

# Stage Center Theatre

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## Dead Man's Cell Phone

Cell phones have become essential to almost everyone's daily life. No matter where you are, you will almost always hear one ringing. In Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, a young woman (Jean) becomes so irritated by the constant ringing of a stranger's cell phone that she walks up to confront him. She quickly discovers that the "rude" gentleman who will not answer his phone is dead. The phone rings

once again, and Jean answers, choosing to get herself involved in the dead man's complex personal affairs. Jean then decides to deal with the man's mother, wife, mistress, brother, and job. She tells a few lies along the way to help the grieving family, and grows throughout the process.

As she attempts to wrap up the dead man's relationships for him, she realizes small things can

have a powerful meaning. The play combines a mortality tale with humor, and takes advantage of the debate surrounding cell phones to create a truly wonderful tale.

NEIU students, faculty, and staff are able to see *Dead Man's Cell Phone* for free with a valid university ID.

## Meet the Author: Sarah Ruhl

Born in Wilmette, Illinois, Sarah Ruhl is a notable playwright from the Chicago-land area. After attending Brown University, her play *The Clean House* was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 2005. She has written several other award winning plays, including *Demeter in the City* and *Passion Play: A Cycle in Three Parts*. Several of her scripts have been translated into different languages and performed worldwide. She has received numerous awards for her work, including

the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship. Ruhl's recent work, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, premiered in 2008 in New York City to rave reviews. This play brings up several issues, one of them being technology and its ability to both unite and isolate. Cell phones, e-mail, texting, and social networking sites allow anyone to connect with people without ever seeing them, something which is trou-

bling to many people. Ruhl makes these concerns evident in *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, which NEIU students, faculty, and staff can see for free at the Center Stage Theatre. Her ability to combine humor with current issues makes Ruhl's work both enjoyable and thought provoking, and she continues to be an important voice in the theatre community.

### UPCOMING SHOWS

#### MAIN STAGE 7:30PM

Reservations: 773-442-4274

*Dead Man's Cell Phone*

October 7-9, 14-16, 21-23

*Around the World In 80 Days*  
November 18-20, December 2-4,  
9-11

#### STUDIO SERIES 7:30PM F 109

*Kita y Fernanda*

October 11-13, 18-20

#### CHILDREN'S THEATRE 10:30AM

**Monday, Wednesday,  
Friday**

Reservations: 773-442-5971

*The Wolf and Its Shadows*

November-December

# STUDIO SERIES SPOTLIGHT

## Kita y Fernanda at NEIU

Tanya Saracho's *Kita y Fernanda* will open as part of NEIU's Studio Series this October. This powerful story of two very different girls tackles several important social and political issues, including immigration, class, and friendships.

The story is framed by the accidental meeting of Kita and Fernanda years after they have last spoken and is told mainly by memories the two women have of their childhoods, relationships with each other, and relationships with their mothers.

As the story progresses, we learn that Kita and her mother have come to America from Mexico with no documentation and eventually find themselves working for Fernanda's wealthy family in Texas. Despite their extremely different lifestyles and backgrounds, the girls develop an unlikely friendship. Over the years, however, both girls change and begin to value different things in life. Kita must work harder than Fernanda, and her undocumented

status makes her life much more difficult than her friend can truly understand. This strains their friendship to its eventual dissolution. Saracho's emotionally charged story about these women brings up crucial issues of our time, and can be seen at the Stage Center Theatre this October 11-13 and 18-20. NEIU students, faculty, and staff receive free admission with a valid university ID.

### Meet the Author: Tanya Saracho

Tanya Saracho is a notable Chicago actress and playwright notable for focusing on Latino issues in her work. Raised near the border of Texas and Mexico, Saracho transitioned between cultures with ease. After completing her theatre degree at Boston University and moving to Chicago, Saracho had difficulty finding bilingual actors who were able to speak the Spanish her scripts required. In 2000, Saracho co-founded Teatro Luna, a Latino theatre ensemble. Though Teatro Luna focuses on issues within the Latino community, people of all back-

grounds enjoy the performances, and even those who do not speak Spanish are able to understand the bilingual stories.

Well known in the Chicago theatre community, Saracho has gained national attention for her works, as well. *El Nogalar*, *Our Lady of the Underpass*, *Jarred*, and an adaptation of *The House on Mango Street* are just a few examples of her successful script-writing. Her scripts carefully take into account current events and personal experiences, to make for more realistic and emotionally moving dialogue.

#### Stage Center Theatre

A great time for family and friends of all ages, Stage Center Theatre also offers a great value on entertainment. Admission to all productions is **free for students, faculty, and staff with a valid NEIU ID.**

#### Main Stage

General Admission.....\$10  
Seniors/Alumni/Students...\$8  
Children 6-12.....\$6

**Studio Series** tickets are all \$3