



THE · WILL · GEER
THEATRICUM · BOTANICUM

NEWS RELEASE

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“OUTDOORS AND INSPIRED” THEATRICUM BOTANICUM ANNOUNCES 2011 SUMMER REPERTORY SEASON

Desperate times call for drastic measures

TOPANGA, CA – April 20, 2011 – Desperate times call for drastic measures. Theatricum Botanicum’s 2011 Summer Repertory Season treats us to the most notorious characters everyone loves to hate. Get ready to cheer and jeer for the maddest, bawdiest and most desperate scoundrels of the stage when Theatricum presents *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Richard III* by William Shakespeare; *Tartuffe* by Molière; the West Coast premiere of the Off Broadway hit comedy *Rose Cottages* by Bill Bozzone; and, inaugurating the S. Mark Taper Foundation Pavilion, Theatricum’s intimate second performance space, the controversial one-woman play *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* in a special five-night only performance. And what summer would be complete without Theatricum’s signature production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*?



Alan Blumenfeld and Melora Marshall in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Photo Credit: Ian Flanders



Ellen Geer, Graco Hernandez and Ernestine Phillips in *Rose Cottages*

Photo credit: Ian Flanders

“This season runs the gamut from glorious comedy to real tragedy,” explains Theatricum artistic director **Ellen Geer**. “Falstaff, Richard, Tartuffe, Rose, Rachel Corrie – even the mortals and immortals in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* – they are all rascals and fighters, willing to do whatever’s necessary, consequences be damned.”

Theatricum Botanicum is renowned for its ardently executed productions of Shakespeare, modern classics, and world premiere adaptations of classic plays and novels in a spectacular outdoor setting. Unlike most theaters in the Los Angeles area that stage continuous runs of a single play,

Theatricum, using a company of actors, performs each play on a rotating basis so that it’s possible to see all six plays in a single summer weekend.

MORE-MORE-MORE

In addition to the six plays in the Repertory Season, Theatricum offers a variety of satellite programming including “**Under the Oaks**,” a Thursday night series featuring the comedy improv of **Off The Grid** and acoustic concerts with **Pete Mitchell** of No More Kings and **Peter Alsop**; “**Take Note!**,” a series of three holiday performances including **Lexi Pearl’s Momentum Place** (Mother’s Day, May 8), **Marshall McDaniel** with the **Pescatori Trio** (July 4); and **Inara George and Friends** in a **Tribute to Burt Bacharach and Hal David** (Labor Day, September 5); “**Family Fundays**,” interactive plays and concerts for kids on Saturday and Sunday mornings; “**Botanicum Seedlings: A Development Series for Playwrights**” featuring free readings of new plays on select Sundays; and **Theme Dinner Buffets** in the idyllic Theatricum gardens, including British fare on Friday evenings in July, Mediterranean “Dream Dinners” on Thursday evenings in August, and French Provençal cuisine on Fridays in September. Audiences are always free to picnic on the lovely grounds before or after a performance.

The beginnings of the Theatricum Botanicum can be traced to the early 1950s when Will Geer, a victim of the McCarthy era Hollywood blacklist (before he became known as the beloved Grandpa on TV’s “The Waltons”) opened a theater for blacklisted actors and folk singers on his property in Topanga. Friends such as Ford Rainey, John Randolph and Woody Guthrie joined him on the dirt stage for vigorous performances and inspired grassroots activism, while the audiences sat on railroad ties. Today the theater is run by his family. Two outdoor amphitheaters are situated in a natural canyon ravine, where audiences are able to relax and enjoy the wilderness during an afternoon or evening’s performance.

The critically acclaimed Theatricum Botanicum is the recipient of multiple awards, including the Margaret Harford Award – the Los Angeles Critics Circle’s highest honor – for “sustained excellence.” **The Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum** is located at **1419 North Topanga Canyon Blvd.** in Topanga, midway between Pacific Coast Highway and the Ventura (101) Freeway. The amphitheaters are terraced into the hillside, so audience members are advised to dress casually (warmly for evenings) and bring cushions for bench seating. Picnickers are welcome on the grounds before or after the performances. For tickets, group discounts, and a full schedule of theater, music and family entertainment, call **310-455-3723** or go to www.theatricum.com.

2011 SUMMER SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

The Merry Wives of Windsor by **William Shakespeare**, directed by **Ellen Geer** – **Alan Blumenfeld** stars as one of Shakespeare’s most beloved creations: the opportunistic schemer and womanizer Sir John Falstaff. When Falstaff tries to woo two wealthy women at once, they happily plot his comeuppance.

Performances **June 4 through September 10:**

- Saturday, June 4 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, June 12 @ 3:30 pm
- Sunday, June 19 @ 3:30 pm
- Saturday, June 25 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, June 26 @ 7:30 pm
- Sunday, July 3 @ 3:30 pm
- Friday, July 8 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, July 10 @ 3:30 pm*
- Friday, July 15 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, July 17 @ 7:30 pm
- Friday, July 22 @ 8 pm**
- Sunday, July 24 @ 7:30 pm
- Friday, July 29 @ 8 pm**
- Friday, August 5 @ 8 pm
- Friday, August 12 @ 8 pm
- Saturday, August 20 @ 8 pm
- Saturday, August 27 @ 8 pm
- Saturday, September 3 @ 4 pm
- Saturday, September 10 @ 8 pm

**Prologue (pre-show discussion): Sunday, July 10 @ 2:30 pm (included in ticket price)*

***Pre-show dinner buffet with British fare served @ 6:30 pm on Friday, July 22 & Friday, July 29 in the theater’s adjacent gardens, followed by an 8 pm performance (separate admission, or combo packages available)*

MORE-MORE-MORE

A Midsummer Night's Dream by **William Shakespeare**, directed by **Melora Marshall** – The Botanicum's signature production is back! Romp through the forest with our ardent young lovers, mischievous fairies and a ragtag band of tradespeople as they encounter a night filled with wonder, magic and romance. Will their hopes and dreams be realized? What adventures await as nature takes its course? There's no more perfect setting than the leafy bower of Theatricum's outdoor stage to experience this delightful tale of misguided mortals and naughty spirits.

Performances June 5 through September 25:

- Sunday, June 5 @ 3:30 pm
- Saturday, June 11 @ 4 pm
- Saturday, June 18 @ 4 pm *
- Saturday, June 25 @ 4 pm
- Thursday, August 4 @ 8 p m**
- Thursday, August 11 @ 8 pm**
- Thursday, August 18 @ 8 pm**
- Thursday, August 25 @ 8 pm**
- Monday, September 5 @ 6:30 pm (Labor Day)
- Saturday, September 10 @ 4 pm
- Sunday, September 18 @ 3:30 pm
- Sunday, September 25 @ 3:30 pm

**Prologue (pre-show discussion): Saturday, June 18 @ 3 pm (included in ticket price)*

***Mediterranean buffet 'Dream Dinners,' with a costumed cast of fairies in attendance, take place every Thursday in August @ 6:30 pm (August 4, 11, 18, 25) in the theater's adjacent gardens, followed by an 8 pm performance (separate admission, or combo packages available)*

Tartuffe by **Molière**, adapted and directed by **Ellen Geer** – One of the funniest, yet most scathing commentaries on human greed and manipulation ever written. A beacon of piety, Tartuffe (**Aaron Hendry**) is a guest in the home of wealthy merchant Orgon (**Ted Barton**). But all is not as it seems. As Orgon becomes more enraptured with his new companion, questions arise. Is Tartuffe a friend, a fraud, a miracle, or a hypocrite? Smelling a rat, the family hatches a cunning plan to outwit the wily deceiver before he brings their house crashing down. First presented in 1664 at the court of King Louis XIV at Versailles, *Tartuffe* was promptly banned for its audacious attack on religious hypocrisy. After much petitioning by the playwright, the ban was lifted and *Tartuffe* has endured as Molière's most popular play.

Performances June 11 through October 1:

- Saturday, June 11 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, June 12 @ 7:30 pm
- Saturday, June 18 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, June 19 @ 7:30 pm
- Sunday, June 26 @ 3:30 pm
- Saturday, July 2 @ 4 pm
- Saturday, July 9 @ 4 pm
- Saturday, July 16 @ 4 pm
- Saturday, July 23 @ 4 pm*
- Saturday, July 30 @ 4 pm
- Saturday, August 6 @ 4 pm
- Saturday, August 13 @ 4 pm
- Sunday, August 21 @ 7:30 pm
- Sunday, August 28 @ 7:30 pm
- Friday, September 2 @ 8 pm**
- Friday, September 9 @ 8 pm**
- Friday, September 16 @ 8 pm**
- Friday, September 23 @ 8 pm**
- Friday, September 30 @ 8 pm**
- Saturday, October 1 @ 4 pm

**Prologue (pre-show discussion): Saturday, July 23 @ 3 pm (included in ticket price)*

***Pre-performance French Provençal buffet dinners take place in the theater's adjacent gardens @ 6:30 pm every Friday in September (September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30) followed by an 8 pm performance (separate admission, or combo packages available)*

MORE-MORE-MORE

Richard III by **William Shakespeare**, directed by **Ellen Geer** – The story of the most charismatic villain ever to command the stage. Daunted by a life of physical challenges, Richard weaves a fiery web of intrigue, removing all obstacles – and all people – that stand between him and his designs on the throne of England. Shakespeare's delightfully bloody and brutal history follows the corrupt path of a twisted man with equally twisted ambitions as Richard manipulates, marries and murders his way to the top with unmatched charm and zeal. **Melora Marshall** and **Chad Jason Scheppner** alternate in the title role.

Performances July 2 through October 2:

- Saturday, July 2 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, July 3 @ 7:30 pm
- Saturday, July 9 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, July 10 @ 7:30 pm
- Saturday, July 16 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, July 17 @ 3:30 pm
- Saturday, July 23 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, July 24 @ 3:30 pm
- Sunday, July 31 @ 3:30 pm
- Sunday, August 7 @ 3:30 pm
- Sunday, August 14 @ 3:30 pm*
- Friday, August 19 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, August 28 @ 3:30 pm
- Sunday, September 4 @ 3:30 pm
- Sunday, September 11 @ 3:30 pm
- Saturday, September 17 @ 4 pm
- Sunday, September 18 @ 7:30 pm
- Saturday, September 24 @ 4 pm
- Sunday, September 25 @ 7:30 pm
- Sunday, October 2 @ 3:30 pm

**Prologue (pre-show discussion): Sunday, August 14 @ 2:30 pm (included in ticket price)*

Rose Cottages – **Helen Heidi Davis** directs **Ellen Geer**, **Earnestine Phillips** and **Graco Hernandez** the **West Coast premiere** of **Bill Bozzone's** delightfully quirky comedy about our enduring need to belong, wherever we are and whatever the circumstances. A defacto family is formed when Rose, the beleaguered owner of a rundown tourist motel, grudgingly befriends two unwelcome guests: a penniless teen skateboarder, and a sassy widow who's been dumped by her feckless son and his new bride.

Performances July 30 through October 2:

- Saturday, July 30 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, July 31 @ 7:30 pm
- Saturday, August 6 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, August 7 @ 7:30 pm
- Saturday, August 13 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, August 14 @ 7:30 pm
- Saturday, August 20 @ 4 pm
- Sunday, August 21 @ 3:30 pm
- Friday, August 26 @ 8pm
- Saturday, August 27 @ 4 pm*
- Saturday, September 3 @ at 8 pm
- Sunday, September 4 @ 7:30 pm
- Sunday, September 11 @ 7:30 pm
- Saturday, September 17 @ 8 pm
- Saturday, September 24 @ 8 pm
- Saturday, October 1 @ 8 pm
- Sunday, October 2 @ 7:30 pm

**Prologue (pre-show discussion): Saturday, August 27 @ 3 pm (included in ticket price)*

My Name Is Rachel Corrie – On March 16, 2003, Rachel Corrie, a 23-year-old American, was killed in Gaza while trying to prevent the demolition of a Palestinian home. Theatricum Botanicum inaugurates its second performance space, the **S. Mark Taper Foundation Pavilion**, with a one-woman play composed from Rachel's journals, letters and emails by British actor/director **Alan Rickman** and award-winning journalist and London *Guardian* editor **Katherine Viner**. **Susan Angelo** directs **Samara Frame** as the young activist who left her home and school in Olympia, Washington, to work in the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since its premiere in 2005, this theater piece has been surrounded by both controversy and impassioned proponents, and has raised an unprecedented call to support political work and the difficult discourse it creates.

Five performance only, September 1 through 29:

- Thursday, September 1 @ 8 pm
- Thursday, September 8 @ 8 pm
- Thursday, September 15 @ 8 pm
- Thursday, September 22 @ 8 pm
- Thursday, September 29 @ 8 pm

UNDER THE OAKS featuring comedy improv and music in the intimate S. Mark Taper Foundation Pavilion:

- Thursday, June 23 @ 8 pm: comedy improv with **Off The Grid**
- Thursday, June 30 @ 8 pm: **Off The Grid**
- Thursday, July 7 @ 8 pm: music with geek pop/rock band **Pete Mitchell** of No More Kings
- Thursday, July 14 @ 8 pm: **Off The Grid**
- Thursday, July 21 @ 8 pm: music with singer/songwriter **Peter Alsop**
- Thursday, July 28 @ 8 pm: **Off The Grid**

TAKE NOTE! holiday series:

- Sunday, May 8 (Mother's Day) @ 2 pm: **Lexi Pearl's Momentum Place** – Lexi Pearl curates Theatricum's annual offering of modern dance, aerial acts, juggling and performance art;**
- Monday, July 4 (Independence Day) @ 4 pm: **Marshall McDaniel** with the **Pescatori Trio** – McDaniel marks his return to his Theatricum home with this award-winning chamber group from Berlin, Germany;
- Monday, September 5 (Labor Day) @ 2 pm: **Inara George's Tribute to Burt Bacharach and Hal David** – now in their seventh year, George's tributes bring together some of L.A.'s freshest songwriters, whose musical interpretations create an uncommon mix of sound and style
***Pre-performance brunch catered by Bon Mélange takes place in the theater's adjacent gardens from 12-1:30 pm (separate admission, or combo packages available)*

BOTANICUM SEEDLINGS: A DEVELOPMENT SERIES FOR PLAYWRIGHTS – this series furthers new works and new voices, presenting free readings of new plays:

- Sundays, June 5, 12, 19 @ 11 am: **Spring Playreadings**
- Saturday and Sunday, November 19 & 20 @ 1 pm: **SeedlingsFest** – A (short) Playreading Festival

FAMILY FUNDAYS

Every Sunday and three Saturdays @ 11 am, June 5 through October 30 (dark July 31):

- Sunday, June 5 - Creative PlayGround presents **The Legends of King Arthur**
- Sunday, June 12 - Creative PlayGround presents **Ferdinand the Bull**
- Sunday, June 19 - Creative PlayGround presents **Aesop's Fables**
- Sunday, June 26 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents **Rhythm Child**
- Sunday, July 3 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents **Lucky Diaz & the Family Jam Band**
- Sunday, July 10 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents **Aaron Nigel Smith**
- **Saturday, July 16** - Creative PlayGround presents **Three Tales by Hans Christian Andersen**
- Sunday, July 17 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents **The Hollow Trees**
- Sunday, July 24 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents series founder **Peter Alsop**
- Sunday, July 31 - *No Fundays performance*
- **Saturday, August 6** - Creative PlayGround presents **The Velveteen Rabbit**
- Sunday, August 7 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents **Barney Saltzberg**
- Sunday, August 14 - *TBA*
- Sunday, August 21 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents **Gwendolyn & The Good Time Gang**
- Sunday, August 28 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents **Stephen Michael Schwartz**
- Sunday, September 4 - *TBA*
- Sunday, September 11 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents **Egg**
- Sunday, September 18 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents **The Sunshine Sisters**
- Sunday, September 25 - Peter Alsop's Kids Konzerts presents **Randy Kaplan**
- Sunday, October 2 - Creative PlayGround presents **The Velveteen Rabbit**
- Sunday, October 9 - Creative PlayGround presents **The Legends of King Arthur**
- Sunday, October 16 - Creative PlayGround presents **Three Tales by Hans Christian Andersen**
- Sunday, October 23 - Creative PlayGround presents **Aesop's Fables**
- **Saturday, October 29** - Creative PlayGround presents **Dia de los Muertos: Cuentos de mi Familia**
- Sunday, October 30 - Creative PlayGround presents **Halloween Stories**

The outdoor amphitheaters at The Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum are terraced into the hillside of the rustic canyon. Audience members are advised to dress casually (warmly for evenings) and bring cushions for bench seating. Picnickers are welcome before or after the performances.

For more information and to purchase tickets, call 310-455-3723, or go to www.theatricum.com.