

DONALD MARGULIES

collected stories



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LOOKS TO LIVE FOR



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VOLVO
for life

from the producer

Welcome to the second production of the Volvo WILD CHILD Season, Donald Margulies Pulitzer Prize-nominated COLLECTED STORIES.

"I am a part of all that I have met." This line from Tennyson takes on new meaning when applied to the creative process. Of course, every artist uses the world as source material. Actors may observe and incorporate a certain walk or tilt of the head or laugh into a role; light falling on a mountain or across a face can inspire a painter or sculptor. But for some reason, writers are a strange and suspect breed apart. Human experience is their 'meat and potatoes' and they cannot help but be alert to the story potential in all they read, see, hear and feel. My last role on stage was the writer 'Trigorin' in THE SEAGULL and I remember it being a fascinating insight into how, for the writer, everything is fair game: your life becomes my story. Here, Donald Margulies explores the morality behind this 'life-appropriation', raising the stakes by having one writer observe another. Under these circumstances, it raises issues beyond mere invasion of privacy or breach of trust. Is it artistic theft? But can we own our stories? Can we own our lives? Whatever your theory, it is probably best not to share it with a writer because you never know, you might read about it someday!

We welcome tonight's cast and crew, particularly Miranda Harcourt making her ATC directorial debut. As ever, we gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support of Creative New Zealand and Auckland City and applaud the valued contribution of our Corporate Partners.

We thank you for your patronage and look forward to seeing you at THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE. Go wild!

Simon Prast

PRODUCER



VOLVO

Following the marvellous opening night of ART Hinemoa Elder helped Simon Prast and I draw the winner of the 2000 Season Subscriber Prize Draw.

The winning subscriber has the use of a new Volvo S40 Turbo for a year, complete with full service and maintenance.

As a Platinum sponsor of the Auckland Theatre Company we are delighted to support the company's drive for subscriptions by providing the loan of the superb S40 Turbo.

The S40 Turbo accents the new more curvaceous design, with an abundance of specification with the added pleasure of knowing you are driving in one of the world's safest mid-size cars. I invite you to test drive one of the new breed of Volvos. As a further gesture, should you be considering purchasing a new car, take along proof of your ATC subscription to your Volvo dealer and I will ensure it will be reflected in your discussions on price.

The lucky subscriber is not the only new driver of a Volvo. Since the beginning of this year, the Auckland Theatre Company has been gliding around Auckland in a Volvo V70 Estate. You may have noticed the silver car with the distinctive Arts + Business signage. The car gets our sponsorship on the road and provides tangible support to the theatre company.

The WILD CHILD season has got off to a great start. I am sure you will enjoy Collected Stories.



John Snaith
GENERAL MANAGER
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As Diamond sponsor of Auckland Theatre Company, we at Rydges Auckland enjoy hosting ATC's backstage briefings held before each play begins. Don't miss the next briefing about THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE - held at 6pm, Monday 3 April at Rydges.

The briefings are a chance for you to meet the directors, designers and actors who will talk about their particular approach to the production. A model of the set and costume designs will also be on display.

At our Circa restaurant, we pride ourselves in serving superb pre-theatre dinners promptly to ensure that you don't miss curtain up.

Some highlights of our new menu are:

*Cured salmon and avocado tartar with tomato croute

*Pot-roasted chicken breast over a pesto mash topped by crisp Parma ham

*Chocolate nemesis under a white chocolate marsecapone

We look forward to hosting you soon.



John Clarke
GENERAL MANAGER
Rydges Hotel Auckland



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Sarah Wiseman, appears in
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women of the beat generation

"[A] woman from the audience asks: 'Why are there so few women on this panel? Why are there so few women in this whole week's program? Why were there so few women among the Beat Writers?' and [Gregory] Corso, suddenly utterly serious, leans forward and says: 'There were women, they were there, I knew them, their families put them in institutions, they were given electric shock. In the '50s if you were male you could be a rebel, but if you were female your families had you locked up. There were cases, I knew them, someday someone will write about them.'"

-From Stephen Scobie's account of the Naropa Institute tribute to Ginsberg, July 1994

The fifties had a choke hold on consciousness, the industrial age at its most insidiously rote and conformist. The Beats were the only game in town or, as journalist Bruce Cook says, "the only revolution going on at the time." The women of the Beat Generation, with rare exception, escaped the eye of the camera; they stayed underground, writing. They were instrumental in the literary legacy of the Beat Generation, however, and continue to be some of its most prolific writers.

This book is a collection of women who participated in a revolution that forever changed the landscape of American literature. Before the late forties and early fifties, poetry was buttoned up tight. The Beats helped make literature a democracy, a game with no rules. All you needed, they believed, was passion and a love of the written word. As the movement spread, the Prufrockian ennui and weltschmerz of Eliot gave way to Beat vision and word jazz, and the literary world was never the same.

Beat was a counterculture phenomenon, a splash of cold water in the face of a complacent society, that radiated out from certain places in America, primarily New York City and San Francisco, and consisted of many people, not all of whom received the attention of the mass media. Diane di Prima, considered by many to be the archetypal Beat woman, started her own press rather than wait for a publisher to come knocking. When a major house finally did pursue her, it was for erotica - *Memoirs of a Beatnik* - not her poetry. Elise Cowen, who typed *Kaddish* for Allen Ginsberg, was in her own right a strong and prolific poet whose work has never been published until now.

To place their accomplishments in context, it is important to understand why, in the seemingly idealized fifties' America of comfort and capital, anyone, man or woman, would choose to live marginally, to struggle and oppose. Postwar America was the richest, most powerful nation in the world, bustling with industry, pride, and the Puritan obsession with work and perfection. Or so it seemed. As it

turns out, not everyone in America shared this swaggering posture. The Beats were simply the first to very vocally and artistically decry American materialism and conformity. Toward the end of the decade, after years of struggling in obscurity, perseverance and timing conjoined to catapult the Beats into the public eye, where they caught the attention of millions who were similarly disenchanted with the American myth. In a very real sense, the Beats helped the Silent Generation find a voice and paved the way for the explosion of the sixties.

Women of the fifties in particular were supposed to conform like Jell-O to a mold. There was only one option: to be a housewife and mother. For the women profiled here, being Beat was far more attractive than staying chained to a brand-new kitchen appliance. For the most part, the liberal arts education these young women were given created a natural predilection for art and poetry, for living a life of creativity instead of confining it to the occasional hour at the symphony. Nothing could be more romantic than joining this chorus of individuality and freedom, leaving behind boredom, safety, and conformity.

In many ways, women of the Beat were cut from the same cloth as the men: fearless, angry, high risk, too smart, restless, highly irregular. They took chances, made mistakes, made poetry, made love, made history. Women of the Beat weren't afraid to get dirty. They were compassionate, careless, charismatic, marching to a different drummer, out of step. Muses who birthed a poetry so raw and new and full of power that it changed the world. Writers whose words weave spells, whose stories bind, whose vision blinds. Artists for whom curing the disease of art kills.

Such nonconformity was not easy. To be unmarried, a poet, an artist, to bear biracial children, to go on the road was doubly shocking for a woman, and social condemnation was high. Joyce Johnson and Elise Cowen fled respectable homes and parental expectations. Others married and raised families, but in an utterly unorthodox manner. Joan Vollmer Adams' common-law marriage to William Burroughs, for example, was shocking to their wealthy, upper-class families. Diane di Prima raised five children, taking them with her to ashrams, to Timothy Leary's psychedelic community in Millbrook, and on the road in a VW van for a cross-country reading tour. Hettie Jones' biracial marriage and children were a scandal even in New York's Greenwich Village, causing irrevocable rifts with her parents.

"If you want to understand Beat women, call us transitional - a bridge to the next generation, who in the 1960s, when a young woman's right to leave home was no longer an issue, would question every assumption that limited women's lives and begin the long, never-to-be-completed work of transforming relationships with men."

-Joyce Johnson

Excerpts from: Knight, Brenda; *Women of the Beat Generation*, 1996, Conari Press, Berkeley.

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

Schwartz began his rise in the New York intellectual circle of poets with his collection of poems called *IN DREAMS BEGIN RESPONSIBILITIES* published in 1938. In 1959 he won the Bollingen Prize in Poetry and the Poetry Society of America's Shelley Memorial Award for the collection of poems and prose called *SUMMER KNOWLEDGE*. Schwartz is considered a cerebral, "city" poet known and respected by fellow poets but not widely read outside this group. His influence, however, is more dispersed than usually thought. For example, Lou Reed, founder of the Velvet Underground, a rock and roll band, was a student of Schwartz's at Syracuse University. Reed refers to Schwartz as a "spiritual godfather." Scott Spencer wrote a novel about young love and called it *ENDLESS LOVE* after the following poem by Schwartz.

*I Am a
Book
I Neither
Wrote nor
Read*

*I am a book I neither write nor read,
A comic, tragic play in which men misperceive,
Revolving as gears crackle like rails,
Xenly each time, what, or who is prepared
To come upon, suddenly dismayed and afraid,
As in the dream which make the fear of sleep
The terror of loss, the depth one cannot learn.
How the false truths of the years of youth have passed,
Have passed at full speed like trains which never stopped
There where I stood and waited, hardly aware,
How little I know, or which of them was the one
To mount and ride to hope or where true hope arrives.
I no more waste than read that book which is
The self I am, half hidden as it is
From one and all who see within a kiss
The banging formless blackness of an abyss.
How could I think the brief years were enough
To prove the reality of endless love?*

Ravaged by mental illness, disaffected, alienated from friends, Delmore Schwartz died alone in a New York City hotel in 1966.

However we may regard the story of Delmore Schwartz's life – as pathos, melodrama, or an experience both terrible and resisting easy explanation – there is a real danger that his work will be brushed aside as he himself becomes the subject of a lurid cultural legend. I don't want to be righteous about this, since I find Schwartz's life as fascinating (though also frightening) as anyone does. The image of the artist who follows a brilliant leap to success with a fall into misery and squalor, is deeply credited, even cherished in our culture; it is an image that, despite sentimental exploitation, has a costly share of reality behind it. Nevertheless, we ought to insist that finally what matters is the work that remains, far more so than the life that is gone. What matters is the stories, five or six of which are lasting contributions to American literature. The rest is pain, gossip, regret, waste.

From Irving Howe's Foreword from "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities".

collected stories

DONALD MARGULIES Author

Donald Margulies' most recent play, *DINNER WITH FRIENDS*, debuted at the 1998 Humana Festival and opened Off-Broadway in 1999. In 1997 *COLLECTED STORIES* was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It featured on Broadway in 1997, and again in 1999, and had its 1999 West End debut starring Helen Mirren. Mr Margulies' other plays include *SIGHT UNSEEN* (Obie Award for Best New American Play, Dramatists Guild/Hull-Warriner Award, Pulitzer Prize finalist, Drama Desk nominee, Burns Mantle "Best Play"); *THE LOMAN FAMILY PICNIC* (Drama Desk nominee, Burns Mantle "Best Play"); *FOUND A PEANUT*; *ZIMMER*; and *LUNA PARK* (inspired by "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities" by Delmore Schwartz); *WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?* and *THE MODEL APARTMENT*, for which he received a Drama-Logue Award, won an Obie Award and was nominated for the Drama Desk and the Dramatists Guild/Hull-Warriner Awards. The Mark Taper Forum commissioned *BROKEN SLEEP*, a one-act musical written with Michael-John La Chuisa, to accompany his long one-act, *JULY 7, 1994*, which itself was commissioned by the Actors Theatre of Louisville and premiered in ATL's Humana Festival of New American Plays in 1995.

Mr Margulies' plays have premiered at Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Repertory, The New York Shakespeare Festival and the Jewish Repertory Theatre. He has won grants from CAPS, The New York Foundation for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. A collection of his work, *SIGHT UNSEEN AND OTHER PLAYS*, has been published by Theatre Communications Group. Mr Margulies is a member of New Dramatists and was elected to the Council of the Dramatist Guild in 1993. He has been a playwright-in-residence four times at the Sundance Institute Playwright's Lab in Utah, and a frequent contributor to the 52nd Street Project.

He lives in New Haven, Connecticut, where he teaches playwriting at the Yale School of Drama.

**ELIZABETH
McRAE**
as Ruth Steiner



If you hadn't been an actor/actress/director/designer what would you have been?

A happy housewife, reading novels

What moment in your life decided your career in theatre?

When I found an audience for my showing-off. Later, when I discovered I could be more myself by being someone else.

Most memorable (worst/best/funniest) moment on stage?

The sound and sight of flames when I was locked into the mound of sand in Beckett's "Happy Days"

What was/is/could have been your favourite role?

Whatever role I'm studying at the moment. Ruth Steiner has a lot going for her.

Who is your favourite writer?

It has to be Shakespeare. E.M. Forster would get the prize for prose-style, followed by Maurice Gee and Janet Frame.

What is your definition of friendship?

Friendship is being loved in spite of one's worst behaviour

What is your favourite journey?

Down my road and up my front steps

What is your motto?

Beware of questionnaires

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Auckland Theatre Company: THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN, THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS, SOCIAL CLIMBERS, UNCLE VANYA

Mercury Theatre: ONCE A CATHOLIC, MIDDLE AGE SPREAD, DIRTY LINEN, MARAT/SADE, UNDER MILKWOOD, THE CRUCIBLE, CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE, DARK OF THE MOON, THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON

Theatre Corporate: PYGMALION, THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS, HAPPY DAYS, NOT I, VINEGAR TOM

International Festival of the Arts: RICORDI

Television: SHORTLAND STREET, HOME MOVIE, COUNTRY G.P., A GOING CONCERN

Film: JUBILEE, SCARECROW, NEVER SAY DIE, AN ANGEL AT MY TABLE, DEATH IN THE FAMILY, RETURN JOURNEY, THE SECRET, GORDON BENNETT, ONE OF THOSE BLIGHTERS, A DOLL'S HOUSE.

SARA WISEMAN
as Lisa Morrison



If you hadn't been an actor/actress/director/designer what would you have been?

In therapy

What moment in your life decided your career in theatre?

Being accepted into the School of Performing and Screen Arts

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Surviving High School

Most memorable (worst/best/funniest) moment on stage?

The truthful ones

What was/is/could have been your favourite role?

All are special and specific

Who is your favourite writer?

At present - Gary Zukav

Who is your favourite hero of fiction?

Sam Gamgee - LORD OF THE RINGS

What is your definition of friendship?

Love, forgiveness, honesty

What is your idea of happiness?

Creative abundance

What is the quality you most admire in yourself?

I'm still learning

What is your favourite journey?

To the beach

What is your motto?

No regrets

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Auckland Theatre Company: AMY'S VIEW, DEATH OF A SALESMAN, CABARET

Television: STREET LEGAL

Short Films: LETTERS ABOUT THE WEATHER, THE WAITING ROOM

DIRECTOR Miranda Harcourt

If you hadn't been an actor /actress / director /designer what would you have been?

There wasn't much of an option for me in what I would do - I came from a theatre family.

What moment in your life decided your career in theatre?

My career in theatre was decided by watching the work of some great directors through the '70's and '80's and '90's. Tony Taylor, Raymond Hawthorne, Colin McColl.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

My greatest achievement at the moment would have to be working on this play, pregnant, with a 15-month-old at home...

What was/is/could have been your favourite role?

My favourite roles include Nora in A DOLLS HOUSE, the 6 characters in VERBATIM, and of course Gemma the bitch in GLOSS.

Who is your favourite writer?

I suppose it's predictable to say Shakespeare but he is one of my favourite writers.

And of course at the moment Donald Margulies is on my list.

Who is your favourite hero of fiction?

Jane Austen's heroines and the flawed women in

Ibsen's plays are my favourite fictional characters; and I've always been a fan of Kezia in Katherine Mansfield's THE DOLLS HOUSE and PRELUDE.

What is your favourite journey?

The first journey I remember is crossing the Cook Strait on the overnight ferry from Wellington to Lyttelton - going to sleep in one place and waking up in another. Now my favourite journey's are still by ferry: the Devonport ferry and the one to Days Bay.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

include many television shows and short films; SKYLIGHT and ARCADIA for ATC; THE DOLLS HOUSE for the Mercury Theatre and Circa Theatre, for which she won Best Actress at the Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards; FLOWERS FROM MY MOTHER'S GARDEN for the NZ Festival; VERBATIM and PORTRAITS which toured prisons and theatres internationally; VOICEOVER for which she won Best Short Film at the NZ Film and TV Awards; and most recently, MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, which she directed and which won Best Production at the 1999 Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards.



SET & COSTUME DESIGNER Tracy Grant

If you hadn't been a designer what would you have been?

An architect, to create space with harmony and form.

What moment in your life decided your career in theatre?

The evening in 1981 when Bob MacMurray bailed me up against the wall at Centrepoint Theatre in Palmerston North, and told me to stop just dreaming about it.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Working professionally in New Zealand.

Most memorable moment on stage?

Having worked within such an incredible community of people for so many years, my memory overflows with far too many wonderful moments.

What was your favourite role as set or costume designer?

Designing for ARCADIA, or THE FLYING DUTCHMAN, or THE MAGIC FLUTE, or FALSTAFF...

Who is your favourite writer?

Anton Chekhov and William Shakespeare

Who is your favourite hero of fiction?

Rose Sayer.

What is your definition of friendship?

Honesty.

What is your idea of happiness?

Calm and silent moments with loved ones.

What is the quality you most admire in yourself?

My dogged clarity of vision.

What is the quality you most admire in a man?

Strength of self.

What is your favourite journey?

I love all journeys. I love preparing for adventure.

I love travelling away from home and returning to rest.

What is your motto?

Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

include work on: LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR and WEST SIDE STORY at the Mercury Theatre with Raymond Hawthorne; THE FLYING DUTCHMAN and THE MAGIC FLUTE for Auckland Opera, and FALSTAFF for Opera Australia with Simon Phillips and Iain Aitken; and ARCADIA for both the Melbourne Theatre Company and Auckland Theatre Company, again with Simon.

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

collected stories

BY DONALD MARGULIES

This is the second production of the Volvo 2000 Season of WILD CHILD COLLECTED STORIES opened at the HERALD THEATRE 10 March 2000

Ruth Steiner	Elizabeth McRae
Lisa Morrison	Sara Wiseman
Director	Miranda Harcourt
Designer	Tracy Grant
Lighting Designer	Vera Thomas
Wardrobe	Elizabeth Whiting
Stage Manager	Danielle Butler
Technical Manager	T.O. Robertson
Operator	Stephen Morrison
Props	Suzanne Gratkowski
Set Construction	Third Stage Ltd.

There will be a 15-minute intermission

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY

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Simon Prast David Haywood John Taylor
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director's notes



Simon asked me to write some notes on the research and experiences I brought with me to begin our rehearsal process on COLLECTED STORIES.

To direct anything you need to find a personal connection. In COLLECTED STORIES it wasn't difficult to make immediate links with my own creative path. Many of the films, plays and stories I have been passionate about making and telling over the past few years have been stories and voices borrowed from other people. Stories told the way real people really speak, often about the lives real people have really lived. Perhaps this borders on documentary, or more likely on fiction, a blend of fact and fiction which seems bound neither by the rules of the documentary-maker nor the fiction writer. Last year Stuart McKenzie and I plundered my own mother's life to devise and perform FLOWERS FROM MY MOTHER'S GARDEN to 25,000 New Zealanders up and down the country. In that case the subject of the piece was a willing collaborator, as my mother Kate performed with me the story of her life, allowing us to use the tools of the editor to render her 73 years in a roller coaster 90 minutes. Many people recognised in aspects of Kate's story elements of their own experiences, the particular becoming universal through the power of theatre.

In VERBATIM and in PORTRAITS, solo shows on which I have collaborated with Stuart and William Brandt, once again real people's experiences and voices were used as the basis for drama, the knowledge that the plays were based on verbatim transcripts bringing a different quality of listening to the audience's appreciation of these stories about violent crime. In these projects however, the identity of the interviewees was hidden; transforming reality into drama using the tools of fiction, just as Ruth Steiner claims to have done with her own characters in COLLECTED STORIES: 'giving them a voice where they had none' yet allowing them their anonymity.

But in COLLECTED STORIES Ruth is presented with a *fait accompli*, a non-negotiable novelised version of her own life story. What does a teacher do when her own tenets are turned against her? When someone she has grown to trust seemingly betrays her? And what choice would each of us make if we were confronted with the chance to seize an opportunity and achieve immortality?

Ruth says: 'what am I without my stories? I'm as good as dead!'

But her youthful counterpart Lisa Morrison claims Ruth herself has taught her that "They aren't your stories.

They stopped being your stories when you

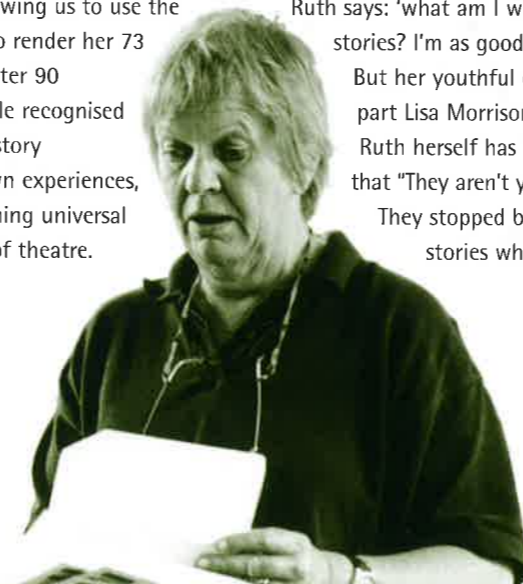
told them to me. They changed my life, so how can they be solely your stories anymore? You don't own them."

Is it Ruth's right to control her story? Or is she unable to see that the burgeoning skill of her student has transformed her story into a metaphor for other people to live their lives by?

David Mamet's OLEANNA and David Hare's SKYLIGHT are first cousins of this new play by Donald Margulies, not only because all three share a two-person cast and a (nearly) single room setting. Each of these plays persuasively presents both sides of an argument about the nature of power, be it man vs. woman, age vs. youth or idealism vs. common sense. It is no coincidence that ATC has programmed all of these plays over the last five years and no coincidence that COLLECTED STORIES complements ART in this year's programme. As ART presented you with three men in a dilemma COLLECTED STORIES presents you with two women in a pickle, as ART was by a woman, COLLECTED STORIES is by a man, and just as ART deals with the nature of taste, opinion and objective truth, so COLLECTED STORIES is a play about opinion, appropriation and ownership.

'There are some things you don't touch.'
Ruth Steiner in COLLECTED STORIES

'Tell! That opens up the congestion a little - the lungs are for breathing, not secrets.'
Grace Paley



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the
beauty queen
of Leenane

MARTIN McDONAGH
Ireland 1996

"I suppose now you'll never be dying. You'll be hanging on forever, just to spite me."

Leenane, a small town in County Galway. Forty-year-old spinster Maureen Folan yearns for a life of her own but is thwarted by the constant and manipulative demands of her aged live-in mother Mag. When local lad Ray Dooley announces the return of his eligible brother Pato, Maureen recognises her first and possibly final chance of a loving relationship. However, Mag's attempt to sabotage her daughter's break for freedom sets in motion a train of events that leads inexorably to the "mother of all reckonings".

Fast emerging as one of modern theatre's most creative storytellers, Martin McDonagh (THE CRIPPLE OF INNISHMAAN) puts the fun back into dysfunction with another wicked fable peopled with indelible characters. Suspenseful, brazen and beguiling, THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE is a darkly comic tale that will stir the mind and memory long after its breath-taking dénouement.

Starring Lee Grant, Michael Lawrence and Andrew Glover

MARGARET EDSON
United States 1998

"Now is a time for simplicity. Now is a time for, dare I say it, kindness"

Vivian Bearing, Ph.D., renowned professor of English and expert on the brilliantly difficult sonnets of metaphysical poet John Donne, is diagnosed with terminal ovarian cancer. Approaching her illness with the same academic rigour as her work, she becomes the prize patient of a teaching hospital, challenging, intimidating and fascinating her clinicians with her remarkable intellectual and physical tenacity. As her resilience fades and with the inevitable upon her, she comes to reassess her life and her work with a profundity and humour that are transformative.

Winner of the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Margaret Edson's beautifully layered and humane new play is an uncompromising, uplifting experience of an extraordinary woman's last, great struggle. Dazzling in form and inspiring in content, WIT delivers an unforgettable night at the theatre.

Starring Ilona Rodgers as Vivian Bearing

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