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IWU Theatre Finds *Treasure* in Classic Political Scandal

Oct. 23, 2013

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—Ambition. Greed. Lust. Recklessness. Righteousness. Honor. Betrayal. Potential. These are the words that Illinois Wesleyan's School of Theatre Arts' (SotA) guest director, Michael Cotey has chosen to describe the themes of Tim Slover's play, *Treasure*. The chilling political drama, which opens at the E. Melba Johnson Kirkpatrick Laboratory Theatre (304 E. Graham St., Bloomington; Ames Plaza, west side of Presser Hall) on October 31, will run through November 2 with performances each evening at 8 p.m.

Tickets for *Treasure* are available for purchase at the McPherson Theatre Box Office. General admission and senior ticket prices are \$3. Student tickets are \$2 with a valid school ID. The McPherson Theatre Box Office is open Monday-Friday from 12:30-5:00 p.m. To reserve tickets, contact the box office at (309) 556-3232.

In this glimpse Slover provides into the life of founding father, Alexander Hamilton, he delves a little bit deeper into early American history. Fifth grade social studies class taught many that Hamilton was a Revolutionary War veteran and a close friend of General and later President Washington's, who appointed him as Secretary of the Treasury in his new government, but one might wonder what else there is to know about Hamilton. Why would Slover write a play about such a lesser-known patriot?

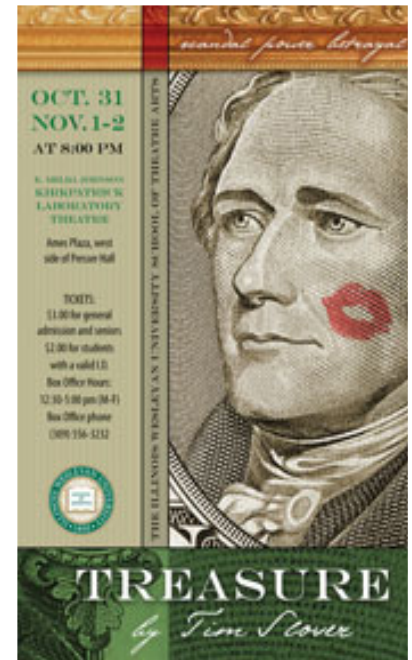
Cotey notes that in his close study of *Treasure*, he found it fascinating that in politics, not much has really changed in the past 200 years of American government. For centuries, politicians have been reamed by the press for their private wrongs in an effort to discredit their public policies. Most recently, Anthony Wiener was in the spotlight, and before that it was John Edwards. Of course, there's the unforgettable White House scandal of former President Bill Clinton, whose story Cotey says is probably most analogous to the events of this play.

"*Treasure* dramatizes the United States' first political sex scandal," said Cotey. "Our history is full of ambitious politicians who have tested the fates with their own indiscretions."

The director describes the play as much more than a stereotypical historical piece, calling it a hidden gem of theater. Slover's play has only been produced twice so far, giving IWU the opportunity to dive into an almost completely fresh script. Cotey said, "[This opportunity] provides a great challenge to the students involved, which is exactly what you want while you are developing your craft."

A Milwaukee-based director and actor, Cotey has been called one of the city's most "exciting and wildly inventive directors" by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, receiving offers to direct various productions across the Midwest.

Cotey said that he's been blown away by the busy schedules of Wesleyan students. "What is truly encouraging," he



said, “is the amount they help out in every aspect of the department. It’s clear that the phrase, ‘that’s not my job’ is not part of the vernacular in the theatre department, and that is inspiring to see. Working with my design team has been a fulfilling and enlightening experience.”

As Cotey and his students reach the home stretch of rehearsals for *Treasure*, the director says he will push for even greater specificity and depth. He notes, “It will be exciting to see where these awesome young actors take this play, and how the work of the young designers will elevate the show in our final rehearsals.”

For additional information, contact the School of Theatre Arts at (309)-556-3011.

Cast Members: Zach Wagner (Alexander Hamilton), Elizabeth Albers (Betsy Hamilton), Steven Czajkowski (James Monroe), Anna Sciacotta (Maria Reynolds), Nick Giambrone (Reynolds), Elliott Plowman (Reverend Muhlenberg)

Production Team: Michael Cotey (Director), Hannah Dhue (Assistant Director), Audra Kuchling (Stage Manager), Kimberly Florian (Assistant Stage Manager), Sydney Achler (Scene Designer), Kelsey VonderHaar (Costume Designer), Laura Gisondi (Lighting Designer)

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