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**The third production of A Noise Within's 2018-2019 Season: *LET ME IN*  
Presented by the S. Mark Taper Foundation**

## ***Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead***

**By Tom Stoppard**

**Directed by Geoff Elliott**

**October 7 – November 18, 2018 (Press Opening October 13)**

Pasadena, CA (October 5, 2018) – A Noise Within (ANW), the acclaimed classical repertory theatre, presents Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, the Tony Award®-winning play that first brought Stoppard to the attention of an international audience – a position he has held in the half century since its premiere in 1967. ANW Producing Artistic Director Geoff Elliott directs. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* performs from October 7 to November 18 (Press Opening October 13).

*Hamlet* is turned topsy turvy in this brilliant comedy that thrusts Shakespeare's two minor characters to the frontlines with no rules except one: they are destined to die. Trapped in a universe where the flip of a coin always comes up heads and pirates can pop-up anytime, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern engage in a battle of wits to try to escape their fate and make sense of a senseless world.

This is not the first time that Stoppard's sharp wit and comedic genius has come to A Noise Within's stage. *Arcadia* received an LA Times Critic's Choice as well as widespread critical and audience acclaim in ANW's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary season. Geoff Elliott is thrilled to be directing another one of Stoppard's works. Elliott says, "I fell in love with Stoppard the first time I read *Arcadia*. I could not put it down. It was the same with *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*."

Elliott continues, "The play is a metaphor for our lives, from the time we're born until we die. The experience Rosencrantz and Guildenstern go through is really what we all go through. The play is dealing with life—which is a heavy description, but keep in mind, it's hilarious. Although it ends in their deaths, as we know from the title, getting there is an absolute hoot. At the end, it's not so much sad as it is mysterious: a true and incredibly crafted work of genius."

A Noise Within is not the only institution to recognize Stoppard's intellectual ingenuity this year. The United States Academic Decathlon has chosen *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* as the selected literature for their 2018-19 curriculum with the theme "The 1960s: A Transformational Decade." The nationwide program is focusing 40% of its entire literature curriculum on this play.

Clive Barnes, reviewing the play in 1967 in *The New York Times*, said, "*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* is a very funny play ... a most remarkable and thrilling play. In one bound, Mr. Stoppard is asking to be considered among the finest English speaking writers of our stage, for this is a work of fascinating distinction. It has the dust of thought about it and the particles glitter exactly in the theatrical air."

Elliott believes the thoughts provoked by Stoppard have an almost magical effect on the audience.

“Stoppard is such a genius that he is able to help us feel as though we are smarter than we probably are. By the end of watching a production of his, you really feel as though you understand these concepts and why they are important to our lives.”

Tickets for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, starting at \$25, are available online at [www.anoisewithin.org](http://www.anoisewithin.org) and by phone by calling 626-356-3121.

### **Symposium, Conversations, Pay What You Can**

The run of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* includes a symposium from a noted scholar at 6:45pm on October 10, 2018 and a post-show conversation on October 21, October 26, and November 9, 2018. *Pay What You Can* nights are October 10, 2018 at 7:30 pm and October 11, 2018 at 7:30pm.

The cast includes (\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States)

**Rosencrantz:** Kasey Mahaffy\*

**Gertrude:** Abby Craden\*

**Guildenstern:** Rafael Goldstein\*

**Ophelia:** Katie Rodriguez

**The Player:** Wesley Mann\*

**Ambassador:** Marc Leclerc

**Polonius:** Apollo Dukakis\*

**Tragedian:** Matt Jennings

**Alfred:** Sam Christian

**Tragedian:** Jonathan Fisher

**Claudius:** Jonathan Bray\*

**Tragedian:** Philip Rodriguez

**Hamlet:** Paul David Story\*

**Tragedian:** Oscar Emmanuel Fabela

**Horatio:** Michael Yapujian

†Designer is represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829 of the IATSE

The scenic design is by Frederica Nascimento†; costume design by Jenny Foldenauer; lighting design by Ken Booth; sound design by Jeff Gardner†; wig/make-up design by Klint Flowers; props master is Sydney Russell; projection designer is Kristin Campbell; costume assistant is Kaja Sondergaard; additional casting is Nicole Arbusto.

### **About *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead***

Living in London in 1963, Stoppard saw an uncut production of *Hamlet* at The Old Vic Theatre in London directed by Laurence Olivier and starring Peter O'Toole. His agent, Kenneth Ewing, mentioned that it would be interesting to explore what happens to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

In 1964, Stoppard wrote a one-act play called *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Meet King Lear* for a writers' conference in Berlin. Stoppard eventually developed the one-act into the full-length script, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, which premiered in performance at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. There, it received great critical acclaim. Upon hearing about the production, Kenneth Tynan, the literary manager at London's National Theatre, requested the script. In 1967, The National Theatre produced *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* at The Old Vic Theatre, and Stoppard became the youngest playwright to have a play performed there.

### **2018-2019 Season - *Let Me In***

“All of our 2018-19 offerings feature characters who are outliers – people who have blazed their own trail but nevertheless struggle for acknowledgement and acceptance,” says Geoff Elliott. “*Let Me In* isn't about a physical space, it's about the deeply human passion to be understood for who we are.”

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* is performing in repertory with *A Picture of Dorian Gray*, based on the novella by Oscar Wilde and adapted and directed by Michael Michetti (September 23 to November 16).

These plays are followed by the holiday season with ANW's annual *A Christmas Carol* (December 1-23, 2018). In the spring, Shakespeare's intimate tragedy *Othello* (February 10 – April 28, 2019) plays in rotating repertory with Tennessee Williams' haunting memory play *The Glass Menagerie* (February 24 – April 26, 2019) and Mary Zimmerman's retelling of the classic Greek myth of The Voyage of Jason and the Argonauts in *Argonautika* (March 20 – May 5, 2019). Following the spring repertory season, the popular and acclaimed ANW production of *Noises Off* (May 21 – June 9, 2019) returns. KCET is a media sponsor for A Noise Within's 2018-19 Season. A Noise Within's repertory theatre season is presented by the S. Mark Taper Foundation.

Julia Rodriguez-Elliott says, "Whether they're in self-exile (*The Glass Menagerie*), or shunned (*Othello*), or led astray by hedonistic desires (*A Picture of Dorian Gray*), or thrust there by the fickle cruelty of fate (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*) or the gods (*Argonautika*), all of these characters on the margins of society are fascinating and deeply resonant with anyone who has ever felt left out."

### **About A Noise Within**

A Noise Within, which celebrated its 25th Anniversary in the 2016-17 Season, was called "an oasis for those who love classic stories" by *Los Angeles Times*, and is a leading regional producer based in Pasadena, CA. ANW's award-winning resident company practices a rotating repertory model at their state-of-the-art, 283-seat performing space. This venue, established in 2011, has allowed ANW to expand its audience, surpassing its previous box office, subscription, and attendance records each year.

In addition to producing world-class performances of classical theatre, the organization runs robust education programs committed to inspiring diverse audiences of all ages. Helmed by Producing Artistic Directors Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, who hold MFAs from San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre, A Noise Within truly delivers CLASSIC THEATRE, MODERN MAGIC.

<http://www.anoisewithin.org>

### **Calendar Listing: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead***

by Tom Stoppard

Directed by Geoff Elliott

At A Noise Within, 3352 E Foothill Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91107

#### **Performances:**

Sunday, October 7 at 2pm

Wednesday, October 10 at 7:30pm (*Pay What You Can and Symposium*)

Thursday, October 11 at 7:30pm (*Pay What You Can*)

Friday, October 12 at 8pm

Saturday, October 13 at 8pm (*Opening*)

Sunday, October 14 at 2pm

Sunday, October 21 at 2pm (*Post-Show Conversation*)

Thursday, October 25 at 7:30pm

Friday, October 26 at 8pm (*Post-Show Conversation*)

Saturday, October 27 at 2pm

Saturday, October 27 at 8pm

Sunday, November 4 at 2pm

Sunday, November 4 at 7pm

Friday, November 9 at 8pm (*Post-Show Conversation*)

Saturday, November 10 at 2pm

Saturday, November 10 at 8pm

Saturday, November 17 at 2pm

Saturday, November 17 at 8pm

Sunday, November 18 at 2pm

Sunday, November 18 at 7pm

## **Tickets and information:**

**Website:** [www.anoisewithin.org](http://www.anoisewithin.org). Phone: 626-356-3121

**Regular Prices:** Single Tickets from \$25, Student Rush with ID an hour before performance \$20.

**Pay What You Can:** Wednesday, October 10 at 7:30pm and Thursday, October 11 at 7:30pm – all tickets remaining are *Pay What You Can*, cash only, exact change appreciated, at the box office on day of performance after 2pm. Limit two per person. Suggested price of \$10.

**Sunday Rush:** November 4 and November 18 at 7pm – all tickets remaining are \$25, available online after 12am day of performance with the code SUNDAYRUSH or at the box office, cash or credit, after 2pm day of performance.

**Groups (10 or more):** Adults from \$25 to \$50 a ticket, up to 35% off; Students from \$18/tickets. Call 626-356-3114 for more information.

## **About Tom Stoppard**

Tom Stoppard was born as Tomáš Straußler on July 3, 1937 in Zlín, Czechoslovakia. His parents were Martha Becková and Eugen Straußler, who worked as a doctor for a shoe manufacturing company. In 1939, when Stoppard was two years old, Hitler's forces invaded Czechoslovakia. Stoppard had Jewish relatives, and in order to escape discriminatory laws aimed at restricting the freedoms of racial and ethnic minorities, his family fled to Singapore. However, in 1942, Japan invaded Singapore, and Stoppard's family was once again faced with the decision to flee or to stay. Stoppard, his brother, and his mother fled to Darjeeling, India, while his father remained in Singapore to work. Stoppard's father died in Singapore not long after his family evacuated.

In India, Stoppard attended Mount Hermon, an American school, where he learned English. In 1946, while in Darjeeling, Stoppard's mother met Kenneth Stoppard, a major in the British Army. The two married, and the family moved to Derbyshire, England. After the marriage and the move, both Tom and his brother assumed Stoppard as their last name.

Stoppard continued his education in England until, at the age of seventeen, he landed a job as a reporter at the Western Daily Press, a newspaper in Bristol. In 1960, six years after beginning his career as a journalist, Stoppard moved to London to pursue a career as a playwright. During his first year in London, Stoppard wrote his first play *Walk on the Water*. This play caught the attention of Kenneth Ewing, who became Stoppard's agent.

After the success of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Tom Stoppard continued to write plays to great critical acclaim. In 1972, his play *Jumpers* premiered at The National Theatre, and in 1974, his play *Travesties* premiered with the Royal Shakespeare Company. *Travesties* then transferred to New York in 1975, where it won the Tony Award for Best Play. In 1977, Stoppard began to write stories centered on human rights and the treatment of Czech dissidents during World War II in his plays *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* and *Professional Foul*.

Since then, Stoppard has established himself as a writer whose fusion of intellectual thoughts and theories with emotion packs a powerful punch. This fusion is seen particularly in his 1993 work, *Arcadia* (staged at A Noise Within in 2016). Stoppard, whose most recent play *The Hard Problem* premiered in 2015, continues to distinguish himself as one of the most prolific contemporary playwrights.