

# VENUS THEATRE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**2017 Season. To a T! Love Notes to a Friend.**

Featuring four new plays,  
Shows run Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8. Sunday at 3.

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Venus embarks on our 17th year of women empowering plays (#59, 60, 61, and 62!) and we welcome and thank you for fair and well balanced coverage.

During my standard process of reading play submissions, a very dear friend was raped and killed over the Christmas holiday. Her name was Tricia McCauley and I loved her very much.

Over the past 20 years she was always right there cheering on my next bold idea. I can't tell you how strange it will be to not have her holding a seat in the house this year, or in any year ahead. It's devastating.

So, we are dedicating the whole year to her.

Each play is my love note to our dear friend.

## - Love Notes -

Tricia:

*In March, the time when the snow melts and seeds dare to begin to leave their very protective shells to drop root into cool and fertile soil, I remember you with the roots of our history in feminist theatre. I remember you giving me your xeroxed copy of the Methuen Files back in the 90's. You were helping me with my frustration about strong roles for women. And, I remember producing so many plays from those earmarked sheets. Thank you. These remind me of your Shavian work in all of the Shaw plays that you did with your beloved Stage Guild family. We will celebrate your strength, your intellect, your resourcefulness, your kind, sharing heart, and your hilarity this March and April with these beautiful short Edwardian plays.*

*In May, as your herb garden begins to bloom, I remember you with a hybrid play that embraces women's independence and feminism and blends it with the power and genius of Beckett's, *Waiting for Godot*. This play is written by Andrea Lepcio who wrote *Looking for the Pony*. She was a student of Milan Stitt. Her pen holds a certain kind of poetry that is stylized, clear, firm, and heart moving. We celebrate your work with Scena Theatre and other Euro Mod companies over the years with this two hander that will produce a piece of sculpted art each performance.*

*In September, as the harvesting begins, I remember you with the ancient Greek tale of a girl who can read the stars and keep a pet tiger at her side. We celebrate your work with *The**

*Theatre Conspiracy and the 3 years that you made that women's theatre run. That company informed SO MUCH of building this company. May the resonances ring on and on. This play is written by Claudia Barnett and it will be the third time we've presented a full production and the fifth time Claudia and I have collaborated. The play is both innocent and sultry. And, the chorus includes women who are at times incredibly beautiful and at other times extremely grotesque. I feel like you would love this. We tango! I feel like this play celebrates both your whimsical side as well as your intellect but mostly your extreme passion and understanding of the stars and of what it means to keep a tiger on a leash.*

*In November, as we begin to head back into our hibernating caves, I remember you with a virtually unknown Shakespearean sonnet inside of a contemporary play that explores and confronts bullies. With this we celebrate your Shakespearean work over the years as well as your questioning and daring spirit. It's sexy and risque and honest and heartfelt and beautiful. Written by Australian playwright Alana Valentine, it's also a radio play on the BBC.*

*None of these plays will bring you back. This is a crushing reality. But, it is my greatest hope they remind us constantly that your laughter remains eternal in our hearts, your artistry remains a permanent fixture in our souls, and your love must now be the light that grows the most beautiful, daring, and exotic things.*

*I love you, T! Wish you were here.*

*XO!deb*

## **- The Plays and Their Playwrights -**

**March 16 - April 9, 2017**

**SELECTIONS FROM:  
The Methuen Drama Book of  
SUFFRAGE PLAYS  
Edited by Naomi Paxton**

By Cicely Hamilton, Christopher St. John, Beatrice Harraden, Evelyn Glover, H. V. Esmond, Mrs. Holloway Phibbs, H. M. Paull, and George Middleton,

Suffrage plays are Edwardian comedies created to entertain women as they picketed and protested for the right to vote at the other turn of the century. Quick, witty, and entertaining, these plays were often inspired from real events.

American women went to England where they learned the tactics of the Suffrage women. This included such activities as ballooning over Parliament and ripping the greens of the golf course with the words, "No Vote. No Golf" among many many other things. For the Americans having gathered every detail of Congressmen and Senators right down to the names of the pets, children, wives, and favorite foods and vacationing spots, to no avail after decades of kind attempts, this new approach would prove both controversial and effective.

Erased from history for a century, Venus brings these plays back to life to celebrate the strong shoulders of women on which we all stand today.

“There were over 400 female playwrights in Britain between the years 1900 and 1920, a period which witnessed enormous political and social change.”

**May 11 - June 4, 2017**

**TUNNEL VISION**  
**-Second Production-**

**By Andrea Lepcio**

<https://www.andrealepcio.com/>

A multi-layered celebration of the Feminine, TUNNEL VISION is ultimately a journey of acceptance and redemption, played out in a non-traditional theatre space from which truth, purpose and love unexpectedly emerge. Key to the action is the live construction of a sculptural art installation. Two female characters enter an unidentified space. It is unfamiliar to them and they are unfamiliar with each other. Unsure how they got here, they quickly find themselves “stuck” in this liminal space. The two struggle to maintain their composure --anything to avoid confronting the circumstances that lie beneath their arrival at this "place" or admit their burgeoning attraction to each other. The play considers many of the daily challenges women face as well as those issues that are, typically, solely female: the struggle to balance motherhood with the desire to have a career, the stigma that comes with not choosing the traditional path assigned our gender, the hypercritical judgment we place on ourselves in comparison to our female peers, the difficulty we find in truly loving ourselves, and the fear that sometimes comes in loving each other. TUNNEL VISION is ultimately a journey of acceptance and redemption, from which truth, purpose and love unexpectedly emerge.

**September 7 - October 1, 2017**

**AGLAONIKE'S TIGER**  
**-World Premiere-**

**by Claudia Barnett**

<http://www.claudia-barnett.com/>

Aglaonike, the first female astronomer, could predict lunar eclipses, but her science was suspect because she was a woman. She therefore billed herself as a sorceress and claimed she could draw down the moon. Inspired by her unsung history, this coming-of-age play follows the protagonist through a series of challenges, both magical and scientific. Drawing on ancient Greek traditions and postmodern performance trends, Aglaonike's Tiger is stylized and visual and uses puppets and masks to explore political, ecological, and scientific themes.

November 2 - November 26, 2017

THE RAVENS  
-US Premiere-

by Alana Valentine

[www.alanavalentine.com](http://www.alanavalentine.com)

Truth may seem but cannot be; Beauty brag but is not she; Truth and Beauty buried be.

The Ravens is about Kira, a trying-to- be-ex sex worker in Kings Cross, Sydney, Australia. When she receives a large victim's compensation payout, deciding what to do with the money becomes more of a problem than a relief. A friend from her former life feels that she is 'owed' by Kira, and moves back into her life and her flat. Then a chance meeting with Nina, a young social work student working at the local chocolate shop, seems like it might give Kira the courage and support she needs to finally get the violent Marg out of her life. An encounter with one of Nina's old age clients at a nursing home focuses Kira's determination but now she wants to help her friend Nancy, who is still working at a brothel but living in a dominating lesbian relationship. Finally Nina suggests that she might use the money for her and Nancy to put on a play – a version of Shakespeare's poem The Phoenix and the Turtle. It's a routine Kira and Nancy used to do as a striptease for an old client – can they learn to change themselves, phoenix like, into something other than they have been for so long? Can love – of life, of self, of friends - be resurrected and transformed by art? As an evocative radio play, The Ravens won the 2015 BBC International Radio Writing Award from the BBC World Service. Venus Theatre is delighted to be presenting the world premiere of the stage play - a visceral, provocative work of fierce insight and compassion for womens' struggle out of violence.

*This isn't...just a play about Kira and others like her, but about anyone who feels trapped in a life they don't want to lead. How do you find the strength to get out, to stand up to someone who you feel you can't stand up to?* - Kate Chisolm, [www.spectator.co.uk](http://www.spectator.co.uk)

*Compellingly, The Ravens offers lessons in confronting bullying that go beyond the textual narrative. This play is full of nuggets of truth: it is at the point when her future seems set fair that Kira's old, violent boyfriend returns with his persuasive rhetoric of fists and insults. Valentine's pared-downscript...displays an easy familiarity with the world inhabited by Kira et al, without burdening the play with the weight of her knowledge.*

- Moira Petty, [www.thestage.co.uk](http://www.thestage.co.uk)



Venus is a 501c3 nonprofit organization committed to setting flight to the voices of women with theatre for a lifetime. Venus is the only woman run theatre company in the state of Maryland and among the longest running women's theatre's on the globe.

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