

PRESS RELEASE
22 February 2017

The Guildhall School presents Lanford Wilson's *Balm in Gilead*

Friday 24, Saturday 25, Monday 27, Tuesday 28, Wednesday 29 March 7:30pm
Monday 27, Wednesday 29 March, 2pm
Silk Street Theatre

Joseph Blatchley director
Dora Schweitzer designer
Jess Bernberg lighting designer*
Tom Bosworth sound designer*

*Student on the BA (Hons) Technical Theatre Arts programme

Suitable for ages 16+

Cast:

Ellen Attwell (Dopey); **Jake Burgum** (Xavier); **Anya Chalotra** (Babe); **Steffan Cennydd** (Bob); **Jacob Coleman** (John); **Will De Renzy-Martin** (Rake); **Lucie Fletcher** (Terry); **Mary Galloway** (Judy); **Mairi Hawthorn** (Darlene); **Katherine Laheen** (Rust); **Georgia Landers** (Ann); **Rosabell Laurenti Sellers** (Martina); **Camille Mallet de Chauny** (Tig); **Iniki Mariano** (Kay); **Ruth Ollman** (Tina); **Caleb Roberts** (Franny); **Shubham Saraf** (Fick); **Fode Simbo** (Joe); **Amelia Strohm** (Bonnie); **Luke Thallon** (The Stranger); **Karina Wiedman** (Allie)

The Guildhall School's drama department continues its spring theatre programme with **Lanford Wilson's *Balm in Gilead***, opening on **Friday 24 March** for seven performances. Taking its name from the biblical principle of salvation, the play is set in Frank's Café, a seedy hangout in Manhattan, and explores whether there is a balm for the disposed, disenfranchised, junkies, hookers and hustlers of 1960s New York.

Lanford Wilson is widely regarded as one of America's premier playwrights. His lyric realism was influenced by Chekhov and Tennessee Williams, and though his soul was formed off-Broadway, on Greenwich Village's pocket-stages, *Balm in Gilead* was his first major play.

Joseph Blatchley first trained as an actor at Drama Centre London. He worked extensively in theatre, film and television in both England and France, with Tony Richardson, Nick Roeg, Mike Newell, Anthony Page, Bill Douglas, François Truffaut, Roger Michell and Peter Brook. He then studied film at The National Film and Television School. His film *Fragments* won Outstanding Film of the Year at the 1984 London Film Festival.

Later he went back to the theatre as a director. He directed many plays; both in Continental Europe: Brussels, Paris, Venice, Stockholm and Rome, and in England: Hampstead Theatre, The Gate, Riverside Studios, Manchester Royal Exchange, The White Bear, Southwark Playhouse and Arcola Theatre.

As well as directing in the professional theatre he has also directed over 100 productions with graduating students at leading drama schools, including: RADA, LAMDA, Drama Centre London and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. He has taught acting to dancers at Maurice Béjart's academy (Mudra) in Brussels, and subsequently to opera singers at The Verbier Music Festival and at Banff Centre for Arts in Canada.

In addition to directing and teaching he has run many workshops at the National Film and Television School, National Theatre Studio, Room One, The Actors Centre, Caravancera Productions, Prima Del Teatro and The Royal College of Art. He is a director of Sandglass Productions - a company set up to give master classes on the great classic playwrights, with a particular interest in the plays of Anton Chekhov. This is Blatchley's 19th year of association with the Guildhall School and most recently directed Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* in February 2016.

Dora Schweitzer trained on the Motley Theatre Design Course and taught by the legendary Percy Harris and Alison Chitty, Schweitzer previously graduated with a first in English Literature from University of East Anglia. She has designed over eighty productions including *Seagull* (Arcola, with Geraldine James and Roger Lloyd-Pack, directed by Joseph Blatchley), *Emma* (starring Doon MacKichan - Watford Palace and Tricycle Theatres) plus five national tours and the West End run of *Grumpy Old Women Live* (Avalon - with Jenny Eclair, Linda Robson, Dillie Keane, Britt Ekland). Other work includes *The Lifeblood* (Wiltons Music Hall, Riverside Studios), *Cider With Rosie*, *Dick Turpin* and *The Merchant of Venice* (Bury St Edmunds Theatre Royal), *The Canterbury Tales* (Guildford Shakespeare Company), *Rent* (LAMDA, Bridewell Theatre), *The Trials of Oscar Wilde* (Trafalgar Studios), two aerial productions with Actors of Dionysus: *Medea* (Rose Theatre, Kingston) and *Helen of Troy* (tour), *Pride and Prejudice* for two actors (Jermyn Street Theatre and touring) and is currently working on *A Passage to India* (Simple8).

Dora recently designed the stage premiere of *The Wipers Times* by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman (The Watermill, Salisbury Playhouse, Ipswich Wolsey, Sheffield Lyceum) which transferred to the West End this month. Previous productions for the Guildhall School include: *Festen*, *Pentecost*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Burnt by the Sun* and *Top Girls*.

Tickets: £10 (£5 concessions), available from the Barbican Box Office: 020 7638 8891 barbican.org.uk

The Guildhall School of Music & Drama is provided by the City of London Corporation. gsmd.ac.uk

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