

the village

# VOICE

## **Greedy**

By Karl Gajdusek  
Ohio Theater  
66 Wooster Street  
212-352-3101

(closed; festival continues through June 23)

## **E-mail Impersonator**

Clubbed Thumb kicks off its annual Summerworks fest

**M**ost of us know to delete desperate e-mails from strangers begging for money. But in Karl Gajdusek's smart, entertaining *Greedy*, when well-to-do cardiologist Paul gets an e-mail from a woman offering millions of dollars in gold artifacts in return for the \$100,000 needed to escape her evil brother, he takes the bait. Presented by the Obie-winning company Clubbed Thumb, *Greedy* is the first of three plays offered at this year's Summerworks festival (next up are Jordan Harrison's *Amazons and Their Men* and Amy Fox's *One Thing I Like to Say*).

Full of snappy, clever dialogue and, at times, laugh-out-loud comedy, the play successfully bounces along from one subplot to the next. While Paul (whose naiveté is perfectly portrayed by Dennis Fox) dreams of what he'll do with his money (Bora Bora!), the con artist, Kiera, is busy suckering her nice unemployed brother, Louis, into playing the bad guy. Meanwhile, Paul's sexy Bosnian trophy wife Tatiana plots to steal a baby from the hospital where Louis's mannish, Budweiser-loving wife Janet (the talented Kelly McAndrew) works as a security guard.

Drew Barr capably directs the solid six-member cast on a set that moves smoothly between Paul's Restoration Hardware-esque kitchen and Louis's raggedy apartment, among a few other locations. Gajdusek, though, relishes subtlety too much in his storytelling, skimping on character motivation and leaving some pertinent details frustratingly unanswered. But it happily all pays off in a nerve-racking conclusion where lovable Louis and Janet, the least greedy of the group, surprisingly wind up holding all the dough. Too bad real life is rarely so just. ANGELA ASHMAN

# PAPER

SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 2007

## STAGE NOTES

FIVE FROM BROADWAY TO WAY OFF BROADWAY

BY TOM MURRIN

JUNE 2007

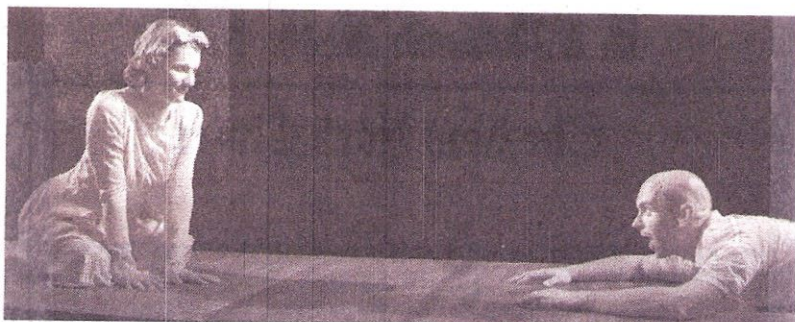
### CLUBBED THUMB SUMMER THEATER FESTIVAL

The 12th year of this most engaging, high-quality theater company's summer festival features three plays. *Greedy*, by Karl Gajdusek, directed by Drew Barr, is about a mysterious e-mail that promises riches and *One Thing I Like to Say Is*, by Amy Fox, directed by Paul Willis, is about a woman named Lina and the stories she tells. The third, *Amazons and Their Men*, by Jordan Harrison, directed by the excellent Ken Rus Schmoll, is a play inspired by the life and work of Leni Riefenstahl. "When it begins, we think we're seeing a campy, classical epic movie, and it becomes increasingly apparent we are in 1939 Germany on a film sound stage and a movie is being made," says playwright Harrison.

While Harrison was researching Penthesilea, the Queen of the Amazons, who fell "murderously in love" with Achilles during the Trojan War, he discovered that Leni Riefenstahl, the German film director who made many of Hitler's propaganda films, was doing her own filmic adaptation of Penthesilea's story in 1939. Although Riefenstahl hovers over the play, she isn't the main character. "It's about a woman who discovers the artist in her is inseparable from the fascist," says Harrison. Playing Frau, the filmmaker, is the marvelous Rebecca Wisocky, who, like Riefenstahl, casts herself in the movie as the Queen of The Amazons. Playing Achilles is a man Frau recruited from the Jewish ghetto. Another female actor, the many-sided Heidi Schreck, plays The Extra, and takes on the roles of 10 different Amazons; with a fourth actor playing Patroclus, Achilles' companion.

Ohio Theater, 66 Wooster St., (212) 352-3101. *Greedy*: Jun. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 & 9. *Amazons*: Jun. 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 & 16. *One Thing*: Jun. 17, 18, 19, 21, 22 & 23. \$15, \$18.





Carl Skutsch

Amy Staats and Christian Rummel in "One Thing I Like to Say Is."

## *You May Call it a Daydream. She Just Calls it Her Life.*

In "One Thing I Like to Say Is," a sensitive new play by Amy Fox that is part of Clubbed Thumb's Summerworks series, the promising romance of Lina and James suffers a fairly

### **THEATER REVIEW**

**JASON  
ZINOMAN**

major setback. "I have some sad news about James," Lina (a wry Amy Staats) says with a doleful glance. "He does not exist."

This might be your first tip-off that this gentle drama about troubled siblings is not always to be trusted. Delivered mostly in speeches addressed directly to the audience, it will frustrate those looking for clear motivations and reliable characters, but even if the show could use a bit more shaping, it nicely captures something of the loneliness and childlike joy of letting your imagination wander.

Lina, whose fantasy life can seem much more vivid than her reality, is the precocious daughter of alcoholic parents. As a child, she found solace in make-believe, particularly with an imaginary Scottish butler who took care of everything. (Who wouldn't want one of those?)

She shared the butler with her hot-headed brother, Toby (the bald, imposing Christian Rummel, who, like Ms. Staat with Lina, plays all incar-

### **One Thing I Like to Say Is** *Ohio Theater*

nations of his character), who was sent away to a reform school.

Toby reunites with Lina when she becomes pregnant at a summer arts camp. When he takes her money for an abortion, it's revealed that his girlfriend is also pregnant. That is one of the many parallels in this jigsaw puzzle plot, which picks up a generation later when a teenager (Daniel Manley) claiming to be Toby's child enters the picture.

The director Paul Willis's sparse production is dominated by one bold design idea. On the back wall of the set by Efren Delgadillo Jr. is a huge checkerboard of images that light up, "Hollywood Squares"-style, to highlight a plot point or key detail. It's a cute but distracting visual conceit, turning your attention from the performances in a drama that requires the full attention of its audience.

Like many plays composed largely of monologues, "One Thing" can be dramatically inert, and the character of Toby seems much more remote than that of his sister. But at its best, it feels like a deeply personal account of a young artist struggling with the double-sided nature of her own creativity. As kids, we all make up stories about ourselves, but Ms. Fox's work is a reminder that many of us never really stop.

"One Thing I Like to Say Is" continues through Saturday at the Ohio Theater, 66 Wooster Street, SoHo; (212) 352-3101.