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A thrilling night of theater

Hudson County One-Act Festival this weekend

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Theater lovers are in for a treat this weekend at this year's Hudson County One-Act Festival in Hoboken. For the third annual festival, five local theater companies will present original work, featuring everything from comedy, to social satire, to mind-altering twists on reality. It features the work of outstanding area groups from Jersey City and Hoboken including Art House Productions, The Attic Ensemble, _gaia Studios, J CITY Theater, and DeBaun's resident troupe, the Theater Company.

The show, which opened last weekend, will run this Friday and Saturday night at DeBaun in Hoboken. It is performed with no intermission and comes in just under 90 minutes.

Words of wisdom

The night kicks off with *The Philadelphia*, which was written by David Ives, was directed by Christine Dalzell, and is presented by the Attic Ensemble, Jersey City's longest running theater group.

This funny story centers on Al (played by TC Corwin), who in addition to having just been fired from his job, can't seem to get what he wants to eat from the waitress (charmingly played by Norrice Raymaker). Yet Al still offers his friend Mark (played by Frank Malvasi) advice.

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Al tells Mark in order to get what you want in life, ask for what you *don't* want.

Spotlight on social commentary

Next up is *The Spot* by Steven Dietz, which is presented by J CITY Theater and was directed by Sandy Cockrell. J CITY

Theater doesn't disappoint with their latest pick, which focuses on a political candidate's PR spot with hilarious results. At last year's festival, they performed *Compression of a Tragedy*, which also illustrated the impact of current events. J CITY continues to select material that is at once smart and funny, yet leaves the audience with a lasting impression by engaging their minds with social commentary.

The Spot features a talented cast of founding members, including: Kellis Carroll (Wagner), Sandy Cockrell (Chumley, appearing courtesy of AEA), and Clay Cockrell (Roger); and other well-known local performers including: Brendan

Wahlers (Nelson) and Rebecca Sesny (Betsy), who recently appeared in the comedy *Moon Over Buffalo* this summer. Dujuana Sharese (Gloria) is perhaps best known for the special events she hosts in Jersey City such as The Cypher Movement, among others.

Happy couples

Come to Me by Lisa Zambetti was directed by Christine Goodman, founder of Art House Productions in Jersey City. Goodman, who had her directorial debut at last year's festival, has hit her stride as a director, guiding the actors in this very physical comedy.

This piece is one of the highlights of the evening with stellar performances by the delightful Richard Kirkwood (Silas) and Helene Taylor (Winnifred). Both actors are outstanding in this weird and wacky period piece and both have performed in Art House Productions before. The drama unfolds when the faithful Silas comes home to woo Winnifred only to find her much changed.



FLOWERS FOR HIS SWEET – The faithful Silas (played by Richard Kirkwood) comes home to woo Winnifred (Helene Taylor) only to find her much changed. “Come To Me” was directed by Christine Goodman, founder of Art House Productions. For more information, call (201) 216-8937.

Duncan Pflaster wrote the modern *Patrick and Lisa's Wedding*, which was directed by Clara Barton Green and is presented by The Theater Company and features work by actors Ashley Gorham Johnson, Courtney Kochuba, and Francesca Ruiz.

The story centers on two female wedding guests who are hiding out in the bridal lounge and hiding secrets of their own. When they are unexpectedly surprised by the bride, they are forced to examine life choices.

The final short, *Chicken Salad*, was written by local writer Joe Del Priore and is presented by _gaia Studio and was directed by Kate Place.

The play, which simply features a man (played by Liam Alexander) and a woman (played by Mary Ellen Farabaugh) has sharp, overlapping dialogue that clearly shows the power struggle that takes place between the sexes and reminds one of Mamet's *Oleanna*.

As they share a quiet lunch alone on a boat, both find that they have cause to mistrust the other. The annual Hudson County One-Act Festival will be held this Friday, Sept. 19 and Saturday, Sept. 20 at 8 p.m. at DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for students and seniors, and \$5 for children. For more information, visit: www.debauntickets.org or call (201) 216-8937.

Comments on this story can be sent to: current@hudsonreporter.com.



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