

Festival UnBound's "Hidden Seed": "it took me hours to download"

The Bethlehem Gadfly Arts, the, Fun Stuff, Touchstone Theater October 28, 2019

 65th in a series of posts on Touchstone Theatre 

Hidden Seed: Bethlehem's Forgotten Utopia

Our Moravian history was a lot more complicated than the tourist guides let on.

Do you know about the Moravian massacre of Native Americans at Gnadenhutten?

Do you know that there were slaves in Bethlehem?

That's the terrible knowledge that a ticket to Touchstone's Festival UnBound play bought for us.

Three 18th century female Bethlehem ghosts — a formerly enslaved West African woman, a Native American woman, and one of the original Moravian immigrants from Europe — agree to tell everything, the whole story not just the happy parts, without lying.

This raising of History's skirt, which Gadfly witnessed in Sisters House and characterized as a spiritual experience like going to Mass in the Catacombs, was the toughest of the Festival's three dramatic events for him to bear.

Olga Negron found just the right words. "It took me hours to download," she said, "It was heavy. My partner and I were driving home *like quiet*. We even went for a walk."

“After such knowledge, what forgiveness?” the poet says.

Walk it off, my racially comfortable Bethlehemites, if you can.

Given the disturbing nature of the core dramatic tension in the play, it was not surprising that the post-performance panel discussion was, for Gadfly, the most challenging.

Moderator Jennie Gilrain prepped panelists (Olga Negrón, Javier Torres, Alicia Miller Karner, Winston Alozi, Berto, Stephanie Powell Watts, and the three actors) to pick and choose among three questions:

What kind(?) of equality and community do we want in the City of Bethlehem today?

What’s holding us back? What’s preventing us from cultivating more equality and community?

What can we learn from the experience of the City’s 18th century Founders explored in the play?

Following past practice, Gadfly offers you here the entire discussion, suggesting that you listen your way through first. And then we’ll come back and focus on and think about specific sections.

AUDIO FILES NOT AVAILABLE IN THIS ARCHIVE