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M E D I A R E L E A S E

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre presents
An "Alan Bennett Festival" featuring

TALKING HEADS

by Alan Bennett

October 18 – November 4, 2007

Cabot Theatre – Broadway Theatre Center

Milwaukee, WI ... Milwaukee Chamber Theatre continues its 33rd season with the Milwaukee premiere of Alan Bennett's **TALKING HEADS**, October 18 – November 4, 2007. This unique monologue series will be presented as an "Alan Bennett Festival" with two separate **TALKING HEADS** presentations (Series A and Series B) performed on alternating evenings in repertory format.

Northern England, the 1980's: Meet Miss Fozzard, who has struck up a rather peculiar arrangement with her new chiropodist; Susan, the vicar's wife, who has a bad habit of raiding the cabinet for communion wine; and Graham, who discovers he is jealous of his 72-year-old mother's beau. Meet a total of six quirky characters in the intimate act of revealing their humorous, all-too-human foibles and their aching hopeful desires.

These award-winning solo pieces – extraordinary portraits of ordinary people – have been delicately crafted by Alan Bennett, acclaimed author of **THE HISTORY BOYS**, 2006 Tony Award® winner for Best Play. **TALKING HEADS** began in 1987 as a series of six monologues written for BBC television. Their popularity led to acclaimed radio and live theatre performances and prompted playwright Alan Bennett to write a second 'season' of six additional monologues which make up the **TALKING HEADS** collection.

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Milwaukee Chamber Theatre presents the Milwaukee premiere of TALKING HEADS as an “Alan Bennett Festival.” Six monologues from the collection have been chosen for performance and divided into two groups of three (Series A and Series B) that will be performed on alternating evenings in repertory format. Series A will consist of *Her Big Chance*, *A Lady of Letters* and *Bed Among the Lentils*. Series B will feature *A Chip in the Sugar*, *The Hand of God* and *Miss Fozzard Finds Her Feet*.

Six talented Milwaukee actors, **Wendi Bazar**, **Laurie Birmingham**, **Angela Iannone**, **Raeleen McMillion**, **Norman Moses** and **Ruth Schudson** will take on these remarkable solo pieces. MCT Producing Artistic Director **C. Michael Wright** will direct both series in the “Alan Bennett Festival.”

Playwright Alan Bennett earned a degree in history at Oxford University. He first appeared onstage in 1960 in a piece he co-wrote with Peter Cook, Dudley Moore and Jonathan Miller, the revue BEYOND THE FRINGE (produced by MCT in 1984 and 1997). Since then, Bennett has worked as an actor and author, writing plays, television plays, novels and translations. His stage plays include FORTY YEARS ON, HABEAS CORPUS, THE OLD COUNTRY, GETTING ON, ENJOY, AN ENGLISHMAN ABROAD, A QUESTION OF ATTRIBUTION, an adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS, THE MADNESS OF GEORGE III and THE LADY IN THE VAN. His work for television includes *A Day Out*, *A Visit from Miss Prothero*, *Afternoon Off*, *One Fine Day*, *Intensive Care*, *Our Winnie*, *Say Something Happened*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *The Insurance Man*, *102 Boulevard Haussmann* and two collections of *Talking Heads* monologues. The original collection of six *Talking Heads* monologues debuted in 1987 on BBC television. They premiered on stage in London in 1992. In 1997, Bennett wrote an additional six monologues for the *Talking Heads* collection, again for BBC television, which later won the South Bank Show Award for Best Drama. The monologues are frequently performed as stage plays around the world. Films include *A Private Function*, *Prick Up Your Ear* and *The Madness of King George* (nominated for two Oscars®). In 2006, his play THE HISTORY BOYS won six Tony Awards®, including Best Play. It was also made into a film which was released in November 2006.

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PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

| October 18 – November 4, 2007 | | | | |
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| Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
| | 18 B 7:30 p.m. ^P | 19 A 8:00 p.m. ^O | 20 B 4:00 p.m. A 8:00 p.m. | 21 B 2:00 p.m. |
| 24 A 11:00 a.m. B 7:30 p.m. | 25 A 7:30 p.m. ^T | 26 B 8:00 p.m. | 27 A 4:00 p.m. B 8:00 p.m. | 28 A 2:00 p.m. |
| 31 B 1:00 p.m.* A 7:30 p.m. | 1 B 7:30 p.m. ^T | 2 A 8:00 p.m. | 3 B 4:00 p.m. A 8:00 p.m. | 4 B 2:00 p.m. |

P = Preview; *O*=Opening; *T*=Talkback, after the show; ***=Talk Theatre, before the show – an interactive discussion beginning at 11:30 a.m., call (414) 276-8842 to order lunch; *V* =ViewPoints - pre-show presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Special Events:

- Post-performance **Talkbacks**: stay after the show for a discussion with the cast and director following performances on Thursday, October 25, and Thursday, November 1.
- Pre-performance **Talk Theatre**: an in-depth discussion of the play with TALKING HEADS director C. Michael Wright and actor Laurie Birmingham beginning at 12:00 noon before the matinee performance on Wednesday, October 31. Join us for lunch at 11:30, call 414.276.8842 to order lunch.
- Pre-performance **ViewPoints**: a free pre-show presentation on contemporary British literature by Mount Mary College professor, Dr. Paula Reiter on Wednesday, October 31 at 6:30 p.m. in the Skylight Bar.

ARTISTS

Her Big Chance..... **Wendi Bazar**
Miss Fozzard Finds Her Feet **Laurie Birmingham**
Bed Among the Lentils **Angela Iannone**
A Lady of Letters **Raeleen McMillion**
A Chip in the Sugar..... **Norman Moses**
The Hand of God..... **Ruth Schudson**

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director..... **C. Michael Wright**
Scenic Designer **Megan Wilkerson**
Costume Designer..... **Amy Horst**
Lighting Designer **Jan Kellogg**
Properties Designers **Meghan Savagian & Randy Holper**
Sound Designer..... **Victoria DeIorio**
Dialect Coach **Michelle Lopez-Rios**

TALKING HEADS performances will take place October 18 – November 4 in the Cabot Theatre of the Broadway Theatre Center located at 158 N. Broadway in Milwaukee’s Historic Third Ward. Tickets, \$20.00 - \$37.00, are available Monday through Saturday from noon-6:00 p.m. at the Broadway Theatre Center Box Office, 158 N. Broadway, or by phone at **(414) 291-7800**. Tickets are also available online – 24 hours a day at **www.chamber-theatre.com**. Group, student and senior discounts are also available. For more information, visit **www.chamber-theatre.com**. **TALKING HEADS** is sponsored by Northwestern Mutual Foundation.

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BIOGRAPHIES

WENDI BAZAR – Lesley in “Her Big Chance”

Wendi Bazar makes her Milwaukee Chamber Theatre debut in TALKING HEADS. She last worked with Michael Wright in Renaissance Theaterworks' production of TALKING WITH... . She has appeared in shows from The Fireside to NYC, and has appeared in or voiced hundreds of commercials, videos and films. Currently, she is a financial representative with the Northwestern Mutual Financial Network.

LAURIE BIRMINGHAM – Miss Fozzard in “Miss Fozzard Finds Her Feet”

Laurie Birmingham returns to Milwaukee Chamber Theatre after performing as Maxine in NIGHT OF THE IGUANA. She has been living and acting in Milwaukee for the better part of 25 years. She has performed with Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Renaissance Theaterworks, The Skylight, First Stage Children's Theater, In Tandem Theatre, Madison Repertory Theatre and American Players Theatre.

ANGELA IANNONE – Susan in “A Bed Among the Lentils”

Angela Iannone has appeared in numerous Milwaukee Chamber Theatre shows including the title role in MEDEA, Maria Callas in MASTER CLASS, Barbara in THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE, Judith in HAY FEVER, Homebody in HOMEBODY/KABUL, Filumena in FILUMENA and Hesione in HEARTBREAK HOUSE. She has also performed with The Skylight, Light Opera of Oklahoma, Nevermore Theatre, Rockford Symphony, the Utah, Georgia and Oak Park Shakespeare Festivals, Next Act Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Peninsula Players, Milwaukee Shakespeare, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Milwaukee Symphony, Ten Chimneys Foundation, three national tours and off-Broadway. Roles include Lady Macbeth in MACBETH, Henry IV in HENRY IV (PART TWO), Gertrude in HAMLET, Titania in A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, Rhetta in PUMP BOYS & DINETTES, Roxie in CHICAGO, Adelaide in GUYS & DOLLS, Diana Vreeland in FULL GALLOP, Sarah Bernhardt in MEMOIR and Blanche in A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE.

RAELEEN MCMILLION – Irene Ruddock in “A Lady of Letters”

Raeleen McMillion has performed previously with Milwaukee Chamber Theatre in ONE THING MORE and THE APPLE CART. Milwaukee acting credits include the premiere production of A CUDAHY CAROLER CHRISTMAS with In Tandem Theatre, WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? with Bialystock & Bloom, MY FAIR LADY with The Skylight and HAUPTMANN with Next Act Theatre. She is currently working on the third installment of RED PEPPER JELLY which will be produced in January by Renaissance Theaterworks. Outside Milwaukee, Raeleen has had the opportunity to work with BBC/HBO (Milwaukee/New York/London) as an actor and casting assistant, travel to Moscow as a speech and voice coach and direct her UWM students in Ballymun, Ireland. She is a co-founder of Renaissance Theaterworks and an instructor at UW-Milwaukee's Peck School of the Arts.

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NORMAN MOSES – *Graham in “A Chip in the Sugar”*

A veteran of the Milwaukee theater scene for over 30 years, Norman Moses has appeared with almost every company in town in such roles as Horton the Elephant in SEUSSICAL at First Stage Children's Theater, Captain Spalding (Groucho) in ANIMAL CRACKERS at The Skylight, Henry in SYNCOPATION at Renaissance Theaterworks and Eddie Lawrence in SHEAR MADNESS at Milwaukee Repertory Theater. MCT roles include Gabe in DINNER WITH FRIENDS, Nick in WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOLF and one of that insane quartet with Bill Leach, Monty Davis and Colin Cabot in BEYOND THE FRINGE (co-written by Alan Bennett).

RUTH SCHUDSON – *Celia in “The Hand of God”*

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre Co-Founder Ruth Schudson has appeared in THE OLD LADY SHOWS HER MEDALS, MISALLIANCE, KIMBERLY AKIMBO, HAY FEVER, 84, CHARING CROSS ROAD, GHOSTS, MEDEA, MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION, THE FAITH HEALER, THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL, ANGELS IN AMERICA: PERESTROIKA and many others. Her other credits include OUR TOWN and DEATH OF A SALESMAN at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC, MY FAIR LADY, OKLAHOMA! and FIDDLER ON THE ROOF at The Skylight, WIT and THREE VIEWINGS at Madison Repertory Theatre, AH! WILDERNESS, LITTLE MURDERS and UNCLE VANYA at McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey and the film *The Hindenburg*.

C. MICHAEL WRIGHT – *Director*

Since joining the staff in 2005, Michael has directed A WALK IN THE WOODS, DICKENS IN AMERICA (a collaboration with American Players Theatre) and JOE EGG. From 1997-2005, he served as associate artistic director of Next Act Theatre, where a long list of directing credits includes THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW, “MASTER HAROLD”...*and the boys*, STONES IN HIS POCKETS, VISITING MR. GREEN, FALLEN ANGELS and HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE (a co-production with Madison Repertory Theatre). Since moving to Wisconsin in 1988, he has directed 58 productions, ten of which have been named on “Best Of” lists in Milwaukee and Madison. Others include THE SYRINGA TREE for both Renaissance Theaterworks and Delaware Theatre Company, LOBBY HERO for Madison Repertory Theatre, 110 IN THE SHADE for The Skylight and three incarnations of A NIGHT IN NOVEMBER for Next Act, Madison Rep and Riverside Theatre in Vero Beach, Florida. He has been acting professionally for 30 years and has appeared in regional theatres all across the country. He played Hally in Athol Fugard's “MASTER HAROLD”...*and the boys* on Broadway, in Israel and in the national tour. Recent acting credits include MAN OF LA MANCHA at The Skylight, TWELFTH NIGHT and CYMBELINE at American Players Theatre and BRAVO, CARUSO! at Next Act. He has also taught theatre privately and at a number of universities throughout the area.

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MILWAUKEE CHAMBER THEATRE

In 2007-2008 Milwaukee Chamber Theatre continues to celebrate a new chapter under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director C. Michael Wright. Performing in the Broadway Theatre Center in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre produces intimate, high-quality, professional theatrical works of literary merit that engage and challenge the audience, while employing and nurturing principally local theatre artists. For more information, visit www.chamber-theatre.com.