The UofSC
Department of
Theatre & Dance
presents

TONGUE
OF A
BIRD

CENTER FOR
PERFORMANCE
EXPERIMENT
718 Devine St.

FEBRUARY
22–28

A play by
Ellen
McLaughlin

Directed by
Steven
Pearson
The UofSC Department of Theatre and Dance presents

Tongue of a Bird

Written by Ellen Mclaughlin

Direction/Set/Sound Design......................Steve Pearson
Costumes.....................................................Robyn Hunt

CAST

In order of appearance

Charlotte........................................Madeline Mulkey
Maxine........................................Candace Thomas
Dessa/Evie........................................Carin Bendas
Zofia...................................................Robyn Hunt*

*Tongue of a Bird is produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.
Tongue of a Bird was originally presented as a staged reading by New York Stage and Film Company and the Powerhouse Theatre at Vassar in association with Ron Kastner, July 1996. Originally commissioned by Center Theatre Group of Los Angeles, Gordon Davidson, Artistic Director.

Tongue of a Bird was originally produced by Intiman Theatre in 1997, Seattle, Washington, Warner Shook, Artistic Director; Laura Penn, Managing Director.

Tongue of a Bird was produced in New York by the Public Theatre/New York Shakespeare Festival in March 1999, George C. Wolfe, Producer.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Lisa Martin-Stuart, Walt Jones, Andy Mills, Sam Gross and the Scene Shop, Valerie Pruett and the Costume Shop, Kevin Bush, K. Dale White, Jason Cobb, Christine Jacky, Ben Blazer, Beck Robinson, Steven Adler, and Nora Cohen

Music Compositions: Adam Norden
In 1994, we were first introduced to Ellen McLaughlin’s writing when we discovered her play, DAYS AND NIGHTS WITHIN. It is a two-hander, inspired by the true story of a woman who was arrested in East Berlin and accused of being a spy. We opened the play at the Northwest Asian-American Theater, an architecturally beautiful and powerful space in the International District of Seattle. Ellen surprised us one night, walking into the theatre to see the performance. Since I had added a silent character--a prison guard--so that we might be able to smoothly achieve the scene shifts, I was concerned about her reaction. But she was very warm, said she very much liked the addition and the production, and was pleased we were the ones doing it. DAYS AND NIGHTS WITHIN was a catalyst for us, as we realized we wanted a research and performance wing that could complement yet exist separately from our work at the University of Washington. And so we created Pacific Performance Project (images from this production can be seen on our website, p3east.com)

Twenty-one years later, we again have chosen Ellen’s McLaughlin’s writing to launch a new endeavor, this time a space: the new Center for Performance Experiment at 718 Devine. Her play speaks to us for many reasons, not the least of which is our interest and attraction to the metaphor of flight. Our original production, FLIGHT, toured to three cities last year (St. Louis, Missouri, Flint, Michigan, and Bangor, Maine) and the true-life stories of our fliers, Maddie and Sophie, have been a part of our work here. We are delighted by one other bit of serendipity: our undergraduate actor, Madeline Mulkey (CHARLOTTE), is the daughter of a flier and flight instructor; she has flown many times in a Cessna, and has been a wonderful resource.

CPE exists for many reasons. The classroom/studio space is the center for the training of the MFA graduate actors, as well as a place where new work can be launched. Last week, Richard Jennings’ clown work with the actors, UP SIDE DOWN, christened the space and we had our first audiences. We intend in all we do to support the overall mission of the Department of Theatre and Dance, and in particular, provide more experimental work, offer opportunities for graduate and undergraduate actors and designers to collaborate, and produce smaller cast productions to ensure that all the graduate actors, in the course of their time with us, fulfill--in powerful and demanding ways--the requirements of their training.

On the evening you see TONGUE OF A BIRD, you may hear many trains. The tracks run very close to our building. The sound of the whistles vary; we find all of them haunting. When you hear the whistle, please imagine that this very train runs on a track in the Adirondacks, far, far below where Maxine flies.

Welcome to the new CPE. We hope you will join us many times in the future.

Steve Pearson