
The Howland Company in collaboration with the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies announces a four-night staged workshop presentation of Holger Syme's new adaptation of Ödön von Horváth's Casimir and Caroline

November 19 – 22, 2015 at the Luella Massey Studio Theatre

TORONTO – The Howland Company has announced a weekend presentation of a four-night staged workshop presentation of the new translation and adaptation of Ödön von Horváth's Casimir and Caroline by Holger Syme. Casimir and Caroline will run as a staged presentation from November 19 to 22 at 8pm, at the University of Toronto's Luella Massey Studio Theatre.

"Nothing's getting better"

Casimir has lost his job. Caroline wants to have fun. They go to a party, and everything falls apart.

Casimir and Caroline is a play about love in the cold atmosphere of modern capitalism. Its world is full of chronically unfulfilled characters, whether they see themselves as victims, winners, or just living in the moment. They all desperately long for something more. None of them can say what that might be.

But at least their lives look dope on Instagram.

Ödön von Horváth's 1932 tragicomedy is one of the most frequently staged plays in the modern German repertoire, but it has never been professionally produced in North America. Veering wildly between raucous and intimate scenes, between destitution and orgies of consumption, between heartbreak and vicious satire, between hilarity and anger, Horváth's play could have been written yesterday. Its political analysis remains astonishingly up-to-date.

As adaptor and director Holger Syme explains, "we took our cue from Horváth's insistence that the play takes place 'now.' We set the action in our world, at a corporate party inside a nightclub, among the shallow and overly thoughtful, the eager and disillusioned, the over-privileged and desperate twentysomethings of contemporary Toronto." Aesthetically, the Howland Company's staging is indebted to Horváth's own commitment to theatricality: as he wrote, "naturalism and realism would kill my plays." "In the past three months," Syme elaborates, "we've been striving to blend European and Canadian stage sensibilities. In this exploration we are looking to find a contemporary theatre language to approximate Horváth's distanced but faithful, unflinching but sympathetic portrayal of 'people as they are.'"

This four-day run is conceived as a workshop production, reflecting the results of an intensive and extended rehearsal process. It is being presented as a fully staged production, a preliminary end point of the company's process; the anticipated future development of the project will focus on the production with all theatrical elements in mind rather than solely on the text. Audience feedback and commentary will be actively solicited during talkback sessions after each of the four performances.

Casimir and Caroline is part of the 2015/16 season of the University of Toronto's Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies. It is produced with support from the Jackman Humanities Institute's Program for the Arts.

Casimir and Caroline

A workshop production - November 19-22 at 8pm

By Ödön von Horváth

Translated, Adapted, and Directed by Holger Syme

Presented by The Howland Company in collaboration with the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies.

Featuring: Alexander Crowther, Sophia Fabiilli, Ruth Goodwin, Courtney Ch'ng Lancaster, Cameron Laurie, Michael Man, Jesse Nerenberg, Hallie Seline, Mishka Thébaud, Kristen Zaza

Lighting Design: Jareth Li

Sound Design: Samuel Sholdice

Stage Manager: Jordana Weiss

Producer: James Graham

Location: Luella Massey Studio Theatre, 4 Glen Morris Street, Toronto
(One block North and one block East of the Spadina/Harbord intersection)

Tickets: \$15 at uofttix.ca

Events: Talkback sessions to follow each night. All are welcome.

About Ödön von Horváth

*Horváth, born in Croatia in 1901, grew up in Hungary and worked as a dramatist and novelist in Germany from 1920 through 1933. He left Nazi Germany for Vienna in 1933, and emigrated to France after the German takeover of Austria in 1938. He died shortly after relocating to Paris, when a tree branch fell on his head on the Champs-Élysées. Horváth's major plays include **Tales from the Vienna Woods** and **Judgment Day** as well as **Casimir and Caroline**; his oeuvre was rediscovered in 1960s Germany, eclipsing Brecht's presence in the repertoire for many years, and has remained a staple of German theatre seasons. **Tales from the Vienna Woods** has twice been staged with great success at the UK's National Theatre, in 1977 and 2003; **Casimir and Caroline** had its first professional production in English earlier this year in Manchester (as **Funfair**), in a translation by Simon Stephens.*

About Holger Syme

*Holger Syme is the chair of the Department of English and Drama on the University of Toronto's Mississauga campus. As a researcher and teacher, he specializes in Shakespeare and contemporary European theatre, and frequently blogs at www.dispositio.net. As a director, he has worked on a dozen short films and stagings of plays ranging from Büchner's **Woyzeck** to Gilbert and Sullivan's **The Mikado**.*

About The Howland Company

The Howland Company is a Toronto-based theatre ensemble made up of eleven artists. Our main artistic focus is on our generation. Our curiosity is in stories that explore, embrace, and confront our hopes and fears for the future. Through our own development as an ensemble and by bringing young theatremakers together through workshops and play readings, we seek to help build an artistic community ready to take on tomorrow's challenges.

On the last Sunday of each month, The Howland Company hosts an open event called The Reading Group, where artists are encouraged to connect with fellow members of the Toronto theatre community and discover new plays together.

*For more information about The Howland Company
please visit: www.howlandcompanytheatre.com*

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