

Meet Candy Spelling

Candy at Last
Discussion / Book Signing



Tuesday,
May 6th, 7PM
765 Route 17 South
Paramus (201) 445-4589

BARNES & NOBLE
BN.COM

This is the print preview:
[Back to normal view »](#)

May 1, 2014

HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

Theater: *Women Of Will* and Shakespeare's Feminine Mystique

Posted: 02/04/2013 2:10 pm

WOMEN OF WILL ** 1/2 out of ****
THE GYM AT JUDSON

Women Of Will is unquestionably the best lecture you'll find on or off Broadway. If it were a lecture rather than a piece of theater, it would certainly be the best bit of acting in a classroom setting. But as it is, this look at the female characters of William Shakespeare and how they chart his growth as an artist is deeply frustrating. Neither fish nor fowl, it clearly demonstrates that Tina Packer has the skill and insight to accomplish either goal -- lecture or theater -- but seems incapable of choosing one.

This lecture/master class/night of theater at the Gym at Judson in New York City features Packer and costar Nigel Gore. With just a dash of lighting, a few modest props and a great sound design (excellent contributions from Les Dickert, Valerie Therese Bart and Daniel Kluger), Packer introduces and performs scenes from the canon, dashing from *Romeo & Juliet* to *Macbeth* and on with aplomb.

This work has evolved and grown for many years and Packer's insights are many. At first, I enjoyed the ramshackle, improvised air she and Gore gave to a show they had presumably performed many, many times before. But that casual mood wasn't a front. As the evening wore on and on towards the three hour mark, as Packer took ten or so minutes just to introduce one brief scene, I realized despite all these years with this material that Packer had never shaped it into a work of theater *or* a crackerjack lecture. That's a terrible pity. As the founding artistic director of Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Massachusetts and a teacher at numerous colleges including Columbia, Packer has

been steeped in Shakespeare for many years. She easily demonstrates how he evolved from writing *about* women to writing *for* women, making them as rich and complex as the men.

The show begins with Packer and Gore performing a piece angrily and then doing it again flirtatiously, an old school but effective reminder about how pliable text can be, how open to varying interpretations. Then she lays out her agenda, to show Shakespeare's artistic portrayals of women in five stages, from the brief early plays where women were little better than props for men to win down to the heroines. This agenda quickly blurs; I think Packer even failed to mention that she'd begun one of the stages until it was almost over. But her thoughts about the characters and the play were interesting while the performances of Packer and Gore led you to wish they'd just keep going.

If Packer were giving a class on Shakespeare, say 90 minutes a lecture for ten lectures, I'd dash to them with excitement. If Packer created a genuine piece of theater, her own *Ages Of Woman*, I believe she has the skill to pull it off. I look forward to her distillation of her thoughts in the book *Women Of Will* due out later this year or next from Knopf. But despite marvelous acting and moments of intellectual clarity, the work in its current form will satisfy only the most ardent of Shakespearean addicts.

THE THEATER SEASON 2012-2013 (on a four star scale)

As You Like it (Shakespeare in the Park with Lily Rabe) ****

Chimichangas And Zoloft *

Closer Than Ever ***

Cock ** 1/2

Harvey with Jim Parsons *

My Children! My Africa! ***

Once On This Island ***

Potted Potter *

Storefront Church ** 1/2

Title And Deed ***

Picture Incomplete (NYMF) **

Flambe Dreams (NYMF) **

Rio (NYMF) **

The Two Month Rule (NYMF) *

Trouble (NYMF) ** 1/2

Stealing Time (NYMF) **

Requiem For A Lost Girl (NYMF) ** 1/2

Re-Animator The Musical (NYMF) ***

Baby Case (NYMF) ** 1/2

How Deep Is The Ocean (NYMF) ** 1/2

Central Avenue Breakdown (NYMF) ***

Foreverman (NYMF) * 1/2

Swing State (NYMF) * 1/2

Stand Tall: A Rock Musical (NYMF) * 1/2

Living With Henry (NYMF) *

A Letter To Harvey Milk (NYMF) ** 1/2

The Last Smoker In America **

Gore Vidal's The Best Man (w new cast) ***

Into The Woods at Delacorte ** 1/2

Bring It On: The Musical **

Bullet For Adolf *

Summer Shorts Series B: Paul Rudnick, Neil LaBute, etc. **

Harrison, TX ***

Dark Hollow: An Appalachian "Woyzeck" (FringeNYC) * 1/2

Pink Milk (FringeNYC) * 1/2

Who Murdered Love (FringeNYC) no stars

Storytime With Mr. Buttermen (FringeNYC) **

*#MormonInChief (FringeNYC) ***
*An Interrogation Primer (FringeNYC) ****
*An Evening With Kirk Douglas (FringeNYC) **
*Sheherizade (FringeNYC) ***
*The Great Pie Robbery (FringeNYC) ** 1/2*
*Independents (FringeNYC) *** 1/2*
*The Dick and The Rose (FringeNYC) ***
*Magdalen (FringeNYC) ****
*Bombsheltered (FringeNYC) ** 1/2*
*Paper Plane (FringeNYC) ** 1/2*
*Rated M For Murder (FringeNYC) ** 1/2*
*Mallory/Valerie (FringeNYC) **
*Non-Equity: The Musical! (FringeNYC) **
*Blanche: The Bittersweet Life Of A Prairie Dame (FringeNYC) *** 1/2*
*City Of Shadows (FringeNYC) ****
*Forbidden Broadway: Alive & Kicking ****
*Salamander Starts Over (FringeNYC) ****
*Pieces (FringeNYC) **
*The Train Driver ****
*Chaplin The Musical * 1/2*
*Detroit ** 1/2*
*Heartless at Signature ***
*Einstein On The Beach at BAM *****
*Red-Handed Otter ** 1/2*
*Marry Me A Little ***
*An Enemy Of The People ** 1/2*
*The Old Man And The Old Moon *** 1/2*
*A Chorus Line at Papermill ****
*Helen & Edgar ****
*Grace * 1/2*
*Cyrano de Bergerac ***
*Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf? ****
*Disgraced ***
*Annie ** 1/2*
*The Heiress ***
*Checkers ** 1/2*
*Ivanov ****
*Golden Child at Signature ** 1/2*
*Giant at the Public *** 1/2*
*Scandalous * 1/2*
*Forever Dusty ***
*The Performers ***
*The Piano Lesson at Signature *** 1/2*
*Un Ballo In Maschera at the Met *** 1/2 (singing) * (production) so call it ** 1/2*
*A Christmas Story: The Musical ***
*The Sound Of Music at Papermill ****
*My Name Is Asher Lev *** 1/2*
*Golden Boy ***
*A Civil War Christmas ** 1/2*
*Dead Accounts ***
*The Anarchist **
*Glengarry Glen Ross ***
*Bare ***
*The Mystery Of Edwin Drood ** 1/2*
*The Great God Pan ** 1/2*
*The Other Place ** 1/2*
*Picnic * 1/2*
*Opus No. 7 ** 1/2*
*Deceit * 1/2*

*Life And Times Episodes 1-4 ***

*Cat On A Hot Tin Roof (w Scarlett Johansson) * 1/2*

*The Jammer ****

*Blood Play ** 1/2*

*Manilow On Broadway ** 1/2*

*Women Of Will ** 1/2*

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of Showbiz Sandbox, a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's available for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called Popsurfing and also available for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain access to thousands of ratings and reviews](#).

Note: *Michael Giltz is provided with free tickets to shows with the understanding that he will be writing a review. All productions are in New York City unless otherwise indicated.*

Follow Michael Giltz on Twitter: www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz