



Portland Actors Conservatory

The Premiere School For Professional Actor Training
In The Pacific Northwest

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26th ANNIVERSARY SEASON SIZZLES WITH WIT, PLAYWRITING PROWESS AT PORTLAND ACTORS CONSERVATORY

PCS' Riordan Guest Directs at Oregon's Only Professional Actor Training Program

PORTLAND, ORE. – Oct. 7, 2010 –Portland Actors Conservatory's 26th Anniversary season of plays champions playwrights new and old with high-pitched satire, classic Shakespearian farce and contemporary theatrical reinvention. As part of its unique model of integrating professional and student actors in their second year of professional training, The Conservatory will produce "Why Torture is Wrong, and the People Who Love Them," by Christopher Durang, William Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors" and Sarah Ruhl's "Passion Play," directed by Portland Center Stage associate artistic director Rose Riordan.

"The playwrights in our season offer our students an incredible range of voices for our professional actors-in-training to embody," said Beth Harper, artistic director. "As an indispensable component of our course of study, performance closes the loop between theory and practice. These carefully chosen works and give our students access to American theater that is at once comprehensive, contemporary, and challenging in all the right ways."

Durang's 2009 "**Why Torture is Wrong, and the People Who Love Them**" was dubbed "a hilarious and disturbing new comedy about all-American violence" by the [New York Times](#) (April 7, 2009) when first produced at [The Public Theatre](#). This absurdist domestic piece from the author of beloved 1980s side-splitters "Sister Mary Ignatius," "Beyond Therapy," "The Actors Nightmare," "The Marriage of Bette and Boo," takes on post-9/11 paranoia and preoccupation with torture in characteristic Durang fashion. Anxiety and irreverence are never as funny as they are in Durang's hands. 'Torture' runs Dec. 1 through 19, directed by Beth Harper.

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In Shakespeare's "**The Comedy of Errors**," directed by faculty member Philip Cuomo, Egeon has a day to scour Syracuse for the ransom that will save his life and find the missing half of his family lost at sea 33 years ago. In his way are twin slaves, a Courtesan, a gold chain, and the mistaken identity politics that make this farce definitively Shakespearean. An entire town is beguiled and horrified by the characters' seemingly magical powers as slapstick physicality prompts us to reexamine what we think we know. "Comedy of Errors" runs February 16 through March 6, 2011.

Director Rose Riordan, associate artistic director of [Portland Center Stage](#), directs the Conservatory's third selection, "**Passion Play**," by Sarah Ruhl. This epic panorama of amateur actors participating in re-enactments of Christ's Passion portrays productions of the ritualized Christian drama taking place in 16th-century England, Germany in 1934, and 1969's South Dakota Black Hills. "'Passion Play' is the most exciting, stimulating, and thrilling piece of theater to hit New York since 'Angels in America,'" *Backstage* wrote earlier this year. "Passion Play" follows the Conservatory's critically acclaimed 2010 production of "Melancholy Play" by the 2006 MacArthur Fellow. "Passion Play" runs April 13 through May 1, 2011.

In traditional, Conservatory fashion the Class of 2011 will select and produce monologue and scene selections for its **Graduation Showcase** May 18 through 21, 2011. The showcase marks the culmination of two years of fulltime professional acting training.

2010-2011 Portland Actors Conservatory Season of Plays

- **Why Torture is Wrong, and the People Who Love Them** by Christopher Durang
Director: Beth Harper
- **The Comedy of Errors** by William Shakespeare
Director: Philip Cuomo
- **Passion Play**
Director: Rose Riordan
- **Graduation Showcase**
Director: Class of 2011 and Cristi Miles

All productions take place at Portland Actors Conservatory's Firehouse Theatre, 1436 SW Montgomery St., Portland, Ore., 97201. [Order tickets online](#), or by calling (503) 274-1717; tickets range from \$13-25 and season subscriptions are available for \$50 to \$80.

ABOUT PORTLAND ACTORS CONSERVATORY

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Portland Actors Conservatory is the premiere school for professional actor training in the Pacific Northwest. Artistic director Beth Harper leads the Conservatory's multiple offerings including its fulltime, Two Year Professional Training

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Program, ongoing Studio Class offerings, and the Summer on Stage youth theatre program. Portland Actors Conservatory provides the highest standard in actor training with distinguished faculty including Beth Harper, Connor Kerns, Philip Cuomo, and Michael Mendelson among others. The Conservatory is located near Portland, Ore.'s city center in the historic Firehouse Theatre, housing an upstairs studio space as well an intimate 70-seat theatre. Portland Actors Conservatory annually produces a three show season featuring its second year students working alongside professional guest artists, in addition to two student showcases. Portland Actors Conservatory is Oregon's only independent professional actor training school accredited with the National Association of Schools of Theatre.

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