

The Sweet Abyss

by Jon Tuttle

Directed by Dr. Dawn Larsen

Cast in order of appearance

Cassandra.....Renee Cunningham
Dori.....Olivia Parrott
Roger.....Conner Connelly
David..... Doug Gray
Caroline.....Princesslori Biglow
Priest.....Quinn Franklin
Elias.....D. Keith Best

When you hear the piano play a short piece and/or you see light changes, time has passed.

There will be one 10 minute intermission.

Special thanks to

Dr Greg Fry and his graphic design class.
Dr. Rhonda Brogdon, Chair FMU Nursing
Dr. Paolo Gualdi, piano
Dr. Jon Tuttle - and happy retirement.

DIRECTOR.....L. Dawn Larsen
SCENIC DESIGN.....Jess Willis
COSTUME DESIGN.....Allison M. Steadman
LIGHTING DESIGN.....Jess Willis
GUEST ASST LIGHTING DESIGN.....Lorna Young
SOUND DESIGN.....L. Dawn Larsen
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR.....Jess Willis
PROPS MANAGER.....Jess Willis
ASST PROPS MANAGERConner Conley
LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR.....Asiana Gaskins-Nelson
SOUND BOARD OPERATOR.....Shamari Tedder
SCENE SHOP FORMAN.....Jessica Sistrunk
PAINT CHARGE.....Jess Willis
WARDROBE MANAGER.....Melissa Gragg
WARDROBE ASSISTANTS.....Lindsay Navarro, A.J. Lunn
BACKSTAGE CREW.....Lauren Reynolds, Elizabeth Fortner
CARPENTERS.....Jessica Sistrunk, Shaunique Robinson, Tyrik Levy, Connor Conley, Elizabeth Fortner
POSTER ART..... Andrew L. Smith
PIANO RECORDING.....Dr. Paolo Gualdi

Director's Statement:

Grief is a funny thing. None of us like it. Most of us try to distract ourselves from it. Some of us, in order to distract ourselves, hyperfocus our attention on something else...like alcohol, work, or...a cat. It is only when we realize that we have to walk through our grief in order to process it that we can heal. And then remembering how it all happened and what we did to process it is also interesting because...memory is a funny thing. It is a thing we construct. And the memories we construct about the grief event and the retelling of those memories, as well as how we frame the telling, are how we truly heal. DL

Theatre Staff

Chair, Fine Arts & Professor of Theatre.....D. Keith Best
Professor of Theatre.....A. Glen Gourley
Professor of Theatre.....L. Dawn Larsen
Professor of Costume Design.....Allison M. Steadman
Interim Technical Director.....Jess Willis

Playwright's Statement:

I have four cats. Only one of them is still alive. Her name is Callie. She and I are crazy about each other. If you're a pet owner, you know what I mean. If you're a pet owner, you know that the purest, most reliable and un-complex relationships are those we share with animals.

I wrote THE SWEET ABYSS when one, then another of my cats died in my arms. Some years after I wrote the play, the third one also died. Their names were Izzy, Gato and Spike. (I think it's important to say their names.) In each case, I made sure that my eyes were the last thing they saw as the light went out in theirs. In each case, the moments that followed were attended by a grief so overwhelming I could not contain it, and a ridiculous desire to undo death.

This play, then, was my attempt to undo death. I wrote it so I could have with myself a conversation about the voids we must face and somehow refill. I failed on all counts. I could not fill those voids, just as Cassandra in the play cannot, but like her, actually through her, I accepted that are other sources of comfort in our lives. Those are people who need us, and thank God for that, because we need them too. Human relationships are usually messier and more difficult, but the rewards—those being purpose, belonging, affection and companionship—are all we really have.

"We must," as Auden wrote, "love one another." We must we must. And we must cherish the memories of those we've lost as the best blessings of being alive. JT

Francis Marion University is a fully accredited institution with the National Association of Schools of Theatre.

Francis Marion University Theatre Program is a member of the South Carolina Theatre Association and the Southeastern Theatre Conference.

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