

# three mormon women

## LANDSCAPES OF FAITH

THREE ONE-ACT PLAYS

**LINKING TIES** STUDENT WRITTEN BY Linda Colloton  
STUDENT DIRECTED BY Leah Stallard

**THE DEEPEST DARKEST PIT** STUDENT WRITTEN BY Lesley Hart Gunn  
STUDENT DIRECTED BY Emily Fickenwirth

**TELL THE HEATHER** STUDENT WRITTEN BY Morag Plaice  
STUDENT DIRECTED BY Kimberly Howington

**Margetts Theatre**

**MAY 11-28, 2005**

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### Production Staff

DIRECTORS ..... Leah Stallard, Emily Fickenwirth,  
Kimmy Howington  
DRAMATURGS ..... Janine Sobeck, Allison MacKay,  
Shelley Graham  
SUPERVISING STAGE MANAGER ..... Tracey Woolley  
SCENIC DESIGNER ..... Susan Jaussi  
COSTUME DESIGNERS ..... Lois Beck, Brittney Pearson  
MAKE-UP AND HAIR DESIGNER ..... Marnell Hardy  
LIGHTING DESIGNER ..... Jenna Wagner  
SOUND DESIGNER ..... Reed Cooper  
STAGE MANAGERS ..... Brian Ramos, Allison MacKay,  
Jasmine Vincent

### Settinga

#### Linking Ties:

A family farm in Norway in the 1850s.

#### The Deepest Darkest Pit:

A modest home on the coasts of Nova Scotia, present day.

#### Tell the Heather:

The Scottish Highlands, spanning the young life of Shauna Burns.

# finding their faith

It is a blessing and a challenge to be a Mormon woman in a world culture that increasingly devalues the divinity of womanhood. For this production three Mormon women playwrights and three Mormon women directors have worked together to tell three distinct stories of the challenges facing Mormon women in a variety of cultures and times. Each play brings us to a different point in the conversion process, and each time we see that a woman who has faith in Christ can be a pillar of strength and a binding influence in her family. And perhaps more importantly, each of the short plays examines the struggle to realize that faith, and then to act upon it.



The kitchen of a typical Norwegian farmhouse was a gathering place for the family. Much of *Linking Ties* occurs in the kitchen, including expressions of joy, anger, and quiet moments of revelation.

## a mother's journey

by Leah Stallard

*Linking Ties* is a show about parent-child relationships, both earthly and eternal. It is a show that gives us time for reflection, time for reevaluation of not only our relationships, but also our basic beliefs. Marte's story, while somewhat removed from our modern experience, is still pertinent to us because Marte's questions are our questions; her wish to know God's will is something every faithful follower seeks.

The decision Marte faces is not "cut-and-dried." The two most precious aspects of life—her love for her family and her love for God—seem strongly

contradictory. How can she reconcile one with the other? While struggling to make her decision, she must also come to terms with a new way to communicate with God: her new religion encourages her no longer to say rote prayers, but to pray truly from the heart. The time has come for her to learn what the phrase "cast your burdens upon the Lord" really means. Marte's desperate search for a personal answer is familiar to us because we too have had these moments of desperately wanting to know the Lord's will for us. In our fast-paced world of what seems to be infinite possibilities, we yearn for the guidance of someone greater than ourselves. While time, place and circumstances may differ, the

fundamental desire is still the same. I hope that after watching this show we will come away with a renewed desire to cultivate that personal relationship with our Father in Heaven and come to feel his immense and particular love for each of us.

## a sister's insight

by Emily Fickenwirth

A couple of years ago, internationally renowned playwright David Edgar came to BYU to speak about his work, and after his presentation, students asked him questions. I listened as my peers asked him about his career, his writing process, etc.

But one female student asked the question that most intrigued me: did he think it was fair for men to write about women? The student indicated she thought that women are misrepresented in theatre since most plays are written by white males from the white male perspective, and did he think that was right?

I waited for a silent moment until he responded. He said he didn't think that male playwrights were wrong to write about women. I was interested. He continued: although the genre seems to be dominated by white males, even if a man doesn't represent women as well as a woman might be able to, at least he was trying to represent them.

When I was asked to direct this play, I remembered that interaction vividly. Even though I didn't like the status quo as far as women in theatre were concerned, what was I doing to change things? The prospect of working on a play that dealt with women's and LDS issues as intelligently as *The Deepest Darkest Pit* was exciting.

The fact that the show was written and largely produced by women made me feel as if this project was making progress toward that representation that the female student in the Q & A session felt was missing in theatre.

Although Leslie Hart Gunn's piece is decidedly the funniest and light of the *Three Mormon Women* plays, it would be a mistake to treat its themes as lightly as its approach. As illustrated so effectively by the story about a supposedly cursed ship, the *Marie Celeste*, the play deals with surviving the harshest of conditions, emerging victoriously even when your crew has abused and abandoned you, or in Carmel's case, even when you feel damaged and adrift.



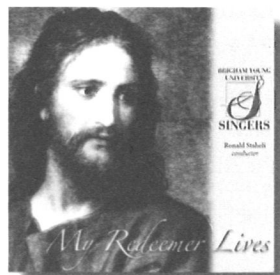
Though she is surrounded by a loving family, Carmel's choices leave her feeling lonely, searching for a light of faith that has set, temporarily, in her life. The image of an abandoned ship returns to her thoughts on more than one occasion.

Although the play focuses on an LDS woman, what makes it such a strong piece is the fact that that isn't the end of it. The characters in the play explore how many people come together in discouraging, difficult situations. Gender, location, and religion are factors in the exploration, certainly,





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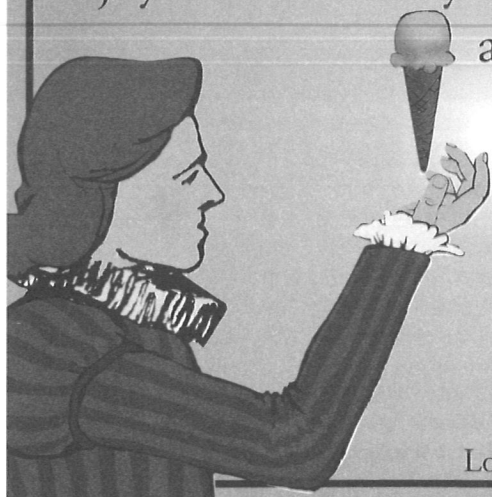


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but in the end, the play's themes are applicable to all of us. For Carmel or Joseph Smith or anybody, really, even if we are in the deepest darkest pit in Nova Scotia and the mountains fall down on us, though it seems as if there is every reason to be discouraged, after a while we will find there is also every reason to carry on.

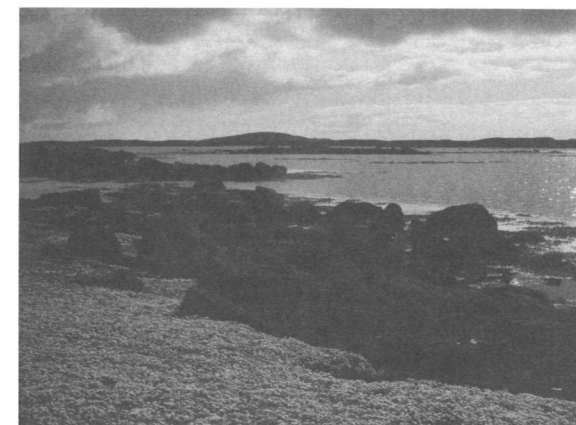
### a daughter's hope

by Kimmy Howington

"Dear Mr. Up in the Sky." Most of us have been taught to pray. We've been taught to believe in a Higher Power and to have faith in the fact that there is more. But what happens for those who were not taught these foundations? And what are the events that cause a little girl to kneel down and pray naively yet reverently to someone she doesn't even know is there?

Shauna, like most humans, considers the possibilities of life after death, or even more morbidly, death after death. She reconsiders her encounters with past family, friends, and associates who have helped guide her in a path of acceptance of a God. Everyone becomes converted, whether to a community, to a new idea or thought, or even to a religion of which they've been a part their whole lives. And these encounters eloquently bring Deity into a questioning child's life.

This child is capable, curious, wanting of more information, and also triumphant in this pursuit, always led on by the question, "Is there a God?" ■



A field of heather melts into the rocks that line the edge of Loch Blashaval. Though small, the heather flower is hardy, and young Shauna imagines that its strength comes from keeping secret the stories whispered by the animals.

### questions to consider

#### Linking Ties:

How does the land of your birth affect the decisions you make and the things you believe? Is it possible to have split loyalties?

#### The Deepest Darkest Pit:

To what extent does culture define a person? Is Carmel's family tied to the sights and songs and stories of their homeland more than their identity as members of the church? Does a line separate homeland and faith? Should there be one? And if so, did these characters cross it?

#### Tell the Heather:

What role does memory play in effecting a religious conversion? What does Shauna gain by interacting with herself as a child?



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## cast and production staff

### Cast

John-Ross Boyce (Johann/Kent/Father), Katy, TX, is a junior studying theatre and English, with a minor in Italian. Acting credits include the lead in BYU's *Professor Taranne* and Narrator in Provo Fringe Theatre's *Dogville*.

Michelle Clawson (Granny), Victor, NY, is a senior in theatre studies with a minor in business. Acting credits include Widow/Phillipa in BYU's *Taming of the Shrew*, and Mrs. Erlynne in *Lady Windemere's Fan*.

John W. Erbstoesser (Hamish McGregor), Georgetown, TX, is a freshman studying acting. Acting credits include Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls*, Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, Curly in *Oklahoma!*, Yasha in *The Cherry Orchard*, and Tony in *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding*.

Ashlee Erdmann (Marjorie), Orem, UT, is a sophomore at Orem High School. Acting Credits include Sally Brown in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, Lady Larken in *Once Upon a Mattress*, Ensemble in *Footloose*, and Sleeping Beauty in *Into the Woods*.

Hank Florence (Patrolman/Father), Camarillo, CA, is a sophomore in theatre arts studies. Acting credits include Ensemble in BYU's *Handing Down the Names*, Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Baker in *Into the Woods*, and Matt in *The Fantasticks*.

Kelly Garrison (Shauna), Duluth, GA, is a senior studying acting, with a minor in psychology. Acting credits include

Ensemble in *Handing Down the Names*, Eydie in *Ladyhouse Blues*, and Dwarf in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Christy Gordon (Carmel), Orem, UT, is a freshman. Acting credits include Dorcas in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and Goldie in *Alias Smedley Pewtree*.

Billy Gunn (Fraser), Mesa, AZ, earned his Bachelor's degree in Russian at Arizona State, and he is currently pursuing an MA in theatre at BYU. Acting credits include Saladin in BYU's *Nathan the Wise*, Camillo in BYU's *The Winter's Tale*, Tuzenbach in Arizona State's *The Cherry Orchard*, and Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Maggie Laurencell (Olava/Andrea), Las Vegas, NV, is a sophomore in theatre studies. Acting credits include Potiphar's Wife in *Joseph . . .*, and Charlotte in *Up the Down Staircase*. She assistant directed *Up the Down Staircase* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Janine Michelle Sobeck (Marte/Dramaturg), Clovis, CA, recently graduated in theatre studies. She played Martha in Provo Fringe Theatre's *Dogville* and was dramaturg for BYU's *Family*.

Lisa Svetz (Naomi), Paradise, CA, is a junior in theatre studies. Acting credits include Gwendolyn in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Sarah Siddons in *Actor's Nightmare*, Andrea in *The Wonderful O*, Nerine in *Scapin*, and Nero in *The 40 Wrestlers*.

Caitlin Wise (Pam), Provo, UT, is a junior in the acting BFA. Credits include Puck in ARTE's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, White Witch in BYU's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Mr. Toad in *The Wind in the Willows*, Ensemble in BYU's *Flight*, and Boy in *The Velveteen Rabbit* at Villa Theatre.

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## Production Staff

Lois Beck-Ewing (Costume Designer), South Haven, MI, received an AA in Fashion Design at Ricks and is currently a senior in theatre studies. She designed costume and make-up for BYU's *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* and Castle Theatre's *Sweeney Todd*. She assisted in costume and make-up design for BYU's *The Beggar's Opera*, and designed hair and make-up for *Smart Single Guys*.

S. Reed Cooper (Sound Designer), LaVerne, CA, is a senior in theatre studies and history teaching. He designed scenic and lighting for BYU's *Pirates of Penzance* and he assisted in light design for *Handing Down the Names* and sound design for *Family*.

Emily Fickenworth (Director), Lewiston, ID, is a senior in theatre arts, with a minor in music. Directing credits include Provo Fringe Theatre's *Lovecan: Trashboy's Love Story* and *Accidents* for FreeSpace.

Shelly Graham (Dramaturg), Aiken, SC, is the dramaturgy supervisor in the Theatre and Media Arts Department. She teaches dramaturgy and new-play development courses.

Marnelle Hardy (Make-up and Hair Designer), Santa Clara, CA, is a sophomore in theatre studies.

Kimmy Howington (Director), Raleigh, NC, is a senior in theatre education and media arts. Acting credits include Wilbur Wright in BYU Young Company's *Flight*, and Lady Capulet in BYU Idaho's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Susan Jaussi (Set Designer, Properties Design), Provo, UT, is a senior in theatre studies. She designed props for *Handing Down the Names*, *Bus Stop*, and *Papa Married a Mormon*. She designed sets for Lilly's *Purple Plastic Purse* and assisted in set design for *Nathan the Wise*.

Allison MacKay (Dramaturg, Assistant Stage Manager), Madera, CA, is a junior in theatre education with a minor in history teaching. She was dramaturg for *The Beggar's Opera*, and she played Patsy in *Dillusions* in the *State of a Potato* for FreeSpace. She also wrote and directed *The Knight and His Table* for Timpanogos Elementary.

Brittney Pearson (Costume Designer), Orem, UT, is a senior in theatre studies. She assisted in make-up and hair design for *The Music Man* and *Bus Stop*, and she supervised make-up for *Misalliance*.

Brian Ramos (Assistant Stage Manager), is a junior in theatre studies with minors in ballroom dance and business management. He stage managed *Up the Down Staircase* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. He designed the Sets for *West Side Story* and a *Streetcar Named Desire*.

Leah L. Stallard (Director), Grand Junction, CO, graduated in theatre arts with a minor in music. She adapted and directed *The Miracle Worker* and she has directed music, composed, choreographed, and wrote lyrics for various productions for Theatre Projects for Youth in Grand Junction. Acting credits include Mother/Student/Julius in *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, Nancy in *Oliver!*, and Antonia in *Man of La Mancha*.

Jasmine Vincent (Assistant Stage Manager), Lexington, VA, is a junior in theatre studies, with a minor in ballroom dance. Acting credits include Martha in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, Yum Yum/Chorus in *The Mikado*, Ensemble in *Joseph ...*, and Ensemble in *The Music Man*.

Jenna Wagner (Lighting Designer), Chester, VA, is a senior in sociology. She designed lighting for BYU's *The Mikado*, and she is an electrician for the Division of Arts and Production. ■



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