

The Drama Circle

P.O. Box 1361, Carrboro, NC 27510

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New Play about TV Pioneer to Premiere

The Drama Circle to present 'On the Rooftop with Bill Sears' by Carrboro playwright Mark Perry

Some people might still remember a TV program called "In the Park," which ran on CBS on Sundays in the early 1950s. It was a family show that featured a local Philadelphia radio and TV personality named Bill Sears, who played an old man who could talk to the animals in the park where he went each day.



Bill Sears in 'In the Park'

Among the show's biggest fans was Ed Sullivan, the popular and powerful host of TV's "Toast of the Town." Then TV Guide, in one of its very first issues, did a feature on the show. And yet, as his career was approaching its apex, Bill Sears took stock of his life and made a choice that would seem to defy explanation. In *On the Rooftop with Bill Sears*, playwright Mark Perry set out to uncover an explanation. The result is a play that is funny yet poignant, nostalgic but intensely personal. Perry himself portrays Sears, a man sincerely grappling with his own destiny, seeking out his true calling.

On the Rooftop marks The Drama Circle's second production, the first being last spring's *A Dress for Mona*, also written by Perry. Like *Mona*, *On the Rooftop* introduces to a general audience the story of a hero known mostly within Perry's faith community, the Bahá'í Faith. The play emphasizes the universality of Sears' story, so that it can be enjoyed by all people, of whatever creed or background. The story encompasses themes of faith and the testing of faith that transcend sectarian divisions, as is evidenced by the diverse backgrounds of those working on *Rooftop's* production team.

On the Rooftop is directed by J. Chachula, Artistic Director for Flying Machine Theatre Co. This is the fourth collaboration between Perry and Chachula. Their work on *Underneath the Lintel* last fall earned critical acclaim, including "One of 2003's top picks" from the News & Observer and "best solo performance" from Robert's Reviews. *On the Rooftop* features props by Devra Thomas and lights by Robert Stromberg. The stage manager is Shawn Paulling.

"On the Rooftop with Bill Sears" runs April 15-18, 22- 25
at the Durham Arts Council PSI Theatre, 120 Morris St, Durham
Tickets are \$8-12 / Advance Tickets, directions and play excerpts at www.dramacircle.org
Please contact Mark Perry (928-9767) for more information