Make Believe

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I met Bess Wohl and Jackson Gay, the playwright and the director of Make Believe, eighteen years ago at Williamstown Theatre Festival. Bess was one of the youngest cast members (there were fifty of them!) in a production of The Skin of Our Teeth that I was directing. She invited me to a late night showing of a play that she had written, Cats Talk Back, directed by her friend Jackson Gay.

By that point in the Williamstown summer, I was tired of all the late night showings. There was one every single night. Or two. Or three. I did not need to see another play. I needed sleep.

But I did show up for Cats Talk Back. And—eighteen years later—I am so glad that I did. Because one never forgets being jolted out of theatrical slumber by a truly original voice. Or by the most confident of collaborators, like Bess and Jackson.

The premise of Cats Talk Back was seemingly obvious, yet no one had thought of it before. The uproarious play—about a reunion of Cats alumni discussing their process and the painstaking creation of their feline characters—managed to be both cruel and compassionate. A funhouse version of an Inside the Actors Studio episode. And it was fascinating to see the mirror being held up to nature to an audience of established and emerging actors.

What does Make Believe have in common with Cats Talk Back? I find myself thinking, again: why hadn’t someone thought of this before? Or had the nerve to try it out?

I have followed Bess Wohl’s and Jackson Gay’s progress over the past two decades. I am so happy that they are collaborating on the opening production in my last season as the Artistic Director of Hartford Stage.

And I am especially grateful to Elizabeth Williamson, our Associate Artistic Director (who has collaborated with Bess on numerous projects), for helping them develop Make Believe.

Darko Tresnjak
Artistic Director

Welcome back to our 55th season! While the summer months were very busy with our landmark education programs and the backstage renovations of the facility, we are eager to kick off this milestone year with this new play by Bess Wohl. We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation to commission Make Believe. Virginia Toulmin was a passionate believer in fairness and equality of opportunity for women, and a generous supporter of the arts. The Foundation makes grants to commission new works by emerging female composers, choreographers, and playwrights to level the playing field so that female artists have an equal opportunity to see their works succeed on stage. We are proud to have been selected in the first round of this grant opportunity four years ago.

We have an ambitious season of plays (and a new musical!) for you to look forward to as we prepare for Darko’s departure in June. In the coming months, I look forward to sharing news with you about his successor.

Thanks, as always, for your support of Hartford Stage. In these challenging times, it is important that we have the experience of live theatre in our lives and in our community. We look forward to sharing many special moments with you over the coming months.

Warmly,

Michael Stototts
 Managing Director
WHAT IS THE COST OF WAR?

BY

William Shakespeare

DIRECTED BY

Elizabeth Williamson

October 11 – November 11, 2018

hartfordstage.org  860-527-5151
HARTFORD STAGE PRESENTS

Make Believe

A New Play by BESS WOHL

Directed by JACKSON GAY

Scenic Design ANTJE ELLERMANN
Costume Design JUNGHYUN GEORGIA LEE
Lighting Design PAUL WHITAKER

Original Music & Sound Design BROKEN CHORD
Dramaturg ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON
Casting LAURA STANCZYK, CSA

Production Stage Manager ROB CHIKAR*
Assistant Stage Manager KELLY HARDY*

Production Manager BRYAN T. HOLCOMBE
General Manager EMILY VAN SCOY
Associate Artistic Director ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON

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National Endowment for the Arts

The development and production of new work at Hartford Stage is funded, in part, by grants from Burry Fredrik Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, and The Lucille Lortel Foundation.

SEPTEMBER 6 – 30, 2018
WELCOME & ENJOY THE SHOW!

- Please turn off your cell phones before the show.

- Photography or video recording of any kind is prohibited without prior written permission.

- Accessible seating for patrons with mobility requirements available in the front row of sections B & F.

- For your eating and drinking pleasure, snacks, soda, wine, beer, and mixed drinks are available at our concessions bar on both levels.

- You are welcome to bring drinks with you to your seat, but please, no drinks with ice. The servers at concessions will be happy to remove ice from your drinks if you do not finish before it is time to go into the theatre.

HARTFORD STAGE ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES
If you are using a Hartford Stage Listening Device, please remove your own personal hearing aid or make sure you turn it off if you leave it in your ear. When you remove the Hartford Stage device from your head, please make sure the volume is turned off on the device. Taking these steps will reduce the amount of static feedback from the listening system.

MAT GARAGE PARKING
There is a new automated parking system for the MAT Garage, which is adjacent to Hartford Stage. Please note the new procedure below and see the Box Office with any questions.

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2. Visit the Hartford Stage Box Office to purchase a Parking Voucher/Validation Ticket for only $6.50.
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WHEN THE GATE GOES UP, YOU CAN BE ON YOUR WAY!

The MAT Garage is owned and operated by the Hartford Parking Authority.
THE CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Part 1
Addie................................................................................................................Alexa Skye Swinton*
Kate ...................................................................................................................Sloane Wolfe*
Chris ..............................................................................................................Roman Malenda*
Carl ................................................................................................................RJ Vercellone

Part 2
Kate ..................................................................................................................Megan Byrne*
Chris ...............................................................................................................Chris Ghaffari*
Carl ................................................................................................................Brad Heberlee*
Addie.............................................................................................................Molly Ward*

Setting
A playroom, in the 1980s and the present.

THERE WILL BE NO INTERMISSION.

Assistant Director ................................................................. Alex Coddington
Assistant Lighting Designer ........................................................ Erin Fleming
Assistant Sound Designer ............................................................... Emily Auciello
Assistant Dramaturg ................................................................. Yan Chen
Youth Coordinator ................................................................. Catherine Michaels
Production Assistant ................................................................. Nicki Berger
Supporting Production Assistant .......................................... Rachel Canowitz

*Members of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

The Scenic, Costume, Lighting and Sound Designers in LORT theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, IATSE.

The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

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MAKE BELIEVE 9
Yan Chen: What inspired the writing of this play?

Bess Wohl: Every play I write has multiple sources of inspiration. With *Make Believe*, the first impulse was to write a play that was for child actors, but wasn’t a play for children. There’s a saying, “Never work with children or animals in the theatre,” and any time I hear the word “never,” I always get excited about doing exactly what I’ve been told not to do.

At the same time, I was interested in looking at family trauma from the point of view of children, and in seeing the similarities and differences between the ways we process and interpret traumatic events, as children, and as adults. For children, pretend can be healing. For the adults, I was interested in exploring whether make believe is a way of healing a painful experience, or an escape—something that you have to let go of as you get older and confront reality and truth.

Yan: Hence the “Make Believe” of the title?

Bess: I was interested in the way that those two words operate together: the idea of make believe as pretend, and also the idea of making someone believe something.

Yan: Jackson, you’ve had extensive experience with new work. What has made working on the world premiere of *Make Believe* unique?

Jackson Gay: *Make Believe* is a dream play for actors—it’s human beings in a room dealing with each other, with themselves, with their past, and with what they want their futures to be.

It’s a brand-new play, so everyone in the room is discovering it together by trying things out: watching and listening to the kids, rearranging and combining scenes...There’s a lot of experimenting, and we’re kind of “make-believing:” What if it’s this? Let’s try this.

It’s so interesting that there are real child actors and adult actors in the production—it requires you to shift your brain and jump between the two, dealing with them in different ways to find the play together.

Yan: What has it been like to write for children and work with them in the room?

Bess: I learned a lot from our workshops with child actors. I would watch them and respond to the things they were doing, sometimes stealing things
that they had said or done, and putting them in the play. I also went to a
school and observed children of this age in classrooms, and I started to get
a feel for how they might talk and relate to each other.

It’s also challenging because so much of making a play is threading through
cause and effect, action and objective. You want to create a logic. At the
same time, kids often don’t follow logic, or do things for reasons that are
opaque. It’s been a challenge to allow things to happen spontaneously,
figuring out how much we want to link cause and effect, and how much
we want to lean into the lack of logical explanations of childhood. Jackson’s
approach with the actors has really stayed away from any cute clichés
of childhood, and looked to the much more strange and unexpected
reactions that kids have.

**Yan:** Your artistic partnership and personal history go back a long way.
As collaborators, how would you describe each other? How does it feel to
work together again?

**Jackson:** When I met Bess at the Yale School of Drama, I was in the directing
program, and Bess was in the acting program. I think her acting background
really informs how she writes and thinks about plays. I also come from
that background, and it’s great having a writer who knows what it’s like
to actually stand up there onstage. Bess wrote and directed a play in grad
school, *Cats Talk Back*, that I was an actor in. We did it at the Yale Cabaret
with actor Brad Heberlee, who’s also in *Make Believe*. In 2013, we worked on
the world premiere of Bess’ play, *Barcelona*.

I love the whole process of collaborating, because Bess is very thoughtful
and detail-oriented, but in a really easy way. I admire her focus, and I
love her childlike wonder—the questions Bess asks are very helpful in
rehearsal. It’s also just great working with somebody you’ve known for
such a long time.
The last thing I'll say is that I’m a mother, and I love working with somebody who’s trying to be a mother in this business and trying to make it work, and then writing a play that’s also about that in many ways. We’re surrounded by children in this process, onstage and offstage, and I really appreciate sitting behind a table with another working mother.

**Bess:** Ditto to a lot that Jackson said. It’s really gratifying to be able to work with someone whom I’ve known since grad school. That friendship and working relationship make the work so much richer. Jackson popped out to me as an incredible talent in our very first year because of the way she conceives of space and pictures. She has a very bizarre imagination, and a very poetic take on things. We have an extensive shared vocabulary, and an ease working together, and as much as this play is an actor’s play, I really think that it’s a director’s play. As soon as I wrote it, I thought, this play needs a director who’s really able to collaborate with a level of authorship, and be inventive with how the story is being told, because there are a lot of open questions.

**Yan:** How have your observations on family, parenting, or childhood experiences informed your work on this play?

**Bess:** There are definitely moments in the writing of this play when I try to channel my own children’s way of seeing the world. I’m also trying to connect with the child in myself as I make this play. How can we bring a childlike mentality to the creative process? How can we be open, curious, and interested in the exploration?

**Jackson:** I find the play very emotional, and the biggest tragedy, I think, is what trauma in the family does to relationships between the kids as they grow up. They go through something together, but after they become adults, they can’t talk to each other. Instead of making them come together,
trauma pushes them apart. When there’s nothing to turn against, people end up taking it out on each other. That’s the thing that kills me. It happens with bigger things in the world too, and this is a small example of it. People are so alone, and they’re so lonely. What a tragedy, to feel lonely when you’re surrounded by people.

Yan: The four siblings in the play are children in the 1980s. What does that time setting mean to you?

Bess: I was a child in the 1980s, so I associate that time period with my own childhood. It also was a time when parenting and childhood were very different than they are now. There was a sense of childhood as a separate magical space that adults didn’t enter as much, and it felt like there was more privacy, probably more danger, too, because we were left on our own more, but there’s also a sense of independence that kids had. I was interested in looking at how not just childhood has changed, but how our world has changed.

There are a lot of different points of entry in this play. I enter this play as a parent, and as a child thinking about my own childhood. I can enter it from a social perspective of how the world has changed, or from a familial perspective of how families respond to different traumatic events. On different days, I’m interested in different parts of it, and that’s what’s been fun about having this ongoing exploration, and trying to tie all these different pieces together.
MEGAN BYRNE

KATE

Hartford Stage: Debut. Off-Broadway: Arcadia, Serious Money, No End of Blame (PTP/NYC); The Hatmaker’s Wife (The Playwrights Realm); The Netflix Plays (Ars Nova); The Voice of the Turtle (Keen Co.). Regional: Dancing at Lughnasa (Two River Theater); The Wolves, Good People (TheaterWorks); Sex with Strangers, Outside Mullingar (City Theatre); Dot (Humana Festival); Other Desert Cities (Theater Aspen); Proof (Merrimack Rep); When Tang Met Laika, Absurd Person Singular, Noises Off!, The Sweetest Swing in Baseball (Denver Center). Film: Enclosure, Landline. Julie & Julia, The Rebound, Ghost Town, Before the Devil Knows You’re Dead. Television: New Amsterdam, The Blacklist, The Path, Younger, The Following, Madame Secretary, Blue Bloods, Law & Order. Education: MFA UC, Irvine; BA, Middlebury College. Awards: NYIT Award winner, CT Critics Circle winner, Ovation Award nominee.

CHRIS GHAFFARI

CHRIS


BRAD HEBERLEE

CARL

Hartford Stage: Debut. Off-Broadway: A Life (Playwrights Horizons); Small Mouth Sounds (Ars Nova); Peter Pan (Bedlam); These Paper Bullets! (Atlantic); This Beautiful City (Vineyard/Civilians); Vanity Fair, The Bald Soprano, Uncle Vanya, Don Juan, Figaro!, The Dingdong, The Rivals (The Pearl); (I am) Nobody’s Lunch (Civilians); The Thugs (SoHo Rep). Regional: Yale Repertory Theatre, Geffen Playhouse, Center Theatre Group, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Huntington Theatre Company, Denver Center Theatre Company, Center Stage Baltimore, Weston Playhouse. Television: Codes Of Conduct written and directed by Steve McQueen for HBO, White Collar, Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt, Person of Interest, Unforgettable. Education: Yale School of Drama.

ROMAN MALENDA

CHRIS

Hartford Stage: Debut. Theatre: History Mystery (TADA Youth Theater!); All My Sons, Guys and Dolls, Anything Goes, 101 Dalmatians, The Aristocats, School House Rock, The Nightmare Before Christmas, Alice in Wonderland, Dear Edwina (French Woods Camp). Film: Aviva (dir. Boaz Yakin, 2018). Education: Professional Performing Arts School. Training: Comedy, Improv (Broadway Comedy Club); Member of TADA! Youth Theater Ensemble; Rhythm Arts Project member (tap); Arts in Motion Mini: jazz, contemporary, hip hop, and break (Broadway Dance Company); Acting coaching with Lee Kasper, Marc Schneider, Gareth Tidball. Awards: Ash Dance Scholarship; Best Contemporary—Radix; Pulse Scholarship; Silver Medalist—Ballroom Dancing. Other: Enjoys skateboarding, playing guitar, singing, rock band, parkour, comedy improv and comic books (DC). Roman is thankful for the opportunity to perform at Hartford Stage and to work with all these amazing people.
ALEXIA SKYE SWINTON
ADDIE
Hartford Stage: Debut. Off-Broadway: Kooky Spook (Duke Theatre); The Department Party (Playwrights Horizons); Santa Doesn’t Come to the Holiday Inn (EST); Annie Warbucks (Signature Theatre); Madeline’s Christmas (Lion Theatre). Film: River of Fundament, I’m Lost, Nettles, Little Brain Surgeries. Television: Billions, Flesh and Bone, Saturday Night Live, The Tonight Show, Today, The View. SAG/AFTRA. Thanks to Dave, Steph & Mel (SGM); Victoria & Jamie (Abrams); Bess, Jackson, Rob, Alex, my incredible cast & the HS team; acting coach Maria Smushkovich! Most of all—my amazing family: Inna, Rolfe, Ava, Maxim, Celia, Simon, Marlene. IG: itstheswintons

RJ VERCELLONE
CARL
Hartford Stage: A Christmas Carol—A Ghost Story of Christmas. Theatre: The Who’s Tommy, The Man With The Glass Heart (Curtain Call); Priscilla, Queen of the Desert (Downtown Cabaret Theatre); The Music Man (Fairfield Center Stage). Television/Web: Shattered: The Wood; I’ve Got So Much To Give, Rocket Ship Run Dance Remix, and I Love You Daddy music videos (The Laurie Berkner Band); Big Ideas with Little Kids. Education/Training: Voice/Acting with Christy Newsom. Other: RJ plays travel hockey.

MOLLY WARD
ADDIE
Hartford Stage: Othello. Off-Broadway: Kin, The Big Meal (Playwrights Horizons, Sam Gold dir); Jesus In India (Ma-Yi Theater Co.); Sisters In Blizzard (Ensemble Studio Theater); The Tenant (Woodshed Collective); The Shape of Metal (Origin Theater Co.); The Nosemaker’s Apprentice (The Brick Theater). Regional: Three Sisters, Romeo & Juliet, Seagull (American Repertory Theater); Find & Sign (World Premiere, Pioneer Theater); Our House (World Premiere, Denver Center); Imaginary Invalid (Playmakers Camille (Bard Summerscape); Lost Girls (Theater Exile). Film: The Art of Wooing. Television: The Path, Are We There Yet? Education/Training: MFA Harvard/Moscow Art Theater School.

SLOANE WOLFE
KATE
Hartford Stage: Debut. Regional: Annie (Paper Mill Playhouse); Samson (Original Cast, Sight and Sound Theatres). Television: Nickelodeon (HALO Awards with Nick Cannon); SyFy (Happy!); Universal Kids/Sprout (Kindness Is A Muscle); Lifetime; The Comcast Network (Comcast Tonight). Commercials: Morey’s Piers, Philadelphia Flyers. Education: 5th Grader. Training: Bob Marks, Dance Molinari, ACANY. Many thanks to Jackson, Bess, Laura Stanczyk Casting, Hartford Stage and John Shea/FBI. Love to friends and family especially Mom, Dad, and big sister Arden. Proud AEA member. Instagram: sloane_wolfe_official
BESS WOHL
PLAYWRIGHT

Bess Wohl’s plays include *Small Mouth Sounds* (John Gassner Outer Critics Circle Award, top ten lists in *The New York Times*, *The New York Post*, *The Guardian* and others), *American Hero*, *Barcelona*, *Touched*, *In*, *Cats Talk Back* and the musical *Pretty Filthy* with composer/lyricist Michael Friedman and The Civilians (Lucille Lortel and Drama Desk nominations for Outstanding Musical). Her play, *Continuity*, will have its world premiere at Manhattan Theatre Club in the spring of 2019. Her plays have been produced or developed at theaters in New York and around the country, including Second Stage, Ars Nova, The Williamstown Theatre Festival, The Geffen Playhouse, Goodman Theater, and many others. She also writes screenplays and has developed multiple original television projects for HBO, ABC, USA, and FOX. She currently holds new play commissions from Lincoln Center, Manhattan Theater Club, Second Stage, and The Williamstown Theatre Festival. She is a MacDowell fellow, an associate artist with the New York based investigative theater troupe, The Civilians, and an alumna of Ars Nova’s Play Group. She was awarded the Sam Norkin special Drama Desk Award for “establishing herself as an important voice in New York theater.” BA Harvard, MFA Yale School of Drama.

JACKSON GAY
DIRECTOR

**Hartford Stage:** Debut. **Upcoming:** Ken Lin’s *Kleptocracy* (Arena Stage); *Power of Sail* by Paul Grellong (The Warehouse Theatre). **Recent:** *Transfers* by Lucy Thurber (New York Stage & Film and MCC, off-Broadway Alliance Best New Play Award 2018); Christina Anderson’s *the ripple, the wave that carried me home* (Ground Floor Berkeley Rep); *Invictus Mingus* by Frank Harts (New Neighborhood/Dorset Theatre); *The Cake* by Bekah Brunstetter and *Lover Beloved* by Suzanne Vega and Duncan Sheik (Alley); Lisa Lampanelli’s *Stuffed* (Westside Theatre); Mat Smart’s *Kill Local* (La Jolla Playhouse); Chekhov’s *Three Sisters* (Studio Theatre/New Neighborhood); Shakespeare’s *Much Ado* adapted with Ken Lin (Cal Shakes); *These Paper Bullets!* by Rolin Jones with music by Billie Joe Armstrong (New Neighborhood, Atlantic, Geffen, Yale Rep—Critics Pick Time Out NY, Best Production and Adaptation LA Sage Awards, Best of 2015 Time Out Los Angeles, Connecticut Critics Circle Award Best Production and Best Director); Silverman’s *The Moors* and *Elevada* by Sheila Callaghan (Yale Rep); Thurber’s *The Insurgents* (Labyrinth Theatre Company); *3C* by David Adjmi and Thurber’s *Where We’re Born* (Rattlestick); Thurber’s *Scarcity* and Jones’ *The Jammer* (Atlantic); Jones’ *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* (Atlantic and Yale Rep, Connecticut Critics Circle Award Outstanding Production of a Play); *A Little Journey* (Mint Theater, Drama Desk nomination Outstanding Revival of a Play). **Education:** MFA Yale School of Drama.

ANTJE ELLERMANN
SCENIC DESIGN

**Hartford Stage:** *An Opening in Time*. **Off-Broadway:** Credits include *Building the Wall*, *Stuffed*, *Dear Elizabeth*, I’m Looking for Helen Twelvetrees*, *The Belle of Amherst*, *The Open House* (Signature Theatre); *Hamlet* and *The Broken Heart* (Theatre for a New Audience). **Regional:** Two River Theater, Kansas City Rep, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Long Wharf Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, NY Stage & Film, Trinity Repertory Theatre, Huntington Theatre Company, Arena Stage, Denver Center Theatre Company, Cleveland Playhouse, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Geffen Playhouse, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Bard SummerScape and Pittsburgh Opera Center. **Award Nominations:** Connecticut Critics Circle Award (*The House That Will Not Stand*); Helen Hayes Award, Ovation Award and Lucille Lortel Award (*Nine Parts of Desire*); Emmy Award Nomination (“Becoming American”). **Website:** www.antjeellermann.com
JUNGHYUN GEORGIA LEE
COSTUME DESIGN
Hartford Stage: Debut. New York: Teenage Dick (Ma-Yi & Public); The Chinese Lady, Sesar (Ma-Yi); Intractable Woman, Caught (Play Co.); Samara (Soho Rep). Regional: As You Like It, Sense and Sensibility (Guthrie); Tiger Style!, Milk Like Sugar, Smart People (Huntington Theatre); North Pole, Buzzer, Mothers and Sons (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park). Education: MFA, Yale School of Drama. Website: junghyunleedesign.com

PAUL WHITAKER
LIGHTING DESIGN

BROKEN CHORD
ORIGINAL MUSIC & SOUND DESIGN
Hartford Stage: A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Whipping Man, Gem of the Ocean, Snow Falling on Cedars, Gee’s Bend, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Broadway: Eclipsed, The Parisian Woman. New York: Scarcity, The Jammer, The Lying Lesson (Atlantic Theater); The Incubator Arts Project; The Insurgents (Labyrinth Theater); Bull in a China Shop (LCT3); Spirit Control, When We Were Young and Unafraid (Manhattan Theatre Club); A Lifetime Burning, Harrison TX, Informed Consent (Primary Stages); (The Public Theater); Stay, Massacre, Charles Ives (Rattlestick); 10 Things to Do Before I Die, The Other Thing (Second Stage Theatre); The Dance and the Railroad, Appropriate (Signature Theatre); Lascivious Something, Row After Row (Women’s Project). Regional: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Actors Theatre of Louisville); (Berkeley Rep); American Buffalo, Pride and Prejudice (Centerstage); (Cleveland Play House); The Tempest, The Odd Couple, Deferred Action (Dallas Theater Center); An Enemy of the People (Guthrie Theatre); Top Girls, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, A Raisin in the Sun (Huntington Theatre); La Jolla Playhouse; Ruined, UniSon (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); People’s Light; Shakespeare Theatre Company; The Glass Menagerie (Trinity Rep); These Paper Bullets! (Yale Rep). Film: Fall to Rise. www.brokenchord.us

ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON
DRAMATURG | ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Hartford Stage: Anastasia, Romeo and Juliet, The Body of an American, An Opening in Time, Hamlet, Reverberation, Macbeth, Man in a Case, Somewhere, A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder and others. West End: The Inheritance. Broadway: A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder (Tony Award for Best Musical), Anastasia. Regional: Touch(ed), In, Find and Sign (Pioneer Theatre Company); M. Proust (Steppenwolf); Mefistofele (Theatre de la Jeune Lune). Directing: Cloud 9, Seder (Hartford Stage); The Life and Death of Pier Paolo Pasolini (Act French Festival, Abingdon); The Floating World (HERE); Rare Bird (Babcock Theatre); Owners (Alter); The Second Amendment Club (AMS). Translation: Hartford Stage: La Dispute. Education: Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Directing and Comparative Literature, Bennington College; Master’s in European Literature, Oxford University; trained at the École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq. Awards: NEA Fellowship in Literary Translation.
LAURA STANCZYK, CSA
CASTING
Hartford Stage: A Lesson From Aloes, Seder, Midsummer Night’s Dream, Having Our Say. Broadway: Top Hat, Side Show, After Midnight, A Night With Janis Joplin, Don’t Dress For Dinner, Master Class, Follies, Lombardi, Ragtime, Impressionism, The Seafarer, Radio Golf, Coram Boy, Translations. Off-Broadway: Poison (Origin Theatre Company); Fetch Clay Make Man (NYTW); A Thick Description Of Harry Smith (P73), The Cripple of Inishmaan (Atlantic Theater Company), Me Myself & I (Playwrights Horizons); Brother Sister Plays (Public Theatre); Flight (DR2 Theatre); The Glorious Ones (Lincoln Center); Tryst (Promenade Theatre). Regional: Royal George, Drury Lane Theatre, Signature Theatre, McCarter Theatre, Miami New Drama, Shakespeare Theatre of DC, among others. Education/Training: NYU Tisch School of The Arts. Awards: Nominated six times for Artios Awards for Excellence in Casting, and won for the Broadway Revival of Follies.

ROB CHIKAR
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
Hartford Stage: Debut. Broadway: The King and I, Larry David’s Fish In The Dark, and You Can’t Take it With You. Off-Broadway: Harry Clarke (Minetta Lane Theater); Stuffed by Lisa Lampanelli (Westside Theatre); Teenage Dick (The Public); and Chix 6 The Musical. Regional: Kill Local (La Jolla Playhouse); Diner The Musical (Delaware Theater Company); These Paper Bullets! (Geffen Playhouse); Hallelujah Baby! (York Theater Company); These Paper Bullets! and In a Year With 13 Moons (Yale Repertory Theatre); Travesties (Bay Street Theatre); The 24-Hour Musicals: Los Angeles, The Pirates of Penzance (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); Iphigenia Among The Stars, Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights and Julius Caesar (Yale School of Drama). Education: MFA from Yale School of Drama.

KELLY HARDY
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

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DARKO TRESNJAK
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Darko Tresnjak is the fifth Artistic Director of the 55-year-old Hartford Stage. He received the 2014 Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards for his direction of A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder, starring Jefferson Mays. He received an Obie Award in 2015 for his direction of The Killer at TFANA, starring Michael Shannon. His production of Anastasia, which premiered at Hartford Stage in 2016, is currently on Broadway at the Broadhurst Theatre, and will be opening in Spain, Germany and going on a national tour in the fall of 2018. In September, his production of Samson et Dalila, starring Elina Garanča and Roberto Alagna, will open the Metropolitan Opera's 2018-2019 season. He has received four Connecticut Critics Circle Awards for his Hartford Stage productions of A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder, Anastasia and The Comedy of Errors (set design). Other productions at Hartford Stage include A Lesson from Aloes; A Midsummer Night’s Dream; Heartbreak House; Rear Window starring Kevin Bacon; Hamlet; Private Lives; Kiss Me, Kate; Macbeth; La Dispute; Twelfth Night; The Tempest; and Bell, Book & Candle. From 2004 to 2009, he was the Artistic Director of The Old Globe Shakespeare Festival, where he received five San Diego Critics Circle Awards, four for his direction of Pericles, The Winter’s Tale, A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder and Cyrano de Bergerac, starring Patrick Page, and one for Excellence in Artistic Direction. Favorite productions include The Ghosts of Versailles with Patti LuPone and Patricia Racette, Macbeth with Plácido Domingo at LA Opera and The Merchant of Venice with F. Murray Abraham at Theatre for a New Audience and the Royal Shakespeare Company Complete Works Festival. He has also directed productions at Williamstown Theatre Festival, Huntington Theatre Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Goodspeed Musicals, Westport Country Playhouse, Vineyard Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Stratford Shakespeare Festival and The Public Theater.

MICHAEL STOTTS
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Mike Stotts is in his thirteenth season as Managing Director of Hartford Stage. Recent accomplishments include leading the multi-year, expansion and renovation of the Stage’s theatre facility. With Darko Tresnjak, he recently produced the world premieres of Rear Window, and the new musical, Anastasia, by Terrence McNally, Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. Anastasia, which enjoyed a sell-out run at Hartford Stage, opened on Broadway in April, 2017. In 2012, the new musical A Gentlemen’s Guide to Love and Murder received its world premiere at Hartford Stage. It subsequently moved to Broadway and won the 2014 Tony Award for Best Musical. Other notable shows include Man in a Case starring Mikhail Baryshnikov, and the Pulitzer Prize-winning play, Water by the Spoonful by Quiara Alegria Hudes. In 2010, with Artistic Director Michael Wilson, he produced Horton Foote’s The Orphans’ Home Cycle which enjoyed a celebrated run in Hartford and subsequently at the Signature Theatre in New York where it won the Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle awards, among others. In 2013, he spearheaded the acquisition of the Hartford Children’s Theatre and the integration of its programs into the Hartford Stage Studio program. During his three-year tenure as Managing Director at Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, he produced a significant number of new plays including works by Paula Vogel, Craig Lucas, James Lapine and Julia Cho. Prior to Long Wharf he served as Managing Director of George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and for nine years he served in the same capacity at the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey in Madison, New Jersey, where he successfully initiated and managed the capital campaign to build the F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre which opened in 1998. He currently serves on the board of Billings Forge Community Works, and is a Corporator of Hartford Hospital, Hartford Public Library, and the iQuilt Partnership. He was a co-founder and President of the Connecticut Arts Alliance, a statewide arts advocacy organization, and continues to serve on that board. Mr. Stotts is originally from Calgary, Alberta.
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MAKE BELIEVE 23
Now in our 55th year, Hartford Stage is under the leadership of Artistic Director Darko Tresnjak and Managing Director Michael Stotts. One of the nation’s leading resident theatres, Hartford Stage is known for producing innovative revivals of classics and provocative new plays and musicals, including 73 world and American premieres, as well as offering a distinguished education program, which reaches more than 21,000 students annually.

Since Tresnjak’s appointment in 2011, the theatre has presented the world premieres of the new musical Anastasia by Terrence McNally, Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens—currently on Broadway; A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder on Broadway, winner of four 2014 Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Direction of a Musical by Tresnjak; Rear Window with Kevin Bacon; Quiara Alegría Hudes’ Water by the Spoonful, winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Drama; Breath & Imagination by Daniel Beaty; Big Dance Theatre’s Man in a Case with Mikhail Baryshnikov; Reverberation by Matthew Lopez; Seder by Sarah Gancher; Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express, adapted for the stage by Ken Ludwig; and The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton, adapted for the stage by Douglas McGrath.

Hartford Stage has earned many of the nation’s most prestigious awards, including the 1989 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Other national honors include Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk, OBIE, and New York Critics Circle awards. Hartford Stage has produced nationally renowned titles, including the New York transfers of Enchanted April; The Orphans’ Home Cycle; Resurrection (later retitled Through the Night); The Carpetbagger’s Children; and Tea at Five.

The leading provider of theatre education programs in Connecticut, Hartford Stage’s offerings include student matinees, in-school theatre residencies, teen performance opportunities, theatre classes for students (ages 3-18) and adults, after school programs and professional development courses.
The Hartt School/Hartford Stage Partnership in Training

Now in its twelfth year, The Hartt School/Hartford Stage Partnership in Training offers a unique alliance of an undergraduate acting conservatory program and a respected professional theatre—one of only two such collaborations in the country. This partnership helps ensure that acting students at the Hartt School receive rigorous training and bring their skills, imagination and intellect to the demands of a professional theatre setting. Hartford Stage staff and guest artists lead classes and workshops and faculty and students appear in Hartford Stage productions. Hartt students have been seen in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, A Christmas Carol, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Noises Off!, To Kill a Mockingbird, the Brand:NEW Festival of New Work, Antony & Cleopatra, Snow Falling on Cedars, The Crucible, The Tempest, Twelfth Night, Hamlet, Anastasia, The Comedy of Errors, and The Age of Innocence.

The University of Massachusetts Graduate Internships at Hartford Stage

Linking one of the most respected graduate programs in theatre with the Tony Award winning Hartford Stage, the University of Massachusetts Graduate Internships give Master of Fine Arts students in design, directing and dramaturgy the opportunity to work alongside the country’s most exciting artists. The Graduate Internships provide a valuable professional testing ground for students and are a natural complement to the practical, hands-on approach of UMass’ graduate program. In turn, Hartford Stage is enriched by the participation of the next generation of theatre artists. UMass students have worked on Boeing-Boeing, Zerline’s Tale, Gee’s Bend, Motherhood Out Loud, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Snow Falling on Cedars, The 39 Steps, Macbeth, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, and Hedda Gabler.

Capital Community College

This season will mark the eighth season of the One Play Program—a partnership between Hartford Stage and Capital Community College, designed to give the entire college community the opportunity to come together around one play each semester. In addition to offering discounted tickets for students and faculty, the program also brings members of each production’s creative team to the College to interact with students. Last season, 625 Capital students saw a performance at Hartford Stage, many reporting it was their first time at the theatre. This season’s One Play productions are Henry V and Detroit ’67. During the 2017-2018 academic year, in partnership with Hartford Stage and other Hartford theatre companies, Capital began to offer a new associate’s degree in theatre.
A LOOK AT OUR LOBBY
Travel back in time to the 1980s—the decade that gave us Casio keyboards, Atari, the Rubik’s Cube and much more. Take a look at some of the era’s iconic advertisements, memorabilia and toys—and learn how Erin Keller, Hartford Stage Props Manager, captures the Kodachrome color-saturated spirit of this time period in her careful selection of props and set dressings. You also won’t want to miss the display featuring Hartford Stage Life Director Arnold Greenberg’s special connection to the “it” doll of the decade—the Cabbage Patch Kid!

TOULMIN FOUNDATION SUPPORT FOR MAKE BELIEVE
Our season opener, Bess Wohl’s Make Believe, was made possible by a generous grant from the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation through their Women Playwrights Commissioning Program. Virginia Toulmin was a passionate believer in fairness and equality of opportunity for women and was a generous supporter of the arts. The Foundation makes grants to commission new works by emerging female composers, choreographers, and playwrights to level the playing field so that female artists have an equal opportunity to see their works succeed on stage.

BACKSTAGE RENOVATION CELEBRATION
Hartford Stage board members and donors received an exclusive, behind-the-scenes tour of the newly-renovated backstage areas of the theatre, which include a state-of-the-art costume shop, fully remodeled green room and refurbishments of the guest artist dressing rooms. A champagne toast capped off the tour to celebrate the final phase of a multi-year plan to transform the theatre’s functionality, comfort and accessibility.

ANASTASIA THE MUSICAL TAKES THE WORLD BY STORM!
As the Broadway production, starring Christy Altomare as the beloved heroine Anya, continues to pack houses, the North American tour for Anastasia will kick off in Schenectady, New York on October 9 with Lila Coogan in the leading role. Jana Gómez will play Anya in the Spanish-language production debuting in Madrid, Spain on October 3, while Judith Caspari will play the lead in the Stuttgart, Germany tour starting on November 15. Meet all four women in this multilingual musical montage video: https://youtu.be/vnfP6yGa7NY.
DARKO AT THE MET
Hartford Stage Artistic Director Darko Tresnjak makes his Metropolitan Opera directorial debut on September 24 with Camille Saint-Saëns’ biblical epic *Samson et Dalila*, starring mezzo-soprano Elīna Garanča and tenor Roberto Alagna. Tresnjak has teamed up with Set Designer Alexander Dodge, Costume Designer Linda Cho, Choreographer Austin McCormick, and Lighting Designer Donald Holder to stage the sumptuous three-act, four-scene French opera. The production runs through March 28, 2019.

COMING NEXT: HENRY V
In Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, shortly after gaining the throne, Henry must decide whether or not to embark on a war that could solidify his reign—or bring his country to its knees. In France, he grows up fast under the pressure to use all means necessary to win a war against tremendous odds. But even if he finds victory, how easy will it be to settle the peace? One of Shakespeare’s most iconic history plays, directed by Elizabeth Williamson, will perform October 11 – November 11.

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Through our community partnership with the Hartford Public Library, city residents can reserve a pair of tickets to all Hartford Stage shows this season simply by using their library card. All available performances can be found on the Hartford Public Library website. When you arrive at the theatre, be sure to bring your Connecticut library card with you and check out a book from HPL @ Hartford Stage—the micro-branch kiosk located at Guest Services. There are many great titles to choose from that will help you dig deeper into the themes of the production.
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