

THE PEARL

THEATRE COMPANY

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THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY PRESS CONTACT:

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THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS
WITTENBERG
BY DAVID DAVALOS
NEW YORK PREMIERE
AT NEW YORK CITY CENTER STAGE II
DIRECTED BY J.R. SULLIVAN

PREVIEW PERFORMANCES BEGIN: March 11, 2011 at 7:30 PM
OPENING NIGHT: March 20, 2011 at 7:30 PM
LIMITED ENGAGEMENT ENDS: April 17, 2011

Press Previews

Thursday, March 17, 2011 at 7:30pm

Friday, March 18, 2011 at 7:30pm

Saturday, March 19, 2011 at 2:30pm and 7:30pm

NEW YORK, NY, March 14, 2011– **THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY** (J.R. Sullivan, Artistic Director; Shira Beckerman, Managing Director) presents the New York premiere of **WITTENBERG** by David Davalos. The new comedy begins performances on March 11 at **New York City Center Stage II** and is directed by The Pearl's artistic director, J.R. Sullivan. Tickets are currently on sale through CityTix® and at nycitycenter.org.

Set at Wittenberg University in 1517 (the year Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses and sparked the Protestant Reformation), the play pits professors Doctor John Faustus and the Reverend Martin Luther against each other in a struggle for the mind and allegiance of their star pupil Prince Hamlet of Denmark. The play's spirited debate of faith versus reason drives each character to break from the paths of their lives, driving them to ultimate fame—or infamy. **WITTENBERG** premiered at Philadelphia's Arden Theatre Company in 2008, a production directed by J.R. Sullivan. The Philadelphia Inquirer headlined their review with "3 amigos of comedy: Luther, Faustus, Hamlet," and continued by hailing the script as "amply layered and toys easily with English as if it were an arcade game."

"This is a comedy drawn from several classics, sharpened to an immediate relevance," according to J.R. Sullivan. "David Davalos pulls off a dramatic hat trick, with his Hamlet, Faustus, and Martin Luther all scoring their points with comic verve."

David Davalos is a graduate of the theatre programs of the University of Texas and Ohio University. His other plays include *The Tragedie of Johnnius Caerson* and *Darkfall*. For **WITTENBERG**, Mr. Davalos won the Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award and the Barrie and Bernice Stavis Playwriting Award through the National Theatre Conference. The play also won a Barrymore Award for Outstanding New Play for the Arden Theatre production and was nominated for a Helen Hayes Award in Washington DC for Outstanding Resident Play.

Directed by **J.R. Sullivan**, this production is the fourth he has staged in his two season as The Pearl's Artistic Director. His Pearl productions include *Hard Times*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *Widowers' Houses*, and *Twelfth Night*. He was the founder of the New American Theater in Illinois, and served as an associate artistic director of the Utah Shakespeare Festival from 2002 until summer 2009. His work has been seen in regional theaters across the country, including 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

Wittenberg features Pearl Resident Acting Company member **Sean McNail** (as Hamlet), who recently finished playing Alceste in The Pearl's acclaimed production of *The Misanthrope*. A company member since 2003, he worked on Broadway this fall understudying T.R. Knight in *A Life in the Theatre* and appeared last season at The Pearl in *The Playboy of the Western World*, *Misalliance*, and *Hard Times*. Joining the **Wittenberg** cast are three guest actors, including **Scott Greer** (as Dr. Faustus), who originated the roll of Faustus in the Arden production of **Wittenberg**. A Philadelphia-favorite, he has worked at the Walnut Street, Wilma, and Arden, as well as the Actor's Theatre of Louisville. **Chris Mixon** (as Martin Luther) made his Pearl Theatre debut this season in *The Sneeze* and was recently seen in New York at the Mint Theater in *Dr. Knock, or the Triumph of Medicine*. He's been seen regionally at the Denver Center Theatre Company, the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Rounding out the cast is **Joey Parsons** (as The Eternal Feminine), recently seen as Arsinoé at The Pearl in *The Misanthrope*. She has worked at Yale Rep, Hartford TheaterWorks, and the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival.

Production Team

The production team includes: **Jo Winiarski**, scenic design; **Liz Covey**, costume design; **Stephen Petrilli**, lighting design; **Barry G. Funderburg**, sound design. The stage manager is **Erin Albrecht** and the dramaturg is **Kate Farrington**.

About The Pearl Theatre Company

The Pearl Theatre Company plays a vital role in the cultural life of New York City and its surrounding region by creating productions that explore and illuminate the human condition. Dedicated to bringing the classics of world theatre to broad audiences, The Pearl is an artistic home for a diverse company of theatre professionals,

especially a core company of resident actors. The Pearl provides engagement opportunities that both educate and enrich the experiences of artists, students, and audiences. Since its founding in 1984, 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.

Wittenberg is the final production in The Pearl's 27th season. Following the close of *Wittenberg*, the company will present a one-night cabaret benefit featuring Broadway stars Marin Mazzie and Jason Daniele. The event, to support The Pearl's resident artist ensemble, will take place on Monday, May 2, 2011 at B.B. King Blues Club.

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, Edward Seamon, and Lee Stark.***

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.

Single tickets can be purchased through New York City Center by calling **CityTix®** at **212-581-1212**, going online to www.nycitycenter.org, or visiting the City Center Box Office (131 West 55th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues).

Production Schedule:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7:30PM; Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday at 2:30PM.

Wittenberg will perform one Thursday matinee performance on March 24, 2011 at 2:30PM.

Previews begin March 11, 2011 at 7:30PM. ***Opening night is Sunday, March 20, 2011*** 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. Not available during preview performances.

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 The Pearl's 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 **Wittenberg** will take place following the performances on March 29, 2011 and April 12, 2011.

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 57th St/7th Ave, the F to 57th St/6th Ave, the D/E to 7th Ave/53rd St, the A/B/C/D/1 to 59th St at Columbus Circle, the C to 50th St/8th Ave, or the 1 to 50th St/7th Ave.

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

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