

MALTHOUSE THEATRE

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MERLYN THEATRE: MAY 22 – JUNE 13 2009

WORLD PREMIERE

MALTHOUSE THEATRE PRESENTS

OPTIMISM

BY TOM WRIGHT

AFTER VOLTAIRE

DIRECTOR MICHAEL KANTOR

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER ANNA TREGLOAN

LIGHTING DESIGNER PAUL JACKSON

MUSICAL DIRECTOR IAIN GRANDAGE



CAST INCLUDES

CAROLINE CRAIG/ AMBER MCMAHON/ BARRY OTTO/ HAMISH MICHAEL/ FRANCIS GREENSLADE/ ALISON WHYTE/ FRANK WOODLEY/ DAVID WOODS

MUSIC PERFORMED LIVE BY IAIN GRANDAGE

IS THIS THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS?

“GOD IS A COMEDIAN PLAYING TO AN AUDIENCE TOO AFRAID TO LAUGH.” VOLTAIRE (1694-1778)

Buckle up for a panoramic, fast moving and fantastical ride, as Voltaire's classic satire of enlightenment insanity *Candide*, is let looses as a gigantic folly in the world premiere theatrical adaptation of *Optimism*.

Melbourne's favourite modern clown, **Frank Woodley**, is our hero, the criminally cheerful *Candide* who travels with unbridled enthusiasm from Edenic paradise to painful disillusionment with a round-the-world adventure reminiscent from the best adventure and romance tales! In a quest to return to his childhood love, Cunegode, *Candide* meets compounding tragedies with comedy and an ever optimistic outlook, until experience teaches him to reject optimism in a search to question 'Is this the best of possible world's.'.....

Director Michael Kantor (*Woyzeck, Through the Looking Glass*) and writer Tom Wright (*The Odyssey, The Women of Troy*) present Voltaire's picaresque novel exploded for the 21st Century, in a world informed by the threats of climate change, third world exploitation, rampaging consumerist waste, the threat of theologically-inspired terrorism and begging the question of how to believe in a benevolent God when experience tells you otherwise?

Cunningly they dissect a sacred cow of contemporary Australia – the myth of positive thinking in a world gone horribly wrong.

Live music performed by **Iain Grandage** (*Vamp*) and a suitably optimistic design from **Anna Tregloan** and **Paul Jackson** thrust *Candide* into a broad, red-faced burlesque world which is a keen dissection of the foibles of human longing. **Frank Woodley** is joined on stage by a cast of consummate character actors including **Caroline Craig** (*Underbelly*), **Alison Whyte** (*Tartuffe, Don's Party*), **Amber McMahon** (*The War of the Roses*), **Francis Greenslade** (*Babes in the Woods*), **Hamish Michael** (*Woyzeck*) and **David Woods** (*Exit the King*).

Religious blasphemy, political sedition and an insightful portrayal of the human condition has thrust Voltaire's *Candide* into great success and great scandal. Reeking with scurrilous vice, this new adaption of *Optimism* transforms Voltaire's classic satire of enlightened insanity into a cutting commentary on the no-worries bravura of the Australian swagger.

Season info:

Merlyn, The CUB Malthouse

May 22 – June 13 2009

Opening night: Wednesday May 27 at 7.30pm

Booking info: www.malthousetheatre.com.au / 9685 5111

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