



PLAYBILL

OF HUMAN BONDAGE



OF HUMAN BONDAGE

VERN THIESSEN. BASED ON THE NOVEL BY W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

APPROXIMATE RUNNING TIME: 2 HOURS & 10 MINUTES.
THERE WILL BE ONE 20 MINUTE INTERMISSION

ARTIST NOTE: MICHELLE MONTEITH

Here we are: Our third trip on this journey and in the shoes of these extraordinary characters.

We are often asked what it's like to approach this work for a third time. Is it the same? What's different? With these questions and the complexities of this role swirling in my mind, I realize that the work will inevitably be different because I am different. I am different today than I was this time last year. The world is different. This group is different. We've lived and experienced over 600 days since our last incarnation of this story. As with all performing arts, the work is brought to life each evening informed, in part, by the artist's life lived that day.

This time around I'm thinking about choice. How are our lives informed by the choices we make? How does privilege inform the choices we make? And if there is no privilege, no equal opportunity,

what happens to choice? How do we judge others for the choices they make? I'm also thinking about empathy. How more of it in each of us would result in more choice for all.

As we revisit this story here and prepare to take it to NYC on Soulpepper's inaugural international tour, I am honoured to share the wealth this play has to offer and am struck by the relevance in its characters struggles, restrictions and ambitions.

This infinitely beautiful cast and creators, have stitched their hearts and their lives into this theatrical canvas before you.

I hope you enjoy our offering.

MICHELLE MONTEITH,

Mildred Rogers in *Of Human Bondage*

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USING #SPHUMANBONDAGE

CREATIVE TEAM**OF HUMAN BONDAGE****CAST**

Courtney Ch'ng Lancaster
Sally & others

Oliver Dennis
Dr. Tyrell, Lawson, & others

Raquel Duffy
Alice & others

Stuart Hughes
Cronshaw & others

John Jarvis
*Thorpe Athelney,
MacAlister & others*

Jeff Lillico
Griffiths & others

Richard Lam
Various

Michelle Monteith
Mildred Rogers

Gregory Prest
Philip Carey

Paolo Santalucia
Dunsford & others

Sarah Wilson
Norah Nesbit & others

Brendan Wall
Miller & others

PRODUCTION

Vern Thiessen
Playwright

Albert Schultz
Director

Lorenzo Savoini
Set & Lighting Designer

Erika Connor
Costume Designer

Mike Ross
Composer & Sound Designer

Guillermo Verdecchia
Dramaturg

Michael Armstrong
Dialect Coach

Kelly McEvenue
Alexander Coach

Robert Harding
Production Stage Manager

Sarah Miller
Assistant Stage Manager

SOULPEPPER PRODUCTION

Andrew Leeke
Technical Director

Jacqueline Robertson Cull
Head of Hair & Makeup

Philip Atfield
Geoff Hughes
Cutters

Barbara Nowakowski
First Hand

Emma Zulkoskey
Dresser

Andres Castillo-Smith
Sound Coordinator

Greg Chambers
Props Builder

Bill Stahl
Carpenter

Of Human Bondage was commissioned by Soulpepper Theatre Company.

“I have most loved people who cared little or nothing for me”

William Somerset Maugham wrote these words about himself but they could also describe Philip Carey, the protagonist of his classic novel, *Of Human Bondage*. Maugham was a star author but the novel was not well received when it was first published in 1915, but over time, readers were drawn to his compelling exploration of the power and enduring hold of our most inexplicable desires. The obsessive love that drives the story was shocking when it first appeared and its dark appeal has kept the book in print for a hundred years.

Fact and fiction are blended here but Maugham insisted there was more invention than autobiography. Still, both he and Philip were lonely orphans – Maugham lost both parents before the age of 10 and suffered systematic schoolyard bullying that left him with a lifelong stammer. Both author and character go through medical school unsure they want to be doctors, and both are deeply marked by the experience. Maugham considered it invaluable training for writing: “I saw how men died... how they bore pain... what hope looked like, fear and relief.” *Bondage* – generally considered to be his masterpiece – is rich with this knowledge, its unforgettable characters animated by Maugham’s pain, rage and craft.

Over the years the original novel was adapted for film three times but it never had a stage adaptation before we commissioned one from Vern Thiessen. He performed the remarkable feat of stripping the narrative to its essentials without sacrificing any of the power, longing and danger of the book. A huge part of the

pleasure of this production is the intricate and ingenious ways our company found to re-tell this classic story. The novel may be more than a hundred years old, but this production makes it seem completely contemporary: jazzy, compelling, surprising. We’re delighted to be able to share it with you again before it joins *Kim’s Convenience* and *Spoon River*, as the anchor shows of our first New York season this coming July at The Pershing Square Signature Center.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM BIOGRAPHY

W. Somerset Maugham was born in Paris in 1874. He achieved fame in 1907 with the production of *Lady Frederick* and by 1908 he had four plays running simultaneously in London. In 1926 he bought a house in Cap Ferrat, France, which was to become a meeting place for a number of writers, artists and politicians. He wrote more than 30 novels and story collections. He died in 1965.

VERN THIESSEN BIOGRAPHY

Vern Thiessen was born in Winnipeg and lived in Edmonton for many years, receiving a City Arts Achievement Award for his cultural contributions. His diverse play catalogue embraces children’s theatre, musicals, historical drama and adaptations. Among his many prizes are a Governor General’s Award for *Einstein’s Gift* and a Carol Bolt Award for Best Play for *Vimy*. He is currently the Artistic Director for Workshop West.

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FOR ATTENDING!



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