meadow Brook Theatre in 1993.

Acclaimed actor, director and educator David Regal directs the MBT production of "The Foreigner." Speaking on the play's popularity, Regal attributes the work's timelessness to the playwright who addressed the frailties and strengths of the human condition through a most down-to-earth manner.

"It is so real because we have all found ourselves in a strange situation, feeling like a fish out of water," said Regal, who is very familiar with Shue's work, having just directed "Grandma Duck is Dead" last Fall at The Theatre Company of University of Detroit-Mercy.

A perennial audience favorite, Regal has made nearly 20 appearances on the MBT stage, most recently as Big Daddy in "Cat On a Hot Tin Roof." He has received numerous professional accolades, including the Detroit Free Press Theatre Excellence Award for Best Actor and The Oakland Press Drama Award for Best Actor.

Regal rejoins former theatre student Ted Raimi in this MBT production. Raimi studied with Regal at the then-named University of Detroit. He is one of many notable alumni of the theatre program that Regal headed for nearly three decades.

Raimi is a native of the Detroit area and starred in films such as "Shocker," "Darkman" and "Army of Darkness." He later played opposite Harrison Ford in Tom Clancy's "Patriot Games." Best known for his work on the smaller screen, Raimi has attracted a loyal following for his roles in "seaQuest DSV," "Xena: Warrior Princess" and "Hercules: The Legendary Journeys."

Joining Raimi is actors Paul Hopper, Mary Benson, Joey Bybee, John Biedenbach, Robin Lewis-Bedz and Kristopher Yoder.

This season Hopper has appeared in "Witness for the Prosecution" and the perennial favorite "A Christmas Carol" at MBT. He previously was featured in MBT's production of "The Rocky Horror Show."

Benson has had many roles on the MBT stage, most recently in "All My Sons" and "A Christmas Carol." She has worked on various stages from Detroit to the West Coast and as far away as South Korea entertaining Army troops.

Bybee, a graduate of Oakland University who premiered at MBT in "Godspell," is another cast member from "A Christmas Carol."

Biedenbach is well known to MBT audiences for his recurring role in "A Christmas Carol" and his MBT appearances in "Witness for the Prosecution," "Bee-luther-hatchee" and "Murder on the Nile."

Lewis-Bedz played in MBT's acclaimed "All My Sons" as well as "Dancing at Lughnasa." She also has been on the stages of the Gem Theatre, Planet Ant Theatre and Jewish Ensemble Theatre in Detroit.

Yoder recently played in MBT's "A Christmas Carol" and "Witness for the Prosecution."

Special performances for the hearing impaired, offering American Sign Language interpretation, will be at the 8 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 26, performance. For the visually impaired, the 2 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 22, performance will be audio-

described.

Tickets for "The Foreigner" and Meadow Brook Theatre's 2002–2003 season are on sale at the MBT box office by calling (248) 377-3300. Group tickets are available at (248) 370-3316.

For more information, visit the **Meadow Brook Theatre** Web site.

SUMMARY

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