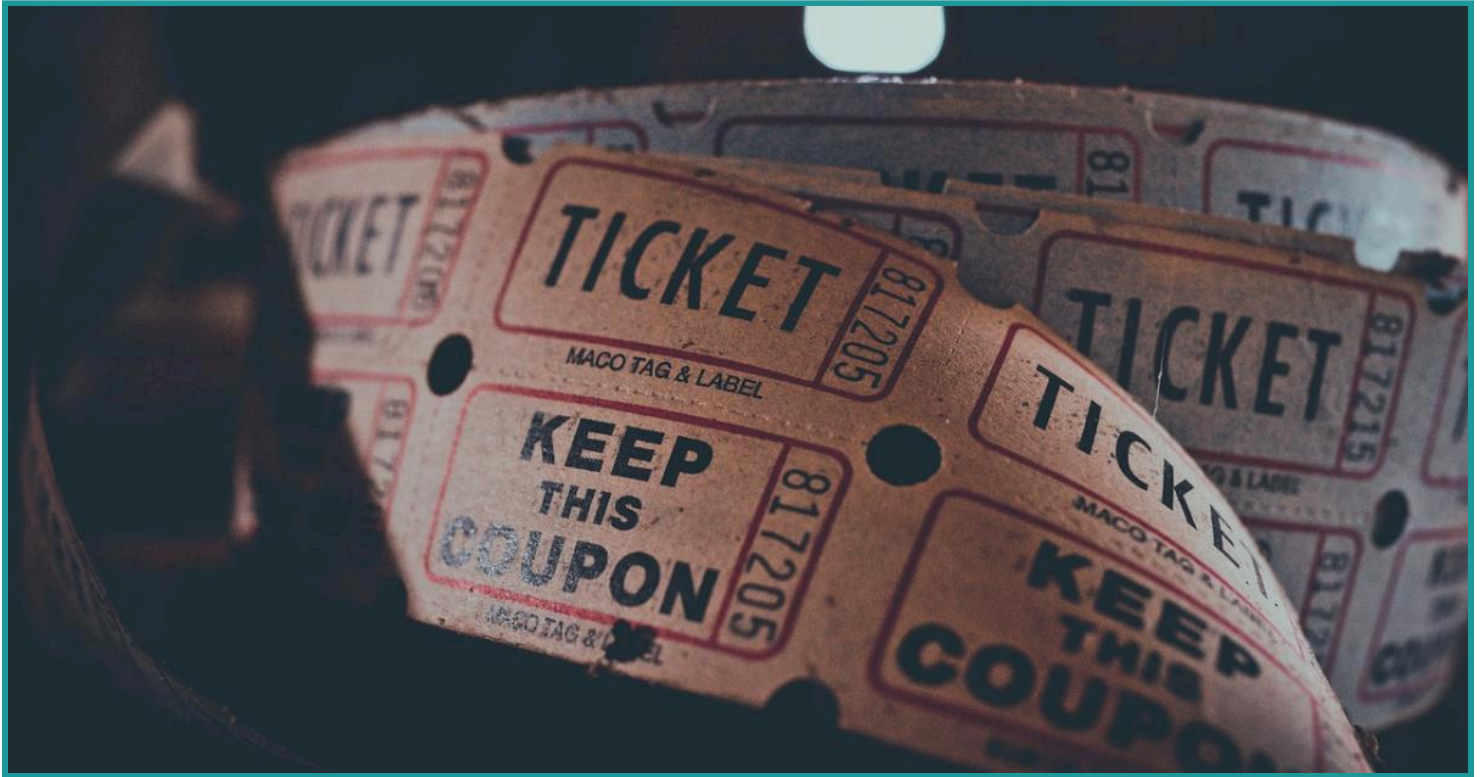


Review From The House

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Vancouver Theatre: Communion

Friday, October 25th, 2013

Communion by Daniel MacIvor

Directed by Roy Surette

Ruby Slippers Theatre Company

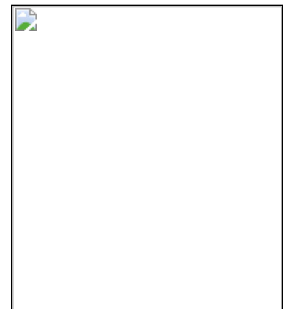
Pacific Theatre

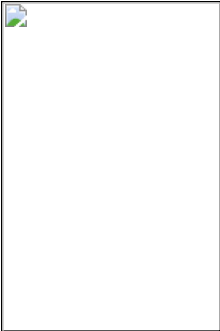
October 25 to Nov 9, 2013

Vancouver, BC: Communion - the sharing or exchanging of the mental or spiritual thoughts or feelings.

Played with no intermission, *Communion* (the play) is a three part drama in which three women, Leda (Diane Brown), her daughter Ann (Marcie Nestman) and her therapist, Carolyn (Kerry Sandomirsky) try to reconcile their beliefs and experiences about atheism, Catholicism, born-again Christian anti-abortion fanaticism, mortality and after-life, sexual orientation, love and rejection, while seeking a pathway through personal crises.

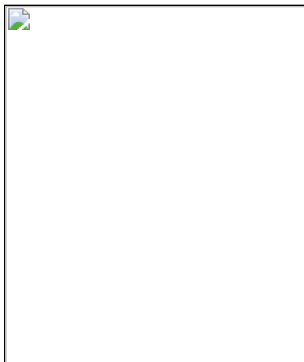
Leda, a messed-up, divorced, ex-alcoholic, has terminal cancer. Estranged from her daughter, she has not told Ann that she has little time left to live. Ann has her own secret to confess. Leda has been seeing Carolyn, the therapist, and shares her recurring dream of a door she dares not open. During a session when Leda demands advice, against her own professional practice, Carolyn tells Leda that she should contact Ann and she does.





The first setting is the therapist's office where Leda unloads with frustration and anger to the serenely, silent Carolyn. Next in a hotel room, Leda confronts Ann and both reveal previously unshared significant changes in their lives. Finally completing the circle, Ann seeks out Carolyn looking for answers, only to find that the therapist is dealing with questions of her own.

The intimate playing space of the small Pacific Theatre is the perfect setting for Daniel MacIvor's sensitive and thoughtful play, as the seating is so close that one feels as one is almost on the stage, sharing in the emotional experience. MacIvor has crafted three powerful female protagonists and all three actors gave stellar performances.



Elegantly costumed by Pam Johnson in a tailored suit with red stiletto heels, Sandomirsky was the epitome of professionalism; listening quietly to a torrent of words, and then zing- a question out of left field. Nestman was believable as the religiously brainwashed daughter, imprisoned for bombing an abortion clinic but one caveat with the script (unless I missed it) was that there was no explanation for Ann's later transformation. Diane Brown was superb both in the persona of the frustrated and agitated client, and then, cleaned up very nicely, as mother meeting with her daughter.



Designer John Webber book-ended the set with lighting that framed two doors – highlighting the recurring symbolism of life passage that ran through the play. Kudos to the stage crew whose set changes between the three acts were so quick and efficient that tension was maintained though

out. Johnson's costuming effectively highlighted each character's transformation from one scene to the other.

I must confess that when I saw Ruby Slippers 2009 production of *A Beautiful View* (<http://www.reviewfromthehouse.com/theatre-seen/as-i-see-it/beautiful-view>) both written and directed by MacIvor, my overall reaction was "I just did not get it." So I was really curious to see how I would respond to *Communion*. This time I can say that I liked the play a lot. There was much to think about and with Roy Surette's tight direction the 90 minutes passed in a flash.

Both I and my friend, another committed theatre-goer, gave a strong thumbs up for the play itself as well as the excellent performances. With a good pre-show dinner at *Portobello* (<http://tinyurl.com/mbmg3tt>) restaurant on Broadway at Granville, all in all we had an excellent night out.

For tickets call 604-731-5518 or book online at www.pacifictheatre.org (<https://tickets.pacifictheatre.org/TheatreManager/1/login&event=0>)

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