

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF  
WRITERS' THEATRE

ISSUE THIRTY-THREE  
APRIL 2011

# THE BRIEF CHRONICLE



**WT**  
WRITERS'  
THEATRE

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dear Friends .....	3
<b>On Stage:</b>	
<i>Heartbreak House</i> .....	4
Shaw's Most Personal Play .....	6
A Time of Uncertainty .....	10
Shaw at Writers' Theatre .....	12
Trio of Talents .....	14
Announcing the 20th Anniversary Season .....	16
Why Here, Why Now .....	18
<b>Backstage:</b>	
<i>Do The Hustle</i> Opening Night .....	20
Event Wrap Up: Literary Luncheon .....	22
Mark Your Calendars: Upcoming Events .....	24
Sponsor Salute .....	25
Celebrating Five Years of <i>The MLK Project</i> .....	26
<i>Making Of...</i> Series .....	28
Performance Calendar .....	29

“IF WE WOMEN WERE  
**PARTICULAR**  
ABOUT MEN'S CHARACTERS,  
**WE SHOULD**  
**NEVER**  
**GET MARRIED**  
**AT ALL”**

- ELLIE DUNN, HEARTBREAK HOUSE

# THE BRIEF CHRONICLE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF WRITERS' THEATRE

ISSUE THIRTY-THREE APRIL 2011

**Michael Halberstam**  
*Artistic Director*

**Kathryn M. Lipuma**  
*Executive Director*

## EDITOR

**Eleanor Berman**  
*Director of Marketing & Communications*

## THE BRIEF CHRONICLE TEAM

**Amber Bel'cher**  
*Development Manager*

**Nicole Gilman**  
*Director of Education*

**Jaron Bernstein**  
*Institutional Giving Associate*

**Bobby Kennedy**  
*Producing Assistant/Literary Associate*

**Stuart Carden**  
*Associate Artistic Director*

**Augusta Lundsgaard**  
*Marketing Intern*

**Julia Davidson**  
*Artistic/Education Intern*

**Sara M. Poorman**  
*Marketing Manager*

**Jon Faris**  
*General Manager*

## DESIGN

LOWERCASE, INC.

## THE WRITERS' THEATRE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Officers

**Elaine Tinberg**, *President*  
**Gillian Goodman**, *Vice President*  
**David McGranahan**, *Vice President*  
**Barbara Melcher**, *Vice President*  
**Tom Hodges**, *Treasurer*  
**Joseph G. Dillon**, *Secretary*

### Trustees

**Lawrence M. Adelman**  
**Arthur Anderson, Jr.**  
**Janice Beck**  
**Susan Belgrad**  
**Amy Pope Brock**  
**Sara Cohan**  
**Howard Conant, Jr.**  
**Michael Halberstam**  
**Linda Havlin**  
**Avril Klaff**  
**Christopher N. Knight**

**Beth L. Kronfeld**  
**Nelson Levy, Ph.D., M.D.**  
**Kathryn Lipuma**  
**Jennifer Litowitz**  
**Thomas Mann**  
**Loel McMillan**  
**Christopher S. Pfaff**  
**Pam Phillips Weston**  
**Christine Pompizzi**  
**Mary Pat Studdert**



**Michael Halberstam**  
*Artistic Director*

**Kathryn M. Lipuma**  
*Executive Director*

Dear Friends,

It's only fitting to round out the 2010/11 Season with William Brown directing George Bernard Shaw's *Heartbreak House*. This production marks the seventh play penned by Shaw to grace our stages, making him the most produced playwright in the company's history. Brown has been a long-time collaborator to Writers' Theatre and has undoubtedly shaped many watershed artistic moments. With Brown at the helm of this classic piece, you're certainly in for a lively interpretation of Shaw's "favorite" play.

In this issue of *The Brief Chronicle*, we delve into the events occurring in Shaw's life that inspired him to write *Heartbreak House* and highlights from the playwright's tenure on Writers' stages. We also profile the dynamic team behind the upcoming world premiere production of *The Detective's Wife* at Books on Vernon and unveil next year's line up of productions for the 20th Anniversary Season.

Backstage, we celebrated new work with the Literary Luncheon and the opening of the world premiere production of *Do The Hustle*, also directed by William Brown. Plus, Director of Education Nicole Gilman muses on the significance of presenting five years of *The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights* at area schools.

There is much to look forward to as we conclude our 19th season. With the 20th Anniversary fast approaching and *Heartbreak House* gracing the Tudor Court stage, there is no better time to renew your commitment to Writers' Theatre. Thank you for your many years of support and we hope to see you back again next year!

Yours Sincerely,

Michael

Kate

# Heartbreak House

By **GEORGE BERNARD SHAW**  
Directed By **WILLIAM BROWN**

April 19 – June 26, 2011 | *Performed at 325 Tudor Court*

In the English countryside on the estate of Captain Shotover, an extraordinary assemblage of guests gather to reunite. Affairs begin, engagements end and hearts and minds become irreparably ensnared in a young woman's dilemma, whether to marry for love or for money. George Bernard Shaw—the master of wit and social thought—bitingly chronicles the demise of the leisure class in his favorite play, *Heartbreak House*.

**FEATURING JEANNIE AFFELDER, ATRA ASDOU, KAREEM BANDEALY,  
KEVIN CHRISTOPHER FOX, TIM GITTINGS, JOHN LISTER, JOHN REEGER,  
TIFFANY SCOTT, KAREN JANES WODITSCH AND MARTIN YUREK**

SCENIC DESIGN BY **KEITH PITTS**  
LIGHTING DESIGN BY **JESSE KLUG**  
COSTUME DESIGN BY **RACHEL ANNE HEALY**  
SOUND DESIGN BY **ANDY HANSEN**  
PROPERTY DESIGN BY **NICK HEGGESTAD**  
STAGE MANAGEMENT: **DAVID CASTELLANOS**

Corporate Production Sponsor

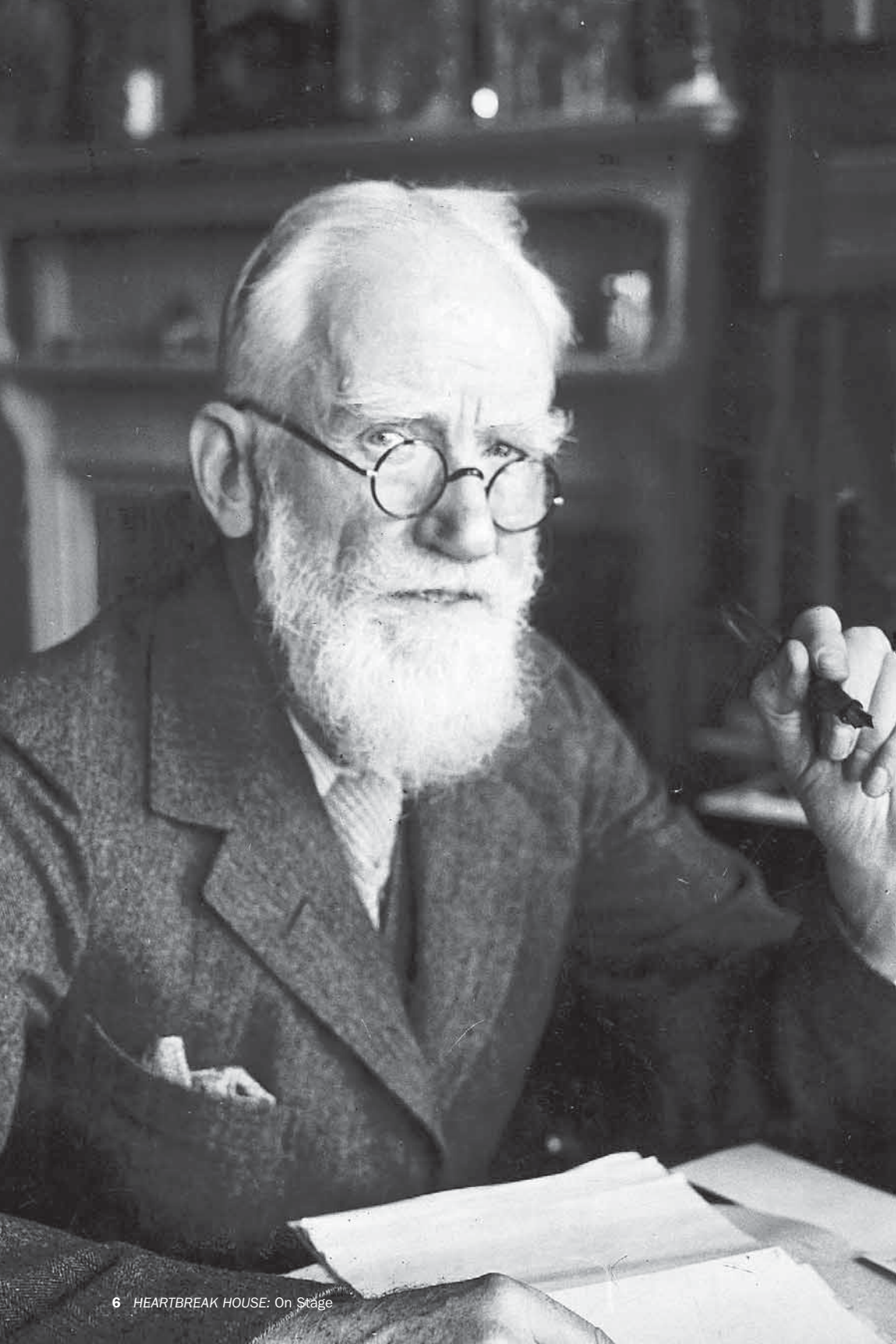
**MAGNETAR**  **CAPITAL**

Foundation Support

**THE ELIZABETH F.  
CHENEY FOUNDATION**

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





# SHAW'S MOST PERSONAL PLAY

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

When *The Brief Chronicle* last looked at playwright George Bernard Shaw in conjunction with our production of *A Minister's Wife*, the playwright was a young man of 38 and had just published his early triumph, *Candida*. Twenty years later, the Shaw who wrote *Heartbreak House* was a markedly changed man, both more beloved by the public and experienced in his writing, and increasingly more concerned about the direction of humanity.

At the beginning of 1914, George Bernard Shaw was on top of the world. His newest play, *Pygmalion*, played New York in March and London in April

to resounding critical acclaim and was well on its way to becoming the most enduring work of the playwright's career. As a darling public persona, Shaw's views and opinions were sought on all sorts of subjects and concerns and he was only too happy oblige with a quick witticism or powerful insight. But the esteem he was granted and the pedestal he stood upon was far from secure.

On June 28, 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife were assassinated in the streets of Sarajevo by a Serbian rebel, prompting a sequence of events that ultimately lead to global war. As Austria-Hungary

and its ally Germany mobilized to attack Belgrade in July, Russia and France came to the tiny country's aid. German troops then violated Belgian neutrality in their march to attack France, which drew Britain (an ally of Belgium) into the conflict, forming the Triple Entente with France and Russia against the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The Great War would rage for four years before an armistice ended the fighting, leaving at least 15 million dead in its wake.

To say Shaw was displeased with the escalation of conflict would be putting it far too mildly. The day Britain declared war on Germany, the playwright sent a telegraph to his German translator saying, "what a hideous situation civilisation tearing itself to pieces...You and I at war can absurdity go further." Being an active and outspoken socialist, Shaw saw the war as an inevitable conclusion to the era referred to as the "Wicked Half Century" (1850-1900), which was characterized by the combined forces of Darwinism and Capitalism destroying civilized society. The playwright publicly voiced his opposition in a pamphlet entitled "Common Sense About the War" and also began giving widely attended anti-war speeches.

"'Common Sense About the War' shook the nation to its underpinnings, generating a fury of outrage and splenetic derogation from the press," wrote Shaw scholar Dan H. Laurence, who expertly describes the ostracizing Shaw received. "He was denounced as a traitor, an enemy 'within our

walls.' Former friends cut him dead at committee meetings and in the streets. Booksellers and librarians removed his work from their shelves." Out of the depths of this solitude, Shaw wrote in a letter, "I never felt so morose in my life. I can't write [...] I am old and finished. I who once wrote whole plays *d'un seul trait* [in a single stroke], am creeping through a new one (to prevent myself crying)."

This "new one" Shaw referred to was *Heartbreak House*. The idea for the play began percolating as early as 1913, when actress Lena Ashwell told Shaw stories about her father, Captain Pocock, a former navy captain who had lived on a ship in the River Tyne. Further inspiration came from a June 1916 weekend at a country estate with his friends Sidney and Beatrice Webb (leading Fabian socialists) and Virginia Woolf and her husband. The playwright was struck by such a gathering of leading British thinkers and how utterly powerless they were to affect the fighting happening in the trenches of Europe. Later that same year, just 10 miles from their home, the Shaws witnessed the Royal Air Force shooting down a German zeppelin, which was heading towards London on a bombing raid. Shaw wrote about the event: "What is hardly credible, but true, is that the sound of the Zepp's engines was so fine, and its voyage through the stars so enchanting, that I positively caught myself hoping the next night that there would be another raid." These influences (a gathering of the elite, an elderly naval captain and a bombing raid) were synthesized into the new play.

Also of significant importance to Shaw's writing of *Heartbreak House* were the works of Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, particularly *The Cherry Orchard*. Shaw had been at the first performance of *The Cherry Orchard* in England during 1913, and remarked to the producer afterwards, "I feel as if I want to tear up all my plays and begin all over again." Just as Shaw's *Candida* years before bore a debt of gratitude to Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, *Heartbreak House* was subtitled "A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes" and portrays a cast of characters similar to those in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, with its differing classes, personal conflicts and universal dilemmas. Like Chekhov, Shaw managed to both provide a highly personal character drama while at the same time scathingly indicting the politics of the time. As Shaw finished his play in 1917, the Russian Revolution—which Chekhov never lived to see—had begun, bringing down the Russian monarchy while the equally archaic class system in Shaw's Britain remained firmly in place.

The year 1917 marked a turning point in Shaw's relationship with the British public. He was invited by British military authorities to visit the French front, thus beginning his climb back to national favoritism. The playwright had also been displaying his patriotism by withholding *Heartbreak House* from publication until 1919 after hostilities ceased and by preventing a revival of *The Doctor's Dilemma* from occurring during wartime. Despite

## WHAT A HIDEOUS SITUATION CIVILISATION TEARING ITSELF TO PIECES...YOU AND I AT WAR CAN ABSURDITY GO FURTHER.

these nationalistic gestures, Shaw still felt more comfortable having *Heartbreak House* premiere in New York rather than Britain. The play ran for 125 performances at the Garrick Theatre in 1920, and then enjoyed its British premiere at the Court Theatre the following year. Initial reviews were mixed, a result of his still somewhat tarnished reputation, but all the critics were forced to admit a begrudging respect for the play's ambition and heart, a respect which has since grown exponentially.

Born out of one of the darkest periods of his life—and of all human existence—it is no surprise that *Heartbreak House* is also referred to as Shaw's most personal play. The earnestness of the play helped revive his fortunes, but his next triumph, *Saint Joan*, would thrust him back fully into the good graces of society, with the 1925 Nobel Prize for Literature as proof. This now classic has enjoyed major revivals around the world every decade since and remains one of the highest points of the Irish dramatist's career. *Heartbreak House* is not only his most personal play, it will remain, as always, his "favorite." ■



# A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

George Bernard Shaw was being very deliberate when he did not assign a precise year to the action of *Heartbreak House*. He wrote the play between 1916 and 1917, in the midst of World War I. German zeppelins started flying over the English countryside on bombing runs as early as 1914. However, the precise date of 1914 was never put in the text of the play by its author.

In his production for Writers' Theatre, director William Brown has set the action of *Heartbreak House* in 1940 at the beginning of World War II during the Battle of Britain. After France fell to the Nazis, Germany's Luftwaffe launched the air campaign to cripple Britain's air

defenses, clearing the way for either an invasion of the British Isles or a forced armistice. Only sites of military and industrial importance were targeted at first, but soon civilian targets in populous cities were being hit. By 1941, bombings had reduced in frequency as Germany backed off Britain and turned their attention to the Eastern front. The triumph of the Royal Air Force over the Luftwaffe was the first major defeat of the Nazis and a turning point in the global conflict.

Setting this production of *Heartbreak House* more than 20 years later than Shaw penned the piece has particular advantages. Generally, World War

II is more familiar to contemporary audiences than World War I, and redefining the time frame heightens the play's power. World War I was supposed to be the War to End All Wars, redefining the European "old world," but as so often happens with sweeping change, it took time to reach full effect. The shock of World War I signaled the beginning of a new world, but it was still uncertain what that world would look like and where Britain would fit in the new order. These questions of uncertainty permeated the interwar period.

On the one hand, Great Britain was still the largest empire on the planet and they weathered the Great Depression better than America and Germany. The Edwardian aristocrats that Shaw satirized in 1919 were still firmly in control of society. Director William Brown put it best when he said that Britain remained a "civilization that has gotten rich and fat enough to sit around and worry about why they're not happy." Much of high society was exactly the same in 1940 as it was in 1919, and yet this time the steadily approaching march of the future could not be overlooked. Other nations, such as the United States and the Soviet Union, were rapidly rising to prominence. The Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 between America and Great Britain acknowledged the former as a global naval power equal to the Empire. Meanwhile, the commonwealths of Canada, Australia and South Africa continued to ask for and be granted more sovereignty from the Crown. A new world was emerging and all that was

needed was another global event to finalize the changeover.

The idea of a transitional society, one that knows something has ended but cannot quite grasp what has begun, should not be unfamiliar to American audiences at present. Much like the sense of apprehension Britain endured in the interwar period regarding the future, Americans are currently exposed to a stream of newspapers, magazines and television shows speculating that we are living through the beginning of the end of American supremacy.

Regardless of whether that downfall is actually imminent, the anxieties of nations are not without effect on their citizens. The characters gathered at Captain Shotover's house are equally uncertain about their own future—especially Ellie Dunn, who must choose whether to marry for love or money. Trapped in a rapidly changing world they are powerless to control, Shaw's characters are desperate to find who they are, where they belong and, most importantly, where they can regain a sense of community among the alienation. ■

# SHAW AT WRITERS' THEATRE

George Bernard Shaw is the most produced playwright in Writers' Theatre history. Over the course of 19 seasons, six productions have been staged by the Irish playwright. Heartbreak House is the seventh, and the fourth to have William Brown's involvement, either as an actor or director. Look back at some of those memorable nights of theatre:

**Two by Shaw**, Writers' Theatre's first dalliance with the master dramatist, consisted of two one-act plays: *Village Wooing* and *Man of Destiny*. Artistic Director Michael Halberstam starred in the 1994 production, directed by Richard Block. Longtime Writers' Theatre collaborator David Turrentine served as stage manager.

Five years later, Writers' returned to Shaw with a production of one his greatest plays, ***Candida***. The 1999 production was directed by Halberstam and starred many of the company's perennial favorite actors, including William Brown as Rev. James Morell, Kristine Thatcher as Candida, Scott Parkinson as Eugene Marchbanks,

Karen Janes Woditsch as Prossy and Donald Brearley as Mr. Burgess.

Another three years elapsed before ***Misalliance***, under the direction of William Brown, brought Shaw back to Writers' stage once again. The 2002 production starred the late Guy Adkins alongside Susan Hart, Joel Hatch, Jonathan Weir and Michael Halberstam. It also marked the Writers' Theatre debut of costume designer Rachel Anne Healy and sound designer Andrew Hansen.

***The Doctor's Dilemma*** followed two years later in 2004 and was directed by Halberstam. The first Shaw play to be staged at the Tudor Court venue, the cast included Kevin Gudahl (his first appearance at Writers' Theatre), Steve Hinger, Scott Parkinson, Robert Scogin, Jonathan Weir and Karen Janes Woditsch. Lighting designer Charles Cooper made his Writers' Theatre debut with the show.

The following year, William Brown returned to direct his second Shaw play at Writers', ***Arms and the Man***. The 2005 production featured favorites Jonathan Weir and Kimberly Mellen alongside Writers' Theatre newcomers Elizabeth Ledo and Timothy Edward Kane.

After a four year hiatus, Writers' Theatre revisited Shaw again, albeit this time through an adaptation. ***A Minister's Wife***, a world premiere musical created through the *Literary Development Initiative*, was a musical adaptation of Shaw's *Candida*, adapted by Austin Pendleton with lyrics by Jan Tranen and music by Josh Schmidt. Artistic Director Michael Halberstam conceived the idea for the show and directed the 2009 world premiere production. The musical will receive its New York premiere at Lincoln Center Theater in May 2011, once again under the direction of Halberstam. ■



Kevin Gudahl and Kate Fry in the 2009 world premiere musical, *A Minister's Wife*.



Susan Hart and Guy Adkins in the 2002 production of *Misalliance*.

# TRIO OF TALENTS

*Writers' Theatre is thrilled to present the world premiere of playwright Keith Huff's *The Detective's Wife*! Three of Chicago's finest talents have worked tirelessly over the course of two years and several workshops to bring this exclusive production to the Books on Vernon stage. Now here is your chance to meet the team behind the production:*



## **KEITH HUFF** *Playwright*

Broadway box office record-breaking writer of *A Steady Rain*

Keith Huff's plays have been produced off-Broadway, internationally and nationally. His most notable recent production was the sold-out Broadway run of *A Steady Rain* featuring Daniel Craig and Hugh Jackman, which he is currently adapting for film. In addition, Huff is developing a Chicago-based series *The Brothers Buczowski* for HBO, and has written episodes for AMC's Emmy and Golden Globe award-winning series *Mad Men*. Huff's sharp writing and compelling storytelling are the perfect fit for the Books on Vernon stage.



## **GARY GRIFFIN** *Director*

Esteemed director of Broadway's *The Color Purple*

Gary Griffin's Broadway directing credits include *The Color Purple* (11 Tony Award nominations including Best Musical) and *The Apple Tree* (Tony Award nomination for Best Musical Revival). He is the resident Associate Artistic Director at Chicago Shakespeare Theater where he most recently directed *As You Like It* and *Private Lives*. Griffin's innovative staging is ideal to bring all of the twists and turns in *The Detective's Wife* to life.



## **BARBARA ROBERTSON** *Actress*

Multi-award winner and Chicago's favorite leading lady

Barbara Robertson has been performing on Chicago stages for more than 20 years garnering numerous awards and accolades. Perhaps best known for her role as Madame Morrible in the Chicago production of *Wicked*, Robertson's other credits include Chicago Shakespeare Theater's *Hamlet*, Drury Lane's *Mame*, Goodman Theatre's *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*, Court Theatre's *House of Blue Leaves*, Lookingglass Theatre's *Hard Times*, Steppenwolf Theatre Company's *A Summer Remembered* and the national tour of *Angels in America* to name a few. A consummate actress, Robertson is the natural choice to take the lead in this unforgettable one-woman show.

**With this incredible team assembled, *The Detective's Wife* is a not-to-be missed theatrical experience. For more information and tickets, call 847-242-6000 or go to [writerstheatre.org](http://writerstheatre.org).**

CELEBRATE WRITERS'

# 20TH ANNIVERSARY

AND

## EXPERIENCE EXTRAORDINARY

JOIN US FOR THE 2011/12 SEASON:

### THE REAL THING

By **TOM STOPPARD**  
Directed by Artistic Director **MICHAEL HALBERSTAM**

September 13 – November 20, 2011 | Performed at 325 Tudor Court

### THE CARETAKER

By **HAROLD PINTER**  
Directed by **RON OJ PARSON**

November 8, 2011 – March 25, 2012 | Performed at 664 Vernon Avenue

### HESPERIA

By **RANDALL COLBURN**  
Directed by Associate Artistic Director **STUART GARDEN**

January 24 – March 18, 2012 | Performed at 325 Tudor Court

### A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

Music and Lyrics by **STEPHEN SONDHEIM**  
Book by **HUGH WHEELER**  
Directed by **WILLIAM BROWN**

May 1 – July 8, 2012 | Performed at 325 Tudor Court

PLUS THE LIMITED ENGAGEMENT:

## THE BLONDE, THE BRUNETTE AND THE VENGEFUL REDHEAD

By **ROBERT HEWETT**

May 22 – July 29, 2012 | Performed at 325 Tudor Court

*The Blonde, the Brunette and the Vengeful Redhead* is currently available only to Subscribers and Members. Add on tickets to your order today!

Go to [writerstheatre.org](http://writerstheatre.org) for more information and join us for the unforgettable 20th Anniversary Season!



# WHY HERE?

The Brief Chronicle series completes the season with Writers' Theatre associate artistic director Stuart Carden in conversation with Heartbreak House director William Brown.

**Stuart Carden:** Some, including you, have called *Heartbreak House* Shaw's best play. Beyond taking on a classic work that you love, why is now the right time to direct *Heartbreak House*?

**William Brown:** Let me answer that in two ways. First, it is a highly personal play. It is called "*Heartbreak*" House for a reason. Every character is longing to connect, to love and be loved and to make love. They want intimacy, to have their hearts broken and to feel what it's like to want something they can not have. The themes of love, family, sex, marriage and paying the bills are universal and timeless.

But of course, this being Shaw, there is a social context as well. Written during World War I, Shaw saw the British Empire in decline. There is a great deal of talk now about the end of the American empire. While I don't think our idea of empire is the same as Queen Victoria's, there is a very real sense in our country that we are slipping. America is certainly in transition. In a way we have lost sight of who we are and don't really know

what costume to put on. We all want to know who we are as a community. These well-fed, well-heeled residents of *Heartbreak House* are in the same boat. And they also have to pay their mortgages.

**SC:** Both you and Writers' have had a love affair with Shaw through the years. What draws you to his writing and why are his words and ideas such a good fit for our theatre and audience?

**WB:** I think Shaw provides the complete package—funny, smart, literate, feisty, surprising, sexy and sometimes moving. People frequently say his plays are too talky, but all plays are talk! When the talk is this good and the attack so theatrical, I find it irresistible. The Writers' Theatre audience, who is always up for some fun, certainly agrees. ■

# WHY NOW?

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT WRITERS' THEATRE BACKSTAGE

# DO THE HUSTLE OPENING NIGHT

The 2010/11 Season continued on Friday, February 4, with the world premiere of Brett Neveu's *Do The Hustle*. Writers' Theatre was delighted to welcome its most ardent friends and supporters to witness the opening performance of this gritty and deftly poignant story of a father-son con artist team. Afterwards, they joined Artistic Director Michael Halberstam, the cast and creative team for a celebratory reception, featuring delicious cuisine provided by Hel's Kitchen. All in attendance raised a glass of champagne (provided by Good Grapes of Glencoe) and toasted the exciting beginning of this world premiere and yet another thrilling Writers' Theatre production.

## A special thanks to our sponsors for *Do The Hustle*:

### Corporate Production Sponsors



### Opening Night Sponsors



1. *Do The Hustle* director William Brown and playwright Brett Neveu with Writers' Theatre Trustee Howard Conant, Jr., CEO of Corporate Production Sponsor Urban Innovations 2. Trustee Amy Pope Brock with Director's Society Members Christine and Michael Pope 3. Trustee Nelson Levy and his wife Louisa with Jay and Rosemary Ryan 4. Elaine Tinberg (center), President of the Board of Trustees and her husband Rich with Paula and Bob Spanheimer and Kathryn and Marty Gilbert 5. Director's Society Members Randy and Lisa White with Executive Director Kate Lipuma (center) 6. Mark Tilton and Stephen Kohl-Solovy with Trustee Barbara Melcher 7. Trustee Christopher S. Pfaff and his wife Sara Pfaff

# LITERARY LUNCHEON

On January 12, 2011, 50 women gathered at the beautiful home of *Director's Society* member Patty Becker for Writers' second-annual Literary Luncheon. As guests arrived, they were greeted with mimosas and mingled with other attendees before gathering for an in-depth discussion with members of the *Do The Hustle* creative team—director William Brown, playwright Brett Neveu and actress Karen Janes Woditsch. After enjoying a lively conversation exploring the fascinating process of realizing a world premiere, from commission and early drafts to workshops and rehearsals, guests adjourned for lunch which featured gourmet soups and finger sandwiches, beautifully presented by Restaurant Michael of Winnetka. The dialogue continued into the afternoon.

We would like to extend a very special thanks to Restaurant Michael for so generously providing lunch and to Patty and Bruce Becker for graciously opening their home for this special event.



1. Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and host Patty Becker with *Do The Hustle* actress Karen Janes Woditsch and playwright Brett Neveu 2. *Do The Hustle* playwright Brett Neveu and director William Brown with *Director's Society* Member Stephanie Sick 3. Trustees Pam Phillips Weston and Christine Pompizzi 4. Alisa Cahan with Trustee Beth Kronfeld and Executive Director Kate Lipuma 5. *Director's Society* members Patty Becker (host) and Vida Marks with Joan Sears 6. Rebecca Woan and Pauline Sheehan with *Director's Society* member Dagmara Kokonas

## UPCOMING EVENTS

# 2011 *WordPlay* Gala



2011 *WordPlay* Gala Chair Beth L. Kronfeld with Artistic Director Michael Halberstam

Writers' Theatre would like to salute Gala Chair and Trustee Beth L. Kronfeld and thank her for her tremendous work and dedication in orchestrating our 2011 *WordPlay* Gala. The event is set to take place on April 15th at the Peninsula Chicago Grand Ballroom and is the most important fundraising evening of the year. Thank you to Beth and all of our supporters!



THE  
DIRECTOR'S  
SOCIETY

## GARDEN PARTY

**SAVE THE DATE** for the 11th Annual *Director's Society* Garden Party! Sunday, July 17, 2011

The Annual Garden Party is just one of the exclusive events offered to members of the *Director's Society*, a group of Writers' most generous supporters. Held at a luxurious private home in Winnetka, this exclusive event provides the perfect setting to celebrate the 2010/11 Season and look forward to the next!

*Director's Society* members receive special access to the art and ticket concierge services with their annual contributions of \$1,000 or more. **For more information on membership in the *Director's Society*, contact Amber Bel'cher, Development Manager, at 847-242-6012 or [abelcher@writerstheatre.org](mailto:abelcher@writerstheatre.org).**

# SPONSOR SALUTE

## THE ELIZABETH F. CHENEY FOUNDATION

Writers' Theatre is deeply pleased to once again salute The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation. For the last 10 years, Writers' Theatre has enormously benefited from the wonderful generosity of the Foundation, one of Chicago's leading arts funders, in support of many past productions, including:

- The American premiere of Nick Whitby's *To the Green Fields Beyond*
- The world premiere adaptation of *Crime and Punishment* by Writers' Theatre co-founder Marilyn Campbell and Curt Columbus (winner of a 2004 Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Adaptation)
- Artistic Director Michael Halberstam's original adaptation of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*
- Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, directed by William Brown
- The world premiere of *A Minister's Wife*, Writers' Theatre's first musical, adapted from Shaw's *Candida* by Austin Pendleton with music by Josh Schmidt, lyrics by Jan Tranen and conceived and directed by Michael Halberstam
- And most recently, last season's revival of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, directed by David Cromer, which was named the "best show of 2010" by the *Chicago Tribune*

We are so grateful to The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation for its collaboration and would like to extend our profound thanks for its help in bringing *Heartbreak House*, George Bernard Shaw's biting witty classic to life.

## MAGNETAR CAPITAL

Writers' Theatre would like to extend its sincere thanks to our Corporate Production Sponsor, Magnetar Capital. We are very pleased to continue this partnership for a fourth consecutive year. Previously, Magnetar was Corporate Production Sponsor of *As You Like It*, *A Minister's Wife* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

# FIVE YEARS OF *THE MLK PROJECT*: *THE FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS*

*On January 17, 2011 Writers' Theatre opened the fifth annual tour of The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights. This educational touring production has reached more than 35,000 students and community members. Each year the production opens on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday and runs through the end of February to commemorate Black History Month.*

The stories featured in *The MLK Project* are those of real Chicago-area activists, representing both the well-known and unsung heroes of the Civil Rights Movement. One actress portrays all of the "characters:" Reverend M. Earle Sardon recounts the boycotts that he led fighting for jobs for African Americans; Maynard Krasne shares his perspective on Freedom Summer when he worked to register people to vote; art teacher Jenn Weinshenker speaks about the peace movement; poet and activist David Hernandez discusses how King's legacy taught him about non-violence, protest and demonstration; Reverend Jesse Jackson addresses the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the murder of Emmett Till; founder of the DuSable Museum Margaret Burroughs focuses on inspiring young people to achieve their dreams; and Reverend Samuel Billy Kyles conveys the devastation of witnessing Dr. King's murder.

While the stories in *The MLK Project* are the same, with each passing year the lens through which we view these stories changes. A few years ago the show toured right after the inauguration of President Obama. At that time students connected the legacy of Dr. King to the reality of electing the first African American president. Their connection to history was shaped by the events occurring in the present.

Last year, there was a surge in school violence and *The MLK Project* became a way to spark conversation about Dr. King's focus on peaceful protest. Students expressed frustration and anger about not feeling safe at school. At a pivotal moment in the play the main character, Alaya, says she's going to turn her anger into action—taking her frustration, irritation and agitation and writing about it, or rapping about it as a way to process her feelings. This was a moment that had new resonance for students as they faced some of the same feelings.

In the fall of 2010 there were dozens of news stories about students being bullied in school and the dramatic and sometimes deadly toll that takes on young people. In the wake of those stories, *The MLK Project* provided a safe space in which students could address issues of prejudice and discrimination and move toward a more empathetic understanding of their peers. Conversations about acceptance and understanding help students see that they aren't alone in their experiences.

The most remarkable thing about *The MLK Project* is that each group of students connects to something different in the production. The diverse stories that are shared allow students with different backgrounds and experiences to relate to the Civil Rights Movement in their own way. We can't claim that *The MLK Project* is going to end discrimination or prejudice, but after five years we can see that these powerful stories help students think about treating each other with respect and kindness. As Dr. King said, "love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend."



*The MLK Project* team: Actress Melanie A. Brezill, Stage Manager Razor Wintercastle, Education Liaison Nicole Ripley and Director Jimmy McDermott.

# THE MAKING OF... SERIES

A series just for you, our Subscribers, Members and supporters!

**MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2011 FROM 6:30-7:30 PM AT 325 TUDOR COURT**

Save the date for the fifth and final event in the 2010/11 *The Making Of...* series, featuring a behind-the-scenes glimpse into *The Detective's Wife* on Monday, June 13, 2011 from 6:30-7:30 pm on the Tudor Court stage. Lighting designer Heather Gilbert will join Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden to discuss her process and creative methods to quite literally illuminate director Gary Griffin's vision for this thrilling world premiere.

**Space is limited; please RSVP to [specialevents@writerstheatre.org](mailto:specialevents@writerstheatre.org) or by calling 847-441-8194.**



Designer Jack Magaw and Associate Artistic Director Stuart Carden discuss the scenic design of *She Loves Me* before a sold out crowd.

Event Series Sponsor:



# Heartbreak House

## APRIL

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
17	18	19 7:30	20 7:30	21 8:00	22 8:00	23 4:00/8:00
24 2:00/6:00	25	26 7:30	27 7:30	28 7:30	29 Private Event	30 4:00/8:00

## MAY

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
1 2:00/6:00	2	3 7:30	4 7:30	5 8:00	6 8:00	7 4:00/8:00
8 2:00/6:00	9	10 7:30	11 7:30	12 8:00	13 8:00	14 4:00/8:00
15 2:00/6:00	16	17 7:30	18 2:00/7:30	19 8:00	20 8:00	21 4:00/8:00
22 2:00	23	24 7:30	25 7:30	26 8:00	27 8:00	28 4:00/8:00
29 2:00/6:00	30	31 7:30				

## JUNE

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 2:00/7:30	23 8:00	24 8:00	25 4:00/8:00
26 2:00	27	28	29	30		

■ Writers' Wednesdays - Post-Show Discussion after evening performances only





**Administration & Box Office**

376 Park Avenue  
Glencoe, Illinois 60022

*Artistic Director*

Michael Halberstam

*Executive Director*

Kathryn M. Lipuma

**WRITERSTHEATRE.ORG**  
**847-242-6000**



Find us on

**Facebook**

follow us on

**twitter**

Ticket discounts are available for groups of 10 or more.  
Call 847-242-6000 for more details.

2010/11 Season Restaurant Partner



**MICHAEL**

A RESTAURANT PARTNER OF WRITERS' THEATRE

restaurantmichael.com

847-441-3100