



advancing theatre, enlivening culture

NEWS RELEASE CALENDAR LISTING

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PASSION AND POWER COLLIDE IN SEXY PSYCHOLOGICAL DRAMA ABOUT PABLO PICASSO

Beloved Houston Actor James Belcher returns to Stages to tackle role as artistic genius

HOUSTON, TX - James Belcher takes on the role of famed artist Pablo Picasso as he squares off with a female Nazi interrogator in Jeffrey Hatcher's acclaimed drama *A Picasso* opening January 29 at Stages Repertory Theatre. Based on a brief footnote in Picasso's illustrious career, the play imagines an interview between the artist and a Nazi art collector alleged to have taken place beneath the streets of Paris in 1943. During the course of their exchange, Picasso is revealed as a vulnerable and volatile man who would go to any lengths to protect his work from the dark intentions of Nazi rule. *A Picasso* runs in Stages' Arena Theater January 27 – February 21, 2010.

"I've loved this play for a while now," says Stages Producing Artistic Director Kenn McLaughlin. "It chronicles a fascinating mystery that is layered with passion, sex, art and politics. It's a dark cat-and-mouse game with surprises at every turn, and that makes it both entertaining and revealing."

Director Matt Huff, whose resume includes regional directing credits in Atlanta and Minneapolis, makes his Stages debut with *A Picasso*. "I love the way in which we get to see Picasso in a compromised position at the beginning, then his slow and powerful movement toward a more commanding role," Huff says. "Picasso's interrogator is a strong and powerful woman with an amazing personal agenda of her own, and the passion that the two of them unleash in each other becomes an engine for new creativity. In the end, new art is made in a climate of intense repression—it is a wonderful exploration of the unstoppable force of the creative impulse."

James Belcher, now in his 21st season as a Company Artist at Houston's Alley Theatre, plays Picasso in a *tour-de-force* role. Carolyn Johnson, most recently seen as Meanie the evil fairy in Stages' *Panto Sleeping Beauty*, takes a decidedly different turn as Miss Fischer, the Nazi interrogator. "This is the dream cast for this play," McLaughlin says. "James and Carolyn both exude the kind of power and intensity that makes the play riveting. We couldn't have found a better combination of actors to realize this play for Houston audiences." Long-time Stages artist Jodi Bobrovsky tackles the production design and John Smetak will design lights for the production.

Stages will host two extraordinary special events in conjunction with *A Picasso*. On January 27 the ACLU Play Group continues with speaker Bill Arning, director of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. And on February 3, Mark Roglán, director of the Meadows Museum on the campus of Southern Methodist University, will lecture on Picasso. Details are below.

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ACLU Play Group with CAMH Director Bill Arning

January 27 at Stages

7:30 PM performance with discussion and light refreshments to follow

Single tickets \$40, or get the ACLU Play Group subscription for \$140 (pro-rated)

The ACLU of Texas continues its outstanding speaker series created to complement Stages' 2009-2010 plays. Bill Arning, director of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, comes to the conflicts of art and politics directly from the "culture wars" of New York.

An Evening with Meadows Museum Director Dr. Mark Roglán

February 3 at Stages

6:00 PM reception, 6:45 PM lecture, 7:30 PM performance

Tickets \$75

Join us for an unforgettable evening celebrating Picasso and the irresistible culture of Spain! Enjoy Spanish tapas and wine and delve into the world of Picasso with an informal talk by Dr. Mark Roglán, a pre-eminent expert on Spanish art and director of the Meadows Museum at SMU in Dallas. Then enjoy the performance of *A Picasso* and wrap up the evening with a sparkling glass of cava! *Food generously provided by Catalan. Wine and cava provided by The Tasting Room.*

Stages will also offer patrons the opportunity to purchase a special dinner package in partnership with Catalan, a Spanish-influenced restaurant on Houston's booming Washington Avenue. The package includes a ticket to the show and a mouth-watering three-course prix fixe menu at Catalan. For the patrons' convenience, all reservations are made through the Stages Box Office—it's one-stop shopping at its best! Dinner packages are \$70 each.

Stages Repertory Theatre

Characterized by courage, generosity, ingenuity, and intimacy, Stages Repertory Theatre advances theatre and enlivens culture by producing new work, interpreting established work in new ways, and nurturing talent for the performing arts field. In addition to its MainStage season of plays, Stages presents the EarlyStages series, introducing young audiences to the power and magic of live theatre. Stages also offers a range of additional education and outreach programs that encourage conversation about important ideas and issues, provide insight into other cultures and viewpoints, and help develop each new generation of citizens, artists and audiences. Now entering its 31st season, Stages is a member of the Fresh Arts Coalition and a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for not-for-profit theatres. Stages operates under an agreement with Actor's Equity Association (AEA), the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

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