

# STRAWD OG

## THEATRE COMPANY

3829 N. Broadway St., Chicago, IL 60613

773-528-9889, [www.strawdog.org](http://www.strawdog.org), [www.myspace.com/strawdogtheatre](http://www.myspace.com/strawdogtheatre), [www.strawdog.org/strawblog](http://www.strawdog.org/strawblog)

PRESS RELEASE

STRAWD OG CONTACT: Shannon Hoag

Chicago, IL, May 22, 2009

773-528-9889 or 773-209-6446, [shannonhoag@strawdog.org](mailto:shannonhoag@strawdog.org)

### **Strawdog Theatre Company Announces 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Season Themed “Why We Fight”**

Strawdog Theatre Company of Chicago announces their 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary season of presenting *“the whole wide world in a little black box,”* with the three mainstage plays focusing on the theme of “why we fight”: the Midwest premiere of Matt Pepper’s **“St. Crispin’s Day,”** David Harrower’s translation of Bertolt Brecht’s **“Good Soul of Szechuan,”** and Curt Columbus’ translation of Anton Chekhov’s **“Uncle Vanya.”** The shows run Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 7 p.m.

These productions, plus on-going late night offerings, will be held at Strawdog’s space in the heart of Chicago’s Lakeview neighborhood at 3829 N. Broadway Street. Season flex-passes are \$50 for all three season shows (attend any night during run except gala), and \$100 for all three gala benefit performances (galas include post-show reception with refreshments). Adult single ticket prices are \$20 on Saturdays at 5 p.m. and Sundays, and \$22 on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. (single gala night tickets are \$40 each); preview, student and senior tickets are \$10 (with ID); and \$15 tickets are available for groups of ten or more. Mainstage tickets also offer free entrance to Strawdog Late Night shows following regular Friday, Saturday (8 p.m.) or Sunday performances. Tickets are available at 773-528-9696 and [www.strawdog.org](http://www.strawdog.org) The run schedule is as follows:

- **“St. Crispin’s Day”** by Matt Pepper, directed by Kevin Christopher Fox, runs September 24–October 31, 2009 (previews September 24 and 25 at 8 p.m., gala benefit on September 26 at 7 p.m., opens September 27 at 7 p.m.)
- **“Good Soul of Szechuan”** by Bertolt Brecht, translated by David Harrower, directed by Shade Murray, runs February 18–March 27, 2010 (previews February 18 and 19 at 8 p.m., gala benefit on February 20 at 7 p.m., opens February 21 at 7 p.m.)
- **“Uncle Vanya”** by Anton Chekhov, translated by Curt Columbus, directed by Kimberly Senior, runs April 22–May 29, 2010 (previews April 22 and 23 at 8 p.m., gala benefit on April 24 at 7 p.m., opens April 25 at 7 p.m.)
- **Strawdog Late Night** features a variety of programming (*“Theatre Wars,”* live music, comedy, improv, roasts) in the newly-renovated Hugen Hall Cabaret space within the theatre, following each Friday and Saturday night mainstage performance at 11 p.m. Admission for Late Night is \$5-\$10 with a cash bar available. Some events are free. Check [www.strawdog.org](http://www.strawdog.org) for current listings.

- more -

## Strawdog Theatre Company 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Season/Page 2

Strawdog Artistic Director Nic Dimond said, *"It's a cliché, but one that cannot be overstated ...these are tough times, and it's hitting close to home for everybody. We all know people whose lives have been wrecked over the last year – smart, talented people who are utterly discouraged. While it's tempting, we don't believe that this is the time for fluffy escapism. We believe that we should expect more of ourselves. This is the time for stories about people who refuse to just lay low and ride it out. This is the time for stories about people who dig in and take a stand, and our Season 22 selections all focus on the idea of why we fight. There is an infamous medieval battle to be justified in 'St. Crispin's Day;'* there is the struggle to be a decent person in a capitalist world in David Harrower's hot new translation of the Brecht classic **'The Good Soul of Szechuan;'** and there is ferocious family infighting in Curt Columbus' saucy translation of Chekhov's **'Uncle Vanya.'** With our signature blend of brains and brawn, Strawdog continues to emphasize a true ensemble-based acting attack, as well as a design approach that immerses our audiences into the worlds where each of these stories live."

Strawdog will open their 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary season with the Midwest premiere of Matt Pepper's black comedy **"St. Crispin's Day."** Set on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt, *"St. Crispin's Day"* follows Shakespeare's famous characters, Bardolph and Pistol as they attempt to alter history and overthrow England's King Henry V. Kevin Christopher Fox makes his Strawdog directing debut with this production, and he has also directed *"Widower's Houses"* for TimeLine Theatre, *"Beggar's in the House of Plenty"* for Mary-Arrchie Theatre, *"The Last Days of Judas Iscariot"* for The Gift Theatre, and *"Arms and the Man"* for the Oak Park Festival Theatre.

The second production of Strawdog's 2009- 2010 season is Bertolt Brecht's **"Good Soul of Szechuan."** A trio of gods pass through Szechuan and bestow great wealth on the poor prostitute Shen-Te as a reward for her pure and charitable heart. Shen-Te struggles to maintain her decency as greedy locals and fair-weather lovers take advantage of her good soul. Brecht's classic receives a new translation from Scottish playwright David Harrower, author of Strawdog's Jeff Award-winning production of *"Knives in Hens."* Company member Shade Murray returns to Strawdog, where he previously directed their *"Detective Story"* (Jeff Award-winning Best Production, Director and Ensemble in 2003), *"Marathon '33"* (Best Ensemble 2006), and *"R.U.R. - Rossum's Universal Robots"* (2008). Murray was assistant director for Steppenwolf's acclaimed production *"August: Osage County."* He also won a 2006 Jeff Award for *"The Chosen"* at Writer's Theatre.

The season will close with Anton Chekhov's **"Uncle Vanya,"** directed by Kimberly Senior. Chekhov's classic about a country doctor's forbidden love for his brother's beautiful wife gets a smoldering translation from former Steppenwolf Associate Artistic Director and current Artistic Director of Trinity Rep Curt Columbus. Strawdog company member Kimberly Senior returns after directing their critically acclaimed *"Cherry Orchard"* in 2009 and *"Three Sisters"* in 2005 (remounted at Theatre on the Lake in 2006). Other Strawdog productions include the Jeff Award-nominated *"Knives in Hens"* (2003) and *"Fuddy Meers"* (2004). Senior also directed TimeLine's *"Dolly West's Kitchen"* as well as this spring's critically acclaimed production of *"The Overwhelming"* for Next Theatre.

- more -

## Strawdog Theatre Company 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Season/Page 3

Strawdog Theatre Company is supported in part by the **Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Alphawood Foundation, the Illinois Arts Council (a state agency), Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation**, and the annual support of businesses and individuals. Strawdog has received numerous Non-Equity Jeff Awards, including awards for "*Hurlyburly*" (1999) - Outstanding Ensemble, Outstanding Actor Michael Dobbs, Outstanding Supporting Actress Stephanie Manglaras, Outstanding Supporting Actor Bart Petty; "*Detective Story*" (2003) - Outstanding Production, Outstanding Director Shade Murray, Outstanding Ensemble, Outstanding Set Design Ray Vlcek; "*Three Sisters*" (2005) - Outstanding Set Design Brian Sidney Bembridge; and "*Marathon 33*" (2007) - Outstanding Ensemble.

Public transportation to Strawdog is available on the CTA via the Red Line Sheridan stop, plus 36-Broadway and 80-Irving Park buses. There is a \$6 honor parking at Horace Greeley School, 832 W. Sheridan, weekends after 5 p.m. Strawdog Theatre Company is committed to ensemble acting and an immersive design approach, offering Chicago the premiere storefront theatre experience. We develop new work, re-imagine classic plays, explore new fusions of music and theatre, ask provocative questions and deliver the unexpected to our audience. We provide a home for our celebrated ensemble to work and play with the most sought after artists in Chicago theatre along with the best new talents in the city. Strawdog is a proud member of the NorthHalsted Area Merchant Association, The Chicago Storefront Theatre District and the League of Chicago Theatres.

The current Strawdog ensemble includes **Jennifer Avery, Hank Boland, Abigail Boucher, Don Cardiff, Erin Carlson, Michael Dailey, Anita Deely, John Ferrick, Mikhail Fiksel, Aly Renne Greaves, Carmine Grisolia, Christopher Hainsworth, Kyle Hamman, Erik Hellman, Tom Hickey, Shannon Hoag, Anderson Lawfer, Sean Mallery, Kat McDonnell, Gregor Mortis, Stacy Parker Hirsch, Michaela Petro, John Henry Roberts, Jamie Vann and James Anthony Zoccoli**. Strawdog Artistic Director is **Nic Dimond** and Managing Director is **Alex J. Goodman**. Notable Strawdog alums include **Elizabeth Auman** (TimeLine), **Alexandra Billings** (actress, cabaret star), **Nancy Bishop** (casting director), **Chrisanne Blankenship** (director), **Becca Cardo** (voice-over artist), **Kristin Caskey** (Fox Theatricals), **Scott Cummins** (actor, director), and **James Denton** ("*Desperate Housewives*"). Strawdog supports Mookie Jam, a Chicago-based, not-for-profit organization created to assist artists living with multiple sclerosis - [www.mookiejam.org](http://www.mookiejam.org)

Strawdog Theatre Company was formed in 1988 by a group of actors who had performed together in a production of Euripides's "*Helen*" at a (now defunct) theatre on the west side. The group took their name from Sam Peckinpah's movie "*Straw Dogs*" (*Theatresaurus Rex* was, thankfully, the runner-up), and they produced their first show, Len Jenkin's "*Five of Us*" at a (now defunct) space in Bucktown. At the time, the Chicago Reader said "Strawdog Theatre Company's inaugural production brings ... truth home with a vengeance," and Skyline Chicago added "The Strawdog troupe shows us what an ensemble can do." Twenty-two years later, Strawdog Theatre Company has survived the ups and downs of Chicago theatre, and is still dedicated to bringing the truth to audiences through the committed work of an award-winning ensemble of actors and designers.