



Staging a coma

Talisman Theatre will be presenting the Montreal English premiere of *Coma Unplugged*, playing at Studio Jean-Valcourt in the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Montreal from October 20-29. Directed by Zach Fraser, the cast includes favourite Montreal actors Eloi Archambaudoin as Daniel (With Bated Breath, Centaur), along with Glenda Braganza (A Line in the Sand, Tableau D'Hote), Susan Glover (Equus, Segal Centre), Chimwemwe Miller (The Flood Thereafter, Talisman) and Donovan Reiter (Life is a Dream, Scapegoat Carnivale).

As a recently divorced humour columnist for the city's most read newspaper, Daniel is a local celebrity. For Eloi Archambaudoin who plays Daniel, the character contemplates the important things we all should have on our mind, from the notion of success to the excess of oversized vehicles.

"This is a very modern piece set in present day, with references to recent events and Montreal news," he said in a statement. *Coma Unplugged* is a witty and beautifully touching look inside Daniel's mind. Here, we meet his various Visitors': his ex-wife Marjorie (Braganza), Roger — a childhood bully (Reiter), his mother Madeleine (Glover), Ishouad - a mysterious Tuareg warrior (Miller) and Stephen Hawking. These tragicomic characters win over our hearts as they face the gap between their youthful dreams and their adult realities. Daniel ultimately grasps that he is comatose following a traffic accident. Or was it an accident? In his own words, he wanted "to see if I could be as brave as that little Chinese guy in Tiananmen Square." His daughter needs him, but will he choose to return? This is the reality check that leads him to examine the cynicism inherent to his era. Teetering between life and death, he finds clarity.

Director Zach Fraser says he is excited by the theatricality in Pierre-Michel's writing and is looking forward to creating the fusion of physical realism and surrealism in this magical, twisted place.

"Our central character is in a moment of crisis where he has everything to lose or everything to gain," he says. "In turn, the audience is drawn into each character's struggle as they live through Daniel and he through them. I hope that along Daniel's journey the audience can have their own moment of reflection. In our society we rush through life and don't take enough time to cherish the simple pleasures and beautiful moments."

For more information, visit www.talisman-theatre.com/play

A good year for ELAN

With the 2011 State of the Arts summit now completed and the organizers fully rested, the English Language Arts Network of Quebec has announced that the four-day event proved to be a major success. The two days of collective brainstorming that took place at the Society for Arts & Technology on Sept. 22-23 instilled a palpable sense of communal confidence in all participants present.

The deliberations on the English-speaking arts community's past achievements and future endeavours also delivered a renewed sense of perspective on just how much this community has grown since the first State of the Arts summit in 2004. Virtually every aspect of the proceedings reached new heights, from the caliber of participants and venues to the organization and, most importantly of all, the focus and ideas.

Among the many notable participants involved in the talks were representatives from the Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada Council for the Arts, Montreal Arts Council, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Culture Montreal, Greenland Productions, Third Side Music, Blue Metropolis Literary Festival, Fringe Festival, Centaur Theatre, Segal Centre, Quebec Writers' Federation, Quebec Drama Federation, Visual Voice Gallery, RUBBERBANDance, Wants and Needs Dance, Montreal Film Group and many others.

After more than a year of planning and preparation, ELAN Quebec's Executive Director Guy Rodgers said he is encouraged by the summit's ability to act as a catalyst for growth.

"State of the Arts brought together 100 community leaders from all artistic disciplines and several important regions of Quebec, along with funders from all three levels of government," says Rodgers. "Participants identified challenges of common concern. ELAN's role as artistic community catalyst was affirmed, but participants also recognized their own need to actively participate in creating strategies and developing projects."

For more information, please visit: www.quebec-elan.org

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