

STRAWDOG



THEATRE COMPANY

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STRAWDOG THEATRE COMPANY **ANNOUNCES 20th ANNIVERSARY SEASON**

**Features Friel's Irish Drama "Aristocrats" Directed by Steppenwolf's Snyder;
Shakespeare's "Richard III" Helmed by Artistic Director Dimond; and the
World Premiere of Brett Neveu's "Old Town" About Chicago Politics**

Strawdog Theatre Company of Chicago celebrates their 20th anniversary season of presenting "*the whole wide world in a little black box*," by presenting a three-show mainstage season, plus on-going late night offerings, at their space in the heart of Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood at 3829 N. Broadway Ave. (Red Line Sheridan stop; 36-Broadway and 80-Irving Park buses; \$5 honor parking at Horace Greeley School, 832 W. Sheridan, weekends after 5 p.m.). Season flex-passes are \$50 for all three season shows (attend any night during run except gala), and \$100 for all three gala benefit performances (galas include post-show reception with refreshments). Adult single ticket prices are \$20 (single gala night tickets are \$40 each); preview, student and senior tickets are \$10 (with ID); and \$15 tickets are available for groups of ten or more. Mainstage tickets also offer FREE entrance to Strawdog Late Night shows following each regular Friday or Saturday performance, or Late Night tickets can be purchased alone for \$5. Tickets are available at 773-528-9696 and www.strawdog.org

Strawdog Artistic Director Nic Dimond said, "*Strawdog's 20th anniversary season is an exploration of the dynasty. This season's three plays are all deeply focused on the idea of power, and specifically how it moves through families from generation to generation. With our signature blend of brains and brawn, Strawdog continues to aim for that sweet spot where gritty, Chicago-style acting meets high-concept theatricality, and these selections hit that mark, with our slightly surreal take on the "Irish Chekhov," a cool and cruel look at one of Shakespeare's most cherished bad boys, and a world premiere musical about machine politics in the Big City.*"

The 2007-2008 Strawdog schedule is as follows (descriptions following – each show runs Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 7 p.m., for about two hours with one intermission):

- "**Aristocrats**" by Brian Friel, directed by Rick Snyder, runs October 11–November 17, 2007 (previews October 11 and 12 at 8 p.m., gala benefit on October 13 at 7 p.m., opens October 14 at 7 p.m.)
- "**Richard III**" by William Shakespeare, directed by Nic Dimond, runs February 21–March 29, 2008 (previews February 21 and 22 at 8 p.m., gala benefit on February 23 at 7 p.m., opens February 24 at 7 p.m.)
- "**Old Town**" by Brett Neveu, directed by Kyle Hamman, runs April 24–May 31, 2008 (previews April 24 and 25 at 8 p.m., gala benefit on April 26 at 7 p.m., opens April 27 at 7 p.m.)
- **Strawdog Late Night** features a variety of programming ("*The Game Show Show and Stuff*," live music, comedy, improv, roasts) in the newly-renovated Hugen Hall Cabaret space within the theatre, following each Friday and Saturday night mainstage performance at 11 p.m. Admission for Late Night is free with paid mainstage ticket (or \$5 for just the Late Night), and there is a cash bar available. Visit the Web site at www.strawdog.org for performance schedule.
- **Strawdog Mardi Gras Casino Night** will be held on Saturday, February 9, 2008, 7 p.m. – 2 a.m., at the theatre, \$20 admission (for 21 and over) includes live cash gambling on blackjack, roulette, craps and Texas Hold 'Em poker.

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Strawdog welcomes guest artist Rick Snyder of Steppenwolf Theatre Company as director of Brian Friel's drama **"Aristocrats,"** the story of an Irish family living in the shadow of a past that's too glorious to be true, and wrestling with a present too treacherous to navigate.

The second production of Strawdog's 20th anniversary season is Shakespeare's **"Richard III,"** directed by Artistic Director Nic Dimond (who has directed the theatre's Shakespeare shows **"Julius Caesar"** and **"Measure for Measure,"** and most recently Shepard's **"A Lie of the Mind"**). This mean new cutting of classic story follows a man who carves his way through his family, cutting every throat that stands between him and the throne.

The season will close with the world premiere of Brett Neveu's "play with music" **"Old Town,"** directed by Strawdog ensemble member Kyle Hamman, music by Mikhail Fiksel. Its election night in Cook County and the back-room dealings of the Chicago political machine collide with the messy personal politics of one candidate's troubled family. Neveu (pronounced **"NEH-view"**) wrote **"Fantastic Phenomenon," "Milford and Dan," "Radio Man"** and **"Radio Woman"** for the Strawdog Radio Theatre series in 2006.

Strawdog Theatre Company was formed in 1988 by a group of actors who had performed together in a production of Euripides's **"Helen"** at a (now defunct) theatre on the west side. The group took their name from Sam Peckinpah's movie **"Straw Dogs"** (**Theatresaurus Rex** was, thankfully, the runner-up), and they produced their first show, Len Jenkin's **"Five of Us"** at a (now defunct) space in Bucktown. At the time, the **Chicago Reader** said "Strawdog Theatre Company's inaugural production brings ... truth home with a vengeance," and **Skyline Chicago** added "The Strawdog troupe shows us what an ensemble can do." Twenty years later, Strawdog Theatre Company has survived the ups and downs of Chicago theatre, and is still dedicated to bringing the truth to audiences through the committed work of an award-winning ensemble of actors and designers.

Strawdog Theatre Company is supported in part by the **Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Alphawood Foundation, the Illinois Arts Council (a state agency), Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation,** and the annual support of businesses and individuals. Strawdog has received numerous Joseph Jefferson Citations, including awards for **"Hurlyburly"** (1999) – Best Ensemble, Best Actor Michael Dobbs, Best Supporting Actress Stephanie Manglaras, Best Supporting Actor Bart Petty; **"Detective Story"** (2003) – Best Production, Best Director Shade Murray, Best Ensemble, Best Set Design Ray Vlcek; **"Three Sisters"** (2005) – Best Set Design Brian Sidney Bembridge; and **"Marathon 33"** (2007) – Best Ensemble.

The current Strawdog ensemble includes **Dan Apodaca, Jennifer Avery, Abigail Boucher, Don Cardiff, Erin Carlson, Michael Dailey, Anita Deely, John Ferrick, Mikhail Fiksel, Aly Renne Greaves, Carmine Grisolia, Christopher Hainsworth, Kyle Hamman, Erik Hellman, Tom Hickey, Shannon Hoag, Anderson Lawfer, Sean Mallary, Kat McDonnell, Gregor Mortis, Stacy Parker Hirsch, Kevin Richey, John Henry Roberts, Noah Simon, Jamie Vann and James Anthony Zoccoli.** Notable Strawdog alums include **Elizabeth Auman** (Victory Gardens), **Alexandra Billings** (actor, cabaret star), **Nancy Bishop** (casting director), **Chrisanne Blankenship** (director), **Becca Cardo** (voice-over artist), **Kristin Caskey** (Fox Theatricals), **Scott Cummins** (actor, director), and **James Denton** (**"Desperate Housewives"**). Strawdog supports Mookie Jam, a Chicago-based, not-for-profit organization created to assist artists living with multiple sclerosis - www.mookiejam.org

From fresh takes on the classics and kitchen-sink dramas to inventive world premieres, Strawdog Theatre Company is committed to presenting great stories. We tell these stories to provoke the important questions and excite the imagination of our audiences. And we use our amazing, intimate space to fully immerse people into the unique worlds that we create for each one of our productions. Founded in 1988, the Strawdog ensemble has consistently produced shows built on authentic human connections, and our comfortable 70-seat home in Lakeview is perfect for offering our audience a quintessential Chicago storefront theatre experience. *"The whole wide world in a little black box."*

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