

banished? productions presents
Desire Caught by the Tail: A Play by Pablo Picasso
in conjunction with the Capital Fringe Festival

Taste with your Eyes - Feast on Desire - The Surreal Beckons

(Washington, DC) **banished? productions** presents a limited engagement of Pablo Picasso's rarely seen surrealist play *Desire Caught by the Tail* as part of the inaugural Capital Fringe Festival. This multimedia theatrical curiosity is an event not to be missed. Gripped by the Nazi occupation of Paris in 1941, Picasso put aside his paintbrushes to write this dark comedy about a motley group of characters who fight wartime deprivation with sensual acts of indulgence in food, sex, and poetry. **banished? productions'** rendering of *Desire Caught by the Tail* plays like a feverish vaudevillian dream filtered through a Dadaist lens and projected onto a cubist canvas.

Desire Caught by the Tail runs July 20-23, 2006 at 1409 Playbill Café, 1409 14th Street NW, Washington, DC. Tickets are \$17 and go on sale July 10 at the Capital Fringe Festival Box Office at the Warehouse Gallery, 1012-21 7th Street NW, by phone toll-free at 1-866-811-4111, or online at www.capfringe.org. Tickets may also be purchased with cash only at 1409 Playbill Café one hour prior to scheduled performance times. Seating is limited, so buy your tickets in advance to guarantee your place at the avant-garde event of the year.

Few know that in 1935, at age 54, Picasso's dabbling with writing and poetry intensified. His artistic vision increasingly manifested itself through imagistic poetry and fractured cubist prose in order to express more vigorously his perception of drama in everyday life. Today, a body of prose poems serves as an intimate journal of a man whose vivid imagination and boundless vigor could not be limited to the canvas. He even produced two plays, of which *Desire Caught by the Tail* is the best known. Although the play lacks a traditional storyline, the experiences presented in *Desire* are everyday and relatable. It is a play of misery, discomfort, anguish, hunger and passion caught in the impossibility of fulfillment. The situations that arise are full of riotous humor and are a mockery of the daily trials of the time. Clever puns and double entendres abound.

It took Picasso just three days during the dark and hungry winter of 1941 to sketch out *Desire Caught by the Tail*, a febrile picture of the life surrounding him in the German occupation during World War II. It was not until March 19, 1944 that Picasso's friends were able to give the play its first reading at a private gathering in Paris. Directed by Albert Camus, the cast included such notable intellectuals as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Michel Leiris and Raymond Queneau. In 1967 – more than a quarter of a century after its creation – *Desire* made its fully-staged premiere in St. Tropez directed by Jean Jacques Lebel.

“The script offers infinite artistic possibilities and is open to the imagination,” said producer/director Carmen C. Wong. “It is hard to believe that such a daring and subversive play was written under watchful eyes of the Nazi regime in occupied Paris. It is only fitting that this production be a synesthetic reminder of the suffering and oppression that result from war.”

An intriguing interdisciplinary mélange, **banished? productions'** *Desire Caught by the Tail* created a hybrid art form that dishes up traditional theatre with elements of dance, music, poetry, puppetry, animation and film. Recently named one of the “Most Powerful Women Under 40” in Metropolitan DC by *Washingtonian* magazine, Meisha Bosma, Founder and Artistic Director of **BosmaDance** will co-choreograph seductive and interpretive dances with Nicole Phillips and other performers. This collaborative choreography will parallel the desires of characters within the play. The dances will be set to a soundtrack inspired by French swing, Gypsy jazz and live music from bassist Allan von Schenkel. A number of DC poets have also been commissioned to create 91-word poems (one word for each year of Picasso's life) to capture the spirit of his vibrant paintings, poems and plays. A selection of these poems will be performed during the entr'actes in *Desire*. The opening scene is re-imagined as a silent film, from which the characters spring to life onto the stage. Projected animations will also be interspersed in the production and toilet bowls will perform by way of a puppeteer.

PREVIEW EVENTS

Prior to the fully-staged production of *Desire Caught by the Tail*, **banished? productions** will present **Desire: An Event in Multiple Parts**, a series of free sneak preview events at various locations along the 14th Street corridor. This series is targeted to engage street audiences who have never participated in performance art or been invited to do so before. Scheduled events include:

- **Theater J** (1529 Q Street NW), in conjunction with its production of Ariel Dorfman's *Picasso's Closet*, will host a free scene preview on **Sunday, July 9 at 2 p.m.**
- **Pulp!** (1803 14th Street NW) will host an InSTALLation that is sure to raise giggles. **July 6-14.**
- **Candida's World of Books** (1451 14th Street NW) hosts a public reading of a newly adapted version of *Desire Caught by the Tail* on **Friday, July 14 at 7:30pm**
- **Gallery Plan B** (1530 14th Street NW) will host a street-front dance and theatre spectacle on **Friday, July 15 at 7:30pm.**

about banished? productions

banished? productions, co-founded by Carmen C. Wong and Niell DuVal, is dedicated to the resurrection of forgotten theatrical forms, the re-creation of wonder, and the re-awakening of the senses. It is committed to producing quality work of multiple disciplines, particularly in theatrical experiments with text and form, to re-discover and re-invent the art of narration. **banished?** strives to inspire and collaborate with other artists in order to fuel its own artistic process. Previous productions include *Greenwood Follies & Other Old French Plays* at Arena Stage's 14th Street outpost in the fall of 2005.

Carmen C. Wong, a German, Film and Theatre graduate from the University of Notre Dame, hails from Singapore. A self-confessed dilettante, Carmen's theatre dabblings have included directing Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (Notre Dame, 2004); stage managing *Back to the Present* produced by Constanza Macras with Sophiensæle (Berlin, 2003) and *Common Threads* with Black Women Playwrights' Group (DC, 2005). An emerging writer, she has worked with The Studio Theatre, Young Playwrights' Theater, Black Women Playwrights' Group, GRACE Heritage's ASEAN Film and Photography Festival, and the Capital Fringe Festival on various projects. Carmen is also the organizer of *SketchDC* – a figurative drawing group in the Washington Metro area.

Niell DuVal is currently in his fifth season at Arena Stage as a full-time props artisan. Prior to his engagement at Arena Stage, Niell served as a props artisan for The Shakespeare Theatre and The Kennedy Center. His artwork has been commissioned by television programs and by other theatrical institutions in the Greater Washington and Baltimore area. A selection of his work was featured in the exhibit *Theatrical Artisans: Props and Crafts from DC Theatre* (2005) at the Montpelier Cultural Arts Center. Prior to his move to Washington, DC, Niell co-founded a handcrafted-boomerang company. He returns to his hometown in Fayetteville, Arkansas every summer to teach drama in the UPWARD BOUND program for underprivileged youth.

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FACT SHEET

Desire Caught by the Tail: A Play by Pablo Picasso

Translated by Bernard Frechtman, adapted by Jean-Daniel Chablais

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DATES: July 20-23, 2006

TIMES: Thursday–Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

LOCATION: 1409 Playbill Café, 1409 14th Street NW, Washington, DC

TICKETS: \$17. Advance tickets on sale July 10 at the Capital Fringe Festival Box Office (Warehouse Gallery at 1012-21 7th Street NW), by phone toll-free at 1-866-811-4111, or online at www.capfringe.org. All major credit cards accepted. Ticket may also be purchased with cash only at 1409 Playbill Café one hour prior to scheduled performance time.

METRO: Centrally located by U Street/Cardozo (Green), McPherson Square (Orange) or Dupont Circle (Red)

PERFORMERS:

Meisha Bosma **Dancer: Anguish I**
Frank Britton **Big Foot**
Clifton Duncan **Curtains/Silence**
Tuyet Pham **Tart**
Nicole Phillips **Dancer: Anguish II**
Otis Ramsey-Zoe **Bow-Wows**
Allan von Schenkel **Bassist**

VOICES:

Naomi Jacobson **The Cousin**
John Lescault **Round End**
Nikki Strong **Onion**

ARTISTIC COLLABORATORS:

Carmen C. Wong **Artistic Producer/Concept**
Niell DuVal **Producer/Props/Puppeteer**

Pruitt Allan **Videography**
Danielle Mages Amato **Dramaturgy/Graphic Design**
Meisha Bosma **Choreography**
Jean-Daniel Chablais **Adaptor**
Matt Jordan **Sound/Set/Carpentry**
Samantha Le Blanc **Poetry Consultant**
Levia Lew **Lighting/Set**
Angie O. Moy **Production Manager**
LeRoy Parham, Jr. **Animation**
Nicole Phillips **Choreography**
Joseph Price **Web/Marketing/Poetry Consultant**
Otis Ramsey-Zoe **Assistant to the Artistic Producer**
Katherine Stebbin **Costumes**
Julie Young **Videography**

www.banishedproductions.org

Presented as a part of the inaugural Capital Fringe Festival.
July 20 – 30, 2006. For more information, visit www.capfringe.org.

