

# DIALOGUE

The Online Magazine of South Coast Repertory

April 2010



## Just for You: A Shiny New Season

The 2010-2011 Season is coming into focus and will feature works by Sarah Ruhl, George Bernard Shaw, Richard Greenberg and the Bard himself. Find out more about next season's plays, their writers and directors, and get some early casting news. SCR veterans will be happy to learn that Founding Artists Richard Doyle and Hal Landon, Jr. are both slated to appear in two plays next year: *A Christmas Carol* and ...



## Southern Sisters Laugh Through Their Tears

Sisters Meg, Babe and Lenny have major problems – dead careers, dead horses, near-dead husbands. But playwright Beth Henley has also given these Mississippi women more than enough grace and gumption to muddle through their catastrophes. Full of heart and humor, *Crimes of the Heart* reminds us that in the end, it's really your family that you can count on—to make you laugh as much as cry. You won't want to miss the final show of the season, which opens May 7.



## Chinese Folk Tale Gets Modern Update

A pair of plucky orphans battles the greedy, evil Mrs. Crawly and her dim-bulb husband in *Ben and the Magic Paintbrush*, the latest world premiere in our Theatre for Young Audiences series. Based on a Chinese folk tale, the play takes children on a magical journey that includes a purple house, a crooked policeman, sleeping potions, disguises and a trip to the kingdom of Bohemia. Not to mention, of course, a happy ending. *Ben* runs May 21 through June 6.



## The Main Characters are Dead, but the Story Lives On

The young lovers have dispatched themselves with poison and knife, and the curtain has come down on *Romeo and Juliet*. The Capulets and Montagues declare peace, but the kids keep feuding. Benvolio (Romeo's best friend) loves Rosaline (Romeo's girlfriend before Juliet), but she still pines for Romeo—and wants revenge. Filled with love, laughter and swordplay, this modern sequel is based on an idea by Keira Knightley and written by her mother with thanks to Shakespeare.

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## 2010-2011 SEASON

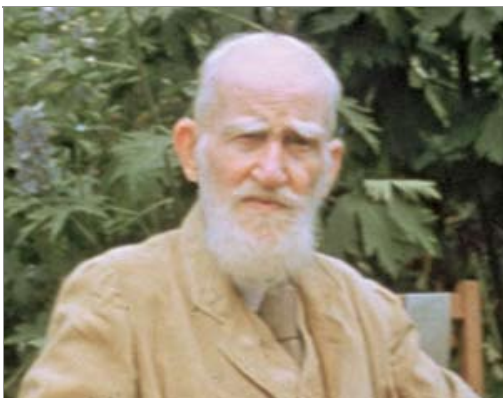
by Soyia Ellison

The future is here, and it looks a little like the past. But only a little.

South Coast Repertory's 2010-2011 season will feature three audience favorites from decades past – *Misalliance*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Three Days of Rain* – along with three Southland premieres and two yet-to-be-named world premieres.

Kicking things off is George Bernard Shaw's mischievous *Misalliance*, brought to life by Artistic Director Martin Benson. Benson has a long and lauded history with the works of Shaw; he has won the L.A. Drama Critics Circle's directing prize three times for his Shaw productions. Stage and screen veteran Dakin Matthews, an SCR regular who recently portrayed Polonius in *Hamlet*, will play the pivotal role of wealthy underwear magnate John Tarleton.

"Some people hear the name 'Shaw' and think 'intellectual,'" said Benson. "But he is so funny and human."



George Bernard Shaw.

**HOW TO GET TICKETS**

Tickets are currently available by subscription only. Packages range from \$42 to \$495. Current subscribers can renew online at [www.scr.org](http://www.scr.org), by phone at (714) 708-5555 or in person at the SCR box office. New subscribers can buy packages over the phone or in person at the box office. Single tickets will be available to the public on August 8.

Take this line from *Misalliance*, for example: "If marriages were made by putting all the men's names into one sack and the women's names into another, and having them taken out by a blind-folded child like lottery numbers, there would be just as high a percentage of happy marriages as we have now."

Would Shakespeare disagree?

Probably not. After all, he gives us a trio of fickle lovers in the comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (one of whom falls in love with a donkey), and warns us that "the course of true love never did run smooth."

The imaginative Mark Rucker, who has directed 20 shows at SCR, including the smash hit *Much*

*Ado About Nothing*, will helm next season's production, which will star Founding Artists Hal Landon, Jr. and Richard Doyle, among others.

Producing Artistic Director David Emmes will direct a revival of Richard Greenberg's *Three Days of Rain*, which had its world premiere at SCR in 1997 and went on to be a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. In 2006, Julia Roberts made her Broadway debut in a revival of the play, and James McAvoy received an Olivier Award nomination for his performance in last year's London revival.

"It's fair to say that *Three Days of Rain* is a work of art, a play for the ages," Emmes said. "In the late 90s, Richard was already an established playwright—we had staged two of his plays, *Night and Her Stars* and *The Extra Man*—but when this commission arrived on our doorstep, we knew immediately it was something special. That it has gone on to so many productions is certainly no surprise because it's one of those plays that will never be dated. It's of the moment, always, and we all agreed—including Richard—that the moment had come for a major revival. I'm looking forward to directing it this time around."



William Shakespeare.

SCR's three Southland premieres all have one thing in common: talented female playwrights.

- Gina Gionfriddo's *Becky Shaw* – a 2009 Pulitzer Prize finalist – is a wicked relationship comedy

- that begins with a blind date that includes a trip to the police station. (Fitting for a play from a woman who writes for "Law and Order.")
- Annie Baker's funny *Circle Mirror Transformation*, about a group of misfits taking an acting class in a small Vermont community center, made such a splash Off-Broadway last fall that it was extended twice.
  - And Sarah Ruhl's *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*, which was just named a Pulitzer finalist, drew raves during its Broadway run from Charles Isherwood of *The New York Times*, who called it "insightful, fresh and funny...a sex comedy ... but for adults with open hearts and minds."

SCR's artistic staff is still hard at work choosing the plays that will fill the final three slots of next season. At least two of the three will be world premieres that will make their debut during the 14th annual Pacific Playwrights Festival. Watch your e-mail for news on the latest play choices. And, of course, next season will include the 31st rendition of the holiday classic, *A Christmas Carol*, starring Hal Landon, Jr. as everyone's favorite somersaulting Scrooge.

## 2010-2011 SEASON

### SEGERSTROM STAGE

#### **MISALLIANCE**

by **George Bernard Shaw**

directed by **Martin Benson**

(Sept. 10 – Oct. 10, 2010)

SCR and GBS—a relationship that has wowed theatre audiences with stellar productions and endless awards. Now the fun begins anew, and Shaw is at his mischievous best, turning his sharp wit to the relationship between parents and children. While the elders argue ideas and morals, the younger generation longs for action, adventure, love and independence.

Especially Hypatia, who is tired of all the talk and ready for something to happen. Finally it does!

#### **BECKY SHAW**

by **Gina Gionfriddo**

directed by **Pam MacKinnon**

(Oct. 22 – Nov. 21, 2010)

Like the Victorian upstart Becky Sharp, this modern Becky is unsure, overdressed and socially ambitious. But watch out. She's no shrinking violet, as the silkily cynical Max soon learns.

From their first blind date, which includes an unscheduled visit to the police station, these 30-somethings, along with the newlyweds who set them up, surprise us—and themselves—in a comedy thriller *The New York Times* called "ferociously funny."

#### **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM**

by **William Shakespeare**

directed by **Mark Rucker**

(Jan. 21 – Feb. 20, 2011)

Off go four young lovers into the woods! This revival of a fantastical comedy features the Bard's most meddlesome—and memorable—character. Yes, Puck will create chaos in the night, but what fun to join in, knowing that by daybreak all will be well in this mystical, moon-drenched masterpiece.

#### **(To Be Announced)**

(April 1 – May 1, 2011) A world premiere production will debut as part of the 2011 Pacific Playwrights Festival.

#### **THREE DAYS OF RAIN**

by **Richard Greenberg**

directed by **David Emmes**

(May 13-June 12, 2011)

The cheering began on opening night of its world premiere at SCR. It never stopped. From New York to theatres across America, from London's West End to a Broadway revival, audiences knew they were seeing something special. A newly discovered journal, filled with enigmatic entries, recalls Greenwich Village in the early 1960s when two young architects, unaware they're on the brink of fame, struggle with plans for a major commission. But it's left to their children, 30 years later, to sort out the mystery behind their lives—and loves.

The journey comes full circle when SCR produces this major revival.

### HOLIDAY SHOW

#### **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

by **Charles Dickens**

adapted by **Jerry Patch**

directed by **John-David Keller**

(Nov. 27-Dec. 26, 2010) Segerstrom Stage

Recapture the spirit of an old-fashioned Christmas with this timeless Dickens classic and all your favorite characters—Tiny Tim and the Cratchit family, the Fezziwigs, the Ghosts of Christmas past, present and yet-to-come—and, of course, Ebenezer Scrooge himself.

### **JULIANNE ARGYROS STAGE**

#### ***IN THE NEXT ROOM or the vibrator play***

by **Sarah Ruhl**

directed by **Casey Stangl**

(Sept. 26 – Oct. 17, 2010)

Broadway's latest mega-hit is set in the Victorian era, just before its corseted women shed their inhibitions. A new electric invention has been introduced to the medical world. Dr. Givings, one of its early champions, marvels at the effect it has on patients suffering from "female hysteria," while in the adjoining room, his own wife yearns for another kind of intimacy. This funny, tender and illuminating play has generated a buzz of excitement from East Coast to West.

#### ***CIRCLE MIRROR TRANSFORMATION***

by **Annie Baker**

directed by **Sam Gold**

(Jan. 9 – 30, 2011)

Pretend to be a baseball glove. Write down your darkest secret and lie on the floor while someone reads it out loud. Have an entire conversation using only the word "goulash." Welcome to Marty Kreisberg's acting class! In a small Vermont town, a divorced and depressed carpenter, a flirty former actress, a pouty 16-year-old, and Marty's hippie husband are all a bit bored with life and looking for an outlet. But are they ready for what Marty's exercises reveal about them and their classmates? *The New York Times* called this comedy triumph "absorbing and sharply funny" in a debut that was extended twice by popular demand.

#### **(To Be Announced)**

(March 13 – April 3, 2011)

#### **(To Be Announced)**

(April 17 – May 8, 2011) A world premiere production will debut as part of the 2011 Pacific Playwrights Festival.

### **2010-2011 Theatre for Young Audiences Season**

#### ***SIDEWAYS STORIES FROM WAYSIDE SCHOOL***

adapted from **Louis Sachar's** *Wayside School* novels

by **John Olive**

directed by **Anne D'Zmura**

(Nov. 5-21, 2010)

The biggest hit of TYA's inaugural season is back—with sound kabooming and lights kaflashing! The classrooms of Wayside School are stacked one on top of the other thanks to a mistake by the builders—and the craziness only escalates as you climb all the way up to the 30th floor, where witchy Mrs. Gorf is casting spells on her bedraggled students, one by one. But when the kids turn the tables on Mrs. Gorf, their little world only gets stranger in this fast-paced, deliriously funny adaptation of Louis Sachar's beloved series for young readers. (And remember: Miss Zarves doesn't exist! There is no nineteenth floor!)

#### ***PETER PAN***

by **J.M. Barrie**

adapted for the stage by **Douglas Irvine**

directed by **Art Manke**

(Feb. 11-27, 2011)

You'll swear Peter Pan is flying! The beloved story of the boy who wouldn't grow up, which has excited and enthralled children for generations, takes off like never before in this highly theatrical and sprightly new adaptation. Fans of *Peter Pan* (and isn't that everyone?) will be whisked away into the night with Wendy and Michael to Neverland—and imaginations will soar with them. Of course, they'll meet Captain Hook and all the rogues, and of course Peter will save them from the evil pirate and get them safely back to bed.

#### ***LUCKY DUCK***

book by **Bill Russell** and **Jeffrey Hatcher**

music by **Henry Krieger**

lyrics by **Bill Russell**

(May 20-June 5, 2011)

*The Ugly Duckling* meets “American Idol,” with music by the composer of *Dreamgirls*! This rollicking riff on a favorite fairy tale begins in the barnyard, where things aren’t going so well for a waterfowl named Serena. She’s got great pipes but is lacking in the looks department, so off she goes to the big city, where she lands a wolf agent and gets a fabulous make-over. But as her journey toward superstardom progresses—with help from her animal friends (including a few that step in from other fairy tales)—Serena discovers that fame is only feather deep.

*All selections are subject to change.*



Kate Rylie, Blair Sams and Jennifer Lyon as three sisters in *Crimes of the Heart*. Photo by Henry DiRocco.

## WHEN LIFE HANDS THEM LEMONS, THEY MAKE LEMONADE

by Kimberly Colburn

*Crimes of the Heart* by Beth Henley won the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best American Play, after winning a new American play contest at Actors Theatre of Louisville. In 1986 it was made into a movie starring Diane Keaton, Jessica Lange and Sissy Spacek and was nominated for three Academy Awards, including one for Henley for Best Adapted Screenplay. It has been produced countless times at theatres across the country and around the world since its first production, and has quickly become a modern classic.

But forget the awards and accolades. *Crimes of the Heart* endures not because of its history, but because of its heartwarming appeal. The play is set in Hazlehurst, Mississippi, in 1974, and centers on sisters Lenny, Babe and Meg. They've been drawn back to Ol' Granddaddy's house where they stir up old resentments, hilarious hijinks and plenty of lemonade.

It's not your everyday reunion for the sisters, however. They're drawn together because it's the day after Babe shot her husband, and she's refusing to say why she did it. It is also Lenny's birthday—not that her sisters remembered—and she finds out her childhood horse was struck by lightning. Meg sweeps into town from her failed singing career out in Hollywood and a recent nervous breakdown. Even on a bad day like this one, the sisters manage to find a way to laugh through the pain.

The sisters must also contend with other zany characters in their life. Pesky cousin Chick is obsessed with the reputation of the family. She frets more about the headlines Babe is garnering in the local paper than her defense and calls Meg "cheap Christmas trash." Doc, the man Meg left behind, is now married but is enticed when he hears of her arrival in town. Since Babe shot the best lawyer in town (her husband Zackery), she's being represented by the young Barnette, who is motivated by a personal vendetta against Zackery and an outsized crush on Babe. The eccentricities of the characters are balanced by the truth in their actions—these feel like real people, no matter what crazy things are happening around them. The rich Southern setting and amusing idioms add to the entertainment.

Meg, Babe and Lenny just need to muddle their way through it with their wacky kind of grace and more than a little bit of gumption. The turmoil in the sisters' individual lives is swept open

**SEGERSTROM STAGE**

## Crimes of the Heart

by Beth Henley  
 directed by Warner Shook  
 May 7 - June 6, 2010

**The Magrath sisters of Hazlehurst, Mississippi survive heaps of tragedy with humor intact—and then bring out the lemonade.**

Approximately two hours with one intermission.

Jean and Tim Weiss, Honorary Producers

KOCE-TV, Segerstrom Stage Season Media Partner

anew by Babe's actions and the sisters gathering together has the force of Hurricane Camille, which swept through Mississippi five years before. In the end, it's really your family that you can count on—to make you laugh as much as cry.

Full of heart and humor, *Crimes of the Heart* will have you leaving the theatre with the faintest hint of a Southern drawl.

### About the Cast and Creative Team



**Beth Henley.**

Playwright Beth Henley is no stranger to SCR. The theatre produced its first Henley play, *The Debutante Ball*, in its 1984-1985 season. In 1989, SCR mounted the world premiere of *Abundance*. In 2002, her play *Exposed* was part of the Pacific Playwrights Festival (PPF). In 2005, *Ridiculous Fraud* was part of PPF, followed by the West Coast premiere production in the 2006 season.

*Crimes of the Heart* was the first full length play that Henley wrote, while she was in LA pursuing an acting career. A friend encouraged her to submit it to the Actors Theatre of Louisville for their new American play contest, where it was produced as a co-winner. The Pulitzer Prize and a Broadway production soon followed, before Henley had truly decided to pursue a career in writing. She said afterwards, "When you have a Pulitzer Prize for a play you get other jobs, and you sort of have to believe you're a writer, which up until that point I wasn't even sure I was."

Born in Jackson, Mississippi, Henley set many of her early plays in the South. Filled with eccentric characters, irony, and unusual plot twists, her work is sometimes called "Southern Gothic" because of the way Henley mines rich veins of humor in an otherwise unhappy, even tragic situation. After seeing the first production of *Crimes of the Heart*, Henley commented, "I was really amazed at how funny it was to people. I just think it's the way your mind works. Coming from the South, people didn't have much patience with you embracing your own pain, groveling in it."

It has been 30 years since *Crimes of the Heart* was first produced. At the twentieth anniversary of the first production, Henley said "sometimes it feels like it's been 50 years, and sometimes it feels like it's been two days. Time is the most fascinating thing to me: It's liquid and relative and makes no sense whatsoever. I'm just happy to be alive, and happy that someone is still interested in doing the play."

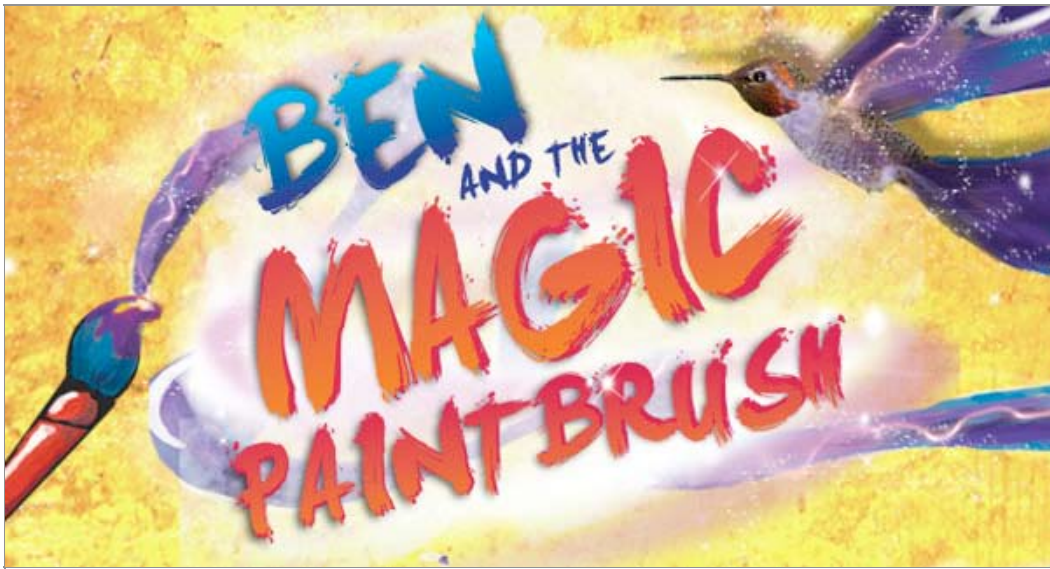
This production is led by director Warner Shook, who has previously delighted SCR audiences with *Beyond Therapy*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, *The Circle*, *You Can't Take it With You*, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *Born Yesterday*. He has directed on Broadway and all over the country and spent seven years as the artistic head of Seattle's Intiman Theatre.

SCR audiences couldn't have asked for a better match than Warner Shook directing *Crimes of the Heart*. The Alabama-bred Shook is certainly familiar with the South and its culture, and has directed a large number of plays known for their great roles for women. In a 2004 interview, Shook admitted, "someone once called me the George Cukor of regional theater," comparing him to one of Hollywood's legendary directors of so-called "women's pictures."



**Warner Shook.**

The sisters he'll be directing include Jennifer Lyon as Meg, Kate Rylie as Babe, and Blair Sams as Lenny. Jennifer Lyon was previously seen on SCR stages in *Born Yesterday*, directed by Shook, and *Noises Off*—which won her the Best Actress of 2009 award from *OC Weekly*. Kate Rylie shone in SCR's production of *Goldfish* last year. Blair Sams has also worked with Shook at SCR—with fellow *Crimes of the Heart* cast member Nathan Baesel (Doc)—in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*. SCR veterans Kasey Mahaffy (Barnette) and Tessa Auberjonois (Chick) round out the stellar cast.



## THE ART OF MAGIC

by Kelly L. Miller

What would you do with a magic paintbrush? One that made everything you painted come to life? Would you paint a cat? A house? Or a big pile of money?

Ben and his sister Megan face that unusual, magical conundrum in *Ben and the Magic Paintbrush*, Bathsheba Doran's charming play, inspired by the ancient Chinese folktale "Liang and the Magic Paintbrush," receiving its world premiere in SCR's Theatre for Young Audiences series.

Ben and Megan are orphans, who've been left to fend for themselves in the world. Megan earns money posing as a human statue, while her brother Ben draws marvelous portraits of people on the street. One day, his talent catches the eye of the evil Mrs. Crawly, who invites him to join a painting competition at her house. The prize? A paintbrush of his very own.

When Ben arrives, he meets his competition, the great artist Pierre Robelinsky, who tells him they're vying for a magic paintbrush, with the power to make paintings come to life. Their assignment? To paint a cat. Pierre's uninspiring picture never moves, but Ben's painting transforms into a real cat, who twitches. Mrs. Crawly captures Ben and Pierre, forcing Ben to paint mountains of money for her and her greedy husband, Harold, while Pierre cleans their massive house. All hope seems lost until Megan arrives with a plan to save the day—and the three of them embark on a magical journey filled with a purple house, a policeman and a trip to the kingdom of Bohemia.

*Ben and the Magic Paintbrush* is a funny, modern-day fairytale about art, creativity and the importance of believing that anything is possible. SCR commissioned playwright Bathsheba Doran to write the play in 2008—and it's the fourth world premiere commission SCR has presented in their Theatre for Young Audience series.

**"Do you want to know the number one most important thing about being a great artist? You have to believe that anything is possible."**

**-Artist Pierre Robelinsky  
in *Ben and the Magic Paintbrush***

ARGYROS STAGE

## Ben and the Magic Paintbrush

by Bathsheba Doran  
directed by Stefan Novinski  
May 21 - June 6, 2010

Doran began her career as a writer and performer at Cambridge University, where she studied English Literature. Her other plays include *Fifteen Minutes*, *Odes and Gameshows*, *The Parents' Evening*, *The War Play*, *Feminine Wash* and an adaptation for young audiences of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (produced in New York by TheatreworxUSA). She has been produced at the Edinburgh Festival, The Atlantic Theatre in New York City, and The Old Vic Theatre and the Drury Lane in London. Her play *The Parent's Evening* is premiering at The Flea Theatre in New York this season and her newest play, *Kin*, was read as part of SCR's 2010 Pacific

**A modern day fairy tale in which  
two kids get captured—  
not for the money but for talent—  
and escape, magically!**

**OC Family Magazine, Media Partner**

Playwrights Festival.

Stefan Novinski returns to direct *Ben and the Magic Paintbrush*, his fifth Theatre for Young Audiences production, having previously directed *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* (2003-04), *The Hoboken Chicken Emergency* (2004-05), *Bunnicula* (2005-06) and *The Only Child* (2006-07). Novinski's cast for the show includes Gloria Guayara (Megan), Shannon Holt (Mrs. Crawly), Richard Doyle (Harold Crawly, Taxman), Bill Brochtrup (Pierre Robelinsky,

Grumpy Man, Cleaning Woman), and Veralyn Jones (Queen of Bohemia, Old Woman, Policeman).

Rounding out the creative ensemble are the show's designers: Set Designer Keith Mitchell, Lighting Designer Tom Ruzika, Costume Designer Sara Clement and Sound Designer Kimberly Egan. The design and visual world of the play are inspired by the world of the original Chinese folktale.

Previews for *Ben and the Magic Paintbrush* begin May 21 on the Julianne Argyros Stage and performances continue through June 6. The Target Family Performance is May 29 and features an earlier curtain time of 11am and lower-priced tickets. With the generous support of foundations and corporations, SCR is proud to continue the tradition of offering free weekday matinee performances to Orange County schoolchildren. For more information on weekday school matinees, contact Janis Morrissette at 714-708-5549. To purchase tickets to *Ben and the Magic Paintbrush*, contact the box office at 714-708-5555.

**Enter to win two tickets to *Ben and the Magic Paintbrush* on Friday, May 21 from Coast Kids!**

## REHEARSALS BEGIN FOR *AFTER JULIET*

There are no sets, no costumes, no props (except two pretty authentic looking swords); they'll come later. But the young actors in SCR's Teen Players ensemble group are fast learning lines and blocking, and soon they'll inhabit their characters as they prepare for the spring production of *After Juliet*.

"This is when the work begins for them," said Director Hisa Takakuwa, "but it's also when the fun begins. Since they started classes back in September, they've been preparing for this moment. Now they get to put to use all that they've learned. It's very exciting for the cast—and the director!"



Julia Jech and Julia Ostmann rehearse *After Juliet*.



Director Hisa Takakuwa, with Elizabeth Wilson and Ellis Beardsley, working on *After Juliet*.

*After Juliet* is based on an original idea by Keira Knightley and written by her mother, Sharman Macdonald. It takes place in a land saddened by the tragedy of the young lovers, at a time when the Capulets and Montagues have declared peace between their families. But the kids keep feuding. Benvolio (Romeo's best friend) loves Rosaline (Romeo's girlfriend before he met Juliet) but she still pines for Romeo—and she wants revenge. The play is filled with love and laughter, as well as lots of swordplay.

The Teen Players are chosen by audition after at least two years in the Theatre Conservatory, and in *After Juliet*, they portray characters

their own age in a modern version—with very modern language. Performances are May 29 at 4pm and 7:30pm, May 30 at 1pm and 4pm, June 4 and 5 at 7:30 pm and June 6 at 1pm and 4pm in SCR's Nicholas Studio. Tickets are \$9.

Cast members are Ellis Beardsley (Alice), Connor Dugard (Gianni), Lauren Gardner (Livia, Angelica), Valentina Gehley (Valentine), Julia Jech (Rhona, Juliet), Julia Ostmann (Bianca), Akshay Sharma (Benvolio, Romeo), Nick Slimmer (The Drummer, Petruccio), Rachel Teague (Rosaline), Maxwell Weinberg (Lorenzo) and Elizabeth Wilson (Helena).



Akshay Sharma and Rachel Teague practice their sword fighting.



**Bathsheba Doran.**

## Playwright Brings Unique British-American Voice to SCR

04/20/10 • British-born playwright Bathsheba Doran is an admitted “American-o-phile.”

“There are a few of us,” she jokes. “[Alfred] Hitchcock was one.”

Since childhood, she dreamed of moving to the United States.

“I felt like I was born an American, in England, she says. “I never really felt British. I come from a Jewish family, and I think it’s easier to be a Jew in America. I always just felt very

conscious of my otherness. Also, I was raised on American things. I loved American cinema as a child.”

Bathsheba—“Bash” to her friends—has been living in New York for nearly 10 years now and writing plays—two of which have SCR connections. The first, *Kin*, was read at last week’s Pacific Playwrights Festival. The second, a children’s play called *Ben and the Magic Paintbrush*, will have its world premiere May 21 through June 6.

*Kin* brings together a tangled web of family and friends in a story that centers around the romantic relationship between Anna, an academic, and Sean, a personal trainer.

“There’s a lot of humor,” she says, “but there’s a lot of pain as well.”

Though not inspired by any one thing, the play was informed by Doran’s marriage last summer.

“The play was written over the period of my engagement,” she says. “I think because I was marrying a woman, and it’s not legal to get married, I was having to ask myself some very serious questions about what the point of getting married was...what is the meaning of the ritual?”

“It’s hard not to see it retrospectively as informing the play because it’s really about this process of forming new kinship circles, and certainly it’s very personal in that I was aware of [my own] two extremely different families coming together.”

But it was also influenced by her work on the children’s play.

“When I wrote *Ben and the Magic Paintbrush*, suddenly I was taking these enormous flights of fancy, because with kids you can say ‘Somebody’s poisoned and therefore they fall asleep, but they’ll be OK,’ and ‘Somebody’s in disguise, but nobody will recognize them.’ There’s this set of ancient conventions that you get to use.”

Doran says the process loosened her imagination and made her lighten up a bit, encouraged her to “push the storytelling a little harder.”

Still, *Kin* deals with themes that turn up consistently in her work: friendship and living in foreign lands.

Which brings us back to England vs. America.

“I think American people—and British people—love the idea that British theatre is inherently better, but that hasn’t really been my experience. I’ve seen really wonderful theatre in both countries; I’ve seen dreadful theatre in both countries.”

What England has, Doran says, is a venerable canon headed by Shakespeare.

“I think America is still caught up—in a good way—in finding new American voices, whereas England can sort of rest on its laurels. There’s not a great patriotic zeal to find a great British voice because they found one 500 years ago.”

That’s good news for us Americans, who are happy to claim her British-American voice as our own.

## Grad Student Playwright Blends Comedy, Tragedy

04/16/10 • When David West Read was in elementary school, he wrote and directed a little movie called *Jurassic Pork*.

"It was a parody of *Jurassic Park* with pigs," he explains, laughing. "I had a weird obsession with pigs. I wrote a series of short stories about a pig-man and then made a movie based on one of those. Keep in mind I was pretty young."



David West Read

David's still pretty young—27—and he's got about a month to go before he completes his MA in dramatic writing at New York University. Recently, he was at SCR's Pacific Playwrights Festival for the reading of his graduate thesis, a play called *Happy Face*.

No, it's not about pigs. It's about 20-year-old Wendy and her 17-year-old brother, Poots (at least that's what everybody calls him). Their parents recently died in a canoeing accident, and Wendy is trying to find a job that will not only support them but also pay for plastic surgery for Poots, whose face is badly scarred from another accident—so badly scarred that he wears a *Phantom of the Opera* mask and has taken to living in a refrigerator box in the back yard.

If that sounds sad, it is—but it's also very funny. After all, it's from the guy who wrote *Jurassic Pork*.

In high school in his native Canada, David says, he was an excellent student, not to mention student council president and a member of the jazz ensemble, the wind symphony and the school newspaper. His friends were the funny guys, though not necessarily the most popular ones.

Then in college, at the University of Toronto, he began writing and acting in a sketch-comedy show. He spent two years after college doing improv and acting in Canadian commercials and TV shows before deciding to study dramatic writing. His plays are much more serious than his sketch work, of course, but his humorous personality always bubbles up.

"[I don't believe] all comedy has to be an absurd, silly exaggeration of life but that comedy is everywhere in life," he says, "and especially in the most painful times."

The idea for *Happy Face* started with his wish to write a play about a brother and sister.

"I wanted specifically to write about a brother-sister relationship that's *good*," he says. "They fight a lot and have a lot of problems, but they really do love each other."

Not coincidentally, David has an older sister, Robyn: "I pulled a lot from my own relationship with my sister. Even though there's very little autobiography in the play events-wise, I think it comes from a very personal place."

"Personal" is important, says David, who wanted to share this piece of advice, given to him by an NYU professor, with other young writers: "The best writing is writing that you feel slightly embarrassed to show to other people because there is something of yourself in there. You wonder: 'What will people think of me if I put this out there? Am I giving away something secret about myself?'"



**Laurie Woolery, right, teaching at SCR. The student happens to be Allison Case who currently stars on Broadway in *Hair*.**

## **It's All in the Family**

04/19/10 • Former SCR Theatre Conservatory Director Laurie Woolery will stage the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's production of *The Language Archive*, which had its world premiere last month at SCR. The play will open the 2011 Season (Feb 27 - June 17) in OSF's New Theatre.

Some background: This will be the first OSF play directed by Woolery, who is currently associate artistic director at Cornerstone Theatre Company. Cornerstone was founded by Bill Rauch, who is currently OSF's artistic director. As if that's not enough closeness, Rauch staged four productions at SCR (*Lovers and Executioners* in 2003, *Habeas Corpus* in 2004, *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler* in 2006 and *My Wandering Boy* in 2007).

In addition to being a former SCR Conservatory Director, Woolery is a graduate of SCR's Professional Acting Program and appeared in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and six seasons of *A Christmas Carol*. She wrote and directed the SCR Players productions of *Bliss*, *The Hundred Dresses* and *Orphan Train: The Lost Children* and taught in the Adult Acting Program.

When Laurie received the call from Bill, asking her to direct the show, it came as a real surprise. "I love Bill, and I love his work," she said. "I've gone up to Ashland to see his shows, and obviously we're still in contact, but I really wasn't expecting this offer. When the call came, Bill told me that he was doing *The Language Archive* next season and wanted me to direct. He said, 'When I read the play I thought you could really do something great with it.' And so, when I was able to pick up my jaw from the floor, I accepted!"

## EDUCATION STATION - APRIL 2010

### Summer Acting Workshop Inspires Kids—and Instructors

All of the students in SCR's [Summer Acting Workshop](#) are new to the acting experience; in fact, that's a prerequisite. The workshop is only for kids who never have taken classes at SCR. Many of them go on to the year-round program; others find acting is not their thing. But they all have a good time.

According to Diana Burbano, one of the program's most enthusiastic (not to mention talented) instructors, "We are process based. No one is 'performing' or getting set up to perform. It is all about creating trust in an ensemble, and feeling the freedom to explore."

And the fun part of that exploration is seeing the kids blossom. "It means a lot to me," Diana said, "to get a shy kid, who a week before wouldn't even speak up in class, to lead a rousing chorus in a Viking anthem while wearing mile-long goldilocks braids."



SCR's Summer Acting Workshop.

#### **SUMMER ACTING WORKSHOP** a fun-filled summer camp for kids and teens (grades 3-12)

Session I: Jul 26- Aug 7

9am-12pm or 1pm-4pm

OR

Session II: Aug 9-21

9am-12pm or 1pm-4pm

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An actor herself, Diana can relate to the kids' experiences. "I started in theatre professionally when I was 12 years old, so I understand where their heads are. I always make a speech at the beginning of each session that when you are an actor you work with eight-year-olds and 80-year-olds, and they are all your peers. I treat my students like colleagues and encourage them to enjoy themselves, and to enjoy themselves in the work."

The [Summer Acting Workshop](#) has been going on for so many years—more than 30!—but there's

always a freshness to the program and an enthusiasm that the instructors pass on to the kids that's totally unforced. When asked what she attributes that spirit to, Diana had the perfect answer: "The fact that most of us still feel and act as if we are 13!"

### All about Diana

And that fresh, young exuberance is helpful in Diana's own acting career.

Besides being an instructor in both the [Kids Acting Program](#) and the [Neighborhood Conservatory](#) (which offers free after-school acting classes to kids in under-served areas), Diana has appeared in the lots of Theatre for Young Audiences shows.

In *The Hoboken Chicken Emergency* she portrayed Miss Pickles; in *Bunnicula*, Chester the cat; in *James and the Giant Peach*, a spider; in *Charlotte's Web*, four characters, including a sheep; and in *Imagine*, an imaginary princess and a thumb!

While the theatre is her favorite place to act, Diana has appeared in such television shows as "Cold Case," "Threat Matrix," "The District," "The Unit" and "What about Brian."

With all that experience, and by feeling and acting as if she were 13, Diana is one reason why the students in SCR's Summer Acting Workshop enjoy themselves so much—while learning all about theatre for the first time.



(l. to r.) Preston Maybank as Homer, Diana Burbano as the President, Jennifer Chang as Fern and Guilford Adams as Wilbur in *Charlotte's Web*.

## SUBSCRIBER ADVANTAGE



This issue's "Reason to Subscribe" is a special offer from La Terraza Mexican Grill and Bar, located at 3605 South Bristol Street (at West MacArthur Boulevard) – a short drive from South Coast Repertory.

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## PHILANTHROPY - APRIL, 2010

### Weiss' Support—A Dozen Plays!

Jean and Tim Weiss have underwritten a play every season since he joined the Board of Trustees in 2000—and then some; in fact, Tim retired from the Board in 2008 and is now a member of the Presidents Circle as well as the Honorary Board. But that hasn't stopped the generous couple from underwriting—the kick-off play of last season, *An Italian Straw Hat*, and now, the final play of this season, *Crimes of the Heart*.

In addition to their annual support, they helped underwrite *Mr. Marmalade* as members of the Playwrights Circle and the 2008 Pacific Playwrights Festival, bringing to an even dozen the number of productions that have benefitted from their support.



**Tim Weiss, Jennifer and Anton Segerstrom and Jean Weiss.**

That support also includes a major donation to both the Legacy and Next Stage campaigns (Tim chairs the Legacy Campaign) and subscriptions to both stages. They are longtime Gala table underwriters, and Jean chaired the successful 2008 Gala Ball, "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Jean and Tim will be honored on First Night of *Crimes of the Heart*.

### The Magic Begins: Plans Underway for SCR's "The Play's the Thing" Gala



**Sophie Cripe and Tom Buderwitz at a recent Gala meeting.**

"We are blessed to have a wonderful production designer to work with," said SCR Gala Chair Sophie Cripe at the second meeting of her committee on April 21.

She was talking about about Tom Buderwitz, designer of "The Play's the Thing," which will launch SCR's 47th Season on September 11, 2010 at the Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort & Spa. Of course, he'll be aided in his endeavors by great input from the committee, a group known for its originality, creativity and imagination.

"The Play's the Thing" will take guests on a theatrical journey from page to stage,

beginning as they gather for the reception—a homage to playwrights, who are the source of great theatre. At SCR, where the playwrights are thought of first and foremost, the catalogue of names is stupendous, from Moliere, Shakespeare, O'Neil and Williams to established playwrights of today like Donald Margulies, Richard Greenberg and Beth Henley, to young writers whose work is just now surfacing at SCR, like Julia Cho, Itamar Moses and Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa. These members of the SCR family—and many more—will be the focus of the reception.

Entering the grand ballroom, guests will be swept to the next level of theatre in its full glory, onstage—surrounded by everything that makes a great production. Buderwitz and the committee are considering such fun deconstructed elements as crystal chandeliers, elegant costumes floating high on a rack, set pieces as they would be seen from backstage, velvet curtains, even ropes and sandbags that fly the sets. Images from SCR productions will infuse the room and theatrical characters may actually spring to life to entertain the guests.

Even this early in the planning stage, "The Play's the Thing" is spreading its magic among the supporters of SCR, who already have begun to underwrite tables for the event, led by the ultra-enthusiastic Underwriting Co-Chairs Olivia Johnson and Teri Kennady.

## Thanks from SCR

Friends of SCR play an important role in SCR's success and stability. The corporations and individuals listed below have contributed \$2,500 or more to this season's Annual Fund. These gifts are helping SCR to be one of the finest theatres in America. We are deeply grateful for their support.

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## SCR Salutes Media Partners

Year in and year out, SCR brings to the stage fresh interpretations of the classics and premieres of new plays, creative endeavors that require a high level of collaboration. And off-stage the collaboration continues as SCR's Media Partner program celebrates another successful year of joining with local print and broadcast media in promotional efforts that serve to support the work on stage.

The 2009-10 Segerstrom Stage Season Media Partner has been KOCE-TV.

"Like KOCE-TV public television, South Coast Repertory enriches life in our community by enlightening those who attend, entertaining those of all ages and educating the youngest of us to the oldest. That's why SCR is such an important community partner of ours," said Jamie MacDonald, KOCE-TV's Executive Director of Advancement.



**Nancy Anderson and David Burnham in the world premiere musical *Ordinary Days*.**

*Putting It Together* • KOCE-TV, Coast Magazine, 89.3 KPCC

*The Happy Ones* • OC Metro

*Saturn Returns* • KOCE-TV, OC Business Journal

*A Christmas Carol* • KOCE-TV and The Orange County Register

*Fences* • KOCE-TV, Orange Coast Magazine and KCRW 89.9

*In a Garden* • 89.3 KPCC

*The Language Archive* • KOCE-TV, Riviera Magazine

*Doctor Cerberus* • KCRW 89.9

*Crimes of the Heart* • KOCE-TV

NewSCRipts Reading Series • Orange Coast Magazine

Pacific Playwrights Festival (PPF) • Coast magazine

SCR's Theatre for Young Audiences • OC Family Magazine

Young Conservatory • Coast Kids

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### Front Page Photo Credits:

Left side, top to bottom:

- Juanita Jennings and Charlie Robinson in *Fences* and Niki Scalera and Dan Callaway in *Putting It Together*. Photos by Henry DiRocco.
- *Crimes of the Heart* Logo by Crystal Woolard
- *Ben and the Magic Paintbrush* logo by Ben Horak
- *After Juliet* logo by Ben Horak

Right side, top to bottom:

- Teacher Laurie Woolery, right, works with student Alison Case. Photo by SCR.
- Kids work on stretching exercises in the Summer Acting Workshop. Photo by SCR.
- Food from La Terraza.
- Brett Ryback as Franklin from *Doctor Cerberus*. Photo by SCR.
- Jean Weiss. Photo by SCR.
- Actor Betsy Brandt and Tom Houston at the premiere of *The Language Archive*. Photo by SCR.
- Jamison Jones in *Doctor Cerberus*. Photo by Henry DiRocco.

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