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#### **MAY 2011**





### theatrebi

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#### **AMY BRENNEMAN OPENS UP**

In her autobiographical show *Mouth Wide Open*, the "Private Practice" doctor looks at life as a patient

by Josh B. Wardrop

elevision viewers are accustomed to seeing actress Amy Brenneman in the role of healer, as psychiatrist Violet Turner on the hit ABC television drama "Private Practice." Those who catch her latest project, however—the soulful stage show *Mouth Wide Open*, running May 24–29 at Cambridge's American Repertory Theater—can see a whole other side of the gifted performer: Amy Brenneman, patient.

"I had colitis," says Brenneman, matter-offactly, sounding for all the world like one of her medical colleagues from the fictional Oceanside Wellness Centre offering a diagnosis. "Things started to go bad in the fall of 2009, and it was January of 2010 when I had major surgery to remove about half of my colon, after months of really feeling just utterly depleted. I lost about 30 pounds in a very short period of time."

Brenneman recovered from her surgery, and, despite a second brief hospitalization, even finished filming the third season of "Practice." The details of her illness weren't widely reported, and she might've just tried to put things behind her and move on with her life as a performer, producer, wife and mother of two. However, at the precise time she'd been struck by her illness, Brenneman had been working on a side project—adapting some of her observational essays, blog postings and journal entries into a theatrical piece to be directed

**OPEN MOUTH, OPEN ARMS:** Actress/writer Amy Brenneman (above) performs in her spiritual and sometimes surreal play *Mouth Wide Open*.

by her longtime friend (and fellow Harvard alum) Sabrina Peck. Rather than let the colitis sideline her project, Brenneman decided to incorporate her experiences with illness and recovery into the show, and so, *Mouth Wide Open* was born. The piece made its world premiere last summer on Martha's Vineyard (where Brenneman makes her summer home), and now brings Brenneman back to Harvard for its run at the A.R.T.

"It's not so much a linear play as it is a look at how your consciousness shifts when you're spending time lying in a hospital bed," says Brenneman. "I found myself having a lot of those 'a-ha moments,' as Oprah calls them. I felt like I was getting messages through my body."

From her years on another TV drama, "Judging Amy" (a series inspired by the work of Brenneman's mother as a Connecticut Superior Court Justice), to the revealing look at her health struggles in *Mouth*, it's clear that the actress has never shied away from mining real life for compelling drama. "I'm definitely drawn to real sto-

Tibetan temple in Kathmandu to an evangelical church in the Mississippi delta will somehow inspire audiences to slap a label on her. In fact, it's likely to be just the contrary. "I'm pretty much the opposite of an orthodox anything," she laughs. "Currently, I go to a wonderful Episcopalian church, but I'm also half-Jewish. I'm a real polyglot.

"I've always thought that with all the beautiful expressions there are in the world of how human beings can find meaning in life, for anyone to say that 'our way is the only way' just closes doors when we should be looking to open them."

Brenneman credits her director and friend, Peck, with making *Mouth* the production it is today. "We knew we wanted to do a show, but we were just starting to mull over what it was going to be about when I got really sick," she recalls. "It was Sabrina that very gently led me to the idea that some of the stuff I was experiencing as a result of my illness was appropriate to write about."

From that breakthrough moment on, Brenneman found herself leaning on Peck's dual

#### "There's a point in the show where one of my friends tells me that I should be relieved because it's all done now and I'm back to where I was. But...things like this change you forever." —Amy Brenneman on *Mouth Wide Open*

ries—I think the truth is far more interesting than anything I could come up with," Brenneman says. "And if it's a story worth telling, I find that before long, it ceases to be about me and a much more universal element works its way in."

Mouth Wide Open sees Brenneman guiding audiences on an often surreal journey from the superficiality of a Tinseltown red carpet, to the stark reality of a hospital bed, to a variety of sacred places where Brenneman seeks spiritual comfort and understanding of life's deeper meanings. It's the kind of intriguing amalgamation of obsessions one might expect from a woman who majored in comparative religion at Harvard, yet ended up a Hollywood star, known for her roles on "NYPD Blue," "Amy" and "Practice."

Personal explorations of religion and spirituality are something that popular entertainers frequently shy away from, but Brenneman shrugs off the idea that the depictions of everything from a qualifications as lifelong confidant and skilled director to craft and mold *Mouth*. "She has unique advantages as a collaborator, because she knows me so well that there's an absolute shorthand in the way we can communicate with each other. She was always telling me not to worry if I felt I wasn't making much sense.

"As a director, she was always interested in extending the movement aspect of the piece and wasn't afraid to let it get a bit surreal," Brenneman adds. "She had such a vision for the show and how it would all coalesce—I honestly couldn't have done it without her."

One of the ideas at the very heart of *Mouth*, according to Brenneman, is the fundamental ways in which life is different after experiencing a serious illness. "There's a point in the show where one of my friends tells me that I should be relieved because it's all done now and I'm back to where I was," she muses. "But the throughline of the story is that you

never go back to who you were. Things like this change you forever."

Given the unpleasant impetus for the show, the potential certainly existed for Mouth to be a bit of a downer. But Brenneman's quick to point out the stream of offbeat humor that runs through the show. "Honestly, things don't really get heavy as much as they get absurd," she says. "During the process of being sick and in recovery, I was shocked at how many 'I just can't f-ing believe this' moments I encountered."



Photo © 2010 ABC Studios/Andrew MacPherson

"PRACTICE" MAKES PERFECT: Amy Brenneman recently wrapped up the fourth season of ABC's "Private Practice," in which she portrays Dr. Violet Turner, before returning to Harvard this May to perform in Mouth Wide Open.

Many of the show's funniest moments, according to Brenneman, feature the surgeon who guided her through the difficult procedure. "When I started writing my surgeon—this brilliant, brilliant socially inept man—I didn't have to make up a word. The things that come out of this guy's mouth are just...," she trails off, laughing, before adding, "My doctor hasn't seen the show yet. I'm too nervous."

Brenneman says the opportunity to bring *Mouth* to the A.R.T. came together organically, helped, of course, by the roots she and Peck have at Harvard and with A.R.T. Artistic Director Diane Paulus. "Diane is an old castmate of mine," says Brenneman. "We noodled around as performers in a couple of shows at Harvard. I know Diane is interested in busting out into all kinds of exciting directions with A.R.T., so it's thrilling to come back here and do the show."

The new production of *Mouth* at A.R.T. also allows Peck and Brenneman to incorporate new elements that were difficult to pull off at the show's

original venue, The Yard on Martha's Vineyard. "The Yard is a magical place to perform, but there were some technical limitations," Brenneman laughs. "The show begins with a short film. there'd be light leaking into the barn while it was running. Now we've been able to add to the video sequences in the show, and expand upon our use of soundscapes."

Brenneman admits that part of her wasn't sure she was ready to revisit an undeniably challenging and painful episode in her life for the new A.R.T. production

of *Mouth*. "As a performer, I'm not terribly Method—I actually tend to get a little impatient with actors that are. But there's no doubt that rehearsing for this and reliving it....I will be emotionally connected to that time of being sick. But I'm prepared to just feel whatever's there to be felt."

The rehearsals for, and performances of, *Mouth Wide Open* come hot on the heels of Brenneman wrapping production on the fourth season of "Practice." From there, the actress embarks on that blissful phenomenon shared mainly by teachers, schoolchildren and successful TV stars: a long summer vacation. "I might spend some time filming a web series project I've been working on, but I fully expect to enjoy some downtime," says Brenneman. "We are in love with the Vineyard, I still have family close by—my brother's in Marblehead, my folks are in Connecticut—so I'll spend a lot of time reconnecting. When I get back to this area, it's really about unplugging."

#### **Artistic Director's Welcome**



I am thrilled to welcome Amy Brenneman to the A.R.T. community with this performance of her deeply personal journey, *Mouth Wide Open*.

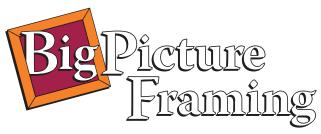
Robert Brustein introduced me to this powerful work after seeing a workshop on Martha's Vineyard last summer, and we are so pleased to support the next stage in the development of this project as part of our First Look Series this season. I was awestruck by Amy's work as an actress when we were both undergraduates at Harvard. It is an honor to welcome Amy back to the Harvard community this week,

as she celebrates her twenty-fifth reunion as part of the Harvard class of '86. I am also delighted to welcome Amy's longtime collaborator and fellow Harvard alumna (class of '84) Sabrina Peck to the Loeb stage as the director of *Mouth Wide Open*.

I know you will be touched by Amy's heartfelt, humorous and fearless story. Thank you for joining us tonight at the A.R.T.

DianGauls

The American Repertory Theater dedicates these performances of *Mouth Wide Open* to the memory of Joan Cutler, an inspiring woman and philanthropic leader. Her positive impact was felt by scores of organizations across the Boston community, and we are proud to honor her legacy as a lifelong champion of the arts and caring force behind the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation.



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#### AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER

**PRESENTS** 

# MOLITH WIDE OPEN

#### CREATED BY AMY BRENNEMAN and SABRINA PECK

WRITTEN BY AMY BRENNEMAN

PERFORMED BY

AMY BRENNEMAN\* ASHLEY BRYANT\* **PAGE LEONG\* ROBERT MONTANO\*** 

SET/VIDEO DESIGN JIM FINDLAY

LIGHTING DESIGN MARUTI EVANS

SOUND DESIGN JILL BC DU BOFF

STAGE MANAGER CHRIS DE CAMILLIS\* and KATHERINE SHEA\*

> DIRECTED BY SABRINA PECK

First performance at the A.R.T. on May 24, 2011

**Mouth Wide Open** was originally presented in a workshop production in 2010 by The Yard, an artist residency and performance center located on Martha's Vineyard, MA.



is being made possible through a generous grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

#### Additional Staff

Dramaturg—ANDREA THOME Assistant Stage Manager—TAYLOR ADAMIK\* Assistant Sound Designer—IEN DENIO

#### PROLOGUE FILM CREDITS

Camera—BRAD SILBERLING Editor—RACHEL FLEISCHER

#### Cast

Krishna—BODHI SILBERLING Krishna's sister—CHARLOTTE SILBERLING Krishna's mother—AMY BRENNEMAN

Publicity reel editor—MICHELLE LaPIERRE

\*Members of Actors' Equity Association

RUNNING TIME: ONE HOUR WITH NO INTERMISSION

#### **SPECIAL THANKS**

Davis Guggenheim Joyce Silberling Kim Gillingham The staff at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center The Solstistas

The Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America Lighting design at The Yard production created by Dan Scully Set design at The Yard production created by Sean McArdle

For all who suffer.

#### **Director's Note**



When Amy and I began developing this piece together over a year ago, we were interested in the intersection of spirituality and celebrity. Amy has always been a seeker, someone who looks for transcendent experiences that can enlighten and inform. She is one of the most spiritual people I know, finding God in unexpected people and places, even a place as un-godlike as Hollywood. But always with humor: "The traffic on the 405 is my teacher," she would lament on the car speakerphone, her kids making a ruckus in the backseat. We became interested in

exploring how those two seemingly disparate worlds might be interconnected in ways not visible on the surface.

During the months that we developed the piece, another subject kept creeping into our bicoastal creative phone calls: her illness. As she got sicker, we spoke increasingly about how it was progressing, what she was doing to battle it and how she was feeling. One day I said, "I think this might be the story you want to tell." So she wrote and I shaped, and together we created a play. Thus began our journey to discover how these three worlds spirituality, celebrity and illness—interrelate.

"God and my body are connected," she says in Scene 5. We kept coming back to this idea, discovering it in her experiences with Newali sacred dance in Nepal, as a child in her Connecticut Congregational church and in an evangelical church in Mississippi, desperate to give her body over to ecstatic baptism. The physical was her way in. I could relate: my first language for storytelling has always been movement.

Eventually it became clear that her illness would be her most important physical-spiritual experience to date, and Hollywood the context for that arduous, transformative journey. What is it like to project an external glamour, while inside the body twists and contorts with pain and decay? How do we find the courage to look into the mouth of our worst fear?

I was carried along by Amy's courage throughout this journey. And the process of working with her to realize this story was personally transformative. We'd worked together in the past, collaborating with people in diverse communities, telling their stories through the lens of classic texts. It was a gift for me to be able to apply that creative muscle to this story—her story.

In the end, artistic endeavors, like physical issues, are never completed or fully resolved. As Amy writes, "Being human is a chronic condition." Maybe that chronic condition for the artist is what Martha Graham calls that "divine dissatisfaction...a blessed unrest that keeps us marching and makes us more alive." So we welcome you to this "First Look" at Mouth Wide Open, and we are glad you are now part of the journey, marching alongside us.

—Sabrina Peck, co-creator and director

#### Cast



#### AMY BRENNEMAN

Performer/ Co-creator/Writer A.R.T.: Measure for Measure. Theater: Romeo & Juliet, The Oresteia, Three Sisters, Sincerity Forever, St. Joan of the Stockyards, Yale

Rep; God's Heart, Lincoln Center; A Nervous Smile, Williamstown Theater Festival. Credits with Sabrina Peck include Working (when Brenneman was 18), The Maske Family Musical, Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella and the original work Interstates, which they cocreated. She is a founding member of the awardwinning Cornerstone Theater Company. Film: Casper, Bye Bye Love, Heat, Daylight, Your Friends and Neighbors, Things You Can Tell Just by Looking at Her, Off the Map, Nine Lives, 88 Minutes, Jane Austen Book Club, Downloading Nancy and Mother & Child. Television: "NYPD Blue" (two Emmy nominations), "Judging Amy" (co-creator, executive producer and star: three Emmy nominations, three Golden Globe nominations, winner of three TV Guide Awards for Best Actress), "Private Practice" (Violet Turner). Amy Brenneman has a degree in Comparative Religion from Harvard University. She is married to film director Brad Silberling and splits her time between Los Angeles and Chilmark, Mass. Her writing can be found on her blog at Momlogic.com and www.theamybrenneman.com.



#### ASHLEY BRYANT

Performer A.R.T.: Debut. Broadway: A Free Man of Color. New York theater: In the Cypher, Combury: The Oueen's Governor. Obama Drama. Regional theater: Ruined, Shelia's Day, King

John. Other theater: Romeo and Juliet, Baal, Marat/Sade, Marcus; or the Secret of Sweet, In the Red and Brown Water, Godspell, Children of Eden, Agamemnon, The Darker Face of the Earth. BFA: University of Utah. MFA: Yale School of Drama. Ashley would like to thank her family for their support.



#### PAGE LEONG

Performer A.R.T.: Debut, Theater: Member of Cornerstone Theater Company for 17 years, performing, writing, directing and choreographing more than 50 produc-

tions, at Arena Stage, Hasty Pudding, The Public

Theater, Classical Stage Company, Long Wharf, Pasadena Playhouse, MOCA, Actors' Gang and in vibrant communities across Los Angeles and the nation. She's also performed at the Joyce Theater, Mark Taper Forum, LATC, Doolittle Theater, Getty Center, Singapore Rep, East West Players and Highways. Favorite roles include Shishir Kurup's An Antigone Story (Antigone), Bill Rauch and Tracy Young's Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella (Medea), Alison Carey's A California Seagull (Nina /Maddy), Carey's Twelfth Night (Olivia), Chay Yew's Red (Ling), Murray Mednick's Coyote Cycle (Cosmic Clown) and Kurup's On Caring for the Beast (Mae/Kali), garnering Dramalogue, Garland and Ovation awards. Film: Another 48 HRS, Ghostbusters II, the upcoming Bourne Legacy. Television: "Three Rivers," "ER," "Dragnet," "Drive," "The Practice," "7th Heaven," "Judging Amy," "JAG," "Strong Medicine," "Star Trek TNG." As a writer, Page adapted her play In a WORD for HIV/AIDS communities across the country. She directed the short films *Head Trip* and *Long Term* for this project as well. Her play attraction was featured on the cover of American Theatre Magazine last year. She holds a Master's degree in Dance from UCLA.



#### ROBERT MONTANO

Performer

A.R.T.: Debut. Broadway: Kiss of The Spider Woman, On The Town dir. by George C. Wolfe, Cats, Chita +2, Legs Diamond. Theater: Created the roles of Anibal

and Benito for the Academy Award-nominated writer Jose Rivera's Cloud Tectonics and References To Salvador Dali Make Me Hot; Lynn Nottage's Fabulation (Herve); Richard Vetere's One Shot One Kill (Sgt. Nick Harris); Edwin Sanchez's Diosa (Miguel); Marty (Ralph, opposite John C. Reilly); East Of Eden dir. Jon Jory (Cal), Comedy Of Errors, Actors Theatre Of Louisville. Film: The Yards (Hector Gallardo, opposite Mark Wahlberg and Joaquin Phoenix), Academy Award-winner Chicago, It Runs In The Family, Center Stage, Fresh Cut Grass, Passionada, Second Best and the soonto-be-released Shame, High Maintenance and The Normals. Television: "Army Wives," "CSI: Miami," "Sex In The City," "Law & Order," "Third Watch," "Six Degrees," "Without A Trace," "Law & Order: SVU" and "Undefeated." As a first time writer, his screenplay Under The Wire, inspired by his trials, tribulations and addictions when he was a professional racehorse jockey, has recently garnered attention from Hollywood. www.robertmontano.com.

#### **Creative Team**

#### SABRINA PECK

Co-creator/Director

Sabrina Peck conceives and directs theater infused with movement and music. New plays Peck has directed include Blood Cherries by Dawn Saito, at Dance Theater Workshop and The New World Theater; The Antigone Project, by Karen Hartman, Lynn Nottage, Chiori Miyagawa and Caridad Svich, developed at The Public Theater; Blue Hyacinths by Stephanie Fleischmann at New Georges; Interstates (developed with Amy Brenneman) and several plays at New Dramatists (while a director in residence). Her choreography credits include: The Clean House, Lincoln Center Theater; Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella, Yale Rep; Henry VIII, New York Shakespeare Festival; The Good Person of New Haven, Long Wharf; Eleanor: A Love Story, Ford's Theatre; and many productions for Cornerstone Theater Company, with which she remains an Associate Artist. Peck often creates productions in collaboration with diverse communities, including Common Green/Common Ground, with community gardeners in NYC; Odakle Ste with Bosnian Muslim refugees in Croatia; Speaking Our Streets, with former tobacco workers in Durham, N.C.; and Commodities, with commodities pit traders on Wall Street. Her work is detailed in the book Local Acts: Community-Based Performance in the United States by Jan Cohen-Cruz. Peck has taught at NYU Tisch School of the Arts and Duke University. She has a degree in Social Studies from Harvard University, where she created the CityStep program and returned as the Peter Ivers Visiting Artist. www.sabrinapeck.com.

#### JIM FINDLAY

Set/Video Designer

A.R.T.: R. Buckminster Fuller: THE HISTORY (and Mystery) OF THE UNIVERSE. Jim Findlay works across specialties as a designer, director, performer and creator with a constellation of theater, performance and music groups. He was a founding member and primary collaborator in both the Collapsable Giraffe and Accinosco/Cynthia Hopkins, as well as being an associate member of The Wooster Group since 1994 and a frequent collaborator with Ridge Theater since 2001. Individual credits include set and video designs for Stew's Brooklyn Omnibus (BAM) and Making It (St Ann's Warehouse); How Can You Stay in the House All Day... (BAM and U.S.

tour) and Rescuing the Princess (Lyon Opera Ballet) by Ralph Lemon; D.W. Jacobs' R. Buckminster Fuller: THE HISTORY (and Mystery) OF THE UNIVERSE at Arena Stage and the A.R.T., DJ Spooky's Terra Nova (BAM and world tour); Steel Hammer by Julia Wolfe (Carnegie Hall and U.S. tour); and Slug Bearers of Kayrol Island at the Vineyard Theater. Findlay's awards include the Henry Hewes Design Award, Lucille Lortel Award, Princess Grace Awards in 1999 and 2010, Obie Awards in 2001 and 2008 and Bessie Awards in 1999 and 2008.

#### MARUTI EVANS

Lighting Designer

A.R.T.: Alice vs. Wonderland. Maruti Evans has worked as lighting and set designer in opera, theater, and dance for the last twelve years. His work includes The Oresteia at Classic Stage Co, Exit Stage Left at Parallel Exits at Lincoln Center, The Traveling Lady at Ensemble Studio Theater (Obie Award for Best Revival), In Paradise at Cherry Lane Theater/INTAR Theater, and others. He has designed several productions at the 59E59 Theaters, Ensemble Studio Theater, The Duke New 42 Theater, Lincoln Center and Stonybrook University. He has been nominated for the Drama Desk Awards in Outstanding Lighting Design in 2007, 2008 and 2009 for the 59E59 productions: In the Heat of the Night, Slaughterhouse 5 and Blindness. Also a nominee for Audelco Awards Best Lighting and Set Design (Relativity with Ensemble Studio Theater and Noon Day Sun with Diverse City Theater) and a nominee for Bessie Awards Best Lighting and Set Design (Relativity with Ensemble Studio Theater).

#### JILL BC DU BOFF

Sound Designer

Broadway: Good People, The Constant Wife, The Good Body, Bill Maher: Victory. Off-Broadway: Other Desert Cities, The Whipping Man, Cradle and All, The Divine Sister, Broke-ology, Lincoln Center, Atlantic, MTC, MCC, Playwrights Horizons, Public, Vineyard, Second Stage, NYTW, New Georges, Flea, Cherry Lane, Signature, Clubbed Thumb (Affiliate Artist), Culture Project, Adobe. Regional: Minneapolis Children's Theatre, Bay Street, La Jolla, Cincinnati Playhouse, Westport, Berkeley Rep. Portland Stage, Long Wharf, The Alley, Kennedy Center, NYS&F, South Coast Rep,

#### creative team (continued)

Humana, Williamstown. TV: Comedy Central, NBC. Radio: Studio 360, WNYC News. Nominations: Drama Desk, Henry Hewes. Recipient, Ruth Morley Design Award. Adjunct Professor: Sarah Lawrence College.

#### CHRIS DE CAMILLIS

Stage Manager

A.R.T.: Thirty-three productions including Johnny Baseball; Trojan Barbie; The Seagull; Cardenio; Julius Caesar; The Veiled Monologues; A Marvelous Party; Oliver Twist; Wings of Desire; Island of Slaves; Romeo and Juliet; Three Sisters; Desire Under the Elms; Dido, Queen of Carthage; The Provok'd Wife; Oedipus; A Midsummer Night's Dream; Lady with a Lapdog; Pericles; Uncle Vanya; Lysistrata; Marat/Sade; Johan Padan and the Discovery of the Americas; Richard II; Mother Courage and Her Children; Three Farces and a Funeral; The Winter's Tale; Full Circle; Ivanov; We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!; The Merchant of Venice; and The Cripple of Inishmaan. Off-Broadway: Pride's

Crossing (Lincoln Center Theater), The Boys in the Band (Lucille Lortel Theatre), Slavs! (New York Theatre Workshop), Raised in Captivity (Vineyard Theatre), 'Til the Rapture Comes (W.P.A.), Oliver Twist (Theatre for a New Audience). Regional: Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Guthrie Theater, Berkshire Theatre Festival (three seasons), George Street Playhouse, Shakespeare & Company, San Antonio Festival, Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, The Acting Company (fifteen productions over five seasons, including As You Like It, directed by Liviu Ciulei; A Doll's House, directed by Zelda Fichlandler; and A Midsummer Night's Dream, directed by Joe Dowling). Chris De Camillis is the A.R.T.'s Artistic Coordinator.

#### KATHERINE SHEA

Stage Manager

A.R.T.: Stage Manager: Prometheus Bound; The Blue Flower; Cabaret; Johnny Baseball; Paradise Lost; Best of Both Worlds; Romance; Endgame; The Communist Dracula Pageant; When It's Hot, It's Cole;



#### creative team (continued)

Donnie Darko. Assistant Stage Manager: The Seagull; Oliver Twist; The Onion Cellar. Production Associate: Island of Slaves; Desire Under the Elms. A.R.T. Institute: Stage Manager: The Front Page; Arabian Night; Zoya; Mayhem; A Bright Room Called Day; The Island of Anyplace; The Bacchae; Spring Awakening; Donnie Darko. Gloucester Stage Company: Production Stage Manager: The Woman in Black. Lyric Stage Company: Production Stage Manager: Kiss Me, Kate; Three Tall Women; Adrift in Macao. Actors' Shakespeare Project: Stage Manager: King John.

#### TAYLOR ADAMIK

Assistant Stage Manager A.R.T.: Stage Manager: The Donkey Show. Assistant Stage Manager: Once. Production Associate: Prometheus Bound: The Blue Flower; Cabaret. Theater In The Open: Stage Manager (selected credits): Master Cat; A Christmas Carol; Romeo and Juliet; Waiting for Godot; Peter Pan. Graduate of Boston University, College of Fine Arts.

Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United ACTOR'S States. Actors' Equity Association (AEA), founded in Equity, 1913, represents more than 45,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence.





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# 2011/12 SEASON

### The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess—starts 8/17 "There's *Porgy*, and there's everything else." Stephen Sondheim

By George Gershwin, DuBose and Dorothy Heyward, and Ira Gershwin Adapted by Suzan-Lori Parks and Diedre Murray Directed by Diane Paulus: Choreographed by Ronald K. Brown

Starring Audra McDonald, Norm Lewis, and David Alan Grier

In 1935, Porgy and Bess premiered at the Colonial Theater in Boston, Now, 76 years later, the A.R.T. brings back **Porgy and Bess** in a new production featuring internationally renowned stars Audra McDonald as Bess, Norm Lewis as Porgy, and David Alan Grier as Sporting Life. A.R.T. Artistic Director and Tony Award nominee Diane Paulus directs this revival adapted by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks (Topdog/Underdog. The America Play, Venus) and OBIE-winning composer Diedre Murray (Running Man, Best of Both Worlds). This heartbreaking love story boasts some of the most famous and beloved works from the Great American Songbook, including: "Summertime," "Bess. You Is My Woman," "It Ain't Necessarily So" and "I Loves You, Porgy."

#### Three Pianos — starts 12/7

"The best antidote to winter's bitter dreas." The Village Voice

By Rick Burkhardt, Alec Duffy, and Dave Malloy

**Directed by Rachel Chavkin** 

Inspired by Franz Schubert's Winterreise, Op. 89, D911 (1828)

This OBIE-winning hit music-theater event wowed audiences and critics alike in its sold-out runs at New York Theatre Workshop and the Ontological-Hysteric Theater. Set on a blustery winter night, three friends, each manning a piano, lead the audience through Schubert's famous song cycle Winterreise while grappling with fundamental questions about the nature of music and drinking too much. The audience is invited to the party as the three pianists slip into a wild reenactment of a "Schubertiad," a musical salon thrown by Schubert and his friends. An evening of hilarity and heartbreak unfolds, and some unfortunate butchery of the German language ensues.

#### As You Like It - starts 1/18

Shakespeare's romantic comedy

By William Shakespeare

Featuring The A.R.T. /MXAT Institute Class of 2012

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" in Shakespeare's beloved pastoral comedy As You Like It. This classic tale follows Rosalind and her friend Celia's escape from a deadly conspiracy into nature's wild, liberating arms. What follows is an unconventional romance, with everything from wrestling matches to cross-dressing shepherds, culminating in a finale so joyful that spring will seem just around the corner.

#### Wild SWCINS - starts 2/11 WORLD PREMIERE

"An extraordinary memoir." The Wall Street Journal

**By Jung Chang** 

Adapted by Alexandra Wood

A world premiere adaptation of Jung Chang's international bestseller, Wild Swans chronicles a family's survival through a century of upheaval. Banned in China, this moving story follows three generations through Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. As change sweeps over their country, the family endures their hardships through sacrifice, courage, and love, Wild Swans is an American Repertory Theater and Young Vic co-production.

#### Futurity: A Musical by the Lisps — starts 3/16 WORLD PREMIERE

"Like an old time variety show." Spin Magazine

Music and lyrics by César Alvarez with The Lisps

Book by Molly Rice and César Alvarez; Directed by Sarah Benson

As the Civil War rages around him, the Union soldier Julian Munro dreams of bringing peace to the world and an end to human suffering. In a series of letters with Lord Byron's brilliant daughter Ada Lovelace, Julian attempts to invent an omnipotent steam-powered brain designed to save humanity before it destroys itself. Featuring the indie-rock band The Lisps, this quirky new musical melds science fiction, historical narrative, and the sounds of American folk music to explore Julian and Ada's epic fantasy of a utopian future.

#### Woody Sez: The Life and Music of Woody Gulhrie — starts 5/5

"A high spirited celebration." The Guardian

Words and music by Woody Guthrie
Devised by David M. Lutken with Nick Corley

One of the most influential song writers and balladeers of the 20th century, Woody Guthrie is a musical hero of legendary proportions who transformed folk music into a vehicle for social protest and captured the adversity and hardship of a generation during the Great Depression. His music and activism paved the way for many great American music makers including Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Johnny Cash, and many more. **Woody Sez** brings the giant to life in a joyous, toe-tapping, and moving theatrical portrait that uses Woody's words and songs to transport the audience through his fascinating, beautiful, and sometimes tragic life. Featuring many classic Woody tunes, including "This Land is Your Land" and "Bound for Glory," **Woody Sez** captures the heart and spirit of Woody Guthrie and the stories of America.

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#### About the A.R.T.

Diane Paulus, Artistic Director

The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) is one of the country's most celebrated resident theaters and the winner of numerous awards—including the Tony Award, the Pulitzer Prize and regional Elliot Norton and I.R.N.E. Awards. In 2002, the A.R.T. was the recipient of the National Theatre Conference's Outstanding Achievement Award, and in May of 2003 it was named one of the top three regional theaters in the country by *Time* magazine.

Founded by Robert Brustein in 1980, the A.R.T. during its 30-year history has welcomed many major American and international theater artists, presenting a diverse repertoire that includes new American plays, bold reinterpretations of classical texts and provocative new music theater productions. The A.R.T. has performed throughout the U.S. and worldwide in 21 cities in 16 countries on four continents. It has presented more than 200 productions, over half of which were premieres of new plays, translations and adaptations.

The A.R.T. is also a training ground for young artists. The Theater's artistic staff teaches undergraduate classes in acting, directing, dramatic literature, dramaturgy, design and playwriting at Harvard University, and in 1987 the A.R.T. founded the Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University in conjunction with the Moscow Art Theater School. The Institute provides world-class graduate level training in acting, dramaturgy and voice.

In 2009, the A.R.T. welcomed its new Artistic Director, Diane Paulus. Armed with the A.R.T.'s mission to expand the boundaries of theater, Paulus and her team have engaged thousands of new theatergoers at performances of Sleep No More, The Donkey Show, Gatz, Best of Both Worlds, Johnny Baseball and Cabaret as well as festivals like Emerging America. Critics and audiences have embraced the immersive environments that have become hallmarks of A.R.T. productions. The Theater has broadened its focus to include the audience's total experience, providing them with a sense of ownership in the theatrical event. The A.R.T.'s new club theater OBERON, which Paulus calls a "second stage for the 21st century," is an example of one initiative that has not only become an incubator for local artists but also has attracted national attention as a groundbreaking model for programming. Through all of its work, the A.R.T. is committed to building a community of artists, technicians, educators, staff and audience, all of whom are integral to the A.R.T.'s core mission of expanding the boundaries of theater.

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The Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard was established in 1987 by the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) as a training ground for the professional American theater. Its programs are fully integrated with the activities of the A.R.T. In the summer of 1998, the Institute commenced a historic joint program with the Moscow Art Theater (MXAT) School. Students engage with two invaluable resources: the work of the A.R.T. and that of the MXAT, as well as their affiliated schools. Together, this exclusive partnership offers students opportunities for training and growth unmatched by any program in the country.

The core program features a rigorous two-year, five-semester period of training in acting, dramaturgy, or voice pedagogy, during which students work closely with the professionals at the A.R.T. and the MXAT as well as with the best master teachers from the United States and Russia. At the end of the program, students receive a Certificate of Achievement from the faculty of the American Repertory Theater and an M.F.A. Degree from the faculty of the Moscow Art Theater School.

Further information about this new program can be obtained by calling the Institute for a free catalog at (617) 496-2000 or going to our web site at www.americanrepertorytheater.org.

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Party to the '70s hits you know by heart as this disco adaptation of A Midsummer Night's Dream unfolds around you as a nightclub fantasy. Special group rates available for bachelorettes, birthdays and parties! Email vip@amrep.org for more info.

#### WHAT IS OBERON?

- The A.R.T.'s second stage for the 21st century
- A Harvard Square hotspot, located at the corner of Arrow St. and Mass Ave.
- · An incubator for the creation of new works
- A haven for local artists, more than 100 of whom have performed at OBERON since its inception

Learn more at cluboberon.com

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- LOEB STAGE Have your ticket stub stamped at the reception desk when you attend a performance and receive discounts at the University Place Garage or The Charles Hotel Garage.
- OBERON Discount parking is available at the Harvard University lot at 1033 Mass. Ave. (entrance on Ellery Street.) For more information, visit the website at: cluboberon.com/directions.html

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Performances generally begin at 7:30 p.m., though times do vary. Late shows occur on some evenings. Check cluboberon.com for details on specific performances.

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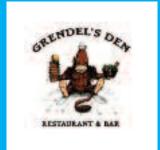
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# GUIDE to LOCAL THEATER

#### May/June 2011

#### DOWNTOWN/THEATRE DISTRICT

BLUE MAN GROUP, Charles Playhouse, 74 Warrenton St., 617-931-2787 or 617-426-6912. *Ongoing*. This giddily subversive off-Broadway hit serves up outrageous and inventive theatre where three muted, blue-painted performers spoof both contemporary art and modern technology. Wry commentary and bemusing antics are matched only by the ingenious ways in which music and sound are created. The show has recently been updated with new performance pieces and music.

CAPITOL STEPS, Wilbur Theatre, 246 Tremont St., 800-745-3000. Jun 18. This hilarious ensemble of political musical satirists—including a number of former Congressional staffers—keeps audiences laughing about the personalities on Capitol Hill, in the Oval Office and other centers of power.

SHEAR MADNESS, Charles Playhouse Stage II, 74 Warrenton St., 617-426-5225. *Ongoing*. This hilarious Boston-set whodunit, where the clues change every night and the laughs come fast and funny, is a worldwide phenomenon filled with up-to-the-minute spontaneous humor and quicksilver improvisation where the audience becomes part of the action and gets to solve the crime.

SUSURRUS, ArtsEmerson, Boston Public Garden, 617-824-8000. May 20-Jun 5. This theatrical offering without actors and a stage is part radio play, part recital, part lesson in bird dissection and part stroll in the park. Audiences follow a map around Boston's Public Garden as they listen to the piece on headphones. The listener hears snippets about opera, memorial benches and botany, which fit together into a mournful and poignant story of love and loss that is "a sensual reinterpretation of A Midsummer Night's Dream with a contemporary edge." (The List).

WEST SIDE STORY, The Colonial Theatre, 106 Boylston St., 617-931-2787. Jun 14-Jul 9. This revival, crafted by its late two-time Tony Award-winning librettist Arthur Laurents, and featuring a classic Bernstein and Sondheim score, tells the classic story of lovers caught between warring gangs. Considered one of the greatest love stories of all time, Story boasts such beloved tunes as "Tonight," "America," "I Feel Pretty" and "Somewhere."

#### LOCAL/REGIONAL THEATRE

ANIMAL CRACKERS, Lyric Stage Company, 140 Clarendon St., 617-585-5678. *May 6—Jun 4*. Hilarity ensues in this classic Marx Brothers musical when Mrs. Rittenhouse's swanky house party honoring the African explorer Captain Spaulding is interrupted by the pilfering of a prominent painting. Screwball antics arise as the guests search for the thief, resulting in this "uproarious slapstick comedy" (*New York Times*).



**DANCE FEVER:** The Donkey Show, a discocentric take on Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, plays at American Repertory Theater's second stage at Oberon every Saturday night.

AT HOME AT THE ZOO, Zeitgeist Stage Company, Plaza Theatre, Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont St., 617-933-8600. May 6–28. Using his breakthrough 1958 one-act play The Zoo Story as Act Two in this full-length work, Edward Albee (Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Seascape) adds a prequel in which Peter, a tweedy book editor, and his wife, Ann, have an everyday conversation that takes an unexpected turn into dangerously personal territory. It's the kind of talk that can drive a husband out for a walk—to Central Park, where Jerry, a desperate outcast, awaits.

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL, Metro Stage Company, Cambridge Family YMCA Theatre, 820 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, 617-524-5013. *Jun 3–11*. Based on a story in *The Weekly World News*, this musical comedy/horror show is about a half-boy/half-bat creature discovered in a cave near Hope Falls, West Virginia that is taught to act like a "normal" boy.

**THE COMEDY OF ERRORS,** Huntington Theatre Company, Boston University Theatre, 264 Huntington Ave., 617-266-0800. *May 19–Jun 19.* Performed in repertory with *Richard III*, the internationally acclaimed, all-male Propeller Theatre Company's production of Shakespeare's comedic tale of two sets of identical twins separated at birth who reunite 25 years later is marked by dynamic physicality, imaginative theatricality and a modern flair.

**THE COUNTRY CLUB,** Happy Medium Theatre, Factory Theatre, The Piano Factory, 791 Tremont St., 617-549-9854. *May* 25–Jun 2. Douglas Carter Beane's Wyomissing, Pennsylvaniaset comedy follows a year in the lives of six insular friends (and one outsider) through a series of holiday-themed parties where lives are casually destroyed, lives go on and, through it all, tragedies are discussed without being mentioned.

#### quide to local theater (continued)

THE DONKEY SHOW, American Repertory Theater, Oberon, 2 Arrow St., Cambridge, 617-547-8300. Ongoing. Bringing the ultimate disco experience to Boston, this crazy circus of mirror balls, feathered divas, roller skaters and hustle queens tells the story of A Midsummer Night's Dream through great '70s anthems you know by heart.

THE DROWSY CHAPERONE, SpeakEasy Stage Company, Roberts Studio Theatre, Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts, 527 Tremont St., 617-933-8600. May 6-Jun 4. The high-spirited hijinks of this 2006 Tony Awardwinner begin when a die-hard musical fan plays his favorite cast album from 1928, and the show magically bursts to life. Suddenly the man finds himself immersed in the glamorous, hilarious tale of a celebrity bride and her uproarious wedding day.

**LEARN TO BE LATINA, Company One and Phoenix Theatre** Artists, Boston Playwrights' Theatre, Walcott Theatre, 949 Commonwealth Ave., 866-811-4111. May 13-Jun 5. Promising young pop singer Hanan has a record label dying to record her-until they find out she's Lebanese. Not to worry, they say: Hanan can still be a star—as long as she learns to be Latina! In this fiercely funny New England premiere by Enrique Urueta, cultural identities and the music business are poked with some very sharp sticks.

MOUTH WIDE OPEN, American Repertory Theater, Loeb Drama Center, 64 Brattle St., Cambridge, 617-547-8300. May 24-29. Soulful, transcendent and laugh-out-loud funny, Amy Brenneman ("Private Practice," "Judging Amy") returns to her roots in this exuberant theater piece.

THE NATASHA PLAYS. Charlestown Working Theater, 442 Bunker Hill St., 866-811-4111. Jun 8-11. This triptych of monologues by one of Russia's freshest new theatrical voices, 23-year-old Yaroslava Pulinovich, consists of Natasha's Dream, the story of a 16-year-old orphan who finds herself experiencing the first rustlings of love; I Won, the chronicle of an upwardly mobile teenager who lets nothing get in her way; and Epilogue, a short piece in which a girl offers up a love letter to her favorite pop star.

RICHARD III, Huntington Theatre Company, Boston University Theatre, 264 Huntington Ave., 617-266-0800. *May 18-Jun* 19. Performed in repertory with The Comedy of Errors, the internationally acclaimed, all-male Propeller Theatre Company's production of this tragic tale of Shakespeare's most villainous king is brought to unsparing life.

SILVER SPOON, The Nora Theatre Company, Central Square Theater, 450 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, 866-811-4111. May 19-Jun 19. This world premiere musical by Amy Merrill and Si Kahn delights with toe-tapping folk numbers and rousing ballads. Working-class Brooklyn and upper-crust Manhattan collide in the idealistic days of the late 1960s as two young lovers fight for justice and search for acceptance from their families, society and each other.

#### **OPERA**

NIOBE, QUEEN OF THEBES, Boston Early Music Festival, Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College, 219 Tremont St., 800-233-3123. Jun 12-19. This masterpiece by Agostino Steffani recounts the ancient Greek tragedy of the Queen of Thebes, whose immense pride earns her family the merciless wrath of the gods. With elegant costumes, breathtaking sets and Baroque flying machines, this heart-wrenching story is a dazzling spectacle for both eye and ear.

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#### The World Goes 'Pound

lyrics by John Kander music by Fred Ebb conceived by Scott Ellis, Susan Stroman, and David Thompson directed by Kate Warner music direction by Todd C. Gordon

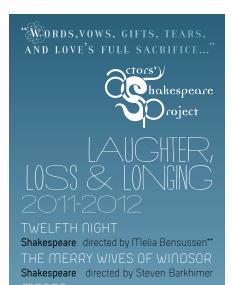
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Euripides

Shakespeare directed by Tina Packer ACTORSSHAKESPEAREPROJECT.ORG

\*\* The director is a member of the stage directors and choreographers society, a national theatrical labor union.

# **GUIDE** to CAMBRIDGE DINING

L-Lunch • D-Dinner • B-Breakfast C-Cocktails • VP-Valet Parking SB-Sunday Brunch . LS-Late Supper

CAFE OF INDIA, 52A Brattle St., Harvard Square, 617-661-0683. Dine in casual comfort on a menu including a variety of meat, seafood and vegetarian dishes, including nightly specials highlighting recipes from all the regions of India. Enjoy a brunch buffet on weekends, an ever-changing lunch buffet during the week and a full bar featuring exotic cocktails, Indian beers and a select wine list seven days a week. L & D daily 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m.

CAMBRIDGE, 1., 27 Church St., Harvard Square, 617-576-1111; 1381 Boylston St., Boston, 617-437-1111. City dwellers looking for refined, sophisticated pizzas can find comfort in Cambridge, 1. Its Best of Boston award-winning, thin crust. charcoal-grilled pies include such toppings as grilled chicken, potato, arugula and even lobster. Both locations offer salads in addition to beer and wine while the Fenway site features select appetizers and pasta dishes. L, D, C, LS.

GRAFTON STREET, 1230 Massachusetts Ave., 617-497-0400. This neighborhood hotspot is named after the spirited cobblestone-lined shopping district in Dublin's famed Temple Bar area. Grafton Street deftly combines a traditional Irish pub's warmth and coziness with a comfortable full-service restaurant serving contemporary American cuisine. L,D, LS, C, Sat & SB.

GRENDEL'S DEN, 89 Winthrop St., 617-491-1160. Since 1971, Grendel's Den has been a comfortable, down-to-earth neighborhood eatery and bar, justly earning landmark status in the Harvard Square community. Priding itself on a wide and varied selection of domestic and imported beer, Grendel's also offers excellent food at even better prices. Tucked away in a basement off the cobbled paths of Winthrop Street, this Cambridge classic is open late and never disappoints. L, D, BR, LS, C.

NOIR, The Charles Hotel, One Bennett St., 617-661-8010. This award-winning, stylish bar and lounge offers seasonally inspired cocktails as well as classic drinks like the Sidecar and Old-Fashioned along with crispy pressed sandwiches, flavorful flatbread pizzas, fresh salads and small bites in a sophisticated setting. C 4:30 p.m.-2 a.m.; D 5-11 p.m.

**OM,** 92 Winthrop St., 617-576-2800. OM Restaurant & Lounge in Harvard Square offers globally-influenced modern American cuisine, drawing in foodies and neighborhood patrons alike. A popular nightlife destination, OM's lounge boasts sleek leather sofas, a hypnotic water wall and signature cocktails. D, C.



**ALL-AMERICAN:** Featuring seasonally inspired cuisine, an exclusively American wine list and an extensive list of regional craft beers, Russell House Tayern is a welcoming bar and restaurant that makes patrons feel right at home.

RUSSELL HOUSE TAVERN. 14 JFK St., 617-500-3055. Combining Executive Chef Michael Scelfo's seasonally inspired menu of modern interpretations of American classics with a bar serving all-American wines, a locally driven craft beer selection and classic as well as modern hand-crafted cocktails. this Harvard Square restaurant is a comfortable gathering spot for every occasion. L, D, SB, LS, C.

RUSTIC KITCHEN, Park Square, 210 Stuart St., Boston, 617-423-5700. This lively and classic Italian-Mediterranean bistro combines a distinctive award-winning menu with a comfortable, inviting and attractive rustic atmosphere. All breads, pastas and desserts are prepared fresh daily on the premises. Pre-theatre menu, three private dining rooms, garden lounge and weekly cooking classes are available. L, D, SB, C, LS, VP.

SANDRINE'S BISTRO, 8 Holyoke St., 617-497-5300. Renowned chef Raymond Ost serves delicious French cuisine with German flair in a cozy, upscale atmosphere right around the corner from Harvard University. Signature dishes include Alsatian pizza, escargots, steamed mussels, foie gras and creme brulee for dessert. L Mon-Sat 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; D daily 5:30-11:30 p.m.

TORY ROW, 3 Brattle St., Harvard Square, 617-876-TROW. Located at the heart of Harvard Square, Tory Row takes its name from the 1770s term for Brattle Street, once populated by British lovalists. Serving up an eclectic mix of Euro-American dishes at affordable prices, this neighborhood bar and restaurant has shed the conservative roots of its name and replaced them with a diverse and creative culinary aesthetic. L. D.

UPSTAIRS ON THE SQUARE, 91 Winthrop St., 617-864-1933. Boasting an eclectic decor, this lush urban oasis features everything from poached Atlantic salmon to fire-roasted Meadow Farms lamb chops. A charming blend of eccentricity and culinary luxury. L, D, C, LS.

WAGAMAMA, 57 JFK St., 617-499-0930; Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Quincy Market, Boston, 617-742-9242; The Prudential Center, 800 Boylston St., Boston, 617-778-2344. This international chain, modeled on the classic Japanese ramen noodle bar, has three locations in the Boston area. Offering affordable prices, speedy service and authentic food, Wagamama is a hip rendition of an old favorite, perfect for the modern globe-trotting food enthusiast. L, D.



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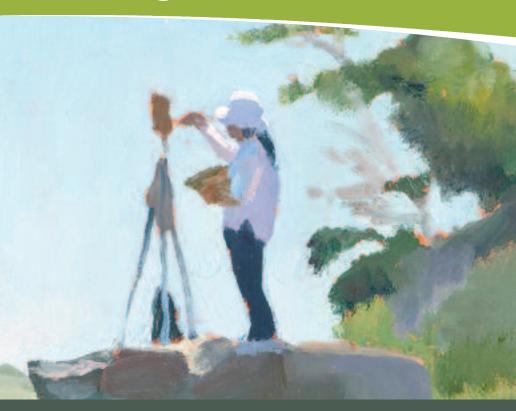






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