

STAGES

CAPITAL★
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Kingdom of the Shore
Edition

MESSAGE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT



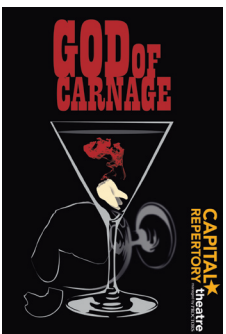
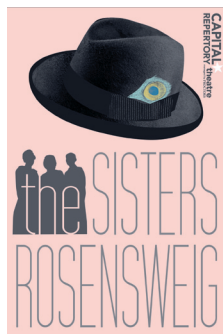
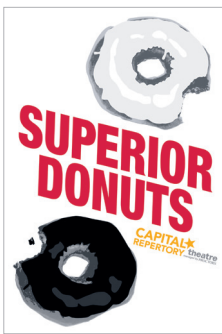
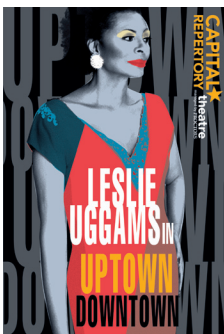
It all started with a porch. Perhaps I should explain. I have always been fascinated by what I call the Sophomore Syndrome. You won't find it in any psychology textbook. It's a nickname I have given to something I first observed in high school. The students who shoved you into your locker, made fun of your odd sounding name or mocked your thick owlish glasses were always sophomores, the ones who had just gone through the same ritualistic hazing the year before. The juniors had become upper classmen and thought themselves above such immature behavior and the seniors were thinking only of graduation and college. It's interesting how much the Sophomore Syndrome manifests itself to a larger degree

in American society. A nation of immigrants, each group has arrived and proceeded to work up the social ladder, only to discover that the people stepping on their fingers on each successive rung is often the group or groups who arrived before them. A few years ago, PBS produced a special on the Irish immigrant experience. I was struck by a fact powerfully brought home in that program. Women were the engine and bulwark of the remarkable rise of the Irish in America from dire poverty to the dizzying heights of power and prestige. Arriving by steerage throughout the 19th Century in Boston and New York, young Irish women worked as maids for the gentry for four dollars a month if not less. Most of those earnings were sent back to Ireland to pay for the passage of a sister or a cousin to join them in service. Within a generation or two, those women became nurses; the next generation, schoolteachers and the following one lawyers. This is not to say the men didn't also rise commensurately. They did indeed. But it was those hard working young women, making beds and scrubbing floors, who started it all. On a visit to Southampton, Long Island, I spotted

a porch. It was empty, but in my mind I started populating it with people. To be precise, four middle-aged sisters and the husbands of the two married ones. The women were to be second generation Irish-Americans whose newly prosperous parents had bought a summer home there over fifty years ago. Southampton has special significance for Irish-Americans. It is where they first broke into "society." Albany born and raised Thomas Murray, the partner of Thomas Edison, had over five hundred patents to his name and was a billionaire by today's standards. He built a villa on the ocean in Southampton and other upwardly mobile Irish followed. But with such a symbol of success often comes unwanted strife as families, like the Moloneys in my play, squabble over property and conflicting memories. All while they cling to their imagined status as old guard holding out against new arrivals. Both my grandmothers were from Ireland. It is to those two remarkably strong and loving women, who determinedly pushed their children up the proverbial ladder, that I dedicate my play.

- Terence Lamude

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Saturday and Sunday 10am – 5pm
- 2. In person** at the Proctors Box Office 432 State Street Schenectady: Monday through Friday 10 am – 6pm Saturday and Sunday 10am – 5pm
- 3. Online** 24 hours a day at capitalrep.org.

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