

PRESS RELEASE

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MARYLAND ENSEMBLE THEATRE'S THE FUN COMPANY PRESENTS: **THE STAR STEALER**

FREDERICK, MD (May 22, 2014) **Maryland Ensemble Theatre's** (MET) family theatre, **The Fun Company**, is proud to present the final show of its 2013-14 season, the World Premier of ***The Star Stealer***. Written by MET ensemble member, **Caitlin Joy**, and directed by fellow ensemble member **Vanessa Strickland**, the show hopes to capture audiences by creating entire universes out of only 6 actors and a collection of objects. The playwright is excited to share her new work; "Vanessa has a fantastic vision for this show and the cast and crew are top notch, so it's bound to be a great performance. The laughs and the lessons are for audiences of all ages. And live theatre is always its own adventure!" The show will run from June 7 through June 29 at MET.

The Star Stealer tells the story of **Bishop Magellan Orion III**. Bishop wants to be an intrepid space explorer like his hero, **Xavier Zenith**, so he is spending the summer in space before his parents send him off to the Intergalactic Academy. Soon, Bishop and his friends discover a greedy, star-stealing creature that threatens the entire universe! "I really wanted to write a children's show set in outer space," said playwright Joy. "Once I sat down to write, the story became more personal. I'm four years out of college and I oftentimes still feel like I'm in a transitional part of my life. I think everybody can relate to Bishop's desire to have great adventures, to make a discovery, and be the best there ever was. Wanderlust and ambition are part of human nature. My goal isn't to discourage kids from following big dreams, but to encourage kids to find joy in the little adventures that are all around them every day." A graduate of the theater program at **Towson University** Joy is also an alumni of MET's **Ensemble School**, where she currently teaches. In addition to *The Star Stealer*,

Caitlin Joy has also penned *Pirates of Pelican Point* for The Fun Company, and is also writing *The Wizard of Odd*, which will premier later this summer at **Frederick Community College** as part of MET's community collaboration.

"Caitlyn is a great writer, and we connect well with each other creatively, so I jumped at this opportunity to direct one of her original works," said the show's director, Vanessa Strickland. "At our annual MET retreat we had a read of her early draft for *Star Stealer*, for which we had already had brainstorming sessions on how to tell the story, and made choices about the design and feel of the show." Strickland directed *Heidi* for The Fun Company last year and has also worked as a teaching artist at **Interact Story Theatre** and **Chevy Chase Elementary**. "We want to bring the audience into Bishop's world through the idea of "pretend play"; so we engage the audience's imagination with this performance and invite them to dream big and explore with Bishop. Also, it's got robots, aliens, old-school video game music, sci-fi references, AND a giant star stealing creature!"

The inspiration for *The Star Stealer* production is *Peter and The Star Catcher*, the Tony Award Winning prequel to the very familiar story of **Peter Pan**. This story provides a back-story to Peter, and like *The Star Stealer*, utilizes a small cast of exceptionally talented actors with a limited amount of props to tell an elaborate story portraying a multitude of characters. The Broadway production played for 18 previews and 319 performances before closing in January 2014.

This show will feature a talented cast of **Jarrold Celeste, Thomas Scholtes, Siobhan Stewart, Courtney McLaughlin, Laura Stark, and Steve Custer**. Strickland will be assisted by a design team that include **Joann Lee** (set), **Devin Gaither** (costumes), **Doug Grove** (lights), **Steve Younkins** (sound) and **Katie Rattigan** (props). The show will also feature new original music by **Thom Huenger**.

All performances of *The Star Stealer* are at Maryland Ensemble Theatre, located in the historic **FSK Hotel** at 31 W Patrick Street. The show runs every Saturday from June 7 through June 28 at 2pm and on Sunday June 22 and 29 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, In School Production outreach programs and Fun Camp.

THE STAR STEALER

Written By Caitlyn Joy

Original Music By Thom Huenger

Directed by Vanessa Strickland

Featuring: Jarrod Celeste (*Bishop*), Thomas Scholtes (*Carl/Ensemble*), Siobhan Stewart (*Neema/Ensemble*), Courtney McLaughlin (*Mom/Mervin/Ensemble*), Laura Stark (*Astronomer/Police Officer/Ensemble*), Steve Custer (*Xavier Zenith/Dad/Ensemble*)

Production: Lorrie Lee (*Stage Manager, Light Board Operator*), Joann Lee (*Set*), Devin Gaither with Julie Herber (*Costumes*), Doug Grove (*Lights*), Steve Younkins (*Sound*), Katie Rattigan (*Props*)

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

Dates: June 7 – June 29, 2014

Performances: Saturday 6/7, 6/14, 6/21, 6/28 at 2pm - Sunday 6/22, 6/29 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.)

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