

...and even more praise for David Katz in

MUSE of FIRE

“...unique depth and humor...tremendous verve...and palpable passion”

—CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

HEADLINE: “MUSE gets to the heart of teacher-pupil dynamic: One-man melodrama revels in quest to excel”



“Great teachers are rarely benign. They leave scars. Yet they also leave stretch marks of the very best kind...Such is the nature of the master-apprentice relationship so winningly captured in MUSE of FIRE, actor-writer-composer-conductor David Katz's autobiographical one-man, many-character, self-described "melodrama."

"The story Katz tells has been told in many different ways. But Katz brings unique depth and humor to his particular experience, and there is much to be learned and savored along the way. The psychically grueling summer institutes that Katz attended were frequently ego-crushing affairs, but when things finally clicked for Katz...he understood exactly what Bruck was striving for. And so do we. A sequence involving the performance of *A Survivor from Warsaw*, Arnold Schoenberg's work about the Holocaust, raises the stakes further."

"...Stocky and bearded but surprisingly graceful, Katz throws himself into the performance of this show with tremendous verve, making Bruck and a slew of other characters spring to life through the use of telling details and palpable passion." —Hedy Weiss, *Chicago Sun-Times*

“...if his conducting is as fine as his acting...he must be superb”

—CHICAGO READER

HEADLINE: “Patton of the Podium: David Katz's one-man show is a clear-eyed tribute to a musical mentor with a tyrannical streak.”

“...David Katz must have felt a little like the boy on the burning deck during his apprenticeship to the famously temperamental conductor and teacher Charles Bruck, the subject of Katz's engrossing one-man show, MUSE of FIRE...Katz doesn't fear to show us Bruck at his worst. The maestro screams "You are hopeless" at one student conductor throughout an entire rehearsal; tells another to conduct with his arms raised high above his head, then mocks the ridiculous pose; forces a third to stand during a meeting because, Bruck says, he has not earned the right to sit.

"With his thick Hungarian accent and saliva-drenched lisp, Bruck lends himself to caricature. But Katz's performance goes far beyond imitation. Fluidly shifting back and forth between high-strung, eccentric Bruck and himself, it subtly registers Katz's own evolution from a skilled musical craftsman to something greater: an artist. And as Katz's maturation becomes evident, so does the humanity, complexity, and even humor underneath Bruck's fiery facade.



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MUSE of FIRE



"...I have never seen Katz lead an orchestra, but if his conducting is as fine as his acting, he must be superb. Every moment of his performance is characterized by emotional honesty, whether he's portraying himself as a shy newcomer or Bruck delivering a tirade. The two-act production climaxes with an extraordinary scene, in which Katz, with crisp timing, depicts Bruck and himself rehearsing the harrowing narration to *A Survivor from Warsaw*, Arnold Schoenberg's jaggedly atonal tribute to victims of the Holocaust. Katz's own interpretation of the text is intense but soft-spoken, while Bruck delivers the material in an anguished scream, unconsciously revealing the wellspring of feeling that shapes his teaching.

"...Certainly, MUSE of FIRE will appeal most strongly to music fans. But anyone whose life has been shaped by conflict and communication with a difficult parent or teacher or boss or lover should find Katz's virtuosic performance moving as well as illuminating."

—*Chicago Reader*

“...one man epic...” —THE LEADER (SUNY-FREDONIA, NY)

“...scenarios such as these leave audiences with ambiguous emotions, not knowing whether to roar with laughter at Bruck's over-the-top personality or shiver in fear at the notion of having to study under a fanatical teacher willing to go to any length to coerce the student to learn.

"What drives MUSE of FIRE are not the stories or experiences with which Katz entertains the audience, or even the renowned compositions of Tchaikovsky, Schumann, Wagner, Bach and Beethoven. Instead, it is the performance of Katz himself...the way in which he effortlessly transforms between harrowing sorcerer and timid apprentice..."

—*The Leader (SUNY-Fredonia) NY*

“...his...passion for the gorgeous music triumphs...” —TIME OUT

HEADLINE: “FOUR STARS: Katz sticks it to his mentor”

“Conductor/actor/playwright David Katz (now *there's* a resume you don't see every day) penned this one-man show, a tribute to legendary pedagogue Charles Bruck...(Katz's) off-beat skill-set proves an ideal vehicle for his thesis, concerning the "sorcerer's" secret imparted by the master: finding the place where "the music and the feeling" are the same, is as much the essence of good acting as the conductor's art.

"Katz's portrait of the iconic Bruck...is well-observed and affectionate...In a clever device, Katz has the maestro interrupt his own performance with withering critiques...Katz delivers two fully-inhabited, carefully differentiated portrayals...his exegetic passion for the gorgeous music triumphs."

—*TIME OUT Chicago*