

American Repertory Theatre

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American Repertory Theatre
in association with the Loeb Drama Center
presents the world premiere of

***The Communist Dracula Pageant
by Americans, for Americans
with hallucinations, phosphorescence, and bears***

by Anne Washburn
directed by Anne Kauffman
October 18 — November 9
Zero Arrow Theatre

Cambridge, Mass. — The American Repertory Theatre presents the world premiere of Anne Washburn's *The Communist Dracula Pageant* directed by Anne Kauffman, at the A.R.T.'s Zero Arrow Theatre, corner of Arrow Street and Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge. The production begins performances on Saturday, October 18 and runs through Sunday, November 9; it will be available for press viewing from Wednesday, October 22.

"History, peopled with our faces, is not our story. Do not hope to find yourself in history. Look for yourself only in the terrible recesses of your own heart."

— *The Communist Dracula Pageant*

Anne Washburn is one of the most exciting new voices in the American theatre. Her plays are feasts of imagination, with vivid characters, storylines that veer off in surprising directions, a wry sense of comedy, and a playful love of language. *The Communist Dracula Pageant* is a spectacular example. Drawing from trial transcripts and from Romania's rich folklore, Washburn dramatizes the final days of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu, the autocrats who ruled Romania from 1965-1989. This romp across Romanian myth and history exists in three time periods: 1989, when the Ceausescus' dictatorship fell; 1976, when the dictators, at the height of their powers, commissioned kitschy pageants to celebrate the glory of the Romanian nation; and the fifteenth century, during the reign of Vlad Tepes, the historical Count Dracula. As protesters gather in Timisoara, Nicolae Ceausescu orders the army to fire on the dissidents. Following this fateful decision, the country unites against the dictator and his wife. The Ceausescus fight to preserve their authority, but they cannot halt their rapid descent from power. They are imprisoned, tried, and executed within days. The events of the Christmas Revolution that overthrew the Ceausescus are woven together with scenes featuring Vlad Tepes and with recreations of the elaborate pageants the Ceausescus staged in the 1970s to celebrate the glory of the Romanian nation.

The play's full title is *The Communist Dracula Pageant — by Americans, for Americans; a play about the Romanian Revolution of 1989 with hallucinations, phosphorescence, and bears*. It reminds us that although Washburn has set it during the insanity of the Romanian dictatorship, the play really transcends national boundaries. Its theme — the shaping of historical events and current affairs for political gain — is universal, and will have particular resonance for us during our own election season.

The professional acting company includes A.R.T. actors **Thomas Derrah** as Nicolae Ceausescu, **Karen MacDonald** as Elena Ceausescu, **Will LeBow** as Vlad Tepes, and **Remo Airdi** in multiple roles; they are joined by **John Kuntz** and **Matt Maher**. A.R.T. Institute's second-year actors **Kaaron Briscoe**, **Sheila Carrasco**, **Shawn Cody**, **Roger Kuch**, **James Senti**, and **Josh Stammel** complete the cast. Set design is by **Mimi Lien**, costume design by **Christal Weatherly**, lighting design by **Tyler Micoeau**, music by **Michael Friedman**, sound design by **David Remedios**, and movement by **Doug Elkins**.

Anne Washburn's plays include *I Have Loved Strangers* (included in an edition of New York Theater Review, edited by Brook Stowe), *Apparition* (published in New Downtown Now; University of Minnesota Press, edited by Young Jean Lee and Mac Wellman), *The Ladies*, and *The Internationalist* (the Gate Theatre in London, published by Playscripts, Inc.), as well as a translation of Euripides' *Orestes*. Her plays have been produced by 13P, Cherry Lane Theater, The Civilians, Clubbed Thumb, Dixon Place, Naked Angels, and the Vineyard Theater in New

York. She had workshops with Kretakor, New York Theater Workshop, The Public Theater, Soho Rep, and the Williamstown Theater Festival. Ms. Washburn is an Associated Artist with Obie award winning groups 13P, The Civilians, and New Georges, and is a member of New Dramatists. She received her MFA from NYU and is currently working on commissions from Yale Repertory Theatre and The Civilians.

Director **Anne Kaufman**'s most recent credits include *God's Ear* at Vineyard Theater and New Georges Theatre; Anne Marie Healey's *Have You Seen Steve Steven* at 13P; Adam Bock's *Thugs* (Obie Award for directing), SoHo Repertory; John Patrick Shanley's *Doubt* and Lisa Loomer's *Expecting Isabel* at Asolo Repertory Theatre in Florida; Jordan Harrison's *Act a Lady* at the Humana Festival of New Plays; *Sides: The Fear is Real* at the Culture Project; Adam Bock's *Typographer's Dream* at Encore Theater, San Francisco; Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas' *The Loyal Opposition* at New York Theater Workshop; Karen Hartman's *Hang Ten* at Women's Project & Productions; *The Children's Hour* (Big Easy Award) at Loyola University; and Anne Washburn's *The Ladies* with The Civilians at Dixon Place and the Cherry Lane Theater. Upcoming directing projects include Dan LeFranc's *60 Miles to Silverlake* with P73 and Soho Rep and David Adjmi's *Stunning* at LCT3, Lincoln Center. Ms. Kaufman has also worked at Playwrights Horizons, New York Theater Workshop, CSC, The Vineyard, The Public, Rattlestick, Clubbed Thumb, American Conservatory Theater, The Guthrie Theater, and the Sundance Institute. She is an alumna of the Soho Rep Writers and Directors Lab, Lincoln Center Directors Lab, The Drama League of New York, a founding member of The Civilians, and was a 2003-2004 New Dramatist Resident Director. She is also on the directing faculty at NYU in the Playwrights Horizons Theater Studio. She received her MFA in directing from UCSD.

Brief biographies of the Company:

Remo Airdi has appeared in fifty-five productions at the A.R.T. Performed at Hartford Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Geffen Playhouse, American Conservatory Theatre, Walnut St. Theatre, Prince Music Theater, Actors' Theatre of Louisville, Serious Fun Festival, Moscow Art Theatre, Taipei International Arts Festival, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company.

Thomas Derrah has appeared in over 100 roles at the A.R.T. over 27 years receiving a number of awards, has toured with the Company across the U.S., and throughout Europe, Canada, Israel, Taiwan, Japan, and Moscow. He was seen on Broadway in twenty-seven roles in *Jackie: An American Life*, as well as off-Broadway, in regional theatres and local companies. He is the recipient of a number of awards from local critics and the Los Angeles DramaLogue Award (for title role in *Shlemiel the First*).

John Kuntz last appeared in *Copenhagen* at A.R.T. He is a founding company member of the Actors Shakespeare Project, appeared in New York in his own work *Jump/Rope*; his one-person shows *Starfuckers*, (Elliot Norton Award and New York International Fringe Festival Award); and *Freaks!*. Recent Boston credits include the title role in *Mr. Marmalade*, numerous productions of *The SantaLand Diaries* (IRNE Award Best Solo Performance), the New England premiere of *The Pillowman* (Katurian), *Waiting for Godot*, and the title role of *Scapin*. His plays *Sing Me To Sleep* and *Freaks!* both received Elliot Norton Awards for "Outstanding Fringe Production," *Jasper Lake* received both the Michael Kanin and Paula Vogel National Playwriting Awards, with productions at the Kennedy Center and the New York Fringe Festival.

Will LeBow has appeared at the A.R.T. in fifty-one productions. Other credits include The Huntington Theatre, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Gloucester Stage Company, and the Boston Pops premiere of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (narrator). He appears on television in the Cable Ace Award-winning animated series *Dr. Katz, Professional Therapist* as the voice of Stanley.

Karen MacDonald is a founding member of the A.R.T., has appeared in sixty-three productions, and received a number of Elliot Norton and IRNE Awards for her work. She directed *Dressed Up! Wiggled Out!*, for Boston Playwrights Theatre, played in numerous productions in local theatres, and nationwide at the Alley Theatre (Company member), Goodman Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, Hartford Stage, and Philadelphia Festival of New Plays.

Matthew Maher's recent credits include the world premiere of Eric Bogosian's *1+1* at New York Stage and Film; other regional credits include *A Seagull In The Hamptons* at the McCarter, and *The Pillowman* at Berkeley Rep. New York credits include *Richard III* (The Public), *Coriolanus* (Theater For A New Audience) *The World Over* (Playwrights Horizons), and *Molly's Dream* (Soho Rep) among others. He received an OBIE Award for the Foundry Theater production of *The Race of the Ark Tattoo* and is an Associate Artist of The Civilians. Films include *Gone Baby Gone*, *Jersey Girl*, *Dogma*. Television: *John From Cincinnati* (HBO, recurring role), *The Jury*, *Deadline*, and all three *Law and Order* series.

The performance schedule of *The Communist Dracula Pageant* is as follows: October 18, 24, 25, 31, November 1, 7, 8, 14, 15 at 8:00pm; October 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30, November 2, 4, 5, 6, 9 at 7:30pm; October 19, 25, 26, November 1, 2, 8, 9 at 2:00pm. Special performances for **Out at A.R.T.** for the GLBT community will take place on Friday, October 31 (Halloween night!) and **Under 35 Night** on Thursday, October 23. The bar will remain open following both performances on these dates.

Single ticket prices range from \$25-\$79, with a \$10 discount for Seniors. Student discounts include the **\$60 Student Pass** for 5 performances (at \$12 a seat); single tickets at \$25 advance purchase, and \$15 day of performance; **Theatre for the price of a movie** — the box office matches a current movie ticket stub with a ticket at the same price for students with valid IDs. Other discounts include **50 @ 15 at noon** (\$15 tickets on sale at noon on the day of performance; in person only, based on availability) and **Pay What You Can** (50 tickets available for every Saturday matinee performance of the season at the Loeb Drama Center for patrons to purchase at whatever amount they can afford (based on availability)). **Group rates**, with extra savings for senior citizens and student groups are also available.

The balance of the A.R.T. 2008-09 Season includes *Aurélia's Oratorio*, written and directed by Victoria Thierree Chaplin and starring her daughter Aurélia Thierree (November 28 — December 28, Loeb Stage); *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov, directed by János Szász (January 10 — February 1, Loeb Stage); *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett, directed by Marcus Stern (February 14 — March 15, Loeb Stage); the world premiere of *Trojan Barbie* by Christine Evans, directed by Carmel O'Reilly (March 28 — April 22, Zero Arrow Theatre); and *Romance* by David Mamet, directed by Scott Zigler (May 9 - 31, Loeb Stage).

The A.R.T. is offering various plans for season subscriptions — including **choose-your-own** and **flex** plans — with a host of benefits, including free Zipcar membership; free tickets to A.R.T. Institute productions; discounts on parking, on books at the Harvard Coop, fine dining, and tickets to other theatres; a *child-care series* (Saturday matinee), and *pre-performance* and *post-performance discussion series* (Saturday matinees).

To learn more about this production and the A.R.T.'s upcoming season, log onto the A.R.T. website at www.amrep.org or call the *A.R.T. InfoLine* at (617) 547-8300. The *InfoLine* is also available 24 hours a day to provide directions to the theatre; to order brochures, calendars, and newsletters; and to allow direct access to the A.R.T. Box Office (hours are noon to curtain time on performance days, noon to 5 pm on non-performance days, closed on Mondays).

The AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATRE (A.R.T.) is one of the country's most celebrated resident theatres and the winner of numerous awards — including the Tony Award and the Pulitzer Prize, and locally numerous Elliot Norton and I.R.N.E. Awards; it was recently named one of the top three theatres in the country by *Time* magazine. Over its twenty-eight-year history the A.R.T. has welcomed major American and international theatre artists whose singular visions generate and define the theatre's work, presenting a varied repertoire that includes new plays, progressive productions of classical texts, and collaborations between artists from many disciplines. The Company has performed throughout the country, and worldwide in twenty-one cities in sixteen countries on four continents. This fall the organization welcomes its new Artistic Director, Diane Paulus, who begins plans for its 2009-10 Season, the Company's 30th in Cambridge.

The A.R.T., located at the Loeb Drama Center at 64 Brattle Street, and at the Zero Arrow Theatre at the corner of Arrow Street and Massachusetts Avenue, Harvard Square, Cambridge, are accessible to persons with special needs and to those requiring wheelchair seating or first-floor restrooms. Deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons can also reach the Theatre by calling the toll-free N.E. Telephone Relay Center at 1-800-439-2370.

Public transportation and discount parking are available nearby.

**AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATRE
FACT SHEET**

WHAT:

THE COMMUNIST DRACULA PAGEANT

by Anne Washburn

Directed by Anne Kauffman

Set Design by Mimi Lien

Costume Design by Christal Weatherly

Lighting Design by Tyler Nicolaeu

Sound Design by David Remedios

Original Music by Michael Friedman

Movement by Doug Elkins

CAST

Nicolae Ceausescu

Thomas Derrah *

Elena Ceausescu/Pageant Elena

Karen MacDonald *

Vlad Tepes/The Functionary

Will LeBow *

Ensemble: Remo Airaldi *, Kaaron Briscoe, Sheila Carrasco, Shawn Cody, Roger Kuch, John Kuntz*, Matt Maher*, James Senti, Josh Stammel, Pageanteers

(*) Members of Actors' Equity Association.

WHEN:

Sa Oct 18 8pm (preview)

Su Oct 19 2pm (preview)

Tu Oct 21 7:30pm (preview)

We Oct 22 7:30pm Press opening

Th Oct 23 7:30pm **Under 35 Night**

Fri Oct 24 8:00pm

Sa Oct 25 2pm & 8:00pm (Playback: post play discussion after matinee performance)

Su Oct 26 2pm & 7:30pm

Tu Oct 28 7:30pm

We Oct 29 7:30pm

Th Oct 30 7:30pm (Pre-play discussion at 6:30pm)

Fri Oct 31 8:00 pm **Out at A.R.T.**

Sa Nov 1 2pm & 8:00pm (Playback: post play discussion after matinee performance)

Su Nov 2 2pm & 7:30pm (Pre-play discussion at 1pm)

Tu Nov 4 7:30pm

We Nov 5 7:30pm (Pre-play discussion at 6:30pm)

Thu Nov 6 7:30pm

Fri Nov 7 8:00pm

Sa Nov 8 2pm & 8:00pm (Playback: post play discussion after matinee performance)

Su Nov 9 2pm & 7:30pm

WHERE: Zero Arrow Theatre, corner of Arrow Street and Massachusetts Avenue, Harvard Square.

TICKETS: \$25-79

Students: \$25. Student rush \$15

Seniors \$10 off ticket price.

Tickets may be charged to American Express, Visa, or MasterCard.

Group discounts are available.

Box Office Phone and A.R.T. InfoLine: (617) 547-8300 www.amrep.org

E-mail address: press@amrep.org **Web address:** www.amrep.org

Production photos of *The Communist Dracula Pageant* can be downloaded from
www.amrep.org/media beginning October 13.