

# PRESS RELEASE

The Studio Theatre  
The Studio Theatre 2ndStage  
The Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory  
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WASHINGTON, DC 20005

# STUDIO THEATRE

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**DATE:** September 8, 2011

## ACCOMPLISHED ACTORS ROUND OUT US PREMIERE OF ALAN BENNETT'S *THE HABIT OF ART* AT THE STUDIO THEATRE

*"The Habit of Art is funny, moving, a whirligig of ideas."* —*The Daily Telegraph*

### *US Premiere*

### ***THE HABIT OF ART***

by **Alan Bennett**

directed by **David Muse**

starring **Ted van Griethuysen** and **Paxton Whitehead**

with **Randy Harrison, Margaret Daly, Cameron Folmar, Matt Dewberry, and Wynn Harmon**

opening September 7, 2011

in the Metheny Theatre

The Studio Theatre follows up its 2008 hit production of *The History Boys* with Alan Bennett's next play, *The Habit of Art*. Deep in the bowels of London's National Theatre, rehearsals for a new play go apace: Benjamin Britten is having trouble with his latest opera and seeks out his collaborator, poet W. H. Auden, after a twenty-five year separation. Between visits by a rent boy and a biographer—whom Auden briefly mistakes for the rent boy—these aging artists wrestle with their desires, their jealousies, the ephemeral connection between creativity and inspiration, and all the reasons their friendship fell apart.

Like *The History Boys* before it, *The Habit of Art* broke box office records at the National Theatre in London and the production toured the country before reopening in London. It was praised for Bennett's "characteristic mixture of wit and wistfulness" (*The Guardian*), called "deft, amusing, and so intelligently and generously crafted that it makes you feel clever just watching it" (*Sunday Times*), and heralded as "A tsunami of jokes, a tidal wave of argumentative statements, a gorgeous gust of opinion" (*The Observer*).

On the heels of his acclaimed performance in *The Walworth Farce* last season, celebrated Washington actor **Ted van Griethuysen** (Fitz/W. H. Auden) returns to The Studio Theatre to play the aging actor Fitz and W. H. Auden. This multi-Helen Hayes Award recipient has appeared in many other Studio productions, including *Moonlight*, *Rock 'n' Roll*, *A Number*, and *The Invention of Love*, as well as in numerous leading roles at The Shakespeare Theatre Company, including last season's *Cymbeline*.

No stranger to the work of Alan Bennett, **Paxton Whitehead** (Henry/Benjamin Britten) joins The Studio Theatre for the first time. Whitehead has many Broadway credits, including the recent revival of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Alan Bennett's *Habeas Corpus*; he also appeared with Alan Bennett in the Broadway run of *Beyond the Fringe*. The former Artistic Director of The Shaw Festival (1967-1977), Whitehead was most recently seen in DC in last year's *All's Well That Ends Well* at The Shakespeare Theatre Company. He also has extensive Off Broadway, West End, film, and television credits.

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**Randy Harrison** (Tim/Stuart) appeared in DC as Sebastian in *Twelfth Night* at last summer's Shakespeare Theatre Free For All. His New York credits include *Wicked* (Broadway), *The Singing Forest* (Public Theatre/NYSF), *Antony and Cleopatra* (Theatre for a New Audience), and *Edward the Second* (Red Bull). Regionally, he played Andy Warhol in *POP!* (Yale Repertory Theatre), Tom in *The Glass Menagerie* (The Guthrie Theatre), and spent five summers at the Berkshire Theatre Festival. Mr. Harrison has appeared on television in the film *Bang Bang You're Dead* and the series *Queer as Folk*, both on Showtime.

A regular at The Shakespeare Theatre Company, where his most recent shows include *An Ideal Husband*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*, **Cameron Folmar** (Donald/Humphrey Carpenter) is making his Studio Theatre debut. Mr. Folmar has appeared on Broadway in *The 39 Steps*, and Off Broadway in *Five By Tenn*, *The 39 Steps*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Jew of Malta*, and *Waiting For Godot*. Regionally, Mr. Folmar has appeared at The Denver Center, The McCarter Theatre and Seattle Repertory Theatre, among others.

**Margaret Daly** (Kay) makes her Studio Theatre and DC debut as *The Habit of Art*'s overworked stage manager. Ms. Daly's Off Broadway credits include *Alphabetical Order*, *Theophilus North*, *Is Life Worth Living?*, *All Day Suckers*, and *T.L.C.* (She has appeared at regional theatres across the country, and her television credits include *One Life To Live* (recurring), *Mercy*, *Law & Order*, and *Nash Bridges*).

**Wynn Harmon** (Neil) has played the Detective in *Porgy and Bess* on Broadway, which was also telecast *Live from Lincoln Center* on PBS. In DC, he appeared in *The Heidi Chronicles* at Arena Stage, as well as *The Alchemist* and *Love's Labour's Lost* at The Shakespeare Theatre Company. Mr. Harmon has extensive Off Broadway and regional credits in classical and contemporary work, and he has been seen on television on *All My Children*, and in the film *Paper Cranes*.

*The Studio Theatre 2011-2012 Season is generously underwritten by **Robert and Arlene Kogod**.*

*The International Plays of the 2011-2012 Season are generously underwritten by an anonymous donor.*

*This production of **The Habit of Art** is generously underwritten by **Jaylee Mead and Judy and Stephen Hopkins**, with additional support by the **Lichtenberg Family Foundation** and an anonymous donor.*

**Starring:** **Ted van Griethuysen** (Fitz/W. H. Auden) and **Paxton Whitehead** (Henry/Benjamin Britten)  
With: **Randy Harrison** (Tim/Stuart), **Margaret Daly** (Kay), **Cameron Folmar** (Donald/Humphrey Carpenter), **Matt Dewberry** (George), **Wynn Harmon** (Neil), **Will Cooke** (Ralph), **Alfredo Palupa** (Tom), and **Lynn Sharp Spears** (Joan).

**Director and Designers:** **David Muse** (Director), **James Noone** (Set Design), **Nancy Schertler** (Lighting Design), **Alex Jaeger** (Costume Design), **Veronika Vorel** (Sound Design), and **Adrien-Alice Hansel** (Dramaturg).

#### **THE HABIT OF ART INFORMATION**

**Where:** The Metheny Theatre

**Dates:** September 7, 2011-October 16, 2011

**Performances:** Wednesday-Saturday: 8:00pm, Sunday: 7:00pm

Matinees: Saturday and Sunday: 2:00pm

Select Tuesdays: September 20, 27, October 4: 8:00pm

**Ticket Prices:** \$35-\$69

**Press Opening:** Sunday, September 11

#### **THE STUDIO THEATRE INFORMATION:**

The Studio Theatre is Washington's premiere venue for contemporary theatre, "where local audiences will find today's edgiest playwrights" (*Variety*). Founded in 1978 by Joy Zinoman, the theatre is in its second season under the leadership of Artistic Director David Muse. Muse is joined by Keith Alan Baker, Managing Director/Artistic Director, 2ndStage; Serge Seiden, Associate Producing Artistic Director; and Morey B. Epstein, Executive Director of Institutional Development.

One of the most respected mid-sized theatres in the country, The Studio Theatre produces the work of today's greatest writers, augmented by occasional productions of modern classics, performed by acclaimed actors in intimate spaces. Studio's programming, while purposefully eclectic, emphasizes plays of sophistication and style with true literary and theatrical merit. The five plays of The Studio Theatre Season form the core of its work, and are complemented by its Special Events, which bring unique performances and one-of-a-kind events to Washington DC; the rawer, frequently irreverent productions of The Studio 2ndStage; and the Studio Lab, in its inaugural season, which is dedicated to stripped-down productions of invigorating new work. Housed in a landmark complex that anchors the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Arts District, each of Studio's four theatres seats fewer than 225 patrons, giving Studio productions their signature intimacy. Throughout the Theatre's 34-year history, the quality of its work has been recognized by sustained community support as well as with 271 nominations and 55 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in professional theatre. In addition, The Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory has trained over 10,000 students, many of whom have gone on to acclaimed careers across the country. A premiere cultural organization in Washington DC, The Studio Theatre serves more than 75,000 people annually and is proud to make a vital contribution to its neighborhood and city.

#### **DISCOUNTS**

**Student, Senior citizen (62+) and Military discount:** \$5.00 off (except Saturday evenings).

**Student Rush:** \$19 tickets for full-time students are available one-half hour before curtain on a seating available basis (except Saturday evenings).

**Groups:** Call the Group Sales Manager at 202-232-7267 for parties of 10 or more.

**Pay What You Can:** Saturday, September 10, 2:00pm.

**Studio District Night:** Wednesday, September 7, 8:00pm. Ticket Price: \$10 for residents and those employed in the Studio District, with proof of address or employment.

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Accessibility:** All performances are fully accessible to accommodate patrons with special needs. FM listening assistive system available. Accessible seats available by reservation. Call to request sign-interpreted performances; two week notice is required. Call the Box Office at 202-332-3300 or V/TTY 202-667-8436.

**Location:** 1501 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW (Northeast corner of 14th and P Streets).

**Parking:** Please call the Box Office for parking information.

**Metro Stops:** Red Line: Dupont Circle, Orange/Blue Lines: McPherson Square, and Yellow/Green Lines: U Street/Cardozo.

**Contact Information:** Tickets: 202-332-3300 V/TTY: 202-667-8436 Fax: 202-332-1187

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