

## Rockville Little Theatre...producing fine plays since 1948.

The year was 1947. World War II was over, and the Marshall Plan was set to help rebuild Europe. Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play in the American League, led the Brooklyn Dodgers to a win in the World Series. *Anne Frank's Diary* was published and, on television, it was Howdy Doody time. On the big screen, Clark Gable, Betty Grable and Humphrey Bogart were stars and *Gentlemen's Agreement* won Oscars for Best Picture and Best Director (Elia Kazan). It was also the first year for the Tony Awards. On Broadway, where tickets were as low as \$1.20, audiences saw the premiers of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Heiress*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Brigadoon*, & *Finian's Rainbow*.

That year, in Rockville, Maryland, a small group, moved by their mutual love of theatre, joined to form **Rockville Little Theatre** (RLT). Their first production, Noel Coward's *Hay Fever*, was performed in the Christ Episcopal Parish Hall, in 1948. RLT continued to hold performances at the church until 1958, when they moved to Broome Junior High School. In September, 1960, the new Rockville Civic Center Auditorium - now the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre - became RLT's new home. RLT members helped design that space. Membership grew from 6 to 60 over the years. Although no records exist of how many people saw the first show in 1948, in 1962, 400 season tickets were sold, and in 1996, RLT celebrated its 50th year with the sale of over 1700 season tickets. In 1986, RLT joined with Rockville Musical Theatre (RMT) to form a consortium, offering subscribers five different shows a season for less than the price of one Broadway ticket. In the 90s, the purchase of a computer allowed RLT to begin keeping permanent records and give programs and documents a more professional look. In 1997, RLT established its own website (<http://rlt-online.org>). RLT's current season is a mix of old and new, but always exciting theatre: *The Baby Dance*, *The Sunshine Boys*, and *Inherit the Wind*.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Christopher Durang** has won Tony and Drama Desk Awards nominations, Obie Awards, and a Warriner Award in a long career as a prolific playwright. In the early 80s, he and Sissy Spacek co-wrote and performed in their acclaimed Brecht-Weill parody, *Das Lusitania Songspiel* and were both nominated for Drama Desk Awards for Best Performer in a Musical. He has appeared in a number of movies and written for them as well as for TV. He has an MFA from the Yale School of Drama. He has won several awards including the three-year Lila Wallace Readers Digest Award. Since 1994 he has been co-chair with Marsha Norman of the Playwriting Program at the Juilliard School in Manhattan. Mr. Durang is a member of the Dramatists Guild Council.



**HVAR THEATRE PROJECT 2006:** RLT is visiting Hvar with performances of *The Actor's Nightmare* and Miro Gavran's *Chekhov Says Goodbye to Tolstoy* as part of an initiative whose intent is to draw international attention to the importance of Hvar Theatre and efforts to protect and restore it. The theatre of Hvar, the first municipal theatre in Europe, was built in 1612, on the upper floor of the city's arsenal, where galleys were repaired and ship equipment stored. The exterior of the theatre is largely preserved in its original form, while its interior architecture dates from the 19th century.

**HVAR THEATRE PROJECT 2006** is an initiative of the International Symposium Platonism & Forms of Intelligence, Hvar 2006, in cooperation with the Hvar Heritage Museum, Hvar Theatre, Hvar Summer Festival, and the Stari Grad Summer Festival: Hic Faros, Hic Ars. Official sponsors of the project are the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia. We extend special thanks to Anne Deslattes Mays & family, and to our local sponsors: Pelegrini Tours, Tihi Taxi, Murvica Restaurant, and Hotel Villa Zarko - Kastel Luksic for their generous support.



# HVAR THEATRE PROJECT 2006



by Christopher Durang

Monday, July 10, 2006

Saint Mark's Church (Archeological Museum), Hvar

Tuesday, July 11, 2006

City Center, Jelsa

Presented by Rockville Little Theatre  
Produced and Directed

by Alexander Fraser

Assistant Director: Anna-Maria Garza

Stage Manager: Naomi Abrams



Produced by special arrangement with Joseph Weinberger Ltd., London

# The Actor's Nightmare

a play in one act by Christopher Durang

## CAST - in order of appearance

Meg ..... Stephen Rourke  
George ..... Ben Russo  
Sonya ..... Michelle Trout  
Dame Ellen ..... Sabrina Shahmir  
Henry ..... Stephen Rourke  
Executioner ..... Stephen Rourke

The action takes place in that fevered location known all too well by anyone who has ever performed in front of an audience . . . the imagination.

---

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Producer and Director ..... Alexander Fraser  
Road/Stage Manager ..... Naomi Abrams  
Assistant Director ..... Anna-Maria Garza  
Costume Designer ..... Sandra Eggleston  
Hair Styling and Makeup ..... Sandra Eggleston  
Program Design ..... David Levin  
Program Art Work ..... G. Bartlett Brown, David Levin  
Props ..... The Cast  
Lighting ..... Edward Eggleston

---

## ABOUT THE CAST and DIRECTOR

**Ben Russo** (George) just completed the 2005/2006 season with the Bay Theatre Company in Annapolis, Maryland, where he was seen as Eddie in *Fool For Love*, Paul Bratter in *Barefoot in the Park* and Valere in *Tartuffe*. Last year he was also seen as Cinesias in Maryland Ensemble Theatre's *Lysistrata*. Ben holds his theatre degree from Frostburg State University in western Maryland. A former acting apprentice with the Tony Award winning Williamstown Theatre Festival and directing intern with the American Stage Festival, Ben's favorite roles include the Doctor in *Croupy of Companions*, King Ferdinand in *Love's Labours Lost*, Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*, and Vince in *Buried Child*. Ben also writes for the stage and currently directs for the Theatre Lab in Washington, DC.

**Sabrina Shahmir** (Dame Ellen) holds a BA in Theatre from the University of Maryland, College Park. She last appeared in *Ritalin For Two* at The Top Floor Theatre in Baltimore. Roles at UMD include a myriad of neurotics and psychotics in such productions as *Polaroid Stories*, *Aloha, Say the Pretty Girls*, *The Drunkard*, *The*

*Laramie Project*, and *Reefer Madness*. While at Maryland, she also directed a production of *Stop Kiss* in UMD's Experimental Theatre. Sabrina lives in Rockville with her two roommates, two chinchilas (her roommate's), ten rabbits (her other roommate's) and a cat (her own.) She thanks her incomparable mum, supportive stepdad, exquisite friends, and Alex for the surprising and lovely opportunity to both play an ingénue and travel to Europe.

**Michelle Trout** (Sofya Tolstoy) is delighted for the opportunity of visiting Hvar, Croatia. Michelle has appeared in numerous plays and independent films. Her stage roles include Gabrielle Buonocelli in *The Dinner Party*, Witches Coterie in *Macbeth*, Naomi in *Naomi in the Living Room*, and Ginny Waters in *The Snow Ball*. Michelle's film work includes a leading role in the independent feature *Livelihood* ([www.livelihoodmovie.com](http://www.livelihoodmovie.com)), and principal roles in *Gray Matters*, *Secret Sin*, and *Bottled Genie*. She just finished shooting the films *Exodus 20:13* ([www.blackkraut.com/exodus.html](http://www.blackkraut.com/exodus.html)) and *Fear of Clowns 2* ([kangaskahnfilms.com/foc](http://kangaskahnfilms.com/foc)). Michelle has studied at the Woolly Mammoth Theatre School and is coached by Professor Vera Katz.

**Stephen Rourke** (Meg, Henry, Executioner) appeared as Leo Tolstoy in the RLT production of *Chekhov Says Goodbye to Tolstoy*. He is an alumnus of Oberlin College and lives in Baltimore, Maryland. Mr. Rourke has extensive theatrical experience, appearing in several independent films, television productions (*The Sopranos*, *The Wire*, *Something the Lord Made*) and numerous stage productions. Mr. Rourke's notable roles include Senator Carlin in *The Best Man* at the Vagabonds Theatre and Valverde in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* at the Audrey Herman Spotlighter's Theatre. Stephen is a partner in an immigration law firm.

**Alexander Fraser** (Producer and Director) draws upon a wealth of experience in many fields to help actors discover facets that lie hidden in each role. As the founder of the Open University of Washington, he taught some two dozen classes such as *Chess for Beginners*, *How to Marry Money*, *Sexual Seminar for Men and Money* and *the Young Professional*. He also founded The King's Company, which performed at the first dinner theatre in Washington; the Formerly Married Society, Art Galleries Limited of Georgetown, Sire Builders Inc. and Opal Oil Well Company. He has directed plays at the Chevy Chase Players, Rockville Little Theatre, Silver Spring Stage, Cedar Lane Stage, Montgomery Playhouse, the British Embassy Players, Sandy Spring Theatre Group, Potomac Theatre Company and Theatre-Studio, Inc. in New York City. Mr. Fraser is actively involved in the community. He has served on the boards of the Sailing Club of Washington, the Inventors' Network, the Washington Athletic Club and several community theatres. He is currently a member of the Los Angeles Playwrights Alliance and the Dramatists Guild of America, Inc. Mr. Fraser holds an MBA from the University of Southern California, where he also taught Mathematics of Finance for two years.

**Anna-Maria Garza** (Assistant Director) graduated from Yale University with a Bachelor of Arts in Art History and subsequently received a Juris Doctor from Catholic University. She discovered her love for theatre while at Yale, performing in lead and supporting roles in several plays, including *Waiting for Lefty*, *A Murder of Crows*, *El Pajarito*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. She also co-founded a community theatre company that put on productions for New Haven's annual International Festival of Arts and Ideas. One such production that she co-wrote, co-directed, and performed in was *In/Out New Haven Speaks*, which addressed socio-economic issues within the New Haven community. She also co-directed a theatre arts program for incarcerated youth at the New Haven Juvenile Detention Center. Anna-Maria is involved with two upcoming films, *The Dying Dutchman* and *Stupid Movie for Jerks*.