

PRESS RELEASE

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MARYLAND ENSEMBLE THEATRE

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MARYLAND ENSEMBLE THEATRE'S FUN COMPANY PRESENTS *THE COMMEDIA PRINCESS AND THE PEA*

FREDERICK, MD (February 2, 2014) **Maryland Ensemble Theatre's** (MET) family theatre, **The Fun Company** is proud to present the third show of its 2013-14 season, ***The Commedia Princess and the Pea***, a fun family tale as much about the actors struggle to mount the show as it is about the classic fairy tale itself.

The Fun Company revisits the classic Commedia dell'arte characters that will be familiar to audiences of their previous Commedia productions including last year's ***Commedia Puss in Boots*** and the previous year's production of ***Commedia Pinocchio***. Commedia dell'arte, Italian for 'comedy of the professional artists,' was a popular form of improvisational theatre that began in Italy in the 15th century and continued in its appeal for centuries. When presented today, the commedia players are portrayed as poor traveling band of actors whose various talents including acrobatics, dance, music, quick wit and insight into human nature, all make the plays as entertaining and relevant today as they were to the people of Renaissance Europe, when commedia dell'arte was at its height of popularity.

The original story of ***The Princess and the Pea***, which is ubiquitous to children of all ages, is a fairy tale by **Hans Christian Anderson** first published in 1835. It recounted the tale of a Prince in search of a real Princess to marry and how a small pea buried under twenty mattresses helps him find her. In this version **Arlequin**, one of Commedia's most popular characters, is afraid he'll be stuck playing the role of the pea in their traveling production of ***Princess and the Pea*** but he ends up getting to play the prince. The troupe then romps through a series of hilarious princess tests with great slapstick humor!

The *Commedia Princess and the Pea* is authored by **Rebecca L. Byars** and **Lane Riosley**. Riosley also penned both of The Fun Company's earlier dell'arte adventures, *Commedia Pinocchio* and *Puss in Boots*. Riosley lives and works in Houston, Texas and is the 1991 winner of the **Roger L. Stevens Award in Playwriting from the Kennedy Center For the Performing Arts' Fund for New American Plays**. Currently, she has more than a dozen plays in publication that have been produced by schools and theatres nationwide. The show will be directed by Maryland Ensemble Theatre company member **Reiner Prochaska**, and features a talented cast which includes **Caitlyn Joy, Matt Kline, Allison Lepelletier DuVall** and **Vanessa Strickland**.

All performances of *The Commedia Princess and the Pea* are at Maryland Ensemble Theatre, located in the historic FSK Hotel at 31 W Patrick Street. The show runs every Saturday from February 22 through March 15 at 2pm and on Sunday February 9 at 2pm. Tickets are \$12 (plus a \$1.50 service fee), and may be purchased by phone at (301) 694-4744, online at marylandensemble.org or in person at the MET box office.

Now in its eighteenth season, The Fun Company seeks to provide high quality, affordable theatre for the whole family that is both educational and entertaining by presenting a yearly Family Theatre Series, an In School Productions outreach program and Fun Camp.

(cont...)

THE COMMEDIA PRINCESS AND THE PEA

By Rebecca L. Byars and Lane Riosley

Directed by Reiner Prochaska

Featuring: Caitlyn Joy (Columbine), Matt Kline (Punchin), Allison Lepelletier Duvall Rosetta, Vanessa Strickland (Arlequin)

Production: Julie Herber (Costumes), Doug Grove (Lights), Joann Lee (Set Designer), Sarah Shulman (Stage Manager)

Where: Maryland Ensemble Theatre, 31 West Patrick Street, Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dates: February 22 - March 15, 2013

Performances: Saturdays at 2pm. Sunday 3/9 at 2pm.

Ticket Prices: All Tickets: \$12 (plus a \$1.50 service fee)

Box Office: 301-694-4744 or marylandensemble.org or at the MET (Tuesday - Thursday 10am - 3pm, Friday 11am - 3pm and 1 hour before each show.)

Press: marylandensemble.org/press

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