

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF
WRITERS' THEATRE

THE BRIEF CHRONICLE

WT
WRITERS'
THEATRE

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THE REALIZATION OF
ADULTHOOD,
THE ETERNAL OPTIMISM
OF YOUTH
AND THE HOPES AND
DESPAIRS THAT LIE
BETWEEN.

THE BRIEF CHRONICLE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF WRITERS' THEATRE

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Michael Halberstam
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Dear Friends:

We are delighted to welcome director Rick Snyder back to Writers' Theatre. Many of you will remember his wonderful production of William Inge's *Bus Stop* two seasons ago. Rick has put together an incredible cast and design team for *The Lion in Winter* and we look forward to a trademark Writers' Theatre revival, in which a familiar classic gets a fresh, visceral, relevant staging on our intimate stage. Coincidentally, the family dynamics that Rick explored as an actor in *August: Osage County* at Steppenwolf very much complement the highly entertaining yet emotional circumstances of Goldman's play. This is perfect summer fare and an equally perfect conclusion to the 2007/08 Season.

Looking forward to the 2008/09 Season, we have an exciting variety of productions for you. The season will include two world premieres, one of which will be an original musical by Josh Schmidt who is currently being celebrated nationally for his recent New York triumph, *The Adding Machine!* These two new works will join two classic revivals making a season that you absolutely will not want to miss! For more information, please turn to page three.


In addition to our regular season programming, we are pleased to announce a revival of our box office record-setting production from 2000, *Nixon's Nixon*, featuring William Brown and Larry Yando reprising their roles and Kissinger and Nixon. Only season ticket holders are guaranteed advance access to this production! We encourage you to renew your season tickets and ensure your *Nixon's Nixon* tickets today. This is a limited-run production and is will on its way to selling out! If you are not currently a season ticket holder, more information about becoming one can be found on page 33.

On behalf of the board, staff and artists at Writers' Theatre, we would like to thank you so much for joining us this season. We hope that you enjoy *The Lion in Winter* and we look forward to seeing you again next season.

Yours Sincerely,

Michael

Kate



“A PICNIC’S
NO FUN WITHOUT
LOTS AND LOTS OF
YOUNG
PEOPLE.”

- MRS. POTTS, *Picnic*

ON STAGE: PICNIC

BY WILLIAM INGE DIRECTED BY DAVID CROMER

September 16 – November 16, 2008

Performed at 325 Tudor Court

When a charismatic young drifter arrives in a small Kansas town on the eve of a Labor Day picnic, the simmering repressions of its residents come rapidly to a boil. Frequently hilarious and profoundly moving, Inge’s masterpiece chronicles the hopes and despairs that lie between the realization of adulthood and the eternal optimism of youth.

This American classic is staged by Chicago’s own David Cromer whose previous work for Writers’ Theatre includes *The Price* and *Booth* and whose highly acclaimed production of *Adding Machine* recently enjoyed a successful run in New York, winning four OBIE Awards, including Best Direction and four Lucille Lortel Awards, including Outstanding Director.

THE CAST

ANNABEL ARMOUR
HILLARY CLEMENS
HANNA DWORKIN
ROBERT FAGIN
SAMANTHA GLEISTEN
MARC GRAPEY
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JACK MAGAW
COSTUME DESIGN
JANICE PYTEL
LIGHTING DESIGN
KEITH PARHAM
SOUND DESIGN
RICK SIMS
PROPERTIES DESIGN
ANDERS JACOBSON
STAGE MANAGEMENT
DAVID CASTELLANOS

MAKING PICNIC

BY **MARCEL LAFLAMME** CURATOR, WILLIAM INGE COLLECTION,
INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS



In the fall of 1950, still dizzy from the accolades that had been showered on *Come Back, Little Sheba*, William Inge took an apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and sat down to write a new play. While audiences had been drawn in by the domestic dysfunction of *Sheba's* Doc and Lola, Inge later wrote that he “felt a desire to expand beyond their dark, somewhat gloomy household and write a play that took place in the sunshine.” It was the sunshine of his native Kansas that would suffuse this new play, a flat, stark sort of

light that would glance off of surfaces and give way to depth only as twilight began to creep across the prairie.

As early as 1946, Inge had been working on a play entitled *Front Porch*, which grew out of what Inge described as “a memory of women – beautiful, bitter, harsh, loving, young, old, frustrated, happy – sitting on a front porch on a summer evening.” Into this sweet, sleepy feminine idyll would burst Hal Carter, a handsome drifter, who would act as both instigator and mirror for the women’s unspoken desires. Inge resumed working on *Front Porch* in 1951, tinkering with characters and adding new scenes until one version of the script called for fully six different sets.

At this point, Lawrence Langner, who had been involved with the casting of *Sheba*, encouraged Inge to approach veteran director Joshua Logan (*South Pacific*, *Wish You Were Here*) about directing the play. Langner apparently saw in Logan a firm hand that could shepherd Inge’s uneven, sprawling work-in-progress into a viable play. Logan agreed to read the script, and in his memoirs he recalled finding “tenderness, beauty, comedy, and theatrically effective scenes in what Inge gave me.” But he was not shy about seeing room for improvement, and the two men

began meeting at Logan’s home in Connecticut to hammer out the final version of *Picnic*.

The six sets gave way to one, the rhythm of the story began to emerge, and finally the one stumbling block that remained was the question of how the play would end. Inge’s original ending consisted of what Logan would describe as “complete frustration for everyone” – Hal leaves Madge, Howard leaves Rosemary, and the unfulfilled longing with which the play opened reasserts itself, more devastating now for having been spoken aloud. Again and again, Logan urged Inge to write an ending that was more satisfying, more conclusive, and each time Inge came back with “the same one, only drearier.”

In the end, of course, Logan got his new ending. Some say that Inge never forgave Logan for insisting on a falsely happy ending to *Picnic*, and in 1962 Inge would publish what he called “the rewritten and final version” of the play—with the original ending restored. But, to my mind, it is the play that opened at the Music Box on February 19, 1953 that says the truer, more subtly ironic thing about the human condition. ■

“ [INGE] FELT A DESIRE TO
EXPAND BEYOND
THEIR DARK,
SOMEWHAT GLOOMY HOUSEHOLD

AND WRITE A PLAY
THAT TOOK PLACE IN
THE SUNSHINE.”

MAKING PICNIC POSSIBLE



Trustee Mary Pat Studdert (Board Member) and Andy Studdert (Chairman & CEO of NES Rentals) at the opening of *The Lion in Winter*. NES Rentals sponsored this production last season.

We would like to thank NES Rentals for their very generous sponsorship of our production of *Picnic*. This production would not be possible without their support. NES Rentals is one of the leading equipment rental companies in the country and we are so pleased to be partnering with them again this year.



SETTING THE STAGE FOR A *PICNIC*

Picnic set model by Jack Magaw, Scenic Designer

“THE ACTION OF THE PLAY IS LAID ON THE PORCHES AND IN THE YARDS

of two small houses that sit close beside each other in a small Kansas town.” These are the opening stage directions for William Inge’s *Picnic*. Here set designer Jack Magaw walks us through the exciting and unprecedented transformation of our stage – and seating areas – at Tudor Court to a backyard in 1950s Kansas.

The very first time David and I met we talked about not placing the houses next to each other at the end of the area behind the proscenium arch. Instead, the trick was to balance two structures in the space by bringing one porch downstage near the audience but doing so without blocking sightlines. So the downstage porch would appear more in fragments and suggestions of a complete porch. The one upstage would be more realistic but cannot be too real as both of these dwellings have to live in the same world. Situating the homes across from each other as we have creates a dynamic diagonal which really activates the room in an interesting way. It also strengthens the other diagonal from the downstage left exit to the gate upstage.

Moving the seats around in the theatre became a natural progression in order to get the architec-

ture of the room to work with us rather than against us. We also never wanted to hide the fact that we are in a theatre which allows us to incorporate the seats to give the audience the best possible experience.

I learned to design in a flexible space at Vanderbilt University in the 1970s when they built the first prototype of the perfect flexible space. It was a completely outfitted theatre with seating banks that could move and change. I went on to teach there and to design 16 shows, never once using the same seating arrangement. It was a space that was more sculptural than pictorial. That is what I want to achieve with *Picnic*.

Working “in the round,” with seating on all sides, immediately limits what you are able to do with scenery. This configuration for *Picnic* is more of a “profile” stage with both

scenery and seating at either end. It’s sort of a hybrid.

With people viewing the action from all sides, we are limited as to what we can introduce into the space and the objects we do allow in still need to be what they’re supposed to be. We are really taking core samples of reality. Taking what the objects would look like in the real world and dropping them into the theatre without any alteration.

Just by doing this it becomes a stylized world. And since the audience is so present in the space they will also become an integral part of the visual picture. ■

“SINCE THE AUDIENCE IS SO PRESENT IN THE SPACE THEY WILL ALSO BECOME AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE VISUAL PICTURE.”



Picnic set model by Jack Magaw, Scenic Designer



DAVID CROMER DIRECTOR'S SIDEBAR

David Cromer brings his trademark direction to Writers' Theatre for this first-of-its-kind reinvention of the Tudor Court space. Previous productions with Writers' include *Booth* and *The Price*, the latter of which won Joseph Jefferson (Jeff) awards for Best Production and Direction in 2002. He most recently directed *Perfect Mendacity* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company and his production of *Adding Machine* for Next Theatre Company just completed a run at Minetta Lane Theater, off-Broadway, garnering many awards including a Lortel and an OBIE award both for Cromer's direction. Other Chicago credits include *Our Town for the Hypocrites*, *Come Back*, *Little Sheba* at Shattered Globe Theatre; the 2003 Jeff Award-winning *The Cider House Rules* at Famous Door Theatre Company (co-directed with *Picnic's* Marc Grapey); *The Dazzle* and *Golden Boy* at Steppenwolf; *Angels in America* at The Journeymen Theatre Company which earned him his first Jeff Award in 1998; *Betty's Summer Vacation* at Roadworks Productions; *MOJO* and *The Hot L Baltimore* at Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company and *Journey's End* and *Translations* at Seanachai Theatre Company. His production of *Orson's Shadow* received its world premiere at Steppenwolf and subsequent revivals at Barrow Street Theatre in New York, The Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts and The Alley Theatre in Houston. Also at The Alley, he has helmed *The Clean House* and will direct *The Farnsworth Invention* this season. Other regional credits include *The Grapes of Wrath* at the historical Ford's Theatre in Washington D.C. Upcoming projects include *Celebrity Row* at American Theatre Company and *The Glass Menagerie* at Kansas City Repertory.



"THE MIDWEST REMAINS MY EVER-PRESENT TOUCHSTONE"

- BRETT NEVEU, *Old Glory*

Theatre history considers William Inge to be the quintessential Midwest playwright. So, The Brief Chronicle asked another one of our season's scribes, Brett Neveu, what being a Midwest writer means to him. Neveu, Iowa bred and Chicago-based from 1994-2007, is the author of our upcoming world premiere play Old Glory.

"The images and people of the Midwest usually take a firm hold in my writing, no matter my story's location. I find myself revisiting these places in my mind, digging deeper into memory and personal point of view, seeking subtext in partially recollected manner and faded conversation. What I end up with are fragments; fragments I seek to link into a whole to tell a different tale, one that feels

familiar to me but yet removed from specific circumstance. Language itself is like a puzzle in the Midwest, also. Its numerous regions survive like positive and negative magnets pushing at each other, defying each other to fall into step and conform to the way it is on the other side of the fence. My upbringing taught me how to listen to these varied languages and navigate them as best I could without getting called out. Through this careful navigation and memories that seem to have dug in very tightly, the Midwest remains my ever-present touchstone. A place that I have both pushed away from and embraced with equal amounts of desperation, fascination and love."

- BRETT NEVEU

OLD GLORY

THE WORLD PREMIER!

February 3 – March 29, 2009

Performed at 325 Tudor Court

ARTISTIC CONVERSATION: PRETTY PEOPLE



Youth and beauty. Those who have it. Those who don't. These are the dominant themes in William Inge's Picnic. In order to gain more perspective on the issue, Writers' Theatre Associate Artistic Director Jimmy McDermott spoke with Dr. Midge Wilson, Professor of Psychology and Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at DePaul University. Wilson's work focuses on, among other things, how physical attractiveness interplays with perceptions of women's leadership abilities. Her research has been featured in such publications as the Chicago Tribune, The Boston Globe, The Washington Post and The New York Times and she has co-authored two books, The

Color Complex: The Politics of Skin Color Among African Americans and Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap between Black Women and White Women.

JIMMY MCDERMOTT: To begin, what distinguishes “beauty” from “physical attractiveness”?

MIDGE WILSON: Beauty is an aesthetic quality that has been of interest to poets and philosophers for centuries, while physical attractiveness is considered a research concept empirically studied for only the past four to five decades. Perhaps it is the word “physical” that makes the two concepts seem different. We look for physical evidence in the real world to support a thesis, while truth, beauty, freedom and love – to quote the bohemians – are pursued as ideals. Certainly beauty and physical attractiveness tend to correlate, and often the words are used interchangeably. There are cases, however, in which beauty and physical attractiveness are differentiated such as when someone who is not so physically attractive is lauded as having a beautiful soul, or conversely when someone who is extremely attractive is deemed ugly on the inside.

JM: Are the origins of what is considered “physically attractive” cultural or biological?

MW: This is a question that has generated a huge amount of research. Since there exists so much variation in what is considered attractive from one culture to another, and variations even from one individual to the next within the same culture, it was long held that standards of beauty were strictly cultural and highly personal. But starting in the 1970s, common elements of physical attractiveness began to be named. For example, having pock-free skin and facial feature symmetry were identified as universally preferred attributes. It was reasoned that as indicators of health, smoothness of skin and symmetry of features would be useful for making snap judgments about another person's reproductive potential. Even with these universal mechanisms for detecting beauty in others, there are strong cultural influences still at work. A remarkable cultural difference found in this country is that in comparison to Caucasian men's preferences, African American men on average prefer larger women. As a result, African American women tend to have much higher body image satisfaction than do European American women, even though the former on average weigh more.

JM: You mentioned symmetrical features and smooth skin as chief components of physical attractiveness. What other elements tend

to contribute to that perception?

MW: Evolutionary psychologists have identified several features they believe play a role – perhaps an unconscious one – in mate selection. There is a particular female hip-to-waist ratio for men selecting women, and a particular inverted triangle shape of the upper half of the male body for women selecting men. Other desirable feminine features are big, round eyes, small noses and full lips, all of which are thought to signify youth. As for what women prefer in men, a strong chin line, a straight nose and being tall of stature are all enticing, perhaps because they signify high levels of testosterone.

“HIGHLY BEAUTIFUL WOMEN MAY EVENTUALLY COME TO QUESTION THEIR OWN SELF-WORTH”

**“BEYOND MARRYING WELL,
MADGE’S OPTIONS
ARE FAIRLY
LIMITED
IN A SMALL KANSAS
TOWN IN 1953.”**

JM: What privileges and treatment do those perceived as physically attractive receive that others do not?

MW: There have been over 500 studies in the field of social psychology documenting the rewards heaped upon those who happen to be blessed with extreme good looks. Children as young as three years old start differentiating others on the basis of physical attractiveness; they also recognize unfair treatment if they themselves happen not to be among those declared “oh, so cute.” Parents and others look at - and dote on - cute babies more than those thought to be less attractive. Oftentimes the most attractive kid in a large family is declared “the golden child” and given more resources to succeed, given he or she already has a big head start from Mother Nature. Emergency room personnel work longer to revive good looking people than

less attractive ones, and highly attractive people have more visitors in hospitals and psychiatric institutions. Good looking defendants tend to get lighter sentencing, earn higher incomes and there is some suggestion that they may even live longer. In general, there is a positive halo effect surrounding those high in physical attractiveness such that they are automatically assumed to be more socially skilled, more popular, more intelligent, more successful, healthier and better adjusted.

JM: In *Picnic*, the character of Madge, the eighteen-year-old town beauty, expresses frustration over the constant attention and flattery she receives because of her looks. How common is this sentiment among those perceived as conventionally beautiful? What effects does it have on them behaviorally?

MW: Some highly beautiful women report having fewer dates because a man who they might be interested in fears rejection and thus is reluctant to even approach them. At the same time, there are always other men who want to play out of their league and highly beautiful women must constantly contend with warding them off. This type is epitomized by Bomber in *Picnic*.

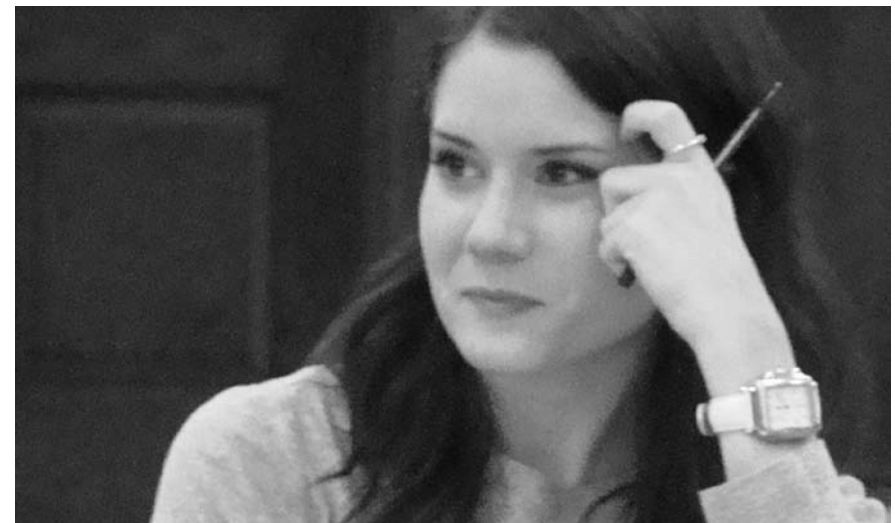
Highly beautiful women may eventually come to question their own self-worth, knowing full well they just happened to have been dealt a royal flush in the game of life – and that no real effort or skill on their part is expected of them

to get ahead. Because of the constant focus on their beauty by others, and a vague questioning of self-worth by themselves, very attractive women may also end up less able to handle the vicissitudes of age. Research indicates that compared to moderately attractive women, those who are extremely beautiful suffer from higher rates of depression during the second half of life.

JM: Beyond marrying well, Madge’s options are fairly limited in a small Kansas town in 1953. She even fantasizes about a career in espionage which her mother quickly dismisses. With women in the workforce far more commonplace today, how does physical attractiveness play into the professional environment for women?

MW: Some highly attractive women have been derailed from pursuing more professional (and longer range) careers, and end

up doing something like modeling which cashes in on their youthful good looks. Or, perhaps they are encouraged by a family member to marry early to a good prospect, as was the case with Maggie to marry Alan, by her mother. This type of pressure was particularly likely during the 1950s. However, today attractive women are no longer held back by their good looks. In fact, they’ve become more like men in the workplace, whose higher physical attractiveness has long been correlated with higher salaries and more promotions. There do remain some occupations for women, however, where extreme good looks can hinder more than help. Many traditionally blue collar type occupations require women to play down their looks. And, it seems some things never change; today there exist only three occupations in which women on average earn more money than men: 1) modeling, 2) porn and 3) sex work – each of which requires youthful good looks. ■



THE CAST:

In Picnic, all eyes are on Madge, the prettiest girl in town. Here are some musings from members of our talented – not to mention handsome – cast on beauty, self worth, high school and beyond.



I was flat chested & scrawny, wore thick glasses and got good grades. I was a happy kid until I hit high school and the pretty girls showed up. I spent the better part of three years trying to rebuild myself to not only look like those pretty girls, but walk like them, talk like them and think like them. If it wasn't for a very cool drama teacher, I might still be bleaching my dark hair blonde and scouring fashion magazines for a personality.

- ALYSON GREEN



Like Millie in *Picnic*, I also have a gorgeous older sister. Luckily for me, her own steadfast self-confidence is decidedly inclusive. A few years ago, during a period of particularly low self-esteem for me, my sister and I took a trip to New York together. As we shared the mirror in preparation for a night out, she suddenly looked at me, smiled, and sighed happily, "Aren't you glad we're pretty?" I'll make fun of her for saying that forever, but there's no denying that she managed to kick my self-confidence back into gear. She's good at that.

- HILLARY CLEMENS



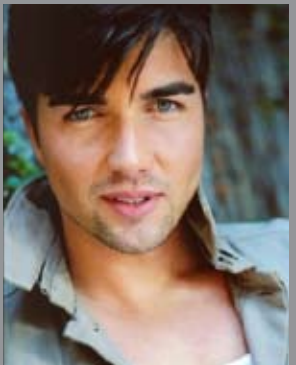
I have been rendered speechless twice in my life, both times upon meeting people whose physical beauty was over-powering. Both of them were also famous. Meeting Don Johnson (of *Miami Vice* fame), I turned into a blushing teenager (at the age of 43), simply because of how he looks. In person, he is perfectly beautiful. Meeting Vanessa Redgrave, I turned into the village idiot partly because she is translucently beautiful, but also because she is such an icon. She has attained goddess status according to some of us.

- ANNABEL ARMOUR



Many years ago, I was dating the son of some friends of my parents. On a trip out east, we stopped for dinner at my boyfriend's grandparent's house along with my boyfriend's brother and his pretty (and very nice) girlfriend, Betsy. After the dinner, phone calls were made and reports given about the impression we two girls made on the grandparents. Word got back to me that the verdict was in: "That Betsy's a real beauty! And the other one? She's a mensch." At the time, I was stung. But as I've gotten older, I know that if I have to choose, I'll take mensch...any day.

- HANNA DWORWIN



I was 5'2" tall the first couple years of high school and kind of self conscious about it. I always thought that if only I was taller I would be less nervous around pretty girls. The last year and a half of high school I grew to be 6 feet tall, and while at a party with some classmates, a girl said to me "we all thought you were cute, but we always said too bad you weren't taller." I was both overjoyed to be 6 feet tall at the time and saddened for my shorter self and the years of "not being tall enough." Ultimately, I was glad to have the height, but it didn't make me less nervous around the girls.

- BOYD HARRIS



In school, being part of the pretty pack is not just about looks. It's about attitude. And as a shy, awkward girl with ears the size of small plates, I was anything but. Lots of things contributed to my awkward-looks attitude including bad purple knickers, a Princess Di haircut and an Ogilvy home perm, but the thing that made me feel like the ugliest duckling was waking up every morning. I had gotten into the habit of locking my hands into fists as I slept, so to remedy the situation I had to wear popsicle sticks stuck to my fingers to keep them straight. This alone might not have made me feel so ugly, but coupled with the fact that I had horrible pink eye and couldn't open my eyes without rubbing away the night's sediment and had no hands to do so made me feel (and look, and sound) downright monstrous.

- SAMANTHA GLEISTEN

**“A QUOTE
FROM THE
GARDEN
PARTY? .”**

- MRS. POTTS, *Picnic*

**WHAT'S
HAPPENING
AT WRITERS' THEATRE**
BAGKSTAGE

MAKING HISTORY...

Beginning with our much anticipated New York revival of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* adapted by Marilyn Campbell and Curt Columbus and directed by Michael Halberstam at 59E59 Theatres, Chicago Theatre took the Big Apple by storm! The New York debut of Writers' Theatre broke box office records and earned unanimous raves from audiences and critics alike, including *The New York Times*. This season, *Crime and Punishment* will be receiving major productions at Berkley Repertory, Indiana Repertory and The Cleveland Playhouse.

WRITERS' THEATRE BROKE BOX OFFICE RECORDS AND EARNED UNANIMOUS RAVES

Writers' Theatre associate artist Josh Schmidt's musical adaptation of *Adding Machine* enjoyed a successful run at the Minnetta Lane Theater off-Broadway, winning OBIE awards for Writers' Theatre alumni, lighting designer Keith Parham (*Bach at Leipzig*, *The Savannah Disputation*), director David Cromer

(*The Price*, *Picnic*) and actor Joel Hatch (*Benefactors*, *Another Part of the Forest*). Hatch will soon appear in *Billy Elliott* on Broadway.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater received the Tony Award for Best Regional Theatre and at the same ceremony Steppenwolf's production of *August: Osage County* took home five awards including the Best Actress prize for Writers' Theatre alum Deanna Dunagan (*Butley*).

New York also took notice of Writers' Theatre here at home when Terry Teachout

of *The Wall Street Journal* wrote of our twice extended production of *The Lion in Winter* as "one of the finest shows I've seen in recent seasons, not just in Chicagoland but in all of America."

The Savannah Disputation by Evan Smith which opened our last season in its world premiere will receive a new production at Playwrights Horizons next winter. Smith has also received a commission from Lincoln Center for a new work.

Closer to home, Artistic Director Michael Halberstam helmed a delightfully successful production of *Enchanted April* at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre last winter and will return this fall to direct *State of the Union*. Also this past spring, he received the 25th Anniversary Chicago Fellows award from The Stratford Shakespeare Festival.

...AND DOCUMENTING IT



Thanks to a generous sponsorship from Harris Bank, Writers' Theatre has been able to create a terrific new video that

highlights the theatre's mission, history, art and programs. This video, directed by Jason Weisner, will be used to introduce new audiences to the Theatre, and to remind our current audiences of all the moments we have shared.

Writers' Theatre has enjoyed a longtime partnership with Harris Bank. "We value the Theatre's strong ties to the community and its consistent artistic excellence," says Roy Picciuca, North Shore Regional President at Harris. "Writers' Theatre enriches the quality of life for members of our community."

Heather Wright, Managing Director, Harris Private Bank, agrees. "We are very fortunate to have such an important and unique cultural institution located right here on the North Shore." Writers' Theatre recognizes that Harris is an advocate for the arts and is honored to be one of the organizations it supports.

Look for the Writers' Theatre video playing in the lobby at intermission. You can also view it online at www.writers theatre.org. We are grateful to Harris Bank for making it possible for us to document our history in this meaningful way.



BACK TO SCHOOL!

A Labor Day picnic always brings back the nostalgia of going back to school. For the Education Department at Writers' Theatre, it also begins the excitement of gearing up for the season. Our teaching artists are getting ready to head back to class with our in-school residency programs: WRITE ON!, part of The Carol Marks Jacobsohn Arts and Education Program.

WHAT IS WRITE ON?

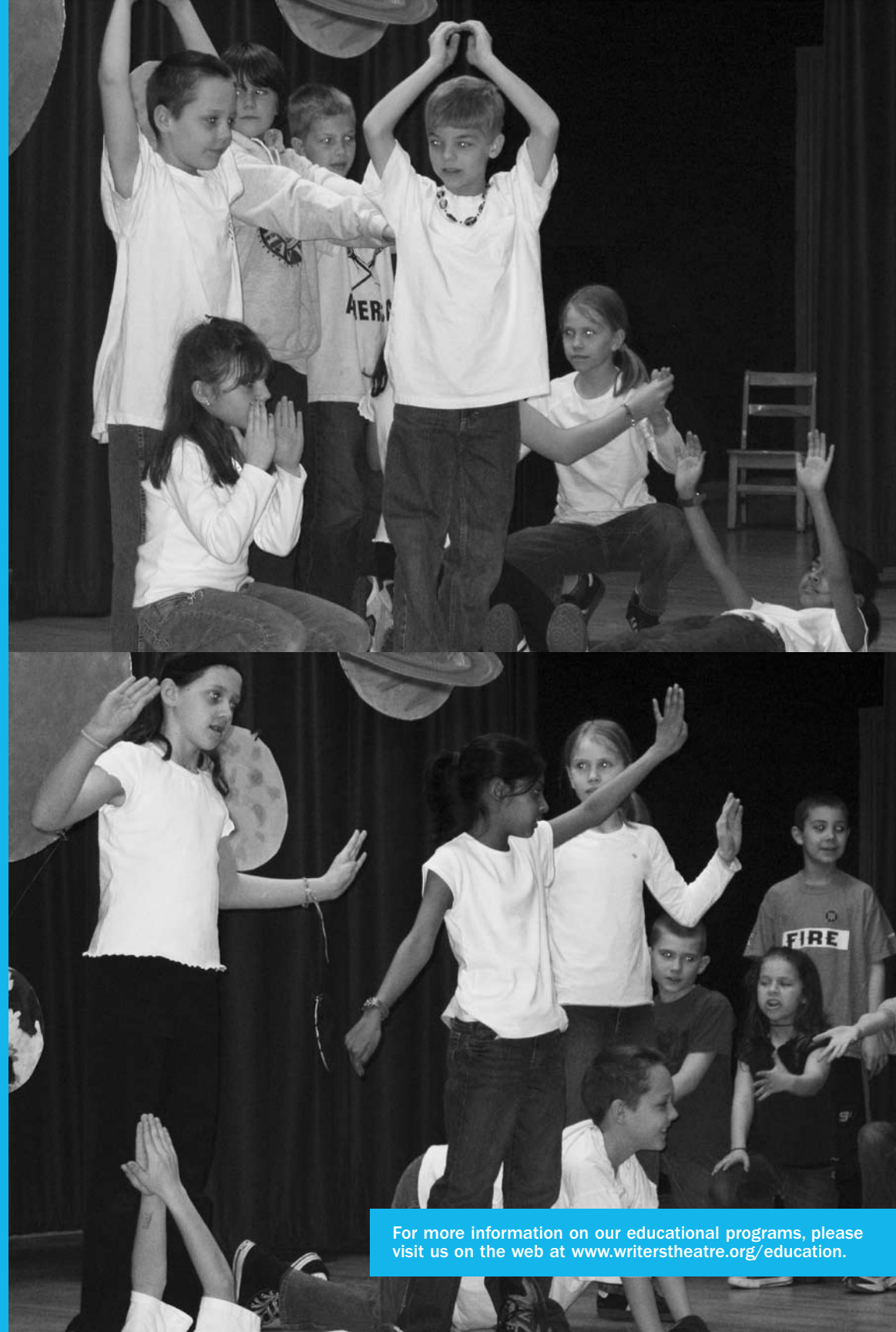
WRITE ON! is the Writers' Theatre Residency Program that brings arts-based workshops into the classroom. Each academic year, Writers' Theatre partners with schools on the North Shore and in Chicago to provide quality integrated arts education. The schools welcome our teaching artists into their learning space for six to twelve weeks to work closely with teachers and students to create a program that either compliments already-existing curriculum or simply introduces them to theatre and performance. The schools provide designated creative space and allow us access to their immediate resources, such as their library, computers and supplies. In essence, the artists reside at the school for the duration of workshop.

WHAT IS A TEACHING ARTIST?

A teaching artist is a practicing professional artist who has developed pedagogy for educating through the use of their art form. Many of our artists have not only worked at Writers' Theatre, but at some of other top theatres in Chicago. In fact, our last residency was led by Jennifer Avery, who was seen on our bookstore stage during the 2006/07 Season in *The Puppetmaster of Lodz*. Other teaching artists include Janet Brooks (*Seagull*) and Sharyon Culberson (*The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights*).

HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Many of our residencies have been made possible through the generous support of our audiences who understand the importance of quality arts education for all. To learn how you can fund an in-school residency, please contact Development Manager Kalena Dickerson at 847-242-6004.



For more information on our educational programs, please visit us on the web at www.writerstheatre.org/education.

A SUMMER AFFAIR: THE DIRECTOR'S SOCIETY GARDEN PARTY

On Sunday, July 13, 2008, more than 100 members and friends of Writers' Theatre gathered to celebrate the end of a marvelous season of theatre and share in the excitement of the year to come at our annual Director's Society Garden Party. The beautiful weather and the spectacular Lake Michigan view from the lovely home and gardens of Bill and Stephanie Sick created an event to be remembered. The highlight of the event was the preview of Writers' Theatre's thrillingly dramatic upcoming season directed by Associate Artistic Director Jimmy McDermott and featuring the talents of William Brown, David Dastmalchian, John Hoogenakker and Larry Yando.



1. Amy & Clay Brock enjoy the summer sun. **2.** Trustee Barb Melcher and Mike & Tina Pompizzi share some shade. **3.** Executive Director Michael Halberstam and Garden Party hosts Stephanie & Bill Sick enjoy a laugh. **4.** Joyce & Bruce Chelberg pose for the camera. **5.** Mike & Christine Pope get in the spirit with their summer chapeaux. **6.** Bruce & Bisi Mau, Jack Segal and Artistic Director Michael Halberstam stop for a moment to enjoy the view of Lake Michigan.



The Director's Society of Writers' Theatre is the group of dedicated patrons who share our passion for the written word and provide the financial foundation that allows us to create a nurturing home for world-class artists while producing critically-acclaimed productions. The society was established to acknowledge those patrons and to provide them with a window into the creative process. With exclusive behind-the-scenes rehearsals and special members-only events, membership in the Director's Society is bursting with privileges.

Please consider joining the Director's Society now so that you, too, can enjoy the wonderful benefits and inside access to the whole Writers' Theatre experience for the entire season. Membership includes a private phone line dedicated to priority ticket orders and exchanges, invitations to three exclusive events and priority subscription renewal service.

For more information, or to become a member, please contact:

Sherre Jennings Cullen
Director of Development
847-242-6005



7. Long-time friends Elly Thaviu & Vivian Kaplan arrive together. **8.** Jason Pizer, his wife Board Vice President Rachel Weinstein, Mark & Trustee Carol Dawley, Emily and Board President Chris Knight enjoy the garden. **9.** Fabrice & Cara Braunrot sport their straw hats. **10.** Nicole Williams & Larry Becker, former hosts of the Garden Party, can't wait for the sneak peek at next season. **11.** Harrison & Lois Steans enjoy the party. **12.** Carol & Larry Adelman, a new Trustee at Writers' Theatre, and Shelly Stallworth take in the beautiful day. **13.** Trustee Mary Pat Studdert wins the "Most Fun Hat Award" as her husband Andy looks on. **14.** Jimmy & Lorry Borowitz, long-time Trustee, celebrate the afternoon. **15.** Mary Jane Pollack, Edith Gaines and Peggy Carr smile for the camera.



OLD WORLD: NEW THEATRE! THE 2008/09 NEW YEAR'S LONDON TOUR



Revel in the theatrical joys of London's West End and ring in the New Year with Artistic Director Michael Halberstam, former Chief Theatre Critic for the *Chicago Tribune* Richard Christiansen and a dynamic group of theatre patrons on this exciting eight-day adventure.

Our popular and highly acclaimed tour to London will again take flight on December 30, 2008, returning to the States on January 6, 2009. The travels will include gourmet meals at some of London's finest restaurants, an introduction to London from *The Guardian's* Chief Drama Critic Michael Billington, exclusive backstage tours, visits with some of London's finest actors (past guests included Ian McKellan, Frank Langella and Simon Russell Beale)

and tickets to six world-class productions. Although the West End winter season is still being planned, we are thrilled to announce that we have already secured tickets to *Twelfth Night* starring Derek Jacobi! Past trips included the world premiere productions of *Art*, *The History Boys*, *Closer*, and *Billy Elliot*. All of our theatrical adventures will be arranged by London Arts, the West End's finest theatre tour operator.

Writers' Theatre values an intimate experience in all of our endeavors, and we prefer to limit the size of our tour groups. **The tour has sold out in the past, so please make your reservation today. The registration deadline is October 1.**

For more information about the tour, please contact Associate Director of Development Kellie de Leon at 847-242-6012 or kdeleon@writerstheatre.org.

PICNIC PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		16 7:30	17 7:30	18 8:00	19 8:00	20 4:00/8:00
21 2:00/6:00	22	23 7:30	24 7:30	25 Private Event	26 8:00	27 4:00/8:00
28 2:00/6:00	29	30 7:30**				

OCTOBER

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

NOVEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 4:00/8:00
2 2:00	3	4	5 7:30**	6 8:00	7 8:00	8 4:00/8:00
9 2:00/6:00	10	11 7:30**	12 2:00/7:30	13 8:00	14 Private Event	15 4:00/8:00
16 2:00						

* Pre-Show Lectures ** Post-Show Discussions

DINNER & THEATRE

Enjoy dinner before the show at Di Pescara, one of the North Shore's top restaurants, named among the city's best new restaurants by *Chicago* magazine. This Lettuce Entertain You restaurant, conveniently located at Northbrook Court (just five minutes from the theatre), is offering a three-course pre-theatre meal for \$29.95*, featuring signature dishes such as artichoke ala marco, hot & crunchy tilapia and homemade lemon meringue pie. Contact Di Pescara to make your reservation and mention Writers' Theatre to receive your special offer.

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*Excludes tax and gratuity.

COMINGS AND GOINGS



From the left:
Lawrence M.
Adelman, Linda
Havlin, Yelena
Vayner, Eleanor
Berman, Bobby
Kennedy

Writers' Theatre welcomes **LAWRENCE M. ADELMAN** of AEG Partners, **LINDA HAVLIN** of Mercer Consulting and **YALENA VAYNER** of Northern Trust Company to the Writers' Theatre Board of Trustees.

Joining the Writers' Theatre administrative team is **ELEANOR BERMAN** as the Director of Marketing and Communication and **BOBBY KENNEDY** as the 2008/09 Season Artistic Intern. Eleanor's previous work includes The Second City, TimeLine Theatre and most recently The Goodman Theatre where she served for 3 years as Communication Manager. Bobby is a recent graduate of Boston University and has work with Huntington Theatre Company, New Repertory Theatre and helped found The Spontaneous Theater Project.

The board and staff would like to thank former Trustees **CHRISTINE POPE** and **TOM HODGES** for their years of service, as well as **KORY KELLY**, Former Director of Marketing & Communications for the past four years. We wish all of them the best of luck in their continued endeavors.

NEXT UP: THE MAIDS

November 18, 2008 – April 5, 2009

Performed at 664 Vernon Avenue



"Would Hamlet have felt the delicious fascination of suicide if he hadn't had an audience, and lines to speak?"
-Jean Genet

This passage appears in Genet's posthumously published memoir *Prisoner of Love*. While this personal and political work came decades after the multi-disciplined author had essentially concluded his career as a playwright, it still speaks volumes towards the theatre of Genet. He requires his audience to experience the artifice of the piece at all times. The idea of performance within performance within performance is a definitive obsession

of Genet's and his aim is to keep the viewer aware of these constructs throughout. For instance, in *The Maids* his first produced play, the opening stage directions describe the domestic attire of "the actress playing Solange." That phrasing is more than a stroke of redundancy on the part of a novice playwright. It is quite deliberate. From the outset, it's as if Genet dares his actress to include her very self in this very complex equation. That she and her own experience are the ultimate conduit and the final filter through which his ceremony can occur. Making it sacred.

Directing *The Maids* is undoubtedly the most seductive challenge of my career. And I am delighted to bring three talented women, Elizabeth Laidlaw, Niki Lindgren and Helen Sadler, to our stage for the first time.

- Jimmy McDermott



Box Office & Administration

376 Park Avenue
Glencoe, Illinois 60022

Artistic Director

Michael Halberstam

Executive Director

Kathryn M. Lipuma

With only 108 seats in our intimate Tudor Court venue, productions at Writers' Theatre sell out quickly!

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