

Press Release for Wichita Community Theatre, Theatre On Consignment and The Wichita Shakespeare Company
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Wichita, KS-- "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." [Abraham Lincoln]

This fall Wichita will be a mecca for political drama validating Lincoln's comment. Wichita Community Theatre is producing FROST/NIXON; Theater On Consignment is producing NOVEMBER; and The Wichita Shakespeare Company is producing JULIUS CAESAR. Though FROST/NIXON and JULIUS CAESAR are dramas, NOVEMBER is a satirical comedy. Yet, all three show that what is relevant in politics is the power of persuasion and manipulation.

Wichita Community Theatre presents FROST/NIXON by Peter Morgan to begin its 2012-2013 Season. Morgan uses his imagination to create a riveting entertainment. FROST/NIXON gives audiences a behind the scenes look at the real-life 1977 television interviews between journalist David Frost and former president Richard Nixon.

Three years have passed since Nixon resigned from the presidential office in disgrace. The Watergate scandal is still current news fodder, but the former commander-in-chief has yet to break his silence about his role in those events. Nor has Nixon offered an apology to the nation. Nixon agrees to be interviewed by the up-and-coming British broadcaster David Frost. Behind-the-scenes it's a battle of egos as they work to manipulate the sessions to their own benefit. But as the cameras roll, the world is riveted by a remarkably honest exchange between one man who has lost everything and another with everything to gain. It is a modern Shakespearean tragedy as Nixon attempts to redeem himself and Frost is bent on outtalking and upstaging the former president.

FROST/NIXON runs September 12-16 at Wichita Community Theatre, 258 N. Fountain.
<http://wichitact.org/>

Theatre On Consignment closes its season with David Mamet's political comedy NOVEMBER. This is a Mamet play for those who are uncomfortable watching Mamet. He lightens up a bit as he recreates one day in the life of incumbent President Smith who's hoping for a second term. Smith is trailing badly in the polls, seemingly abandoned by his party and his major donors, and despised by the beltway elite. Even his wife is already prepared to exit the White House, hoping to spirit away at least some of the furnishings.

In Smith Mamet shows an incompetent manager in a job too big for his britches which is both tellingly humorous and poignant as Smith disgorges racist, sexist and xenophobic diatribes. President Smith's long-time political adviser has also thrown up his hands. The president asks him, "Why do they hate me?" "Because you're still here," he answers.

His main speechwriter has just returned from a trip to China where she adopted a child. She demands that the President perform a wedding ceremony for her and her female partner on national television or she won't hand over a major speech he needs. The speeches she creates for her boss are smooth, seductive spiels that Americans can't help falling for during campaigns. Smith also has to deal with the traditional Thanksgiving turkey pardon and a Native American firebrand who wants Nantucket Island returned to the original inhabitants...and turned into a giant casino. Oh, and a war with Iran seems imminent.

NOVEMBER runs October 4-6 and 11-13 at First Metropolitan Community Church, 156 S. Kansas.
<http://www.theatreonconsignment.com/>

JULIUS CAESAR closes The Wichita Shakespeare Company's season with an all female version of the play. Within JULIUS CAESAR are found excellent examples of how politicians use and abuse speech and words to subtly manipulate or change meaning and weave it into their own arguments or use the words of their opponents against them. The theme of the play is also very relevant in the cloak and dagger world of politics. The play deals with a world where one woman is gaining too much power, and people fear the potential of this, and so try to justify their own ambition and power-hungry nature with all sorts of arguments that obscure their own thirst for power.

Throughout the course of the play the masses show a weak-willed eagerness to support anyone who manages to achieve the enviable position of having the last word on a subject. There is growing apprehension among the Roman senators that Julius Caesar hides a secret ambition to become emperor and serve over Rome as essentially an elected dictator.

The crux of JULIUS CAESAR is a political issue: the question of whether the killing of a king is justifiable as a means of preventing the tyranny of dictatorship and the loss of freedom. Caesar is struck down in the name of liberty and fear that absolute power and Caesar's view of himself as more than a mere mortal will enslave Rome to the will of a single woman.

JULIUS CAESAR runs September 7-23 in parks in the Wichita area. Check dates and times at
<http://www.wichitashakespearecompany.org/>.

In each play political power is beckoning the main character like a firefly in the night. Is the pursuit made for the common good or the good of the pursuer? Does power corrupt absolutely? Temptations abound for those seeking political power. "With great power comes great responsibility." Voltaire