

JUL

05

5:00 pm

A Concert of Music for Flute and Bassoon

Alicia Mielke, flute, and Allison Eaton, bassoon, both young New England

Conservatory diplomates, will present a lively program of classical works for their respective instruments, ...

JUL

08

7:00 pm

Concert in the Park!

Join the over 50 talented musicians of the Maine Pops Concert Band for one of those perfect Maine evenings. Bring

a chair, a picnic ...

JUL

10

6:00 pm

18th Edition Kennebunk Free Library 5K Road Race

The 18th Edition 5K Road Race to benefit Kennebunk Free Library begins

at 6:00 PM. Preregister online for a discount. The first 250 registrants get ...

[view calendar](#)

Posted: June 30, 2015

THEATER REVIEW: MUCH IS LEFT TO THE IMAGINATION IN 'THE TURN OF THE SCREW' AT MONMOUTH

Written by: Steve Feeney - contributor - sdenn2@yahoo.com



Marlowe Holden and Jacob Sherburne in a scene from "The Turn of the Screw." Courtesy photo

The Theater at Monmouth is one of the more pleasant destinations for a Maine summer theater. Driving up from the south includes a nice ride over hill and dale with occasional glimpses of beautiful fields leading down to shimmering lakes. This year's first show, however, puts you on a different sort of theatrical road.

Kicking off the 46th season at Monmouth is a production of "The Turn of the Screw," Jeffrey Hatcher's adaptation of Henry James' 1898 gothic novella of the same name.

Hatcher's play, developed and premiered by the Portland Stage Company about 20 years ago, seeks to reexamine the classic story of a young governess undertaking the care of two orphans who turn out to be more than the usual handful. Are they possessed by the evil spirits of two deceased former employees who menacingly begin to appear to the new caregiver? Or, is the governess' view distorted by all sorts of repressed memories and desires rooted in her own past? Is she the real threat to the youngsters rather than their salvation?



Courtesy photo

Much is left to the imagination in what is, to a large extent, a dramatic exercise in storytelling presented through extensive narration by two costumed performers. Brief passages of dialogue and some limited action do serve to illustrate some of the more important moments in the story. The play may be a head-scratcher, particularly for those not familiar with the original story. For those who are, the ambiguities will linger and the play's form may further mystify.

The performers, under the direction of James Noel Hoban, are very good and definitely serve to elevate this "Turn."

Marlowe Holden takes the lead role of the governess and, with just the necessary touch of an English accent, draws the audience into the complexities that her character reveals as she recounts her days and, especially, nights at the remote estate in 1872 Essex. Holden is excellent at conveying through vocal inflection, facial expression (those eyes!) and physical movement how the young governess' "harsh" religious upbringing, seemingly a source of rectitude, may have actually bent her in a little more bizarre direction than is at first thought.

Jacob Sherburne fills all the other roles in the play, including man, woman, child and bird. It's hard not to chuckle at times as he works through his unusual dramatic task. Though using one adult male in all these roles is a bit of a distraction, it perhaps does help the audience get through some rather squirm-inducing moments involving one of the children.

The period costumes, minimal set and occasional ominous background music serve a play that gives a peek into the Jamesian world from which it draws a good deal of its strength. But it's the fine acting that ultimately makes it worthwhile to head for Monmouth.

WHAT: "The Turn of the Screw"

WHERE: The Theater at Monmouth, 796 Main St.

REVIEWED: June 26; continues through Aug. 21

TICKETS: \$20-\$30

INFO: 207-933-9999, theateratmonmouth.org

Up Next: Theater Review: Ogunquit Playhouse's vibrant production of 'Victor/Victoria' is instantly attention grabbing