



News

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SHAKESPEARE ON THE SOUND
PREPARES FOR
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JOANNA SETTLE'S
INAUGURAL PRODUCTION

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"
TO FEATURE SCORE BY TONY AWARD-WINNING
SINGER-SONGWRITER STEW

Norwalk, CT (4/2/09) – Shakespeare on the Sound, Connecticut's premier outdoor summer theater, has begun work on its 2009 production which marks Artistic Director **Joanna Settle's** debut with the company. In a bold new interpretation of the play, ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** will be composed by 2008 Tony Award-winning singer-songwriter **Stew**, choreographed by **David Neumann**, and will feature set design by **Andrew Lieberman**, sound design by **Obadiah Eaves**, lighting design by **Adam Silverman**, and costume design by **Iona Somogyi**.

Casting is underway in New York while Stew is recording his adventurous score in a studio in Los Angeles.

Currently in its 14th Season, **Shakespeare on the Sound** will present Settle's site-specific production at two beautiful locations on the Long Island Sound as follows: June 16-28 in Pinkey Park, Rowayton; and July 4 – 12 in Baldwin Park, Greenwich. The landscape of these parks will provide direct inspiration for the design of the production.

Artistic Director **Joanna Settle** said, "It's with honor and great joy that I continue the tradition begun by Shakespeare on the Sound's Founding Artistic Director Ezra Barnes of welcoming families to our parks for an evening of performance filled with inspiration and poetry. What an incredible gift Ezra and the other founders made when they began bringing free Shakespeare to Rowayton. I knew I wanted to be a part of Shakespeare on the Sound the moment I stepped on the lawn to find my seat last year! It was the audience that won me, even more than Shakespeare. Families gathered on blankets picnicking, kids coloring in pages made from costume sketches, night descending during the first act. A community gathered together in celebration of a story and each other. In that spirit, I am hard at work with my colleagues from around the country ushering in a new chapter in

the company's history with our exploration of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Rowayton and Greenwich. With this play, our author dares us to dream of the forbidden, dares us to imagine our selves freely, and then *live* what we imagine. In the spirit of community, we are designing the set with a deep 3/4 thrust that brings the audience all around the action. **Stew** has been in the studio in LA for a week with his musicians and engineer creating not only seven beautiful new songs with lyrics from our play, but an extraordinary library of orchestral compositions for us to theme the evening with.

Shakespeare's magical story, Stew's music, a picnic and a bottle of wine. What a great summer night!"

This production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* had a four-day script development workshop hosted by The Public Theater in January with Settle working in collaboration with acclaimed text experts Barry Edelstein and Morgan Jenness, and a multicultural cast, many of whom will repeat their roles this summer.

Shakespeare on the Sound has established itself as one of the most popular summer theater companies on the east coast, drawing large audiences to each performance in the under-the-stars waterfront settings of its venues.

Audiences are invited to arrive early and picnic in the park before the performance. There is no admission fee, but a donation of \$20 (\$10 for students and seniors) is suggested. In Rowayton, parking is limited and early arrival is suggested. In Greenwich, the production is less than a five minute walk from the Greenwich Metro-North stop. Ample parking is available.

A Midsummer Night's Dream will be performed Tuesdays – Sundays at 7:30 p.m. For rail and road directions, visit www.shakespeareonthesound.org.

Complete casting for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and other **Shakespeare on the Sound** summer news will be announced shortly.

Bios

Stew (Composer) wrote the book, lyrics and composed music for *Passing Strange* for which he received the 2008 Tony award for 'Best Book of a Musical'. He is a two-time Obie winner: 'Best New Theater Piece' and, as a member of the *Passing Strange* acting family, 'Best Ensemble.' A four-time Tony nominee, Stew leads, along with his collaborator Heidi Rodewald, two critically acclaimed bands: The Negro Problem and Stew. Works: Post Minstrel Syndrome (1997), Joys and Concerns (1999), Guest Host (2000), The Naked Dutch Painter (2002), Welcome Black (2002), Something Deeper Than These Changes (2003) and the cast album of *Passing Strange* (2008). Artist-in-residence at the California Institute of the Arts (2004/5); *Passing Strange*: Berkeley Repertory Theater/the Public Theater/the Belasco Theater (2006/2007/2008). Spike Lee's feature film of the stage play *Passing Strange* is currently at the Sundance Festival.

David Neumann (Choreographer) has been a featured dancer in the works of Susan Marshall, Jane Comfort, Sally Silvers, Irene Hultman, Cathy Weiss, Big Dance Theater, and the late club legend Willi Ninja. He was a member of Doug Varone and Dancers and the Doug Elkins Dance Company. He continues to perform and choreograph for theater, opera and film, working with such directors as: Hal Hartley, Laurie Anderson, Robert Woodruff, Lee Breuer, Peter Sellars, JoAnn Akalaitis, Chris Bayes, Mark Wing-Davey, Daniel Sullivan, Les Waters and Molly Smith. Recent and upcoming projects include: creature movement on "I Am Legend" with Will Smith, performing in *Beckett Shorts* with

Mikhail Baryshnikov at New York Theater Workshop and choreographing *The Bacchae* at the Public Theater. David is the Artistic Director of advanced beginner group, a professor of Theater at Sarah Lawrence College and a guest lecturer at both Barnard College and the Graduate Program at Yale University.

Andrew Lieberman (Set Design) is the head of set and film design at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. His work has been seen at New York City Opera, Montreal Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, Cincinnati Opera, Opera Theater of St. Louis, The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Kennedy Center, Second Stage, The Public Theater, Baltimore's Centerstage, McCarter Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, The Juilliard School, and California Shakespeare, among others. Andrew has received a Drama Desk nomination as well as a Princess Grace Award. Upcoming projects include: *Aida* at the Deutsche Opera Berlin, *The Adding Machine* at La Jolla Playhouse, and *Our House* at The Denver Center.

Obadiah Eaves (Sound Designer) is a composer and sound designer for theater, television, and film. His work for the stage appeared on Broadway in Martin McDonagh's *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, Conor McPherson's *Shining City*, the revival of William Inge's *Come Back, Little Sheba*, and in countless Off-Broadway and regional productions over the past decade. His scores and jingles have aired on Nickelodeon, Discovery, The Learning Channel, HBO, Noggin, the broadcast networks, and several Fisher-Price toys. Obadiah has written music and created sound for the original productions of works by such playwrights as David Mamet, Woody Allen, Theresa Rebeck, Nicky Silver, and Suzan-Lori Parks. In 2007, Obadiah received the Bay Area Critics Circle Award for Best Sound Design for his work on Les Waters' production of *Heartbreak House* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. He received the Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Sound Design for *Nine Parts of Desire* at Manhattan Ensemble Theater in 2006, and the production went on to be remounted in five major American cities. He was nominated for the Henry Hewes Award for *Trumpery* in 2008, a Viv Award for *Birdie Blue* at Second Stage, and a Barrymore Award for Best Musical Score for the Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival's production of *King Lear*. He received a Career Development Grant for Designers from Theatre Communications Group and the NEA in 2001, and he has been featured in the periodicals *Front of House*, *Entertainment Design*, and *American Theatre*. Obadiah is a Master Artist at the University of Rochester's theater program. He played the electric violin in the band Big Hair and performed with them at the New Music Seminar, CMJ Music Festival, and the Foundations Hard Music Convention. Big Hair has released two nationally distributed CDs and three 7" records.

Adam Silverman (Lighting Designer) works in opera, theatre and dance. Recent productions include *Dido Queen of Carthage* Royal National Theatre, London; *l'Ercole Amante* De Nederlandse Opera; *Partenope*, *Boris Godunov* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* at English National Opera; *Aida* for the Deutsche Oper Berlin; *James, Son of James*, *The Bull* and *Giselle* for the Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre. Additionally Adam has lit; *Tannhäuser* for San Francisco Opera; *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, *Jeux* and *La chute de la maison Usher* for the Bregenz Festival; *Das Schatzgraber* for Oper Frankfurt; *Pique Dame* for Bayerische Staatsoper; *Orfeo*, *One Touch of Venus* and the *Eight Little Greats* season at Opera North; *Orfeo* and *Imeneo* for Glimmerglass Opera; *La traviata* for the New Israeli Opera; the première of the play *Five Gold Rings* for the Almeida Theatre; the musical *Beauty and the Beast* for the Royal Shakespeare Company and the play *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* on Broadway.

Ilona Somogyi (Costume Designer) is a costume designer and lecturer at The Yale School of Drama and the Yale Theater Studies Program. Ms. Somogyi has worked as a freelance designer for nearly fifteen years at theaters around the United States and in

Europe, but remains based in Connecticut. Her recent productions include Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance* at the Arena Stage in Washington DC, Sarah Ruhl's *Passion Play* at the Yale Rep, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Hartford Stage, Ethan Coen's *Almost an Evening* in New York, and *Jerry Springer; The Opera* at Carnegie Hall. Regionally she has designed at Hartford Stage, Westport Country Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Williamstown Theater Festival, Southcoast Rep, Center Theater Group in Los Angeles, Dallas Theater Center, and Long Wharf Theater where she got her first big break with the play *Wit*. In New York she has designed at The Public Theater, The Atlantic, Signature Theatre Co, The Vineyard, and Manhattan Theater Club among others. In her more colorful moments she designed costumes for *Disney on Ice: Princess Wishes*, the Dutch production of *Saturday Night Fever*.; as well as serving as associate designer for *Spamalot* and Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Joanna Settle (Director) is a graduate of the inaugural Andrew W. Mellon Directing Program at The Juilliard School and a recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts/Theater Communications Group Fellowship for Directors. She has directed classic and modern classic work by Sophocles, Ionesco, Shakespeare, Euripides, Harold Pinter, and Samuel Beckett, among others. Her direction of contemporary plays includes "9 Parts of Desire," which won two Lucille Lortel Awards. "9 Parts of Desire" was presented in New York at Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, in Chicago at the Museum of Contemporary Art, at California's Berkeley Rep, Washington, DC's Arena Stage and in numerous other theaters across the country. Recently, Joanna directed "In Darfur" for the New York Public Theater downtown and at the prestigious Delacorte Theater in Central Park.

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