

# DIVERSIONS

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"Requiem for a Heavyweight"

### STAGE REVIEWS

Catey Sullivan reviews a Shattered Globe Theatre production of "Requiem for a Heavyweight" that "blazes from start to finish." Jennifer Thomas calls "The Goodbye Girl" at Drury Lane in Oakbrook Terrace "witty and entertaining."

### CONCERT REVIEWS

Dorothy Andries reviews a Lake Forest Symphony performance of Bach and Rachmaninoff that played like "a love letter."

### BLOGS

Readers continue to weigh in about "June" at <http://blogs.pioneerlocal.com/realtime>.

### MOVIE SHOWTIMES

Showtimes are now on line with more comprehensive listings.

## BRUCE STAKE

THE FILM REVIEW

"Sorry to fixate on the lingerie, but that's really the only thing that lingers in the mind about 'Mad Money.'"

SEE MOVIE REVIEW, PAGE B5

## Teaming up with Olympica

**'THE ART OF COLLABORATION'**  
7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 17, Wilmette Theatre, 1122 Central Ave., Wilmette. \$30 (includes a ticket to "Botanic Garden"). (773) 671-3000.

**'BOTANIC GARDEN'**  
7:30 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Saturdays and 2:30 p.m. Sundays, Feb. 8-Mar. 9. Previews are 7:30 p.m. Jan. 30-Feb. 3 and Feb. 5-7. Victory Gardens Greenhouse Theater, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago. \$35; previews \$25. (773) 671-3000.

By MYRNA PETLICKI  
Contributor

It takes a certain talent to collaborate, but it helps when the collaborators are all passionate about the project. That's the happy situation with Todd Logan's new play, "Botanic Garden." Logan, director Olympica Dukakis, and stars Carmen Roman and James Leaning are all strongly committed to the two-person show about a woman about to embark on her first date since the death of her husband. Dukakis and Logan will discuss their collaborative process at the Wilmette Theatre on Thursday evening, Jan. 17, and the show opens Jan. 30 at Victory Gardens Greenhouse Theater.

It was a coup landing film, theater and television luminary Dukakis to direct the play. During a phone conversation from her New York home, Dukakis reported that Roman introduced her to the piece. The in-demand talent agreed to take on the project because, as she explained: "It's a wonderful play about a couple. It's a wonderful play about what goes on between men and women. It's a play about going forward in the face of grief and tragedy. I think for audiences it's going to be very satisfying, fulfilling, funny."

### 'Wonderful actors'

Dukakis is pleased to direct the husband-and-wife team of Roman and Leaning, who she described as "wonderful actors. We're very fortunate to have this play in their hands."

It's also a dream team for playwright Logan who was raised in Highland Park (class of '71) and now lives in Winnetka. "There have been passionate arguments about things, but all to forward the play," he explained. "Egos have been set aside."

Logan recalled his first meeting with Dukakis in a New York restaurant. She said of the female character in "Botanic Garden," "This woman's in pain. We've got to get beneath the words and



Olympica Dukakis (left) collaborated with playwright Todd Logan (front) on a two-person play performed by James Leaning (back) and Carmen Roman (right).

figure out what's going on."

Even prior to starting rehearsals, Dukakis and Logan engaged in lengthy discussions about the play. "We have all sorts of conversations about where we think the story is perhaps not clear where we think the motivation is not necessarily strong enough and where we think it's really working," Dukakis said.

Logan has made a number of changes to the script based on those discussions. Although the structure of the play hasn't changed, he was surprised to discover that the script is now 10 pages shorter. "If somebody had said to me before I started the process, 'Todd, you're going to cut 10 pages,' I probably would have said, 'I'm not doing this.'"

### Making cuts

That's because the play had already had six workshop readings at which changes were made. The current cuts were painless, though, because "It all made sense to me," Logan said. "It's

not being told, 'Cut this.' Things become self-evident."

The play was actually scheduled for a New York production last September. That staging was canceled because the producers and director butted heads. After that door closed, Logan was amazed to find another one opening with Dukakis directing.

Working with Dukakis has been an exciting process for Logan. "She's so down-to-earth, bright, passionate and funny," he said. "It's been a true collaboration."

The collaborative process is one of Dukakis' favorite aspects of directing, even though she noted that it's also the most difficult when you are "trying to keep the play moving forward."

Being a good collaborator means being a good listener, Dukakis asserted. Also, "It takes the belief that we can all together find what's best for us all."

"No one person has all the answers," Logan agreed. "Good things come out of this sense of trust."