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**March 26, 2010**

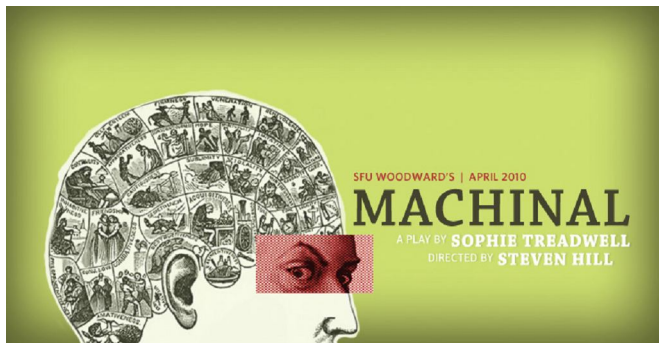
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**NOTE: UPDATED VENUE INFORMATION**

**SFU Woodward's Presents Modern Age Tragedy *Machinal* (April 7-17)**

Vancouver, BC – Simon Fraser University's SFU Woodward's Inaugural Program is set to launch its latest production, ***Machinal* (April 7–17)** – a modern age tragedy of isolation turned to murder.



Written by journalist Sophie Treadwell, *Machinal* (pronounced MACK-in-al) was first staged in 1928 and became a hit on Broadway where the cast included a young Clark Gable. The play is loosely based on the true story of an unremarkable American stenographer, Ruth Snyder, who was convicted of murder in 1927 and became the first woman to die in the electric chair. Her trial and death sentence caused a sensation throughout the United States. Snyder became Treadwell's inspiration for the character of Helen, a young woman trapped in a boring, mindless office job. In a desperate attempt to escape her confining existence, she chooses an equally unfortunate alternative –

a loveless marriage to her dull, unattractive boss. An unwanted pregnancy intensifies Helen's state of unhappy anxiety – and then she meets a man who offers a passionate alternative. Her response takes her down a dangerous path that ultimately leads to the electric chair.

*Machinal* explores themes of alienation and mechanization as it takes theatre-goers inside the skin of a woman who responds to the lure of passion instead of conforming to society's rules. Those themes are still compelling and relevant in today's technology-driven society and *Machinal* remains a provocative enquiry into how we live in a rapidly changing world. It maintains its fascination for theatre companies and contemporary productions are frequently staged throughout North America. This updated production of the play features SFU's full BFA acting class of 18 students and is directed by **Steven Hill**, a writer, performer, SFU faculty member and the co-artistic director of the acclaimed Leaky Heaven Circus.

***Machinal* in brief:** Based on the true story of a woman whose crime of passion led her to the electric chair. *Machinal* first appeared on Broadway in 1928 and remains a provocative commentary on our personal choices in a rapidly changing world. April 7-17, 2010.

**NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE:** *Machinal* will be staged at SFU Theatre on Burnaby Campus\* to accommodate further construction at the new SFU Woodward's complex at 149 Hastings Street. The final presentation in the SFU Woodward's Inaugural Program, *IMPRINT* (June 17-20), will be staged in the downtown facility's Fei and Milton Wong Experimental Theatre as originally announced.

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Tickets for *Machinal* in advance at [www.sfuwoodwards.ca](http://www.sfuwoodwards.ca) or 604.873.3311, or at the SFU Theatre box office before each performance.

**More information on all the Inaugural Program productions** is available at [www.sfuwoodwards.ca](http://www.sfuwoodwards.ca).

\* **SFU Theatre is located on Burnaby Campus**, 8888 University Drive, on Convocation Mall across from the WAC Bennett Library. For more detailed directions please call 778.782.3514