



Hope For Hard Times in One of America's Great Plays

Eugene O'Neill's *Moon for the Misbegotten* to play Wells Theater

Running January 20 through February 8, 2009

Virginia Stage Company (VSC) continues its 30th season with the great American play, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, running January 20 through February 8 at the Wells Theatre. Inspired by the unhappy final chapters in the life of Eugene O'Neill's ne'er-do-well older brother, James, the play is unique within his body of work for its forgiving spirit and promise of hope.

A dilapidated Connecticut farm-house provides the backdrop for family intrigue in one of Eugene O'Neill's best plays. Old Phil Hogan and his fiery daughter fear eviction from their landlord and devise a scheme to keep their home. But as emotions run deep, plans begin to unravel. All that remains are two "misbegotten" people, under the moonlight, facing their own loneliness. *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is one of the great American classics and can't be missed.

"O'Neill's plays involve love, greed, shame, and forgiveness. They offer hope not through happy endings but through the redemption of catharsis", says Artistic Director Chris Hanna. "His themes are rarely spoken outright and never get handed to audiences in neat monologues. Instead, their essence lays buried within the individual performances that will haunt the memories long after the audience has left a theater."

Moon for the Misbegotten is onstage at the Wells Theatre from January 20 to February 8, 2009. Tickets range in price from \$10.00 to \$42.50. The Pay-What-You-Can performance is Sunday, January 18 at 7:00pm and the popular Best Ticket in Town performances are Tuesday, January 20 at 7:00pm, Wednesday, January 21 at 8:00pm, and Thursday, January 22 at 8:00pm. Opening night is Friday, January 23 at 8:00pm. All tickets may be purchased through Ticketmaster by calling (757) 671-8100 or at any Ticketmaster outlet, at the VSC box office, or online at www.vastage.com.

O'Neill was the first American dramatist to regard the stage as a literary medium and the only American playwright ever to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. Through his efforts, the American theater grew up during the 1920s, developing into a cultural medium that could take its place with the best in American fiction, painting, and music. Until his *Beyond the Horizon* was produced in 1920, Broadway theatrical fare, apart from musicals and an occasional European import of quality, had consisted largely of contrived melodrama and farce. O'Neill saw the theater as a valid forum for the presentation of serious ideas. Imbued with the tragic sense of life, he aimed for a contemporary drama that had its roots in the most powerful of ancient Greek tragedies--a drama that could rise to the emotional heights of Shakespeare. For more than 20 years, both with such masterpieces as *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and *The Iceman Cometh* and by his inspiration to other serious dramatists, O'Neill set the pace for the blossoming of the Broadway theater.

Moon for the Misbegotten is the fourth play of the 2008/09 season, VSC's 30th at the Wells Theatre. Next in February is *Line in the Sand: The Norfolk Battle of Massive Resistance* by Chris Hanna running February 24 - March 15, 2009. The 30th season will close with the regional premiere of the bio-musical *Ella*, book by Jeffrey Hatcher, conceived by Rob Ruggiero and Dyke Garrison, based on an original play by Dyke Garrison, musical arrangements by Danny Holgate, running March 31 - April 19, 2009.

Virginia Stage Company is the region's only fully professional resident theatre company, serving an audience of more than 90,000 yearly. In the years since its founding, Virginia Stage Company has made significant contributions to the quality of life in Hampton Roads: presenting more than 125 plays through more than 2500 performances; revitalizing and renovating the historic Wells Theatre; providing educational programs for students of all ages; and preserving the legacy of live theatre for future generations.

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