

# Director

Joe Atack is the producing artistic director at Good Luck Macbeth Theatre. As a director, he's currently leading rehearsals of GLM's next production, the stage adaptation of *Let the Right One In*, the 2004 novel by John Ajvide Lindqvist, about a child vampire named Eli. The book has also been adapted into two films.

## You're doing *Let the Right One In*. Why that?

We really like doing things that have a sort of cult following in some ways. But we also—especially when it comes to the Halloween time—we like to give our audiences an opportunity to see something kind of scary and interesting and different. And we came across the script for it and realized it had been on Broadway and on the West End. And it's a really challenging script. That's what really finally caught our interest is that it's very challenging. It's got a lot of technical elements to it. But it's also, at heart, a love story.

## When does it open? How are rehearsals going?

It opens on Oct. 4, and it runs pretty much through the entire month, and it's mostly Thursday through Saturdays, but we have a couple of Wednesdays in there, too. Rehearsals are going great so far. We're still in the early stages, getting on our feet, and coming to grips with all the characters and relationships. And figuring



out the tech elements for blood and snow and water and sand. ... There's a lot of different locations, so the set design is very conceptual as opposed to trying to recreate the full locations of each spot. There's 25 different locations in the play. ... The stage adaptation—the written adaptation of it—it particularly draws on the book and the Swedish film. ... I loved the Swedish movie. There's barely any dialogue in the movie of course. It has that sort of old, classic movie vibe to me. It's not all instant gratification. You're sort of led through the story in a really interesting way that also makes you, the viewer, do some of the work. ... There's so many interesting things about it, like, how the vampire folklore interacts with the modern world, and what that really means—the lack of privacy in the modern world—even though it's set a few decades back. The creeping modern world, and

how it becomes harder and harder to hide within the modern world. And something that fascinates me is the idea of this being trapped as a child forever, and always being perceived and talked to as if they're a child. And how does that affect them cognitively?

## Tell me about your cast.

It's a great cast. Some people who are new to us at GLM and some people who have done a few things for us before. Our Eli is played by Courtney Ropp. Courtney is really interesting. This is the first time she's played a lead for us. ... She is really fantastic. She's actually a photographer and videographer, and she actually came out of the military. She was in the military for a number of years. She's a veteran.

## How old is she?

I want to say she's 28?

## So, late 20s—so she's going to be playing a much younger character?

Right, exactly. And we've done that—there are no children in it. This is a big difference with the stage and the film adaptation. And I think it's very true of stage and film and the difference between the two. When you're sitting in the audience and there's violence, when you're watching a film, you're kind of one step removed from it, but when you're watching it in a play, it's generally—audiences give you a lot of feedback—it's generally a lot more shocking to see blood and violence and things of that nature. And so there's some stuff that we couldn't really do with children. □

## NOTES FROM THE NEON BABYLON

BY BRUCE VAN DYKE

# Fire it up

Imagine the buzz coming off The Playa—as usual. “Oh my god that was fucking amazing!” It's Burning Man's most powerful, lingering, brain Burn, installed thousands of times every year. “OMGTWFA!” In fact, B Man just might lead the planet in OMGTWFA's every doggone year. What else comes close?

What other major event has the audacity to say, “Hey! You! Yeah, you! How would you like to have a life-changing curve-ball sideswipe you into Desert Oblivion for a few days? Wanna see what happens to you and your mind? You and your attitude? You and your hair?” Burning Man's balls and humor have consistently served it well, from the very beginning until the very now. There's really nothing like it. How cool and convenient that it happens about 100 miles from us!

Imagine a meeting of the Reno Sparks Convention Authority in 1988, and some of the fellas are spitballing a little, trying to guess what kind of events will be popular in the future of Northern Nevada. You think any of them envisioned something like ... freaking Burning Man?

Where things have seemed to be fairly dark and quasi-insane the last 32 months, I have to admit that it's delightfully mellow that we now live in a land where one can stop by the local *pot shop* on the way out of town to load up on brain-spinning goodies to take to an ecstatic mega-hoedown in the naked desert called Burning Man, an event which is, fortunately, not hostile to the THC-laden gummy bear experience. How nice to live long enough to see this pleasant dream from long ago finally realized. And we were right about the effing pot, all you

Puritan bastards who oppressed us in the '60s!

It's amusing to muse about what happens to people from Germany, England, Paraguay and New Zealand when they first visit the Black Rock Desert. I can't help but wonder how totally blown away they'll be by the staggering beauty of The Great Elemental Circus of Air, Light, Heat, Stars and Dust, and then how truly freaking *agog* they will be when some burn buddy hands them a mushroom cloud margarita and be bop a lula they get right properly introduced and christened into this most mind-wobbling municipality.

At that point, if you've got any game *at all*, you suck it up, get your shit together, and realize that you're in one swingin' slaphappy town, one that's ready for you and your dancing, dilated eyeballs. Really ready.

OMGTWFA. □



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