

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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“STRAUSS AT MIDNIGHT”

Theater Oobleck presents a new play by Jeff Dorchen,
author of “Ugly’s First World” and “The Life and Times of Jewboy Cain”

Chicago DCA Storefront Theater
June 11 – July 19, 2009

Theater Oobleck, in association with Chicago DCA Theater, presents the world premiere of ***Strauss at Midnight*** by company founding member Jeff Dorchen. The production comes to Chicago DCA Theater’s Storefront Theater at 66 E. Randolph Street, from June 11 through July 19, 2009. Members of the press are invited to the opening performance on Thursday, June 11, at 7:30 p.m.

Strauss at Midnight visits Oscar Madison’s apartment in order to explore such “Odd Couples” as liberty and tyranny, love and hate, man and superman. When a time-traveling tourist on a prehistoric safari accidentally kills a butterfly, Oscar and Felix’s poker table becomes the battleground for human civilization. Incorporating Saul Bellow, Niccolo Machiavelli, and University of Chicago Neo-Con godfathers Leo Strauss and Allan Bloom, this world premiere takes Neil Simon’s most famous play into Tom Stoppard territory and considers a society where the super-privileged can redesign the fabric of time and space.

Performances are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday afternoons at 3:00 p.m. There is no performance on Friday, July 3, or Saturday, July 4, due to the Independence Day holiday. A post-show discussion will follow the performance on Thursday, June 18.

Tickets are available for a \$15 suggested donation or pay-what-you-can by calling 312.742.TIXS (8497), visiting www.dcatheater.org, or stopping by the box office, open Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 6 p.m.; Sundays, noon to 4 p.m.; and one hour prior to each performance.

Cast and Production Team

Strauss at Midnight features H.B. Ward as Oscar, Brian Nemtusak as Felix, Matt Rieger as Roy, Matthew Holzfeind as Gauss, Kat McJimsey as Crabtree, and KellyAnn Corcoran as Evelyn. All based on characters from Neil Simon’s “The Odd Couple,” this group has been warped by alterations in the space-time continuum.

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Members of the University’s of Chicago’s Committee on Social Thought -- Leo Strauss (played by David Shapiro), Allan Bloom (Troy Martin), and Saul Bellow (David Isaacson) – are joined in a bothersome afterlife by D’wayne Taylor as Virgil Tibbs of “In the Heat of the Night” and Scott Hermes as Niccolo Machiavelli of the Italian Renaissance.

The show’s set design is by Mickle Maher with lighting by Martha Bayne, sound by Chris Schoen, and costumes by Angela Altenhofen.

Special Events

In association with the production, Theater Oobleck and Chicago DCA Theater will present a special free event:

Monday, June 29, at 7 p.m.

Panel Discussion Moderated by Arts Critic Andrew Patner

Art and Pop Culture, Leo Strauss and Western Democracy, Text and Subtext, and Other Odd Couples

Storefront Theater, 66 E. Randolph Street

FREE, Reservations encouraged at 312.742.TIXS (8497), or at www.dcatheater.org

International arts critic Andrew Patner moderates a discussion on some of the themes of ***Strauss at Midnight*** with knowledgeable panelists and Oobleck members, including the play’s author, Jeff Dorchen.

Theater Oobleck is dedicated to producing and performing original works of theater at low or no cost to audiences. Three things define the company: New works. No director. Free if you’re broke. In 21 years in Chicago, Oobleck has launched over 50 productions of new works, all created and developed by members of the ensemble, working in concert to create a collective vision without an overseeing director. Most recently, the company completed an Off-Broadway run of *The Strangerer* at New York’s Barrow Street Theatre and presented *Oobleck Election Play 2008: The Trojan Candidate* at the Neo-Futurarium in Chicago.

The Storefront Theater and the Studio Theater, its companion theater located in the Chicago Cultural Center at 77 E. Randolph Street, comprise Chicago DCA Theater, an anchor of the downtown theater district. Chicago DCA Theater offers downtown audiences an off-Loop theater experience with an exciting look at the vibrant emerging and developing theater companies that call Chicago home. Proposals for creative and innovative productions for the January to June 2010 season are now being accepted until May 15, 2009.

Discounted parking is available at Wabash Randolph Self Park at 20 E. Randolph. Patrons can receive the \$14 rate by validating their ticket at the Storefront Theater box office.

For more information about Theater Oobleck’s ***Strauss at Midnight*** and Chicago DCA Theater, visit call 312.742.TIXS (8497) or visit www.dcatheater.org. The enhanced website features more information about DCA Theater performances and programs, including a blog, photo galleries, and visitor information.

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Note to Press: Electronic images are available at www.dcatheater.org/press or by request.

Author Biography

Jeff Dorchen is a founding member of Theater Oobleck, for which he has written eleven plays, including co-authoring the recent election satire *The Trojan Candidate*. His plays have also been produced in Chicago by Theater for the Age of Gold and in Los Angeles by The Actors Gang, Sacred Fools and The Zoo District. His artwork has appeared in group shows in Los Angeles and Berlin. Jeff is also a regular contributor to The Huffington Post blog and WNUR's *This is Hell* radio program, and co-screenwriter of the upcoming film *Basmati Blues*.

Cast Biographies

KellyAnn Corcoran (Evelyn) is the founder and Artistic Director of Corcoran School of Theater Arts, a performance-based theater school for homeschoolers. She recently appeared in Beau O'Reilly's *No Longer the Rock of the World* and played Hillary Clinton in Oobleck's *The Trojan Candidate*.

Scott Hermes (Niccolo Machiavelli) was a founding member of Cardiff Giant Theater, with whom he helped create five full-length plays and one musical. He performed in *Too Much Light Makes The Baby Go Blind* with The Neo-Futurists from 1992 and to 1996. Scott appeared as Dick Cheney in Oobleck's *The Passion of the Bush*. He also wrote and starred in *My Life in Jeopardy!* a one-man show about his life-long obsession with Jeopardy.

Matthew Holzfeind (Gauss) was last seen in *The Flu Season*, with Black Sheep Productions. Recent credits include: *Romeo & Juliet*, with T.U.T.A.; *The Threepenny Opera*, with The Hypocrites; and *The Rotogravure*, with Sat Hat. Mathew has also performed with Strange Tree Group, The House Theatre, Chicago Children's Theatre, Writers' Theatre, Pegasus Players, Eclipse, Collaboraction, and Lookingglass.

David Isaacson (Saul Bellow) is a founding member of Theater Oobleck, for which he has written fourteen plays, including *Letter Purloined* and *The Making of Freud*. He has appeared in thirty Oobleck shows and also performed with the Curious Theater Branch, Redmoon, the Splinter Group, and Theater for the Age of Gold.

Troy Martin (Allan Bloom) is an actor/singer/ukulelist transplanted from the Great State of Nebraska. Recently, he has worked with Teatro Vista, Collaboraction and The Curious Theatre Branch. He was a member of the Free Associates, and is a founding member of The Billy Goat Experiment Theatre Company.

Kat McJimsey (Crabtree) is an Oobleck ensemble member and has appeared in their *Letter Purloined*, *Spirits to Enforce*, and *Innocence and Other Vices*. She has also worked extensively with The Curious Theatre Branch, performing most recently in *One Boppa*.

Brian Nemtusak (Felix) is an actor and writer who lives in Chicago. He has appeared with the Factory Theater, the Curious Theatre Branch, the Neo-Futurists, the Irregulars, Prop Thtr, and Citizens' Relief, and is a member of the Magpies and Found Objects Theater Co.

Matt Rieger (Roy) is the co-founder and co-artistic director of Illegal Drama and an ensemble member of The Curious Theatre Branch. His plays include *Trash*, *Misplaced Son*, *The Skyway is Falling*, *Never Enough Nothing*, and *Subject Matter Created and Destroyed*. His debut film, *The Golden Age of Arcade Games* premiered in February.

David Shapiro (Leo Strauss) has acted and directed at theaters in Chicago, New York, Tampa and Winnipeg. He played Jack in the American premiere of Wallace Shawn's *The Designated Mourner* at Steppenwolf Theatre and has been performing Shawn's monologue play *The Fever* for many years. In Chicago he has also worked with the Neo-Futurists and the late Stark Raving Ensemble.

D'wayne Taylor (Virgil Tibbs) has been seen recently in *A Perfect Wedding* at Circle Theatre, *In Arabia We'd All Be Kings* at Steep Theatre. His professional acting debut was in the Hypocrites' production of *Our Town*.

H.B. Ward (Oscar) appeared most recently in *Vitrine* with Dog and in *The Art of Unbearable Sensations* with The Magpies. He is a Curious Theater company member, an Associate with Collaboraction, and has also worked with the Prop Thtr, Teatro Vista, WNEP, and Red Orchid.

Tech/Design Biographies

Angela Altenhofen (Costume Designer) has worked with O Theater, The Magpies, Girl Go Boom, and Lucky Pierre. As founder of DeCorps Costume Collective she has collaborated with other artists, costume designers, and performers to create costume-based events such as Burlesque Tartare at the Hideout in Chicago. Angela works as an archaeological illustrator of artifacts at the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.

Martha Bayne (Lighting Designer) has worked on Oobleck's productions of *The Trojan Candidate*, *The Strangerer* (in Chicago and NYC), *Spukt*, and *The Passion of the Bush*. She is a founding member of the Magpies (*The Art of Unbearable Sensations* and *The Great Cicada Letdown*) and a freelance writer and editor.

Mickle Maher (Set Designer) is a playwright and actor based in Chicago for the last twenty years. He is a producing company member of Theater Oobleck since cofounding the group in 1987. His plays have been presented Off-Broadway at the Barrow Street Theatre, the Public Theater, and The New Victory Theatre; in Chicago at Steppenwolf Theater, Redmoon Theater, The Goodman Theatre (New Stages Series), the Museum of Contemporary Art, The Spertus Institute, and Links Hall; regionally at the St. Louis Museum of Contemporary Art and DiverseWorks in Houston; and at venues in Finland, Germany, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom. His plays are published by Hope and Nonthings (Chicago).

Chris Schoen (Sound Designer) has composed, designed, and performed sounds and music for seven Oobleck plays and has appeared as an actor in three. His last CD, *Heraclitus*, was released on Discobolus records in 2005.