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Finding Balance, Happiness, and Hope in Theater at Monmouth's *Enchanted April*

Monmouth, Maine – Bask in the warmth and enchantment of Italy without leaving Maine during Theater at Monmouth's production of *Enchanted April*. Elizabeth Von Arnim's resplendent 1920s novel comes to life on stage in this Tony Award-nominated play by Matthew Barber. *Enchanted April* runs from Thursday July 19th, at 7:30 p.m. throughout the season including matinee and evening performances on both weekdays and weekends.

Feeling lost in the shadows of marriage and post-WWI society, two London housewives rent a villa in Italy for a ladies-only holiday, reluctantly recruiting a pair of difficult upper-class women to share the expense and experience. Under the Mediterranean sun, the women clash, bond, and bloom, ultimately finding their lost selves in the garden of earthly delights.

The enticement of an enchanting Italian holiday captivates the hearts of two British housewives on a drizzly London afternoon in 1922, and fills their imaginations with wisteria and sunshine. By the time they arrive at their Mediterranean villa, an aging matron and a young socialite have joined their quest for something more. The gardens, sea, cinnamon and pasta are just the beginning of the transformation they discover. Elizabeth von Armin wrote *Enchanted April* while on a month-long vacation in Italy. Adapted first for the stage in 1925 and for film in 1935, von Arnim's novel was also the basis for the popular 1992 film. This stage play based on the novel was originally produced in 2000 and on Broadway in 2003 with Molly Ringwald as Rose Arnott.

Director Kate Bergstrom was drawn to *Enchanted April* because of its focus on "an unlikely group of women who are thrown together and learn to support one another in an unbearable time by calling on the enchantment within." While this is a play featuring characters with marital issues and those in search of a grand romance, it is most importantly about the power of women bonding and growing together.

Ultimately a story of escaping to a place of beauty and transformation, the play begins in Great Britain just a few years after World War I, in a time of darkness, when people are still dealing with the great losses from the war. Artistic Director, Dawn McAndrews elaborated, "For all four women, there's an amazing transformation once they get to Italy where there's sun, flowers, and fresh air, and for a short time, no men. It's magical how the space to breathe brings them back to life emotionally, spiritually, and sexually."

Enchanted April features James Noel Hoban as Mellersh; Janis Stevens as Mrs. Graves; KP Powell as Anthony Wilding; Ryan Broussard as Frederick; Katie Croyle as Lady Caroline; Amber McNew as Lotty; Bibi Mama as Rose; and Maureen Butler as Costanza. Set design by Brittany Vasta, costume design by Elizabeth Rocha, lighting design by Jennifer Fok, and sound design by Rew Tippin.

Performance Calendar: OPENING 7/20 at 7:30 p.m.; additional performance dates 7/19, 7/28, 8/8, 8/11, 8/16 at 7:30 p.m., 7/29, 8/1, 8/14 at 1:00 p.m., and 7/12 at 7:00 p.m. with a Post-Show discussion.

Tickets, Subscriptions, and Ways to Save

TAM Season Passes offer up to 25% off the single ticket price and exclusive benefits such as priority seating and free ticket exchanges. Gold, Flex, General, or Senior Passes are available for purchase, so whether you want a ticket for each show or five tickets to one show, there's an option for you. Single tickets for the Summer Repertory and Fall Show are \$34 for adults, \$29 for senior citizens, and \$20 for students (18 and under). Groups of 10 or more can enjoy TAM shows at up to a 22% discount. Groups may also schedule pre or post show discussions with tours of historic Cumston Hall. Contact the Box Office for more information and to book your group's event.

Opening Nights are Educator Nights

Educators receive 20% off the single ticket price with a photo ID at the Box Office.

Under 30 Rush

For patrons under 30, twenty \$10 Rush Tickets are accessible at each performance in the season when available. Sign up by contacting the Box Office, either by emailing boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org or calling 207.933.9999 the morning of the performance. Tickets will be released to the first 20 people on the list twenty minutes before curtain.

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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