

Firebelly Productions

For Immediate Release

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Firebelly Brings Hamlet to Everyone with a Twist

“Madness in great ones must not unwatch’d go.”

Firebelly Productions presents William Shakespeare’s classic revenge story, *Hamlet*, July 16 - August 9, 2009, at Theatre on the Run, 3700 South Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

Many are familiar with the tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, who plots revenge on his uncle Claudius after Claudius murders Hamlet’s father, usurps the throne, and marries Hamlet’s mother, Gertrude. The play touches famously on themes of madness, treachery, moral corruption, and, of course, revenge.

“*Hamlet* is one of my favorite plays because nothing beats a good revenge story,” says director Michael Ryan Fernandez, Firebelly’s pick for its 2009 Young Directors Project. “Our culture finds it extremely fulfilling to see someone plot their vengeance and finally get it.”

In Fernandez’s new and shortened multimedia approach to *Hamlet*, he uses live video, on stage, to heighten Hamlet’s paranoia and fully immerse the audience in the story and characters. “I have constantly been searching for the best ways that film and theatre can help each other,” Fernandez states. “Theater needs to open itself up to something new—*Hamlet* is perfect for this endeavor.”

The added live video feed is “an attempt to more effectively engross the audience,” says Fernandez. “I want all who see this production, old or young, to understand this story and take away with them Hamlet’s choices. Maybe adding a bit of technology will draw some audience, who may have been a bit timid about *Hamlet*, but I hope everyone who leaves after the production will be more open and understanding to what Shakespeare offers them.”

This vision of *Hamlet* has been brewing in Fernandez’s head over time, and he was waiting for the right moment and opportunity to give it life. “To fuse video and theater has been my dream for a long time, and I never thought I would do this at this point in my [young] career.”

Firebelly Productions’ mission is to give young theatre artists, such as graduate student Fernandez, professional opportunities to really flex their creative muscles. According to the young director, “approaching almost any other theater company with this concept would have been a ludicrous idea, but Kathi Gollwitzer [Artistic Director] and Barbara Walthall [Producer] have made this production a reality.” The entire production team, as well as most of the cast, is fresh out of college. Some have a few professional credits to their name, but most would never

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get an experience like this without Firebelly's support.

Fernandez hopes overall that, with a solid cast and crew to make it a reality, "through this new perspective we will constantly be reminded of what starts this play in motion and what keeps it going to the gruesome end."

Firebelly offers 16 performances, July 16- Aug. 9; Thurs.-Sat at 8 pm, Sundays at 2 pm; Tickets: \$15 adult, \$12 Students*/ Seniors 65+; Special Senior Rate on Sundays \$5.00 for Seniors 65+; Special group rates for groups 6 +; call the Box Office at 703 409 2372; Two-for-\$20 Thursdays; Food on Fridays, bring 3 canned goods (donated to AFAC) to get a fourth ticket free.

This production is suitable for students 12 yrs +; order tickets online: firebellyproductions.net via Instantseats or call 703.409.2372

All Performances are at Theatre on the Run, 3700 South Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington, VA 22206

About the Young Director's Project

Firebelly's Young Director's Project gives young directors a supportive, mentoring environment paired with the responsibility of all aspects of directing a main stage production. This includes the directors responsibility in selection of the play, casting, budgeting, marketing and publicity support, selection of and oversight of technical staff (light designers, sound designers, costume designers, and set designers), and willingness to be involved in cast-audience talkbacks. This balance of support and responsibility prepares young directors with experience and valid credentials for further study or directing opportunities.

Firebelly Productions is supported by Arlington County through the Arlington Commission for the Arts and Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources.

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