



For IMMEDIATE RELEASE, JUNE 14, 2011

The Drowning Girls

Three brides. Three bathtubs. One scoundrel.

“Tall, dark, handsome, baritone, strong features, shy, good teeth, military bearing, athletic build, reserved, dangerous, romantic, large hands, protector, Prince Charming, controlling, unfeeling, cold-hearted, callous, thief, cheat, bigamist, predator”

Gananoque, On The Thousand Islands Playhouse is proud to open the 2011 season of the Firehall Theatre with a highly theatrical mystery that is based on an actual case from Edwardian England. *The Drowning Girls (July 1 -30)* by Beth Graham, Charlie Tomlinson, and Daniela Vlaskalic is also probably the wettest play you'll ever see, as three brides in their wedding gowns tell their stories from three bathtubs - with water also pouring down "from above." Directed by Kathryn MacKay, with set design and lighting by Steve Lucas, sound design by Sandy Thorburn, and costumes by Jayne Christopher, *The Drowning Girls* will be an eery and suspenseful trip to the past -with all the theatricality of the present. The cast features three stellar performers (Liza Balkan, Carly Street, and Taylor Trowbridge) whose performing experience ranges from performing at the Playhouse and in Kingston to major roles in theatres across the country

As *The Drowning Girls* opens, Bessie (Carly Street), Alice (Taylor Trowbridge) and Margaret (Liza Balkan) emerge from bathtubs full of water to relive their romance with George Joseph Smith, a clever Edwardian scoundrel with a string of wives behind him. Smith decided that these three new brides – and three insurance policies – would be a good addition to his “portfolio,” offering each an escape from the shameful fate of spinsterhood but a rather short-lived marriage. *The Drowning Girls* is based on a real-life case called The Brides in the Bath, one that first brought dramatic re-enactments into the courtrooms of England. A hypnotic and timeless thriller, *The Drowning Girls* is also a humour-tinged tale (with action taking place both inside and outside the tubs) and a reminder of how someone desperate for love or acceptance can be easily blinded to the truth – even when signs abound. *The Drowning Girls* previews July 1 and opens July 2, running until July 30.

Showtimes: Tuesday-Sunday, 8 p.m. Matinees Fridays and Saturdays at 2:30 p.m. Prices range from \$16 for students, previews and Sunday shows to \$32. **Box Office, 613 382-7020.** Online purchasing, www.1000islandsplayhouse.com Company info follows.



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THE AUTHORS Daniela Vlaskalic, Charlie Tomlinson and Beth Graham premiered a shorter version of *The Drowning Girls* at the 1999 Edmonton Fringe Festival. In 2007, a new full-length version of the play was created and received four Betty Mitchell awards prior to going to Toronto, touring across the country and being part of Vancouver's 2010 Cultural Olympiad.

KATHRYN MACKAY, DIRECTOR Associate Artistic Director and part of the Playhouse since 1982, Kathryn's many directing credits include *Girl in the Goldfish Bowl*, *Trying*, *The Russian Play*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and *The Shape of A Girl*. Following *The Drowning Girls*, she will appear in *Lend Me A Tenor* as the passionate Maria.

LIZA BALKAN (Margaret) For the Playhouse: *I Ought To Be in Pictures*. Elsewhere: *The Winter's Tale* (National Arts Centre) *The Stronger Variations* (Harbourfront/Theatre Rusticle); *It's All True* (GCTC); *Sylvia* (Belfry Theatre); *Forms of Devotion* (Theatre Kingston) *Still The Night* (Theatre Passe Muraille Cross Canada Tour – Dora Award Recipient and nominated for Calgary's Betty Mitchell Award)

CARLY STREET (Bessie) For the Playhouse: *The Russian Play & Essay* Elsewhere: *Brief Encounter* (Broadway, Roundabout Theatre Company); *Intimate Apparel* (Citadel/CanStage/Obsidian); *Educating Rita* (Segal Centre for the Arts); *Myths & Hymns* (Talk is Free Theatre); *Oliver!* (Theatre Aquarius); *The Lord of The Rings* (Mirvish Productions - Dora Award Nomination); *Real Estate, It's a Wonderful Life* (The Grand Theatre, London); *Fire* (Theatre Calgary); *The Three Sisters*, *Into the Woods*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *My Fair Lady*, *Tempest-Tost*, *Henry IV* (Stratford)

TAYLOR TROWBRIDGE (Alice) For The Playhouse: **DEBUT** Elsewhere: For stage - *The Tempest* (Canstage), *Wild Dogs* (Nightwood/Canstage), *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew* (Bard on the Beach), *The Crucible* and *The Invisible Man* (Shaw Festival), *That Summer* (The Georgian Theatre Festival), *As You Like It* (Theatre by the Bay) For Film and Television - *The Listener* (CTV), *Being Erica* (CBC), *An Accidental Friendship* (Hallmark), *Slings & Arrows* (TMN), *Roxanna* (CBC/Bravo), *Half a Person* (Castle Frank), *The Murdoch Mysteries* (Chum/City), *The Canadian Experience: The 13th Mission* (CBC), *The Junk Chronicles* and *Bloodline* (CFC)

JAYNE CHRISTOPHER (Costume Design) For the Playhouse: *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, *Forever Plaid*, and many Young Company productions. Elsewhere, *White Christmas*, *Fiddler On the Roof* for St. Lawrence College Musical Theatre, *Chantecler* and *Candida* for Theatre Kingston.

STEVE LUCAS (Set and lighting Design.) For the Playhouse: *Test Drive*, *The Ballad of Stompin' Tom*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Old Love*, *Freedom 85*. Upcoming at the Playhouse, *Ned Durango*. Elsewhere Sets and lighting for more than 300 productions of theatre, dance and performance art throughout Canada, the US, Europe, Asia and Australia. World premieres include *2 Pianos 4 Hands* and *The Drawer Boy*. He has received 29 Dora Mavor Moore award nominations, and has won four times.

SANDY THORBURN (Sound Designer) For the Playhouse: resident musical director, associated with the Playhouse since 1986. He music directed *Les Miserables*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and many other shows here. He will be seen in *Billy Bishop Goes to War* later this season. Elsewhere: composer CBC News Network, professor of musicology (University of Toronto, Lakehead University, University of Waterloo, McMaster), and musical theatre performance (St Lawrence College, McMaster, Queen's).

Stage management is by Kathleen Harrison.