

ABE Awards for Touchstone Theatre's Festival UnBound productions

The Bethlehem Gadfly Arts, the, Fun Stuff, Touchstone Theater January 11, 2020

 78th in a series of posts on Touchstone Theatre 

Huzzas, high-fives, hugs, handshakes, and honkings are in order for dramatic elements of Touchstone Theatre's 10-day festival this fall that occasioned a near record 77 posts here on Gadfly.

Well done!

"The Secret" — the play about Bethlehem-born poet H. D. — returns to Touchstone April 2-5.

Paul Willistein, "14th annual ABEs Salute Lehigh Valley Stage: From plays to musicals, theater unbound in 2019." Bethlehem Press, January 3, 2020.

Producer: Touchstone Theatre. "Festival UnBound," the multimedia project two years in the making, produced some 20 events and ran 10 days in October 2019. The festival took a measure of Bethlehem's southside 20 years after Touchstone's landmark "Steelbound" production when SteelStacks was a twinkle in the Christmas City star. It was a big year for Touchstone Theatre, which also produced a terrific 20th production of "Christmas City Follies."

Play: "The Secret," Mock Turtle Marionette Theater. The world premiere about H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Bethlehem native and poet, during "Festival UnBound" was part of "Finding H.D., A Community Exploration of the Life and Work of Hilda Doolittle," a year-long series of events organized by the Lehigh University English Department,

Bethlehem Area Public Library, the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center and Mock Turtle Marionette Theatre. Doug Roysdon, Artistic Director, Mock Turtle Marionette Theater, was chief writer of the multimedia performance that mixes narrative, song, music, poetry, puppets and actors. Script collaborators were Jennie Gilrain, William Reichard-Flynn, Aidan Gilrain-McKenna, Matilda Snyder, Kalyani Singh and Seth Moglen.

Original Play: “Prometheus/Redux,” Touchstone Theatre.

“Prometheus/Redux” was the astounding opening work of “Festival UnBound.” “Prometheus/Redux,” commissioned for “Festival UnBound,” is written by Gerald Stropnick, a founding member of Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, and directed by Christopher Shorr, Touchstone ensemble member and director of theater at Moravian College. Music is by Harry Mann. Images and footage from the Steelworkers Archives are incorporated into the work as is an image of the implosion of Martin Tower, former Bethlehem Steel Corp. headquarters.

Ensemble, Play: “Prometheus/Redux,” Touchstone Theatre. Touchstone Theatre cofounder and ensemble member Bill George returned as Prometheus. It’s 20 years after he left The Steel and now, instead of being chained to the ladle, he is bound to a hospital bed, suffering liver failure. The cast included former steelworkers, a county judge and members of previous generations of the Touchstone ensemble.