

exclusive to *ON THE AISLE*

THE POSSIBILITIES

by **Howard Barker**

directed by **Meg Taintor**

**Ensemble - Timothy F. Hoover, Sarah Huling, Lorna McKenzie,
Jennifer O'Connor, Brian Quint, Sarah Pauline Robinson &
Andrew Winson**

**[Whistler In The Dark](#) at Charlestown Working Theatre
442 Bunker Hill Ave., Charlestown / (617) 945 - 9033
through Mar. 4**

Reviewed by **[Will Stackman](#)**

Of all the current hard-edged playwrights across the pond in England and Ireland, poet/ aesthetician/playwright **Howard Barker** is probably the least seen here and indeed at home. His somewhat oblique *theatre of catastrophe*, somewhat akin to Caryl Churchill's efforts, has been developed with an experimental theatre group The Wrestling Room. "**The Possibilities**" is a collection of ten moral fables written in the '90s, which are even more relevant in today's uneasy world. The show continues the Charlestown Working Theatres recent presentations of physically expressed theatre with intellectual content. Incidentally, The name of this new theatre ensemble, Whistler in the Dark, comes from an admonition is one of the two poems used as prologue to the show.

An ensemble, four women and three men, mostly recent theatre grads, present these pieces briskly under the direction of **Meg Taintor**, the group's Co-Artistic Director. The cast includes **Timothy F. Hoover**, seen at TheatreZone last season as Tom Joad, **Brian Quint** who just did "Romance 101" with Lowell's new Image Theatre, and very tall **Andrew Winson** who was in the Theatre Coop's "Our Country's Good" last fall. **Sarah Huling** most recently appeared with the Czech-American Marionette Theatre in "The Book of Esther", **Lorna McKenzie** has worked with Footlight, Walpole, Medway, and Destruction, **Jennifer O'Connor** was also seen in TheatreZone's "Grapes of Wrath" while **Sarah Pauline Robinson** graduated from Brandeis/Theatre Arts last May

Robinson's most effective contributions are in "The Necessity of Prostitution..."

and as a wife who shows her ankles in a newly puritanical society. Winson has striking roles as an traveling executioner in "The Dumb Woman's Ecstasy" and as the Philosophical Lieutenant. This last piece gives McKenzie a chance to shine without words, which she uses aplenty as a bag lady/bookseller opposite Winson in another piece. Quint is notable as a rug weaver whose town is under siege, a war-weary Emperor, and a soldier returning, perhaps from the same wars. O'Connor has a number of effective feisty parts, while Hoover's best turn is as a peasant most concerned with shining the Emperor's boots. Huling has her moments throughout, starting as a fearful weaver in the first scene.

Everything is done simply, with formal onstage costume changes, mostly additions to a basic uniform, all designed by **Kelly Leigh David** and a few bits of scenery and furniture.. There's a slight feel of student earnestness appropriate to these fables, which are somewhat reminiscent of Brecht's Lehrstuck, though more bloody-minded,. Physical movement is precise and effective, as is **Andrew Dickey's** lighting. "The Possibilities" is a strong opening production for this company, whose next effort is announced as Eric Overmeyer's "In Perpetuity Throughout the Universe," which approaches ideological clashes and social doom in his own fashion.

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