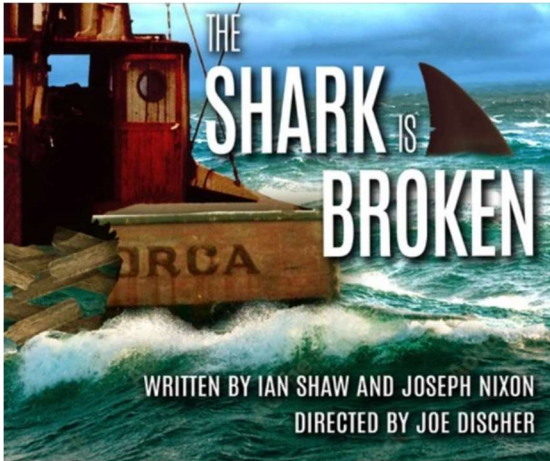


The Howard – Theater Reviews – “The Shark is Broken” at POP

by Howard Steven Frydman

October 9, 2024



Hello Possums – during the Summer of '75, there was one film, JAWS, the first of the Summer Blockbusters, that terrified and begged an entire nation – “You’ll never go in the water again”! But this day, Playhouse on Park, is inviting all to “come ashore and be witness” to this luxurious theatrical journey of “Jaw-covevery.” – “The Shark Is Broken” – the fascinating “behind the scenes” making of 26 year old Producer/Director Steven Spielberg’s epic cinema classic about a “great white shark” starring Jake Regensburg as Richard Dreyfuss, Nicholas Greco as Roy Scheider, and John D. Alexander as Robert Shaw. “The Shark Is Broken”, direct from Broadway and having it’s Connecticut premiere, opens POP’s 2024/2025 16th Main Stage Season, with their theme of

“Reframing the Familiar”, written by Ian Shaw (Actor Robert Shaw’s son) and Joseph Nixon and directed by Joe Discher. Folks, as our intrepid actors sang in the film “Show Me the Way to Go Home”- indeed wherever you may roam the place to be this Autumn is at POP for this riveting and oh-so comedic fish-tale!



“You’re Gonna Need A Bigger Boat”- Yep, there is a Great White “Man”-Eating Shark hanging around these parts, and his name is “Bruce”. We may not see this mechanical “man-muncher”, within POP, he be minding his own business in the seas off of Martha’s Vineyard, but we have indeed come aboard his pursuer – “The ORCA”. Friends, I must state, I am literally stunned, on entry to the POP theater, “Land of Goshen, ahem, I mean “Amity”, there be the famous “ORCA”, it’s a whale of a fishing boat that almost brought down one of Filmdom’s movie monsters, and here it takes center stage. Big, Bold, Brimming with nautical film artifacts, encircled by a real water pool, this replica, commands our full

attention. This illustrious recreation is by Scenic Designer Johann Fitzpatrick and it’s a masterpiece of onstage settings. The Orca replicant literally fills the entire POP theater, from the rafters to first row. OMG – oh-so creative, a true “piece de resistance”, and adds so much to the production’s re-creation of being part of the film’s set. BTW- how about adding a few floating fishes to the onstage water tank?



So, come now and hear a long tale, of the making of one of the greatest, grandest, movie blockbusters ever made, that still lives on today in sequel upon sequel. BTW, take note, that in “Back to the Future- Part 2, when Marty McFly ventures to 2015 (oy), we see a Holographic theater featuring “Jaws 19” directed by Max Spielberg, Steven Spielberg’s son. Folks, it’s the old Hollywood adage of making a movie – “Hurry Up and Wait” – and that is actually what “The Shark Is Broken” is all about-the long wait. By the way, instead of filming in a water tank on a film studios backlot- Spielberg wanted realism and filmed JAWS on the ocean. Friends,

and the final outcome of filming on the open seas is, “The Shark Is Broken” – the recollections of Robert Shaw via his son Ian on the making of the film.



So, what do those actors do while they are waiting, waiting, waiting, for in this case, the darn mechanical shark to work, boats and onlookers to get out of shots or the weather to clear up, and to finally hear Director Spielberg finally yell ACTION. Well friends, during those long months of “the making of JAWS”, they compete, verbally feud, question their acting skills, fight, get seasick, bask in the sun, seek their next big film such as Dreyfuss’s upcoming “Close Encounters of the Third Kind”, and for one cast member -they drink, drink and drink some more. In fact, some say, they are still searching for some bottles on the ORCA left by actor Robert Shaw. “The

Shark Is Broken” brings us three talented effervescent actors, Jake Regensburg as Richard Dreyfuss (an outstanding embodiment of Dreyfuss), Nicolas Greco as Roy Scheider, John D. Alexander as the ‘boozed up’ Robert Shaw, all three taking on these iconic, talented and gifted performers and the roles that are now legend. “The Shark Is Broken” at POP is a most excellent “Way-back Machine” event, and it’s almost a wrap by The Howard, yet, I beseech you to wait to the very end of the production to hear John D. Alexander as “Shaw” recreate the “USS Indianapolis” dialogue- it’s incredibly moving. Enjoy!!



(Available from <https://thehoward24.wordpress.com/2024/10/09/the-howard-theater-reviews-the-shark-is-broken-at-pop/>)