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M E D I A   R E L E A S E

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre presents

## **Crimes of the Heart**

by Beth Henley

**August 11-28, 2011**

Broadway Theatre Center's Cabot Theatre

**Milwaukee, WI. ... Milwaukee Chamber Theatre (MCT)** presents the Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy **CRIMES OF THE HEART** by Beth Henley, **August 11-28, 2011**. Onstage favorite **Mary MacDonald Kerr** makes her MCT directing debut with this heartfelt comedy. **CRIMES OF THE HEART** performs in the Broadway Theatre Center's Cabot Theatre in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward.

Set in Hazelhurst, Mississippi, **CRIMES OF THE HEART** tells the story of the three Magrath sisters who are offbeat, to say the least. While the lovelorn Lenny attempts to celebrate her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday in peace, the wayward Meg returns home from a failed singing career after the seemingly innocent Babe is arrested for shooting her husband in the stomach.

Beth Henley's play, **CRIMES OF THE HEART**, won the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award. The play was adapted by Henley for the 1986 screen version featuring Diane Keaton, Sissy Spacek, Jessica Lange, Sam Shepard and Tess Harper. A Mississippi native, Henley's works often highlight southern life and culture. Her numerous other plays include **THE MISS FIRECRACKER CONTEST**, **CONTROL FREAKS**, **THE LUCKY SPOT**, **ABUNDANCE** and **THE DEBUTANTE BALL**. She also wrote the screenplay for the films *Nobody's Fool* (1986) and *Miss Firecracker* (1989). Ms. Henley's newest work, **THE JACKSONIAN**, will premiere at the Geffen Playhouse in January 2012.

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**CRIMES OF THE HEART** will be directed by **Mary MacDonald Kerr**, who is familiar to audiences at MCT where she has performed in 20 productions including **THE SWEETEST SWING IN BASEBALL**, **JOE EGG**, **THREE DAYS OF RAIN**, **THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE** and **BEAST ON THE MOON**. MCT favorites – and real-life married couple – **Laura Gray** (**THE SWEETEST SWING IN BASEBALL**, **TALLEY’S FOLLY**) and **Jonathan Wainwright** (**MAURITIUS**, **TAKE ME OUT**) will play Lenny Magrath and Doc Porter. Making their MCT debuts are **Karen Estrada** as Chick Boyle, **Laura Frye** as Babe Magrath Botrelle, **Neil Haven** as Barnette Lloyd and **Georgina McKee** as Meg Magrath.

**CRIMES OF THE HEART** is the fifth production in Milwaukee Chamber Theatre’s **Pulitzer Prize series**. As a part of MCT’s long-standing tradition of producing great literary works, in 2007 Producing Artistic Director C. Michael Wright committed to producing a Pulitzer Prize-winning play for five consecutive seasons. Previous productions in the series are the 1980 Pulitzer winner **TALLEY’S FOLLY** (2007-2008 season), 2007 winner **RABBIT HOLE** (2008-2009), 1953 winner **PICNIC** (2009-2010) and 1965 winner **THE SUBJECT WAS ROSES** (2010-2011).

**CAST**

*Chick Boyle* ..... **Karen Estrada**  
*Babe Magrath Botrelle* ..... **Laura Frye**  
*Lenny Magrath* ..... **Laura Gray**  
*Barnette Lloyd* ..... **Neil Haven**  
*Meg Magrath* ..... **Georgina McKee**  
*Doc Porter* ..... **Jonathan Wainwright**

**PRODUCTION STAFF**

*Director* ..... **Mary MacDonald Kerr**  
*Scenic Designer* ..... **Rick Rasmusen**  
*Costume Designer* ..... **Kimberly O’Callaghan**  
*Lighting Designer* ..... **Eric Appleton**  
*Sound Designer* ..... **Cristine DeRisi**  
*Properties Designer* ..... **Dana Fralick**

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**PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

August 11-28, 2011				
Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	11 7:30 p.m. <sup>P</sup>	12 8:00 p.m. <sup>O</sup>	13 8:00 p.m.	14 2:00 p.m.
17 7:30 p.m. <sup>V</sup>	18 7:30 p.m. <sup>T</sup>	19 8:00 p.m.	20 4:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	21 2:00 p.m.
24 1:00 p.m.*	25 7:30 p.m. <sup>T</sup>	26 8:00 p.m.	27 4:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	28 2:00 p.m.

*P* = Preview; *O* = Opening; *T* = Talkback, after the show; \* = Talk Theatre, before the show – an interactive discussion beginning at noon; *V* = ViewPoints - pre-show presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m.

**Special Events:**

- Pre-performance **ViewPoints**: a free, pre-show presentation by UW-Parkside history professor **Dr. Edward Schmitt**, entitled “*Picking up the Pieces: The South in the Seventies*” on Wednesday, August 17 at 6:30 p.m. in the Skylight Bar & Bistro. Dinner is served in The Skylight Bar & Bistro from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
- Pre-performance **Talk Theatre**: MCT Producing Artistic Director C. Michael Wright will lead a lively and informative chat with Director **Mary MacDonald Kerr** beginning at 12:00 noon before the matinee on Wednesday, August 24. Lunch is served in The Skylight Bar & Bistro from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
- Post-performance **Talkbacks**: Post-show discussion with the cast following performances on Thursday, Aug. 18 and Thursday, Aug. 25.

**CRIMES OF THE HEART** performances will take place August 11-28, 2011 in the Broadway Theatre Center’s Cabot Theatre, 158 N. Broadway in Milwaukee’s Historic Third Ward. Tickets, \$15-\$40, are available Monday through Saturday from noon-6:00 p.m. at the Broadway Theatre Center Box Office, 158 N. Broadway, or by phone at **(414) 291-7800**. Tickets can be purchased online - 24 hours a day at **[milwaukeechambertheatre.com](http://milwaukeechambertheatre.com)**. Group, student and senior discounts are also available. Season ticket packages, \$60-\$155, can be purchased by calling (414) 276-8842. For more information, visit [milwaukeechambertheatre.com](http://milwaukeechambertheatre.com). **CRIMES OF THE HEART** is co-sponsored by Briggs & Stratton Corporation Foundation, Mary Ann & Lloyd Gerlach and George & Julie Mosher.

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**KAREN ESTRADA – Chick Boyle**

**CRIMES OF THE HEART** marks Karen Estrada’s MCT debut. She has worked with Renaissance Theaterworks, In Tandem Theatre, First Stage Children’s Theater and Skylight Opera Theatre’s Kidswrites program. She has also performed with the sketch comedy troupe The Show and Bunny Gumbo's Combat Theater. This summer, she is teaching at Next Act Theatre’s summer education program for teens, The Next Actors.

**LAURA FRYE – Babe Magrath Botrelle**

Laura Frye makes her MCT debut in **CRIMES OF THE HEART**. She recently returned from Italy where she played Helena in *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM*. Recent NYC and regional credits include Ophelia in *HAMLET*, Beatrice in *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*, Hermione in *THE WINTER’S TALE*, Anna in *HOLLOW MEN* and Robin in the off-off-Broadway production of *SAVED BY THE BELL: THE MUSICAL*. She was last seen in Milwaukee in First Stage Children’s Theater’s *A THOUSAND CRANES* and Lake Geneva Theatre Company’s *PRIVATE LIVES*.

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**LAURA GRAY – Lenny Magrath**

Laura Gray returns to Milwaukee Chamber Theatre where she was last seen in THE SWEETEST SWING IN BASEBALL and TALLEY'S FOLLY. She has also appeared in Renaissance Theaterworks' BARNEY AND BEE, Cornerstone Theatre's HEDDA GABLER, Nevermore Theatre's THE GLASS MENAGERIE, Bialystock and Bloom's FAR AWAY, Milwaukee Shakespeare's MACBETH and Madison Repertory Theatre's NOISES OFF. She serves on the theatre faculty at Carroll University and is working with her husband, Jonathan Wainwright, in this production.

**NEIL HAVEN – Barnette Lloyd**

Neil Haven is a Milwaukee-based playwright and actor. Recent acting credits include Skylight Opera Theatre, In Tandem Theatre, Optimist Theatre and Southwest Shakespeare. He is the author of PINK CHAMPAGNE, STUCK, THE PLAYDATERS, GET A LIFE and WHO KILLED SANTA? His plays have been seen at various theatres across the U.S. and Canada. A graduate of UW-Whitewater, he makes his MCT debut in CRIMES OF THE HEART.

**GEORGINA MCKEE – Meg Magrath**

Georgina McKee makes her Milwaukee Chamber Theatre debut in this production. Recent Milwaukee credits include Carly in REASONS TO BE PRETTY with Renaissance Theaterworks, Eve/Barbara/Ella in THE APPLE TREE and Lori in ROMANTIC FOOLS with In Tandem Theatre, BOMBSHELLS and A CHRISTMAS CAROL with Milwaukee Repertory Theater and Mary in MARY'S WEDDING with Next Act Theatre. Other regional work includes productions with American Players Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Fireside Dinner Theatre. She holds a BFA in acting from Southern Oregon University.

**JONATHAN WAINWRIGHT - Doc Porter**

Jonathan Wainwright returns to MCT where he appeared as Dennis in MAURITIUS and Shane Mungitt in TAKE ME OUT. Other work includes TRANSLATIONS at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, COYOTE ON A FENCE and SIDEMAN at Next Act Theatre, CABARET at Skylight Opera Theatre as well as numerous appearances at Door Shakespeare, Milwaukee Shakespeare, First Stage Children's Theater and Bialystock & Bloom. He is sharing the stage with his wife, Laura Gray, in this production.

**MARY MACDONALD KERR - Director**

Mary makes her MCT directing debut with CRIMES OF THE HEART. She has appeared in 20 MCT productions in roles including Darryl Strawberry in THE SWEETEST SWING IN BASEBALL, Sheila in JOE EGG, Lina in THREE DAYS OF RAIN, Sally in THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE and Seta in BEAST ON THE MOON. Her other directing credits include MERCY OF A STORM, GREETINGS, GOING TO ST. IVES, PURGATORIO and BIG BOYS for Next Act Theatre and WOMAN IN BLACK for Renaissance Theaterworks.

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**MILWAUKEE CHAMBER THEATRE**

Founded in 1975, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre (MCT) produces intimate, high-quality, professional theatrical works of literary merit that engage and challenge the audience, while employing and nurturing principally local theatre artists. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director C. Michael Wright and Managing Director Kirsten Mulvey, MCT performs at the Broadway Theatre Center in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward. For more information, visit [www.milwaukeechambertheatre.com](http://www.milwaukeechambertheatre.com)