

Stories of the innocent

‘The Exonerated’ will get you thinking

“It is hard to be a poet, or the crucifixion revisited.”

They are black, white, young, old, male, female.
They are poor.

And they were all wrongly convicted and sentenced to death.

These are their stories.

Playing at the Lincoln Center through May 6, “The Exonerated” is a spare, moving, gritty play that tells the stories of six death row inmates convicted of crimes they didn’t commit.

On a bare stage, with only staggered marble columns for a set and a backdrop of concrete slabs and chain link fence, a dozen or so men and women re-enact the lives of six human beings who got stuck in the wrong time and place.

“It is not easy to feel good in winter winds when ice is everywhere and you want to sing and you stand waiting for a train or a bus that may never come.”

Kerry, Gary, David, Sunny, Robert and Delbert are a cross-section of humanity who share the misfortune to be caught in a system that is more concerned with righteousness than justice.

Delbert Tibbs, a hitchhiking African-American poet who was convicted of rape and murder in the south in the 1970s, opens the play with his haunting prose.

“This is not the place for thought that does not end in concreteness,” he says.

The stories are graphic, powerful, painful, real.

Based on interviews, letters, transcripts, case files

RH IF YOU GO

“The Exonerated”

Lincoln Center Mini theater, 417 W. Magnolia, Fort Collins.

Friday and Saturdays through May 6, 8 p.m.

Cost: \$20, \$15 students and seniors.

Matinees Sunday April 23 and Sunday April 30, 2 p.m., \$13.

Thursday May 4, 7:30 p.m. \$20, \$15 students and seniors.

Phone: 221-6730

and public records, the production has been performed across the country and in London, for senators and Supreme Court justices, governors, dignitaries and religious leaders.

The cast has included famous names such as Robin Williams, Matt Dillon, Kathleen Turner, Mary J Blige and Alanis Morissette, as well as four of the real exonerated, playing themselves — Kerry Max Cook, Gary Gauger, Delbert Tibbs and Sunny Jacobs.

We can thank the organizers at the Lincoln Center for bringing this stark production here.

This is no fluffy Andrew Lloyd Webber-esque production.

No matter how you feel about the death penalty, this play will make you think. Hard. You will leave the theater changed.

If it can happen to them, maybe, just maybe, it could happen to you.

— Christine Steele