

For Immediate Release
October 4, 2007

Media Inquiries: Meiyu Tsung
press@banishedproductions.org

banished? productions presents
bobrauschenbergamerica

by Charles L. Mee

As part of the 2007 Corner Store Theater Fest

**“A creative party, low-key, intimate, and genuinely celebratory -- truly a mood-altering show.” –
*The Washington Post.***

(Washington, DC) Fresh from its 2007 Capital Fringe Festival triumph, **banished? productions** reunites the cast and creative team to present a limited engagement of Charles L. Mee’s play *bobrauschenbergamerica* as part of the 2007 Corner Store Theater Fest. Come ride through a wildly familiar landscape in a play as one of America’s greatest painters might have conceived: a Rauschenberg-esque collage of people, places, icons, music and dancing, of love stories and the sheer exhilaration of living in a country where people make up their lives as they go.

Intrigued by the notion that art is all-inclusive, that art is possible anywhere and by anyone, *bobrauschenbergamerica* producer/director Carmen C. Wong turns the production’s identity inside out, replicating the same collection of impressions of Americana, but from a non-American perspective and appropriating from icons and archetypes to examine just what makes America ‘American’.

Embracing a free-spirited vibe, *bobrauschenbergamerica*, christened by The New York Times as “brashly and unapologetically entertaining,” is fashioned by a mélange of nonlinear, colorful, light-hearted vignettes that pay tribute to an ebullient American artist who was able to fashion art out of ordinary objects. Charles L. Mee’s whimsical, nostalgic creation however, is not so much a portrait or biography of Robert Rauschenberg than it is about Rauschenberg’s milieu that fed into his artistic vision: one that exuded a carefree and joyous pleasure in art and life. Mee draws on a kaleidoscope of characters, habits and images to evoke memories of that era.

Inspired by a Rauschenberg retrospective at the Guggenheim in 1997, Charles L. Mee collaborated with Anne Bogart to create *bobrauschenbergamerica* working through a series of workshops with actors from the SITI Company. The play first premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays at the Actors Theatre of Louisville in 2001 and has traveled with SITI to major US cities. Written before 9/11, its relevance and musing on Americana today has gained an elegiac pining for the optimism, inclusivity and openness that Mee believes Rauschenberg’s work embodied. Its journey into randomness is initiated by the opening: “Tie a string to something, and / see where it takes you” and what unravels on stage is a pastiche of sketches culled from items from everyday life, soap operas, recurring objects in Rauschenberg’s work and texts inspired by these objects.

Continuing its tradition of merging interrelated disciplines with theatre to craft a hybrid art form **banished? productions’ *bobrauschenbergamerica*** will be served up with elements of dance choreographed by Carrie Monger, music and an assortment of multimedia effects by Ron Keith and Cort Smith. Levia Lew once again creates a set that is lyrically functional and evokes a blank canvas from which the characters emerge.

***bobrauschenbergamerica* runs October 19-21, 2007 at the Corner Store Gallery, 900 South Carolina Avenue, SE, Washington, DC. Performance times are Friday through Sunday at 8:00 pm with an additional Sunday matinee at 2:00 pm. Tickets are \$25 and go on sale now, by phone (202) 544-5807, or email info@banishedproductions.org. Tickets may also be purchased with cash only at the Corner Store Gallery one hour prior to scheduled performance times. Seating is limited, so buy your tickets in advance to guarantee a place at one of the most vibrant performances of the year.**

about banished? productions

Carmen C. Wong is a German, Film and Theatre graduate from the University of Notre Dame who hails from Singapore. A self-confessed dilettante, Carmen's directorial dabblings include the breezily whimsical *bobrauschenbergamerica* by Charles L. Mee, a scatologically-inspired rendition of Pablo Picasso's *Desire Caught by the Tail* (DC, 2006) and a mixed-media production of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (Notre Dame, 2004). She has also stage managed Constanza Macras' *Back to the Present* produced by Sophiensæle (Berlin, 2003). In her spar(s)e time, Carmen runs an art salon for artists of all mediums and is also the organizer of SketchDC – a figurative drawing group in the Washington Metro area.

ccw@banishedproductions.org

Niell DuVal is currently in his seventh season at the Arena Stage as a full-time props artisan. Before his engagement at the Arena Stage, Niell has also been a props artisan for the Shakespeare Theatre and the Kennedy Center. His artwork has been commissioned by television programs, museums and by other theatrical institutions in the Greater Washington and Baltimore area. A selection of his work was featured in the exhibit *Theatrical Artisans: Props and Crafts from DC Theatre* (2005) at the Montpelier Cultural Arts Center. Prior to his move to Washington, DC, Niell co-founded a handcrafted-boomerang company based in his hometown Fayetteville, Arkansas.

jnd@banishedproductions.org

Levia C. Lew's designs have graced the following works: Washington D.C.: banished? productions: *bobrauschenbergamerica* by Charles L. Mee, and Pablo Picasso's *Desire Caught by the Tail*. (Lighting/Set.); Active Cultures: *Hansel and Gretel Eat Crabs*. (Lighting/ Set); Baltimore: Baltimore Theatre Project: *Roxi in 3-D with Elvis*. (Lighting); New York: LaMama ETC *Siguriya* (Associate Lighting Design); Normal, Illinois: Pentecost, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *The Lonesome West*, (Lighting Design). *Lysistrata*, *Macbeth* (Set Design).

lcl@banishedproductions.org

For more information...

Meiyu Tsung – Press Contact

press@banishedproductions.org

Tickets: (202) 544-5807 or info@banishedproductions.org

Website: banishedproductions.org

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BOBRAUSCHENBERG AMERICA

by Charles L. Mee



FACT SHEET

bobrauschenbergamerica

by Charles L. Mee, adapted and directed by Carmen C. Wong

MEDIA CONTACT: Meiyu Tsung

E-MAIL: press@banishedproductions.org

DATES: October 19-21, 2007

TIMES: Friday and Saturday at 8:00 p.m.; Sunday at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Corner Store Gallery, 900 South Carolina Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20003

TICKETS: \$25. Tickets go on sale now by phone at (202) 544-5807, or email info@banishedproductions.org. All major credit cards accepted. Tickets may also be purchased with cash only at the Corner Store Gallery one hour prior to scheduled performance times. Artist/Student discounts available for eligible patrons, please enquire.

METRO: Orange Line: Eastern Market **OR** Metro Bus 92 and 32.

PERFORMERS:

Jessie Agus

Dionne Audain

Jerry Busher (**video**)

Niell DuVal (puppet model/voice)

Gabriela Fernandez-Coffey

Carrie Monger

Meera Narasimhan

ARTISTIC COLLABORATORS:

Carmen C. Wong **Director/Producer/Concept**

Niell DuVal **Producer/Props/Carpentry**

Levia Lew **Resident Lighting & Set Designer/Concept**

Julie Allen **Video Shoot**

Pruitt Y. Allen **Video Shoot**

Danielle Mages Amato **Graphic Design/Dramaturgy Consultant**

Frank DuVal **Artwork**

Jerry Busher **Sound Design**

Ron Keith **Videography/Video Concept**

Carie Monger **Choreography**

Susie Pamudi **Stage Manager**

Joseph Price **Webmaster**

Cort Smith **Video Editing**

Meiyu Tsung **Press and Marketing**

Glynnis Vance **Costumes**

Kristian Whipple **Photography**

www.banishedproductions.org

Presented as a part of the 2007 Corner Store Theater Fest.

October 19 - 21, 2007. For more information, visit www.banishedproductions.org