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“Fantastical Adventures of a Missing Son” up Next in Kushner’s *The Illusion*

Monmouth, Maine – Tony Kushner’s most joyfully theatrical play, *The Illusion*, freely adapted from Pierre Corneille’s original opens Friday, July 29th at 7:30 p.m. at the Theater at Monmouth. An anxious father seeks to reunite with his estranged son and enlists the services of a powerful sorcerer. Visions reveal the romantic, adventurous, and perilous life the son has been leading—but may not be as they seem. This wildly entertaining tale of passion and regret, of love, disillusionment and magic runs through August 19th.

The Illusion, first staged in 1988 (when Kushner was working on *Angels in America*), exhibits few of the social, political, and ethical concerns that are at the center of most of Kushner’s work. But perhaps more than any other play it presents Kushner as a man in love with words, of course, but also with the enchanted, ephemeral theatrical universe that words can conjure. *L’Illusion*, which Pierre Corneille called “an outlandish monstrosity,” remains one of the most mesmerizing meditations on what theater is. The original production at New York Theater Workshop of Tony Kushner’s version of the 1636 French play was a great success and has spawned productions all over the country since.

The play may tell the unlikely story of an old lawyer who goes to a magician’s cave seeking news of a son he had driven from home 15 years before but in the end it is about much more than a family squabble and its surprise ending reveals much more than the son’s journey.

Director Davis Robinson believes this is a story about the power of forgiveness. “It is a story best told through the power of live theater,” he says. “Corneille used his mastery of the form to fully exploit the magical uses of the stage, a story that seems to be almost custom-made for Cumston Hall.”

The Illusion features Mark Cartier as the anxious father, Pridamant; Christopher Holt as the magician’s assistant, Amanuensis/ Geronte; Janis Stevens as the magician, Alcandre; Rob Glauz as the estranged son, Calisto/ Clindor/ Theogenes; Erica Murphy as his love interest, Melibea/ Isabelle/ Hippolyta; Blythe Coons as the other woman, Elicia/ Lyse/ Clarina; Jake Loewenthal as the jealous rival, Pleribo/ Adraste/ Prince Florilame; and James Hoban as the impossible dreamer, Matamore. Directed by Davis Robinson; set design by Jim Alexander; costume design by Stephanie Peters; lighting design by Matthew Adelson; fight direction by Leighton Samuels, and sound design by Rew Tippin.

Performance Calendar: PREVIEW 7/28 at 7:30 p.m.; OPENING 7/29 at 7:30 p.m.; additional performance dates 8/5, 8/9, at 7:30 p.m.; 8/10, 8/14, 8/19 at 1:00 p.m.; 8/7 at 7:00 p.m. with post-show talk-back. Educators receive 20% off tickets for opening night with a photo ID at the Box Office. Ticket prices range from \$20-\$32. For patrons under 30, twenty \$10 Rush Tickets are available at each performance in the season. Tickets will be released to the first 20 people on the list ten minutes before curtain. Discounts available for groups of 10 or more. For calendar and reservations, please contact the TAM Box Office at 207.933.9999 or visit www.theateratmonmouth.org.

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Theater at Monmouth, founded in 1970, was named the Shakespearean Theater of Maine by the State Legislature in 1975. The theatre’s mission is to present innovative approaches to Shakespeare and

other classic plays through professional productions that enrich the lives of people throughout Maine. Since its founding, TAM has produced expertly crafted, engaging productions in its three-month Summer Repertory Season entertaining audiences from 36 states and through Education Tours annually reaching more than 15,000 students statewide.

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