

Clarence Brown Theatre
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CBT opens 2002-2003 season with Broadway hit "Art"

KNOXVILLE-- "Art" by Yasmina Reza will kick off CBT's 2002-2003 season with 90 minutes of sharp wit and honest humor Aug. 30 through Sept. 14. "Art" isn't really about art. It's about the obsession with materialism and social status and dealing with your friends when you no longer understand them.

A simple white-on-white painting threatens the ties that bind three friends of 15 years. Marc questions his relationship with Serge, a well-to-do doctor, who spent 200,000 francs on a painting he cannot qualify as 'art'. Mark, who fancies himself as an art buff, vocally dismisses the painting as a piece of post-modern trash. Looking for a third opinion, Marc and Serge enlist their neurotic, indecisive friend Yvan to choose sides. Yvan is quite content to appease both parties when he is not babbling about his own complicated impending marriage to his boss's niece. The three friends debate modern art while dishing out regrettable insults that deteriorate their shaky friendship.

"Art" debuted in Paris at the Comédie des Champs Elysées in 1994. Sean Connery saw the production on his wife's advice and liked it so much that he decided to back an English-language production. He and co-producer David Pugh asked the renowned playwright, Christopher Hampton, to translate the script and the show opened in London at Wyndham's Theatre in 1996. The playwright, Yasmina Reza, won the Olivier Award and the show won an Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy in 1996. "Art" continued its success on Broadway, winning a Tony Award for Best Comedy in 1998. It has since been produced around the world in over 100 productions including Chicago, Sydney, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, Singapore in 35 different languages.

This production stars Guiseppe Jones, John Forrest Ferguson and David Brian Alley and is directed by Bruce Speas, who last directed "The Crucible."

"The three men are a very close-knit group and when something goes wrong with that

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closeness, they overreact as they would with someone who's a relative stranger, an acquaintance or maybe even somebody at work, as opposed to the deep friends they have been for many years," says Speas.

"Art," sponsored by Moxley Carmichael, previews Thursday, Aug. 30 followed by opening night Friday, Aug. 31. The show will run through Saturday, Sept. 14. Ticket prices are \$17 to \$23 and \$33 on opening night. Call the Clarence Brown Theatre box office at 974-5161 or Tickets Unlimited at 656-4444 to order tickets.

PLAYWRIGHT

Yasmina Reza was born in 1959, the daughter of a Russian-Iranian businessman and a Hungarian violinist, and grew up in Paris among the highly cultured Jewish upper middle class. She graduated from the University of Paris with a degree in Sociology, and later trained at the Jacques Lecoq Drama School, immersing herself in the life of the theatre as both performer and author.

She began work as an actress, appearing in several new plays as well as Molière and Marivaux. In 1987 she wrote *Conversations after a Burial*, which won the Molière Award for Best Author. Following this, she translated Kafka's *Metamorphosis* for Roman Polanski. Her second play, *Winter Crossing*, won the 1990 Molière Award for Best Fringe Production, and her next play *The Unexpected Man*, enjoyed successful productions in England, France, Scandinavia and Germany and will open in New York in October. In 1995, *Art* premiered in Paris and went on to win the Molière Award for Best Author. Since then it has been produced worldwide and translated into 35 languages. The London production received the 1996-97 Olivier Award and Evening Standard Award and continues to play at the Wyndham's Theatre. The Broadway production of *Art* received the 1998 Tony Award for Best Play. Screenwriting credits include *See You Tomorrow*, starring Jeanne Moreau and directed by Didier Martiny. In 1997, she published her first novel *Hammerklavier* and a new work of fiction.

CAST AND DESIGNERS

David Brian Ally (Yvan), a CBT Artist-in-Residence, was last seen in "All in the Timing," "Three Sisters," "Child's Christmas in Wales" and "The Rainmaker."

Guiesseppe Jones (Serge), who currently lives in New York, has many regional theatre credits and recently appeared on television in "Law and Order: Criminal Intent."

John Forrest Ferguson (Marc), a lecturer for the Dept. of Theatre, has starred in numerous CBT productions and was last seen in "All in the Timing" and starred as John Proctor in "The Crucible."

The play is directed by CBT resident director **Bruce Speas**. Speas directed "The Crucible"

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and "Woman in Black" at the CBT. He is also Assistant Professor for the Department of Theatre at UT where he teaches undergraduate courses in directing, theatre history and acting. **Michael Heil**, scenic designer, is also an Assistant Professor and last designed "Cinderella." Costume designer **Stephen Brown**, is a UT alum who currently lives in New York City. He previously designed for "Catfish Moon" and his work can be seen on film, *One Life to Live* and other television productions. Other designers include: **Joshua P. Hamrick** lighting design, **Mike Ponder**, sound design and **Marta Stout**, stage manager.

TICKET AND SCHEDULE INFORMATION

Tickets are \$17 to \$33, with discounts for students, faculty/staff, seniors and groups. To purchase tickets call (865) 974-5161. Performances are Tuesday through Sunday at 8 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS

WUOT 91.9 is sponsoring **Dinner Theatre** at the University of Tennessee University Club on Tuesday, Sept. 3. Call the Clarence Brown Theatre Box Office at 974-5161 to purchase tickets and to make your dinner reservations. Clarence Brown Theatre staff and WUOT radio personalities will be in attendance to give a behind-the-scenes look at "Art." Dinner Theatre begins at 6 p.m. and dinner is served a 6:30 p.m.

Theatre Talk is a series of discussions about the production and text of the play. Knoxville Museum of Art curator of collections and exhibitions Stephen Wicks will lead a discussion about modern art alongside "Art" director Bruce Speas. Theatre Talk is held at Barnes and Noble Booksellers on Sunday, Sept. 1, at 2 p.m.

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FACT SHEET

- WHAT:** "Art" by Yasmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton and directed by Bruce Speas
- WHO:** Serge Guiesseppe Jones
Marc John Forrest Ferguson
Yvan David Brian Alley
- WHEN:** Preview: Thursday, Aug. 29, 8 p.m.
Opening Night: Friday, Aug. 30, 8 p.m. (reception immediately following)
Run: Saturday, Aug. 31, 8 p.m.
Tuesday, Sept. 3 through Friday, Sept. 6, 8 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 8, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Tuesday, Sept. 10 to Saturday, Sept. 14, 8 p.m.
- PLAY:** "Art" by Yasmina Reza, revolves around three friends who find their 15 year relationship tested when Serge buys a white-on-white painting for 200,000 francs.
- TICKETS:** Preview: \$17 adult, discounted (UT Faculty/Staff and Senior Citizens) \$11
Opening Night: \$33 (no discounts)
Tuesday - Thursday and matinee performances: \$20, discounted \$18, non UT student \$11
Friday, Saturday and Sunday performances: \$23, discounted \$21, non UT student \$14
UT students: \$5 (except opening night)
- HOW:** Box office window hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. On performance weekdays, 10 a.m. to curtain time and weekends, 1 p.m. to curtain time.
- WHERE:** The Clarence Brown Theatre is located on the UT campus at 1714 Andy Holt Ave., Knoxville, Tenn. Parking is available in Lot 23 directly behind the theatre.
- PHOTOS/INTERVIEWS:** For photos or to schedule an interview, call Rachael Fugate at (865) 974-2582, mobile: (865) 310-5276. Press kits will be released on Aug. 16.
- CALL:** Box Office: (865) 974-5161
Department of Theatre main office: (865) 974-6011
Public Relations: Rachael Fugate (865) 974-2582, mobile: (865) 310-5276

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