



& First Hand Theatrical present

INTERRUPTING THE SERMON

A play using stories, poems and a sermon
by Dr. Wayne C. Olson
created by Kevin Olson

COMPANY OF ARTISTS

Sermon Wayne.....Kerwin Olson
Memoir Wayne 1.....John Kohan
Memoir Wayne 2.....Perry Hunt
Directed by Kevin Olson

Sermon -- delivered by Dr. Olson on October 17, 2010
My Bible Then and Now

Stories -- These stories are taken from a collection of stories titled *Pastoral Stories*
Sermon Interruption 1 -- *Being a Hero Without Being One*
Sermon Interruption 2 -- *Committee To Stop the Nuclear War*
Sermon Interruption 3 -- *Confirm Me Please*
Sermon Interruption 4 -- *AIDS Baptism*
Sermon Interruption 5 -- *Don't Interrupt the Sermon*

Poems -- These poems are taken from a collection of poems titled *Seventy Secular Psalms*
Poetic Olio #1 -- *Wondering*
Poetic Olio #2 -- *Who Sings Your Song As Well As You*
Poetic Olio #3 -- *Celebrate Your Life*
Poetic Olio #4 -- *There's A Mountain Out There*

ABOUT THE PLAY – notes by Kevin Olson

Are you willing to re-consider how religion, spirituality, sacred text, and the divine affect you beyond the ideas you already hold about them? What prevents you from doing so? How much do you actually know about the world's many religions?

Dr. Wayne C. Olson, my late father, writes: "In this play, stories are being told and a sermon is being preached. I wrote the stories years after they occurred, as part of a collection of over eighty stories titled *Pastoral Stories* chronicling my professional life. And I preached this reflective sermon, from which excerpts are included, not so very long ago. Everything you will hear, whether in story or sermon, actually happened to me over fifty years as a Pastor serving several congregations and as Faculty and Campus Minister on several college campuses."

He writes elsewhere that "By creating religions, we have lost religion." This play challenges us to keep thinking about our spiritual lives, to keep learning, to keep working to connect to the divinity that surrounds us every moment and to find our own true "religion."

My father whose words make up the text of this play, "converted" to New England Transcendentalism inspired by his dissertation on the moral and educational imperatives of Thoreau, Emerson and Fuller – a long way from his studies at Western Theological Seminary and initial ordination in the Dutch Reformed Church. He retired to the mountains of Vermont where he was able to think and to write in the spirit of his beloved Transcendentalists.

In October of 2010, I was visiting my parents one weekend in rural Vermont. That Sunday, my father was guest preaching and delivered a deeply moving sermon he had written the week before titled *My Bible: Then and Now*. The sermon struck me as his version of Randy Pausch's *The Last Lecture*. Driving back to my home in Rhode Island, I considered if I could somehow create a theatrical piece anchored by that sermon. He sent me a copy of it and the two of us exchanged many emails over the next

several weeks discussing which of his stories might fit with the sermon. We presented two readings of the play using members of nearby churches and our family as readers.

A few months after he passed away, I returned to the script. I added some poems my Dad wrote from his collection *Seventy Secular Psalms* and an excerpt from an essay he wrote titled *Job and Me*. I produced the play last September in Rhode Island and am so happy to bring it here to my father's home of many years.

My gratitude is eternal to this company of artists who took a chance with me on this project as well as to my family and friends and to all of you for attending.

Perry Hunt is a recent graduate from Butler University's Theatre department where she was last seen onstage as Irina in "Mad Forest" and as a Refugee and Narrator in "Water Carriers". During her four years at Butler she was fortunate enough to travel and study at The Moscow Art Theatre School in Russia as well as learn with various international artists here in Indy. Perry also dedicated a portion of her senior year researching the benefits of a theatre education as therapy for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and presented her curriculum for such a class at the Undergraduate Research Conference this year. She is very excited to be a part of "Interrupting the Sermon" as her first professional project in Indianapolis.

John Kohan's theatrical journey began while majoring in Theater and Visual Communication Design at Purdue University. He is a fine artist who has painted many murals, sewn many costumes and designed many props before being enticed onstage. While living in New York City, a great leap occurred when John met Judith Malina and became a performing member of The Living Theatre. He was cast in the Obie award winning 2006 production of "The Brig"(Warden / Prisoner 7) and he performed in over 300 performances, including the 2008 European tour. John went on to play Leach in the 50th anniversary production of "The Connection" and finally as Jelly, in the collaborative Waldman/Malina production "Red Noir." John is also a student of improvisation and has performed with various groups. John is thrilled to be part of the Indianapolis Fringe Festival. He is honored to be able to help celebrate the life, compassion and wisdom of Dr. Wayne C. Olson.

Kerwin Olson is the Executive Director of Citizen's Action Coalition in Indianapolis an organization that has advocated for four decades on behalf of Hoosiers on issues regarding energy policy, utility reform, health care, pollution prevention, and family farms. This performance marks Kerwin's return to the stage having not performed since being in plays at North Central High School in Indianapolis where he also sang. Kerwin, one of Dr. Wayne C. Olson's four children, has lived in Indy for most of his life having been born in Queens, N.Y.

Kevin Olson established First Hand Theatrical in 2013 and has created two original scripts for the company – "Interrupting The Sermon" and "This Is My Story: Mayses, 1938-1948." Kevin holds a M.F.A. in Theatre Directing from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities where he received a Twin Cities Drama Critics Circle KUDOS Award for his production of Brian Friel's "Translations" at University of Minnesota Theatre. Kevin has served on the Theater Department faculty at Hope College in Holland, Michigan and at the University of Michigan, Flint. Currently, he serves as Adjunct Faculty at the University of Rhode Island (URI), Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) and New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) teaching courses in Theater, Film and Communication.

Dr. Wayne C. Olson received a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) from Teacher's College, Columbia University as well as a Masters of Divinity (M.Div.) from Western Theological Seminary. He was a noted scholar of the New England Transcendentalists including Emerson, Thoreau and Margaret Fuller. He was an Instructor of Speech at Butler University and Indiana-Purdue University at Indianapolis. He served congregations in Woodstock, N.Y., Jamaica, N.Y., Passaic, N.J. and Staten Island, N.Y. He moved to Indianapolis in 1981 where he worked as the Director of Metropolitan Indianapolis Campus Ministry and served several congregations in the area. In 2007, he retired to Bradford, Vermont where he passed away in July, 2013.

SPECIAL THANKS

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