



Mauckingbird Theatre Company
www.mauckingbirdtheatreco.org

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Mauckingbird Theatre Company presents
Shakespeare's R&J
by **Joe Calarco**
directed by **Peter Reynolds**
August 1 – 23, 2008

PHILADELPHIA – **Mauckingbird Theatre Company** will present ***Shakespeare's R&J*** by award-winning playwright **Joe Calarco** and directed by Mauckingbird Artistic Director **Peter Reynolds** from **August 1 – 23, 2008** at the **Adrienne Theatre's** Mainstage, located at 2030 Sansom Street in Philadelphia. A follow up to the company's sold-out inaugural production of an all-male *The Misanthrope*, *Shakespeare's R&J* is also performed by a male cast. Named #1 of the "Five Best Plays" in London by *The Independent*, *Shakespeare's R & J* has enjoyed successful, critically acclaimed runs both off-Broadway and on London's West End. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for seniors and students and are available by calling **(215) 923-8909** or online at www.mauckingbirdtheatreco.org.

Shakespeare's R&J spins the classic story of history's most famous "star-cross'd lovers" in a modern tale of teenage awakening. Mauckingbird Theatre Company's intimate production explores youthful desires, vulnerability and burgeoning sexuality as four schoolboys at a repressive preparatory school discover William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and find themselves suddenly immersed in the tragic story of forbidden love. As the boys assume the roles of all the play's characters, the classic tale begins to blur with the students' own lives and Shakespeare's verse is heard anew.

Hailed as a "vibrant, hot-blooded new adaptation [that] pulsates with an adolescent abandon" by *The New York Times* and an "exploration of passion and repression in both Shakespeare's time and our own" by *Variety*, Joe Calarco's revisionist tale continues to speak to audiences around the globe.

"Joe Calarco's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is inspired. It offers a powerful message of tolerance and acceptance without being didactic," says Peter Reynolds. "New discoveries are illuminated in Shakespeare's original text with the frequent gender changes of the characters, producing a provocative work that continues to remain timely and relevant in our current social and political climate."

The talented young cast of four is led by **Evan Jonigkeit** as Romeo, whose recent credits include Célimène in Mauckingbird's sold-out hit *The Misanthrope*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* at People's Light & Theatre, *Dishwashers* at Walnut Street Theatre, and Fox TV's *Twice a Hero*. **Conrad Ricamora** portrays Juliet, and his recent credits include *USER 927* (Brat Prod.), *Ferdinand the Bull* (Arden), *West Side Story* (New Candlelight), *Romeo & Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew* (NC Shakespeare Festival).

Newton Buchanan and **Nicholas Park** play the two other students and various characters. Buchanan has worked exclusively with Hedgerow Theatre for the past four years, appearing in over 30 productions as an actor, while Park is a senior musical theatre major at the University of the Arts who has appeared at the Philadelphia Gay and Lesbian Theatre Festival.

The *Misanthrope* production team returns including set and costume designer **Marie Anne Chiment**, lighting designer **Maria Shaplin**, and voice and text coordinator **Lynne Innerst**, with the addition of fight director **John V. Bellomo**.

Founded by Artistic Director **Peter Reynolds** and Managing Director **Lindsay Mauck**, Mauckingbird Theatre Company is committed to producing professional gay-themed theatre, while also exploring classic literature and musical genres and providing affordable productions of infrequently produced works.

Reynolds currently serves as the Director of Musical Theater for the Department of Theater at Temple University. For Temple Theaters he has directed productions of *Into the Woods*, *Ragtime*, *Company*, *Pericles*, *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery* and *Beautiful Thing*. In Philadelphia, he has directed productions at Act II Playhouse, Walnut Street Theatre, Hedgerow Theatre, Villanova Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company in their collaborations with Philadelphia Young Playwrights, and he spent two seasons with the Lenape Regional Performing Arts Center in New Jersey where he assisted the Producing Artistic Director. Reynolds spent 6 years as Artistic Director of the award-winning HealthWorks Theatre in Chicago and has also worked at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Theatre Building Chicago, Apollo Theatre Chicago, St. Louis' HotCity Theatre, Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre, and Maples Repertory.

Playwright and director **Joe Calarco** is the creator of *Shakespeare's R&J*, winner of the 1998 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Special Achievement in Theatre for an off-Broadway production. Calarco also directed the play's premieres in Chicago (garnering five Jeff Award nominations including Best Play and Best Director), Washington, D.C. (garnering the Helen Hayes Award nominations for Best Play and Best Director), London's West End (named #1 of the "Five Best Plays" by *The Independent*, honorable mention from the Evening Standard Awards committee for direction), and the Japanese premiere in Tokyo. Calarco's regional credits include Philadelphia Theatre Company's *The Last Five Years* (Barrymore Award-nominee for Best Director, winner for Best Musical) and *Elegies: a song cycle* (seven-time Barrymore Award-nominee with wins for Best Musical Director and Best Ensemble of a Musical).

Shakespeare's R&J

FACTS

Performances: Fri, 8/1 7:30pm Sat, 8/2 7:30pm Sun, 8/3 7:30pm Wed, 8/6* 7:30pm Thu, 8/7 7:30pm Fri, 8/8 7:30pm Sat, 8/9 7:30pm Wed, 8/13 7:30pm Thu, 8/14 7:30pm Fri, 8/15 7:30pm Sat, 8/16 7:30pm Sun, 8/17 2:00pm Wed, 8/20 7:30pm Thur, 8/21 7:30pm Fri, 8/22 7:30pm Sat, 8/23 7:30pm	Dates: August 1 – 23, 2008 Previews run August 1 – 3 *Opening night is Wed, August 6 Presented by: Mauckingbird Theatre Company Location: Adrienne Theatre, Mainstage 2030 Sansom Street Philadelphia, PA 19103 Prices: Adults - \$20, Seniors & Students - \$15 for all performances Box Office: (215) 923-8909 Web: www.mauckingbirdtheatreco.org
	Shakespeare's R&J by Joe Calarco Directed by Peter Reynolds Cast (in alphabetical order) Newton Buchanan Student 3 Evan Jonigkeit Student 1 (Romeo) Nicholas Park Student 4 Conrad Ricamora Student 2 (Juliet) Production Team Marie Anne Chiment Set and Costume Designer Maria Shaplin Lighting Designer John V. Bellomo Fight Director Lynne Innerst Voice/Text

*Opening Night

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To request more information, photos, interviews, and press tickets, please contact:

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