

# THE PEARL

THEATRE COMPANY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS**

## **THE SNEEZE**

**BY MICHAEL FRAYN**

**ADAPTED FROM PLAYS & STORIES BY ANTON CHEKHOV**

**AT NEW YORK CITY CENTER STAGE II**

**DIRECTED BY J.R. SULLIVAN**

**PREVIEW PERFORMANCES BEGIN: September 17, 2010 at 7:30 PM**

**OPENING NIGHT: September 26, 2010 at 7:30 PM**

**LIMITED ENGAGEMENT ENDS: October 31, 2010**

### **Press Previews**

**Thursday, September 23, 2010 at 7:30pm**

**Friday, September 24, 2010 at 7:30pm**

**Saturday, September 25, 2010 at 2:30pm and 7:30pm**

NEW YORK, NY, August 19, 2010— **THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY** (**J.R. Sullivan, Artistic Director; Shira Beckerman, Managing Director**) proudly presents the first production of its 27<sup>th</sup> season, **THE SNEEZE** by Michael Frayn, adapted from plays and stories by Anton Chekhov. Beginning September 17 at New York City Center Stage II, the comedy is directed by The Pearl's Artistic Director, J.R. Sullivan. Tickets are on sale beginning August 23 through CityTix® and at [nycitycenter.org](http://nycitycenter.org).

Adapted by **Michael Frayn** (*Noises Off, Copenhagen*) from **Anton Chekhov's** short stories and plays written at the beginning of his career, the work contains a collection of comic sketches including *The Bear, The Evils of Tobacco, Swan Song, The Proposal*, and *The Sneeze*.

"These are eight comic gems," according to J.R. Sullivan. "Not only do they display Chekhov's famous facility for character and the absurd, but they also dazzle with Michael Frayn's gifts for the same, and his acclaimed skill for translating Chekhov with distinctive wit and style. *The Sneeze* ought to be a delightfully spirited start to The Pearl's new season at New York City Center."

Born in 1933 in a suburb of London, **Michael Frayn** is best known for his plays *Noises Off, Copenhagen*, and *Democracy*. He won a Laurence Olivier Award for Best Comedy for *Noises Off* in 1982 and a Tony Award in

2000 for *Copenhagen*. Called Britain's finest translator of Anton Chekhov, Frayn has translated all four of Chekhov's major plays, and an early untitled work, which Frayn titled *Wild Honey*, in addition to *The Sneeze*.

**Anton Chekhov** (1860-1904) has been praised as one of the greatest short-story writers in the history of world literature. His career as a humorist and short story writer began in the 1880's, initially only for financial gain, prior to writing his famous dramas. Only later in his career would he produce his four major dramas, which include *The Seagull* in 1896, *Uncle Vanya* in 1899, *Three Sisters* in 1901, and *The Cherry Orchard* in 1904.

Directed by **J.R. Sullivan**, the production marks the start of Sullivan's second season as The Pearl's Artistic Director. Prior to being named Artistic Director, Mr. Sullivan directed five productions for The Pearl, including *Widowers' Houses*, *Biography* and *Twelfth Night*, as well as last season's *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Hard Times*. He was the founder of the New American Theater in Rockford, Illinois, and served as an associate artistic director of the Utah Shakespearean Festival from 2002 until summer 2009. His work has been seen in regional theaters across the country, including productions seen at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Studio Theatre in Washington DC, and the Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia, among others.

### **The Cast**

*The Sneeze* features 5 members of the Resident Acting Company. **Rachel Botchan**, a member of the company since 2000, was last seen at The Pearl in *Hard Times* and recently at Two Rivers Theater in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. **Bradford Cover**, a Pearl company member since 1996, has performed regionally and on Broadway in the 2001 revival of *A Thousand Clowns*. He was last seen at The Pearl in last seasons *Hard Times*. **Dominic Cuskern** has been a member of The Pearl's Resident Company since 2000, appearing most recently in *Misalliance* and *The Playboy of the Western World*. **Robert Hock** and **Edward Seamon** are both returning to The Pearl's stage after year-long sabbaticals, both last seen in *Nathan the Wise* in 2008. Mr. Hock has been a member of the Resident Acting Company since 1993 and Mr. Seamon since 1997. Joining The Pearl's company members are two guest actors: **Chris Mixon**, who recently appeared in *Doctor Knock* at the Mint Theater Company and has worked extensively at the Utah Shakespearean Festival, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and **Lee Stark**, who has appeared at the Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, and Milwaukee Repertory Theater, was seen at The Pearl last season in *Misalliance* and *The Playboy of the Western World*.

### **Production Team**

The production team includes: **Jo Winiarski**, scenic design; **Barbara A. Bell**, costume design; **Ann Wrightson**, lighting design; **Jane Shaw**, sound design. The stage manager is **Lisa Ledwich** and the dramaturg is **Kate Farrington**.

### **About The Pearl Theatre Company**

Founded in 1984, The Pearl Theatre is a New York City repertory company producing a full range of plays rooted in the classic tradition, impacting over 30,000 artists and audiences each year. Over its 26-year history, The Pearl has been awarded with a 1992 Obie grant for Continued Artistic Excellence; a special Obie Award for Sustained Excellence of Performance; a sweep of Actors' Equity Association's awards for Performance in Classical Plays; an American Theatre Wing grant for consistent commitment to excellence in the professional theatre; and the Board of Education's Friend of Manhattan High Schools Award for Classics in the Classroom, the Pearl's Arts-in-Education initiative which has allowed thousands of New York City high school students to experience classical theatre.

The Pearl performs at New York City Center's Stage II. **THE SNEEZE** will be the first production in the 2010-2011 season, followed by Henrik Ibsen's **Rosmersholm** in November 2010. The season continues with **THE MISANTHROPE** by Molière in January 2011 and concludes with David Davalos' comedy **WITTENBERG**.

### **The 2010-2011 Resident Acting Company**

The 2010-2011 Resident Acting Company consists of veterans of the New York and regional stages including: **Jolly Abraham, Rachel Botchan, Robin Leslie Brown, Bradford Cover, Dominic Cuskern, Dan Daily, TJ Edwards, Robert Hock, Sean McNall, Carol Schultz, and Edward Seamon**. The 2010-2011 resident stage managers are **Lisa Ledwich** and **Dale Smallwood**.

### **2010-2011 Ticketing and Performance Information**

The Pearl Theatre Company provides a variety of ticketing options for the performance space at New York City Center, including season subscription packages.

For subscription tickets and information, contact Audience Services at 212-598-9802 or visit [www.pearltheatre.org](http://www.pearltheatre.org). Single tickets can be purchased through New York City Center beginning August 23 by calling CityTix® at **212-581-1212** or online at [www.nycitycenter.org](http://www.nycitycenter.org). Tickets will be available at the City Center Box Office (131 West 55<sup>th</sup> Street between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues) beginning September 7.

### **Production Schedule:**

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7:30PM; Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday at 2:30PM. *The Sneeze* will perform one Thursday matinee performance at 2:30PM on September 30, 2010.

**Previews begin September 17, 2010 at 7:30PM. Opening night is Sunday, September 26, 2010 at 7:30PM.**

**Regular Ticket Prices:**

\$55 for performances on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday; \$45 for performances on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday; \$35 for all preview performances.

**Senior Discount:** \$25 tickets can be purchased on the day of the performance only, up to one hour before curtain, subject to availability, by people 65 and older. One ticket per valid ID (with date of birth) at the box office. Not available during preview performances.

**Student Rush:** \$10 tickets can be purchased on the day of the performance only, up to one hour before curtain, subject to availability, by students with a valid student ID. Limit 2 tickets per I.D at the box office.

**Thursday Rush:** \$10 tickets are available to anyone for Thursday evening performances on the day of performance only, up to one hour before curtain, subject to availability at the box office. Not available during preview performances.

**Groups** of ten or more receive up to 25% off single tickets. Contact our Audience Services Manager at 212.598.9802 for details.

**Tuesday Talk Post-Performance Discussion:**

These in-depth discussions give audiences the opportunity to participate in intimate talk-backs led by published scholars and experts within their fields. Tuesday Talks during **THE SNEEZE** will take place following the performances on September 28, 2010 and October 19, 2010.

**Directions:**

The company performs its 2010-2011 Season at New York City Center Stage II, located at 131 West 55th Street (between 6th and 7th Avenues) in midtown Manhattan.

The Box Office is located at 131 West 55th Street in the outer lobby of the theatre entrance.

New York City Center can be reached by taking the N/Q/R to 57<sup>th</sup> St/7<sup>th</sup> Ave, the F to 57<sup>th</sup> St/6<sup>th</sup> Ave, the D/E to 7<sup>th</sup> Ave/53<sup>rd</sup> St, the A/B/C/D/1 to 59<sup>th</sup> St at Columbus Circle, the C to 50<sup>th</sup> St/8<sup>th</sup> Ave, or the 1 to 50<sup>th</sup> St/7<sup>th</sup> Ave.

**By Bus** m1, m2, m3, m4, m5, m6, m7, m10, m20, m31, m57, m104

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