



JOE CRONIN (LEFT), KELLY QUINNETT AND ERIC HADLEY IN OCT'S *LUCKY ME*

FORTUNE'S SMILE

Robert Caisley's comedy
Lucky Me premieres at OCT

Sara is unlucky. She has a problem with light bulbs blowing out, leftovers spontaneously combusting and goldfish going belly up before their time.

But in the new comedy *Lucky Me* by Robert Caisley — now playing at Oregon Contemporary Theatre — Sara finds something special because of her supposed faults, not in spite of them.

Written in a snappy style reminiscent of Kaufman and Hart, Caisley populates Sara's leaky apartment with a cast of genuine and lovable misfits.

First we meet Tom, an earnest TSA officer who helps the limping Sara home after her latest accident has landed her in an ankle boot. Eric Hadley's Tom is warm and irrepressibly positive, always eager to come to someone's aid as he tries to fit into the mix. Hadley brings a huggable masculinity to the role, with terrific humor and timing. Watching Tom relate to this motley crew while trying to keep his composure is nothing short of delightful.

Joe Cronin as Sara's father Leo is every bit the endearing curmudgeon, barbed with one-liners and pithy comebacks for everyone around him. Leo's a shut-in,

dependent on Sara for life's essentials, but so independent in his own spirit that it hardly matters. With his razor-sharp delivery and emotional nuance, Cronin engages throughout.

Trusty landlord Yuri, played with broad physicality and charm by Tony Stirpe, injects some needed zaniness into the more dramatic exposition of the second act.

And as Sara, Kelly Quinnett is simply radiant, infusing the role with a longing for normalcy and an acceptance that "normal" is probably what you make it. Sara shines through the face of adversity, not with some Pollyanna disingenuity, but as herself. Quinnett not only makes it possible for us to care about Sara, but we root for her all the way.

That is perhaps the greatest success of Caisley's work here as a playwright. Though he seems overly encumbered by backstory in the second half of the play, he never strays from his mission to allow the relationship between Tom and Sara to grow and develop organically. There's not a whiff of theatrical artifice, or of that sitcom penchant for tying everything up in a neat little bow.

Credit also goes to director Patrick Torelle, who confidently builds a complete world in Sara's little apartment. Through Torelle's guidance, characters become so real and enjoyable that you wish you could see them again. ■

Lucky Me plays through May 2 at Oregon Contemporary Theatre, 194 Broadway. \$15-\$35; for tickets, call 465-1506.

ART & POLITICS

Campus theaters explore
environmental and social justice

Theater has long served as fertile ground for new ideas to germinate, with playwrights boldly questioning the status quo and planting the seeds of change.

Eugene audiences will have the opportunity to examine two politically charged plays, as the University of Oregon Department of Theatre Arts presents Chantal Bilodeau's *Sila: An Arctic Story* and Lane Community College's Theatre Department performs Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*.

Set on Baffin Island in the outer reaches of northern Canada, Bilodeau's *Sila* follows the intersecting lives of a climate scientist, an Inuit activist, two Coast Guard officers, an Inuit elder and a pair of polar bears (yes, polar bears) as it shines a snow-blinding light on the challenges they all face. This West Coast premiere, directed by Theresa May, features three languages and utilizes puppetry, projection, poetry and myth to investigate our environmental interconnectedness.

Sila is recommended for ages 13 and up, and runs 8 pm April 16-18 and April 23-25, with a 2 pm matinee April 26, at the Hope Theatre on the UO campus. Tickets are \$14-\$16, free for UO students.

And it's hard to believe that it's been nearly 25 years since Kushner's *Angels in America* premiered. Funny, powerful and haunting, Kushner's "Theatre of the Fabulous" revels in the dynamic between real and unreal, past and future, fantasy and farce.

Award-winning *Angels in America* easily finds its place as one of the most important plays of the 20th century. With a rapier wit and empathetic ear, Kushner's prescient work skewers the Reagan-era reaction to the AIDS crisis, while still finding love and hope in a world turned upside-down.

LCC Theatre presents a full production of Kushner's *Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches*, directed by Brian Haimbach, at 7 pm April 24-25 and May 1-2 and at 2 pm April 26. *Part Two: Perestroika* will be presented in an enhanced staged reading 6 pm on April 26, 7 pm on April 30 and at 2 pm May 3. But audience marathoners are encouraged to attend both plays Sunday, April 26.

Between the two shows, food will be available for purchase, and global HIV activist Ethan Guillen will be on hand to discuss the current state of the HIV/AIDS crisis. This production is for adult audiences only. Tickets are \$5-\$10. — Rachael Carnes

For tickets to *Sila*, call 346-4363. For tickets to *Angels in America*, call 463-5161.



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