

CCRI's Guest Artist Series Provides New Opportunities for Students and Loads of Entertainment



Working in college theater can be fantastically educational and rewarding; however, there are some inherent limitations, specifically for designers and technical engineers who are only exposed to their own school's inner resources and programming. In order to gain experience, many students need to dabble in summerstock or regional theater work, schedules and policies permitting. To that end, CCRI's theater department established the Guest Artist series, specifically designed to serve as a learning opportunity for technical theater students, allowing them to develop the skills they'll need in the real world, to work at touring venues (eg, PPAC, VETS) and theaters that have quick turnover in programming. By serving as hosts to visiting companies, the intention is that these students develop practical skills that will be vital to their careers as professional theater technicians.

Motif spoke to CCRI theater professor, Theodore Clement, and his next visiting artist, Kira Hawkrigde (artistic director of OUT LOUD). OUT LOUD visits CCRI starting November 14 at the Bobby Hackett Theatre for what is being called *Creature Double Feature*, a return of OUT LOUD's critically acclaimed works from last season. Billed as a "Devised Tour," *Creature Double Feature* brings together OUT LOUD's original and wholly devised monster/horror productions, *CREATION X* and *IMMORTAL THIRST*. OUT LOUD will also present a series of "collective breath" process-oriented workshops that engage with how these pieces were conceptualized, created and experienced, alongside a double-feature limited run of both plays. As opposed to simply being spectators at these performances, students will immerse themselves in the creative process and take part along the way.

We asked Clement how this series started and why OUT LOUD got the nod. "The Guest Artist series was created as a practical learning journey for our students, particularly our technical theater students," says Clement. "It began last spring when we hosted Seed and Ivy Theatre Company in conjunction with the Office of Student Life and produced their original work, *Bedtime Stories*, as a part of CCRI's Sexual Assault Awareness programming." After hosting Seed and Ivy, which proved extremely rewarding for their students, the CCRI faculty and staff agreed that the model was worth pursuing.

"We want to teach the students how to promote and produce touring shows," says Clement, drawing a distinction between productions that are more traditionally "one and done" and not meant for re-creation elsewhere. They have scheduled Epic Theatre Company's two-hander, *Marshall* to take residency in the spring, but OUT LOUD was in high demand from both CCRI students and faculty. "The work that OUT LOUD Theatre is creating is groundbreaking. We're thrilled to have them in residence," says Clement. "Each company we bring in will be asked to present an educational component that will be open to the CCRI community and the public at large. We hope to continue to feature productions from the Rhode Island theater community, particularly focused on original works."

OUT LOUD's artistic director, Hawkridge, says, "After seeing *CREATION X*, Ted immediately approached us and expressed interest in collaborating on this model. After we created *IMMORTAL THIRST*, Ted brought the concept of the *Creature Double Feature* (a nod to the Boston-based monster movie series that used to captivate viewers in the '70s and '80s) to our collaborative and we absolutely loved it. We are passionate about creating space for student artists and providing a multitude of opportunities to engage with different types of work and processes. This felt like a perfect fit."

We asked Hawkridge what about the Guest Artist series drew them in besides just an opportunity to present these works again in a different setting. "Participating in [the series] is an exciting opportunity for OUT LOUD to fully engage with one of our expanding goals as a collaborative: To continue to explore our original and devised work through devised touring models that also have a strong focus on an educational component," says Hawkridge. "In revisiting the original work from our Season 7 in a new context, we have been able to also use these processes and final products to expand upon our unique ensemble-building methodology, and figure out how to articulate that process to students and/or interested collaborators. In doing this, we're able to support their initiative to teach their students how to promote and produce touring shows."

Asked how this residency will address the specifics germane to technical theater, Hawkridge says, "We have a unique way of approaching a tech process that is highly and often radically collaborative. It has been a wonderful experience working with the CCRI students on putting up this double feature and we hope it has been an exciting learning environment for all involved!"

The CCRI Players Proudly Present OUT LOUD Theatre in CREATURE DOUBLE FEATURE: A presentation of Devised Theater. Featuring:

CREATION X, co-directed by Siobhan LaPorte-Cauley & Kira Hawkridge. Thursday, November 14 at 7:30pm and Saturday, November 16 at 2pm

Wrestling with the lines we draw between observation, active study and reckless experimentation, Creation X explores the internal and external consequences that our actions have when we begin to slip past the laws of nature, morality, and reason.

and

IMMORTAL THIRST, directed by Kira Hawkridge. Friday, November 15 at 7:30pm and Saturday, November 16 at 7:30pm

IMMORTAL THIRST follows a family of aristocrats — a father (The Lord), his two sons (The Heir and The Spare) and his daughter (The Daughter) — who are invited to attend an elusive and coveted gala held by the illustrious Contesă. It is revealed that only an elite set of families who meet the Contesă's

highly specific and utterly unknown criteria are hand- picked to attend this particular event and that it is an astonishing honor to be invited. Upon arrival, the family realizes they are the only guests worthy of an invitation and the Contesă's true motivations are yet to be revealed.

To reserve tickets, call 401-825-2219. All performances at The Bobby Hackett Theater, Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), 400 East Ave, Warwick.