

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF
WRITERS' THEATRE

ISSUE TWENTY-SIX
SEPTEMBER 2009

THE BRIEF CHRONICLE



WT
WRITERS'
THEATRE

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“ETERNITY
IS A TERRIBLE THOUGHT.
I MEAN WHERE’S
IT GOING TO
END?”

- ROSENCRANTZ, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

THE BRIEF CHRONICLE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF WRITERS' THEATRE

ISSUE TWENTY-SIX SEPTEMBER 2009

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Michael Halberstam
Artistic Director

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Dear Friends:

Welcome to the 2009/10 Season! We are delighted to have so many of you back for another year and we're thrilled to see so many new faces join our family of Subscribers and Members. As always, we will strive to bring you another series of productions which embody everything you've come to expect from Writers' Theatre—a quality theatrical experience in which the word and the artist combine to bring you true dramatic alchemy in our intimate venues.

In this issue of *The Brief Chronicle* we hear from some of the creative minds who are collaborating on our opening production *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and we offer insight into the life and work of playwright Tom Stoppard. We also take you behind-the-scenes at some of our spring and summer events, including the 2009 *WordPlay* Gala, which turned out to be our most successful benefit to date, a marvelous opening night for *A Minister's Wife* and many of our education programs. Thank you to everyone who supported these remarkable programs. We wouldn't be here without your generosity of time, spirit and resources.

These challenging times call for challenging art and unprecedented levels of commitment from our staff, artists and patrons. It is a testament to your trust and faith in our productions that Writers' Theatre is thriving and ready to bring you another year of literary and dramatic adventures. We are so very fortunate to be in partnership with you! We thank you for your commitment and support and eagerly anticipate the upcoming season.

Yours Sincerely,

Michael

Kate

ON STAGE

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD

BY **TOM STOPPARD**

DIRECTED BY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
MICHAEL HALBERSTAM

September 29 – December 6, 2009

325 Tudor Court, Glencoe

Hamlet, Shakespeare's greatest drama, is retold from the perspective of his schoolmates, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in Tom Stoppard's comedic masterpiece. Equal parts Laurel and Hardy, *Waiting for Godot* and classic Shakespeare, Stoppard's scintillating wit, far-reaching imagination and astonishing skill with words traces the journey of these fascinating characters as they struggle to avoid the inevitability of the bard's tragic conclusion.

THE CAST: **LAURA COOVER, BRANDON FORD, SEAN FORTUNATO, ALLEN GILMORE, DANE HALVORSON, TERRY HAMILTON, JOHN HOOGENAKKER, GREGORY ISAAC, TIMOTHY EDWARD KANE, JOEY STEAKLEY, FREDRIC STONE, JEFF TRAINOR, KAREN JANES WODITSCH**

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This program is partially supported by a grant
from the *Illinois Arts Council*, a state agency.

THE ROAD TO ROSENCRANTZ

BY **BOBBY KENNEDY**, *Producing Assistant/Literary Associate*

Tom Stoppard was born Tomáš Straußler on July 3, 1937 in the town of Zlín, Czechoslovakia. His father was Jewish, and in 1939—fearing persecution—he safely relocated his family to Singapore. However, their peace proved short-lived. As the Japanese threatened to invade their new city in 1941, Stoppard's father was able to get his wife and two sons to India, but he was killed by a Japanese bombing raid before he could join them. In late 1945 Stoppard's Mother, Martha Straußler, married an officer in the British army, Kenneth Stoppard. The boys adopted their stepfather's last name and the family relocated to Bristol, England early the following year. Tom quickly developed a lifelong love of England.

Although he did well at school, Stoppard found his education to be uninspiring and chose not to go on to university. At age 17 he became a journalist, working at *Western Daily Press* and *Bristol Evening World* writing features, articles and eventually arts criti-

cism. In 1960 when the Bristol papers consolidated, Stoppard opted to write freelance and continue contributing his increasingly experimental columns and reviews to anyone interested. This lasted until 1962 when he moved to London and started writing theatre reviews for *Scene*, a culture magazine. But what Stoppard really wanted to do was write a play.

With the success of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* in 1956, the British theatre scene experienced a renaissance and suddenly playwriting became the hot medium for creative writing. Equally influential on Stoppard was the 1955 English-language London premiere of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, which forever modernized the possibilities of dramatic structure.

Stoppard's first full-length play, *A Walk on Water* (1960), was deemed more suitable for television, although it was eventually produced on stage in 1968 as *Enter a Free Man*. However, *Scene's* bankruptcy in 1963 forced Stoppard to



Playwright **TOM STOPPARD**

Photo by Amie Stamp

“THE MOST BRILLIANT DRAMATIC DEBUT OF THE SIXTIES.”

take his creative writing more seriously. He acquired an agent and began to write for radio and television with some success. He signed a contract to write his first—and only—novel and earned a Ford Foundation fellowship to hone his craft at a symposium in Berlin.

Prior to leaving for Berlin in 1964, the seed for Stoppard's breakout success, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, was planted in his brain. After having a television play rejected, his agent Kenneth Ewing, suggested that Stoppard, “stick to theatre,” boldly stating, “your work can't be contained on television.” Ewing then suggested that Stoppard write a play about the two supernumeraries in *Hamlet*, who upon arriving in England without the Prince of Denmark, were executed by one of Shakespeare's other characters, King Lear. The result was *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern meet King Lear*, a twenty-five minute, one-act play.

Unsatisfied with this version, Stoppard rewrote his initial treatment into a full-length play, moving the action from England back into the world of *Hamlet*, becoming what is known

today as *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. The Royal Shakespeare Company was impressed with the first two acts and commissioned a third, but ultimately passed on producing it, as did everyone who read the script.

Fortunately, a student group at Oxford University decided to produce the play at the 1966 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. After the group's original director quit, Stoppard stepped in to revise the piece and help run rehearsals. Meanwhile, plagued by insecurity about his playwriting abilities, Stoppard convinced himself that his fame would be found with his debut novel, *Lord Malquist and Mr. Moon*—not his drama.

Thus, Stoppard was caught completely off guard when his novel, although well received, failed to sell, and influential theatre critic Ronald Bryden of *The Observer* published a rave review of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*. As a result, the National Theatre in London leapt on the play, producing it in 1967. The praise intensified when Harold Hobson of the *Sunday Times* called *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* “the most important event in the British professional theatre of the last nine years.” Bryden, seeing the piece again, magnified his past praise, relating it “the most brilliant dramatic debut of the sixties.” Stoppard won the Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright and the Broadway transfer production won the Tony Award and New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play. At the age of 29, Tom Stoppard had permanently made his mark on the theatrical world. ■

PROLIFIC PLAYWRIGHT

Far from being a one-hit wonder with the success of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, Tom Stoppard continued to define modern drama with his clever, cerebral and intensely theatrical plays. He has won seven London Evening Standard Awards, four Tony Awards and numerous other prestigious honors. Here is a sampling of the legacy he continues to extend to this day.

THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND (1968) is his hilarious spoof of theatre critics and classic murder mysteries, à la Agatha Christie.

The true follow-up to his triumphant debut, **JUMPERS** (1972) explores the conflicting subjects of moral philosophy, logic and the sport of gymnastics.

TRAVESTIES (1974) portrays the efforts of James Joyce, Lenin and Dadaist founder Tristan Tzara's efforts to put on a production of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Ernest* in Zurich during World War I, as told through the aging memory of the production's lead actor. *Travesties* earned Stoppard his second Tony Award for Best Play.

THE REAL THING (1982) is a blisteringly insightful examination of love and fidelity. The play racked up major awards for its original London and Broadway productions, including Stoppard's third Tony Award for Best Play, plus a lauded Broadway revival in 2000.

ROUGH CROSSING (1984) is a raucous comedy set on an ocean liner. It was produced at Writers' Theatre in 2003 and featured *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* cast members Sean Fortunato and Gregory Isaac, with original music by Josh Schmidt, composer of last season's *A Minister's Wife*.

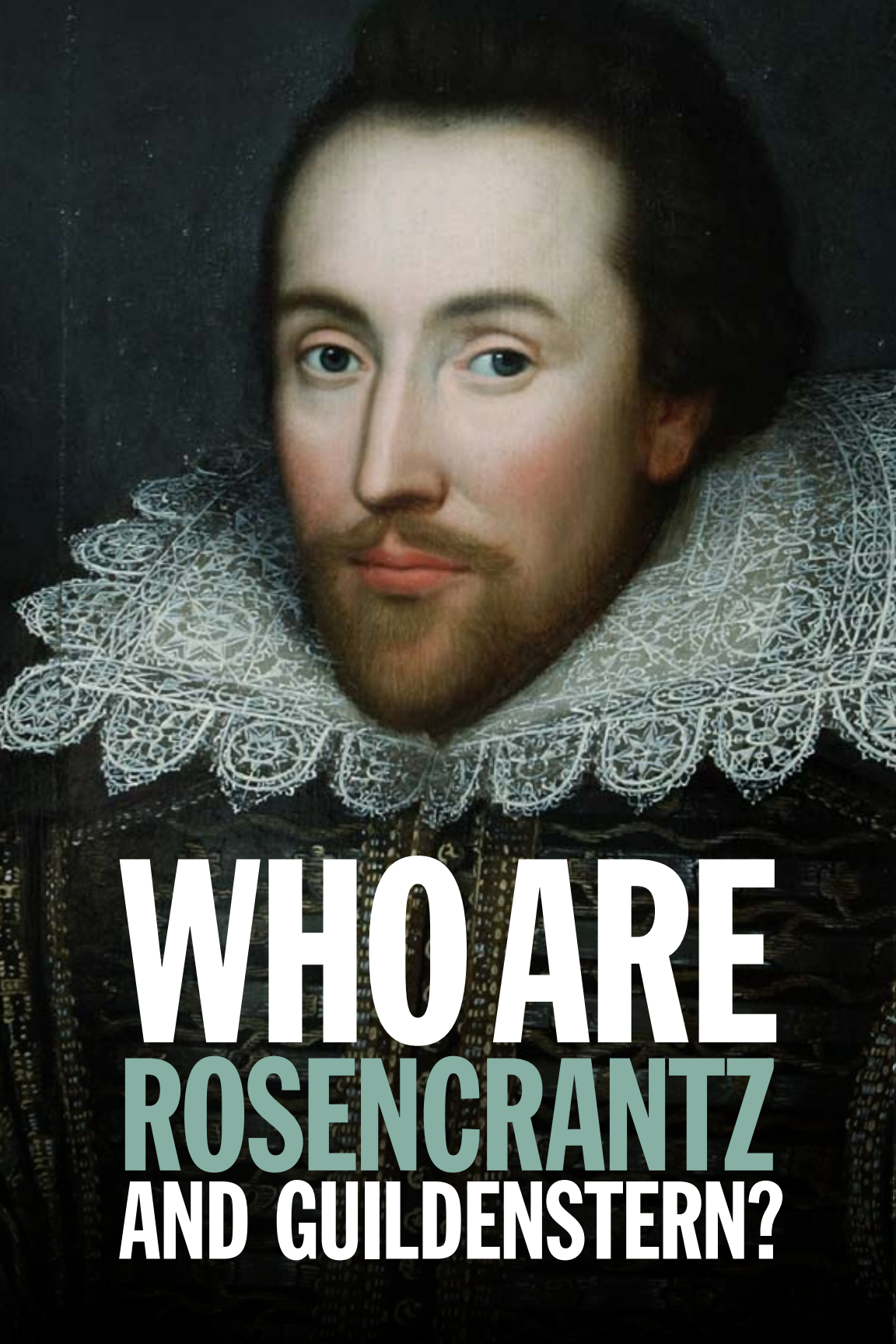
ARCADIA (1993), another Stoppard masterpiece, depicts different time periods and touches on a dizzying array of ideas, including quantum mechanics, landscaping, lust, romanticism and English literature.

THE COAST OF UTOPIA (2002) is an epic trilogy of plays (*Voyage*, *Shipwreck* and *Salvage*) that chronicle political radicalism in 19th century Russia. The 2006 Broadway production won Stoppard his fourth Tony Award for Best Play, among many other accolades.

Stoppard's newest play **ROCK 'N' ROLL** (2006), recounts pop music's influence on bringing down Communism in Eastern Europe. Goodman Theatre's production earlier this year starred Timothy Edward Kane, who is playing Guildenstern in Writers' current production.

Stoppard has also written and collaborated on many screenplays, including Terry Gilliam's brilliant fantasy, **BRAZIL** (1985), Steven Spielberg's **EMPIRE OF THE SUN** (1987) and **SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE** (1998), for which he won an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay.

Stoppard was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1977, knighted in 1997 and appointed to the prestigious Order of Merit in 2000.



WHO ARE ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN?

“Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are a curious and rather appealing couple, customarily thought of as ‘unsympathetic,’ as spies and accessories to the evil plot against Hamlet. However nothing in the play indicates a shared guilt with the King; they are told little, they obey orders and are somewhat bewildered, having been thrust into a situation which has nothing to do with them and they hardly understand. Because of this they have the air of occupying a level above the action, a different level of reality.”

– Notes from the original 1966 Edinburgh Fringe Festival Production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the title character's throne is usurped by his uncle Claudius, who has murdered Hamlet's father and married his mother. When Hamlet's father comes to him as a ghost and commands him to avenge his death, Hamlet is immediately aware that whatever path he takes will likely lead to his own mortality. If he accuses Claudius of murder on the word of a ghost he will be discounted as mad. If he attempts to kill the king, he will most likely meet his end through violent retribution. Hamlet's solution is to behave as if he is insane, which allows him to bide his time while investigating his uncle for a definitive sign of guilt. To find out why Hamlet is behaving so strangely, Claudius sends for his nephew's school friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and asks them to spy on Hamlet—which they do. When Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are charged by the king to lead Hamlet to his death, Hamlet easily turns the tables on his two trusting friends and ensnares them in their own deadly trap.

It is always a rather shocking moment in the play when Hamlet, the great philosopher and supposed humanist, reveals that he has condemned his

friends to death. After all, they were only following orders. Hamlet tells his best friend, Horatio, that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have died explaining:

“Why, man, they did make love to this employment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat

Does by their own insinuation grow:

‘Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes

Between the pass and fell incensed points of mighty opposites.”

It is in this seed of Hamlet's uncertainty that Stoppard grew his play. Stoppard asks: what if these school friends are perfectly reasonable—even likeable—and what if we got caught up in their dilemma? True to form, Stoppard is not content to stop there. He takes the play a step further into the realm of the absurd, asking what if Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's entire existence was defined exclusively by Shakespeare's play? In doing so, they are defined not by laws of science but by the laws of theatre and Stoppard might just be saying, “all the world is a stage, and all the men and women merely players!” ■

DIRECTOR'S SIDEBAR: MICHAEL HALBERSTAM

IN LOVE WITH LANGUAGE



Writers' Theatre Artistic Director Michael Halberstam gets in touch with his sillier side as Rafe in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* at *The Stratford Festival* (1990). Photo by David Cooper.

Writers' Theatre Artistic Director Michael Halberstam has always loved words. "As a child, I knew I wanted to be an actor and I performed in school plays when I was six years old," explains Halberstam. But it wasn't until being accepted into the University of Illinois' actor training program that his lifelong romance with language really began. "I was immersed in the classics: the Greeks, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ibsen, Chekhov, Shaw, Williams, Pinter and of course, Stoppard. These became the staples of my educational diet and I gained an appetite for eloquent dramatic rhetoric that I have never lost."

After moving to Chicago shortly after college graduation, Halberstam was naturally drawn toward the classics. He worked almost exclusively on Shakespeare, including productions of *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure* and *The Winter's Tale* among others. Halberstam reminisces, "perhaps it was being brought up amidst the rolling landscape of England or perhaps it was simply my voracious appetite for reading (I claimed to have read all the novels in the children's library by age 10), whatever it was—I have always enjoyed an ability to parse difficult text." But the true catalyst for his deep understanding of classic works was the two years he spent as a member of the Stratford Festival's Young Company in Ontario, Canada.

The Young Company was an intensive program designed to completely immerse young actors in a classical repertory company alongside some of the world's greatest performers, including actor Nicolas Pennell, who could claim a lineage of teachers tracing back

to Shakespeare himself. "Nick was an extraordinarily private person, but he took an immediate interest in me because he knew I wanted to learn from him." Halberstam's residency at the Stratford Festival included performing the title role in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* by Beaumont and Fletcher, and it was these two years that gave him a new appreciation for the power of the written word. The Young Company had a profound influence on him and became the direct impetus towards founding Writers' Theatre upon his return to Chicago, dedicating the company to the word and the artist.

The work of playwright Tom Stoppard is a natural choice for Writers' Theatre. As a frequently produced playwright there have been ample local opportunities to see his plays, including *Remy Bumppo*, *Court Theatre* and most recently *Goodman Theatre*. "Stoppard is so oft revived because of the richness of his text and the way he embraces the theatrical art form," says Halberstam. "He shapes his characters and delves into their psychol-

"I WAS IMMERSSED IN THE CLASSICS"

ogy through an astonishingly specific use of words. He does this without compromising character, substance or plot. Stoppard has created a linguistic style uniquely his own." Directing *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* represents the perfect marriage of Halberstam's passion for language, his wit and his desire to honor the classic texts that he fell in love with as a child—and now with a very exciting and contemporary sensibility. ■

WHY HERE? WHY NOW?

In this new The Brief Chronicle series we explore what brings a director and a particular production together. Here, the 2009/10 Season directors share what draws them to their respective plays, why they want to stage them at Writers' Theatre and why they feel it is important to direct them at this point in time. We begin with Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and the 2009/10 Season opener, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard.

You've directed a Tom Stoppard play at Writers' Theatre once before, *Rough Crossing* at Books on Vernon in 2003. What attracts you to his writing?

I have always admired wit and Stoppard cannot help himself but be witty. His intellect is perhaps one of the finest in contemporary playwriting. It seduces and dazzles with its brilliance and at the same time illuminates and elevates the fundamental traits of human behavior. He also celebrates the theatrical art form. Stoppard's plays want to be plays—they are not screenplays masquerading nor do they long for a cinematic treatment—they revel in the theatre and embrace its nature. Consequently they are enormously fun

to explore as an actor, director, designer and of course, audience member.

Why, out of all of Stoppard's many plays, did you decide on *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*?

From a purely practical perspective, I don't think there's been a major production of the play in the Chicago area in at least ten years, so it was definitely ripe for revival. I've also had a crack at directing *Hamlet* in the past few years and now it's a marvelous challenge to tackle Stoppard's take on the piece. I was flirting around with a Shakespeare play for this season but when *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* revealed itself as a possibility, it was too much of a temptation to resist. Furthermore, it addresses themes of

great consequence but does so with a light-hearted touch. We crave substance when we go to the theatre but we don't want to be crushed by it—we want profound experiences but need to escape from our surroundings and laugh a little too.

Stoppard's early work has often been referred to being "beyond absurdity" and a reaction to absurdist playwrights like Samuel Beckett and Jean Genet. How would you describe the play's importance in building upon absurdist theatre and creating a new style of modern drama?

Well, I think the answer is within the question. Stoppard builds upon writers like Beckett and Genet, but as all great artists who take inspiration from the masters, he puts his own spin on their artistry. Stoppard's style lets the audience know it's best not to worry too much about the world of the play making sense. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* is neither as bleak as Genet nor as hopeless as Beckett—it uses many of the same conventions but offers a much more effervescent theatrical experience.

Why are Writers' Theatre and the Tudor Court stage ideal places to stage the play?

Great plays require great actors. Writers' Theatre puts faith in the skill of our performers, and we already dedicate resources towards recruiting the significant talent necessary to bring such plays to life. We are also blessed with an extremely clever

design team who will use the intimacy of the Tudor Court Theatre to draw the audience into an unexpected world. The enormous complexity of the play is balanced by the fact that most of its significant scenes are intimate, with only two or three characters present. Actors Sean Fortunato, Timothy Edward Kane and Allen Gilmore will soar in the intimacy of our space. They will be complimented by moments of tremendous theatrical verve as Shakespeare's world comes periodically crashing through Stoppard's...or is it the other way around?

After six seasons of performing at the Tudor Court theatre, why is it time for Writers' Theatre to return to this playwright and his debut success?

Frankly, I'm dying to produce *The Coast of Utopia*. Moving into Tudor Court was effected with the understanding that there were certain projects that the bookstore venue could not hold and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* was unquestionably one of them. I was not certain in fact that Tudor Court could hold it until my good friend and former Associate Artistic Director, Jimmy McDermott handed me a breakdown of the play that he had put together some years before. Suddenly, the possibilities for the play in this space roared into my imagination and reignited my fiery desire to produce the piece. We are all wildly excited about bringing it to life for you now, and hopefully there will be more Stoppard to come! Perhaps even *The Coast of Utopia*. Anyone care to underwrite it? ■

WHAT'S
HAPPENING
AT WRITERS' THEATRE
BACKSTAGE



WordPlay 2009

Writers' Theatre's Annual Gala

On April 24, 2009, more than 350 friends and supporters of Writers' Theatre gathered at The Peninsula Chicago for *WordPlay* 2009, the theatre's annual Gala. The much-anticipated event, co-chaired by Amalia Mahoney of Winnetka and Christine Pompizzi of Glencoe, sold out two months in advance and raised a record-breaking \$395,000!

An unseasonably warm, 80-degree day set the stage for a truly magical event; upon arrival, guests headed onto The Peninsula's fabulous outdoor terrace, where they enjoyed cocktails and hors d'oeuvres surrounded by the brilliant lights of downtown Chicago.

As night fell, party-goers took their seats in the ornately-decorated Grand Ballroom, where they enjoyed a preview of the dynamic musical revue, *Oh Coward!*, which will be a highlight of the 2009/10 Season. Finally, guests energetically raised their paddles to purchase a number of exciting Live Auction prizes, including luxury vacations, trips to the GRAMMY Awards and once-in-a-lifetime private performances by Writers' talented artists.

The evening ended after dessert with a drawing of the *WordPlay* Grand Raffle prize of a 2009 Mini Cooper or \$20,000 cash. The prize went to Mary Pat Studdert.

The Trustees of Writers' Theatre would like to extend their deepest gratitude to the individuals and organizations who helped to make the WordPlay 2009 Gala such a success:

Gala Co-Chairs

Amalia Mahoney
Christine Pompizzi

Gala Sponsors:



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Special Thanks

Writers' Theatre would also like to thank the following generous supporters that made the 2009 WordPlay Gala Live Auction possible.

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1. Liesel Pritzker, Artistic Director Michael Halberstam, Martyl Langsdorf, Christopher Strauss and Irene Pritzker **2.** Writers' Theatre artists John Sanders, Rob Lindley and Heidi Kettenring performing selections from *Oh Coward!* **3.** Chris Pfaff, Lloyd Culbertson, Bianca Juarez, Sara Pfaff and Rick Carpenter **4.** Elizabeth Ballis, Andi Srulovitz, Tom Hodges, Gail Hodges and Carol Adelman **5.** Gala Co-Chairs Amalia Mahoney and Christine Pompizzi **6.** Jack Segal and Bill Sharp of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Corporate Sponsor of the 2009 WordPlay Gala **7.** Mary Phillips, Trustee Dagmara Kokonas, Patty Mosele and Elisabetta Franchini

RECENT EVENTS: A MINISTER'S WIFE OPENING NIGHT

The start of every production is always met with joy, excitement and pride by the Writers' Theatre family—but on Friday, June 5, 2009 the theatre was truly abuzz. After four years in the making, friends and supporters packed the house at Tudor Court for the opening night of Writers' Theatre's first ever musical, *A Minister's Wife*.

The evening began with a private champagne reception for the Production Sponsors, whose invaluable support was instrumental in helping us to develop the project and realize its World Premiere. Together with Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and the production's writing team, they toasted the extraordinary journey of the piece. After the show—which concluded with a hearty standing ovation—the artists joined the audience for a lively celebration with hors d'oeuvres provided by Di Pescara.



1. Executive Director Kate Lipuma with 2008/09 Season Sponsor Mary Green and Trustee Sara Cohan
 2. Director's Society members Avy and Marcie Stein with Director of Institutional Advancement Rachel Weinstein
 3. *A Minister's Wife* Assistant Musical Director Tim Splain, Composer Josh Schmidt and actor Kevin Gudahl (Rev. James Morell)
 4. Artistic Director Michael Halberstam with Director's Society members Lou and Dick Hurckes
 5. Director's Society members Michael and Christine Pope and Clay Brock
 6. Director's Society member Carolyn Colburn with Joanne Pertz



Students at Greenbriar Elementary School in Northbrook explored fairy tales during a Write On! Residency.



Working together as a group, Northbrook Students created their own original version of The Emperor's New Clothes.

HANDS-ON IN THE CLASSROOM WRITE ON! RESIDENCIES

Serving schools in Chicago and the northern suburbs, Writers' Theatre is dedicated to providing education outreach programs that foster the development of creative expression, engage students in cross-cultural dialogues, encourage collaboration and critical-thinking and most of all—are fun! During the last three years, our education programs have reached more than 30,000 students throughout the Chicagoland area.

One of our exciting education outreach programs is the *Write On!* Residency Program. Writers' Theatre teaching artists work directly with teachers and principals to create lesson plans customized to compliment any classroom curriculum. Through writing, theatre and ensemble exercises, the residency program inspires students to find their own artistic voice and to collaborate with classmates.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS PAST YEAR'S RESIDENCIES INCLUDE:

DISTRICT 28 AFTER-SCHOOL KID CARE

Offering after-school creative writing and theatre classes focusing on literacy, imagination and performance, first though fifth grade students explored fairy tales, myths and legends using their bodies and voices to create their own stories.

EXPLORING MYTH AT NEW TRIER HIGH SCHOOL

After studying Homer's *The Odyssey* in their freshman English class, students collaborated as actors, writers, assistant

directors and technicians to create their own original piece, *Journey into a Dream*, using storytelling with themes of courage and bravery to dramatize a hero's journey.

STUDYING NOVELS AT ALCOTT AND BELDING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Students at Alcott Elementary explored the non-fiction novel *We Beat the Street* and used the themes and ideas in the novel to create their own original performance piece. At Belding Elementary students studied *The Devil's Arithmetic* and adapted and performed scenes from the book.

WE ARE NOW BOOKING WRITE ON! RESIDENCIES FOR THE 2009/10 SCHOOL YEAR!

Programs are flexible and can be scheduled for just a few days or several months. To bring this program to your school contact Nicole Gilman, Director of Education, at 847-441-6840 or ngilman@writerstheatre.org.

SPONSOR SALUTE



Writers' Theatre salutes Harris Bank, our Corporate Production Sponsor for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Harris has been a longtime supporter of the theatre and we are thrilled that they have decided to partner again with us this season. Last spring, Writers' Theatre was pleased to welcome Harris' Senior Vice President Joe Dillon to our Board of Trustees and to celebrate the company's support at our annual WordPlay Gala, for which Harris generously underwrote the creation of a promotional video showcasing the company and its programming; this video may now be viewed by audiences in our lobby and our website at writerstheatre.org.

"Harris appreciates the opportunity to sponsor the terrific work of Writers' Theatre. We admire and support its commitment to artistic excellence as well as to the community." - **JOE DILLON**.

Writers' Theatre looks forward to continuing to build upon our relationship with Harris Bank, a company with a rich tradition of community service and civic engagement that supports other worthy North Shore cultural institutions like the Chicago Botanic Garden and Ravinia Festival. We hope that our partnership will continue to flourish for many seasons to come.



MARY PAT STUDDERT

Since joining the Writers' Theatre Board of Trustees in 2007, Mary Pat Studdert has consistently demonstrated enthusiasm and leadership. In addition to serving as Board Secretary, Mary Pat was at the vanguard of Writers' efforts to develop our first-ever musical—the world premiere of *A Minister's Wife*.

"Given my lifelong love of theatre, I was thrilled and proud to be part of a team of avid Writers' Theatre supporters who were able to help bring *A Minister's Wife* from an idea to a fully-realized show. It was an amazing two-year journey and I felt privileged to watch it unfold. The whole experience was incredibly rewarding and I am now very excited about *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. I love the behind-the-scenes access production sponsorship affords me and my friends. I would urge anyone that loves Writers' Theatre to take advantage of this wholly unique experience."

- **MARY PAT STUDDERT**



TAKE A NEW YEAR'S LONDON TOUR

December 30, 2009 — January 6, 2010

REGISTRATION DEADLINE EXTENDED

There is still time to sign up for Writers' Theatre's annual New Year's London Tour and experience the glamour and glory of London's West End theatre district!

Curated and led by Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and former *Chicago Tribune* chief theatre critic Richard Christiansen, this getaway will feature six world-class productions; dynamic, thought-provoking post-show discussions; engaging, private talks with esteemed actors (past guests have included Sir Ian McKellen, Sir Derek Jacobi, Frank Langella and Zoe Wanamaker) and delicious meals at some of London's finest dining establishments.

The registration deadline has been extended to September 30. Space is extremely limited, so make your reservations early. For information, please call Development Manager Amber Bel'cher at 847-242-6012.



FROM PAGE TO STAGE

Read the book. See the play. Get involved!

From Page to Stage takes you inside the world of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead!*

Writers' Theatre and select North Shore libraries present the fifth annual *From Page to Stage* program. This comprehensive series of special events, lectures, readings and performances are designed to enhance and enrich your understanding of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*—Tom Stoppard's comedic twist on Shakespeare's great tragedy, *Hamlet*.

Schedule of Events:

Tuesday, September 22 – 6:30 p.m.

FILM VIEWING: ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD

Deerfield Public Library
920 Waukegan Road, Deerfield
847-945-3311 | www.deerfieldlibrary.org

In Tom Stoppard's directorial film debut, Gary Oldman and Tim Roth are brilliant as unwitting players of a dazzling game of illusion and reality. Their tennis-match debates on probability, identity and death crackle with wit.

Tuesday, September 22 – 7 p.m.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE? READINGS FROM HAMLET

Lake Bluff/Lake Forest Public Library
123 Scranton Avenue, Lake Bluff
847-234-2540
www.lakeblufflibrary.org

Enjoy readings of select scenes from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, directed by Jimmy McDermott, former Associate Artistic Director of Writers' Theatre, where he directed such hits as *The Maids*, *The Frog Prince*, *The Puppetmaster of Lodz* and *A Christmas Carol*.

Tuesday, September 29 – 6 p.m.

FILM VIEWING: HAMLET

Deerfield Public Library
920 Waukegan Road, Deerfield
847-945-3311 | www.deerfieldlibrary.org

Winner of four Academy Awards, Sir Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet* continues to be the most compelling screen version of Shakespeare's beloved play. Experience "the other side of the curtain" of Writers' Theatre's presentation of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* through this classic film adaptation of Shakespeare's great tragedy.

Thursday, October 1 – 7 p.m.

HAMLET REVISITED

Northbrook Public Library
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook
847-272-6224
www.northbrook.info/lib_index.php

Dorothy Andries will discuss how Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are treated in various film adaptations by sharing film clips and offering insightful commentary. Ms. Andries is classical music and arts writer and a special studies instructor at the Chautauqua Institution in New York.

Sunday, October 4 – 2 p.m.

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD AS HAMLET INSIDE OUT

Winnetka-Northfield Public Library
768 Oak Street, Winnetka
847-446-7220 | www.winnetkalibrary.org

David Bevington, The University of Chicago Phyllis Fay Horton Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus, will focus on aspects of *Hamlet* as told from the perspective of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, asking what the play would be like without them; looking at these two great plays as obverse sides of the same coin.

Wednesday, October 7 – 7 p.m.

RE-IMAGINING SHAKESPEARE: FROM THE BARD TO THE ABSURD

Glenview Public Library
1930 Glenview Road, Glenview
847-729-7500 | www.glenviewpl.org

Join Robert Coscarelli, Professor Emeritus, College of Lake County as he brings the Bard to life and explores the legacy that inspired Tom Stoppard to write his absurdist comedy.

Tuesday, October 13 – 6:30 p.m.

FILM VIEWING: SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE

Deerfield Public Library
920 Waukegan Road, Deerfield
847-945-3311 | www.deerfieldlibrary.org

Tom Stoppard wrote this Oscar-winning motion picture that stars Gwyneth Paltrow, Judy Dench, Geoffrey Rush, Joseph Fiennes and Ben Affleck. This witty, sexy romp through 16th century London has Will carrying on a passionate affair with Lady Viola who is secretly and successfully impersonating a man in order to play the lead in his latest production!

Tuesday, October 20 – 7 p.m.

EXPLORING 50 MINUTE HAMLET

Highland Park Public Library
494 Laurel Avenue, Highland Park
847-432-0216 | www.hplibrary.org

The Shakespeare Project of Chicago has adapted *Hamlet* into a 50-minute, two-actor production. The Shakespeare Project's Artistic Director Jeff Christian, who adapted and directed the production, discusses the adaptation and rehearsal process, the resonant themes of the play and their experiences performing the piece. Select scenes from the play will be performed, focusing on Hamlet's relationship with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

From Page to Stage is generously supported by:

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M I C H A E L

A PERSONAL CREATION BY MICHAEL LACHOWICZ



Introducing Writers' Theatre's newest Dining Partner—Restaurant Michael.

Writers' Theatre is thrilled to partner with Winnetka's award-winning Restaurant Michael for the 2009/10 Season! Featuring impeccably crafted cuisine of the freshest local and organic ingredients, Restaurant Michael prepares haute cuisine with a contemporary flair.

Diners can enjoy a duo of Sauteed Medallion and Strudel of Foie Gras, Exotic Mushrooms and Duck Confit, Trio of Slowly Braised Beef Short Rib or Filet Mignon and Wild Mushroom Ravioli among other menu favorites before ending the meal with Panna Cotta with Lavender Scented Berries. An evening at Restaurant Michael is sure to please both the palate and the eye.

PLUS, Writers' Theatre patrons receive **10% off their guest check***, when they present their ticket stub. Conveniently located just 10 minutes from the theater at 64 Green Bay Road, Restaurant Michael is the perfect fit for any dining occasion.

For more information visit www.restaurantmichael.com or call (847) 441-3100.

*Offer only available on purchases of \$75 or more and subject to availability. Writers' Theatre ticket stub must be presented at time order is placed. One offer per table. Not valid with any other special discount offers or promotions and excludes alcohol, tax and gratuity.

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		29 7:30	30 7:30			

OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 8:00	2 8:00	3 4:00/8:00
4 2:00/6:00	5	6 7:30	7 7:30**	8 7:30	9 Private Event	10 4:00/8:00
11 2:00/6:00	12	13 7:30**	14 7:30	15 8:00	16 8:00	17 4:00/8:00
18 2:00/6:00	19	20 7:30	21 7:30	22 8:00	23 8:00	24 4:00/8:00
25 2:00/6:00	26	27 7:30	28 7:30	29 8:00	30 8:00	31 4:00/8:00

NOVEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 2:00/6:00	2	3 7:30	4 7:30	5 8:00	6 8:00	7 4:00/8:00
8 2:00/6:00	9	10 7:30	11 2:00/7:30	12 8:00	13 8:00	14 4:00/8:00
15 2:00	16	17 7:30**	18 7:30**	19 8:00	20 8:00	21 4:00/8:00
22 2:00/6:00	23	24 7:30	25 2:00/7:30	26	27 8:00	28 4:00/8:00
29 2:00/6:00						

DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 7:30	2 7:30	3 8:00	4 8:00	5 4:00/8:00
6 2:00						

**Post-Show Discussions

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE THE SHOW

Pre-show Discussion

Starting October 13, join us 30 minutes before the performance every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to explore Stoppard's masterful comedy and how it intersects with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This quick pre-show discussion gives audiences an inside look and helpful background information to get the most out of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*.

All pre-show discussions are free and open to the public.



Administration & Box Office

376 Park Avenue
Glencoe, Illinois 60022

Artistic Director

Michael Halberstam

Executive Director

Kathryn M. Lipurna

WRITERS'THEATRE.ORG
847-242-6000

Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more. Call 847.242.6000

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