



Lit Moon World Shakespeare Festival

BACKGROUND

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ABOUT THE DIRECTORS & THE COMPANIES **2008 LIT MOON WORLD SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL** **OCTOBER 16 - 26, 2008 • SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA**

John Blondell (director, *Julius Caesar* and *Blue Tempest*) is the Founding Artistic Director of the Lit Moon Theatre Company, the Director of the Lit Moon World Theater Festival and the Lit Moon World Shakespeare Festival. Since the company's founding in 1992, he has directed and produced 16 Lit Moon productions, including *Alice in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking Glass*, *Peer Gynt*, *Pinocchio*, *The Master and Margarita*, *Henry V*, *The Diary of a Madman*, *The Visions of Aksenty Ivanovich*, *Hamlet*, *Tartuffe*, *King Richard II*, *The Tempest*, *Queen C*, *Humbug!*, and *The Wedding*. His directing work has been seen in Bulgaria, Scotland, Canada, Poland, the Czech Republic, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Blondell holds a Ph. D. in Dramatic Art from the University of California, Santa Barbara, is Director of Theatre at Westmont College, and has taught master classes and workshops in Shakespeare, physical theatre, and mask in the United States, Poland, Bulgaria, Scotland, Montenegro, and Macedonia. He is the recipient of six Independent Theatre Awards, a 1994 Robby Award, and the 2003 Faculty Research Award from Westmont College. He lives in Santa Barbara with his wife Victoria Finlayson and sons Nicholas, William, and Simon

Lilia Abadjieva (director, *Othello/Measure for Measure*) received her MA from the National Academy for Drama and Cinematography in Sofia. Her productions have been some of the most heralded and talked about of her country, and have toured Europe and the Middle East, with stops in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, and Egypt. She has directed for all the major theatres in Sofia, including the National Theatre (*Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*), the Sofia Drama Theatre (*Hamlet*, and *The Seagull*), the Renaissance Theatre of Sofia (*The Father*), and the Little Theatre of the Channel (*Othello* and *Notebook from the Underground*), and the Renaissance Theatre of Sofia (*The Father*). Ms. Abadjieva is the recipient of many awards, including the "Golden Feather" award for the Development of Bulgarian Culture (2007); "Best Director" at the World Theatre Festival in Cairo for *Romeo and Juliet* (2006); "Best Director" and "Best Performance of the Season" from the Ministry of Culture of Macedonia for *Waiting For Godot* (2007); "Best Performance of the Season" from the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture for *Othello* (2006); "Best Director" for *Notebook From the Underground*, Vratza Chamber Theatre Festival (2002); and the Award from the Ministry of Culture For Contribution And Dissemination of Bulgarian Culture (2002).

Irwin Appel (director, *The Winter's Tale*) is an Associate Professor of Theater and Director of the BFA Actor Training Program at UC Santa Barbara. He is also a professional director, Equity actor and composer/sound designer, and has performed with Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Shakespeare Festival/LA, the New York, Oregon, Utah, and Colorado Shakespeare Festivals, The Acting Company, Theatre For a New Audience, Hartford Stage, Indiana Repertory Theatre, and other prominent regional theatres. Acting roles include: Prospero in *The Tempest*, Shylock in *Merchant of Venice*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Falstaff in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Kent in *King Lear*, Macbeth in *Kabuki Macbeth*, Matt in *Talley's Folly*, as well as the Emperor in a world premiere of *Emperor's New Clothes*. Since arriving in Santa Barbara, he played the title role in *Richard III*, De Vere in *The Beard of Avon*, Frank in *Molly Sweeney*, Duke Senior and Duke Frederick in *As You Like It*, and won Santa Barbara Independent Awards for his portrayal of Oscar Wilde in *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* and the title role in Theatre Artists Group's *Timon of Athens*. His directing credits throughout the United States include: *The Tempest*, *Angels in America*, *Three Sisters*, *Pentecost*, *A View from the Bridge* (SB Indy Award), *The Cherry Orchard*, *Speed-the-Plow*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Crucible*, *The Countess*, *Madwoman of Chaillot*, *Sylvia* and the world premiere of *Brown Baby* (SB Indy Award) for his sound design. He is a graduate of Princeton University and The Juilliard School.

Nina Sallinen (performer and co-writer, *Poor, Poor Lear*) is from Finland. She has a Masters Degree from the Finnish Theater Academy. In Finland, she worked at the National Theater and Tampereen Työväen teatteri (The Tampere City Theater) and smaller theaters in Helsinki. She was also a series regular on Finnish TV doing sketch comedy. In the U.S., she first lived in Chicago, where she co-founded A Walk About Theater with Kristan Schmidt. She also worked with The European Rep. and Buffalo Ensemble. In Los Angeles she is now working at Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, currently appearing in Bertolt Brecht's *A Man's a Man*. Nina has now performed in more than 70 different stage productions, and recently received a Best Supporting Female Performance nomination from the L. A. Weekly, for her performance as Frankie Boy in *Conquest of the South Pole*.

Levan Tsuladze (director, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) is one of the most distinctive artists in present-day Georgia. Appointed artistic director of the theatre in 2006, Mr. Tsuladze is a talented and skillful stage director, and creates productions that are known for their fantasy, humor, and warmth. His productions are of extremely high quality, and he has maintained a prolific output of work, commenced in 1997 when he founded the Basement Theatre, which was the first independent theatre in Georgia. In addition to his work at the Marjanishvili and Basement theatres, Tsuladze he is frequent guest at significant provincial theatres in Georgia, and has worked as an actor in several prominent Georgian films. Tzuladze graduated from the Tbilisi State Institute of Theater and Cinema

Lit Moon Theatre Company is a collective of theatre artists dedicated to the development and presentation of alternative theatre. Modeling itself upon European laboratory theatre companies which integrate aesthetic experimentation with cross-cultural interaction and understanding, Lit Moon produces international theatre festivals, organizes artistic residencies and collaborations, provides workshops and classes, and does its own touring. Lit Moon has created nearly 20 complete theatrical pieces. It has presented festivals featuring companies from Bulgaria, Russia,

Hungary, Poland, France, China, Germany, Canada, the Czech Republic, South Africa, and the United States. They have toured and created artistic collaborations with numerous artists from Eastern and Central Europe. Its artists have won scores of *Santa Barbara Independent Theatre Awards*, including ones for directing, acting, design, and music composition.

Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre is the flagship theatre of the European Republic of Georgia. Originally founded in Kutaisi by well-known stage director Kote Marjanishvili in 1928, the theatre moved to Tbilisi later that year, where it soon became – and is to this day – one of the most significant cultural monuments in the republic. Today, the theatre is generally recognized as the most significant theatre in all of Georgia, maintaining both classical and modern plays in an extensive repertory that includes one of Kote Marjanshvili's original productions entitled *Huriel Akosta* (now played by its fourth generation of actors), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare), *The Flying Doctor* (Moliere), *The Seagull* (Chekhov), *The Threepenny Opera* (Brecht/Weill), *Antigone* (Anouilh), *Art* (Reza), *Pygmalion* (Shaw), and many plays by noted Georgian writers. The theatre is comprised of its historic main stage (recently renovated in 2006) and a new experimental stage, developed by present artistic director Levan Tsuladze. The theatre boasts a dynamic, young audience, 40% of which is younger than 35 years. Most productions sell out two weeks before productions open. The theatre is recognized as one of Eastern Europe's most significant theatres, and consistently performs in major festivals in Europe and Asia. Recent festival invitations include ones the Chekhov Festival in Moscow, the Edinburgh International Festival, the Glasgow Theater Festival, the Parco Theatre in Tokyo, and other festivals in Kiev, Kaunas, Sofia, Moscow, and Madrid.

Westmont College Festival Theatre is the production arm of the Westmont College Theatre Arts Department. Westmont is a Christian liberal arts college in the Protestant Evangelical tradition. Its Theatre Arts Department offers theatre and dance tracks in a Baccalaureate degree, and includes full complements of courses in history, theory, and literature, and the practical arts of the stage, including dance. The program stages all kinds of material – classical and contemporary plays; original, devised theatre; adaptations of literature; contemporary dance; and performance art. The department's Globe Series of International Theatre is an international residency program that features actors, designers, dancers, directors, scholars, and others.

UCSB Department of Theater and Dance provides a thriving forum for the study of dance, theater, and other types of performance. The mission of the department is to develop and nurture students' capacity for self-expression and critical thinking; to train actors, dancers, designers, directors, and playwrights for professional work; to provide students with a general education through the media of dance, performance, and theatre; and to train graduate students as scholars and teachers. In a typical year, the department produces five main stage drama productions (which include the UCSB New Plays Festival) and two modern dance concerts. The productions represent the various periods and styles taught in the academic programs, ranging from the classics to contemporary dramas and comedies to original works. Additionally, the department offers graduate and undergraduate directed one-act plays, and dance studio presentations.

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