

PLATES & ANGLES

"IS it a good thing or a bad thing when a play gives you nightmares?" asked New York Times drama critic Debra Jo Immergut in her positive review of *Bash: Latter-day Plays*. This Neil LaBute trio of Mormon monologues ran last June and July at New York's Douglas Fairbanks Theater and starred Calista Flockhart, TV's Ally McBeal.

No doubt, these average Mormon characters who murder give PR.-minded Saints nightmares. After a New Yorker feature on the Mormon, BYU-taught LaBute, the Association for Mormon Letters' Internet list debated whether the plays were only cosmetically LDS.

In *Iphigenia in Orem*, Ron Eldard portrays an LDS husband/father who confides to a person off-stage how he let his infant daughter asphyxiate to help him keep his job during a downsizing. In *Medea Redux*, Flockhart (right) recounts her revenge upon a former teacher who seduced and then abandoned her with a baby when she was thirteen. In *A Gaggle of Saints*, Flockhart and Paul Rudd alternately tell their tale of "virginal kids . . . tangled up in something unholy." (Then titled as *Bash*, *Gaggle* was performed at the 1992 Sunstone Symposium [tape SL92-193] and published in the Dec. 1995 SUNSTONE; *Medea* and *Iphigenia* were performed at the 1994 and 1995 Chicago Symposiums, respectively [tapes CH94-001, CH95-09].)

Earlier, LaBute irked noses with his "loathsome," "misanthropic"—but not Mormon!—films, *In the Company of Men* and *Your Friends and Neighbors*. He "demands that you watch characters do really ugly stuff . . . because his writing is so hypnotically on target," wrote Immergut.

President Spencer W. Kimball prophesied that we "shall yet have Miltons and Shakespeares of our own." Who thought that included our David Mamets, too?

In January 2000, another sweetheart, *Titanic*'s Kate Winslet, will pluck the gaggle in London's East End. ☐





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