



TRAVESTIES

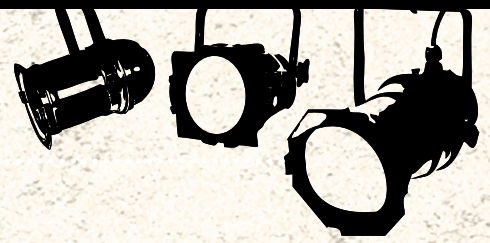
BY **TOM STOPPARD**
DIRECTED BY **PATRICK MARBER**

**ROUNABOUT
THEATRE
COMPANY**

UPSTAGE GUIDE

A publication of **EDUCATION AT
ROUNABOUT**

UPSTAGE SPOTLIGHT



TRAVESTIES

by Tom Stoppard

Directed by Patrick Marber

The Tony Award®-winning Best Play returns to Broadway in a “near-miraculous production” of “mind-bending splendor” (*The New York Times*). In 1917 Zurich, an artist, a writer and a revolutionary collide in a kaleidoscopic thrill-ride that’s “wickedly playful, intensely entertaining, infectiously theatrical” (*Time Out London*).

.....

A NOTE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TODD HAIMES

Travesties dares to ask: Is art a necessary tool in the fight for social change, or a pointless substitute for meaningful action? It’s a debate that pokes at the very foundation of what we—and Stoppard himself—do as theatre artists. *Travesties* investigates this question with abandon, taking the theatrical form to its limits to discover exactly where those limits lie.

.....

WHEN

1917 and many years later

WHERE

The Zurich Public Library and the drawing room of Henry Carr’s apartment

WHO

Henry Carr appears as a very old man and also as his youthful self.

He dresses in a most elegant way and is especially interested in the cut of his trousers; he has the figure for it.

Tristan Tzara is the Dadaist of that name. He was a short, dark-haired, very boyish-looking young man, and charming (his word). He wears a monocle.

James Joyce is James Joyce in 1917/1918, aged 36. He wears a jacket and trousers from two different suits.

Lenin is Lenin in 1917: aged 47.

Bennett is Carr’s manservant. Quite a weighty presence.

Gwendolen is Carr’s younger sister; young and attractive but also a personality to be reckoned with.

Cecily is also young and attractive and even more to be reckoned with. Also appears as her old self.

Nadya is Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin’s wife: aged 48.



Interview with Director Patrick Marber	Page 4-5
Tripping Through <i>Travesties</i> : A Guide	Page 6-7
Interview with Actor Sara Topham	Page 8-9
Tristan Tzara and Dada	Page 10
James Joyce and <i>Ulysses</i>	Page 11
Lenin and the Russian Revolution	Page 12
Switzerland	Page 13
Henry Carr and <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	Page 14
The Travesty of <i>Travesties</i>	Page 15
Tom Stoppard Biography	Page 16
Stoppard on Stoppard	Page 17
Designer Statements	Page 18-19
Pre-Show and Post-Show Activities	Page 20-21
Glossary and Resources	Page 22
About Roundabout and Staff Interview	Page 23

UPSTAGE CONTRIBUTORS

MANAGING EDITORS:

Kim Oria, Senior Manager of Education Programs
Jill Rafson, Director of New Play Development

WRITERS:

Jason Jacobs, Teaching Artist
Leah Reddy, Teaching Artist
Nick Mecikalski, Artistic Assistant
Anna Woodruff, Education Apprentice
Lucy Powis, Artistic Apprentice
Cassidy Jones, Artistic Intern
Miranda Haymon, Roundabout Directing Fellow

Copyright © 2018 Roundabout Theatre Company, Inc.
All rights reserved.

INTERVIEWS:

Ted Sod, Education Dramaturg

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Darren Melchiorre, Associate Director, Art and Design
Bo Krucik, Graphic Design Apprentice

EDUCATION STAFF:

Jennifer DiBella, Director of Education
Mitch Mattson, Associate Director of Education
Katie Christie, Assistant Director of Education
Abby Case, Education Program Manager
Karen Loftus, Education Program Manager
Sarah Kutnowsky, Education Coordinator
Jackie Maris, Education Assistant
Olivia Atlas, Education Apprentice
Aasim Rozier, Education Apprentice

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR PATRICK MARBER

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with Director Patrick Marber about his work on *Travesties*.

Ted Sod: When did you first encounter *Travesties*? Did you see the original Royal Shakespeare Company production in 1974?

Patrick Marber: No, but I saw it at school when I was 14, in 1978. Some of the older students did a production. I didn't understand it, but I really loved it. I was confused by my reaction: on the one hand it was incomprehensible and on the other, magnificent. This intrigued me. It drew me—strongly—to Stoppard's work. I began reading him and became an admirer.

TS: Later, after you began writing plays, you became friends with Stoppard—correct?

PM: When my first play, *Dealer's Choice*, was produced at the National Theatre in 1995, Tom was on the board there. He was a supporter of that play and more particularly of my second play, *Closer*. I felt very honored to have his blessing. We would have the odd lunch or dinner, and it was thrilling. On one occasion he cooked me lunch in his flat and then gave me some vital notes on my third play, *Howard Katz*. Pinter and Stoppard are huge influences on my work as a playwright. I have had the great privilege of working with both of them as a director.

TS: Was there anyone who influenced your directing?

PM: I became a director by default. I ended up directing the original production of *Dealer's Choice* because there is a complicated poker game in the play, and it made sense that I should look after it because I understood what the hell was going on. I'm influenced by too many to mention but no one director more than another.

TS: Is it true Tom Stoppard called you to discuss another director being considered to direct this revival of *Travesties*?

PM: Yes! I was in Venice with my wife and one of our sons. My phone rang, and Tom's name flashed up on the screen. I have to admit that I was in the bathroom at the time and that my posture was sedentary. My first thought was, "It's not appropriate to take a call from Sir Tom Stoppard on the john." Then I figured, genius though he is, he's not going to know my exact location. So I took the call, and we exchanged pleasantries. Then he said, "The reason I'm phoning you is that I once wrote a play called *Travesties*." I said, "Yes, Tom, I'm aware of it." He continued, "It seems the Menier Chocolate Factory would like to revive it." And I thought, "Great, he's going to ask me to direct it." Tom continued, "I was wondering what you think of Sam West as a director?" Now, I've known Sam since university, he's a friend and a terrific director. In fact, he directed a very fine revival of *Dealer's Choice* at the Chocolate Factory in 2007, so it was logical that Tom would ring me about him. I said, "Sam is excellent, and he'll do a terrific job on *Travesties*." Tom said, "Well, good, thank you very much," and we continued to natter. We got to the end of the call, and I blurted out, "Look, Tom, just one thing before you go - if Sam can't do it, please can I throw my hat in the ring?" He said, "Oh, well, thank you very much, that's good to know."

Nothing happened for two weeks. Then I got a call from David Babani, the artistic director of the Chocolate Factory, offering me the job due to Sam West's tricky scheduling issues. I thanked him and said that before



I committed I was going to re-read the play because I hadn't actually looked at it since I was 14. It lived in my mind as extraordinary, but I should read it over the weekend to be sure. Obviously I'd say "yes," but due diligence was required. David said great, and we agreed to talk on Monday.

So, I sat down and read it on a Saturday morning and then felt very glum indeed. I had no idea how to do it. It was impossible to direct. It was as mystifying to me as it had been more than 35 years before. I spent the rest of the day in a very dark brown study thinking, "I can't turn down this play, I'll never forgive myself." Equally, I thought, "Tom will never forgive me if I screw it up. Nor will I forgive myself if I fail it because I've waited so long to see it done as I dreamed it should be." On the Sunday I had another try. This time I read the original 1973 version. And on this second read I got an inkling of how I might approach it. I saw it as an intellectual farce with songs and dancing and the lucid logic of a dream. And I found its emotional pull; the terrible tragedy of time. I still couldn't grasp the play, but I felt I could stage it without too much embarrassment if I got the right Henry Carr.

I phoned David and then Tom and said "yes please" and then explained that having read both of the published texts I felt there were some things we might think about restoring and some other things we might cut. Tom was remarkably generous about all this, and we met on and off over a few months (smoking, coffee, cutting, pasting), and he produced a fantastic new draft specifically for this production. It was a great experience working with Tom, now eighty, on this flabbergasting play he wrote in his roaring thirties. I could see that it was haunting for

him. The play—and time—had caught up with the playwright; he was young Henry Carr’s age when he wrote it and is now approaching old Carr’s age in revival. Tom said brilliant things about the play, about everything really. In this respect (and others) it reminded me of the happy times I’d spent with Mike Nichols working on the film of *Closer*. Tom said one thing in particular which opened up the whole production, words to the effect of: *Travesties* is a memory play as much as it is anything else. Or rather, it’s a misremembered memory play. A memory play remembered by an amnesiac. If you’ve ever experienced a relative losing their memory—I’m 53 and I’m losing mine—you’ll understand the feeling of the play and this production.

TS: How did you come up with casting Tom Hollander as Henry Carr?

PM: Easy. I made a list of my favorite actors and then prioritized intellect and wit. The Chocolate Factory, Tom Stoppard, and I all agreed to offer Tom. At the time, back in the Spring of 2016, I’d been talking to him about another project, so I had his phone number and it was a simple offer to make. Fortunate timing. Tom wasn’t actively looking for a play to do, but he wasn’t averse to considering it.

TS: I’ve read reviews that say Hollander found an emotional underpinning in his interpretation of Henry Carr. Is that true?

PM: Yes. It was a principle of the production. We took every opportunity to make the play an emotional experience for the audience. Although the surface of the play is wild and witty, the “underplay” is melancholic—and, as ever with Stoppard, the potency is in the clash.

TS: Stoppard was at Roundabout a few seasons ago when we did his plays *The Real Thing* and *Indian Ink*. I asked him what traits he looked for in casting actors, and he said, “Clarity of utterance.” Do you feel the same way?

PM: I would add charm and brilliance, too, but “clarity of utterance” is foremost because it indicates specificity of intention. A Stoppard production without strong intention and strong wants can be deadly. I saw a good number of actors for this revival, and I was extremely impressed by the quality (and punctuality) of American theatre actors. I was never anxious about casting for New York. We’ve got a sensational company, and I can’t wait to start working with them.

TS: I understand you told friends seeing the show in London either at the Menier Chocolate Factory or later at the Apollo Theatre to familiarize themselves with *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Would you give that same advice to the Roundabout audiences?

PM: I would never tell an audience to prepare, but it’s kind of useful to know that there are characters in *The Importance of Being Earnest* named Jack, Algernon, Gwendolen, and Cecily. But no one should worry if they don’t get all the references. Just follow the love stories and you won’t go far wrong.

TS: Any advice for students, teachers, and teaching artists in terms of preparation, or does the same thing apply to them? Should they just come with an open mind?

PM: The general audience is different from the student audience. If you’re teaching or studying *Travesties*, it’s obvious you should read the play in advance. You should know a bit about Lenin and the Russian Revolution of 1917. And you should know that he was hanging around in Zurich waiting to pounce. You should read James Joyce and know that he was composing *Ulysses* in this period. And I daresay some knowledge of Tristan Tzara, Dada, and the Cabaret Voltaire will do you no harm.

TS: During the course of the play, various opinions are offered about the role of art in society. Is that important in your production?

PM: Everything in the play is important to me. *Travesties* takes it all on: art, love, war, politics, friendship. Tom writes on a huge scale. I don’t think he can write a small play; it must be very taxing for him. He throws it all in the pot and mixes it differently from play to play.

TS: While you were working on this play, did you start asking yourself what the purpose of art was? Or do you think about that all the time?

PM: I’m fairly committed to the provocative view that the purpose of art is to amuse and entertain. How one defines entertainment and amusement is somewhat more complicated. Tentatively, I think good art might stir the soul. Certainly mine was stirred early on by this amazing play. To have seen it as a gazing adolescent and then to direct it as a wide-eyed adult is very strange and somewhat spooky. It is one of the most unlikely and joyous journeys of my creative life. ♦



The company of *Travesties*
Photo: Jenny Anderson

TRIPPING THROUGH TRAVESTIES: A GUIDE

Though *Travesties* is fictional, playwright Tom Stoppard was inspired by historical facts: in 1917, during WWI, three revolutionaries—Lenin, Tristan Tzara and James Joyce—all lived in Zurich, Switzerland. Further, Joyce was involved in a court case against British consular official Henry Carr over the cost of a pair of pants Carr purchased to wear while appearing in Joyce's production of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The play is told through the unreliable memory of an older Henry Carr.

THE BASICS

TRAVESTY

- A travesty is “a debased, distorted or grossly inferior imitation” of something
- Can also be defined as an artistic imitation of something in a ridiculously inappropriate style
- *Travesties* is a travesty of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and other literary sources
- Characters in *Travesties* are travesties of the real people they are based on

WWI (1914-1918)

- Started when Austro-Hungary invaded Serbia
- Known as the War to End All Wars
- The two sides were:
 - Allies: Russia, Great Britain, France, Serbia, United States
 - Central Powers: Germany, Austro-Hungary
- 10 million soldiers, 5 million civilians killed



ZURICH

- Major city in Switzerland, its financial center
- First language of Zurich is German, but French is also widely spoken
- Switzerland was politically and militarily neutral during WWI
- Spies, diplomats, artists, refugees and intellectuals all gathered there to work or to escape the war

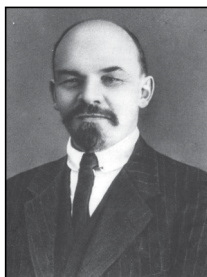


THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

- Oscar Wilde's famous high comedy about the English upper class, which premiered in 1895
- Main characters are Algernon and Jack, who both lead double lives, and the women they love, Cecily and Gwendolen
- Cecily and Gwendolen in *Travesties* have resonance with Wilde's characters of the same names



THE PLAYERS



LENIN

- Full name: Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov
- Married to Nadezhda “Nadya ” Krupskaya
- Founder of Russian Communist Party; leader of faction called Bolsheviks, who worked to overthrow the Tsar
- Returned to Russia in 1917 and led an armed takeover known as the October Revolution, which led to the creation of the Soviet Union



TZARA

- Full name: Tristan Tzara (born Samuel Rosenstock)
- Romanian freethinker and radical
- Helped found artistic movement called Dada in Zurich’s Cabaret Voltaire
- Dadaism was purposefully chaotic, random, and shocking
- Called “anti-art,” Dada mocked traditional artistic values, such as the idea that words in a poem should be carefully chosen



JOYCE

- Full name: James Augustine Aloysius Joyce
- The Irishman’s early work included *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
- Started The English Players, a theatre troupe, while in Zurich
- *Ulysses*, his retelling of Homer’s *Odyssey* set in Dublin on a single day, the 16th of June 1904, was published in 1922 and broke new ground with its use of stream-of-consciousness and interior monologue
- *Ulysses* is now regarded as a masterpiece; Henry Carr is mentioned in it, mockingly



CARR

- Full name: Henry Wilfred Carr
- The Englishman enlisted in 1914 and was sent to France
- Suffered a leg injury in battle, captured by Germans, and paroled to Switzerland
- Played Algernon in James Joyce’s English Players’ production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*
- Was offended by Joyce and sued for the cost of pants he purchased to wear in the play
- Joyce countersued for the cost of tickets Carr sold; Joyce won

INTERVIEW WITH ACTOR

SARA TOPHAM

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with Actor Sara Topham about her work in *Travesties*.

Ted Sod: Where were you born and where did you get your training? Did you have any teachers who had a profound impact on you?

Sara Topham: I was born in Victoria, B.C., in Canada. I had serious ballet training in Victoria with a woman named Sheila MacKinnon, who was truly a great teacher. She used classical ballet to teach theatre; what she was really teaching was storytelling. She is the person who set me on the path of being interested in how to tell a story to a group of people. I also went to the University of Victoria—it's one of the major Canadian universities—where I pursued a classical acting degree. After graduation, I put my resume together and an audition outfit in my suitcase and moved to Toronto—just like Ruby Keeler in *42nd Street*. I didn't know anyone in Toronto. I don't know what I thought I was doing, but I had an instinct that I had to go away and do something brave – and, at the time, moving to Toronto certainly felt brave. I was very fortunate in Toronto because I was taken into the Stratford Festival Company. I did the conservatory training at Stratford and remained in the company for many seasons, which is how I ended up with you wonderful people at Roundabout. At Stratford, I worked with the late, great Brian Bedford, who I miss terribly. It was he who brought me to New York in 2010 and 2011 to play Gwendolen in his production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

TS: I understand that you played Cecily in a production of *Travesties* at the McCarter Theatre in 2012. What are the challenges of returning to a role that you've already played?

ST: I think there are more benefits than challenges. I feel confident that I understand how the play works and I know audiences get an enormous amount of pleasure out of it. I think when you are approaching a part again and your brain and heart are attached to things you had done previously, it can be very hard to do something new. But because it's been a long time—at least it feels like a long time—I think I'll be able to adapt to new direction. I am sure I will benefit from my mouth remembering instinctually how those glorious words of Stoppard's go. Which also means that, hopefully, I will know the words at a deeper level than I did the first time. Laurence Olivier used to say, "It's not how well you know it, it's how long you've known it."

TS: Will you talk about how the character of Cecily is relevant to you?

ST: I think she is relevant to me because she thinks deeply about things. I'm very interested in Cecily's tenacity in exchanging ideas. I enjoy taking on that part of Cecily's intelligence. There are arguments in the play about what the place of art is in society and what responsibility artists and their work have to the political culture, to society at large, and those subjects are very relevant in our times. Cecily's wrestling with things that artists have wrestled with for decades, but I'm sure she might not be too keen on being compared to an artist because she is, as you know, pursuing other interests. I think her tenacity in getting ahold of an argument and really wanting to follow it through all the way to the end—that's important and relevant as well. One of the things that I see happening in the world right now is that people think just listening to someone's opposing point of view is tantamount to agreeing with it. People feel obligated to shut down any point of view that doesn't reflect their own thinking. We are losing the capacity to have any kind



Sara Topham

of exchange of ideas because we're all so busy holding onto and defending our own. Something wonderful about Stoppard's play is that it is just chock-full of opposing ideas. An audience can go from agreeing with one of the characters to agreeing with another character who has an opposing view. I think that's why we go to the theatre. When theatre is at its best, it engages us with both comfortable and uncomfortable ideas.

TS: What do you personally feel the role of theatre is in today's world?

ST: I think when we grow up, we lose the opportunity to feel challenging things in a safe environment, in the way that little kids do when they hear stories read to them that give them different emotional experiences. The theatre is this amazing place where we can, for instance, see a play about a woman who has lost a child and be with that woman and hopefully experience a deep sense of empathy for her. I believe experiencing that in a theatre allows us, in our own lives, to be more compassionate when we encounter someone like that outside the theatre. I think the theatre is a place for us to be with our fellow human beings and wrestle with ideas, with feelings, with experiences. I think that's what our job is as practitioners of acting. We are storytellers.

TS: What kind of stamina does it take to perform in *Travesties*? It seems to me like playing this twice on one day is going to be exhausting; is that true?

ST: It is. It's not as hard as *Noises Off*, which I've done; *Noises Off* is the most exhausting play I've ever been in. *Travesties* requires

mental stamina; it requires Olympic scale concentration. That was my experience before, and I'm sure it will be in Patrick's production as well. You cannot take your eye off the ball for a second because there is so much precision required, so much accuracy. In the case of the Cecily and Henry Carr scene—that scene has got these time slips because Carr is remembering events, and his memory is not very reliable—he keeps repeating the scene over and over, and he is trying to get to an ending that he likes. So, what happens is, you get to a certain point in the scene, then you go back almost to the beginning and start again, but it's always slightly different. It would be very easy for us to get trapped in a loop, and the audience at Roundabout would end up watching *Travesties* for six hours!

TS: When I asked Stoppard what he looks for in actors, he said: "clarity of utterance."

ST: There is no room for sloppiness. The rhythm is so important. I think in all of Stoppard's plays, the words are of supreme importance. The words are God, and you have to get them right, you have to get them inside your being in such way that they come out with the rhythm that he intended. That way, the words can sing because there is so much music in the play's text. It's almost like there is an internal music to the dialogue, and it requires figuring out what the rhythm is and then not repeating it like a robot. You cannot take anything for granted; you are reminding and rediscovering that rhythm every single day. That's the part that's exhausting mentally, I think.

TS: I'm curious if you think Roundabout's audiences should prepare before seeing *Travesties*?

ST: I think audiences should never underestimate themselves. I always say this to students who are coming to see Shakespeare: "If you don't understand the play, that's not your fault, that's our fault." Our job as interpretive artists, which is what we actors are, is to lift it up off the two-dimensional page and make it live; hopefully, we will breathe life into it. So, what I think is always required of an audience is that they come to the theatre with their hearts and minds open and a willingness to engage with the play and the production. I would ask audiences to make a bit of an investment in thinking and listening in order to get a huge payoff. Tom Stoppard is just a wonderful writer. He gives the audience all of the information they need to enjoy the play.

TS: What about the historical characters and references?

ST: It's not as if you need to come in knowing everything about Lenin and the Russian Revolution. Yes, there is an extra layer of meaning that you might get if you happen to know a thing or two about the Russian Revolution or you happen to know about Tristan Tzara and Dadaism. This play is really a vaudeville; what Tom Stoppard has written is a vaudeville that has some serious content in it and some ridiculous, absurd, and touching content, too. The writing in *Travesties* is full of love and conflict. I don't think it's exclusively an intellectual experience by any means.

TS: How does the fact that you played Gwendolen in Brian Bedford's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* at Roundabout affect your understanding and work on Cecily in *Travesties*?

ST: Having spent almost two years of my life in *The Importance of Being*

Earnest is an invaluable asset when working on *Travesties*! Of course, I was playing Gwendolen, rather than Cecily—but just having the whole sense of Wilde's rhythms and energy internalized is a wonderful base to work from. I have said before that Stoppard's play is both a Valentine and a decapitation of *Earnest*. The Valentine aspect results in a lot of mirrored rhythms and at times whole lines of text appearing in surprising places; the decapitation aspect comes, of course, with how Stoppard turns those words inside out and yet manages to make the plot unfold in a way we recognize! Both plays are a joy. Very difficult to do, but a joy to play once you find your way through! And I think because most audiences are familiar with *Earnest*—it can be a lovely roadmap to take with you in your mind as you come on this crazy journey with us.

TS: What do you look for from the director when you collaborate on a revival?

ST: Of course, you want to be able to contribute and discover things and perhaps not be told everything up front because it's always better if you get there yourself. I, of course, will have in my being some of the things that I did in the McCarter production, and some of them I will be very fond of and maybe I will have a hard time letting them go—but with most things, I am sure I'll think, "What we've come up with this time around is better!" I always endeavor to be as open and flexible as possible. I got the sense from both Tom Hollander and Patrick Marber after meeting with them that they're not interested in imposing things on people. I think a reasonable amount of freedom is helpful, given that we are recreating something that already exists. I have no doubt about Patrick giving the cast that. He's a very open, interested, curious person insofar as I know him, and that can only be of benefit in the rehearsal room.

TS: Is there a question you wish I had asked that I didn't?

ST: Here's something I should have said: I think *Travesties* is like a giant piñata; you might not get every piece of candy that falls out of it, but you'll get some that you really love and some that you're going to save to eat later. •



TRISTAN TZARA AND DADA

TRISTAN TZARA (1896-1963)

Born in Romania under the name Samuel Rosenstock, Tristan Tzara was introduced to the Symbolist art movement by poet Adrian Maniu. Symbolism stood in opposition to realistic art, emphasizing emotions, feelings, and ideas, and often featuring mystic or religious imagery. Together with poet Ion Vinea and painter Marcel Janco, Tzara founded the magazine *Simbolul* shortly prior to the First World War, when he was just 16 years old. It was during the War that he moved to Zurich, co-founding the Cabaret Voltaire, which became known as the "cradle of Dada." Featuring experimental forms of performance, poetry, art, and more, the Cabaret Voltaire was where early Dadaist manifestos were read, many of which were written by Tzara, who could often be spotted sporting a monocle and suit, or even with "DADA" written on his forehead.

In 1919, after the War and the closing of Cabaret Voltaire, Tzara moved to Paris, where he joined the staff of *Littérature* magazine. Tzara and one of the magazine's editors, André Breton, often clashed over their shared desire to lead, with Breton eventually breaking away from Dada and speaking out against Tzara in public. In 1923, a production of Tzara's play *Gas Heart* provoked fights among those in support of and those against Dadaism. Meanwhile, Breton had begun to write manifestos about a new artistic movement: Surrealism. An evolution of Dada that focused on the power of the subconscious mind and dreams, Surrealism grew in popularity, overtaking Dada and eventually winning over Tzara. By the beginning of the Second World War, however, Tzara had decided that being an artist was not an effective way to fight

the Nazis. He joined the Communist Party, lived in hiding in France for much of the War, and remained a passionate anti-war advocate until his death in 1963.

DADA

With its first manifestos written towards the end of the First World War, Dada is an artistic movement that is often called "anti-art." Tristan Tzara, one of its founders, famously declared that "art is a private affair, the artist produces it for himself; an intelligible work is the product of a journalist." Dada sought to defy and destroy artistic conventions by freeing itself from logic, and by using techniques such as simultaneous action and an antagonistic relationship with the audience.

A perfect example of what Dada stood for artistically and politically was the inaugural performance at the Cabaret Voltaire in 1916. For the occasion, Tzara and fellow poets Richard Huelsenbeck and Marcel Janco each read poems they had written...at the same time. The cacophony created was meant to "annihilate the language by which the war was justified," which was key to the movement's philosophy. If language is what structures our lives and allows us to perpetuate violence against each other, then art needs to undermine language.

Dadaists aimed to derail audience expectations and undermine the meaning of words so that the world could be looked at with fresh eyes. Chance operations, such as cutting up newspapers to create a poem (as seen in the opening of *Travesties*) were often used to create work towards this end, forcing creators to free themselves from their intentions and ego.

Despite their often-aggressive performances, Dada's founders were pacifists and believed that the best way to avoid future wars was to destroy pre-existing structures and start anew. While the movement eventually lost momentum to Surrealism, it remains an important example of the intersection of art and politics in a tumultuous era. •



JAMES JOYCE AND ULYSSES

James Joyce was born in 1882 in a suburb outside Dublin, Ireland. He studied at University College, focusing mainly on language, mathematics, and philosophy. Joyce began writing in 1900 at the age of eight, creating dramatic vignettes and prose poems. He was an avid reader and even learned to speak Dano-Norwegian in order to read the plays of Henrik Ibsen, of whom he was a great admirer. In 1909, Joyce opened the very first cinema in Ireland, called the Volta. Unfortunately, this business venture failed because Joyce chose to showcase only Italian cinema, rather than the popular films of Hollywood.

Joyce wrote a variety of novels, short stories, and one stage drama throughout his career. *Dubliners*, a series of short stories about life in Dublin, was published in 1914. The novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was published in 1916, thanks to the poet Ezra Pound, who published early excerpts of the novel in the literary magazine *The Egoist*.

Joyce's most famous novel, *Ulysses*, was published in 1922. (It is this particular work from Joyce that we encounter in *Travesties*). Once World War I began in 1914, Joyce and his family took refuge in Zurich (refer to page 13 to learn more about this neutral territory during wartime), and he wrote *Ulysses* while in Zurich. The novel is known for its hefty length (over 700 pages) and its stream-of-consciousness narrative, which presents the character's inner thoughts directly on the page. Here is an example of this narrative technique:

A quarter after what an unearthly hour I suppose theyre just getting up in China now combing out their pigtails for the day well soon have the nuns ringing the angelus theyve nobody coming in to spoil their sleep except an odd priest or two for his night office or the alarmlock next door at cockshout clattering the brain out of itself let me see if I can doze off 1 2 3 4 5 what kind of flowers are those they invented like the stars the wallpaper in Lombard street was much nicer the apron he gave me was like that something only I only wore it twice better lower this lamp and try again so that I can get up early.

Joyce co-founded The English Players with actor Claude Sykes, which performed plays in English in Zurich, Switzerland. Their first undertaking was *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde (refer to page 14 to learn more about this famous production). After the war in 1920, Joyce left Zurich and moved back to Paris to be with his poet friend, Pound. Joyce had met many people in France who helped propel his

writing. American expat Sylvia Beach helped publish *Ulysses*, and another expat, Paul Léon, helped publish his final book, *Finnegan's Wake*, in 1939.

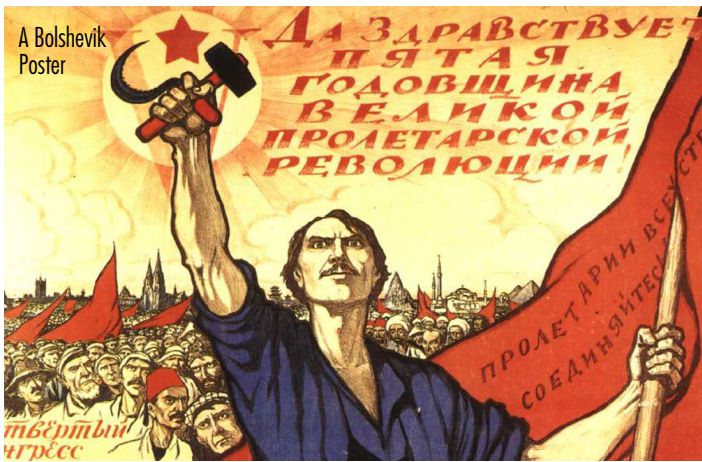
After spending 20 years in France, in 1940, he fled the country to avoid the Nazi invasion and returned to Zurich. When Joyce left Paris, Léon went to Joyce's apartment and put his belongings in safekeeping for the duration of the war. It is because of Léon that we have many of Joyce's personal possessions and manuscripts today. Joyce ended up dying one year later after having surgery for ulcers in his small intestine and was buried in Zurich.

By the end of his life, Joyce was a master of 17 languages, including Sanskrit, Arabic, and Greek. Known as the father of Modernism, Joyce's masterful handle on different languages might explain the experimentation with language in his own writing; in other words, "you have to know the rules to break them." For a writer constantly examining life in Dublin, it is interesting just how little time Joyce spent in his homeland, spending almost 30 years of his life in Paris and Zurich. Still, he is one of Ireland's most distinguished writers, responsible for creating some of the most challenging and complex pieces of literature to date. •

James Joyce in Zurich, c. 1918



LENIN AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION



A Bolshevik Poster

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917

After centuries of rule by monarchs with absolute power, Russian politics were upended in 1917. With the economy devastated by the First World War, members of the working class went on strike in February and took to the streets to demand bread. Persisting even after army troops opened fire on them, the protests led to the creation of a provisional government in March of that year, made up of upper-class citizens. This government ruled in conjunction with Tsar Nicholas II at first, enforcing rights such as freedom of speech, equality before the law, and the rights of unions, but opposing violent revolution.



Tsar Nicholas II

Eventually, the Tsar stepped down, leaving just the provisional government in power. Its leader, Alexander Kerensky, continued to support Russia's efforts in the war, which only worsened food shortages and caused more civil unrest. In October of 1917, Lenin led the uprising that overthrew the provisional government and put him and his party, the Bolsheviks, in power.

The Bolshevik mantra was "peace, land, bread," and they were considered a socialist party, meaning that they stood for the rights of the working class and advocated for democracy. Under Lenin's leadership, their government redistributed land to peasants, allowed for states that became Finland and Lithuania to declare their independence from Russia, and overhauled the military to enforce democratic procedures within it as well. While the party eventually moved away from socialism and became more extremist, it initially provided relief to workers at the end of a long, difficult war.

VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN (1870-1924)

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, who later took on the alias of "Lenin," was born in Simbirsk, Russia, which has since been renamed Ulyanovsk in his honor. His brother, Aleksandr, was executed in 1887 at age 21 for an attempted assassination of the Russian Emperor. It was this incident that also turned Lenin towards socialist politics, fighting for the empowerment of the working class.

Lenin moved to St. Petersburg in 1893, where he began a relationship with his eventual wife, Nadezhda "Nadya" Krupskaya, a teacher with similar political views, who also appears as a character in *Travesties*.

In 1896, Lenin was arrested for inciting others to rebel against the Russian government and charged with three years' exile to Siberia. Soon after, Nadya was also arrested, but she claimed to be engaged to Lenin so that she would also be sent to Siberia. The pair wed and eventually returned to St. Petersburg in 1905 after unrest prompted Tsar Nicholas II to sign a manifesto giving more power to elected officials along with the monarchy.

Lenin held fast to his beliefs that the Russian working class could overthrow the monarchy, which culminated in the February and October Revolutions of 1917, putting him in control of the Russian government. Lenin remained in power until a series of strokes, caused by an assassination attempt, took away his ability to speak, and eventually led to his death in 1924. •



Workers Strike in St. Petersburg Russia, 1917



SWITZERLAND

WORLD OF THE PLAY: SWITZERLAND IN WORLD WAR I

"...pacific civilian Switzerland—the miraculous neutrality of it, the non-combatant impartiality of it, the non-aggression pacts of it, the international red cross of it—entente to the left, detente to the right."

—Carr in *Travesties*



A NEUTRAL, LANDLOCKED COUNTRY

"Switzerland is a birdcage, surrounded by roaring lions."

—Hugo Ball, Dadaist and Founder of Cabaret Voltaire

Modern Switzerland was founded in 1848, and its constitution declared its neutrality in international conflicts. An agreement made at the 1907 Hague Conference stated that, as a neutral country, Switzerland could:

- Export goods and arms to warring countries, but could not join any military alliance
- Have diplomatic relations with all the warring countries, but had to treat all states equally
- Admit and house wounded soldiers, but not allow military troops from either side to cross its borders

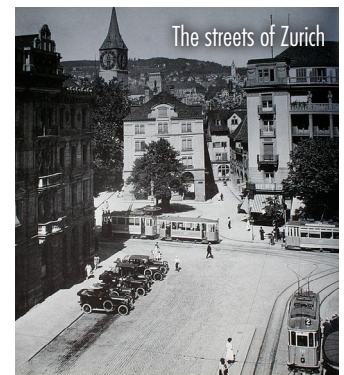
As a landlocked country, the Swiss economy depended on importing raw goods and exporting manufactured goods. At the time of World War I, 40% of its food supply had to be imported. When the war broke out, Switzerland was surrounded by warring countries on every border. In 1914, the Swiss made trade agreements with both France and Germany. France would supply food through its Mediterranean ports, while Germany agreed to import corn and coal.

PRISONERS OF WAR

During World War I, Switzerland played a humanitarian role by aiding prisoners of war from across Europe. The International Committee of the Red Cross, based in Geneva, negotiated an agreement with Germany, France, Britain, Russia and Belgium. Wounded and sick prisoners of war were sent from enemy camps to Switzerland, where they could recover before being sent back to their own countries. Henry Carr probably arrived as a British POW in 1916, by which time over 27,000 soldiers had been interned in Switzerland.

ZURICH: A MAGNET FOR REFUGEES

In the mid-19th century, Zurich emerged as a modern industrial city. Switzerland's first major railroad connected Zurich to Baden, Germany in 1847, opening Zurich to international visitors. During World War I, Zurich attracted political exiles, intellectuals, writers, and artists from around Europe. Many faced increased repression in their own countries, but Swiss neutrality allowed a free exchange of ideas, including artistic responses to the destruction and devastation caused by war. Writers could publish their work in the Swiss papers, magazines, and books. Zurich especially attracted many German and Austrian writers, as well as socialists like Lenin and Trotsky. Cabaret Voltaire, a short-lived venue for the Dada artists, opened in 1916.



THE ZURICH LIBRARY

The Central Library of Zurich, where much of *Travesties* takes place, opened to the public in 1917. Zurich is both a city and a canton (Switzerland

has 26 cantons, equivalent to America's states, but smaller), and the new library represented the merger of Zurich's city and cantonal libraries. By the 19th century, both city and canton libraries needed more space for their growing collections. Zurich's citizens approved a charter for the new library in 1914. The library was converted from an abbey, originally built in 1234 AD.

HENRY CARR AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

THE IMPORTANCE OF HENRY CARR

Unlike the other the major characters in *Travesties*, the real Henry Carr holds little claim to fame. Stoppard learned about Carr and became intrigued by a real-life incident mentioned in a biography of James Joyce. In Zurich during World War I, Joyce worked with an English theatre to produce Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Joyce cast a mix of professionals and amateurs, including Henry Carr, an Englishman living in exile, as the lead role of Algernon. Apparently, Carr gave an enthusiastic performance, but afterwards, a small financial dispute with Joyce escalated into dueling lawsuits. Carr sued Joyce for reimbursement on clothes he bought as his costume; Joyce counter-sued Carr for money owed on five tickets. Carr lost his case and was further punished by Joyce when he named an unlikeable character in *Ulysses* after Carr. Stoppard knew little more than this about the real Henry Carr while writing *Travesties*; however, after its 1974 London premiere, a surprise letter from Carr's widow provided more details of the real man's life.

Henry Wilfred Carr (1894-1962) was born and raised in Northeast England. At 17 he moved to Canada and worked for a bank, then volunteered for military service with the Royal Highland Canadian Infantry during WWI. He was wounded while fighting in France, then captured as a prisoner of war by the Germans. He was sent, along with approximately 700 British prisoners, to recover in Switzerland, in accordance with an agreement made by the International Red Cross allowing soldiers from all over Europe to recover in Switzerland. Carr's infamous encounter

with Joyce occurred in spring of 1918, and he left Zurich when the war ended that November. Carr's post-war life was unexceptional. He worked for a department store in Montreal in the 1920s, then moved back to England with his second wife, Noël Bach, in 1933. He worked for a metal factory in Sheffield and commanded a Home Guard in Warwickshire during World War II. He died of a heart attack in 1962, leaving no children. In his introduction to *Travesties*, Stoppard writes: "I am indebted to Mrs. Noël Carr for these biographical details, and, particularly, for her benevolence towards me and towards what must seem to her a peculiarly well-named play."

STOPPARD'S TRAVESTY OF EARNEST

Throughout *Travesties*, Stoppard uses characters, plot points, and quotations from *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde's renowned 1899 comedy. Beloved for its witty dialogue, the farce follows the antics of bachelors Algernon Moncrieff and Jack Worthing. Both men create alter egos named Ernest to escape their lives and pursue the hearts of Cecily and Gwendolen, who are each determined to marry a man named Ernest. Jack is unable to win the approval of Gwendolen's imperious mother, Lady Bracknell, after revealing he was found in a handbag as a baby. A complex tangle of deception and mistaken identities ensues—including the women's rivalry over the same "Ernest"—until misperceptions are cleared and the couples are united. Wilde satirized English society and the Victorian obsession with respectability, but the play remains popular with modern audiences, most recently at Roundabout during its Tony®-nominated 2011 revival. •

HERE'S HOW STOPPARD'S CHARACTERS IN *TRAVESTIES* RELATE TO *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*

(Pictured from Roundabout's 2011 production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*)



Charlotte Parry
as Cecily
in *Earnest*



Sara Topham
plays Cecily
in *Travesties*



Sara Topham
as Gwendolen
in *Earnest*



Scarlet Strallen
plays Gwendolen
in *Travesties*



Santino Fontana
as Algernon
in *Earnest*



Tom Hollander
plays Henry Carr
in *Travesties*



Brian Bedford
as Lady Bracknell
in *Earnest*



Peter McDonald
plays James Joyce
in *Travesties*

Stoppard transplants his own versions of Wilde's Cecily and Gwendolen into *Travesties*. (**Fun Fact:** Sara Topham, who now plays Cecily in *Travesties*, played Gwendolen in RTC's production of *Earnest*.)

In his travesty of *Earnest*, Stoppard has Henry Carr stand in for Algernon, the role he played in Joyce's 1918 production.

Stoppard imagines James Joyce in the role of imperious Lady Bracknell, perhaps a nod to Joyce's artistic differences with Tzara and economic battle with Carr.

THE TRAVESTY OF TRAVESTIES



Santino Fontana, Charlotte Parry, Sara Topham, and David Furr
in *The Importance of Being Earnest*

At first glance, *Travesties* may seem to be a daunting work to crack. Traversing literary styles and references, delving headfirst into the history of World War I and the Russian Revolution, and pitting dense intellectual arguments on the meaning and purpose of art against each other, Tom Stoppard's absurdist and avant-garde play can seem hopelessly out of reach for anyone who isn't an expert in these particular topics. But Stoppard has created a roadmap that allows his audiences to untangle the characters, plotlines, and references of *Travesties* as they watch, and his first clue for doing so is provided in the title of the play itself. What exactly, then, is a travesty?

"Travesty" may just be one of the most misused words in the English language. Often erroneously used as a synonym for "tragedy" or "disaster," the word "travesty" is actually defined as "a false, absurd, or distorted representation of something" and is close in meaning to "mockery," "parody," or "farce." *Travesties*, then, is comprised of exactly that: an assortment of parodies or "distorted representations" of historical and literary figures and events. With this as a point of entry into the genre and tone of the play, we can parse out who and what is "travestied" in *Travesties*—and why.

Set in Zurich, Switzerland, during World War I, *Travesties* follows former British soldier Henry Carr (based on a real-life soldier of the same name who fought in World War I) as he, as an old man, recounts a series of meetings he claims to have had with three historical figures: communist revolutionary Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (better known as Lenin), Dadaist artist Tristan Tzara, and renowned author James Joyce. While in Zurich, Lenin learns of the Russian Revolution and attempts to find safe passage back to Russia; Tzara defends Dadaism against more traditional forms of art; and Joyce casts Carr in a production of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, for which he is the business manager. Though all of these events

did really happen and all four of these people were present in Zurich during this time, the idea that all four of them met at the same time and that all their stories interwove in some way is purely the invention of Carr's failing and fanciful memory. It is the breakdown of Carr's mental faculties and his desire to cast himself as a more important figure in these stories than he really was that warps these historical events and people into outlandish travesties.

True to the play's title, then, Carr's unreliable narration takes these fictionalized meetings to their farcical extremes, and the characters become over-the-top, almost cartoonish parodies of their real-life counterparts. Adding to the distortion is Carr's occasional inability to separate his own story from the production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in which he performed for James Joyce; hence why Carr includes the characters of Gwendolen and Cecily from Oscar Wilde's play in his memories and sometimes even frames supposedly real-life events as scenes from *Earnest*, which are themselves often twisted and expanded nearly beyond recognition.

The resulting web of conflicts, storylines, and clashing philosophies in *Travesties* becomes, with Carr's inconstant memory as a catalyst, an explosive dramatization of the many and varied cultures, ideas, and nationalities that could theoretically have bumped up against each other in neutral Zurich during World War I. The play becomes a bit of a blender of conflicting ideologies and caricatures, but this is Stoppard's intention, and there's nothing to fear if it all throws us a bit off-balance. "[T]here is very often no single, clear statement in my plays," Stoppard has said. "What there is, is a series of conflicting statements made by conflicting characters, and they tend to play a sort of infinite leap-frog." It's only natural, then, that *Travesties* might leave our minds doing that exact same thing as we leave the theatre. •

TOM STOPPARD BIOGRAPHY

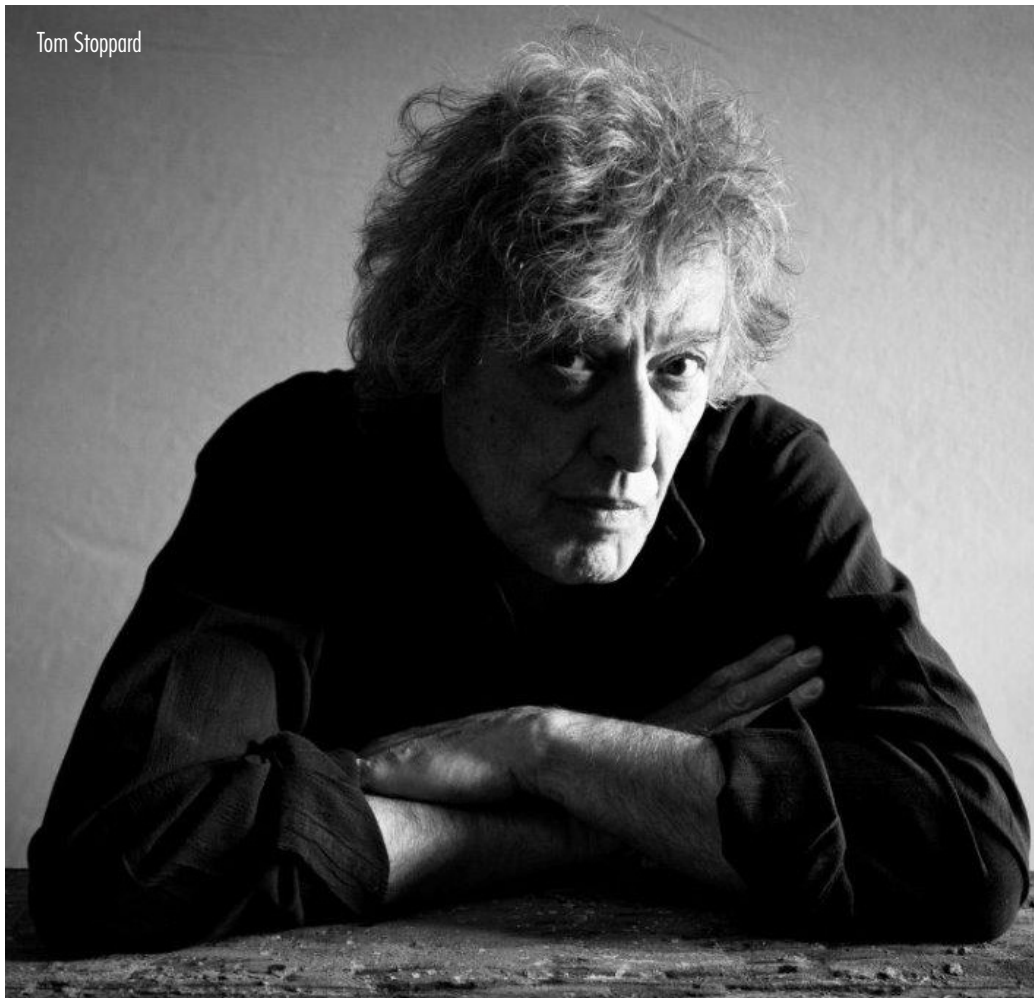
Tom Stoppard was born Tomáš Straüssler in 1937 in Czechoslovakia (present day Czech Republic and Slovakia). He was raised in Singapore and India when his family fled Europe during World War II. His father, Eugen Straüssler, was killed by the Japanese while Stoppard was attending school in Darjeeling, India. His mother, Martha Becková, remarried a British army major, Kenneth Stoppard, which led to the playwright's name change. Once the war ended in 1946, a young Stoppard moved to England with his mother and stepfather. At the age of 17, he grew tired of his schooling and dropped out to become a journalist. He got a job at the newspaper Western Daily Press, in the town where his family lived.

While writing for the newspaper, Stoppard decided to delve into theatre criticism, which he enjoyed immensely. Upon seeing Peter O'Toole's performance of Hamlet in 1958, Stoppard fell in love with the theatre and decided he would write plays. Throughout the 1960s he continued to work in

journalism and write plays in his spare time. His first few plays were radio plays, a popular form of entertainment in England where plays are recorded and listened to on the radio.

His first play produced on the stage was *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1966. This play riffs off two minor characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the play that originally inspired Stoppard to write for the theatre. The National Theatre decided to produce the play, which then made its way to Broadway the following year. He went on to become one of the most prolific playwrights of his generation, going on to write 36 plays, 21 of which have been produced on Broadway so far. His plays are known for rich, complicated characters whose intellectual musings and witty banter on morality, art, and existence make up the main action. Some of his best-known plays include: *Jumpers* in 1972, *The Real Thing* in 1982 (produced at Roundabout in 2014), *Arcadia* in 1993, *Indian Ink* in 1994 (produced at Roundabout in 2014), *The Invention of Love* in 1998, and *The Coast of Utopia* in 2002.

Stoppard served on the board of directors for the National Theatre from 1989-2003. Because of his great influence on British theatre, he was knighted in 1997. Stoppard also writes for film; his screenplays include: *Anna Karenina* (2012), *Tulip Fever* (2014), and co-writing the screenplay for *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), for which he and co-writer Marc Norman won the Oscar for Best Original Screenplay. He has won the Tony award for Best Play for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* in 1967, *Travesties* in 1976, *The Real Thing* in 1984 and in 2000 for Best Revival of a Play, and *The Coast of Utopia* in 2007. Stoppard resides in London, England. •



Tom Stoppard



STOPPARD ON STOPPARD

While *Travesties* is a memory play that deals with the purpose of art in society, it spans across many different topics, including morality, communism, Dadaism, artistic creation, and perception of the past. This play does not stray from the hallmarks of Tom Stoppard's writing style, which weaves seemingly disparate subjects into one story. Some of his other works touch on such unexpectedly-paired topics as art and colonialism in *Indian Ink* or mathematics, science, love, and death in *Arcadia*. At first glance, these plays may feel intimidating, but it is important to keep in mind that Stoppard is not writing a textbook or manifesto; he is simply writing a script with characters who have basic human wants and emotions. So even though Stoppard

himself has acknowledged that his plays can feel like a game of "infinite leap-frog," you'll find that they aren't as complicated as they may initially seem. It is not necessary to be a Russian historian or professor of Irish literature to enjoy this play. He is using a complex approach to get at the heart of questions that will engage us long after the curtain falls. As theatre critic Anita Gates says: "You can put your brain on red alert, sit up straight and listen intently to all of Tom Stoppard's clever wordplay ... Or you can relax, sit back and allow the play to wash over you, appreciating the verbal gems that come through clearly and letting the others pass." Here are some statements that Stoppard has made about his own writing, which may give context to anyone grappling with the dramatic acrobatics of *Travesties*. •

"There is very often no single, clear statement in my plays. What there is, is a series of conflicting statements made by conflicting characters, and they tend to play a sort of infinite leap-frog. What happens in my plays is a kind of marriage of categories.

It's not my objective in the sense that I calculate it—it just seems to be what I'm doing, the way things come out. But I want to marry the play of ideas to farce. Now that may be like eating steak tartare with chocolate sauce, but that's the way it comes out."

"It's worth asking whether the artist and the revolutionary can be the same person or whether the activities are mutually exclusive... How would you justify Ulysses to Lenin? Or Lenin to Joyce?"

"[*Travesties* is] about Lenin and Joyce and Tzara in Zurich in 1917, but it's not a historical play."

"I write for a fairly broad audience, with me plumb in the middle. I don't write for rarefied audiences. I don't think of myself as being rarefied."

"If you consider the mixing up of ideas in farce a source of confusion, well, yes, God knows why I try to do it like that—presumably because I am like that. Plays are the people who write them. Seriousness compromised by frivolity. . . . My plays are a lot to do with the fact that I just don't know."

"I think that art provides the moral matrix from which we draw our values about what the world ought to be like."

"Most of the propositions I'm interested in have been kidnapped and dressed up by academic philosophy, but they are in fact the kind of proposition that would occur to any intelligent person in his bath. They're not academic questions, simply questions which have been given academic status."

DESIGNER STATEMENTS

TIM HATLEY—SET AND COSTUME DESIGN

My starting point as a designer is always to read the play, and in the case of *Travesties*, which is a complex play, it required careful reading and thought to begin to understand the threads and layers of the writing, and talking closely with the director, Patrick Marber. It seemed to me that our production needed a strong yet simple approach to the design. The shifting of time and location is clear in the writing and did not need physical transitions to interrupt the flow. Our space is both present and memory, library and apartment, and allows for characters to appear and disappear within. The costumes are rooted strongly in the period, and their palette was developed in tandem with the development of the space. Cross references to Oscar Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, were an enjoyable anchor to designing the play.

NEIL AUSTIN—LIGHTING DESIGN

Tom Stoppard brilliantly represents the failing memory of Henry Carr through Dadaist jumps and repetitions in the text

of his play, *Travesties*. And so, the lighting is designed to help the audience follow the narrative through these fractured reminiscences by giving them visual clues as to which time period it is and where the location is. The lighting in the more narrative sections of the play, when Carr in his dotage is unreliably recalling his time in Zurich, has a very different visual look to the scenes in the play which are set in the year 1917. As Carr's memories misfire and get repeated in ever more confused versions, both lighting and sound mark them with a library bell and a flicker—not only to underscore the time-slip, but to also aid the audience through the confusion happening in Carr's mind.

ADAM CORK—SOUND DESIGN & ORIGINAL MUSIC

On the surface, *Travesties* seems to be a play about the unreliable reminiscences of a British diplomat named Henry Carr. But my inspiration for the music and sound score is drawn from the way it stages the struggle between the brutal power of meaninglessness (as expounded by the anarchic "Dada" art of Tristan Tzara) on the one hand, and the



The set model for *Travesties*

rich potential of a densely textured multiplicity of meaning (exemplified in the fiction of James Joyce) on the other. Although they differed in their views regarding the value of the fragments left behind, both Tzara and Joyce (like many writers, artists, and composers of the era) were discovering ways in which the shattering effects of war and rapid social change could be expressed in artistic gestures. Tzara's "Dada" inspires the disruptive ingredient in the musicscape: drums and cymbals puncture the drama like bursting bombs and rapidfire bullets, together with sirens wailing "EMERGENCY!" and "WAR!" Tom Stoppard has brilliantly sculpted the whole, translating the "Dada" technique of photomontage into a dramatic structural principle, so that we move without transition from one time frame, one literary style, one theatrical convention to another in a cut-and-paste succession of dazzling incongruities. This enables us to baldly introduce birdsong when the text suddenly topples into Wildean lyricism, as well as soulful Russian chorales and opera and cabaret songs when the scenes take other abrupt turns. All this is set against the historical backdrop of both the First World War and the Russian Revolution, and the play embraces the extraordinary historical coincidence of Tzara, Joyce, and Lenin all living in Zurich in 1917 in the Swiss afterglow, what's more, of Einstein's transformation of physical science with his relativity theory. Space and Time were no longer seen as fixed quantities—they could be distorted by other forces. This inspired my accompaniment for the moments in the play when Carr has little memory slips and reality seems to reset, delivering different versions of the same events. All the sounds, all the words, all the tunes in the world of *Travesties*

are strangely untethered from the familiar: "Even the cheese has got holes in it!"

POLLY BENNETT—MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

Where choreography is about making from scratch, movement directing is about working with a text that already exists and transferring what is in a script from "page to stage." *Travesties* is unlike any other play I have worked on, as my work has been less about finding a physical language that runs through the piece but instead working to enliven specific moments of Stoppard's text. The movement is subsequently led by Carr's wayward mind—the benefit of which is the freedom it gave me to elaborate his confused memories in an expressive way. As a movement director, you can't do your job without the presence of actors, without bodies in a space, so knowing that a finale dance was written, I used the Charleston and swing dance as a way to start rehearsals—a company that dances together, stays together, after all! Then, as rehearsals continued, the joy, unity, and silliness of dance slid into the work, making comedic moments of physicality part of the fabric of the production. Soon, it made total sense to have Tristan Tzara twirling and spinning as he entered the stage, to have characters popping out from cubbyholes to sing unexpectedly, and Carr's fantasy of Cecily very easily morphed into a literary themed table dance (of course!).

There is also subtler movement work at play in *Travesties*. I worked with Tom Hollander, who plays Carr, on the specificity of the character's elderly body: we explored where age manifests in his body and developed techniques to ensure that his deterioration was rooted in truth. I also worked with the actors to engage with each other, their characters, and the theatre space, all so they can keep up with Stoppard's marathon text for eight shows a week. •



The set model for *Travesties*

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES



HOW DO DESIGNERS ANALYZE THE SCRIPT OF *TRAVESTIES* TO CREATE DESIGN RENDERINGS?

(Common Core Code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1)

In preparation for seeing *Travesties*, students will do a close reading of Tom Stoppard's stage description and apply their understanding of the text to create their own set designs for the play.

MATERIALS: Paper, pencils, pens, crayons. Other articles in this Upstage Guide.

- PREPARE** Read and discuss "The Travesty of *Travesties*" article on page 15 of this Upstage Guide. Discuss the definition of "travesty" and ask students to make inferences about what kind of play this is (a false, absurd, or distorted representation of something; mockery, parody, or farce).
- ANALYZE** Give students the opening stage description from the play (available at [HERE](#)). (You may choose to read it aloud, or break into smaller sections.) Ask students what clues Tom Stoppard gives to the designers. (For example, two locations, a library and a room; the action is Carr's memory; the time period is WWI; and specifics about furniture, entrances, exits.) You may note the characters mentioned in this description and provide an introduction to them.
- DESIGN** Have students create a set design for how they think the set might look.
- DISPLAY & REFLECT** Post the designs around the room and allow the students to view all the design choices. Ask students how they used the text as evidence for their choices? How did they incorporate the idea of a "travesty" within their design?
-

HOW DOES A GRAPHIC DESIGNER EXPRESS THE WORLD OF THE PLAY IN A TRAVEL POSTER?

(Common Core Code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7)

Before attending *Travesties*, students explore the world of the play through creating travel posters.

MATERIALS: blank paper, art supplies, Upstage Guides.

- PREPARE** Read and discuss "Tripping Through *Travesties*: A Guide" on pages 6-7 of this guide. Where and when does this play take place? What are the selling points of Zurich in 1917?
- DESIGN** Break the class into groups. Each group will create a travel poster advertising a trip to Zurich in 1917. Assign each group a different focus for their poster, based on the subjects of the primer: Tzara, Lenin, Joyce, Carr, Neutrality in WWI, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Students can conduct further research into each subject by reading additional articles in the Upstage Guide.
- SHARE & REFLECT** Display posters around the room, and host a gallery walk. Which poster sells Zurich to you, and why? What's intriguing about this location and the people in it? What might it have felt like to be a visitor to Zurich in 1917?



POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

HOW DO ARTISTS DEBATE THE ROLES AND FUNCTION OF ART IN SOCIETY?

(Common Core Code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5)

After watching *Travesties*, students continue the play's thematic debate about the role of art in society and articulate their own perspectives.

- REVIEW** Ask students to recall their impression of the discussions about art and artists throughout *Travesties*. You may provide this Quote Sheet (available [HERE](#)), which organizes some of the play's key statements according to character and perspective. You may point out that while Tom Stoppard introduces a range of different perspectives, his play does not endorse any one over the other, and use that to segue to a debate.
- PEPARE** Arrange students into four groups. Each group will create an argument for one character's perspective on art. Ask students to put these ideas into their own words, and either find or create an example of the type of art this character would like, based on their point of view. (Decide whether you want to allow time and resources for students to create their own examples. Consider allowing visual art, music, literature, and spoken word as sources.)
- DEBATE** Allow each group to present their given perspective on the role of art, show their sample, and explain how this work is an example of such a perspective. You may allow other students to pose questions and challenges to the presenting group about art.
- REFLECT** Which of these perspectives on the role and function of art do you agree with the most? Do you have an alternative opinion on art's function that has not been expressed in the play?
-

HOW DOES A PLAYWRIGHT IMAGINE A FICTIONAL MEETING BETWEEN HISTORICAL OR FAMOUS PERSONALITIES?

(Common Core Code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9)

Travesties was inspired by playwright Tom Stoppard's realization that three major influencers of western culture in the twentieth century lived in Zurich in 1917 and developed some of their important ideas and works there. After viewing *Travesties*, students engage in a playwriting process that mimics Stoppard's exploration of the disparate important figures living in Zurich in 1917.

- BRAINSTORM** Reveal the location and time period chosen. Generate a list of people who were present at the time, along with notes about their work, later life, and style. On what issues do these people agree with each other? In what ways might they disagree or have differing approaches to the same problems? Create a second list of events (like the production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*) and locations (like the library) that could potentially bring the historical or cultural figures together.
- WRITE** Working individually or in small groups, have students select two or three important people and one location or event to bring them together. Students should then write a scene imagining what would happen.
- SHARE & REFLECT** Host a staged reading of scenes. How did the playwrights incorporate each character's beliefs and/or style into the scene? What parts of the scene were based in history, and what did you invent or imagine? What was challenging about this activity?

GLOSSARY AND RESOURCES

FREE ASSOCIATION

Free association is a technique used in psychoanalysis that was originally devised by Sigmund Freud. Free association involves freely sharing thoughts, random words, and anything else that comes to mind, regardless of how coherent or appropriate the thoughts are
Carr says he does not approve of Bennett's "free association" after a monologue Bennett gives about the current and future state of Russian politics.

COGNOSCENTI

People who are considered to be especially well informed about a particular subject
Carr says, "The Boche put on culture a-plenty for Swiss, what's the word?" Bennett responds (in rhyme), "Cognoscenti."

ANTI-ART

Anti-art is a loosely used term applied to an array of concepts and attitudes that reject prior definitions of art and question art in general. It is mainly associated with the Dada movement
Tzara says that anti-art is the "art of our time."

COMMUNISM

A political and economic doctrine, communism aims to replace private property and a profit-based economy with public ownership and communal control of at least the major means of production and the natural resources of a society. It is therefore a form of socialism—a higher and more advanced form, according to its advocates
Cecily is arguing with Carr when she explains that Lenin knew that famine would lead to revolution and bring Russia "closer to the dictatorship of the proletariat, closer to the Communist society."

SOCIALISM

A social and economic doctrine, socialism calls for public rather than private ownership or control of property and natural resources. Therefore, society has a whole should own or at least control property for the benefit of all its members
Cecily explains to Carr in an argument that socialism is not about certain allowances like striking and voting, but is about "ownership—the natural right of the people to the common ownership of their country and its resources."

NIHILIST

A person who believes life is meaningless and rejects all religious and moral principles
Cecily describes Carr as a "decadent nihilist."

NON-PARTISAN

Free from party affiliation, bias, or designation
Lenin declares "down with non-partisan literature."

RESOURCES

"About Us/History of Zentralbibliothek Zürich (ZB)." *Zentralbibliothek Zürich*. N.D. Web. Accessed March 2, 2018.

Arts3 Network, "André Breton, Father of Surrealism." *Surrealism Art*. Web.

"Best Picture: Shakespeare in Love." The 71st Academy Awards Memorable Moments, www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/1999/memorable-moments.

Byrne, Ciar. "Tom Stoppard: The True Voice of Old England." *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 13 Mar. 2008, www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/features/tom-stoppard-the-true-voice-of-old-england-795430.html.

Cardullo, Bert and Robert Knopf, ed. *Theater of the Avant-Garde, A Critical Anthology: 1890-1950*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. Print.

Christiansen, Rupert. "Tom Stoppard and Patrick Marber: 'Theatre Is Always Better When Playwrights Read the Papers'." *The Telegraph*, 4 Oct. 2016, www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/playwrights/tom-stoppard-and-patrick-marber-theatre-is-always-better-when-pl/.

Dagen, Philippe. "Tristan Tzara exhibition: the man who made Dada." *The Guardian*, 28 November 2015. Web.

Dethal, Lor. "Dadaist Artists That Changed the Course of Art History - 100 Years of DADA."

Gates, Anita. "Nimble Wordplay and Wink at History." *The New York Times*, *The New York Times*, 24 Mar. 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/03/25/nyregion/a-review-of-travesties-at-the-mccarter-theater-center.html.

Gussow, Mel, and Tom Stoppard. *Conversations with Stoppard*. Nick Hern, 2003.

"Harry Ransom Center The University of Texas at Austin." *Harry Ransom Center*, www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/permanent/windows/southeast/james_joyce.html.

History.com Staff. "Vladimir Lenin." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/topics/vladimir-lenin.

"James Joyce." *Biography.com*, A&E Networks Television, 28 Apr. 2017, www.biography.com/people/james-joyce-9358676.

Kelly, Katherine E. *The Cambridge Companion to Tom Stoppard*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

League, The Broadway. "IBDB.com." *IBDB: Internet Broadway Database*, www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/tom-stoppard-8912.

"Life." *The James Joyce Centre*, jamesjoyce.ie/james-joyce/life/.

Moos, Carlo: Domestic Politics and Neutrality (Switzerland) (Version 2.0), in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2017-01-24. Translated by: Tamir, Dan

"On This Day...30 April." *The James Joyce Centre*. April 30, 2014. Web. Accessed March 2, 2018.

"On This Day." *The New York Times*, *The New York Times*, archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0202.html.

"Search Past Tony Awards Winners and Nominees." *TonyAwards.com*, www.tonyawards.com/p/tonys_search.

Simmer, George. "Henry Carr, and the history behind 'Travesties'." *Great War Fiction*. Feb 25, 2017. Web. Accessed March 2, 2018.

Sooke, Alastair. "Cabaret Voltaire: A night out at history's wildest nightclub." *BBC Culture*, 20 July 2016. Web.

Stoppard, Tom: *Travesties*. London: Faber & Faber, 1974.

"Stream of Consciousness- James Joyce's 'Ulysses.'" *ENG 2150 Gimme Shelter the Spaces We Live in RSS*, 12 Feb. 2013, blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/gimmeshelter/2013/02/12/stream-of-consciousness-james-joyces-ulysses/.

"Synopsis.: *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Fan Website).

"Tom Stoppard." *Literature*, 1 Jan. 1970, literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/tom-stoppard.

"Tristan Tzara Biography, Art, and Analysis of Works." *The Art Story*, THE ART STORY FOUNDATION, 2018, www.theartstory.org/artist-tzara-tristan.htm#biography_header.

"Ulysses." *Ulysses*, by James Joyce, Penguin, 1986, p. 642.

Wachter, Daniel and Odermatt, André. "Zürich Switzerland: History." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Jan 4, 2018. Web. Accessed March 2, 2018.

Wetzsteon, Ross. "Tom Stoppard Eats Steak Tartare with Chocolate Sauce." *Village Voice*, 10 Nov. 1975.

Whitmarsh, Andrew. "Swiss neutrality in wartime." *Switzerland and the First World War*. N.D. Web. Accessed March 2, 2018.

Whitmarsh, Andrew. "Prisoners of war interned in Switzerland." *Switzerland and the First World War*. N.D. Web. Accessed March 2, 2018.

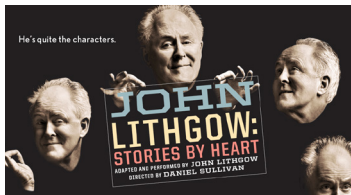
Widewalls, 12 February 2016. Web.

ABOUT ROUNDABOUT

ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director/CEO) celebrates the power of theatre by spotlighting classics from the past, cultivating new works of the present, and educating minds for the future. A not-for-profit company founded in 1965, Roundabout fulfills its mission each season through the production of familiar and lesser-known plays and musicals with the ability to take artistic risk as only a not-for-profit can while discovering talented playwrights and providing them long-term artistic support to contribute to the future of the theatrical canon. Roundabout presents this work on its five stages and across the country through national tours. Roundabout has been recognized with 36 Tonys®, 51 Drama Desks, 5 Olivier Awards, 62 Outer Critics Circle, 12 Obie and 18 Lucille Lortel Awards. More information on Roundabout's mission, history and programs can be found by visiting roundabouttheatre.org.

2017-2018 SEASON



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: INTERVIEW WITH LANE HOSMER, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EVENTS AND CORPORATE RELATIONS

Ted Sod: Tell us about yourself. Where were you born and educated? How and when did you become the Director of Special Events and Corporate Relations?

Lane Hosmer: I was born and raised in Northwest Georgia in a small town called Menlo. In fact, the town was so small that it had one traffic light, which was eventually removed due to low traffic volume. I graduated from The University of Alabama in Huntsville with a BA in Communications. While in college, I acted and directed in a lot of community and some regional theatre. My first job out of school was teaching theatre, English; and creative writing in Alabama. I later moved to Tampa, Florida to become the director of a non-profit organization managing city celebrations (parades, festivals, etc.). I moved to NYC in 2007 to work for GLAAD (The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) as the Associate Director of Events. I then became GLAAD's Director of Corporate Relations. In 2012, I came to work for Roundabout as the Director of Special Events. Because of my background in corporate fundraising, corporate relations was included in my management responsibilities about a year ago.

TS: Describe your job at RTC. What are your responsibilities?

LH: I am responsible for managing a team that handles all of the Development department's fundraisers, including our annual Gala, Casino Night, Benefit Concert Readings, and the 24-Hour Plays off-Broadway. My team produces all of our opening night events, as well as any events that involve donors: such as playreadings,

patron nights, insider events, and the Artistic Director's Circle dinner. I also manage our corporate fundraising events, including any sponsorships for programs and shows, which includes our Corporate Club program.

TS: What is the best part of your job? What is the hardest part?

LH: The best part of my job is two-fold: I really enjoy the satisfaction that comes with planning, creating and finishing an event, and I like knowing immediately if we were able to accomplish the goals of that event and then moving on to the next one. I also get to work with really great people on my team and within Development and in other departments at Roundabout. I feel very fortunate that I get to know so many interesting and diverse people throughout the company. Probably the most difficult part of the job is the multitasking it requires. We start working on the benefit concert reading in the summer for a fall or early winter production date and, at the same time, we are knee-deep in producing the Gala for a late winter production date. We are working on 25-35 other events throughout any given season. I have to stay focused and organized and at the same time be very flexible because plans can change at the very last minute.

TS: Why do you choose to work at Roundabout?

LH: I choose to work at Roundabout because I love theatre and Roundabout's mission. I really appreciate the family environment that Todd Haimes, Julia Levy, and Sydney Beers have inspired. It's a pleasure to come to work every day. •

Learn more at roundabouttheatre.org. Find us on:



WHEN YOU GET TO THE THEATRE

FOR
EDUCATORS

TICKET POLICY

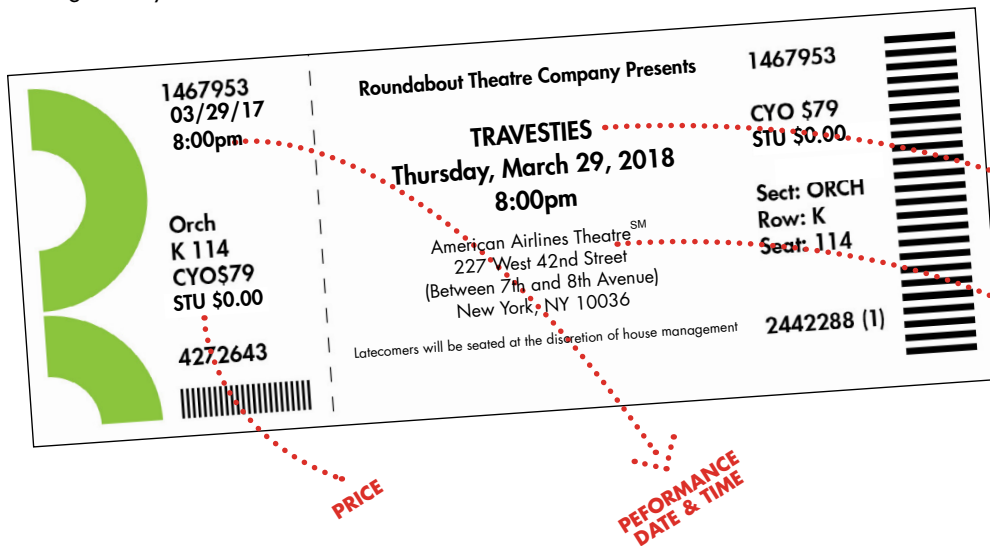
As a student, you will receive a discounted ticket to the show from your teacher on the day of the performance. You will notice that the ticket indicates the section, row, and number of your assigned seat. When you show your ticket to the usher inside the theatre, he or she will show you where your seat is located. These tickets are not transferable and you must sit in the seat assigned to you.

PROGRAMS

All the theatre patrons are provided with a program that includes information about the people who put the production together. In the "Who's Who" section, for example, you can read about the actors' roles in other plays and films, perhaps some you have already seen.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

As you watch the show please remember that the biggest difference between live theatre and a film is that the actors can see you and hear you and your behavior can affect their performance. They appreciate your applause and laughter, but can be easily distracted by people talking or getting up in the middle of the show. So please save your comments or need to use the restroom for intermission. Also, there is no food permitted in the theatre, no picture taking or recording of any kind, and if you have a cell phone or anything else that might make noise, please turn it off before the show begins.



SPONSORED BY:
Bank of America

Partial underwriting support for *Travesties* provided by Ravenel Curry.

Anonymous
The Aeroflex Foundation
Altman Foundation
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
Rose M. Badgley Residuary Charitable Trust
The Theodore H. Barth Foundation
The Honorable Joseph Borelli
Philippa and James Burke
Karen McKeel Calby
Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity
R. Martin Chavez and Adam Norbury
Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation
Con Edison
Dalia Foundation
Jeanne Feldhusen and Gerry Jager
Kathleen Fisher and Rocco Maggiatto
The Ford Foundation
The Honorable Daniel R. Garodnick
Myrna and Freddie Gershon
The Golden Family
Gray Foundation
Mr. Barry Gurin and Mr. Buzz Kelly

Barbara McIntyre Hack
Meryl Hartzband
Muna and Basem Hishmeh
Tracey and Craig Huff
Karen and Paul Isaac
JobsFirstNYC
The JPB Foundation
The Kaplen Foundation
James and Josie Kelly
Elroy and Terry Krumholz Foundation, Inc.
Ms. Barbara Lee and Mr. Alston Gardner
Peter J. Lyon
Tristin and Marty Mannion
David and Anita Messengill
Sara Miller McCune/SAGE Publications, Inc.
Mellam Family Foundation
The Michael and Pamela Miles Gift Fund
Carol Mitchell
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
New York Community Trust
New York State Council on the Arts
Cynthia Nixon

Charles R. O'Malley Charitable Lead Trust
The Pinkerton Foundation
Lisa and Gregg Rechler
The Rudin Foundation
Ms. Samantha Rudin and Mr. David Earls
May and Samuel Rudin Foundation
Steven Sanders and Madelyn Simon
The Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation
Denise R. Sobel
Mary Solomon/Goldman Sachs Gives
Stavros Niarchos Foundation
Jeffrey and Janis Ing Strauss
The Solon E. Summerfield Foundation, Inc.
Theater Subdistrict Council, LDC
Tikkun Olam Foundation, Inc.
Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund
Michael Tuch Foundation
Diane and Tom Tuft
The Walt Disney Company
Emily J. Zuckerman, Esq. and Dr. Edward H. Bonfield

Education programs at Roundabout are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

