

Theater for the New City's Dream Up Festival presents  
"Lured"  
A Graphic Account of Homophobic Vigilantism in Modern Russia

WHERE AND WHEN:

September 10 at 2:00 PM, September 11 at 2:00 PM, September 12 at 6:30 PM, September 15 at 6:30 PM, September 18 at 8:00 PM.

Community Theater, Theater for the New City, 155 First Ave. (at East 10th Street)

Presented by Theater for the New City (Crystal Field, Artistic Director) as part of the Dream Up Festival 2016.

Ticket Price: \$15.00

Box office: (212) 254-1109, [www.dreamupfestival.org](http://www.dreamupfestival.org)

Runs for 1:00 Hrs. Reviewers are invited

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"Lured" by Frank Avella is a drama built upon the factual accounts and experiences of persecuted members of the LGBTQ community in Russia over the past decade. Drawing influence from gritty experiences, "Lured" explores the homophobia subtly sponsored by the Russian government and how it ultimately feeds a cycle of violence and revenge. Rod Kaats will direct.

The events of the play are consequences of the brutal rape and torture of a character named Dmitry, a homosexual schoolteacher. He falls victim to the sadistic Tatiana and her fiance Sergei, who have aligned themselves with the Occupy Pedophilia group, dedicated to publicly humiliating gay men. In response, Dmitry's lover Valentin vows revenge, and tricks Tatiana and Sergei into a similar trap. As the situation grows steadily worse, questions of morality and justice begin to trouble the minds of Valentin and his crew, but the play nevertheless culminates in violence and uncertainty.

"Lured" is inspired by factual events and accounts, most of which have occurred in Russia in the past decade. LGBTQ communities across the globe have been making great strides towards political, social and economic equality, and the play further compounds their message of peace and understanding.

The cast list will consist of Cameron August, John Ball, Carlotta Brentan, Cali Gilman, Brian Patterson, Dave Stishan and Ian Whitt. Mario Marone will stage manage, Christine Cox will associate produce, Kris Caplinger will choreograph the fights and John David West will coordinate social media.

Playwright Frank Avella has been an active member in raising awareness of issues affecting the LGBTQ community. "Lured" is set to be published in an anthology of LGBTQ plays by Adirondack Plays. In 2012, Avella's play "Consent" about bullying and homophobia was a semifinalist in the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. In 2013, his play "Vatican Falls," which explores events in the fallout of the Catholic church's sex abuse scandal, received a special mention from the conference. Avella is a graduate of the NYU Tisch School of the Arts and a member of the Dramatists Guild. He has written 19 full-length plays in his career, 10 of which have received staged productions.

Rod Kaats is a director, producer, writer and the artistic director of the Helen Hayes Theatre company, located in Nyack, New York. Kaats worked on "The Ballad of Little Jo" with the Harold Prince Musical Theatre Program, and the musical was later awarded The Richard Rodgers Award and produced at Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. He was the general manager John Doyle's national tour of "Sweeney Todd," and served in similar roles productions of

"American Psycho" and the Blue Man Group. Kaats has been chosen for the TCG New Artistic Directors Program, and had received a Charles H. Revson Directing Fellowship.

#### ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Occupy Pedophilia is one of many anti-LGBTQ vigilante groups to emerge in Russia following President Vladimir Putin's signing of Federal Law No. 135-FZ, which banned distributing information about same-sex relationships to children. The law effectively legalized discrimination against LGBTQ communities and individuals, and vigilante groups emerged seeking to get teachers and professors of the LGBTQ community fired. Many of these groups soon devolved into violent gangs, aimed at outing members of the LGBTQ community, specifically gay men, and humiliating and torturing them on video. These horrific videos were later posted to the Internet via social media sites. Occupy Pedophilia was formed by Maxim "Tesak" Martsinkevich, a former member of a neo-Nazi group with a criminal record of hate crimes. Although the initial surge of these groups has calmed, and media attention has dissipated, the problem of homophobia and vigilante gangs is still prominent, especially in urban environments.

The seventh annual Dream Up Festival ([www.dreamupfestival.org](http://www.dreamupfestival.org)) is dedicated to new works. Presented by Theater for the New City, the Festival will run from August 28 to September 18, 2016 and will feature a variety of original dramas, comedies, musicals, adaptations and experimental plays. The Festival is traditionally a celebration of the arts in a time when cultural and arts funding is in sharp decline due to a number of social and market forces. Now an East Village tradition, it challenges the audience to reflect on the innovative and imaginative ways that they interact with the theater.

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