

For Immediate Release: 10/23/14
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HOLY THEATRE!

Theatre Group Dzieci announces 2014 performance dates for the 15th year of *Fools Mass*.



Photo: Fred Hatt

dziecitheatre.org

(New York, NY) Actors playing medieval village idiots have been invited to take over cathedrals, churches, and other places of worship in New York City this December to enact their own Christmas Mass.

Theatre Group Dzieci (pronounced djeh-chee; Polish for “children”) presents its signature creation, *Fools Mass*, returning for its 15th year this December to perform in some of NYC’s most venerated holy places, including The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, where *Fools Mass* has been an annual offering for the past 13 years. This absolutely unique theatrical experience has been embraced by theatre lovers and an array of spiritual communities (spanning a multitude of paths and practices) across the nation. The piece celebrates the sacred, the miracle of life and the enigma of death, with lovely choral singing, riotous comic buffoonery, and extraordinary dramatic invention. *Fools Mass*, like no other event, captures the heart of the holidays this winter season.

ANNOUNCING THE 2014 FOOLS MASS SCHEDULE

To celebrate Dzieci's 15th anniversary of *Fools Mass*, ten performances have been scheduled throughout New York City, plus one show in Upstate NY, from December 5th to the 21st.

Friday, December 5th at 7:00PM
John Street United Methodist Church
44 John Street, Manhattan
~ ♦ ~

Sunday, December 7th at 7:00PM
Church of the Nativity
1099 Ocean Avenue, Ditmas Park
~ ♦ ~

Wednesday, December 10th at 6:00PM
Union Theological Seminary James Chapel
3041 Broadway, Manhattan
~ ♦ ~

Friday, December 12th at 7:00PM
Union Theological Seminary Lampman Chapel
3041 Broadway, Manhattan
~ ♦ ~

Saturday, December 13th at 7:00PM
St. John-St. Matthew-Emanuel Church
283 Prospect Avenue, Park Slope
~ ♦ ~

Sunday, December 14th at 12:30PM
Old Dutch Church
272 Wall Street, Kingston, NY
~ ♦ ~

Friday, December 19th at 7:00PM
Second Presbyterian Church
6 West 96th Street, Manhattan
~ ♦ ~

Saturday, December 20th at 7:00PM
Sure We Can (The Bushwick Canning Collective)
219 McKibbin Street, Bushwick
~ ♦ ~

Sunday, December 21st at 11:00AM
West-Park Presbyterian Church
165 West 86th Street, Manhattan
&

The Grand Fools Finale at 5:15PM
The Cathedral of Saint John the Divine
St. James Chapel
1047 Amsterdam Avenue, Manhattan

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There is a \$10 suggested donation for all performances.
No reservations are necessary.
Doors open 15 minutes prior to the show.

For further information please call 718 638 6037 or e-mail matt@dziectheatre.org
And please visit: <http://dziectheatre.org>

TESTIMONIALS

“Moving between the sublime and the ridiculous, drawing its audience through laughter toward participation and contemplation, the work resists being categorized as either theater or religion, becoming both at once in an event experienced by many as transformative.”

- The Encyclopedia of Religion 2nd Edition

“Dzieci is devoted to the idea that theater is essentially a form of ‘communion’. It uses theater work to seek an ever-greater understanding of what it means to share, to give of oneself in performance.”

- Tom F. Driver, The Paul Tillich Professor of Theology and Culture Emeritus,
Union Theological Seminary

“I can’t even begin to summarize what it is that they do; except to say, it is unforgettable, deeply moving and will give you a new lens on the Eucharist and all of worship.”

- Rev. Cheri Kroon, Flatbush Reformed Church

“I participated (again) in one of the most precious, powerful and important Masses I have ever seen in my life: The Fools Mass. They sang, read the gospel, shared the peace of Christ, gave me bread, blessed me and sent me to the world. Today I had church. Dzieci works in between theatre and religion, so you are there for a play but it feels deeply like real worship. I left with this oceanic feeling that God was all around.”

- Claudio Carvalhaes, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Professor of Liturgy and Worship

“Fools Mass, with a nod to Beckett, begs the question, ‘How do we, as people, manage when our ‘God’ —our leader, our guide — does not show up?’ Left to our own devices, what do we make in the vacuum? How do we connect with one another in a way that creates the thing we are missing? How do we climb out of our despair and disappointment and relate in order to make a world with our fellows?

How do we go on when our hearts are broken? I think Dzieci Theatre gives us a fine answer: through enacting communal rituals, like Mass or theater or breaking bread with others, we embody the thing we’ve been waiting for. Thank you, Dzieci, for this transporting and transforming theatrical experience.”

- Rebecca Hoffman, LMSW

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BIOGRAPHIES

DZIECI, founded in 1997 by Matt Mitler, utilizes techniques garnered from such theatre masters as Jerzy Grotowski, Eugenio Barba, and Peter Brook, ritual forms derived from Native American and Eastern spiritual disciplines, and an ethic based securely in Humanistic Psychology, in a search for the "sacred" through the medium of theatre. The company balances work on performance with work of service, and is committed to Art as a path for transformation. Dzieci was the only theatre company invited to present at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona in 2004, was artist in residence at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, and is a two-time recipient of the Elizabeth Ann Bogert Fund for the Study and Practice of Christian Mysticism. Dzieci and Mr. Mitler are featured in the book, *Working on the Inside: The Spiritual Life Through the Eyes of Actors* by Retta Blaney, as well as the journal, *Ecumenica*, and are profiled in the current edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religion*.

MATT MITLER (Founding Director) was initially trained in Humanistic and Existential Psychology, and Group Process before discovering the healing potential of theatre. He considers his therapeutic study with such notables as R.D. Laing and Carl Rogers to be equal to his theatrical study with Jerzy Grotowski and The Polish Theatre Laboratory. Integrating these pursuits has been a lifelong process. Matt has led workshops in a variety of settings including Hutchings Psychiatric Center (NY); The Association for Humanistic Psychology; The National Theatre School of Sweden; New Brunswick and Union Theological Seminaries; The Institute for Clergy Excellence; The Heart of the Healer Foundation; The Parliament for the World's Religions; and the graduate school of The University of Psychology of Warsaw, where his essay, *Art and Therapy* was published in the anthology, *New Directions in Psychotherapy*.

<http://dziecitheatre.org>

Links to photo galleries:
[Fools in Toronto](#)
[Fools at Fort Tilden](#)
[Fools at St. John the Divine](#)