



Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre

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THEO UBIQUE'S "THE TAMING OF THE SHREW," OPENS AUGUST 30

**Director Nick Minas Incorporating Contemporary Thinking
With Elizabethan Costumes, Carnival Atmosphere**

Chicago, August 8, 2009 -- Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre is opening its 2009-10 season with William Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" with opening night at 7 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 30 at the No Exit Café, 6970 Glenwood Ave. in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago. Performances run through October 4 on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Directing this production is Nick Minas, artistic director of Blindfaith Theatre Co. and education director for the Great River Shakespeare Festival in Winona, Minn. He soon will begin advanced directing work at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre as well as an observership with Theatre du Complicite in London.

Ethan Deppe, who has composed music for Chicago Shakespeare theatre including their production of Taming of the Shrew, is music director and composing original music to Shakespeare's words for the Theo Ubique production. All music will be performed live by the ensemble.

"My vision is to use the same format of musicals to tell a story, but without turning it into a full-fledged musical," Minas said. "Both musicals and Shakespeare talk directly to the audience with the characters revealing their inner most thoughts. Shakespeare goes from prose to verse, using the musicality of language. We can use Shakespeare's words to incorporate live music into the show."

Minas sees "The Taming of the Shrew" as a commedia d'elle arte form with stock characters that people recognize. "The highly theatrical, heightened style is similar to musical comedy that is fun, and the audience has fun. We want to create a carnival festival atmosphere feel, as if a group of actors landed in the No Exit Café and all of us are watching the comedy together."

Lead roles are played by Jenny Lamb as Katherine (Kate) and Jeremy van Meter as Petruchio. In gender-switching roles are Cheryl Roy as Kate's father, Baptista Minola, and Matthew Sherback as Kate's younger sister, Bianca. Filling out the cast are Ryan Jarosch as Grumio, Steve Gensler as Lucentio, Mike Oleon as Tranio, Benjamin Mason as Hortensio, J. Preddie Predmore as Gremio and Mikey Vines in many supporting roles, sometimes on the stage together.

Assistant director is Brian Hunt and text coach is Barbara Zahora, who teaches at Roosevelt University and has performed with Goodman and Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. Others are Clare Roche, stage manager; Brian Hoehne, lighting design; Jill van Brussel, costume design, and R&D Choreography, violence design.

"It's a story about the relationships between men and women, and it was written at a time when women's roles were viewed very differently, so the challenge is bringing Elizabethan costumes and language into a modern day contemporary world," said Minas. "I believe Kate and Petruchio are madly in love and perfectly matched and become the happiest couple in the world."

"The controversy that usually arises when producing 'The Taming of the Shrew' is with our current sensibilities about the roles of men and women in our society. Not only can we see how far we have come as a society, but that we are still conflicted over roles of gender with the ongoing discussion of gay marriage, a woman's ability to become President and many other issues that evolve around gender. My vision is to take this controversy head-on and explore it with the audience in a way that works best in the intimate setting of cabaret theatre, starting with an experiment of switching around some roles without mocking gender," Minas explained.

Minas and the cast are exploring what these gender changes do to the relationships. For example, a boy is in a virginal, lusted-after role and a woman as the father is conducting the business of a marriage contract and dowry. "Like a cabaret show, we're asking the audience to come along with us and have fun. It's not reality; it's entertainment. It's a journey of how we can relate to each other," Minas said.

Tickets for Taming of the Shrew are available through the box office at 773-347-1109 or online at www.theoubique.org. Preview tickets at 7:30 p.m., August 28 and 29 are \$10. Regular performance tickets for August 30-October 4 are \$20, and a show/dinner package is \$43. Dinner is optional and starts one hour prior to show time. Free parking and a shuttle van are available at the Lifeline Theatre parking lot, corner of Morse and Ravenswood. No Exit Café is by the Morse stop on the Red Line.

For additional information:

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Founded in 1997 by Fred Anzevino, Artistic Director, Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre is a Rogers Park-based cabaret-theatre company. It initially began performing at the Heartland Studio, producing an array of straight drama, comedy and musicals, and in 2004 started the cabaret-theatre trend in the Chicago area when it began producing musicals and revues at Michael James' No Exit Café—its home since then. During its 12-year history, Theo Ubique produced 26 productions and received 18 Jeff Awards Non-Equity and 3 After Dark Awards. The name Theo Ubique (pronounced thee-oh oo-bah-kway) is a combination of Greek and Latin words reflecting the company's mission to engage actors and audiences in an intimate and honest conversation with great theatrical works. Visit the web site at www.theoubique.org.