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Though the Earth Give Way

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TAYLOR UNIVERSITY'S

Mitchell Theatre

PRESENTS

TAYLOR THEATRE PRESENTS

THOUGH THE EARTH GIVE WAY

a new play written by
WILLIAM GEBBY

commissioned & presented by the
**TAYLOR THEATRE
TOURING COMPANY**



**A Guide For Further
Discussion, Exploration,
Conversation & Discovery**

By
Dr. Fergus McDonald

William Gebby's play *Though The Earth Give Way* explores in a fantasy setting the successful resistance by King Hezekiah of Judah to the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC which has been eloquently celebrated by the English poet Lord Byron:

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold...

Sennacherib, the Assyrian emperor, was the most powerful man in the world of his time. He led an empire notorious for its ruthless violence and cruelty.

The siege of Jerusalem features in an extant Assyrian account where Sennacherib boasts of imprisoning Hezekiah in Jerusalem 'like a bird in a cage.' But more detail is found in the Bible which contains no less than three accounts of the siege and its miraculous relief (2 Kings 18-20; Isaiah 36-39; and 2 Chronicles 32). In Hebrew narrative repetition is purposeful so the triple accounts underline the importance of the episode.

Though the Earth Give Way highlights **that** the reason for the prominence given to Hezekiah is his faith. Trust is the *leitmotif* of the Hezekiah story. The word occurs no less than nine times in 2 Kings 18 and 19.¹ Hezekiah wasn't perfect. In his first encounter with Sennacherib his faith buckled and he compromised.² But when the real crunch came, against all odds, the king fully trusted the LORD God to keep his promise to save the city. He was convinced that God's message through Isaiah the prophet was true.³

Hezekiah's faith found active expression in his prayers for the survival of the city, and some years earlier, for recovery from a life-threatening illness.⁴ A similar permutation of trust and prayer is common in the Book of Psalms. In fact Psalm 46 might have been composed to celebrate the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib.

¹ 2Kings 18.5 and 30 where the NIV version translates the Hebrew verb as 'trust' and in 18.20, 21 (twice), 22, 24, and 19.10 where it is rendered 'depend.' In 18.19 the noun form is translated 'confidence.'

² See 2 Kings 18.13-16.

³ 2 Kings 19.20-34.

⁴ Hezekiah's prayer for the city is in 2 Kings 19.14-19. His prayer for recovery from illness (2 Kings 20.1-11) preceded the Assyrian siege of the city.

THOUGH THE EARTH GIVE WAY

King Henry**Daniel Morrison**
Elsbeth***Lexie Owen**
Mark/Young Henry**Ross Delong**
Abigail**Charnell Peters**
Ashe***Luke Secaur**
Archbishop/William**Zach Cook**
Deborah***Tamara Peachy**
Edwards**Tyler Smith**
Stephens***Stephen Chou**

Setting

The besieged city of Ariel (capital of The Southern Kingdom) and its Cathedral, Palace, and fortifications.

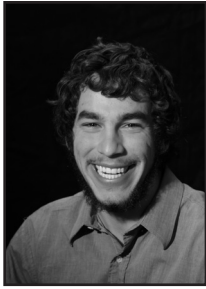
Time

Not that long ago.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Scenic and Lighting Design.....***Terrance Volden**
Technicians.....**Claire Hadley, Leah Murphy**
Carpenter and Sound.....**Jon McCourt**
Scenic Artists.....***Kathryn Irwin, *Esther Neel**
Properties.....***Kacey Heinlein, Callie Haven**

***Denotes Alpha Psi Omega Membership
National Dramatic Honor Society**

**Daniel Morrison**

Kijabe, Kenya is home to Daniel. He is a Music Composition major and wishes to serve God wherever He "calls me to go, but preferably within the world of the performing arts." In high school Daniel appeared in shows including *The Pink Panther*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and *Cheaper by the Dozen*. He is a member of the Taylor Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble and Chorale and enjoys listening to and making music, and most anything that involves hanging out with friends.

***Lexie Owen**

Lexie is a junior professional writing major who is also carrying a theatre minor. While at Taylor she has had roles in shows including *Waiting for Godot*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *On Golden Pond* and *But Not Destroyed*. Lexie also enjoys writing fiction, reading novels, and having game nights with friends.

**Ross DeLong**

Ross is a 7th grade student at Fishers Junior High in Fishers, Indiana. At Taylor he played the roles of Colin Craven in *The Secret Garden* and Young Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*. Ross has also played Oliver in *Oliver!* at Muncie Civic Theater and Friedrich in *The Sound of Music* at Candlelight Dinner theater in Claremont, California. He is a member of the junior high band and the Indianapolis Children's Choir, is involved in school plays, speech team and Math Counts. He also enjoys reading, watching NFL games, and listening to music.

**Charnell Peters**

Sophomore Charnell Peters is a Professional Writing and Communication major from Bedford, Indiana. Plays in which she has had roles include *But Not Destroyed*, *The Mousetrap*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Bye, Bye Birdie*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. She is also a Taylor Discipleship Assistant and works in Admissions on CREW. Charnell enjoys reading good books, writing, napping, "getting addicted to a new series on Netflix, singing, and playing the harmonica."

***Luke Secaur**

Warsaw, Indiana, is home to Luke. He is a junior Media Communication major. His theatre credits include *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Incident at Vichy*, *Time Stands Still*, *Spinning Into Butter*, *You Can't Take It With You* and *Once Upon A Mattress*.

**Zachary Cook**

Zachary is a sophomore History major from Whitinsville, Massachusetts. After appearing in *Romeo and Juliet* last fall, Zach had roles in the student-directed shows *Deathtrap*, *On Golden Pond*, and *Getting Away With Murder*. His vocational plan is to become a lawyer.

***Tamara Peachy**

Tamara recently appeared in two student directed shows, *Deathtrap* and *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*. Her first role on Taylor's stage was the nurse from *Hippolytus* in 2010. Her most memorable roles are Lenny in *Crimes of the Heart* and Inge Scholl in *We Will Not Be Silent*. She hopes to produce her own theatrical works in the future.

**Tyler Smith**

Sophomore Tyler Smith is an International Business major and is from Rockford, Illinois. He was in *Romeo and Juliet* last fall. While in high school, Tyler had roles in *Calamity Jane*, *Get Smart*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Oklahoma!*, *You Can't Take It With You*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*.

***Stephen Chou**

Stephen is a senior math education major with a theatre arts minor. He has been a stage manager, student director, master carpenter, and an actor while at Taylor. He has done lighting for the touring show and is excited to jump into an on-stage role in the current show. Next year, Stephen hopes to take everything he has learned at Taylor and direct or assist in a high school theatre while teaching math.

***Denotes Alpha Psi Omega Membership
National Dramatic Honor Society**



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR - *TRACY MANNING

“A play is a story incarnated in real space and time by real people. It is human-to-human interaction that can often communicate something transcendent.”

Todd E. Johnson

The quote above comes from a textbook I use in one of my classes, *Performing the Sacred: theology and theatre in dialogue*. The authors explore the term incarnation as a theological tenant and also a component of the theatrical process. If the incarnation is a means whereby we can evaluate what is truly human and theatre is

ultimately the exploration of what it means to be human, then theology and theatre are not as far apart as some would think. An incarnate God is a God of creation and history; an incarnate God is a God of story.

That is never truer than when the powerful medium of theatre engages with a story from the Ultimate medium of scripture. To discover again the story of King Hezekiah, to read the passage again and again, to find relevance and meaning for me today has truly been a gift. After dusting off some sections of the Old Testament, I find a God who is the same Yesterday, Today and Forever. Sitting alone in the big chair at my house where I read my Bible the story of Hezekiah has moved me. Sitting together with you in community experiencing the breath of Hezekiah in the room with me, moves me greater still.

This company of players would welcome the opportunity to come and perform at your event or church. If you're interested in hosting us, please contact Judy Kirkwood at jdkirkwood@taylor.edu or 765-998-5289.

We count it a privilege to bring words to life, to provide audiences with the opportunity to engage with scripture in new and powerful ways, and to minister the redemptive love of Christ to a world in need through the medium of theatre. Thank you for your prayers and financial support.

I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I Cor. 9:22b

Blessings,

Tracy Manning

As you explore the texts from the Bible which inspired William Gebby's play (2Kings 18-20 and Psalm 46) you might consider reflecting on the following questions:

When you find yourself engaged in a dramatic struggle between the seen and the unseen, **who** or **what** do you depend on?

Is prayer an adequate means of combatting worry?

Do angels still intervene in human affairs?

The Taylor Touring Company is in its 7th year of production. The Company has toured Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and various locations in Ireland.

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Taylor Theatre Spring Production

The Miracle Worker

May 2-4, 9-11

The story of Annie Sullivan and her student, blind and mute Helen Keller; *The Miracle Worker* dramatizes the volatile relationship between the lonely teacher and her charge. Trapped in a secret, silent world, unable to communicate, Helen is violent, spoiled, almost sub-human and treated by her family as such. Only Annie realizes that there is a mind and spirit waiting to be rescued from the dark, tortured silence. Annie's success with Helen finally comes with the utterance of a single, glorious word: "water".

For ticket information contact Judy Kirkwood at
765.998.5289 or jdkirkwood@taylor.edu