



Bay Street Theatre Names Scott Schwartz New Artistic Director

August 19, 2013

by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

As in so many aspects of life, timing might not be everything in the world of live theater, but it certainly counts for a lot. Nearing the end of a 2013 summer mainstage season that was arranged without an artistic director, Bay Street Theatre announced that award-winning director Scott Schwartz has been named to fill the vacant post. The prior artistic director, Murphy Davis, left in December 2012.

A search for the new artistic director wasn't expected to begin until after this summer's mainstage production, said Bay Street Producer Gary Hygom. But after Schwartz's name came up in a conversation with a sound designer earlier this summer, Hygom called him up and started a dialogue that led to interviews with Bay Street executive director Tracy Mitchell and a number of board members with the ultimate decision to name him to the post last week.

"I think Scott is a perfect fit for Bay Street and our theater community," Hygom said, "and because he was considering other offers, we wanted to move as quickly as possible to bring him on board and not miss this extraordinary opportunity."



Scott Schwartz.

An internationally acclaimed theater artist whose work has been seen on and off Broadway, across the United States, in Great Britain and Asia, Schwartz has built a reputation over the past 20 years for pursuing and embracing a wide range of works for the stage, from new plays to classics to musicals and opera, according to a release from Bay Street.

"We are delighted to welcome Scott Schwartz as our new artistic director," said Mitchell and Ana Daniel, chairman of the Bay Street board of trustees, in a joint statement. "His remarkable talent, experience, and passion for theater will help lead us to an incredible future of programming and new artistic alliances. We couldn't be more thrilled."

A graduate of Harvard University and a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, Schwartz directed the longest running one-woman show in Broadway history, "Golda's Balcony," William Gibson's one woman play about Golda Meir, starring Tovah Feldshuh (Lucille Lortel Award: Best Actress, Best Solo Performance, Drama Desk Awards).

Schwartz also directed the Off-Broadway hit "Bat Boy: The Musical" at the Union Square Theatre

(2001 Drama Desk Award Nomination: Outstanding Director of a Musical, 2001 Outer Critics Circle Award, and Lucille Lortel Award: Best Off-Broadway Musical), Jonathan Larson's "tick, tick... Boom!" at the Jane Street Theatre (2002 Drama Desk Award Nomination: Outstanding Director of a Musical), "Kafka's The Castle" at Manhattan Ensemble Theatre (2002 Outer Critics Circle Nomination, Outstanding Director of a Play), "Rooms: A Rock Romance" at New World Stages and most recently "Murder for Two" at Second Stage Uptown.

He directed "Séance on a Wet Afternoon" starring Lauren Flanigan at New York City Opera, as well as its world premiere at Opera Santa Barbara, for which he won a Santa Barbara Indy Award as Best Director.

Schwartz is an Associate Artist at the Alley Theatre in Houston, and his work has been seen at major regional theaters across the country, including ACT, Alliance Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Dallas Theatre Center, Denver Center Theatre Company, Goodspeed Opera House, La Jolla Playhouse, The Old Globe, Papermill Playhouse, Philadelphia Theatre Company and Westport Country Playhouse, among others.

"Scott is an exceptional choice as our new Artistic Director," Hygom noted in the release. "He is a dynamic, innovative director and ideally suited to lead Bay Street. His fresh perspective will have a galvanizing effect and reinvigorate our tradition of producing great theater that appeals to our diversified audience."

Currently, Mr. Schwartz is directing the new musical *Secondhand Lions* with book by Rupert Holmes and music and lyrics by Michael Weiner and Alan Zachary. The production will open at the 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle on September 26 and is being produced in association with Warner Brothers Theatre Ventures.

"I am thrilled and deeply honored to be appointed artistic director at Bay Street Theatre," Schwartz is quoted as saying in the release. "I have long admired the work done by this great company, dating back to its earliest days. I still remember how taken I was when I traveled to Sag Harbor to attend Cynthia Ozick's 'Blue Light,' by the excitement of seeing first-class performers doing their work so close in this intimate and beautiful theater."

Noting that he is looking forward to working with the whole Bay Street family, Schwartz said he is also looking forward to building on the theater's tradition "...of presenting entertaining, innovative and thought-provoking productions for the East End of Long Island.

"At its core," Schwartz continued, "I believe theater is a social art form, and that a theater company is most vital when it is a focal point for its community. I am excited to bring the best and brightest theater artists working today to Sag Harbor, and to continue to make Bay Street a gathering place and center for the arts where artists and audiences alike will have the opportunity to enrich and enlighten each other."

BASIC FACTS: The Bay Street Theatre is located at 1 Bay Street, Sag Harbor, NY 11963. www.baystreet.org.

© 2013 Hamptons Art Hub LLC. All rights reserved.