



The Artist in Society Tackled in “Travesties” at Bay Street Theatre

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

Bay Street Theatre continues its summer main stage with *Travesties*, a Tony award-winning comedy written by Sir Tom Stoppard. The play opens this week, just in time to celebrate the comedy’s 40th anniversary. Stoppard’s play takes on the role of “the artist in society” and embraces it through an exuberant comedy about art and revolution. The writing has remained as fresh and thought-provoking as when it was first written and produced, according to Bay Street. *Travesties* will run from June 24 through July 20. Directed by Gregory Boyd, the cast features Michael Benz, Carson Elrod, Richard Kind among the cast.

Travesties is a theatrical extravaganza containing the wit of Oscar Wilde, complete with song-and-dance, strip-tease, pie-fights and brilliant wordplay. Set in 1917 and 1974 in Zurich, Switzerland, the play fantasizes how a British consul named Henry Carr encounters some of the most famous figures of the 20th century. The line-up of the famous include James Joyce, Tristan Tzara and Lenin as encountered through an amateur production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.



Andrew Weens and Carson Elrod. Photo by Jerry Lamonica.

If laughter isn’t enough, then perhaps the promise of star power will sweeten the deal.

The cast includes Michael Benz (*Downton Abbey*, *The Tempest*) as Tristan Tzara, Carson Elrod (*Person of Interest*, *Wedding Crashers*) as James Joyce, Aloysius Gigl (*Les Misérables*, *Sweeney Todd*) as Bennett, Isabel Keating (*The Boy from Oz*, *Spider-Man Turn Off the Dark*) as Nadya, Richard Kind (*Spin City*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*) as Henry Carr, Julia Motyka (*Richard III*, *We Got Issues*) as Gwendolen, Emily Trask (*Twelfth Night*, *The Gaming Table*) as Cecily, and Andrew Weems (*Born Yesterday*, *Inherit the Wind*) as Lenin.



Isabel Keating and Andrew Weems. Photo by Jerry Lamonica.

Behind the scenes, the impressive talent continues.

Gregory Boyd (Director) is the Artistic Director of the Alley Theatre in Houston, Texas. During his tenure, the Alley has risen in national and international prominence, The theatre has won the Special Tony Award and experienced record growth in its Houston audiences, while also taking its productions to major European Festivals (including two in one season at the Venice Biennale), Broadway, and on tour to 40 American cities.

Sir Tom Stoppard (playwright), born Tomáš Straussler; July 3, 1937, is a Czech-born British playwright, knighted in 1997. He has written prolifically for TV, radio, film and stage, finding prominence with plays such as *Arcadia*, *The Coast of Utopia*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, *Professional Foul*, *The Real Thing*, and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. He co-wrote the screenplays for *Brazil*, *The Russia House*, and *Shakespeare in Love*. Stoppard has received one Academy Award in addition to his four Tony Awards. Themes of human rights, censorship and political freedom pervade his work along with exploration of linguistics and philosophy. Stoppard has been a key playwright of the Royal National Theatre in London and is one of the most internationally performed dramatists of his generation.



Julia Motyka and Emily Trask. Photo by Jerry Lamonica.

Travesties was first produced at the Aldwych Theatre in London on June 10, 1974 by the Royal Shakespeare Company. After appearing at the Aldwych Theatre and the Albery Theatre (both in London), it traveled to the Ethel Barrymore Theater in New York City. *Travesties* closed on March 13, 1976 after [156 performances](#). It won the 1976 Tony Award for Best Play, the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award for Best Play and the Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy.

In 1993, a revival was staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Barbican Arts Centre. It appeared next at the Savoy Theatre from March to June 1994. The revival featured a revised text that shortened a lecture on Lenin in Act II. In 2008, a reading was given by John Hurt at the British Library.



Richard Kind. Photo by Jerry Lamonica.

BASIC INFO: *Travesties* will run from June 24 through July 20, 2014. Bay Street Theatre is located

at 1 Bay Street, Sag Harbor, NY 11963. Tickets can be purchased online at www.baystreet.org or by calling the Box Office at 631-725-9500 from 11 a.m. to Showtime. For information on Bay Street Theater, visit www.baystreet.org.

“STUDENT SUNDAY” will be held every Sunday through July 20. High School and College students can receive one free admission for the 2 p.m. performance.

TALKBACK TUESDAY takes place on Tuesday, July 1, following the 7 p.m. performance. The Talkback will feature Bay Street Theatre’s new Artistic Director, Scott Schwartz, with members of the *Travesties* cast.

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