



PITTSBURGH IRISH & CLASSICAL THEATRE
Professional Theater in Residence at the University of Pittsburgh

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Noise (and Laughter) in the Silence

*PICT celebrates the artistry of Nobel Prize-winning playwright
Harold Pinter with extraordinary six-play Festival*

Pittsburgh, PA – June 28, 2010. Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre honors one of the most important playwrights of the late 20th century with **Hearing Noise in the Silence: A Celebration of the Life and Theatre of Harold Pinter**. A team of seventeen actors and directors bring the plays to life, beginning with the comedy *The Hothouse* on July 22nd, and continuing with five additional plays running in repertory until August 22nd. Adventurous patrons who wish to condense the experience have two opportunities to see all six of the plays in three days (August 12th through 14th, or August 20th through 22nd). The Pinter Celebration is generously sponsored by Richard E. Rauh and The National Endowment for the Arts. DUQ 90.5-FM is the Media Sponsor.

The Pinter Celebration continues the tradition that PICT began in 2006 with BeckettFest, a festival featuring all 19 of Samuel Beckett's plays, and continued in 2008 with Synge Cycle, featuring the complete plays of the playwright who most influenced Beckett, John Millington Synge. Nobel Prizewinning playwright Harold Pinter is perhaps the most "Beckettian" of all playwrights, and the six plays produced in the Pinter Celebration illustrate the variety that exists within his overall library of works.

The celebration begins with *The Hothouse*, a sinister and scathingly funny dark comedy that unlocks the secrets of a state-run "rest home" where the staff is even more disturbed than the inmates. Set on Christmas day and dealing with the investigations into (and cover-ups of) a birth and a death at the institution, *The Hothouse* unearths with the worm-eaten corruption of bureaucracy, the secrecy of government, and the disjunction between language and understanding. *The Hothouse* is directed by Matthew Gray.

No Man's Land is directed by Andrew S. Paul, and follows the opening of *The Hothouse*. Two eccentric men, unlikely friends, stumble home from the pub together to continue their merrymaking. Hirst (Sam Tsoutsouvas) is a wealthy recluse haunted by dreams and memories, and Spooner (Rick McMillan), a down-at-heels poet. They seem to share a common history, but then again they may be strangers performing an elaborate charade. The ambiguity and the comedy

intensify with the arrival of Hirst's man-servants Briggs and Foster, who may be lovers. All four inhabit a no-man's-land between reality and imagination.

Next to open in the festival is an evening featuring two of Pinter's best-known shorter plays, *The Dumb Waiter* and *Betrayal*. Directed by Martin Giles, *The Dumb Waiter* features Ben (Michael Hanrahan) and Gus (Jarrod DiGiorgi), two hit-men holed up in a basement flat awaiting their next assignment. Awkwardness and tension develop as the two make seemingly mindless conversation, only to be fueled by the constant interruption of a strange dumbwaiter delivering food orders which Ben and Gus are ill-equipped to fill. *The Dumb Waiter* was the inspiration for Martin McDonagh's hit film, *In Bruges*.

Written in 1978 and aptly named for the numerous disloyalties committed throughout the course of the play, *Betrayal* traces an adulterous affair backwards in time, starting two years after the affair has ended. This unconventional plot structure fuels the intensity, making *Betrayal* one of Pinter's greatest dramatic works. Alan Stanford directs a cast featuring Nike Doukas, Leo Marks, and David Whalen.

The last evening to open features Pinter's first play, *The Room*, paired with his final play, *Celebration*. *The Room* is directed by Sheila McKenna and centers on Bert (Martin Giles) and Rose (Bernadette Quigley), a couple who might not actually be legally married, and their stay in a room in a large house. Left alone in the room, Rose receives a series of callers who fill her afternoon with both comic and disturbing interludes.

Alan Stanford directs the comedy *Celebration*, which takes place in a West End restaurant where you never know what will be served up next. The play encompasses the dealings of a couple involved in extramarital affairs, thugs and their wives, and a few members of the restaurant staff who don't always act like restaurant staff.

Pinter's distinctive style spawned the adjective "Pinteresque," which describes situations that are often comic, but with an undertone of impending violence or danger. An important element in the style known as Pinteresque is the pause. Pinter used "pause" frequently in his stage directions, allowing the actors to use silence to underlie that which is happening but is not being said.

The man who inspired the phrase "Pinteresque" and brought forth a new generation of playwrights (including Sam Shepard, David Mamet and Jez Butterworth) was born to Jewish parents in the tough East End of London in 1930. The influence of a childhood spent living under the shadow of World War II and the air raids on London, as well as the subsequent discoveries of the horrors of the Holocaust are reflected in his plays. He briefly studied acting at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, but disliked it there and left to tour with an Irish theatrical troupe. He was politically minded from his youth, refusing to go when called up for National Service. His application as a conscientious objector was rejected by two tribunals, and he was forced to pay a fine to avoid spending time in jail.

Pinter's success was not limited to the stage. In addition to a hugely successful career as a playwright and a solid career as a stage performer and stage director, Pinter wrote a number of highly lauded screenplay adaptations, including "The French Lieutenant's Woman," "The Last Tycoon," "The Handmaid's Tale," "Sleuth" and (uncredited) "The Remains of the Day." He also wrote film and television adaptations of many of his plays, including "One for the Road," "Celebration," "Old Times," "The Dumb Waiter," "Betrayal," "No Man's Land," "The Lover," "The Homecoming," "The Birthday Party," and "The Caretaker." As an actor, his film and television career included roles in "The Tailor of Panama," "Wit," "Mansfield Park," "Mojo," and "Krapp's Last Tape."

Pinter held many honorary degrees and was awarded many prizes and honors during his career, including a CBE (Commander of the British Empire) in 1966, and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005. He turned down the offer of British Knighthood in 1996.

His first marriage to actress Vivien Merchant gave him his only child, Daniel. He married the author Antonia Fraser in 1980, and was with her until his death, from cancer, on Christmas Eve 2008, at the age of 78.

Five-time Dora Award-winning Canadian actor Rick McMillan (*Henry*, *Stuff Happens*, *Julius Caesar*) returns to the PICT stage for the first time since 2007 for *No Man's Land* and *Celebration*. McMillan's career encompasses a wide range of works, including the Stratford and Broadway productions of *The Mikado*. He originated the role of Sarumon for *Lord of the Rings: The Musical*, and was the villainous Scar in the long-running Toronto production of *The Lion King*. He also spent many seasons with Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Shakespeare Festival, the Stratford Festival and the Shaw Festival. Recently, McMillan starred in the new Andrew Lloyd-Webber/Ben Elton musical *The Boys in the Photograph*. His previous PICT credits include *Stuff Happens*, *Julius Caesar* and *Henry*.

Irish director, actor and playwright Alan Stanford returns to PICT after his stunning 2007 production of *Salome*. Stanford is the artistic director of Second Age Theatre Company, and his extensive career includes directing Harold Pinter in a production of Pinter's play *The Collection* at the Gate Theatre in Dublin. He will direct *Betrayal* and *Celebration*.

Also returning to PICT this season is L.A.-based actor Nike Doukas. Doukas was previously seen as the delightfully fiendish Mrs. Cheveley in PICT's 2008 production of *An Ideal Husband*. Doukas and her real-life husband Leo Marks reprise their roles from the acclaimed 2008 Andak Stage Company production of *Betrayal*. The couple also shares the stage in *Celebration*, and Marks will be seen in *The Hothouse*.

Bernadette Quigley makes her Pittsburgh debut in Pinter Festival, playing Prue in *Celebration* and Rose in *The Room*. Quigley has been seen on Broadway and in the national tour of Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Other credits include productions at Abingdon Theatre, Actors Studio, and regionally at Repertory Theatre of St. Louis (*Bug*, *The Crucible*), Virginia Stage (*Beauty Queen of Leenane*), as well as Williamstown Theatre Festival, Long Wharf Theatre, and Milwaukee Repertory Theatre.

Pinter Celebration also marks a return to the stage for PICT Artistic Director Andrew S. Paul. In his first acting role since 2003, Paul will portray the verbose, comical waiter in *Celebration*. Paul also directs *No Man's Land*.

Completing the Pinter Celebration ensemble are Fredi Bernstein, Jarrod DiGiorgi, Tami Dixon, Martin Giles, Matthew Gray, Michael Hanrahan, Sheila McKenna, Larry John Meyers, Doug Pona, Sam Tsoutsouvas, and David Whalen.

The design team includes scenic designer Gianni Downs (incl. Sygne Cycle, *Othello*, *Salome*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Boston Marriage*), lighting designer Jim French (Synge Cycle, *Othello*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*), sound composer Elizabeth Atkinson (BeckettFest, Sygne Cycle), and costume designer Crystal Gomes.

A Pinter Celebration Finale, with the entire company reading from Pinter's poetry and prose and a talk-back with the company will be held on Sunday, August 22nd at 7 p.m. in the Charity Randall Theatre.

A free panel discussion, (Mis)Perceiving Pinter, will be held on Saturday, August 14th at noon in the Henry Heymann Theatre. Panelists will be Ann C. Hall, President of the international Harold Pinter Society, and Alan Stanford, director of *Celebration* and *Betrayal*.

Tickets for *The Hothouse* and *No Man's Land* are \$50 - \$20. Tickets for *The Dumb Waiter/Betrayal* and *The Room/Celebration* are \$32 - \$20. Tickets for the Pinter Celebration Finale are \$25. More information is available at www.picttheatre.org, and tickets are available through ProArtsTickets at 412.394.3353 or online at www.proartstickets.org.

The *Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre* was founded in 1996 to diversify the region's theatrical offerings by providing Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania audiences with high-quality, text-driven, affordable productions of classical theatre and the works of classical and contemporary Irish playwrights and to significantly improve employment opportunities for local talent in all facets of theatrical presentation and production. PICT is a Small Professional Theatre (SPT) affiliated with Actors' Equity Association, and a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG) and the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council. PICT is the Professional Theatre in Residence at the University of Pittsburgh and PICT productions at the Charity Randall and Henry Heymann Theatres are presented in cooperation with the University of Pittsburgh – Department of Theatre Arts.

Pinter Celebration Fact Sheet

Hearing Noise in the Silence: A Celebration of the Life and Theatre of Harold Pinter

July 22 – August 22, 2010

The Charity Randall and Henry Heymann Theatres

Stephen Foster Memorial, 4301 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Acting and Directing Team: Fredi Bernstein, Jarrod DiGiorgi, Tami Dixon, Nike Doukas, Matthew Gray, Martin Giles, Michael Hanrahan, Leo Marks, Sheila McKenna, Rick McMillan, Larry John Meyers, Andrew S. Paul, Doug Pona, Bernadette Quigley, Alan Stanford, Sam Tsoutsouvas, and David Whalen

Design and Production Team: Elizabeth Atkinson (*Sound Design*), Paul Bistrican (*Technical Director*), Gianni Downs (*Scenic Design*), Jim French (*Lighting Design*), Cory Goddard (*Properties, Assistant Stage Manager*), Crystal Gomes (*Costume Design*), Phill Madore (*Production Manager/Production Stage Manager*), and Joey Scarillo (*Assistant Stage Manager*)

The Hothouse

July 22 – August 22 Henry Heymann Theatre

Starring: Tami Dixon, Martin Giles, Michael Hanrahan, Leo Marks, Larry John Meyers, Doug Pona, and Sam Tsoutsouvas
Director: Matthew Gray

The Hothouse Performance Dates and Times:

First Week: Thursday – Friday, July 22 – 23, Previews, 8 p.m.
 Saturday, July 24, Opening Night, 8 p.m. (followed by reception)
 Sunday, July 25, 2 p.m. (followed by talk-back with actors)

Second Week: Tuesday, July 27, 7 p.m. (Professional Tuesday performance)
 Wednesday – Thursday, July 28 – 29, 8 p.m.*
 Sunday, August 1, 7 p.m.
 * - preshow discussion Wednesday and Thursday, 7 p.m.

Third Week: Saturday, August 7, 2 p.m.

Fourth Week: Friday, August 13, 8 p.m.

Fifth Week: Wednesday, August 18, 8 p.m.
 Sunday, August 22, 2 p.m.

No Man's Land

July 30 – August 21, 2010 The Charity Randall Theatre

Starring: Jarrod DiGiorgi, Rick McMillan, Sam Tsoutsouvas, David Whalen
Director: Andrew S. Paul

No Man's Land Performance Dates and Times:

First Week: Friday, July 30, Preview, 8 p.m.
 Saturday, July 31, Opening, 8 p.m.
 Sunday, August 1, 2 p.m. (followed by talk-back with actors)

Second Week: Wednesday, August 4, 8 p.m.
 Sunday, August 8, 7 p.m.

Third Week: Thursday, August 12, 8 p.m.

Fourth Week: Tuesday, August 17, 7 p.m.
 Saturday, August 21, 8 p.m.

The Dumb Waiter & Betrayal

August 5 – 21, 2010

Henry Heymann Theatre

The Dumb Waiter

Starring: Jarrod DiGiorgi and Michael Hanrahan

Director: Martin Giles

Betrayal

Starring: Nike Doukas, Martin Giles, Leo Marks and David Whalen
Director: Alan Stanford

First Week: Thursday – Saturday, August 5 – 7, 8 p.m.
Sunday, August 8, 2 p.m.

Second Week: Wednesday, August 11, 8 p.m.
Saturday, August 14, 2 p.m.
Sunday, August 15, 7 p.m.

Third Week: Saturday, August 21, 2 p.m.

Celebration & The Room

August 14 – 20, 2010

The Charity Randall Theatre

Celebration

Starring: Fredi Bernstein, Tami Dixon, Nike Doukas, Martin Giles, Michael Hanrahan, Leo Marks, Rick McMillan, Andrew S. Paul, and Bernadette Quigley

Director: Alan Stanford

The Room

Starring: Fredi Bernstein, Jarrod DiGiorgi, Martin Giles, Larry John Meyers, and Doug Pona

Director: Sheila McKenna

First Week: Saturday, August 14, 8 p.m.
Sunday, August 15, 2 p.m.

Second Week: Thursday – Friday, August 19 – 20, 8 p.m.

Pinter Celebration Finale

Sunday, August 22, 7 p.m.

The Charity Randall Theatre

TICKET INFORMATION:

Prices for *The Hothouse* and *No Man's Land*:

Saturday Nights - \$50, Seniors \$47

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday Nights - \$46, Seniors \$43

Professional Tuesdays, Saturday and Sunday Matinees - \$42, Seniors \$40

Preview Thursday and Friday - \$34 for all seats

\$20 tickets available for youth under 25, with valid ID

Prices for *The Dumb Waiter & Betrayal*, and for *Celebration & The Room*:

All seats \$32, all performances

\$20 tickets available for youth under 25, with valid ID

Prices for *Pinter Celebration Finale*

All seats \$25

To purchase, call ProArtsTickets at 412.394.3353 or visit online at www.proartstickets.org.

Group rates are available for all PICT productions. Contact Eric Nelson at enelson@picttheatre.org or 412.561.6000 x206 for details.

(mis)Perceiving Pinter

Saturday, August 14 - noon

A free panel discussion featuring Ann C. Hall, President of the international Harold Pinter Society, and Alan Stanford, internationally-known actor and director, and director of *Celebration* and *Betrayal* in PICT's Pinter Celebration.

PINTER CELEBRATION SPONSORS:

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