

A CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR MORITZ VON STUELPNAGEL

By Tom Miller

TM: What are some things you are enjoying (or learning to cope with) during quarantine?

- MS:** 1. Having family dinners again.
 2. Baking enough that chemical reactions are starting to make more sense to me.
 3. Watching the magnolia trees blossom.
 4. Attempting to cook Chinese cuisine.
 5. Making up cocktails with whatever's in the liquor cabinet.
 6. Experiencing a love-hate relationship with a new fitness app.
 7. Fixing an ancient hammock in anticipation of warm weather.
 8. Convincing my father to give me all of the family stories.
 9. Giving my stepmother tutorials so she can get tech savvy.
 10. Watching our favorite movies to see which ones hold up, while a fire burns in the fireplace.

TM: Have you discovered anything new?

MS: I've gone on a deep dive of sketch comedy routines. Peter Sellers, Bob Booker and George Foster, Abbott and Costello,

and lots more. I think I'll get into some off-beat puppet stuff soon if anyone has any suggestions!

TM: What's the first thing you want to do once we are free to gather?

MS: Meet some friends at a bar or restaurant, just to be around people and one another.

TM: McCarter announced that you'd be directing *Tiger Style!*, a comedy by Mike Lew in 20/21. How did you come to collaborate with Mike on this?

MS: About a thousand years ago, Mike and I were interns together at Playwrights Horizons. We became fast friends and have now done almost ten productions together. That familiarity and trust adds a lot of joy to the collaboration, which I think translates to the stage. We don't have to be polite with one another, so it's really about making the best show we can. Although I'm not Chinese-American, I do know what it's like to have family who've recently immigrated to the United States, and what it's like to sometimes feel between worlds as the characters of *Tiger Style!* do. But more than that, I appreciate Mike's wit. He has an ability to bounce from low brow comedy into biting acerbic satire. It's theater that's accessible and fun, yet provocative. What else could you want from a world-trotting adventure play about race and family!



Moritz von Stuelpnagel. Photo by Jenny Anderson



Raul Esparza in *Seared* on MCC Theater. Photo by Joan Marcus



Steve Boyer in *Hand to God* on Broadway. Photo by Sara Krulwich

ABOUT MORITZ

Moritz von Stuelpnagel (Director) Broadway: Theresa Rebeck's *Bernhardt/Hamlet* starring Janet McTeer (Roundabout), Noël Coward's *Present Laughter* starring Kevin Kline (three Tony Award nominations including Best Revival), Robert Askins' *Hand to God* (five Tony Award nominations including Best Play and Best Director). West End: *Hand to God* (Olivier Award nomination). Off-Broadway: Larissa Fasthorse's *The Thanksgiving Play* (Playwrights Horizons), Mike Lew's *Teenage Dick* (Ma-Yi/Public Theater), Nick Jones' *Important Hats of the Twentieth Century* (Manhattan Theatre Club), Nick Jones' *Verité* (Lincoln Center Theatre/LCT3), Mike Lew's *Bike America* (Ma-Yi), Nick Jones' *Trevor* (Lesser America), Robert Askins' *Love Song of the Albanian Sous Chef* (Ensemble Studio Theatre), *Mel & El* (Ars Nova), Michael Mitnick's *Spacebar* (Studio 42), and Adam Szymkowicz's *My Base and Scurvy Heart* (Studio 42). Regional: Williamstown Theatre Festival, Huntington Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, and more. Moritz is the former artistic director of Studio 42, NYC's producer of "unproducible" plays.

www.moritzvs.com



Moritz von Stuelpnagel