

ILLCIT LOVE, MURDER, AND GHOSTS ON THE GREAT PLAINS

Melanie Marnich's haunting drama *Tallgrass Gothic* opens Friday, November 14, 2008

BERKELEY, CA, OCTOBER 14, 2008—Impact Theatre continues its 2008–09 Bar Mitzvah season with *Tallgrass Gothic*, an award-winning new drama by Melanie Marnich, directed by Mina Morita. *Tallgrass* opens November 14, 2008 and plays Thursdays through Saturdays at 8pm until December 20 (with a preview Nov 13) at Impact's home, La Val's Subterranean in Berkeley.

Winner of the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune's* award for best new play, *Tallgrass* debuted at the 2004 Humana Festival. A spare, haunting play based on Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's Jacobean tragedy *The Changeling*, *Tallgrass* takes place in the Great Plains, where Laura yearns to leave her hometown and escape her abusive husband. A lover appears to promise her a way out, but that path leads to a devastating climax.



"I tried to create characters who shared DNA with *The Changeling's* main characters—who were similar in their passions, confusion, innocence and cunning," Marnich explains. "While it's an extreme story about people taking extreme actions, it's also a story that plays out every day in this civilized place we call America, whether we like to admit it or not. Judgement for these characters comes not from the law or the courts or from juries, but from the ghosts of their actions. *Tallgrass Gothic* is actually a ghost story, a tale about being haunted by one's desires, actions and mistakes."

This production also represents the addition of a vital new voice to local theatre: though playwright Melanie Marnich's works have been seen on some of the most prominent national stages, such as Steppenwolf, The Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Guthrie Theatre, and Actors' Theatre of Louisville, this production marks Marnich's Bay Area professional debut. It's another feather in Impact's cap: over 13 seasons, the company has introduced several talented young writers to this area, among them Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, Sheila Callaghan, and Steve Yockey.

"Melanie Marnich is in the next wave of important American playwrights," Artistic Director Melissa Hillman says. "It's a crime that her work hasn't been produced professionally in the Bay Area before now."

Tallgrass will be directed by Mina Morita, who is currently the Bret C. Harte Directing Intern with Berkeley Repertory Theatre under Artistic Director Tony Taccone. She was the assistant director of Berkeley Rep's recent hit *Yellowjackets* and has worked with Shotgun Players, Active Arts, Kaiser, and other organizations.

Tickets for *Tallgrass Gothic* are \$17 general, \$10 student/senior/TBA members. **Advance tickets, featuring \$15 general tickets, are available online at impacttheatre.com.** Pay-what-you-wish rush tickets are

available for performances the first two weekends excluding opening night, beginning a half hour before the performance.

For more information, please call 510-464-4468 or visit impacttheatre.com. Press photos in a variety of formats and PR archives can be found at impacttheatre.com/press.

ABOUT IMPACT THEATRE

Since 1996 Impact Theatre has spoken to a new generation of theatregoers and enthusiasts alike who want to see something fresh and bold on stage. Impact's audience ranges from students to professionals to seniors, all of whom share a taste for exciting, unpretentious theatre that doesn't conform to stale assumptions of what constitutes high culture. Impact's primary mission is to directly contribute to the future of American theatre through focusing on new plays by emerging playwrights. Impact has produced 17 full-length world premieres, including 12 by local playwrights, as well as dozens of world-premiere ten-minute plays by burgeoning writers nationwide in the *Impact Briefs* series. Impact also prides itself on its fast-paced, vital, contemporary spins on classic drama. Impact shows compel, provoke, and inspire, at prices everyone can afford. And nowhere else in the Bay Area can you eat pizza and drink beer while you're watching a play. *The East Bay Express* named Impact "Best Small Theatre Company 2008."

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

PRODUCTION: Impact Theatre presents *Tallgrass Gothic*
by Melanie Marnich, directed by Mina Morita

WHEN: Preview Nov 13, 2008 · **Opening night Nov 14** · **Closes Dec 20**
Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays at 8pm

WHERE: La Val's Subterranean, 1834 Euclid Ave, Berkeley, CA 94709

ADMISSION: Advance tickets: \$15 general / \$10 students/seniors/TBA
At the door: \$17 general / \$10 students/seniors/TBA
Nov 13 and 15: pay-what-you-wish rush, at the door, cash only, no reservations

MORE INFO: impacttheatre.com · press photos and PR archives at impacttheatre.com/press

BOX OFFICE: impacttheatre.com · brownpapertickets.com

PRESS CONTACT: Melissa Hillman or Cheshire Isaacs
510 464-4468 · info@impacttheatre.com

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