

The Focus

*The Devils Drama Raises
Eternal Questions*



The Devils adapted by Elizabeth Egloff play at Portland Center Stage
L to R: Linda Hayden/Dasha Shatov, Micheal Newcomer/Nicholas Stavrogin.

The Devils marks the Portland directing debut of Portland Center Stage's new Artistic Director, Chris Coleman. He has chosen an ambitious historical drama, with a cast of 15 characters, elaborate costumes, and a vast, multi-layered set.

This sweeping production uses the Newmark's capabilities to the fullest and engages the audience in fast-paced scenes of provocative moral dilemma and emotional urgency. The essential question of *The Devils* is: what price change?

The play concerns a group of aimless anarchists in provincial 19th century Russia. Their ruthless leader is Peter Verkhovensky, barely able to goad his followers to print a "Strike!" poster while coldly plotting the murder of Shatov, a timid turncoat.

The ragtag band, also known as The Gang of Five or The Society, looks for spiritual leadership in Nicholas Stavrogin, an amoral aristocrat with a sense of loyalty to no one but himself and nothing but his own momentary impulses.

The rest of the cast include Mrs. Stavrogin, Nicholas' mother and patron of Stepan Verkhovensky, Peter's father and a dilettante academic; Shatov's sister Dasha, Mars Stavrogin's servant and Nicholas' lover, and Marie Shatov's errant wife who returns to him only to give birth to her illegitimate child.

Then there's Governor Lembke, object of the Society's plotting, and

his entourage: Mrs. Lembke, his dizzy wife, and Blum, his bumbling enforcer. Remaining characters include the rest of The Gang of Five: Shigalyov, Virginsky and Liputin; Kirilov, Peter Verkhovensky's designated hit-man; and Matryosha, one of Nicholas' young victims.

The Dostoevsky novel, *The Devils* written about 19th century revolutionaries, previews at Portland Center Stage on Thursday, September 28. It opens Friday, September 29 and runs through the matinee on Sunday, October 22. Portland Center Stage performances take place in the graceful Newmark Theatre at the Performing Arts, 1111 SW Broadway at Main. Tickets range from \$10 - \$41 at the box office. Call 503/248-6309 for general information or 503/274-6588 for the box office.

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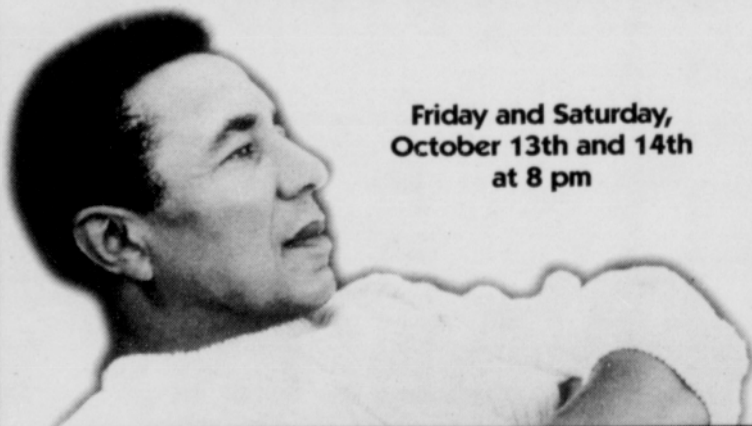
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