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TAM Opens “Magic, Murder, and Mayhem” Season with *Turn of the Screw*

Monmouth, Maine – Jeffrey Hatcher’s adaptation of the Henry James gothic novella *The Turn of the Screw* opens at Theater at Monmouth on Friday, June 26 at 7:30 p.m. This suspenseful tale of good versus evil and natural versus supernatural takes audiences on a frantic foray into the haunted world of a young governess and her two adolescent charges. The New York Times hailed Hatcher’s adaptation: “A dazzling act of the imagination. Mr. Hatcher has pushed James’ clever turn to its furthest degree.”

As in James’ original 1897 novella, *The Turn of the Screw* tells the story of a young Governess left to care for two young children at an isolated mansion in the English countryside. Shortly after her arrival, the governess begins to see visions of not one, but two malicious ghosts who seem determined to corrupt and possess the innocents in her care. Determined to save the children at all costs, she struggles to unravel the mystery of the ghosts’ motives and discover the key to destroying their power.

Described by Stephen King as “the quintessential ghost story,” *The Turn of the Screw* was originally published in serialized form and eventually became one of James’ most famous works. James added a new spin to the traditional ghost story by writing it entirely from the Governess’ perspective, leaving the reader to interpret her account’s accuracy and truthfulness. More than a century later, critical debate rages on over the nature of the ghosts, the complicity of the children, and the sanity of the governess.

Playwright Jeffrey Hatcher’s adaptation was commissioned and received its premiere at Portland Stage Company in 1996. Hatcher’s goal was “to create a dramatic piece that was true to the essence of Henry James’ story and themes... and preserve the ambiguity of the story’s point of view.” He also chose to make the play a tour-de-force for two actors—one woman plays the Governess, and one man plays all other roles including the housekeeper and the young children.

Director James Noel Hoban believes “there is in each of us...a fervent desire to know if there is something outside the realm of our five senses.” As with any ghost story, Hoban says, the words lay the scene. “All that remains to complete the spell is to add the most magical ingredient of all: your imagination.” But what if the ghosts aren’t real?

Turn of the Screw features Marlowe Holden as the Governess and Jacob Sherburne as the Man; Set design by Jim Alexander, costumes by Sera Bourgeau, lights by Stephen Jones, and sound by Rew Tippin.

Performance Calendar: OPENING 6/26 at 7:30 p.m.; additional performance dates 7/11, 7/15, 8/6 at 7:30 p.m.; 7/26, 8/13 at 1:00 p.m.; Ticket prices range from \$20-\$30, and \$10 rush tickets are available for every performance to anyone under 30. 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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