

Culturally Speaking

**MOSAIC SHINES
WITH TALK RADIO**

By Ron Levitt

Contributing Writer

Although there are some 40 theatre venues in South Florida, almost everyone agrees that – when discussing regional theatre – several companies immediately come to mind. In Dade, it's GableStage, Actors Playhouse, and New Theatre – all in Coral Gables and newcomers like Naked Stage in North Dade. In Palm Beach County, it's Florida Stage, Caldwell, Palm Beach Dramaworks, Maltz Jupiter Theatre and New Vista (last year's addition). In Broward, however, despite the fact that there are several up and coming and specialized venues (including Inside Out, Promethian, Women's Theatre Project, Sol Theatre, etc.) one name has stood out for the past few years – the Mosaic Theatre in Plantation.

For theatre lovers, Mosaic – for some mysterious reason – has been able to schedule some of the latest and most popular off-Broadway and on-Broadway plays, just shortly after their Manhattan openings.

It is an amazing success story for Mosaic's Artistic Director Richard Jay Simon. Insiders say, Simon has caught the attention of several Broadway big whigs who like what he has done in seven years to this tiny venue located at the American Heritage School. That is why last season, Mosaic was able to bring the popular show *Rabbit Hole* to South Florida audiences. This year, Simon has done it again. He is currently directing *Talk Radio*, a play by Eric Bogosian – a play which just had a super-successful four month revival in New York, which won praise for its star Liev Schreiber.

Now, Simon has put South Florida favorite, the multi-talented Paul Tei, in the role of the controversial radio host in Cleveland, Ohio. The role has all the flavors of Rush Limbaugh, Howard Stern and Don Imus, rolled into one. It is an outrageous role and an inside look at broadcasting.

Talk Radio is the fifth collaboration of Simon and Tei – all of which have been notable. Remember Tei being directed by Simon in *Art*, *Match*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and *Dealer's Choice*. and you'll get an idea of the depth of this current production which runs through Oct, 7.

In addition to Tei, Simon has put together an amazing cast: the marvelous Irene Adjan, Dave Corey, Pete Rogan, Beverly Blanchette, Noah Levine, Daniel Lugo, Johnny Mineo, George Schiavone, Erin Joy Schmidt and Stephanie Simon.

And, the production staff for this season opener is notable, as well, Sean McClelland (Resident Set Designer), Jeff Quinn (Lighting Designer), K. Blair Brown (Costume Designer), Matt Corey (Sound Designer), Naomi Littman (Production Stage Manager), George Schiavone (Graphic Design & Photography) and Douglas Grinn (Technical Director).

Call 954-527-8243. Tickets may be hard to get so call early.

After *Talk Radio*, Mosaic has a powerful season -the East Coast Premiere of *Guest Artist* by actor/writer Jeff Daniels. Mosaic also will produce the Southeast Premiere of *Dirty Story*, written by John Patrick Shanley (of *Moonstruck* and *Doubt* fame) along with the Steinberg New Play Award Winner for 2006, *A Body of Water*. The season will conclude with Neil LaBute's *Wrecks* which just closed in New York with Academy Award Winner Ed Harris...

(Ron Levitt, an entertainment/travel writer, served as Assistant Secretary of State, overseeing cultural affairs. The former United Press Correspondent is president of the South Florida International Press Club and Vice President of the Theatre League. Reach this column at ron@levittgroup.com.)