

★ Front Row ★

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College of the Mainland Community Theatre • 1200 Amburn Road • Texas City, Texas 77591 • www.com.edu/theatre

Fall Chills as COM Thrills with **THE WOMAN IN BLACK**

This season's hottest import is COM Theatre's most chilling play to date. **THE WOMAN IN BLACK**, adapted by Stephen Mallatratt from the book by Susan Hill, is a spine-tingling ghost story that has been running in London's West End for more than 20 years with a trail of delighted and terrified audience members to prove it. Arriving just in time for the haunting season, COM's production of **THE WOMAN IN BLACK** opens on Thursday, Oct. 29 at 8 p.m. Come see a performance on a dark night if you dare or a Sunday matinee if you don't!

THE WOMAN IN BLACK tells – or rather, re-tells – the story of a terrifying supernatural encounter in a remote part of the English countryside. When a reclusive old woman dies without any family heirs, a young lawyer named Kipps is dispatched to sort through her papers and resolve her affairs. Unbeknownst to Kipps, the woman's hermit-like existence is more than a mere eccentricity. It's a necessity. The woman is haunted by a spirit – a woman in black – and anyone who chances to encounter that spirit suffers a terrible punishment. Dismissing the warnings of the local townspeople as country superstition, Kipps presses ahead with his work. Too late, he learns the truth.

As the play opens, it is years later. Kipps has endured a lifetime of suffering and arrives at a plan that he hopes will exorcise the demons. He resolves to tell his family the truth of what happened to him. Having written his story, he hires an actor to coach him and help him present the tale. And so **THE WOMAN IN BLACK** takes place in a theater, its story woven through a series of rehearsals in which the acting coach plays Kipps, and Kipps draws on his memory to play every other person he encountered. As the performance takes off, magic happens. But is it theatrical magic or another more sinister kind? In the world of the stage, a world that exists as illusion, how can you know what's real? The answer may mean the difference between life and death itself.

Alan Hall, previously seen on the COM stage in **HENRY V** and **DROWNING ON DRY LAND**, plays the "real" Kipps (known in the script as "Actor"), whose tormented existence has moved him to perform the story of his worst nightmare. Hall takes on more than half a dozen characters over the course of the show in a tour de force performance of subtle but vivid acting choices. He is joined onstage



by Jim Hackett, a professor of speech communication at COM, last seen on stage in **RED HERRING**. As the acting coach playing the role of Kipps (and identified in the script simply as "Kipps"), Hackett must live out the terrible events that befell the "real" Kipps afresh for the benefit of the audience. Through Hackett's uninhibited performance, the audience connects first hand with the horror of events barely describable in words.

"I don't know that we've ever attempted anything quite like this," notes director Rob de los Reyes, "The lush technical elements combined with the raw acting power needed to pull off the storytelling give us a shot at something unique and darkly beautiful." He adds, "But aesthetics aside, I just don't know that there's a scarier or more entertaining thriller out there than **THE WOMAN IN BLACK**."

THE WOMAN IN BLACK runs from October 29 through November 22, Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. For tickets, please call the College of the Mainland Community Theatre box office at 888-258-8859, ext. 345 or 409-938-1211, ext. 345 or purchase tickets online at www.com.edu/theatre.



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THE WOMAN IN BLACK



JIM HACKETT (Kipps) is delighted to return to the COM stage. Jim was last seen here as FBI agent Frank Keller in RED HERRING, and before that as Peter Quince in A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM sporting a long ponytail and goatee. Other COM appearances include COMIC POTENTIAL and THE TAMING OF THE SHREW. Elsewhere in the region, Jim has performed with the Chocolate Bayou Theatre Company, the A.D. Players, the Strand Street Theatre, Main Street Theater and Upstage Dinner Theatre. He is a professor of speech communications here at College of the Mainland and lives in Seabrook.



ALAN HALL (Actor) is pleased to be returning to the COM stage. He has previously appeared in HENRY V and DROWNING ON DRY LAND. His appearances elsewhere include Main Street Theater: CLICK, CLACK, MOO: COWS THAT TYPE; PS AND QS: THE ABCS OF MANNERS; SIDEWAYS STORIES from Wayside School; A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM; A LITTLE HOUSE CHRISTMAS; IF YOU GIVE A PIG A PARTY; IF YOU GIVE A MOOSE A MUFFIN; JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH; THE MERCHANT OF VENICE; RAMONA QUIMBY; THE TAMING OF THE SHREW. Houston Grand Opera: HANSEL AND GRETEL. Unity Theatre: MASTER CLASS; ARMS AND THE MAN. Unhinged Productions: THE LONG CHRISTMAS RIDE HOME. Infernal Bridegroom Productions: TAMALALIA 9 & 10; FULL CIRCLE; RHINOCEROUS; HOTEL PLAY. Mildred's Umbrella: A MURDER OF CROWS; A LONG HISTORY OF NEGLECT; [SIC]; THINGS BEING AT THE WORST; DRACULA. Early Stages: PECOS BILL AND THE GHOST STAMPEDE; THE TOYS TAKE OVER CHRISTMAS; SUNDIATA, THE LION KING; THE HOUSE I CALL LOVE. dos chicas Theatre Commune: TITUS ANDRONICUS; OEDIPUS REX; FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN CITIES. Alan graduated with a B.S. and M.A. from Northwestern University and a J.D. from the University of Houston.



THE WOMAN IN BLACK

Be sure to mark your calendars for the theatrical social event of the year!

THE 2009 COM COMMUNITY THEATRE VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION NIGHT

Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009 • 7 - 9 p.m.



There will be plenty of food, fun and great chances to reconnect with the casts and crews from all of the COM Community Theatre productions of the 2009 calendar year.

Also, COM Community Theatre will present a number of awards for Outstanding Performances and Volunteers of the Year (for ticket takers, crew members and technical support).

Everyone who participated in a 2009 COM production is invited and welcome to bring one guest. The 2009 COM productions are I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE, HENRY V, RED HERRING, THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE, DOUBT and THE WOMAN IN BLACK.

R.S.V.P. by Friday, Dec. 4 to Susan Gilbert at 888-258-8859, ext. 345 or 409-938-1211, ext. 345.

CALLBOARD

www.com.edu/theatre

The Woman in Black

| Sunday | Mon. | Tues. | Wed. | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|------------------------------------|------|-------|------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | OCT. | The Woman in Black 29 8 p.m. | The Woman in Black 30 8 p.m. | The Woman in Black 31 8 p.m. |
| The Woman in Black 1 2:30 p.m. | | | | The Woman in Black 5 8 p.m. | The Woman in Black 6 8 p.m. | The Woman in Black 7 8 p.m. |
| The Woman in Black 8 2:30 p.m. | | | | The Woman in Black 12 8 p.m. | The Woman in Black 13 8 p.m. | The Woman in Black 14 8 p.m. |
| The Woman in Black 15 2:30 p.m. | | | NOV. | The Woman in Black 19 8 p.m. | The Woman in Black 20 8 p.m. | The Woman in Black 21 8 p.m. |
| The Woman in Black 22 2:30 p.m. | | | | | | |

Don't miss our next production!



Conceived and Directed by Mark Adams

Jan. 21 – Feb. 14, 2010

A revue of the charming, funny and romantic music of Rodgers and Hart

For ticket information, call Susan Gilbert in the box office at 888-258-8859, ext. 345 or 409-938-1211, ext. 345.

THE WOMAN IN BLACK

Online Ticket Sales?! O Brave New World!

It occurs to COM Theatre that this “Internet” thing may be more than just a passing fad, so we’ve decided to get in the game. We are pleased to announce that we now offer online ticket sales right from the theater’s home page. Pick your date, pick your section, charge your credit card through our secure payment system and the tickets are yours – no waiting! Visit our home page at www.com.edu/theatre. Then just look for the big green “Buy Tickets Online” button, click it and you’re off and running.

Announcing COM Community Theatre’s 2009-2010 Season

MY FUNNY VALENTINE

January 21 - February 14, 2010

Music by Richard Rodgers, Lyrics by Lorenz Hart
Conceived by Mark Adams

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

April 8 - May 2, 2010

By Oscar Wilde

SPINNING INTO BUTTER

May 27 - June 20, 2010

By Rebecca Gilman

CABARET

July 15 - August 8, 2010

Music by John Kander, Lyrics by Fred Ebb
Book by Joe Masteroff

COM Community Theatre Ticket Information

FOR TICKETS

409-938-1211 or 1-888-258-8859, Ext. 345

TICKET OFFICE HOURS

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday
with extended hours on performance days.

TELEPHONE RESERVATION

during regular office hours

TICKET PRICES

Sections: “A”/\$23, “B”/\$18, “C”/\$13
Discount for students and senior citizens.
Children must be four years old to attend.

