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

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre presents

Mauritius

by Theresa Rebeck

February 17 – March 13, 2011

Broadway Theatre Center's Studio Theatre

Milwaukee, WI. ... Milwaukee Chamber Theatre (MCT) presents the Milwaukee premiere of **MAURITIUS** by **Theresa Rebeck**, **February 17 – March 13, 2011**. This contemporary thriller premiered on Broadway in 2007 and tells an edgy and surprising tale about a fight over a valuable stamp collection. Milwaukee native **Andrew Volkoff** directs **Drew Brhel, Betsy Skowbo, Jonathan Wainwright, C. Michael Wright** and **Sara Zienek** in the production. **MAURITIUS** (rhymes with suspicious) performs in the Broadway Theatre Center's Studio Theatre in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward.

The bond between two half-sisters is tested when Jackie decides she can solve all her financial problems by selling her grandfather's exceptional stamp collection. As Jackie shrewdly tries to cash in on a pair of rare stamps from the island of Mauritius, she discovers how dangerous stamp collecting can be! Contemporary playwright Theresa Rebeck has written a cat-and-mouse game like no other, full of twists, turns and plenty of suspense.

When Theresa Rebeck's **MAURITIUS** played in New York it was named one of *Time Magazine's* "Top Ten Plays of 2007." Ms. Rebeck's numerous other plays include **BAD DATES**, **OMNIUM GATHERUM** (2003 Pulitzer Prize finalist), **THE SCENE**, **THE WATER'S EDGE**, **LOOSE KNIT**, **THE BUTTERFLY COLLECTION** and **VIEW OF THE DOME**. For television, she has written for *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*, *Dream On*, *Brooklyn Bridge*, *L.A. Law*, *First Wave*, *Third Watch* and *NYPD Blue*, where she also worked as a producer. In addition, she has written two novels, *Three Girls and Their Brother* and *Twelve Rooms with a View*.

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Set in the unusual world of philately, the practice of stamp studying and collecting, **MAURITIUS** focuses on a battle over the famous Mauritius “Post Office” stamps. (Mauritius is a small island nation off the southeast coast of the African continent in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar.) In 1847 Mauritius issued some of the world’s first postage stamps, now called the “Red Penny” and “Blue Two Pence” Post Office stamps. The stamp engraver made what is considered to be an error, using the words “Post Office” instead of “Post Paid” on the stamps. As a result of this error, the Mauritius “Post Office” stamps are considered the greatest items in all of philately. The famed “Bordeaux Cover,” an envelope including both stamps, sold for nearly four million dollars in 1993. When playwright Theresa Rebeck learned that stamps could have such high values, she was inspired to write a contemporary play about people fighting for possession of these highly prized objects.

Milwaukee native **Andrew Volkoff** (now based in New York) will make his MCT main stage directing debut with **MAURITIUS**. The cast features **Drew Brhel** (HAY FEVER, BACK TO METHUSELAH), **Betsy Skowbo** (A HOTEL ON MARVIN GARDENS, PRESENT LAUGHTER), **Jonathan Wainwright** (TAKE ME OUT, ANDROCLES AND THE LION) and MCT Producing Artistic Director **C. Michael Wright** (DUET FOR ONE, ANGELS IN AMERICA: PERESTROIKA). Making her MCT debut is UW-Milwaukee theatre student **Sara Zientek**.

CAST

Sterling **Drew Brhel**
Mary..... **Betsy Skowbo**
Dennis**Jonathan Wainwright**
Philip..... **C. Michael Wright**
Jackie **Sara Zientek**

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director.....**Andrew Volkoff**
Scenic Designer **J. Branson**
Costume Designer..... **Holly Payne**
Lighting Designer **Holly Blomquist**
Properties Master **Ben Komistra**
Sound Designer..... **Mikhail Fiksel**

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PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

February 17 – March 13, 2011					
Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
	17 7:30 p.m. ^P	18 8:00 p.m. ^O	19 4:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	20 2:00 p.m.	
23 7:30 p.m. ^V	24 7:30 p.m. ^T	25 8:00 p.m.	26 4:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	27 2:00 p.m.	
Mar 2 1:00p.m.* 7:30 p.m.	3 7:30 p.m. ^T	4 8:00 p.m.	5 4:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	6 2:00 p.m.	
9 7:30 p.m.	10 7:30 p.m. ^T	11 8:00 p.m.	12 4:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	13 2:00 p.m.	

P = Preview; *O* = Opening; *T* = Talkback, after the show; * = Talk Theatre, before the show – an interactive discussion beginning at noon; *V* = ViewPoints - pre-show presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Special Events:

--Pre-performance **ViewPoints**: a free, pre-show presentation by arts journalist and stamp enthusiast **Tom Strini** on Wednesday, Feb. 23 at 6:30 p.m. in the Skylight Bar & Bistro. Dinner is served in The Skylight Bar & Bistro from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

--Pre-performance **Talk Theatre**: MCT Education Director/Literary Manager Jacque Troy will lead a lively and informative pre-show chat with MAURITIUS Costume Designer **Holly Payne** beginning at 12:00 noon before the matinee on Wednesday, March 2. Lunch is served in The Skylight Bar & Bistro from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

--Post-performance **Talkbacks**: Post-show discussion with the cast following performances on Thursday, February 24, Thursday March 3 and Thursday, March 10

MAURITIUS performances will take place February 17 – March 13, 2011 in the Broadway Theatre Center's Studio Theatre, 158 N. Broadway in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward. Single tickets, \$30-\$35, 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 available online - 24 hours a day at **milwaukeechambertheatre.com**. Group, student and senior discounts are also available. For more information, visit milwaukeechambertheatre.com. **MAURITIUS** is sponsored by John E. Holland and Konrad Kuchenbach.

BIOGRAPHIES**DREW BRHEL - Sterling**

Drew Brhel began his professional career at MCT in 1986, playing a small role in MAN AND SUPERMAN. Since then, MCT performances include Joyce Burge in BACK TO METHUSELAH, Richard Greatham in HAY FEVER, and his latest MCT appearance as Porfiry in CRIME AND PUNISHMENT. Roles elsewhere include Bobchinsky in THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR and Fezziwig and Mr. Topper in A CHRISTMAS CAROL for Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Jaques in AS YOU LIKE IT for Milwaukee Shakespeare, Herr Biedermann in THE FIREBUGS and Mr. Merkin in BELOW THE BELT for Next Act Theatre and Herr Schultz in CABARET for Skylight Opera Theatre. He also spent eight summers with American Players Theatre in Spring Green in roles including Bottom, Polonius, Dogberry, Cornwall in KING LEAR and Pompey in MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

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BETSY SKOWBO - *Mary*

Betsy Skowbo returns to Milwaukee Chamber Theatre where previous credits include Rose in A HOTEL ON MARVIN GARDENS, Ellie in HEARTBREAK HOUSE, Daphne in PRESENT LAUGHTER and as part of the ensemble in UNDER MILK WOOD. Other local credits include DEAR ESTHER with Next Act Theatre, Betty in THE CAPTAIN'S TIGER with Renaissance Theaterworks, Juliet in ROMEO & JULIET, Hero in MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING and Hermia in A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM with Milwaukee Shakespeare. She holds a BFA in acting from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and is a proud member of Actors' Equity.

JONATHAN WAINWRIGHT - *Dennis*

Jonathan Wainwright returns to MCT where his most recent performance was as Shane Mungitt in TAKE ME OUT. Other work includes TRANSLATIONS at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, COYOTE ON A FENCE and SIDEMAN at Next Act Theatre, CABARET at Skylight Opera Theatre as well as numerous appearances at Door Shakespeare, Milwaukee Shakespeare, First Stage Children's Theater and Bialystock & Bloom.

C. MICHAEL WRIGHT - *Philip, MCT Producing Artistic Director*

Michael Wright began his professional acting career 34 years ago and has appeared all across the country in regional theatres such as Seattle Repertory Theatre, Guthrie Theater, McCarter Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Barter Theatre, Madison Repertory Theatre, StageWest, Riverside Shakespeare Company, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, American Players Theatre, Milwaukee Shakespeare, GeVa Theatre and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. He also played Hally in Athol Fugard's "MASTER HAROLD" ...and the boys on Broadway, in Israel and in the national tour with James Earl Jones. His most recent performances have been as Dr. Alfred Feldmann in DUET FOR ONE at MCT and as Sancho Panza in MAN OF LA MANCHA at Skylight Opera Theatre. Since moving to Wisconsin in 1988, he has directed well over 60 productions. At MCT, his most recent directing credits include THE SUBJECT WAS ROSES, THE SWEETEST SWING IN BASEBALL, PICNIC, BROOKLYN BOY and THE DALY NEWS. Last season, Mr. Wright was honored with an "Artist of the Year" award by the City of Milwaukee Arts Board.

SARA ZIENTEK - *Jackie*

Sara Zientek makes her Milwaukee Chamber Theatre debut with MAURITIUS. Theatre credits include BY THE BOG OF CATS, SPIRITS TO ENFORCE, THE TEMPEST, OEDIPUS REX, SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR, STARBOARD HOME, WHAT I DID LAST SUMMER and NORMAL: IN SCHOOLS. She will receive her BA in acting from UW-Milwaukee this spring.

ANDREW VOLKOFF - *Director*

Andrew Volkoff is former associate artistic director of both Barrington Stage Company (BSC) in Massachusetts and Genesis Theatre Group (GTG) in New York City. He returns to MCT after directing for the 2008 Young Playwrights Festival. Directing work for BSC: THE FANTASTICKS, UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL, THIS WONDERFUL LIFE, I AM MY OWN WIFE, FULLY COMMITTED, SANTALAND DIARIES, THIEF RIVER and THE SHAPE OF THINGS. He directed the New York premieres FAIR GAME and SAVANNA BAY and the regional premieres STUPID KIDS, THE WILD PARTY and A...MY NAME WILL ALWAYS BE ALICE (Boston). Other New York City directing work includes FOLLIES, WTC VIEW by Brian Sloan (starring Michael Urie) and BUMPING HEADS. He is a Drama League Directing Fellow and SDC member.

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MILWAUKEE CHAMBER THEATRE

Founded in 1975, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre (MCT) produces intimate, high-quality, professional theatrical works of literary merit that engage and challenge the audience, while employing and nurturing principally local theatre artists. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director C. Michael Wright and Managing Director Kirsten Mulvey, MCT performs at the Broadway Theatre Center in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward. For more information, visit www.milwaukeechambertheatre.com