



INTERNATIONAL CITY THEATRE

NEWS RELEASE

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Sisterhood is complicated in Beth Henley's Pulitzer Prize-winning 'Crimes of the Heart'

LONG BEACH, Calif. (March 12, 2017) — Meg just left a man. Lenny never had a man. Babe just shot a man. **Luke Yankee** directs a revival of *Crimes of the Heart*, the Pulitzer Prize and New York Drama Critics Circle Award-winning comic drama by **Beth Henley**, for a **June 9** opening at **International City Theatre**. Two low-priced previews take place on June 7 and June 8.

Warm-hearted, irreverent, funny and touching, Henley's first play examines the plight of three Mississippi sisters betrayed by their passions as each is forced to come to terms with her "crimes of the heart."

"I have loved this play ever since I saw the original Broadway production," says Yankee, whose previous directing credits at ICT include *Private Lives* and *Shipwrecked!*. "Its wit, charm and humanity speak to me — and to many of us — on a very basic level. Its message of honoring and loving your family first, no matter what, is timeless."

Set in Hazlehurst, Mississippi in 1974, *Crimes of the Heart* tells the story of the three Magrath sisters. Lenny (**Jennifer Cannon**, most recently seen at ICT as Abigail in *Abigail/1702*), the oldest, is unmarried and facing diminishing marital prospects. Middle sister Meg (**Robin Long**) has just returned from the West Coast after a failed attempt at a singing career. And youngest sister Babe (**Megan Gainey**) has just been bailed out of jail after shooting her husband in the stomach. Their priggish and insufferable cousin Chick (**Alexandra Wright**) seems only too pleased to stir up gossip and rehash old family scandals. Into this disturbing but hilarious world of dysfunction comes Barnette (**Wallace Angus Bruce**, previously seen in ICT productions of *Heir Apparent* and *End of the Rainbow*), an awkward young lawyer who hopes to rescue Babe from her legal predicament. Rounding out the group is Doc Porter (**James Louis Wagner**), Meg's former flame whom she ditched after a brief tryst five years earlier during Hurricane Camille.

Henley completed writing the play in 1978 and submitted it to several regional theaters — without success. Unknown to her, a friend entered it in the Great American Play Contest at the Actors Theatre of Louisville. It was named co-winner and produced at the 1979 Actors Theatre Festival of New American Plays. There, it was so well received that it was selected by numerous regional theaters for their 1979-80 seasons. The Manhattan Theatre Club produced it off-Broadway in December 1980, where it garnered the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best American Play. It opened on Broadway at the John Golden Theatre in 1981. The 1986 film adaptation was directed by Bruce Beresford; it garnered three Academy Award nominations, including one for Henley for Best Adapted Screenplay.

The creative team for the ICT production includes set designer **Pete Hickok**, lighting designer **Stacy McKenney**, costume designer **Kim DeShazo**, sound designer **Dave Mickey**, props designers **Patty** and **Gordon Briles**, and hair and wigs designer **Anthony Gagliardi**. Casting is by **Michael Donovan** and the production stage manager is **Bradley Zipser**.

Luke Yankee previously served as artistic director of the Long Beach Civic Light Opera and the Struthers Library Theatre. On Broadway, he worked as assistant director on *Grind* (directed by Harold Prince), *The Circle* with Rex Harrison, *Light Up the Sky* with Peter Falk and *Brigadoon* with Tony Roberts. Off Broadway, he directed *The Cherry Orchard* with Cynthia Nixon and *High Infidelity* with John Davidson. Regional directing credits include *Driving Miss Daisy* with Eileen Heckart, *Nite Club Confidential* with Barbara Eden, *Man of La Mancha* with Robert Cuccioli,

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Love Letters with Edward Asner and Joanna Gleason, *Oleanna*, and a bilingual tour of *Cyrano De Bergerac*. His work as a playwright includes *The Last Lifeboat*, *A Place at Forest Lawn* (both published by Dramatists Play Service), *The Man Who Killed The Cure*, and *The Jesus Hickey* starring Harry Hamlin. His critically acclaimed memoir *Just Outside the Spotlight* is published by Random House, with a foreword by Mary Tyler Moore. Luke just finished directing *Later Life* at CV Rep in Rancho Mirage and *Hairspray* at El Camino College. He recently completed his MFA in Writing for the Performing Arts from UC Riverside. This fall, he will be an adjunct faculty member at Cal State Fullerton.

Crimes of the Heart runs **Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.** and **Sundays at 2 p.m., June 9 through June 25**. Two preview performances take place on Wednesday, June 7 and Thursday, June 8, both at 8 p.m. Tickets are **\$47** on Thursdays and Fridays, and **\$49** on Saturdays and Sundays, except for June 9 (opening night) for which tickets are **\$55** and include a post show reception at Utopia Restaurant. Low-priced tickets to previews are **\$35**.

International City Theatre is located in the **Long Beach Performing Arts Center** at **330 East Seaside Way** in **Long Beach, CA 90802**. For reservations and information, call **562-436-4610** or go to InternationalCityTheatre.org.

Details for Calendar Listings 'Crimes of the Heart'

WHAT:

Crimes of the Heart — Meg just left a man. Lenny never had a man. Babe just shot a man. Warm-hearted, irreverent, funny and touching, Beth Henley's first play examines the plight of three Mississippi sisters betrayed by their passions as each is forced to come to terms with her "crimes of the heart." Winner of the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best American Play.

WHO:

- Written by **Beth Henley**
- Directed by **Luke Yankee**
- Starring **Wallace Angus Bruce, Jennifer Cannon, Megan Gainey, Robin Long, James Louis Wagner, Alexandra Wright**
- Produced by **caryn desai** [sic]
- Presented by **International City Theatre**

WHEN:

Previews: June 7 and June 8 at 8 p.m.

Performances: June 9 – June 25

- **Wednesday at 8 p.m.:** June 7 only (preview)
- **Thursdays at 8 p.m.:** June 8 (preview), 15, 22
- **Fridays at 8 p.m.:** June 9 (Opening Night), 16, 23
- **Saturdays at 8 p.m.:** June 10, 17, 24
- **Sundays at 2 p.m.:** June 11, 18, 25

WHERE:

INTERNATIONAL CITY THEATRE
Long Beach Performing Arts Center
330 East Seaside Way
Long Beach, CA 90802

HOW:

562-436-4610 or www.InternationalCityTheatre.org

TICKETS:

- Opening Night (June 9): **\$55** (*includes post-show reception with the actors*)
- Saturdays and Sundays: **\$49**
- Thursdays and Friday (except June 9): **\$47**
- Previews: **\$35**