Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: On Stage
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“ETERNITY IS A TERRIBLE THOUGHT. I MEAN WHERE’S IT GOING TO END?”

- ROSENCRANTZ, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead
Dear Friends:

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

In this issue of The Brief Chronicle we hear from some of the creative minds who are collaborating on our opening production Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, and we offer insight into the life and work of playwright Tom Stoppard. We also take you behind-the-scenes at some of our spring and summer events, including the 2009 WordPlay Gala, which turned out to be our most successful benefit to date, a marvelous opening night for A Minister’s Wife and many of our education programs.

Thank you to everyone who supported these remarkable programs. We wouldn’t be here without your generosity of time, spirit and resources.

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

Yours Sincerely,

Michael Halberstam
Artistic Director
Kathryn M. Lipuma
Executive Director

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

THE ROAD TO ROSENCRANTZ

BY BOBBY KENNEDY, Producing Assistant/Literary Associate

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

Although he did well at school, Stoppard found his education to be uninspiring and chose not to go on to university. At age 17 he became a journalist, working at Western Daily Press and Bristol Evening World writing features, articles and eventually arts criticism. In 1960 when the Bristol papers consolidated, Stoppard opted to write freelance and continue contributing his increasingly experimental columns and reviews to anyone interested. This lasted until 1962 when he moved to London and started writing theatre reviews for Scene, a culture magazine. But what Stoppard really wanted to do was write a play.

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

Stoppard’s first full-length play, A Walk on Water (1960), was deemed more suitable for television, although it was eventually produced on stage in 1968 as Enter a Free Man. However, Scene’s bankruptcy in 1963 forced Stoppard to
“THE MOST BRILLIANT DRAMATIC DEBUT OF THE SIXTIES.”

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

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

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

Unsatisfied with this version, Stoppard rewrote his initial treatment into a full-length play, moving the action from England back into the world of Hamlet, becoming what is known today as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead. The Royal Shakespeare Company was impressed with the first two acts and commissioned a third, but ultimately passed on producing it, as did everyone who read the script.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stoppard was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1977, knighted in 1997 and appointed to the prestigious Order of Merit in 2000.
“Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are a curious and rather appealing couple, customarily thought of as ‘unsympathetic,’ as spies and accessories to the evil plot against Hamlet. However nothing in the play indicates a shared guilt with the King: they are told little, they obey orders and are somewhat bewildered, having been thrust into a situation which has nothing to do with them and they hardly understand. Because of this they have the air of occupying a level above the action, a different level of reality.”

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

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

It is always a rather shocking moment in the play when Hamlet, the great philosopher and supposed humanist, reveals that he has condemned his friends to death. After all, they were only following orders. Hamlet tells his best friend, Horatio, that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have died explaining:

“Why, man, they did make love to this employment; They are not near my conscience; their defeat Does by their own insinuation grow: ‘Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes Between the pass and fell incensed points of mighty opposites.”

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

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

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

The Young Company was an intensive program designed to completely immerse young actors in a classical repertory company alongside some of the world’s greatest performers, including actor Nicolas Pennell, who could claim a lineage of teachers tracing back to Shakespeare himself. “Nick was an extraordinarily private person, but he took an immediate interest in me because he knew I wanted to learn from him.” Halberstam’s residency at the Stratford Festival included performing the title role in The Knight of the Burning Pestle by Beaumont and Fletcher, and it was these two years that gave him a new appreciation for the power of the written word. The Young Company had a profound influence on him and became the direct impetus towards founding Writers’ Theatre upon his return to Chicago, dedicating the company to the word and the artist.

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

“I WAS IMMERSED IN THE CLASSICS”

ogy through an astonishingly specific use of words. He does this without compromising character, substance or plot. Stoppard has created a linguistic style uniquely his own.” Directing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead represents the perfect marriage of Halberstam’s passion for language, his wit and his desire to honor the classic texts that he fell in love with as a child—and now with a very exciting and contemporary sensibility.
In this new The Brief Chronicle series we explore what brings a director and a particular production together. Here, the 2009/10 Season directors share what draws them to their respective plays, why they want to stage them at Writers’ Theatre and why they feel it is important to direct them at this point in time. We begin with Artistic Director Michael Halberstam and the 2009/10 Season opener, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead by Tom Stoppard.

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

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

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

From a purely practical perspective, I don’t think there’s been a major production of the play in the Chicago area in at least ten years, so it was definitely ripe for revival. I’ve also had a crack at directing Hamlet in the past few years and now it’s a marvelous challenge to tackle Stoppard’s take on the piece. I was flirting around with a Shakespeare play for this season but when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern revealed itself as a possibility, it was too much of a temptation to resist. Furthermore, it addresses themes of great consequence but does so with a light-hearted touch. We crave substance when we go to the theatre but we don’t want to be crushed by it—we want profound experiences but need to escape from our surroundings and laugh a little too.

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

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

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

Great plays require great actors. Writers’ Theatre puts faith in the skill of our performers, and we already dedicate resources towards recruiting the significant talent necessary to bring such plays to life. We are also blessed with an extremely clever design team who will use the intimacy of the Tudor Court Theatre to draw the audience into an unexpected world. The enormous complexity of the play is balanced by the fact that most of its significant scenes are intimate, with only two or three characters present. Actors Sean Fortunato, Timothy Edward Kane and Allen Gilmore will soar in the intimacy of our space. They will be complimented by moments of tremendous theatrical verve as Shakespeare’s world comes periodically crashing through Stoppard’s...or is it the other way around?

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

Frankly, I’m dying to produce The Coast of Utopia. Moving into Tudor Court was effected with the understanding that there were certain projects that the bookstore venue could not hold and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern was unquestionably one of them. I was not certain in fact that Tudor Court could hold it until my good friend and former Associate Artistic Director, Jimmy McDermott handed me a breakdown of the play that he had put together some years before. Suddenly, the possibilities for the play in this space roared into my imagination and reignited my fiery desire to produce the piece. We are all wildly excited about bringing it to life for you now, and hopefully there will be more Stoppard to come! Perhaps even The Coast of Utopia. Anyone care to underwrite it?
On April 24, 2009, more than 350 friends and supporters of Writers’ Theatre gathered at The Peninsula Chicago for WordPlay 2009, the theatre’s annual Gala. The much-anticipated event, co-chaired by Amalia Mahoney of Winnetka and Christine Pompizio of Glencoe, sold out two months in advance and raised a record-breaking $395,000!

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

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

The evening ended after dessert with a drawing of the WordPlay Grand Raffle prize of a 2009 Mini Cooper or $20,000 cash. The prize went to Mary Pat Studdert.
The Trustees of Writers’ Theatre would like to extend their deepest gratitude to the individuals and organizations who helped to make the WordPlay 2009 Gala such a success.

Gala Co-Chairs
Amalia Mahoney
Christine Pompizzi

Gala Sponsors:

Video Sponsor:

Gala Host Committee:
Randy & Melvin Berlin
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Rachel Weinstein & Jason Pizer

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

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Amalia Mahoney
Andrea Murphy
The Oprah Winfrey Show
The Peninsula Chicago
The Peninsula New York
Maria Pinto Boutique
Christine Pompizzi
Michael and Christine Pope

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

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

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

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

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS PAST YEAR’S RESIDENCIES INCLUDE:

DISTRICT 28 AFTER-SCHOOL KID CARE
Offering after-school creative writing and theatre classes focusing on literacy, imagination and performance, first though fifth grade students explored fairy tales, myths and legends using their bodies and voices to create their own stories.

EXPLORING MYTH AT NEW TRIER HIGH SCHOOL
After studying Homer’s The Odyssey in their freshman English class, students collaborated as actors, writers, assistant directors and technicians to create their own original piece, Journey into a Dream, using storytelling with themes of courage and bravery to dramatize a hero’s journey.

STUDYING NOVELS AT ALCOTT AND BELDING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
Students at Alcott Elementary explored the non-fiction novel We Beat the street and used the themes and ideas in the novel to create their own original performance piece. At Belding Elementary students studied The Devil’s Arithmetic and adapted and performed scenes from the book.

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

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

Mary Pat Studdert

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

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

- Mary Pat Studdert

HARRIS

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

"Harris appreciates the opportunity to sponsor the terrific work of Writers’ Theatre. We admire and support its commitment to artistic excellence as well as to the community.” - Joe Dillon.

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

MARY PAT STUDDERT

HARRIS

REGISTRATION DEADLINE EXTENDED

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

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

The registration deadline has been extended to September 30. Space is extremely limited, so make your reservations early. For information, please call Development Manager Amber Bel’cher at 847-242-6012.
From Page to Stage takes you inside the world of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead!

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

**Schedule of Events:**

**Tuesday, September 22 – 6:30 p.m.**
**FILM VIEWING: ROSENCRANZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD**
Deerfield Public Library
920 Waukegan Road, Deerfield
847-945-3311 | www.deerfieldlibrary.org

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

**Tuesday, September 22 – 7 p.m.**
**TO BE OR NOT TO BE? READINGS FROM HAMLET**
Lake Bluff/Lake Forest Public Library
123 Scranton Avenue, Lake Bluff
847-234-2540
www.lakeblufflibrary.org

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

**Tuesday, September 29 – 6 p.m.**
**FILM VIEWING: HAMLET**
Deerfield Public Library
920 Waukegan Road, Deerfield
847-945-3311 | www.deerfieldlibrary.org

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

**Thursday, October 1 – 7 p.m.**
**HAMLET REVISITED**
Northbrook Public Library
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook
847-272-6224
www.northbrook.info/lib_index.php

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

**Sunday, October 4 – 2 p.m.**
**ROSENCRANZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD AS HAMLET INSIDE OUT**
Winnetka-Northfield Public Library
788 Oak Street, Winnetka
847-446-7220 | www.winnetkalibrary.org

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

**Wednesday, October 7 – 7 p.m.**
**RE-IMAGINING SHAKESPEARE: FROM THE BARD TO THE ABSURD**
Glenview Public Library
1930 Glenview Road, Glenview
847-729-7500 | www.glenviewpl.org

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

**Tuesday, October 13 – 6:30 p.m.**
**FILM VIEWING: SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE**
Deerfield Public Library
920 Waukegan Road, Deerfield
847-945-3311 | www.deerfieldlibrary.org

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

**Tuesday, October 20 – 7 p.m.**
**EXPLORING 50 MINUTE HAMLET**
Highland Park Public Library
494 Laurel Avenue, Highland Park
847-432-0216 | www.hplibrary.org

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

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Kathryn M. Lipuma
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