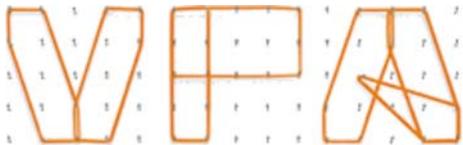
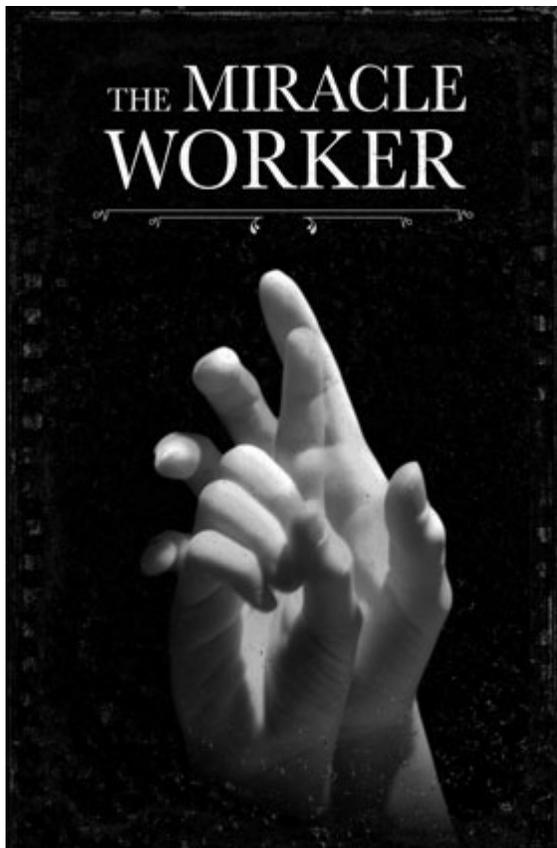


Syracuse University College of Visual and Performing Arts



Syracuse Stage to present 'The Miracle Worker' March 23-April 23



Tuesday, March 15, 2011

[Patrick Finlon](#)

(315) 443-2636

"Once I knew only darkness and stillness... my life was without past or future... but a little word from the fingers of another fell into my hand that clutched at emptiness, and my heart leaped to the rapture of living." In her own words, Helen Keller captures the inspirational heart of William Gibson's classic American play. Between the emptiness and the rapture, though, came a fierce struggle of wills, with Helen, in her darkness and stillness, on one side, and the determined Annie Sullivan on the other, a young woman who had endured a lifetime of pain in just twenty years. Gibson's text is unsparing and unflinching in its depiction of their confrontation and mutual triumph. The hearts that will be leaping will be ours. *The Miracle Worker* runs March 23-April 23 at Syracuse Stage. Tickets range \$16-\$48, available at 315-443-3275 or www.SyracuseStage.org.

The Miracle Worker is sponsored by Alliance Bank, N.A. and Carrier Corporation. Media sponsors are Syracuse.com and WRVO. Syracuse Stage season sponsors are *The Post-Standard* and Time Warner Cable.

Playing the role of Helen is 11-year-old Jacqueline Baum of Central New York making her theatrical debut. The role of Annie Sullivan will be portrayed by Anna O'Donoghue, a Juilliard-trained actress who performed on Broadway in Tom Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll*. They join a cast comprised of professional actors (8) including several instructors from Syracuse University's Department of Drama, student actors from SU Drama (4), and local actors (12) including 11 children from the Central New York Area. A former Search and Rescue dog, Sonar Findling of Syracuse, will also appear in this production.

Set in the American South in the 1880s, *The Miracle Worker* tells the story of real-life Medal of Freedom winner Helen Keller, who suddenly lost her sight and hearing at the age of 19 months, and the extraordinary teacher who taught her to communicate with the world, Annie Sullivan. The 1960 Broadway premiere won five Tony Awards including Best Play, and starred Patty Duke as Helen Keller and Anne Bancroft as Annie Sullivan. The 1962 film version earned an Oscar nomination for William Gibson's adaptation.

"It's a very compelling story and what appeals to me about it is of course, first of all, it is a story of a teacher and a student," said Director Paul Barnes. "It is uplifting and it is about overcoming formidable obstacles."

On the role of Annie Sullivan, who is referred to in the title of the play, Barnes notes, "She is a young woman who has overcome a lot of adversity and is feisty and really knows how to fight for what she believes in. That translates into our work in rehearsal and performance as 'playing to win,' as we call it, and playing for high stakes."

Playwright William Gibson (1914-2008) was well-known for creating strong, popular female characters. His connections to Syracuse stretches back to the late 1940s when his wife, Margaret Brenman Gibson, studied at Syracuse University. During this time, the couple lived on James Street, and Gibson performed at local jazz clubs playing what he referred to as "honkey-tonk piano."

Although this is the first production of *The Miracle Worker* to be staged at Syracuse Stage, patrons may remember Gibson's *The Butterfingers Angel* (produced at Syracuse Stage in 1974, 1978 & 1994), and the world-premiere of *Handy Dandy* (1984).

Throughout the run of *The Miracle Worker*, two exhibits will be displayed in the Syracuse Stage lobby highlighting other local connections to the play:

1. Reflections of The Miracle Worker in Central New York History

Produced by the Onondaga Historical Association

Located in the Coyne Lobby at Syracuse Stage

Sponsored by Hancock Estabrook, LLP

The Onondaga Historical Association (OHA) continues its partnership with Syracuse Stage with an exhibit that explores several of the pioneering links that Central New York has in the education of children who are who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard-of-hearing, late deafened and deaf blind. Following its run at Syracuse Stage, the panels will circulate throughout the Onondaga County Public Library system in conjunction with suggested reading lists for materials related to the themes of the play and exhibit.

2. Know Me – The WHOLE ME

Filmed and Produced by Ellen Blalock

Located in the Sutton Pavilion

This large-scale video installation will feature students and staff from the WHOLE ME afterschool program, a local organization designed to promote the success of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, their families, and their communities.

Starting with *The Miracle Worker* and continuing with future productions, Syracuse Stage will offer one Audio-Described performance for each show. Patrons who are blind or visually impaired may pick up an audio receiver upon arriving at the theatre, and during the performance a live narrator will verbalize visual details about the actors and scenic elements. *The Miracle Worker* will be Audio-Described during the performance on Saturday, April 9 at 3 p.m.

For patrons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, Open Captioning is provided for two performances: Sunday, April 17 at 2 p.m. and Wednesday, April 20 at 2 p.m. Open Captioning provides a small digital screen to the side of the stage that displays text corresponding to the play's dialogue and other sounds. In addition, the longstanding Signed Performance Series will take place on Saturday, April 2 at 3 p.m.

Syracuse Stage is pleased to now offer Signed Performances, Open Captioning, and Audio Description for every Syracuse Stage production.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Prologue: One hour before every performance (except the Wednesday matinee) a cast member will offer an insightful and entertaining talk about the play. *Supported by the Grandma Brown Foundation.*

M&T Bank Pay-What-You-Can Series: Tuesday, March 22 at 7:30 p.m. to watch the final dress rehearsal. \$9 suggested donation, tickets available at the door 2 hours prior to curtain.

LIVE in the Sutton Series: Friday, March 25, live music following the 8:00 p.m. curtain.

Welch Allyn Signed Performance Series In Memory of Susan Thompson: Saturday, April 2 at 3:00 p.m.

Happy Hour Series: Thursday, April 7, one hour before the 7:30 p.m. performance. Half-price bar drinks and complimentary snacks.

Audio-Described Series (NEW!): Saturday, April 9 at 3 p.m. Patrons who are blind or visually impaired may pick up an audio receiver upon arriving at the theatre, and during the performance a live narrator will verbalize visual details about the actors and scenic elements.

Actor Talkback Series: Sunday, April 17 following the 7:00 p.m. performance.

Open Caption Series: Sunday, April 17 at 2 p.m. and Wednesday, April 20 at 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday @ 1 Lecture Series: Wednesday, April 20 at 1 p.m. before the 2 p.m. matinee.

**Special event programs are additionally funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation/The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, the National Organization for the American Theatre.*

TICKETS

Adults: \$25-\$48

40 & Under: \$25

18 & Under: \$16

Student Rush: \$15

**Rush tickets available day of performance, by phone (\$5 fee) or in person (no fee)*

**Discounts available for seniors, students, groups and subscribers*

Online: www.SyracuseStage.org

Call: 315-443-3275

In person: 820 East Genesee Street

Groups (10 or more): 315-443-9844