IMAGO THEATRE’S FAMILY FRIENDLY “ZOOZOO” COMES TO JORGENSEN

Sun, Mar 13, 2016 at 2:00 pm

The internationally acclaimed Imago Theater visits UConn’s Jorgensen Center for the performing Arts on Sunday afternoon, March 13 to delight audiences of all ages with their presentation of ZooZoo, an enchanting production featuring the talents of five skilled performers clad in surreal masks and exquisite costumes who transform the Jorgensen auditorium into a magical world – part zoo and part circus – where a madcap menagerie of creatures interacts with the audience and with one another in skits that not only amuse but also offer timeless insights into the human condition. The family friendly show, praised as “delightful” by the New York Times, takes place in Jorgensen’s intimate chamber setting, which allows perfect viewing for even the smallest audience member. Soda and candy bars are available for purchase when doors open at 1:30 pm. Show begins at 2:00 pm.

During the performance, in a series of vignettes and solo pieces, universal themes are presented with a light touch as animals take on human characteristics and inanimate objects spring to mischievous life. Fireflies come together to make shapes in the dark, they wink as eyes, later transforming into a flock of birds; frogs reveal the underlying tension of their stillness; a hippo couple struggles for their side of a too-small bed; a paper bag comes to life and balances delicately above the ground, a family of polar bears dances and mingles with the audience; and penguins compete against each other in a heated game of musical chairs. In ZooZoo’s final piece, “Paper”, the actors appear as humans, masked in red bodysuits. They dance and tumble across the stage, and in a thrilling finale, each actor’s identity is at last revealed.

Often described as combining the acrobatics of Cirque du Soleil and the theatrical techniques of the Mumenschanz mime troupe, ZooZoo represents the culmination of more than thirty years of innovation by directors Carol Triffle and Jerry Mouawad. Referred to as alchemists, magicians, theatrical animators, and physical comedians, the couple’s blend of illusion, mime, dance, acrobatics, original music, and masks offers audiences worldwide an imaginative and sophisticated show appealing to young and old.

Mouawad says while developing each individual creature and skit for ZooZoo, he and co-creator Triffle searched for a universally recognizable theme or situation around which to build the piece; a message or observation that would resonate with audiences everywhere.

“The vignettes in the show are tales of humanity from the perspective of the animals, which we attempted to portray in thought-provoking or amusing ways,” says Mouawad.

Mouawad describes the theme behind ZooZoo’s Jumping Frogs as: “No matter how hard we try, all of us have trouble keeping up with peers who seem to always jump higher.”

The message behind ZooZoo’s Restless Hippos: “Marriage, insomnia, and domesticity are universally recognizable, even when experienced through the bodies of some very heavy hippos,” he says.

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And regarding the universal theme behind ZooZoo's Battling Penguins: “Sure, it’s musical chairs, but when played by penguins, it’s a battle for who can win in the ongoing struggle to be best,” says Mouawad. “It’s the human condition on ice.”

ZooZoo is performed without words to an original score by Katie Griesar.

This year the University of Connecticut’s Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts proudly celebrates its 60th anniversary. Established in December of 1955, Jorgensen has grown to become the largest college-based presenting program in New England. Each season Jorgensen enriches the lives of students, faculty, staff, and area residents with 30 to 35 diverse performances from nationally and internationally acclaimed artists and ensembles ranging from classical music to world music and dance, classical ballet and contemporary dance, comedy, family programming, and contemporary entertainment. Dedicated to University of Connecticut president Albert N. Jorgensen, Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts continues to follow his vision of the University as the state’s educational and cultural leader.

Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts is located at 2132 Hillside Road on the UConn campus in Storrs. Tickets are available now online. Prices are: Adults - $22, Children - $20.

For tickets and information, call the Box Office at 860.486.4226, Monday through Friday, 10 am - 5 pm, and 90 minutes prior to events, or order online at jorgensen.uconn.edu. Convenient $5 event parking is available in the North Garage. Free parking is available in Lots 9, F, and L. For a detailed parking map, go to park.uconn.edu.