



**THEATREWORKS ANNOUNCES NEW WORKS FESTIVAL '09
IN A SPECTACULAR EXPANDED PRESENTATION,
NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
July 15-August 23**

Summer line-up includes readings of three new musicals and three new plays, plus many extras.

PALO ALTO (May 11, 2009) – **TheatreWorks**, the nationally-acclaimed theatre of Silicon Valley, celebrates its 40th Anniversary season and commitment to the creation and development of new works with its **New Works Festival '09**, sponsored by **Microsoft**. The eighth annual Festival commences **July 15** with the world premiere production of **TINYARD HILL**, a rousing new musical by Tommy Newman and 2009 Jonathan Larsen Award-winning composer Mark Allen. This season's festival, held in Palo Alto at the Lucie Stern Theatre, will feature workshops of new works by artists including Chris Smith, Raquel Bitton, Darrah Cloud, Kim D. Sherman, Joe DiPietro, Brendan Milburn, Valerie Vigoda, Laura Schellhardt, Rajiv Joseph, Kait Kerrigan, and Brian Lowdermilk, in addition to stunning concerts by Grammy-winning vocalist Maureen McGovern, and the nationally acclaimed singer and composer, Vienna Teng. Tickets go on sale May 29 at 650-463-1960 or theatreworks.org.

TheatreWorks has assembled an impressive lineup for the 2009 New Works Festival, featuring staged readings of three new plays including **THE SPARROW AND THE BIRDMAN**, a sensuous song-filled drama about the unforgettable Edith Piaf by Raquel Bitton and Chris Smith, **AUCTIONING THE AINSLEYS**, a humorous drama by Laura Schellhardt to be directed by recently appointed New Works Director Meredith McDonough, and **THE NORTH POOL**, a cat and mouse thriller from playwright Rajiv Joseph. The Festival will also feature staged readings of three new musicals including **MAKEOVER**, the story of a feisty single mother who builds an empire from her gift for glamour, with book and lyrics by Darrah Cloud and music by Kim D. Sherman, **ERNEST SHACKLETON LOVES ME**, a fever dream musical with music by GrooveLily team Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda, and book by Joe DiPietro, and **TALES FROM THE BAD YEARS**, a new musical for a generation of lost and adrift twenty-somethings, from Kait Kerrigan and Brian Lowdermilk.

The Festival will also present **Maureen McGovern**, the Grammy-winning Broadway and pop star in a moving evening in song, *A Long and Winding Road: The Concert*, and Stanford-grad and nationally acclaimed singer/composer, **Vienna Teng** in a concert of her greatest hits and brand new songs from her new musical. Additional events will include **The Big Four O: Hurwitt and Kelley**, a special

THEATREWORKS EIGHTH ANNUAL NEW WORKS FESTIVAL

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conversation with *San Francisco Chronicle* theatre critic Rob Hurwitt and TheatreWorks' Founding Artistic Director, Robert Kelley; **Young Playwrights Showcase**, a selection of the best from TheatreWorks' Young Playwrights Initiative; **Bay Area Playwrights Take the Stage**, an intriguing and innovative evening of mini-readings hosted by Theatre Bay Area; and **Meet the Festival Artists**, where the Festival's featured playwrights and composers will share their challenges and triumphs in creating new works.

Recently appointed New Works Director Meredith McDonough will oversee this summer's New Works Festival. McDonough has been actively developing new works for the past ten years at theatres including Actors Theatre of Louisville, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Round House Theatre, The Public Theatre, LABrynth Theatre Company, Ars Nova, Women's Project and Productions, New Georges, and the Drama League. She spent two years as the New Works Program Director at the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, and three seasons as a resident director at Actors Theatre of Louisville, famed for its annual Humana Festival of New American Plays. She has personally directed over twenty world premiere plays and musicals.

NEW PLAYS

Three staged readings

The Sparrow and The Birdman

A Play that Sings

By Raquel Bitton and Chris Smith

Directed by Chris Smith

August 3, 7:30pm

In a song-filled drama, sensuous chanteuse Edith Piaf encounters quirky genius Jean Cocteau in 1930s Paris. The mysterious star's unforgettable voice, recreated by recording artist Bitton, proves irresistible to the eccentric writer and filmmaker, played by acclaimed Bay Area actor James Carpenter. French jazz singer and recording artist Raquel Bitton is recognized as the foremost singer of French music in America today and has been internationally reviewed as the greatest interpreter of the music from the Edith Piaf repertoire. Chris Smith spent five seasons as Artistic Director at the Magic Theatre.

Auctioning the Ainsleys

A Play for People and the Objects that Own Them

By Laura Schellhardt

Directed by Meredith McDonough

August 18, 7:30pm / August 21, 8:00pm

Going, going ... gone! A family of auctioneers is selling off its heritage, its Victorian, and its secrets.

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With a brilliant flair for language, this humorous, mysterious drama explores what happens if what we own becomes more important than who we are. Other original works by Schellhardt include *The K of D* (premiered at the Magic Theatre in October '08), *Courting Vampires*, *The Outfit* (Jeff Award nominee), *Inheritance*, *Je Ne Sais Quoi*, and *Searching for Loneliness*. The piece will be directed by Meredith McDonough, the recently appointed Director of New Works at TheatreWorks.

The North Pool

A Psychological Thriller

By Rajiv Joseph

August 15, 2:00pm / August 17, 7:30pm

Khadim enrolled from Saudi Arabia, while Vice Principal Danielson grew up here in town. But secrets haunt them both at suburban Sheffield High, tucked in hidden lockers, concealed on high-tech phones, awaiting revelation on this semester's last day. This cat-and-mouse thriller traverses the minefields of ethnic and sexual profiling in a community strung-out on political correctness. Rajiv Joseph has written plays including *Huck & Holden*, *All This Intimacy*, and *Animals Out of Paper*, for which he won a Lucille Lortel Award for 'Outstanding Play.' His play *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* is enjoying its world premiere this month at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City, with direction by Moisés Kaufman.

NEW MUSICALS

Three staged readings

Makeover

An Alluring Musical Comedy

Book and Lyrics by Darrah Cloud / Music by Kim D. Sherman

Directed by Tom Lindblade

August 5, 7:30pm / August 9, 7:00pm

Abandoned after World War II, a feisty mom parleys her gift for glamour and gab into an empire catering to the dreams of women across the country. Told with insight and humor, her journey to the heights reflects a changing vision of women in our times, proving that beauty, love, and life are inevitably more than skin deep. Darrah Cloud and Kim D. Sherman are the creators of TheatreWorks musical hits *O Pioneers!*, *Heartland*, and *Honor Song for Crazy Horse*. Their musical *The Boxcar Children* has been seen on stages throughout the United States. A frequent visitor to the Bay Area, Tom Lindblade has directed, musical directed, and conducted over 50 productions for companies including TheatreWorks, Magic Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, and California Shakespeare Festival.

Ernest Shackleton Loves Me

A Fever Dream Musical

Music by Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda, Book by Joe DiPietro

Directed by Kent Nicholson

August 8, 2:00pm / August 11, 7:30pm / August 15, 8:00pm

Sleep-deprived Kat, played by violinist Valerie Vigoda, writes great music. Okay, it's for video games—but great. And so is her baby, even if her boyfriend split and an explorer named Shackleton keeps phoning from beyond time. Inspired by Kat's music, Shackleton shares his Antarctic journeys with her as both struggle toward new horizons. Director Kent Nicholson, who recently left as TheatreWorks' New Works Director to become the Director of Musical Theatre Development at Playwrights Horizons, will helm this fever dream. The script is by DiPietro, who also penned the TheatreWorks musical sensation, *Memphis*, now Broadway-bound, and whose other hits include *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*; Broadway's *All Shook Up*, and *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, due to open on Broadway later this year

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4-4-4-4-4

starring Harry Connick Jr. GrooveLily duo Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda are co-creators of last season's charmer *Long Story Short* and the hit *Striking 12*, which was developed at TheatreWorks and went on to enjoy a successful off-Broadway run.

Tales from the Bad Years

A Song Cycle for a New Generation

By Kait Kerrigan and Brian Lowdermilk

August 19, 7:30pm / August 22, 8:00pm / August 23, 7:00pm

This funny, fascinating musical focuses on the lives and loves of five twenty-somethings adrift in a world of insecurity, insincerity, and sometimes, insanity. Charting the passage years from college to adulthood with insightful satire, hot tunes, and brilliant harmonies, it reveals the challenges of finding your place, losing your edge, partying down, and finally stepping up to embrace the rest of your life. Kait Kerrigan and Brian Lowdermilk's adaptation of the popular children's book series *Henry & Mudge* had an Off-Broadway run at the Lucille Lortel Theatre and is currently touring the country. Other musicals include *The Woman Upstairs* and *Wrong Number*, both of which were featured in the New York Musical Theatre Festival, and *The Unauthorized Autobiography of Samantha Brown*, currently work-shopping in New York. They are recipients of a 2006 Jonathan Larson Award and a 2004-2005 Jonathan Larson Fellowship at the Dramatists Guild

CONCERTS

Music as Theatre

Maureen McGovern

A Long and Winding Road: The Concert

August 6, 8:00pm

TheatreWorks presents the Grammy-winning Broadway and pop star in a thrilling, introspective concert journey "to a time when everything was possible." The concert salutes singer-songwriters of the "Second Half of the Great American Songbook," including Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell, James Taylor, and Lennon & McCartney. McGovern's career began with two Academy Award winning songs, "The Morning After" and "We May Never Love Like This Again." She then took to the stage, appearing on Broadway and across the country, and later debuted at Carnegie Hall, singing a collection of George Gershwin songs.

She has continued to perform and record, and at this concert will celebrate her newest CD, "A Long and Winding Road."

Vienna Teng

In Concert

August 14, 8:00pm

The nationally-acclaimed singer/composer returns to her local roots for a concert of greatest hits and brand new songs from her new musical. While pursuing a computer science degree at Stanford, Teng wrote songs as a hobby and performed at local campus events. After graduating in 2000, Teng worked as a software engineer for Cisco Systems, but she continued to write and perform in her free time. In 2002,

Teng quit software to pursue music full-time. Her first album, *Waking Hour*, peaked at #5 on the Amazon.com bestseller list and her career was assured. Her second album, *Warm Strangers*, reached #2.

Her newest album, *Inland Territory*, was released in April 2009.

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EXTRAS

An Insider's Look

The Big Four O: Hurwitt & Kelley

July 27, 7:30pm

A special 40th Anniversary "Coffee Talk with Kelley"—*San Francisco Chronicle* Critic Robert Hurwitt explores 40 years of growth and change with TheatreWorks' Founding Artistic Director Robert Kelley.

Young Playwrights Showcase

August 9, 2:00pm

Fresh voices from local teens test the limits and seek the heights in an evening of new play readings of the best from our Young Playwrights Initiative.

Meet The Festival Artists

August 10, 7:30pm

The Festival's featured playwrights and composers share the highs and lows of creating brave new works for the American Theatre.

Bay Area Playwrights Take Stage

August 20, 8:00pm

Theatre Bay Area hosts an intriguing, innovative evening of mini-readings of new work by the best of the Bay Area's outstanding playwrights.

The 2009 New Works Festival is presented by TheatreWorks' *New Works Initiative*, which seeks out new material and serves as a collaborative matchmaker for writers and composers. Several works developed under the *New Works Initiative* at TheatreWorks have gone on to broad success nationwide. *Memphis*, the rock n' roll hit musical from Joe DiPietro and Bon Jovi composer-keyboardist David Bryan will open on Broadway this fall, and has also been produced at La Jolla Playhouse, North Shore Music Theatre, and The 5th Avenue Theatre. *Vanities: A New Musical*, with music and lyrics by David Kirshenbaum and book by Jack Heifner will begin an off-Broadway run this summer at Second Stage Theatre and has also been produced at Pasadena Playhouse. GrooveLily's illuminating holiday hit *Striking 12* also enjoyed a successful off-Broadway run. Paul Gordon's sparkling adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma*, which became the highest-grossing, most-attended production in TheatreWorks history, has gone on to Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. Other festival participants include Stephen Schwartz, Scott Schwartz, Andrew Lippa, Marsha Norman, and Tony Award-winner Rachel Sheinkin.

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With approximately 9,000 subscribers and 100,000 patrons per year, TheatreWorks has captured a national reputation for artistic innovation and integrity, often presenting Bay Area theatregoers with their first look at acclaimed musicals, comedies, and dramas, directed by award-winning local and guest directors, and performed by professional actors cast from across the country.

A Deluxe Festival Package (\$75) entitles the ticket holder to all 6 Staged Readings and 4 “Extras.” Single event tickets (\$10-\$15) are also available, as well as Festival Sampler tickets (\$40), entitling the ticket holder to 3 staged readings and 2 “Extras.” Concert tickets for Maureen McGovern are \$75 and tickets for Vienna Teng are \$35. For complete Festival ticket information and packages, or for tickets to TheatreWorks’ fully staged production of the world premiere of **TINYARD HILL** (\$26-\$64), the vibrant new country-pop musical, playing July 15-August 16, the public may call **650-463-1960**, or visit **theatreworks.org**. **Tickets will be available May 29.**

About Microsoft

Microsoft is proud to partner with TheatreWorks to cultivate creativity and innovation in the Silicon Valley. Microsoft is a longtime supporter of TheatreWorks and the Founding Corporate Sponsor of the New Works Festival. Founded in 1975, Microsoft is the worldwide leader in software, services, and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **TheatreWorks**, the nationally-acclaimed theatre of Silicon Valley, celebrates its 40th Anniversary season and its commitment to the creation and development of new works with the **2009 New Works Festival**, sponsored by **Microsoft**. The eighth annual Festival commences **July 15** with the world premiere production of **TINYARD HILL**, a rousing new musical by Tommy Newman and 2009 Jonathan Larsen Award-winning composer Mark Allen. This season’s festival, held in Palo Alto at the Lucie Stern Theatre, will feature workshops of new works by artists including Chris Smith and Raquel Bitton; Darrah Cloud and Kim D. Sherman; Joe DiPietro, Brendan Milburn, and Valerie Vigoda; and Kait Kerrigan and Brian Lowdermilk, in addition to two stunning concerts by Grammy-winning vocal maven Maureen McGovern, and the Stanford-grown lyrical chanteuse, Vienna Teng.

WHEN: *In chronological order:*

TINYARD HILL

By Tommy Newman and Mark Allen

July 15-August 16

The Big Four O: Hurwitt and Kelley

July 27, 7:30pm

THE SPARROW AND THE BIRDMAN

By Raquel Bitton and Chris Smith

August 3, 7:30pm

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7-7-7-7-7

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NORTH POOL

By Rajiv Joseph

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AUCTIONING THE AINSLEYS

By Laura Schellhardt

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TALES FROM THE BAD YEARS

By Kait Kerrigan and Brian Lowdermilk

August 19, 7:30pm / August 22, 8:00pm / August 23, 7:00pm

Bay Area Playwrights Take Stage

August 20, 8:00pm

WHERE: TheatreWorks at the Lucie Stern Theatre
1305 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto

TICKETS: *ON SALE MAY 29*
For Festival ticket packages and single event tickets, the public may call **650-463-1960** or visit **theatreworks.org**.

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