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Ted Karber returns to directing
after a five-year hiatus with the
Beth Henley dramedy "Crimes of
the Heart" Sept. 3-25 at El Paso
Playhouse.

"After five years, I felt it was time to
try my hand at being a director again,"
Karber said. "My beloved friends (and
longtime playhouse supporters) Mike
and Carol Bernstein encouraged me
to submit a play title to the playhouse
for consideration. So I submitted
"Crimes of the Heart" to the play-selec-
tion committee at the playhouse and
was accepted for their current season."

The play has a long history as a win-
ner. A friend of Henley's submitted it to
the Great American Play Contest at the
Actors Theatre of Louisville, and it was
named co-winner and performed in
February 1979 at the company's annual
Humana Festival of New American
Plays. It won the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for
Drama and the 1982 Tony Award for the
best play on Broadway.

Karber also brings a long list of suc-
cess to his effort. With both bachelor's
and master's degrees in theater from
UTEP, Karber founded his own theater,
Aardvark Theatre (housed where KIDS-
N-CO. is now), which provided the
community with outstanding modern
and classic theater from 1997 to 2005.
He now owns and teaches acting at
EPStageBusiness. He also is a recog-
nized playwright. His shows were semi-
finalists at the Eugene O'Neill Theater
Center National Playwrights Conference
in 1993 and 2007.

That experience is applied to the com-
plexity of the story.

"I've always liked 'Crimes of the
Heart' and have always felt it is a
deceptively powerful script," Karber
said. "The script functions as a comedy
but underneath the frivolity of the play
there is this incredibly tender and seri-
ous story of three sisters who are able to
reestablish their relationship with one
another. It is a very Chekhovian script,
using comedy to teach us a basically
tragic lesson."

"Crimes" tells the story of the three
Magrath sisters, Meg, Babe and Lenny,
who reunite at Old Granddaddy's home
in Hazlehurst, Miss., after Babe shoots
her abusive husband. The stories of
their dysfunctional family surface in
both amusing and tragic ways as they
deal with Babe's problems.

Karber said that he was excited about
his cast.

• Lenny, eldest of the three Magrath sis-
ters, is played by Emily Piperato: "She
is quite enchanting to work with. She
has great instincts on the stage."

• Meg Magrath — Sylvia Prieto: "One
of my former EPStageBusiness stu-
dents. It is fun to watch her grow as an
actress."

• Babe Magrath — Alexandra Welch
Quarm: "... who has the most exquisite
complexion I have ever seen and HUGE
energy on stage."

• Chick Boyle (their cousin) — Megan
Gotham: "... who has proved to be
riotously funny in rehearsal."

STAGE TALK



by Carol Viescas

• Barnette Lloyd (Babe's lawyer) —
Manuel Monreal: "A growing actor. It
is fun to watch Manny learn as he pre-
pares for his role."

• Doc Porter (Meg's old flame) —
Matthew Minnich: "This guy is really
wonderful. He has taken a relatively
small part and elevated it to a true sup-
porting role."

The Bernsteins also support him as
assistant directors.

Karber relishes turning his talents back
to directing.

"As with any production, learning to
work with a new group of actors is
always a challenge," Karber said, "and,
similarly, allowing the actors to go
through their process as they learn to
work with me. It is all a big, complicat-
ed give-and-take. It is exciting and
somewhat scary at times."

Another Pulitzer Prize-winning play
will be on the boards at El Paso
Community College. The EPCC Theatre
Ensemble will open their main stage
season beginning Sept. 24 at the
Transmountain Forum with the 2006
Tony Award- and 2007 Pulitzer
Prize-winning play "Rabbit Hole" by
David Lindsay-Abair.

Professor Keith Townsend directs the
story, which features the return to the
stage of El Paso theater legend
Elizabeth Gaidry as Nat, the mother of
one of the main characters.

"Gaidry has theater-production credits
too numerous to list, but has worked at
one time or another with almost every
local theater company, past and present,
as well as the school districts and the
college and UTEP," Townsend said.

Veronica Sontoyo plays Nat's daugh-
ter, Becca Corbett, and Joel Anguiano is
Howie Corbett. Sontoyo is a Columbia
University graduate who acted profes-
sionally in Mexico City with Teatro de
Arena and K-OZ Producciones, while
Anguiano is a performance-studies stu-
dent at EPCC who recently won nation-
al honors at the 2010 Phi Rho Pi
National Intercollegiate Forensic
Competition.

EPCC Performer's Studio will be
doing an encore performance run Sept.
2-4 at the Transmountain Forum of
their summer repertory production of
"The Fantasticks" to help fund EPCC
scholarships.

*Carol Viescas is a veteran of
community theater and teaches
journalism at Bel Air High School.*