

Theater events: Body image at play in Clockwise's 'Impenetrable'

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Body image

A spa billboard showing a gorgeous, bikini-clad woman with arrows pointing to her imperfections and how they could be improved provokes outrage in a Chicago suburb in "Impenetrable" by Mia McCullough. Judy Blue directs Clockwise Theatre's production of the 2012 play about body image and perception and how this advertisement affects men and women in the community. Opens at 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 10, at 221 N. Genesee St., Waukegan. \$12, \$20. See clockwisetheatre.org.

A sneak peek

The Actors Gymnasium offers a glimpse of new works as part of its Circus in Progress series showcasing circus arts. Featured artists include Striding Lion dance theater along with trapeze artist Camille Swift and Akemi Berry on silks. Next up is "A Circus Night's Dream," written and directed by The House Theatre's Chris Mathews. 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 11, at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes St., Evanston. \$15. (847) 328-2795 or actorsgymnasium.org.

Devil has his 'Day'

Signal Ensemble Theatre opens its season with the world premiere of "Devil's Day Off" by Jon Steinhagen ("Blizzard '67," "Dating Walter Dante"). Set during a record-breaking heat wave that is accompanied by massive power outages, "Devil's Day Off" chronicles the fear, humor and heroism of the event through multiple vignettes. Co-artistic director Ronan Mara directs the premiere, which features 13 actors playing 100 characters. Previews begin at 8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 16, at 1802 W. Berenice Ave., Chicago. The show opens Oct. 18. \$12-\$23. (773) 698-7389 or signalensemble.com.

Other theater events

- ColorBox Theatre, co-founded by Naperville residents Kurt and Michelle Konow, makes its Chicago debut with "Nightfall With Edgar Allan Poe," in which the writer attempts to convince the audience he is not mad. The show -- which incorporates "The Raven" and "The Bells" along with short stories "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Tell-Tale Heart" -- opens Friday, Oct. 10, at the Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted St., Chicago. (312) 988-9000 or colorboxtheatre.com.

- Oracle Productions concludes its season with Gore Vidal's adaptation of "Romulus," a satire by Swiss playwright Friedrich Durrenmatt about the fall of the Roman Empire whose leader spends the last days whiling away his time. Performances begin Saturday, Oct. 11, at Oracle Theatre, 3809 N. Broadway, Chicago. Kevin Cox stars. See publicaccesstheatre.org for more information.

- Previews begin Sunday, Oct. 12, for Pride Films and Plays' "The Submission," by Jeff Talbot, about a gay white playwright who wrote a play about an inner-city African-American family using a black female pseudonym. When it gets accepted to a prestigious festival, he hires a black actress to play him. The show opens Oct. 14 at the Apollo Theater, 2450 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago. (773) 935-6100 or pridefilmsandplays.com.

- Windy City Musical Theatre, formerly Youth Company Chicago, presents "The B. F. G.," based on Roald Dahl's story about a big, friendly giant who works with an orphan named Sophie to rid the world of giants who "gobble up human beans." Performances begin Sunday, Oct. 12, at 5340 W. Lawrence Ave., Chicago. (312) 324-7300 or youthcompanychicago.org.
- Tony Lahr, former New Yorker drama critic, discusses his latest book, "Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh," with Steppenwolf Theatre artistic director Martha Lavey at 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 13, at 1650 N. Halsted St., Chicago. "John Lahr has penned a seminal account of Williams' life and work," said Lavey in a prepared statement. "He does a masterful job of reading the plays and poetry of Williams within the context of the artist's life and time." The event includes a Q-and-A followed by a book signing. Tickets are \$10. (312) 335-1650 or steppenwolf.org.
- Broadway in Chicago announced that the one-man show "Men Are From Mars -- Women Are From Venus Live!" will play the Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place, 175 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, from Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 14-19. John Gray's best-selling book inspired the show, which stars Peter Story ("CSI," "Without a Trace," "Ugly Betty"). (800) 775-2000 or broadwayinchicago.com.
- Previews begin Tuesday, Oct. 14, for TUTA Theatre Chicago's world premiere of "The Anyway Cabaret (an animal cabaret)," a play with music by Slovenian artist Martin Marion. Jacqueline Stone directs the comedy that examines power, identity and what it means to be human. The show opens Oct. 17 at the Storefront Theater, 66 E. Randolph St. Chicago. See tutato.com.
- Dead Writers Theatre Collective presents benefit performances of Pierre Carlet de Marivaux's "The Game of Love and Chance," at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 14-15, at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. Translated and adapted by Stephen Wadsworth, this 18th-century comedy of manners is about Silvia and Dorante, a couple engaged to be married who have never met, each of whom trades places with a servant to get a better sense of their future spouse. (773) 327-5252 or deadwriters.net.
- A woman buried up to her neck in garbage is determined to find meaning and "happy days" in Samuel Beckett's tragicomedy "Happy Days." Andras Visky directs Theatre Y's revival in which artist Peter Szabo buries actors in their own digital garbage. Previews begin Tuesday, Oct. 14, at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 2649 N. Francisco, Chicago. The show opens Oct. 17. (773) 977-7873 or theatre-y.com.
- Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St., Chicago, presents the season's first young adult production: Althos Low's world-premiere adaptation of George Orwell's "Animal Farm." It's about animals who establish their own society, which falters when some of the animals become power hungry. Hallie Gordon directs the production, which begins previews Wednesday, Oct. 15, and opens Oct. 18. (312) 335-1650 or steppenwolf.org.
- Previews begin Wednesday, Oct. 15, for the Chicago Children's Theatre musical adaptation of Leo Lionni's "Frederick," about a daydreaming mouse who stores up something special for a cold winter. Stuart Carden ("The Old Man and the Old Moon") directs Suzanne Miller's adaptation, which features original songs by Sarah Durkee and Paul Jacobs. The show opens Oct. 17 at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St., Chicago. (872) 222-9555 or chicagochildrenstheatre.org.
- Theater Oobleck's next installment of its ongoing Baudelaire in a Box series of musical and theatrical adaptations of Charles Baudelaire's poems runs Wednesday through Saturday, Oct. 15-18, at The Charnel House, 3421 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago. "Episode 7: The King of Rain" features 15 new songs by Chris Schoen, Emmy Bean, T-Roy Martin and Sad Brad Smith. See theateroobleck.com.
- French theater company Theatre de la Ville brings its "Ionesco Suite," celebrating avant-garde playwright Eugene Ionesco, to the Chicago Shakespeare Theater as part of the company's world's stage series. Conceived and directed by artistic director Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota, the setting is a dinner party that "descends into an absurdist nightmare" during which characters rail against social conventions. Performances run Wednesday through Sunday, Oct. 15-19, at Navy Pier, 800 E. Grand Ave., Chicago. (312) 595-5600 or chicagoshakes.com.

- Her Story Theater premieres "Shadow Town II: The Johns" on Thursday, Oct. 16, at the Mayer Kaplan Theatre, 5050 Church St., Skokie. Directed and written by Mary Bonnett, whose interviews with people involved in sex trafficking in Chicago inspired the play, "The Johns" centers on the men who buy girls for sex. Post-show discussions about sex trafficking follow every performance. Proceeds benefit The Dreamcatcher Foundation, a crisis center assisting trafficked girls and prostituted women. (847) 763-3500 or herstorytheater.org.
- Silk Road Rising presents the Midwest premiere of Christopher Chen's "The Hundred Flowers Project," about a theater company whose play about Mao Tse Tung's Cultural Revolution morphs into a propaganda play, raising questions about who or what is controlling their art. Previews begin Thursday, Oct. 16, at The Historic Chicago Temple Building, 77 W. Washington St., Chicago. The show opens Oct. 25. (312) 857-1234, ext. 201, or silkroadrising.org.
- The Neo-Futurists ask -- are you the shark or the chum? -- as part of their latest show, three plays-within-a-play titled "Pseudo-Chum." Written and directed by Sean and Carolyn Benjamin, it consists of "The Rehearsal" and "The Performance" of a play titled "Chum" and "The Interview" with the playwright who may be an activist protesting Australia's destruction of sharks or a sharklike opportunist. Previews begin Thursday, Oct. 16, at 5153 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago. The show opens Oct. 20. (773) 275-5255 or neofuturists.org.
- "My Dinner With Music," the latest comedy from Nealshow Productions about a reunion between the members of a failed rock band, runs Thursday, Oct. 16, through Friday, Nov. 14, at Gorilla Tango Theatre, 1919 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago. (773) 598-4549 or gorillatango.com.
- redtwist theatre partners with Adapt Theatre Productions for "Dancing in the Storm." Written and directed by Tonia Sina, the play is about a woman with a rare blood disease who finds support through people she meets on the Internet. The show marks the inaugural production in redtwist's new Guest Company series. Performances run through Nov. 10 at 1044 W. Bryn Mawr, Chicago. (773) 728-7529 or redtwist.org.
- Sam Radom and Mickey Bravo preside over the comic variety show "Sam and Mickey Are Friends: Friendisimo!" running Fridays and Saturdays through Oct. 18 at Gorilla Tango Theatre, 1919 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago. (773) 598-4549 or gorillatango.com.
- Chicago Dramatists announced recently that the company's 36th season will begin March 13, 2015, with "The Mecca Tales." Written by resident playwright Rohina Malik, the play centers on five Muslim women of different backgrounds who meet for the first time during an Islamic pilgrimage in Mecca. In the tradition of "The Canterbury Tales," each pilgrim reveals her reason for making the journey. Performances take place at 1105 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago. That's followed by Elaine Romero's "A Work of Art" (June 26-July 26, 2015, at 170 N. Dearborn St., Chicago). Produced in conjunction with Goodman Theatre, the play centers around a woman whose life changes after the Vietnam War claims her brother. (312) 633-0630 or chicagodramatists.org.
- Curious Theatre Branch announced its next season. It begins Friday, Nov. 7, with Beau O'Reilly and Julia Williams' "March!" (at the Side Project, 1439 W. Jarvis St., Chicago) about a day at a museum that finds curators bickering about exhibits and a janitor pining for a co-worker. The Rhinoceros Theater Festival, celebrating Chicago's fringe scene, runs Jan. 10 to March 1, 2015, at the Prop Thtr, 3502 N. Elston Ave., Chicago. The festival's final week is devoted to "Something Short I Know You'll Like," comprised of seven short works by Beau O'Reilly, five of them world premieres. The 2014-2015 season concludes at Prop Thtr in June 2015 with Bryn Magnus' "Black River Falls," about a young man whose early return home from a deer hunting trip disrupts his family. See curioustheatrebranch.com for more information.
- In case you missed the epic "All Our Tragic," The Hypocrites announced that adapter/director Sean Graney's theatrical spectacle -- combining all 32 surviving Greek tragedies -- will return in June 2015 to the Den Theatre, 1329 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago. See the-hypocrites.com.