

Frank Theatre opens its 21st season with

Franz Kafka's

METAMORPHOSIS

adapted by the company

Gregor Samsa wakes one morning to find that he has been transformed into a monstrous vermin. Life just isn't the same after that.

Directed by Wendy Knox

Set Design by John Bueche

Lighting Design by Karin Olson

Costume Design by Kathy Kohl

Live Music by Michael Crowell

Dramaturgy by Steve Matuszak

Stage Managed by Glenn Klapperich

Featuring

**Maria Asp, Patrick Bailey,
John Catron, Tessa Flynn
and Christopher Kehoe**

FRANK
T H E A T R E

April 9 – May 1, 2010

at Open Eye Theatre, 506 East 24th Street, Minneapolis, MN

Tickets at www.franktheatre.org, or 612-724-3760

Frankly Speaking

NEWS OF FRANK THEATRE • APRIL 2010

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ABOUT THE PLAY

Kafka's short story METAMORPHOSIS is among the most analyzed works of modern literature and it has sparked vast interpretation on the stage, in literature and in music. Kafka himself was said to be unsatisfied with the story's ending, and the literary questions of the piece may be as provocative as the interpretive ones. METAMORPHOSIS was written around 1914. The central character, Gregor Samsa, a traveling textile salesman, wakes one morning to find that he has been transformed into an "ungeziefer," literally "an unclean animal not suitable for sacrifice." (This is most often translated as "horrible vermin," and assumed to be a cockroach, but appears to be closer to a dung-beetle.) Gregor has been his family's sole breadwinner since a business misfortune five years earlier left his father deep in debt to his creditors. Noticing that Gregor has not left for work, his parents attempt to wake him, when the Chief Clerk from the workplace appears. Gregor, struggling with his new physicality, manages to open the door to reveal his transformation, which horrifies the family and the clerk. The story details the family's adjustment to the changes, as they find new ways to survive, while Gregor faces his lonely demise.

For this production, Kafka's METAMORPHOSIS has been adapted by a team of Frank artists including Maria Asp, Patrick Bailey, John Catron, Annie Enneking, Tessa Flynn, Marya Hart, Elise Langer, Wendy Knox, Steve Matuszak, Tom Sherohman, and Emily Zimmer. (The original version is available as a free download at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/5200>)



PHOTO BY TONY NELSON

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

- Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8:00 pm, Sundays at 2:00 pm. **NOTE:** The theatre seats ONLY 73 people, so please make reservations!
- Tickets are \$18 on Thurs and Sun; \$20 on Fri and Sat; \$2 discount for students, seniors and low-income. **Pay-what-you-can performance, Thursday April 15th.** (\$10 suggested minimum) There is one Monday night performance on April 26 (\$18). The performance on Fri, April 30 will be audio-described. Call 612-724-3760 for info on group rates.
- Post-show panel discussions are Sunday April 11, 18 and 25.
- Reservations can be made online at www.franktheatre.org or by calling the Frank box office at 612-724-3760.





**PARKING and DIRECTIONS
TO THE THEATRE**
506 E. 24th St., Minneapolis:

(Please double check on Mapquest or Google!)

FROM THE NORTH:

Coming in to Mpls on 35W headed south, take exit for I-94/11th Ave. Merge with East 17th St., turn left on to Portland Ave. South. Turn right on to East 24th St. Theatre is on the right. Coming in on I-94 from the west, take the Lyndale exit and turn left on Franklin Ave. Go to 5th Ave South and turn right. Take 2nd left on to East 24th St. Theatre is on the left.

FROM THE SOUTH:

Coming in to Mpls on 35W headed north, take the 31st St/Lake St exit. Merge on to 2nd Ave South and take a slight right at East 29th St. Turn left on to 5th Ave South and turn right on to East 24th St. Theatre is on the right.

FROM THE WEST:

Coming in to Mpls on I-394, take Dunwoody Blvd exit and turn right on Lyndale Ave S. Turn left on Franklin Ave, then right on 5th Ave S. Take 2nd left onto E 24th St. Theatre is on the left.

FROM THE EAST: I-94

Coming in to Mpls on I-94 headed west, take 11th St. exit. Follow signs for East Grant St. Turn right on to Portland Ave South, then right on East 24th St. Theatre is on the right.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Franz Kafka was born in 1883, the son of Hermann Kafka and Julie (Lowy), in Prague, where he remained for most of his life. Kafka was highly intelligent and enjoyed reading and writing as a small boy. He spoke Czech with his family, but was educated at German schools and quickly learned the language. He earned his doctorate degree in law in 1906, and in 1907, he took up a position as a clerk at an insurance company. He continued with various jobs, spending his afternoons writing. In 1912, he hit a creative streak, which is when he wrote his most famous piece, "Metamorphosis." This was a semi-autobiographical book, telling of a man who turns into an insect. The family is ashamed of the insect and keeps him hidden from the outside world. Kafka displayed his crafty ability to create an impossible event, while placing it in a highly realistic situation; in doing so, he draws the readers to create their own conclusion and search for a deeper meaning. "Metamorphosis" demonstrates the influence of both expressionism and existentialism on his writing. In life, Kafka was plagued by themes that appear in his work — troubled relationships with his father and with women — and he also suffered poor health, including headaches, insomnia and eventually, a fatal battle with tuberculosis. He died in 1924, one month before his forty-first birthday, and was buried in Prague's Jewish Cemetery. He left behind three unfinished novels: "The Trial" (1925), "The Castle" (1926), and "America" (1927). All three were translated into English the following decade. His short stories included "The Judgment" (1945) and "A Country Doctor" (1945).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Maria Asp (*Mother*) continues building her Frank rap sheet of nearly 20 productions, having last performed in PUNTILA; **Patrick Bailey** (*Father*) last appeared in Frank's PALACE OF THE END, as well as many other productions over the past seven years including VINEGAR TOM, PUNTILA, PILLOWMAN, VENUS, etc, and made a trip to the Jungle for THE SEAFARER last Christmas; **John Bueche** (*Set Designer*) was pried away from his wheelin' and dealin' as a Bedlam Theatre kingpin, to design his ninth show for Frank, from our dirtiest warehouse installation to BY THE BOG OF CATS at the spiffy new G — he recently designed MUSIC LOVERS for Workhaus; **John Catron** (*Gregor Samsa*) made his Frank debut in BOG OF CATS last spring, and comes back for this production (only to find he's going to be turned into a dung-beetle) after Illusion's MY ANTONIA and Park Square's OHELLO; composer/sound designer **Michael Croswell** (*Live Sound and Music*) is another longtime Frankfurter, with 18 Frank credits to his name over the past two decades, most recently PALACE OF THE END — he just

adapted, directed and composed his own version of THE BACCHAE for Hastings High School; **Tessa Flynn** (*Grete*) appeared as one of the "pit girls" for VINEGAR TOM, and now makes an appearance where she actually gets to speak lines instead of singing them; **Christopher Kehoe** (*Multiple Roles*) makes it a Frank hat-trick with previous scores in VINEGAR TOM and BOG OF CATS; **Kari Kelly** is Wendy Knox's right-hand gal for this production; **Glenn Klapperich** (*Stage Manager*) wrangles the whole buggy crew; **Wendy Knox** most recently directed SANTALAND DIARIES at Portland Center Stage, after PALACE OF THE END at Frank last fall; **Kathy Kohl** adds to her astounding 25 Frank credits with her gorgeous and zany costumes that have steered Frank's aesthetic over the years, while she designs like a madwoman all around town; **Steve Matuszak** is our secret weapon as he continues to help us keep it real with his dramaturgical eye; **Karin Olson** makes her Frank debut, shedding light on this METAMORPHOSIS; **Tom Sherohman** is fulfilling his community service by acting as our script captain.

“In the more-than-capable hands of Frank Theatre, which has spent 20 years bringing the difficult to the stage, [BY THE BOG OF CATS] becomes a wild carnival ride, Carr's terrific script is a fine starting point, but the work truly comes alive in the hands of Frank director Wendy Knox and a talented cast of performers... The show is also buoyed by excellent costumes and set, and a wonderful soundscape by Michael Croswell, which brings the unearthly qualities of the Bog of Cats to life...”

— *MinnPost*



PHOTO BY TONY NELSON

WHY THIS PLAY?

continued from back page

I have to say that I have been thrilled by the process, as have most of the collaborators. It's been a delight to watch actors write scenes, read them to each other, and rework them. There's a little light in their eyes as you can see they are being asked to do something new, something outside their usual job description, something a little risky about making themselves vulnerable in an area where they don't usually traffic. There's also a tremendous amount of pride as you can see a sense of ownership of the project. Of course, there's also a tremendous panic as we often feel like we're flying without a safety net and we don't know what we're doing. Thank god the stage manager brought in a compass to help us find direction...

Above all, I am reminded—as I am on just about every Frank project—how lucky I am. I like my job, I get to work with people I love and respect, and we get to do work we believe in. I have a fantastic group of pranksters with me, and while my name often bears the blame and the glory for Frank's escapades, the wonderful artists—and fantastic Board members and volunteers—who have made Frank what it is over the past 20 years are the reasons we're still here. Believe me, I am so grateful to all of them, and to you, our courageous audience! We look forward to seeing you at our latest adventure at Open Eye Theatre!

Wendy Knox, Artistic Director

THE FRANK PANEL DISCUSSION

Frank has established a tradition of giving our audience a chance to talk back, to ask questions, to digest our work and place it in the larger context of the world we live in. **Every Sunday afternoon**, we invite you to stick around or come back and join us in wrestling with the ideas sparked by the play. We gather a panel of community members who have some experience with, or interest in, some aspect of the subject matter of the play. We ask them to respond to the performance, and then we invite you to ask your questions and offer your comments. We're interested in YOUR ideas, and we're interested in your response to the play. These have proven to be fascinating, stimulating, and insightful conversations. They're free, they're casual, and we would love to have you. **Stop by any Sunday during our run!**



Help Frank SPRING AHEAD!

Enter the Frank Raffle and join us for the Frank Cabaret!!!

Come one, come all to an evening of libations, noshing, music, theater and drum rolls as we announce details of our upcoming season and draw the lucky winners of the Frank Raffle on Saturday, May 8, 8-10 pm at Joe's Garage, 1610 Harmon Place, Mpls, MN.

The action will take place on the main floor of Joe's Garage. Frank artists and friends of Frank will team together to provide their unmatched talents in song and verse and in naughty and wickedly humorous scenes, plus a delightfully Frank live game show! While you are being entertained, enjoy an array of small bites while you can order drinks from the cash bar. At 9:30 pm we will draw three lucky raffle tickets and announce the winners of our fabulous prizes. All this for only \$20! Thanks to Joe for hosting Frank!

Contact the Frank Box Office at **612-724-3760** to make your reservations today. Or purchase tickets on the web at www.franktheatre.org or at any performance of "Metamorphosis". Don't miss this night of Frankalicious fun!

And about that raffle...

In these tough economic times, small, sassy, independent theaters need a little boost. The Frank Theatre Board is conducting a raffle this spring to help us spring ahead to a glorious end to our fiscal year. Pop \$10 for a ticket, earning yourself

a chance to win one of three fantastic prizes:

Prize #1 - 3-night stay for up to eight people at a winterized cabin on a large, wooded lot overlooking the upper St. Croix River. Nearby attractions include Wild

River State Park, Wild Mountain Ski Area/Water Park, Interstate State Park, the quaint towns of Taylors Falls, MN and St. Croix Falls, WI, Franconia Sculpture Park and more!

Prize #2 - Ladera Winery package including a magnum of its acclaimed wine, private tour and wine tasting for four adults at the Stotesbery's historic Howell Mountain Vineyard in Napa Valley, California. (You gotta get yourself to California for the full enjoyment but that magnum of delicious vino is yours either way!)

Prize #3 - Six gift certificates for wine tasting at Alexis Bailly Vineyards, Hastings, MN, with proprietor Nan Bailly, a longtime Frank supporter! Pack yourself a picnic lunch, take the short drive to Hastings, and drink in the lovely surroundings while you sample the wine!

The drawing will be held on **May 8** at the Frank Revue. (Must be 21 to purchase a ticket or win a prize, need not be present to win.) If you are interested in purchasing a ticket, call **612-724-3760** or purchase tickets at any performance of **Metamorphosis, April 9-May 1.**



FEATURED RECIPE

BRAMBORAKY (Classic Czech Potato Pancake)

6 large potatoes, peeled	1 t. dried marjoram (optional)
5 cloves of garlic, minced	3 t. caraway seeds (optional)
3 T. milk	salt and pepper to taste
3 eggs	oil for frying
3/4 cup all-purpose flour	

Peel and coarsely grate the potatoes, squeezing out as much liquid as you can. Transfer to a mixing bowl. Stir in the garlic, salt, pepper, marjoram, and caraway seeds.

Beat the eggs with the milk. Add the egg mixture to the potatoes and stir well to combine. Gradually mix in the flour to form a thick but still pourable batter. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium-high heat; the oil should be about 1/4-inch deep. Spoon about 1/4 cup of batter into the hot oil, flattening it slightly. Fry the pancake until golden brown, about 3 minutes on each side. Drain on paper towels. Taste the first pancake and adjust the seasoning if necessary; repeat with remaining batter.

Serve with apple compote (or applesauce) and crème fraiche (or sour cream). Goes well with a cold beer, and perhaps a sausage!

MISSION STATEMENT

Frank Theatre is a professional theatre company committed to producing unique work that stretches the skills of the artists who create the work while simultaneously challenging the everyday perceptions of the audience through the exploration of ideas and issues of social, political and/or cultural concern.

Frank Theatre was founded with the desire to produce work that provides opportunities for artists to grow, to stretch, to work outside of and beyond the typical opportunities provided by theatres with a greater commercial interest. The theatre has successfully pursued this goal through the consistent staging of works that require the actors, designers, and director to challenge themselves and each other.

The theatre is a Twin Cities'-based company, founded in 1989 by Artistic Director Wendy Knox. In its twenty-year history, the theatre has staged 45 productions.

The theatre is committed to producing work that reflects the world in which we live.



Call Frank Theatre
at 612-724-3760
for tickets
& information.

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FRANK T H E A T R E

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
3156 23rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407-1907
www.franktheatre.org

APRIL 9 — MAY 1, 2010

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WHY THIS PLAY?

Last spring, as we were attempting to figure out what was coming up with Frank, two of my artistic siblings, Joel Sass and Dona Werner Freeman, offered up the same suggestion within weeks of each other. An acclaimed production of Kafka's METAMORPHOSIS had recently been presented in London; Dona had seen it and described production elements that seemed fascinating, puzzling and exciting. For five months, we tried getting the rights to the adaptation, but got no response whatsoever. Finally, enlisting the help of the Brits (Frank regular Patrick Bailey's father, a director who lives in London), we managed to get a squeak out of them: *"The rights for U.S. production are not available at this time."*

Now most of the plays that Frank does, nobody else wants to do. (Well, not always.) More accurately, we don't often have to battle for rights for a play, and if we did, we'd probably lose. The whopping royalties that a playwright might make on a Frank production don't hold a lot of sway. Around this same time, however, I had been polling the members of the Frank Artist Resource and Think Tank about what work they would like to do personally, what things were they interested in tackling, what personal artistic challenges were enticing. One thing that was mentioned several times was the desire to create a piece, which we hadn't done since our adaptation of WOMEN OF TROY in 2005. Once we got the thumbs down from the British agent, our appetite for Kafka and for METAMORPHOSIS was already whetted, so I asked, *"Why don't we do our own adaptation?"* That set the wheels in motion.

In mid-December, a group of about 12-15 actors gathered in the Frank studio and we read the novella aloud. As we read, I asked people to scrawl any questions, fascinations, puzzlements, or fleeting thoughts on a post-it and toss it in the middle of the table. At the end of the session, we had a stack of post-its with lots of thoughts and questions. At the next session, we went through the post-its, clarifying the question/thought/observation. Then we grouped the post-its into various categories for discussion: **Gregor Samsa, Sound, Staging Logistics/Questions, Emotion**, etc. As we discussed the responses, when someone offered, for example, that they loved the scene when the father and son got into a fight, I'd respond with "Could you write a scene about that?" That was often met with a mini-gulp, followed by a "Sure!" We continued to meet, and read the scenes, discuss them, and lo and behold, soon we had enough material written to almost cover the arc of the story! At that point, Dramaturg Steve Matuszak, Script Captain Tom Sherohman and I focused in on things, and tossed everything together into a "script." We met again, read, edited, rewrote, edited, and put the cast together. Rehearsals began, and that's where we are now. We have a script that contains scenes and elements from everyone who contributed, and we're working towards a vital theatrical re-telling of Kafka's story.

METAMORPHOSIS is an odd little story. Kafka creates a modern nightmare, an event that couldn't possibly happen, but he delivers the story in such a compelling way that the notion of impossibility slips away. Bearing the earmarks of existentialism and expressionism, METAMORPHOSIS is a literary Rorschach blot, asking you to make of it what you will. People have seen it as a tale of anti-totalitarianism, alienation from life, a psychoanalytic analysis of modern neuroses, etc. However, I find Kafka to be much more humorous and subversive; unlike many of Frank's works, there's not a clear, singular political imprint of the work, perhaps one of the reasons why it so often provides the source material for artists in various disciplines. Milan Kundera salutes the surrealist humor of Kafka as a predecessor of artists such as Federico Fellini, Gabriel García Márquez, and Salman Rushdie.



PHOTO BY ANN MARSDEN

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