



**Hvar Theatre** is a unique monument to the tradition of the dramatic arts in Europe and the world as a whole. Built in 1612, it was the first municipal theatre and one of the oldest covered theatres in Europe. It was built 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. RLT's guest performances of Christopher Durang's play *The Actor's Nightmare* and the English-language translation of Miro Gavran's play *Chekhov Says Goodbye to Tolstoy* are being organized with the aim of drawing the attention of the international community to the significance of Hvar theatre, the unique cultural heritage of the island of Hvar as a whole, and the imminent threat to many of its irreplaceable monuments. The organizers hope that this initiative will form the first in a series of international exchanges and a starting-point for the inauguration of an annual festival centred around Hvar Theatre, where groups from all over the world can come to perform the best of contemporary drama, as well as the greatest dramatic works of the world's literary traditions. Hvar theatre, equal in importance to the original Globe theatre (built 1599, destroyed 1613 by fire; rebuilt 1614 and destroyed again 1644), enjoys the added significance of being intended from the start as a municipal theatre, serving the general public, and not only wealthy nobles. Rockville Little Theatre, likewise, is a municipal theatre company in the original sense of the word, serving the city of Rockville, Maryland since 1948, and at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre in the Rockville Civic Center Park since 1960, in the best of the American spirit of civic pride and responsibility.

**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 Miro Gavran

Wednesday, July 12, 2006  
Village Brusje Theatre, Hvar

Thursday, July 13, 2006  
Villa Biankini, Stari Grad

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 the playwright

# 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*, and *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 exciting theatre: *The Baby Dance*, *The Sunshine Boys*, and *Inherit the Wind*

**HVAR THEATRE PROJECT 2006:** RLT is visiting Hvar with performances of Christopher Durang's *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.

**Naomi Abrams** (Stage Manager) worked on our RLT production of *The Man Who came to Dinner* earlier this season. She has stage managed and assistant directed numerous shows with the Cedar Lane Stage, Silver Spring Stage, and other local theatre companies.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Miro Gavran** (playwright) was born in 1961. His works have been translated into 25 languages, and he is the most prolific and frequently performed writer of his generation. He has published eight books of prose for adults. Mr. Gavran has read dramaturgy in the Academy for Theatre, Film and Television in Zagreb, and worked at Zagreb's ITD Theatre, first as dramatist (1986-1989) and later as artistic director (1989-1992). He conceived and developed the idea for, and later led, the Modern Croatian Drama project (1990-1992), and the ITD Theatre's series called Drama Library. The literary magazine *Plima* was his brainchild, and he edited it from 1993 to 1996. Since 1990 he has run a school of creative writing, drama and prose. He founded the Epilogue Theatre in Zagreb in 1995 and was the company's in-house playwright from 1995 until 2001. Together with his wife, the actress Mladena Gavran, he founded the GAVRAN Theatre in 2002. His debut as playwright took place in 1983 when Gavella Theatre produced his first play, *Creon's Antigone*. Since then he has written some thirty plays performed in Croatia, The Netherlands, the USA, Slovenia, Poland, Bulgaria, Argentina, France, Greece, Hungary, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He is the first Croatian playwright to be performed at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center (1999). Miro Gavran has won 20 theatre and literary awards.



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## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION STAFF



**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 & Theatre-Studio, Inc. in NYC.

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.

*Blackmail*, his one-act play, is available from JAC Publishing and Promotions in Burlington, MA. His plays have been performed in California, the Washington DC area and New York City.

**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*.

# Chekhov Says Goodbye to Tolstoy

a play in one act by Miro Gavran

**CAST** - in order of appearance

Leo Tolstoy ..... Stephen Rourke  
Sofya Tolstoy ..... Michelle Trout  
Anton Chekhov ..... Ben Russo  
Olga Chekhov ..... Sabrina Shahmir

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The action takes place in the living room of Yasnaya Polyana, the estate of the great Russian writer Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy, in early June 1890.

Scene 1 1:00 PM  
Scene 2 11:00 PM  
Scene 3 the next afternoon  
Scene 4 two days later  
Scene 5 two hours later  
Scene 6 one hour later  
Scene 7 11:00 PM the same day  
Scene 8 the next day, late morning  
Scene 9 the same day, early evening  
Scene 10 the next morning

## 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  
Photographer ..... Michelle Trout  
Program Design ..... David Levin  
Program Art Work ..... G. Bartlett Brown, David Levin  
Master Carpenter ..... John Vandegriff  
Set Dressing and Painting ..... Helen Templin  
Props ..... Helen Templin and the Cast  
Lighting ..... Edward Eggleston

# Director's Notes

Isn't it wonderful, how one thing leads to another in this life?

For example - years ago, a little girl grew up in Maryland, just outside of Washington, DC.

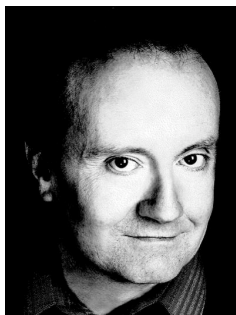
Her parents took her to plays at Rockville Little Theatre. Even though she grew up, moved to Europe, met and married a Croatian, she never forgot those magic moments when the house lights dimmed, the curtain parted and she was transported into another world.

This little girl grew up to be Dr. Marie-Elise Zovko of the Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb, Croatia. She and her family vacation on the island of Hvar. There, she saw the Hvar Theatre and lamented the disrepair it had fallen into. She determined to do something to help save this lovely building, one of the oldest theatres in Europe. But how?

She recalled the plays she had seen at the Rockville Little Theatre and wondered if there were some way that RLT could help raise funds to save the Hvar Theatre. In the summer of 2005, while she was visiting her family in Rockville, she made a presentation to the Board of Directors of RLT. She proposed that RLT perform a play by Miro Gavran, Croatia's most well known playwright, and bring it to Hvar.

Did this did come to pass? Did, as we noted above, one thing lead to another? Tonight's performance proves that it did. We hope you enjoy the show.

## ABOUT THE CAST



*The Royal Hunt of the Sun* at the Audrey Herman Spotlights Theatre.

**Stephen Rourke** (Leo Tolstoy) is an alumnus of Oberlin College, is a partner in an immigration law firm, 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



**Ben Russo** (Anton Chekhov) 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*. He 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, his 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** (Olga Chekhov) 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 chinchillas (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.