The Real Thing

By Tom Stoppard

September 5 - 29, 2013

MST – Rice Village

Main Street Theater opens its 39th MainStage season with Tom Stoppard’s brilliant exploration of love and language, The Real Thing.

With previews August 31, September 1 and 4, The Real Thing opens September 5 and runs through September 29 at Main Street Theater – Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. Performances are on Thursdays at 7:30pm, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm, and Sundays at 3pm. Tickets are $20 - $36 (previews are $10), depending on date and section, and are on sale in person at the Main Street Theater Box Office, 2540 Times Blvd., via phone at 713.524.6706, or online at MainStreetTheater.com.

About The Real Thing

In The Real Thing, Tom Stoppard combines his characteristically exquisite wordplay and wit with flashes of insight that investigate the mystery of love, the nature of honesty and the joy of beautiful, skillful language. Using a play-within-a-play, Stoppard mines the romantic permutations of two creative couples -- actors and a playwright -- to explore the themes of semblance and reality. Winner of the Tony Award for Best Play in 1984; Winner of the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play in 2000. Main Street Theater produced the Houston premiere of The Real Thing in 1986.


“gusty and cheerfully intellectual...measurably funny, immeasurably clever and unexpectedly clever...” – Clive Barnes, New York Post

Recommended for audiences 18 and up.

About Playwright Tom Stoppard

Sir Tom Stoppard (knighted in 1997) has an illustrious list of playwriting credits to his name including Arcadia, The Invention of Love, Rock ’n Roll, The Coast of Utopia, Hapgood, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, The Real Thing, Jumpers, Travesties, The Real Inspector Hound, Rough Crossing, On the Razzle, and many more. He has won 4 Tony awards: The Coast of Utopia (2007), The Real Thing (1984), Travesties (1976), and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (1968). He has won 7 Evening Standard awards, including 1 for Arcadia, which also won the Critics’ Circle Theatre award and the Laurence Olivier Award.

Main Street Theater has been known for decades as a champion of Tom Stoppard’s works, producing the greatest number of his plays (14) locally throughout its 39 year history. MST has produced 3 of his plays twice over the years, making MST’s Stoppard production total 17 (with this current production of The Real Thing).

About the Production

MST Artistic Director Rebecca Greene Udden is the director. The cast includes MST veterans Justin Doran (My Wonderful Day, The Heidi Chronicles, Arcadia), Shannon Emerick (Richard III, The Coast of Utopia, Arcadia), Sara Gaston (Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-A** Wit of Molly Ivins, Present Laughter, The Best Man), and Joe Kirkendall (Henry V, Love Goes to Press, The Coast of Utopia). Also in the cast are MST newcomers David Clayborn, Scott Gibbs, and Shannon Nicole Hill.

The design team includes Jac Jones (set design), Macy Perrone (costume design), Eric L. Marsh (lighting design), Shawn W. St. John (sound design), and Rodney Walsworth (properties design). Lauren Evans is the production stage manager.

More...
Part of the Art Series
Main Street Theater has launched a new audience engagement initiative, the Part of the Art Series, providing special opportunities for people to connect with MST’s work in new ways. On August 12, over 40 people attended the first read-through at the first rehearsal for *The Real Thing*. Audiences and artists alike were energized by the experience.

Other Part of the Art events for *The Real Thing* include:

- **Stumble-through**: August 20 at 6:45pm.
  Watch the first, rough run-through of the play in rehearsal.  
  $40 per person. Purchase online at www.MainStreetTheater.com, or call 713-524-6706.

- **Mimosas & a (Costume) Parade**: August 25 at 11:00am.  
  Have a mimosa, and watch the Costume Parade, where Macy Lyne, the production’s costume designer, shows the director what she has for each actor to wear and with the actors in these costumes. See what works, what doesn’t, what thought-process goes into this aspect of the production. Approx. 45 minutes.  
  $20 per person. Purchase online, or call 713-524-6706.

- **Free Opening Night Pre-show Discussion with the Designers**: September 5 at 6:45pm.  
  A 15-20 minute discussion with the show’s designers about their process. What intrigued them about this play? Did things change for them along the way? Their favorite prop/costume/part of the set/sound cue/lighting moment?  
  RSVP to shannon@mainstreettheater.com by September 4.

- **After-parties (following Friday and Saturday night shows)**: beginning September 13 for *The Real Thing*.  
  Enjoy a free drink with the cast after the show!  
  Included in ticket price; no RSVP required.

- **Lunch with *The Real Thing* director Rebecca Greene Udden**:  
  September 15 at 1pm at Salento in Rice Village.  
  $50 per person. Only 10 spots available. Email shannon@mainstreettheater.com to book.

- **Post-show Discussion**: Following the matinee on September 15.  
  Be part of – or just listen to! – a discussion with the actors and the director about *The Real Thing*.  
  No RSVP required; even if you have tickets for a different day, everyone is welcome.

- **Dinner with *The Real Thing* actors Joe Kirkendall and Shannon Emerick**:  
  September 22 at 6pm at El Meson in Rice Village.  
  $50 per person. Only 10 spots available. Email shannon@mainstreettheater.com to book.

Main Street Theater was founded in 1975. The organization produces plays at two locations, 2540 Times Boulevard in Rice Village and 4617 Montrose Boulevard at Chelsea Market. Our MainStage is in its 38th season and its 13th season operating under an Actors’ Equity Association union contract. The MainStage features new works (including numerous world and regional premieres), rediscovered classics, passionate revivals, works by female playwrights, and neglected musicals in the intimate setting of our Rice Village location. Our Theater for Youth is Houston’s most-attended theater for young audiences, serving over 130,000 children and families from the greater Houston area in school performances, weekend family matinees and tours to schools and community centers across the state of Texas. Plays are selected based on literature children are reading at home or at school. Our Education Department offers students a performing arts playground where professional theater artists serve as mentors. In support of Main Street Theater’s mission, our Education Department provides a significant resource in the community for education in theater and classical theater for children, families and educators and provides classes and camps (on and off-site) as well as programs in residential treatment facilities for Harris County youth.

Main Street Theater is a founding member of the Fresh Arts Coalition, which recently merged with Spacetaker here in Houston, a founding member of Houston Arts Partners, and a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for not-for-profit theaters. Main Street Theater is also a member of Actors’ Equity Association and of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (formerly ASSITEJ), the world theatre network of theatre for children and young people. Main Street Theater is funded in part by grants from the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

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