PITT REP’S 2006-07 ‘GLOBAL CROSSINGS’ SEASON CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL THEATRE ENDS WITH CHEKHOV’s

THE PROPOSAL & THE WEDDING & THE BEAR

RUNS March 21- April 1, 2006

Laugh your heart out at Pitt Repertory Theatre’s final show of 2006-2007 season: Anton Chekhov’s The Proposal & The Wedding & The Bear. Love, marriage and the realities of commitment converge in a hilarious and delightful three-ring comedic circus! In The Bear, Popova must decide whether to stay faithful to the memory of her defunct husband or to fall for the many charms of Grigory Smirnov, the attractive man who refuses to leave her house. In The Proposal, Ivan and Natalya have to come to terms with neighborly envies and settle financial disagreement, if they want to finally get married. Finally, in The Wedding the wedding reception of Aplombov and Dashenka turns into a living hell with a hilarious ending.

All three plays explore through the lenses of farce how people deal with the maddening experience of courting and falling in love. What would the characters do for love? How much of themselves are they willing to sacrifice to pursue the ones they love? The Pitt Rep production of these three one-act plays, translated from the Russian by Carol Rocamora, provides an exhilarating answer you don’t want to miss! Director Stephen Coleman weaves the three farces together by featuring a few characters in all of the plays, thus providing a strong narrative thread and a sense of continuity to the stories.

W. Stephen Coleman directs a talented cast of 23 actors, also featuring two of Pitt Theatre Teaching Artists, Doug Mertz and Elena Alexandratos. Coleman describes how their presence will challenge the student actors “to rise to the level of these fine talents.” Mertz and Alexandratos, who have acted together many times in the past, will be seen this semester also in the Shakespeare-in-the-School version of Romeo and Juliet.

Set designer Julie Ray highlights the farcical sense of the plays by staging them on a rotating platform comprising of three fully equipped sets. These three plays will feature a painted proscenium stage, vaudeville footlights, and signs indicating the title of the plays. Ray says that she wanted to “create a circus-like quality for this show that would be reminiscent of 19th century carousel. Pitt faculty member Don Mangone and his assistant designer Kristin Becks will grace this production with lavish and sophisticated costumes.

For information, please call 412.624.PLAY (7529) or visit www.play.pitt.edu

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The Proposal & The Wedding & The Bear will run March 21 – April 1 in the Charity Randall Theatre in the Stephen Foster Memorial (corner of Forbes & Bigelow) on the University of Pittsburgh’s main campus. Tickets for senior citizens, Pitt Alumni Association members, as well as Pitt and UPMC faculty and staff are $15. Student tickets are $10 for any show and Student Semester Passes are available for $34 for five admissions. Pitt’s flexible season pass, the Encore! Card, is on sale for $60 for four admissions and $85 for six admissions. The pass is good for Pitt Rep admissions for any show on any date. For information, please call 412.624.PLAY (7529) or visit www.play.pitt.edu.

About the cast: The cast of 23 includes Teaching Artists-in-Residence Doug Mertz and Elena Alexandratos (The Philip Chosky Teaching Artist in residence), as well as a talented group of graduate and undergraduate students, including: Parag Gohel, Charles Brown, Brenden Gallagher, Jennifer Murray, Patrick Berger, John Graham, Earl Haines, Tanaz Balaporia, Grant Scavello, Zachary Singer, Chaya Gordon, Peter Fedysnin, Dan Jusinski, Garret Fuller, Heidi Nagle, Joel Ambrose, Andy Ris, Magdelyn O’Toole, and Andrew McNally.

About the Playwright: Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) is a Russian playwright and short-story writer. The son of a former serf, he supported his family by writing popular comic sketches while studying medicine in Moscow. While practicing as a doctor, he had his first full-length play, Ivanov (1887), produced, but it was not well-received. He took up serious themes with stories such as “The Steppe” (1888) and “A Dreary Story” (1889); later stories include “The Black Monk” (1894) and “Peasants” (1897). He converted his second long play, The Wood Demon (1889), into the masterpiece Uncle Vanya (1897). His play The Seagull (1896) was badly received until its successful revival in 1899 by Konstantin Stanislavsky. He moved to the Crimea to nurse his eventually fatal tuberculosis, and there he wrote his great last plays, Three Sisters (1901) and The Cherry Orchard (1904), for the Moscow Art Theatre. Chekhov’s plays, which take a tragicomic view of the staleness of provincial life and the passing of the Russian gentry, received international acclaim after their translation into English and other languages, and as a short-story writer he is still regarded as virtually unmatched.

About the Director: W. Stephen Coleman, associate professor and director of Undergraduate Studies, is a specialist in Shakespeare in performance, and the performance areas of actor-training and directing. He joined the faculty of the University of Pittsburgh in 1981 but has taught also at several other universities and colleges, most notably the University of Texas at Austin and the London International Film School. Continuing the practice of theatre, he directs and acts professionally, as well as in the educational theatre. Recent directing for Pitt includes Pinter’s Old Times, and Shaw’s Arms and The Man. He has also performed recently as a faculty guest artist in How I Learned to Drive and Waiting For Godot (which he also directed). His extensive professional theatre, film, and television credits include his recent appearance in the role of General Edward Braddock in the four-part, nationally televised PBS series, The War That Made America. On stage he recently appeared as First Messenger in Oedipus The King, directed by Ted Pappas at the Pittsburgh Public Theatre, and as Warwick in the Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre’s production of the Dakin Matthew’s
adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*. Other professional highlights include over a dozen major roles with the Three Rivers Shakespeare Festival while also serving as one of its two resident directors between 1983 and 1992, and playing the unfortunate Sergeant Pembry in the academy-award winning film, *Silence of the Lambs*.

**About the 2006-2007 Season:**
During the 2006-07 season, the University of Pittsburgh Repertory Theatre has been transporting audiences around the globe through the imaginative, witty, and truthful observations of international playwrights including China’s Nobel Laureate Gao Xingjian and Britain’s Caryl Churchill. The “Global Crossings” season has been taking audiences on an adventure through the world of international drama; whether solving a mystery or laughing at the foibles of love and marriage, audience members found no shortage of food for thought in our four dynamic theatre offerings.

The Pitt Repertory Theatre season dovetailed with Pitt’s strength in international studies as we partnered with the University Center for International Studies (UCIS) to provide a diverse and dynamic theatre-going experience. All four areas of the University of Pittsburgh’s emphasis in international studies were showcased in Pitt Rep’s season allowing vibrant works from Latin America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and Far East Asia to take center stage.

Audiences of the “Global Crossings” season were also treated to a tour of the Department of Theatre Arts’ performances spaces, as the plays will be produced in the Henry Heymann and Charity Randall Theatres in the landmark Stephen Foster Memorial, as well as the intimate Studio Theatre at the Cathedral of Learning, Forbes and Bigelow on Pitt’s Oakland campus.

**CALENDAR**

*Preview*  
Wednesday, March 21 – 8:00 pm

*Opening Night*  
Thursday, March 22 – 8:00 pm

*Runs*  
Friday, March 23 – 8:00 pm  
Saturday, March 24 – 8:00 pm  
Sunday, March 25 – 2:00 pm *Talk back following show*  
Wednesday, March 28 – 8:00 pm  
Thursday, March 29 – 8:00 pm  
Friday, March 30 – 8:00 pm  
Saturday, March 31 – 8:00 pm

*Closes*  
Sunday, April 1 – 2:00 pm