



A Play For The Living in a Time of Extinction at the Centaur

Description

For those who care about the environment or enjoy excellent theatre

By Irwin Rapoport

May 4, 2022

Until May 15, *A Play For The Living in a Time of Extinction* is being performed at the **Centaur Theatre** in Old Montreal. I saw it last Saturday (April 30) and was mesmerized – not because I am a committed environmentalist, which I am, but because the one-woman, one-act play was compelling and kept your eyes riveted on **Warona Setshwaelo** and intently listening to every word she uttered.

The play, written by Baltimore native **Miranda Rose Hall** and directed by **Rose Plotek**, is a **wake-up call about the environmental crisis** we are facing as a global society. Via the dialogue, which is interactive as the audience has an opportunity to participate, it asks us to consider what we are doing to the ecosystem that sustains all life on Earth and why we should care and take action to preserve life – not just human life, but the whole web of life, from the smallest plants and insects to the largest creatures that walk and swim on our planet.

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All the information provided is spot on and designed to make you think, whether it covers natural history, previous mass extinctions, or the vital importance of protecting and preserving natural areas and biodiversity.

The Centaur Theatre web page for the play states: “Meet Naomi, a dramaturge who must retell the story of life on Earth, including all the great extinctions. Played by award-winning actor Warona Setshwaelo, Naomi’s journey mirrors our own as she confronts impending climate disaster with honesty, humour, and heart.”



A Play For The Living in a Time of Extinction is shortlisted for the **Susan Smith Blackburn Prize**, and rightly so. This is the Canadian premiere of the play and I hope it will be performed across the country to serve as an alarm bell for everyone to get involved in the struggle. For me, it is a clear case of do or die.

After the 2 pm matinee, which I thoroughly enjoyed, Centaur Artistic and Executive Director **Eda Holmes** hosted a **Saturday Salon** with Miranda Rose Hall, who currently lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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The majority of the audience attended the Saturday Salon, where Holmes did an enlightening Q&A with the playwright. Miranda Rose Hall started out as a poet and became a playwright. She understands the theatre and how it works. It is clearly evident in the way the audience took the play to heart. The performance was about 75 minutes, but I was prepared to have it go on for another hour – it was that compelling. I knew much of the material presented to us and kept nodding in agreement. She also described her process of writing plays and why she is committed to bringing words and ideas to life. We learned a lot about the theatre during that exchange of ideas, which was free-flowing and informative.

The playwright did her research and Warona Setshwaelo was brilliant in putting forth the ideas and concepts. When the play ended, you were left wanting more. The dialogue was crisp, emotional, funny, and sad. It tugged at the heart. It was easy to see how aspects of poetry blended in with the script.

***A Play For The Living in a Time of Extinction* at the Centaur until May 15.**

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Images: Andrée Lanthier



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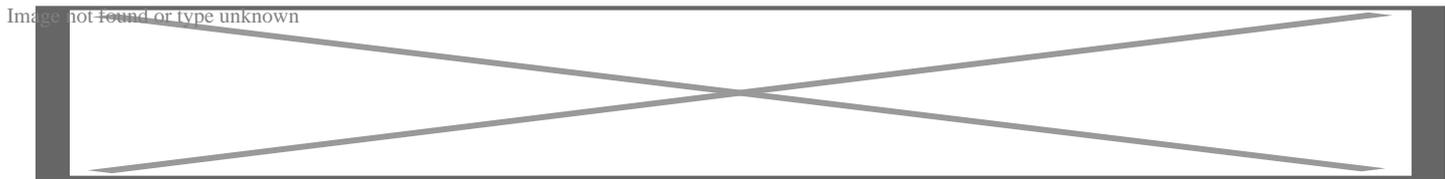
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Irwin Rapoport is a freelance journalist.

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