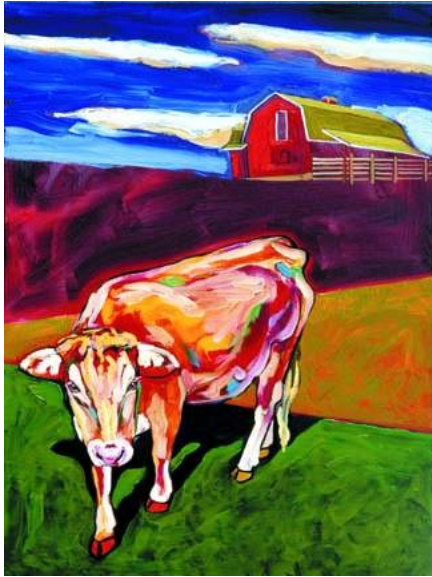


The Drawer Boy

by Michael Healey



(A Playgoer's Guide)

synopsis:

It's 1972, and a self-absorbed young Toronto actor, Miles, arrives on a small farm to do hands-on research for an upcoming role in a play about country life. He is sent to live with two middle-aged farmers, Morgan who is not thrilled with the self-involved young city dweller, and Angus, who is unable to remember that the young actor is even there due to a head injury sustained in London during World War II. Miles unwillingly stumbles upon the truth about their past and as a result, their lives are forever altered when art attempts to imitate life and the line between truth and fiction is crossed. What begins as an amusing portrayal of rural and urban culture-clash, slowly peels away layers of forgotten truths and lies, exposing hidden secrets of love and tragedy. Think farm life is boring? Think again! Think plays about farm life are boring? You be the judge.

what about Michael Healey?

To imagine something that affected people that powerfully, and on top of that was an event of theatre, brought a focus to my writing. I threw out what I'd begun and started thinking about the fact that an act of theatre can humanize someone."

- Michael Healey's first play was titled *Kicked*. He also acted in it as a policeman, a school bus driver, a shoe sales man, and an ER doctor.
- He has written two chapbooks about the theatre: *Dear Mr. Newton*, *Sincerely, Michael Healey*, and *An Actor's Diary*.
- He was an actor before he began writing and acted in various shows such as a jobless, desperate middle-class man in George F. Walker's *The End of Civilization*.
- He fired all his agents one day and stopped auditioning for film, T.V., and commercials so there would be no more distractions from his play writing.
- He left Ryerson Theatre School in 1985 with the hopes of playing Hamlet at Stratford before he was 25 -- but instead of that he went home and started to write a novel. The novel idea did not pan out because according to Healey he had no discipline but he is always working on it.
- He is currently a playwright in residence at the Tarragon Theatre.
- He and Kate Lynch also co-wrote two one-act comedies which were performed together by the pair as a play called *The Road to Hell* at the Tarragon Theatre.
- *The Drawer Boy* won four Dora Mavor Moore Awards in 1999
- It won a Governor General's Literary Award in 1999/2000 for Best English Drama.
- It also won the Floyd S. Chalmers Canadian Plays Award for Best New Play and received a prize of \$25,000.

Michael Healey was also nominated for, and won, the Chalmers Award for Best New Play in 1998 for *Kicked*. Last year he was nominated for the Dora Mavor Moore Award for outstanding performance in a feature role in a play or musical for *Better Living*.

some history:

The "roots" of *The Drawer Boy* lie in an historic chapter of Canadian theatre history. In 1972, a group of young, Toronto based actors, working with Toronto's Theatre Passe Muraille embarked on a project which involved the study of an Ontario farming community. Actors lived with farm families in the community of Clinton, Ontario, laboured on these farms and collected stories from the people they encountered. The stories were developed into a collective theatrical production called The Farm Show, which opened in Toronto and later toured parts of Canada. Both Miles Potter and David Fox, who were the director and an actor in the original multi-award winning production at Theatre Passe Muraille, helped create and appeared in the original production of *The Farm Show*.

some previous productions:

- February 25 - March 21, 1999 at the Theatre Passe Muraille, Toronto, Ontario
- January 18 - February 3, 2000 at the Magnus Theatre, Thunder Bay, Ontario.
- January 25, 2000 at the Theatre Northwest in Prince George, British Columbia.
- July 14 - 29, 2000 at the Blue Water Summer Playhouse, Kincardine, Ontario.
- October 12 - 21, 2000 at the Alderney Landing Theatre, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
- February 18 - 21, 2001 at the Persephone Theatre, Saskatoon

from some reviews:

(We couldn't find bad ones)

"Michael Healey's prize-winning instant classic *The Drawer Boy* has heart, soul and brains" – *Now Magazine*, Toronto

"Sheer magic...a moving tribute to art's healing power" – *Maclean's*

"Wonderfully understated. Funny and deeply *affecting*" -- *Toronto Sun* (Five stars)

"Far and away the finest new Canadian drama to grace a Toronto stage this season...touches the heart and mind in equal measure" --*Toronto Star*

The Drawer Boy is a play about the healing and restorative power of theatre -- perhaps the most special effect ever created for the stage. – John Coulbourn, *Toronto Sun*

"Of all life's pleasures, sometimes it's the simple pleasures that are best. Simple pleasures like *The Drawer Boy*" – *The Toronto Sun*

This guide was produced by
The Drawer Boy Task Force

(<http://www.stthomasu.ca/~p2s/DRAWER/mainpage.htm>)

St. Thomas University English 2223:

From the Page to the Stage

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