

Mickle Maher. *There Is a Happiness That Morning Is*. Theater Oobleck, DCA Storefront Theater, Chicago, 14 April–22 May 2011. <<http://theateroobleck.com/home>>.

Reviewed by Mary Silverstein

**I**N *There Is a Happiness That Morning Is*, Mickle Maher has imagined a witty, amusing, and moving love story about two college professors, inspired by two of William Blake's poems. The first poem, "Infant Joy" from *Songs of Innocence*, is taught by the exuberant Bernard (Colm O'Reilly). The second, "The Sick Rose" from *Songs of Experience*, is taught by the precise, severe Ellen (Diana Slickman). The college dean, James (Kirk Anderson), serves as the worm in this Garden of Eden. The audience serves as the students in the classroom. William Blake, eighteenth-century poet, is front, center stage. His poems, chalked with artistic flourish on a large blackboard which dominates the stage, are always in front of the

student–audience. They are referred to again and again by the characters, speaking in verse. So skilled are the actors that this seems natural, while it adds texture and increases the emotions of the plot.

Tension develops from the public lovemaking of these two teachers, witnessed by the dean. James, speaking in prose in contrast to Bernard and Ellen, insists that the two apologize publicly. An argument among the three ends with the dean being tossed to the floor in so realistic a manner that the audience is called upon for a doctor. When a doctor proves unnecessary, Bernard and Ellen return to making love, to everyone's relief. To be convincing, this one-act play needs the best of actors, as it had in this production. The starkness of the set, a blackboard with two podiums, serves to focus the audience on the Blake poems and the developing, multilayered, imaginative love story.

*Editors' note: Photographs of the production are in the online version of this review.*

## N E W S L E T T E R

### **New Members of Blake's Advisory Board**

Those who keep a weather eye on the journal's masthead will notice that we have two additions to the advisory board, Tristanne Connolly and Tilar Mazzeo. We are very pleased to have them on board. Below are the notes that they have provided to introduce themselves:

Tristanne Connolly is associate professor in the English Department at St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo. She is the author of *William Blake and the Body* (Palgrave, 2002) and several essays on Blake, romantic women poets, medicine, sexuality, and religion. Her recent work includes *Queer Blake*, co-edited with Helen P. Bruder (Palgrave, 2010), and *Blake 2.0: William Blake in Twentieth-Century Art, Music and Culture*, co-edited with Steve Clark and Jason Whittaker (Palgrave, 2012).

Tilar J. Mazzeo is the Clara C. Piper Professor of English at Colby College and the author of *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period* (University of Pennsylvania

Press), *The Widow Clicquot* (HarperCollins), *The Secret of Chanel No. 5* (HarperCollins), the forthcoming *The Ritz at War* (HarperCollins), and various essays on romanticism, William Blake, and historical criticism. She is currently working on a study of material culture, fashion, economic history, and the production of European romanticism.

### **Blake Exhibition in Moscow**

The first major exhibition of Blake's works in Russia, William Blake and British Visionary Art, opened at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts <<http://www.arts-museum.ru>> in late November and runs until mid-February. A collaboration between the museum and the Tate, it includes works by other artists and from other British institutions. In conjunction with the exhibition, a Russian translation of *Songs* has been published. We hope to have a review of both in an upcoming issue.