

## NEWS RELEASE



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### **Two River Theatre Company Presents** **an Interracial Production of MISS JULIE**

(RED BANK, NJ) Stage directors often transport a classic play to a contemporary place and time, with the goal of highlighting the play's relevance for a modern audience. Two River Theatre Company, in a bold adaptation of August Strindberg's classic drama, *Miss Julie*, will take a somewhat opposite approach. Rather than setting the play in, say, the 21<sup>st</sup> century, TRTC's production of this legendary tale of gender and class struggle will be placed in Louisiana in 1865, more than 20 years before the play was actually written.

Although the play remains among the most popular works of modern drama and has been adapted into ballet (1950), film (1951), and opera (1966), *Miss Julie* has had a controversial history, having been banned in Strindberg's native Sweden. A manipulative flirtation soon turns into a dangerous and erotic game of power, money, and betrayal. The bitter sex dual between Julie and her servant, Jean, is inflamed by the differences in their class and hereditary backgrounds. Director Jane Page ratchets up the play's incendiary themes by setting it in the post-Civil War South, and by casting an African American actor in the role of Jean.

"When Strindberg wrote the play," said Ms. Page, "he was writing of a time of strict social norms, of clearly defined class and gender boundaries. Racial struggle has been, and remains, one of this country's defining issues. This production's interracial casting will hopefully make the play more immediate to American audiences."

(more)

“Jane is a very exciting director and brings a feminist perspective to the play,” commented Jonathan Fox, TRTC's artistic director. “By placing the brutal and highly charged erotic encounter between Julie and Jean – usually played offstage – in full view of the audience, she makes the play so much more immediate.”

The cast includes two up-and-coming actors, both graduates of the highly regarded Yale School of Drama: Heather Lea Anderson (Miss Julie), who has appeared professionally in such roles as Titanla in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Chris in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, and Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. Ed Blunt (Jean) has performed on stage in *Master Harold...and the Boys*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and is currently performing in *The Exonerated* in New York. He has also been seen on television in *Law & Order CI*, *Third Watch*, and various soap operas. Mr. Blunt has also studied at the St. Petersburg Drama Academy in Russia. Nedrah Banks completes the cast, playing Kristine.

Ms. Page has directed at top regional theatres throughout the country, including the Buffalo Studio Arena Theatre, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Capital Repertory Theatre in Albany, and is well known throughout the Rocky Mountain region where she has directed over 70 productions, including her work at the Arvada Center in Denver.

Performances begin March 18, 2004 at the Algonquin Arts Theatre, 171 Main Street in Manasquan, and run through April 4th. Regular ticket prices range from \$19 to \$35, depending on the performance date. Immediately following the performance on Saturday, March 20th, TRTC will host a reception with the cast and director. A special matinee has been added on Wednesday, March 31st at 1:00 p.m. at the discounted price of \$19. The audience is invited to meet the cast and participate in a question and answer session after the performances on Wednesday, March 24 at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 28 at 3:00 p.m.

For tickets call TRTC's box office at 732-345-1400, or online at [www.trtc.org](http://www.trtc.org). Student and youth tickets are available at \$12. Senior and group discounts apply. For more information about TRTC's new theater visit [www.trtc.org](http://www.trtc.org).

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