

PRESS RELEASE

The Studio Theatre

THE STUDIO THEATRE. THE STUDIO 2NDSTAGE. THE STUDIO THEATRE ACTING CONSERVATORY. 1501 FOURTEENTH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20005. WASHINGTON DC

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PRESS RELEASE

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THE STUDIO 2NDSTAGE PRESENTS POLLY STENHAM'S EXPLOSIVE *THAT FACE!*

"One of the most astonishing debuts I have seen in more than 30 years of theatre reviewing."
– The Daily Telegraph

THAT FACE

by **Polly Stenham**

Directed by **Rahaleh Nassri**

Featuring **Patrick Thomas Cragin, Eva Wilhelm, Dana Levanovsky, Will Cooke, Zehra Fazal and Angela Weichbrodt**

Opening February 17, 2010

In Stage 4

Causing a national sensation, London playwright Polly Stenham was just 19-years-old when she wrote this shocking story about a violent encounter at an all-girls school and its startling ramifications. With a pitch-black sense of humor, *That Face* captures a family on the brink... about to explode. With an exciting roster of fresh acting talent, this production is led by Rahaleh Nassri, director of The Studio 2ndStage hit *Breath, Boom*.

From London's cutting-edge Royal Court Theatre, Stenham became the youngest dramatist in over forty years to have a play produced on the West End when *That Face* transferred to the Duke of York Theatre in 2008. She has won such major awards as the 2007 *Evening Standard* Award for Best New Play, the Most Promising Playwright Award at the Critics' Circle Awards and the Special Commendation for the Susan Smith Blackburn Award. The Studio Theatre is delighted to introduce Ms. Stenham's work to U.S. audiences before it has its New York premiere later this spring.

That Face opens with a shocking scene – two teenage girls, Mia and Izzy, torturing the younger Alice, who is blindfolded and tied to a chair. What begins as "innocent" hazing morphs into something far more sinister. A disquieting attack on London's upper middle class, *That Face* turns into a twisted dissection of a troubled family. We see the tragedy of children who must become parents to their own parents. *That Face* deals with violence and dysfunction, and Stenham depicts it all with razor-sharp dialogue, a strong sense of humor and engaging compassion for all of her characters.

Patrick Thomas Cragin makes his Studio 2ndStage debut as Henry, a son devastated by the pressure of caring for his destructive mother. Cragin has appeared in theatres throughout the DC area, including The Kennedy Center, Signature Theatre and Toby's Dinner Theatre. **Eva Wilhelm** plays his fraught mother Martha, whose attempts to hold herself together tear her family apart. Having earned an M.F.A. in Classical Acting at The Shakespeare Theatre Company's Academy for Classical Acting at The George Washington University, she has performed in theatre and film throughout Chicago. Playing Henry's equally fractured sister Mia is **Dana Levanovsky**, a recent graduate of The George Washington University's acting program. Ms. Levanovsky recently appeared in *Four Dogs and a Bone*

at the DC Capital Fringe Festival. **Will Cooke** takes on the role of Hugh, Mia and Henry's absentee father. Cooke has performed in numerous productions at the Hangar Theatre in Ithaca, NY. He also appeared in Warner Brothers' film *The Exorcist*. Playing the predatory Izzy, Mia's schoolmate, is **Zehra Fazal**, whose local credits include Layla in *The Two Marys*, directed by Joy Zinoman at the Source Theatre Festival; Rival Woman in *Lysistrata* at Synetic Theatre and the solo performance *Headscarf and the Angry Bitch*, for which she won the DC Theatre Scene's 2009 Capital Fringe Award

— MORE —

for Best Solo-Performance. Rounding out the cast is **Angela Weichbrodt**, a student from Classen High School, playing Alice, the tortured schoolgirl.

The 2009-2010 season of The Studio Theatre 2ndStage is underwritten by Ina and A. Fenner Milton.

Featuring: Patrick Thomas Cragin (Henry), **Eva Wilhelm** (Martha), **Dana Levanovsky** (Mia), **Will Cooke** (Hugh), **Zehra Fazal** (Izzy) and **Angela Weichbrodt** (Alice).

Director and Designers: Rahaleh Nassri (Director), **Joel David Santner** (Assistant Director), **Peter Stray** (Dialect Coach), **Luciana Steconi** (Set Design), **Colin K. Bills** (Lighting Design), **Elisheba Ittoop** (Sound Design) and **Kristy Lee Hall** (Costume Design).

THAT FACE INFORMATION

Where: Stage 4

Dates: February 17–March 14, 2010

Performances: Wednesday–Saturday: 8:30pm, Sunday: 7:30pm

Ticket Prices: 1st Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: \$25, All Following Performances \$30

Press Opening: Sunday, February 21

THE STUDIO THEATRE INFORMATION:

“Most of the best plays I saw last season were either presented Off Broadway or by such regional companies as... Washington's Studio Theatre. That's the new reality of drama in America.”

— *Terry Teachout, Wall Street Journal*

The Studio Theatre is Washington's premiere venue for contemporary theatre, and is **“where local audiences will find today's edgiest playwrights...a place for innovation,”** according to *Variety*. The Studio Theatre's mission is to produce the best in contemporary theatre. Its restless, innovative spirit makes it a leader both in Washington DC, and in the nation. Artist-founded and artist-driven, The Studio Theatre demands the highest quality production values, bringing audiences provocative writing along with unparalleled artistry in performance, directing and design.

Founded in 1978, The Studio Theatre is led by the driving force of Joy Zinoman, Founding Artistic Director, whose recent work has been called **“riveting,” “beautifully orchestrated” and “inspired”** by *The Washington Post*; along with Keith Alan Baker, Managing Director/Artistic Director, 2ndStage; Serge Seiden, Associate Producing Artistic Director; and Morey B. Epstein, Executive Director of Institutional Development. In 2004, The Studio Theatre opened a new four-theatre complex, a major landmark that anchors the 14th Street Arts District. The complex was quickly hailed as **“a magnificent theatre space that promises more memorable evenings to come”** (*Washington City Paper*). The Studio 2ndStage creates edgy, explosive, extreme and electrifying productions that complement The Studio Theatre's season. *The Washington Post* proclaimed that 2ndStage **“has long been a playground for... directors and actors (and, naturally, some of its riskier experiments)”** and that a **“convention-defying approach informs many 2ndStage offerings.”** The Studio Theatre provides opportunities for developing theatre artists as year-long apprentices. The Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory offers rigorous professional theatre training in close partnership with the working artists at The Studio Theatre. Now in its 35th year, it has been called **“the area's premiere professional training facility for actors and directors”** by *Variety*. The Conservatory has trained over 8,000 actors and directors, now performing on Broadway, Off Broadway and in theatre and film across the country. The theatre is deeply invested in the community and in neighborhood revitalization.

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

Accessibility: All performances are fully accessible to accommodate patrons with special needs. FM listening assistive system available. Call for schedule of sign-interpreted performances. Accessible seats available by reservation. Call the Box Office at 202-332-3300 or V/TTY 202-667-8436.

Location: 1501 14th 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 Green Line U Street/Cardozo.

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