

PRESS RELEASE

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Bronte's Secret Life Revealed in Southeast Premier of UGA Playwright

Athens – 4 April 2012 – The University Theatre kicks off the new year with the southeast premier of “Children of an Idol Moon,” opening in February at the Seney-Stovall Chapel. This compelling tale by award-winning playwright and PhD candidate Cheryldee Huddleston offers a glimpse into the reclusive world of Emily Bronte, author of the haunting nineteenth-century novel “Wuthering Heights.” Directed by George Contini, “Children” opens a window into the Brontes’ troubled past.

The play is set in the misty English moors of Emily’s childhood. After their mother died, the Bronte children's shared love of writing became their only relief from the cold, oppressive atmosphere of their father’s discipline. “Children of an Idol Moon” explores the tangled relationships between the brother and sisters, in particular the curious magnetism between Emily and her brother Branwell, thought by some to be the Heathcliff to Emily’s Catherine. “In fact,” Huddleston says, “in the world of my play audiences may discover parallels between Heathcliff and Emily herself — the indomitable soul who loves without care or concern for what the world thinks, who wishes only to remain on her moors forever.”

The play also depicts the fevered reception of the novel when it was first published in 1847. According to Huddleston, “Emily did not understand why readers were so disturbed and unsettled by ‘Wuthering Heights,’ Like Emily, I was lead by my passions.” Winner of the PEN USA Award for Drama for her play “Who Loves You, Jimmie Orrio?” (her MFA thesis production at UNLV), Cheryldee Huddleston is a PhD Candidate in the UGA Department of Theatre and Film Studies. “Children of an Idol Moon” has benefited from an exciting collaboration between playwright, director and cast for its southeast premiere in Athens, and Huddleston is excited that the historic nineteenth-century Seney-Stovall Chapel will be the venue for this production.

Although director George Contini is working to recapture the haunting atmosphere of the nineteenth century moors for “Children of an Idol Moon,” the overall approach to the production

is highly contemporary. "The play opens on Emily's deathbed and we experience the story as a vision of Emily's fevered brain. Memories, images, text, and emotions swirl together in almost a nightmarish way. The imaginary Gothic world of the Bronte Sisters becomes, in fact, the reality," says Contini. Contini, an assistant professor in the Theatre and Film Studies Dept at UGA is also a professional actor most recently scoring successes in "Shear Madness" at the Alliance Theatre and "The Big Bang" at the Horizon Theatre, both in Atlanta.

"Children of an Idol Moon" deals with adult situations and may not be appropriate for young children. The performance runs approximately two hours with one ten-minute intermission.

"Children of an Idol Moon will open on Thursday, February 16 and will run February 16 – 18 and 22 – 25 at 8:00 pm and February 26 at 2:30 pm. It will be performed in the Seney-Stovall Chapel located at 201 N. Milledge Drive, behind The Varsity.

Regular admission is \$12; admission for students and senior citizens with I.D. is \$10. Tickets may be purchased beginning February 2 at the University Theatre box office located in the lobby of the Fine Arts Bldg. at the corner of Lumpkin and Baldwin Sts. (hours: M-F, 12 – 5 pm) or at the theatre door beginning one hour prior to show time. Reservations may be made in advance by calling the University Theatre Box Office line at (706) 542-2838. Tickets are also available at Schoolkids Records, 264 E. Clayton St., Athens.

Publicity photos are available at <http://www.drama.uga.edu/~publicity/>. Please click on the image title to view and download the high-resolution photo.

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