

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
Presents

Parfumerie

Adapted by E.P. Dowdall from the Hungarian play *Illatszertar* by Miklos Laszlo
Directed by Mark Brokaw

Richard Schiff, Eddie Kaye Thomas, Deborah Ann Woll and Arye Gross
lead ensemble cast

Opens Tonight!

Now through December 22 at Bram Goldsmith Theater

Production will be complemented with the Exhibition

Timeless Scents: 1370-2013

A history of iconic fragrances through the ages created especially for The Wallis
by Chandler Burr, former *New York Times* scent critic

Lovelace Studio Theater

(Beverly Hills, CA – December 4, 2013) The romantic comedy *Parfumerie*, adapted by E.P. Dowdall from the Hungarian play *Illatszertar* by Miklos Laszlo, will have a rare revival as the first theater production of the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts (Lou Moore, Executive Director), for a limited engagement now through December 22. The production, directed by Mark Brokaw, who is currently represented on Broadway with *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*, centers on a romance that unfolds through love letters, a perfect homage to the historic Beverly Hills Post Office.

Set during Christmastime, 1937 in Budapest Hungary, the play centers around two bickering employees at an upscale boutique, who have been building an anonymous romantic relationship through letters to one another for two years. This popular comedy has been a favorite in Europe, but is rarely seen in the United States. Written by Hungarian émigré Miklos Laszlo, *Parfumerie's* charming plot has been adapted to film several times, including *The Shop Around the Corner*, *In the Good Old Summertime*, and *You've Got Mail*, and as the Broadway musical *She Loves Me*.

The cast of *Parfumerie* is lead by Richard Schiff (Toby Ziegler on "The West Wing"), Eddie Kaye Thomas (*American Dad*, *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle*, *Harold and Kumar 3D Christmas*), Deborah Ann Woll (Jessica Hamby on "True Blood") and Arye Gross (TV: *Castle*, *Six Feet Under*).

The cast also includes Cheryl Lynn Bowers (world premieres of Adam Rapp, Steve Martin plays); Adam Farabee (Berkeley Rep *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* SF Bay Area Theatre Critics Award); Andy Goldenberg (films: *Jack and Jill*, *Austin and Ally*); Linda Griffin (Broadway: *The Drowsy Chaperone*; tour: *A Chorus Line*; *42nd Street*, LA: *Beauty and the Beast*), Jacob Kemp (Signature Theatre *Greenwood*; Yale), Jackson Moran (Pearl Theatre Company, Yale Repertory Theatre); Tony Pasqualini (South Coast Rep, Seattle Rep,

Intiman, *Mad Men*, “Law and Order,” “West Wing”); Ariana Shore (Broadway: *The Performers*); Jayne Taini (Pasadena Playhouse’s *Enchanted April*, Mark Taper Forum’s *Cider House Rules*); Jill Van Velzer (Pasadena Playhouse *The Heiress*, also *The Matchmaker*, *Harvey*, *Boeing Boeing*, *She Loves Me*); and Matt Walton (off-B’way Berger in *Hair*; “One Life to Live,” “All My Children”).

One of America’s most accomplished directors, Mark Brokaw is currently represented on Broadway with *Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella*; he also directed the original New York productions of Lynda Barry’s *The Good Times are Killing Me*, Douglas Carter Beane’s *As Bees in Honey Drown*, Lisa Kron’s *2.5 Mile Ride*, Kenneth Lonergan’s *This is Our Youth* and *Lobby Hero*, Paula Vogel’s *How I Learned to Drive* and *The Long Christmas Ride Home*, which helped establish both the playwrights and the plays.

Mark Brokaw also directed New York and Broadway productions of *After Miss Julie*, *Cry-Baby*, *The Constant Wife*, *Reckless* and New York premieres of works by David Auburn, Eric Begosian, Charles Busch (*Olive and the Bitter Herbs*), Keith Bunin, Julia Cho, Kevin Elyot, Craig Lucas (*The Dying Gaul*), Eduardo Machado, Nicky Silver, and Wendy Wasserstein. Regional work includes at Yale Repertory, Guthrie, Seattle Rep, Center Theatre Group, Huntington, La Jolla Playhouse, Steppenwolf, Sundance Theatre Lab, Kennedy Center Sondheim Celebration, and the O’Neill Theatre Conference. He has also directed at London’s Donmar Warehouse, Dublin’s Gate Theatre, and the Sydney Opera House. He is the artistic director of the Yale Institute for Musical Theatre and the artistic associate at Roundabout Theatre in New York.

Brokaw has assembled a Broadway design and creative team including scenic designer Allen Moyer (Broadway: *After Miss Julie*, *Thurgood*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *Grey Gardens*, *12 Angry Men*); costume designer Michael Krass (Broadway: *The Lyons*, *After Miss Julie*, *After the Night and the Music*, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*); lighting designer David Lander (Broadway: *The Winslow Boy*, *The Heiress*, *The Lyons*, *33 Variations*, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*); and sound designer Jon Gottlieb (*Master Class*, *QED*, *George Gershwin Alone*).

Miklos Laszlo (originally Nicholas Leitner May 20, 1903 - April 19, 1973) is best remembered for *Illatszertar*, also known as *Parfumerie*, which was the basis for the films *The Shop Around the Corner*, *In the Good Old Summertime*, and *You’ve Got Mail* and the Broadway musical *She Loves Me*. Born in Hungary in 1903, Laszlo was raised in a riches-to-rags entertainment family during wartime Budapest. In his younger years he knew playwright Ferenc Molnár whose *Liliom* became Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Carousel*, and in his young adult life was both a budding playwright and unexpectedly the sole provider for his mother and eight siblings when his father died suddenly. He turned to a host of jobs – candy-maker, collar and necktie salesman and agent, script typist, clerk and even a petroleum factory worker to help raise the family, all while continuing to write.

Just into his thirties, his first three-act play, *Legboldogabb Ember (The Happiest Man)*, an ironically titled play about an embittered factory worker and his interior dream-life, won him the prestigious Hungarian Royal Academy Award for Literature in 1934, the Hungarian equivalent of the American Pulitzer Prize. A Jew, he left Hungary behind in 1938 for America, and was able to establish himself in the lower Manhattan east side Hungarian community; a year later he married Florence Herrman, an aspiring young actress and the daughter of a successful entrepreneur -- a Cunard Line travel agent, landlord and financial exchange merchant.

The English language *Parfumerie* had its premiere in 2009 with the Asolo Repertory Theatre in Sarasota, in a new adaptation by E.P. Dowdall, Laszlo’s nephew, which took the property back to its original form exploring with equal emphasis, both the story of the young lovers as well as the troubled marriage of the shop owner. It has also been produced by the Toronto Soulpepper Theatre Company. Laszlo’s screenplay *Katherine* became the 1948 MGM film *The Big City* starring Margaret O’Brien, Robert Preston, Danny Thomas and George Murphy. His play *St. Lazar’s Pharmacy* received an American production, starring actress Miriam Hopkins; *Pharmacy* toured all over the United States in Canada.

As a special event, an exhibition on perfume entitled *Timeless Scents: 1370-2013*, a history of iconic fragrances through the ages is being created especially for The Wallis by Chandler Burr, former *New York Times* scent critic. The exhibition will be on view in the Lovelace Studio Theater during the engagement of *Parfumerie*.

Calendar Listing for *Parfumerie*

Venue: Bram Goldsmith Theater, Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Performance Now through December 22, 2013

Schedule: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday Evenings at 8 pm
Saturdays at 3 pm and 8 pm; Sundays at 2 pm and 7pm

Tickets: **Prices:** \$49.00-\$129.00

In Person – Wallis Annenberg Center Box Office,
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

By Phone - 310-746-4000

Online – www.thewallis.org

Cast: Cheryl Lynn Bowers, Adam Farabee, Andy Goldenberg, Linda Griffin, Arye Gross, Jacob Kemp, Jackson Moran, Tony Pasqualini, Richard Schiff, Ariana Shore, Jayne Taini, Eddie Kaye Thomas, Jill Van Velzer, Matt Walton, Deborah Ann Woll

Note: Publicity **PHOTOS** available at www.thewallis.org/press