

**BROCK UNIVERSITY  
MEDIA RELEASE**

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Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts

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**Theatre at Brock embraces BIG LOVE**

Charles Mee's contemporary look at Aeschylus's Greek tragedy *The Suppliant Women* is an astonishingly fresh take on an age-old story: love versus power.

**BIG LOVE** tells the story of fifty brides (all sisters) who flee from arranged marriages to fifty grooms (their cousins) who pursue them across the sea to Italy. Three of the brides seek asylum in an Italian family's villa. When their hosts are unable to negotiate their way through the moral predicament and allow the forced marriages, the brides make a murderous pact to kill their husbands on their wedding night. One of them fails to kill. Who betrayed whom?

Director Gyllian Raby states, "I am drawn to the play because it has the scale of a Greek tragedy, but it is dressed in the global culture of today. Mee invites a wild post-modern performativity, but his story is so deeply sourced in western culture that it is very accessible." Designer Karyn McCallum has set our production in an installation suggestive of a temple-gymnasium where the body wrestles with the spirit. Mattel's gendered Ken and Barbie dolls hang from the lighting grid and punch-bag mannikin forms are anchored to the stage floor. A deeply passionate movement score with choreography from Gemini nominated Director and Award winning Choreographer Allen Kaeja conveys chaotic savagery and the tenderness of love, as well as the dark endurance of the survivor.

**BIG LOVE** showcases the talents of students in Brock University's Department of Dramatic Arts undergraduate acting classes: Rebecca Durance-Hine, Jacqueline Costa, Sadie Isaak, Rob MacMenamin, Corey Mehlenbacher, Trevor Ketcheson, Jen Bender, Chris Boyle, Michael Pearson, Eric Frank, Dylan Mawson and Kasey Dunn.

**BIG LOVE** exhibits the extremes of passion as it explores two impossibilities: love and forgiveness.

Performed on stage at the Sean O'Sullivan Theatre, Brock University, performances are held on Thurs., Feb. 11, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.; Fri., Feb. 12 at 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Sat., Feb. 13 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 adults; \$12 seniors & students; \$10 groups, and are available at the Centre for the Arts Box Office, 905-688-5550, ext. 3257, or e-mail [boxoffice@brocku.ca](mailto:boxoffice@brocku.ca). The Department of Dramatic Arts is proud to be a partner of eyeGo to the Arts, encouraging high school students to attend live performing arts through an innovative \$5 ticket program. Announcing \$5 Friday! – attend the matinee performance on Fri., Feb. 12 at 1 p.m. for only \$5 – available to holders of Brock ID cards.

Such productions by the Department of Dramatic Arts are a key part of the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts' mandate in building connections between the community and the breadth of talent and creativity at Brock University.

For more information or to set up interviews contact:  
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### **Media Backgrounder:**

**Gyllian Raby** was the founding artistic director of One Yellow Rabbit Theatre, a company internationally celebrated for a vivid physical theatre that is thought provoking and thrill seeking. In directing Charles Mee's **BIG LOVE**, Raby draws on these roots and the spirit of collaborative innovation in combining theatre, dance and music performance that informed her twenty years of freelance directing in Canada and the US. Now on faculty in the Department of Dramatic Arts at Brock University, she teaches studio courses. She was recently awarded a significant SSHRC Research and Creation Grant and is conducting a three-year research project investigating creative process in the Fine and Performing Arts for her project Devised Theatre with Youth in Niagara Schools. Gyllian's project is in collaboration with Carousel Players of St. Catharines.

**Karyn McCallum** is pleased to be designing at Brock University, and to once again be working with Gyllian Raby. Recently, she has been working in Western Canada and living in Vancouver where she has been nominated for four Jessie Richardson awards for best design in both large and small theatre categories. In 2006, McCallum received the Critic's Choice award for best set design for *Metamorphoses* presented in The Phoenix Theatre of the University of Victoria. Recent credits are: *Peter Pan* for the Globe Theatre Regina, *Where the River Meets the Sea* at Presentation House Vancouver, *Art of Murder* at Vertigo Mystery Theatre Calgary. She was resident designer for two seasons at the Gateway Theatre in Richmond B.C., McCallum received her MFA in Theatre Design from the University of Victoria in 2006 and is a member of the Associate Designers of Canada.

**Allen Kaeja** Gemini nominated Director and award winning Choreographer, has created over 90 stage works and choreographed for 26 films. He is Co-Artistic Director of Kaeja d'Dance with Karen Kaeja, and they tour their works and teach partnering master classes worldwide. Kaeja is also co-founder of the CanAsian International Dance Festival. He has received commissions for new works from companies in Sweden, Portugal, United Kingdom, India, Mexico, across Canada and in the USA. His stage works have been presented in festivals around the world. He recently received new commissions from Soulpepper Theatre Company (Toronto) and from Panta Rei Danseteater (Norway). [www.kaeja.org](http://www.kaeja.org)  
<<http://www.kaeja.org>>