

Tom Stoppard's
The Coast of Utopia
Parts Two and Three: *Shipwreck* and *Salvage*

February 10 – March 11, 2012
MST – Rice Village

Main Street Theater presents **the first U. S. production of Tom Stoppard's trilogy, *The Coast of Utopia*, since its American premiere at Lincoln Center in 2006.** Parts two and three, *Shipwreck* and *Salvage*, will run at MST – Rice Village in February and March.

“Stoppard's magnificent trilogy chronicles a group of real-life Russian intellectuals chafing under an oppressive regime and dreaming of revolution,” says MST Executive Artistic Director Rebecca Greene Udden who is also directing the trilogy. “It's an intense, joyful work that dramatizes what it means to seek a better life. Stoppard explores the power of passionate discourse, the ability of fundamental philosophical ideas to re-shape one's world view and the hunger of young people eager to turn ideas into action, all the while reminding us that there are always human motivations for even the greatest historical events. At no time in recent history has this play been more relevant, as we see these same forces at work transforming the Arab world country by country, regime by regime.”

Part two, *Shipwreck*, opens February 10 and runs through March 8 at MST – Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. Part three, *Salvage*, opens February 24 and **then runs in repertory** with *Shipwreck*, closing on March 11, also in Rice Village. Performances are on Thursdays at 7:30pm, Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm, and Sundays at 3pm. Tickets start at \$26, depending on date and section. Tickets are on sale in person at the Main Street Theater Box Office, 2540 Times Blvd., via phone at 713.524.6706, or online at www.mainstreettheater.com.

About *Shipwreck* and *Salvage*

Spanning 1833 to 1866, the trilogy is anchored by the presence of anarchist Michael Bakunin, literary critic Vissarion Belinsky, literary giant Ivan Turgenev, and revolutionary thinker Alexander Herzen, four men who came of age under Tsar Nicholas I and whose passion for political and intellectual change is mirrored in their personal pursuit of love and happiness. As the arcs of their lives intersect repeatedly, the seeds of the great social revolutions of the late nineteenth century are sown.

Shipwreck shifts the focus to philosopher Alexander Herzen and the location to Paris against the backdrop of the Revolution of 1848. Herzen articulates the search for a Utopia, but even as he strives to reach it, it eludes him in a series of personal catastrophes.

In *Salvage*, a disillusioned Herzen finds solace in London within a community of political émigrés which includes Karl Marx and Bakunin, who has escaped from Siberia.

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About Playwright Tom Stoppard

Sir Tom Stoppard (knighted in 1997) has an illustrious list of playwrighting 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 (11) locally throughout its 36 year history.

Special Events

February 27 there will be a screening of *The Captivating Star of Happiness*, a 1975 Lenfilm historical drama sympathetic to the failed 1825 Decembrist uprising against Tsar Nicholas I. This event is free and will be at MST – Rice Village at 7pm.

March 5 MST will offer a Poetry and Philosophy Night featuring the writings of Herzen, Belinsky, Bakunin, Pushkin, Turgenev, Gogol, and George Sand. The reading is free and will be at MST – Rice Village at 7pm.

Other events include our Post-show Discussion Series on Sunday afternoons with artists and special guests. Visit MainStreetTheater.com for current information.

About the Production

The entire company of the trilogy is comprised of over 30 actors including Joe Kirkendall as Herzen, Guy Roberts as Bakunin, Joel Sandel as Belinsky, and Seán Patrick Judge as Turgenev. Other actors featuring prominently in *Shipwreck and Salvage* are Jessica Boone, Ivy Castle, Kregg Alan Dailey, and Shannon Emerick.

The design team includes Jodi Bobrovsky (set design), Margaret Crowley (costume design), Eric Marsh (lighting design), Shawn W. St. John (sound design), and Pamela Miltenberger (properties design and set dressing). Lauren Smith is the production stage manager.

The Coast of Utopia is supported in part by a grant from the Mayor’s Special Initiative Program of the Houston Arts Alliance as well as the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.

Additional support comes from the Humphreys Foundation and the Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation.

Since 1975, Main Street Theater has produced high quality professional theater for audiences of all ages through its MainStage productions and Main Street Youth Theater. The Main Street Theater Kids On Stage program offers performing arts classes and camps for children 5 years to 14 years of age. The organization produces plays at two locations, 2540 Times Boulevard in Rice Village and 4617 Montrose Boulevard at Chelsea Market.

Main Street Theater is a member of the Fresh Arts Coalition, a collaboration of 25 arts organizations that work collectively to raise awareness of the size and diversity of the arts in Houston, and a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for not-for-profit theaters. Main Street Theater offers a lively year-round repertory of classic and contemporary plays for audiences of all ages and provides a much-needed showcase for Houston theater professionals. Main Street Theater is also a member of Actors’ Equity Association and of 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.

Media Contact Only (not for print publication):

Shannon Emerick, Marketing Director

713.524.3622 ext 105 / shannon@mainstreettheater.com