

Bahá'í Journal UK

Journal of the Bahá'í Community of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Volume 19, No.5 – October, 2002 / 159BE

 **LARGE PRINT** / Standard Print.

Theatre Reviews 

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The day will come when the Cause will spread like wildfire when its spirit and teachings will be presented on the stage or in art and literature as a whole. Art can better awaken such noble sentiments ... (Shoghi Effendi: The Arts, p.7)

What Can I Do With My Heart, written and performed by Susan Hegarty.

SUSAN HEGARTY'S play, **What Can I Do With My Heart**, received its UK premiere during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August. Based on the diaries of Juliet Thompson, the play charts the emotional and spiritual struggles Thompson experienced before, during and after she accepted the Bahá'í Faith in 1901. Susan Hegarty is a stage actress who has performed in regional theatre all across the US, and is one of Hollywood's top dialect coaches. Her clients have included Sir Ben Kingsley, Kate Winslet, Ralph Fiennes and many more. She has just finished working with Eric Bana in *The Hulk*, directed by Ang Lee, and her work with Italian actress Monica Bellucci will be seen in the forthcoming *Matrix* sequels.



What Can I Do with My Heart is her first play. She spent nine years researching and adapting it for the stage and it received a Garland Award Honourable Mention for Performance and Costume Design for its US premiere in Los Angeles.

The play is in essence a love story centred around the three major characters in Thompson's life: her mother, the driving force in her artistic career; Percy Stickney Grant, Thompson's great unrequited love, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Centre of the Bahá'í Covenant and her spiritual comforter.

With a few well-chosen props, simple but dramatic lighting and beautifully designed costumes, Hegarty conjures up the atmosphere of a Washington drawing room, a Parisian art studio and the House of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá in 'Akká, where Thompson met with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, seamlessly and convincingly. The play is not without its lighter moments and, given the intimate nature of the venue, Hegarty is able to lift the mood with the arching of an eyebrow, imply tension with a precise, slight gesture of the hands and evoke real, tangible pathos in her voice. However, what comes across most powerfully in the performance is the questing of Juliet Thompson's soul for a spiritual solution to her own, and the world's, difficulties.

It is not a straightforward task to awaken noble sentiments in today's audiences but Hegarty's portrayal of Juliet Thompson does so without descending into maudlin sentimentality: she is a consummate artist whose delivery is faultless, whose command of the stage is fascinating and who, from the moment the lights come up, establishes an immediate rapport with the audience which draws them into the drama. Suspending one's

...disbelief has never been as easy.

Rumi's Astonishing Myth, performed by Hadie MacLeod

A PERFORMANCE of the poetry of Rumi by Edinburgh Bahá'í, Hadie MacLeod, has just completed a three-week run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

The performance has grown out of Hadie's love for the mystic poetry of Rumi which she discovered initially from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. An extract from the show was broadcast on the BBC TV programme, "Heaven and Earth", on September 22.

Hadie has mentioned the Faith in the programme notes by writing: "In His more mystical works, and in replies to questions from Sufis, Bahá'u'lláh often quotes from Rumi and He has credited him with having extended the Islamic dispensation through the regenerating effect of his writing and teaching."

Hadie's performance is dynamic, witty and inspiring by turns. She plays the part of Rumi the poet, Rumi the lover and Rumi driven to madness in his search for the "Beloved" with great energy and comic skill and the show was well received by her audiences.

Despite this being Hadie's first run on the Festival Fringe, and her first television appearance, she was comfortable and confident in front of the audiences and cameras and has probably been influential in one large Edinburgh bookshop selling out its copies of Rumi's poetry. The friends in Scotland and elsewhere look forward to her next project.

