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**GAMMTHEATRE.ORG** 

172 EXCHANGE STREET PAWTUCKET, RI

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We thank the following individuals and organizations for their support of PLAY in our 32nd Season: The Rhode Island Foundation, The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, a Community Development Block Grant from the City of Pawtucket, the Norman and Rosalie Fain Foundation, Hassenfeld Family Charities Foundation, June Rockwell Levy Foundation, Collette/Alice I Sullivan Foundation, Taco/White Family Foundation.

This study guide was prepared by Kate Hanson, Susie Schutt, Tracy Morreo, and Courtney Martin.



Arcadia first opened at the Royal National Theatre in London on April 13, 1993. (Above) Felicity Kendal as Hannah Jarvis, Bill Nighy as Bernard Nightingale. (Below) Emma Fielding as Thomasina Coverly, Rufus Sewell as Septimus Hodge.



# ACT WELCOME

Dear Educator,

The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre is pleased to offer you this study guide to prepare you and your students for our production of *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard. In this guide you will find background information about the play and playwright, an inside look at our production, as well as activities for your classroom and questions for discussion. We recommend using this study guide before your visit to The Gamm, as well as after to debrief with your students.

We would like to offer a pre-show visit with your classroom/school before your visit to help prepare your students for the play. This will whet students' appetites for the performance and encourage them to question and explore the themes of the play. This visit will last about half an hour and is offered to your classroom free of charge. Most student matinees are followed by a talkback with the production team and offer students the opportunity to debrief the performance immediately and ask questions of the actors, director, designers or playwright. Talkbacks range in length but we encourage you to stay and participate in the dynamic discussion.

We also offer longer workshops that will get students out of their seats and up on their feet engaging in the motifs and the language of the play. Kinesthetic engagement with language and literature ensures students deep comprehension and text-to-self connection that encourages students to invest in reading and literacy-learning. Much of this work was discovered, developed and inspired by the ArtsLiteracy Project at Brown University. Their strategies and models for learning continue to serve as a foundational pedagogical tool for all Gamm Education programming, including our PLAY (Pawtucket Literacy and Arts for Youth) in-school residencies.

Attending a production addresses several Common Core Standards in Theatre Arts Standards in Aesthetic Judgment, Cultural Contexts, and Communication, as well as many of the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. Below, we have included a list of standards that align with attending a performance and using our study guide.

We would love to hear from you about your experiences using this study guide. It is a great help to us as we build on our education program from year to year. We look forward to seeing you at The Gamm!

#### Susie Schutt

Education Director, susie@gammtheatre.org

#### Kate Hanson

Education and Outreach Coordinator, kate@gammtheatre.org



What is so exciting about attending the theater - especially in a smaller space such as The Gamm - is that it is live! Live theater is different from other forms of entertainment; unlike film and television you are encouraged to pay close attention and actively engage your imagination.

You, the audience, are mere feet (and sometimes inches!) away from the actors; therefore, you play an active role in the experience. **The actors can see and hear any distracting behavior such as talking, text messaging, unwrapping candy, the ringing of cell phones, etc.** This can affect the actor's concentration, disrupt the performance, and ruin the experience for other audience members. So we ask that you refrain from talking or making any noise during a performance. *Thank you!* 

Discuss with your students the particular demands and benefits of attending a live performance. Perhaps have them brainstorm how theater is different from film, television and sporting events.

## **COMMON CORE GUIDE**

Here is a list of College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards that align to the information and activities in our guide:

- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2] See Themes and Questions for Discussion
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3] See Themes and Questions for Discussion
- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4] See our Activity for the Classroom
- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7] See examples throughout our study guide.
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9] See our Resident Scholar's essay.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3] See our Activity for the Classroom
- Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1] See Themes and Questions for Discussion
- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2] See examples throughout our study guide.



# PLAY & PLAYWRIGHT

#### **ABOUT TOM STOPPARD:**

Theatre is first and foremost a recreation. But it's not just a children's playground; it can be recreation for people who like to stretch their minds. -Tom Stoppard

Tom Stoppard has been famously criticized for the supposed chilled detachment of his densely cerebral writing. New York Times theater critic Ben Brantley rightly observes: "A suspicion lingers in the heart of the constant theatergoer that if you are too clever, then you must be made of ice. This prejudice has misguidedly



dogged, among others, that greatest of songwriters, Stephen Sondheim, like a peevish, affection-starved beagle. But it has never clung to anyone more tenaciously and erroneously than it does to the playwright Tom Stoppard."

Chaos theory, dialectical materialism, Eastern European politics, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, metaphysics, and linguistics are indeed imposing themes. But Stoppard also writes about heartbreak, longing and love. Also threading continuously throughout his work is the theme of exile. Stoppard was born Tomáš Straussler in Czechoslovakia in 1937. In 1939 his family fled to escape the Nazis and outrun the war, relocating first in Singapore, moving on to Australia then India before eventually settling in England. Though Stoppard jokes about his early peripatetic years ("I'm a bounced Czech") he repeatedly and poetically returns to the notion of exile, whether metaphorical, self-imposed or political. In Arcadia scholar Hannah Jarvis attempts to uncover the identity of the mythical "hermit of Sidley Park." And what is a hermit but an émigré from the world?

Stoppard has written numerous works for stage, television, film and radio. Plays include Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead (1966), Jumpers (1972), Travesties (1974), The Real Thing (1982), The Invention of Love (1997), the trilogy The Coast of Utopia (2002), Rock 'n' Roll (2006) and The Hard Problem (2015). Screenplays include Brazil (1985), Shakespeare in Love (1998), for which he won an Academy Award, and Anna Karenina (2012). In 2013 Stoppard won the PEN Pinter Prize, awarded annually to one British and one international writer who cast an "unflinching, unswerving gaze upon the world, and shows a fierce intellectual determination ... to define the real truth of our lives and our societies."

#### ABOUT ARCADIA

Recognized as one of the greatest plays of the last 50 years, Arcadia is a captivating, comedic cocktail of literary sleuthing, romantic entanglements and scientific discoveries. In a stately home in the British country-side, poets, tutors, historians and lovers roam the halls some 200 years apart, trying to solve their particular mystery. In the early 19th century, impetuous 13-year-old Thomasina and her tutor, Septimus, are discovering chaos theory too early. In the late 20th century, scholars Hannah and Bernard are piecing together history from the puzzling documents that remain. Along the way, there are mistaken identities, hermits, duels—and sex, the irrational force that brings everyone together and splits them apart with hilarious and tragic results.

Arcadia premiered at London's National Theatre in April 1993. It moved to the West End after eight months. It made its U.S. premiere in New York City at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in March of 1995. In 2006, the Royal Institution of Great Britain named it one of the best science-related works every written.



# **OUR PRODUCTION**

## **WHO MADE IT HAPPEN:**

#### ON STAGE:

#### **BEHIND THE SCENES:**

Director Fred Sullivan, Jr.
Set Design & Production

Management Jessica Hill

Lighting Design Costume Design

Stage Management
Sound Design
Technical Production
Supervisor
Assistant Director/Music
Assistant Stage Managers

Production Assistant Dialect Coach Master Electrician Electricians

Construction Crew

Jeff Adelberg David T. Howard Jessie Darrell Jarbadan Robin Grady Alex Eizenberg

DJ Potter
Milly Massey
Jessica Hill\*,
JonPaul Rainville
Erika Rethorn
Wendy Overly
Justin Carroll
Zac Bender,
Kathy Crowley,
Arthur MacKeith,
Corey Powers
Alex Eizenberg,
Nicholas Holbrook,
Max Ramirez



#### **DIRECTOR'S NOTE**

The great thing about working on a masterpiece is how obvious it is that the most talented person in the room is without a doubt the playwright. I first experienced the genius of Tom Stoppard when I was cast in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead in high school and in Dogg's Troupe Hamlet in college. This playwright obviously shared my deep personal fascination with Shakespeare's greatest of great plays. Then I directed Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound* in grad school and acted in *The Real Thing* as one of my earliest gigs as a company member at Trinity Rep.

Years later, I found myself one lovely summer playing Bernard in *Arcadia* at the Bread Loaf School of English and, like most theater folk, I fell madly in love with Stoppard's greatest of great plays. Brilliant, challenging, profound, hilarious and heartbreaking, *Arcadia* deserves its reputation as a modern masterpiece. It is a comedy with a laugh on every page and yet a comedy in the *Divine Comedy* sense. Each moment of inspired wit is tinged with melancholy and even mortality. Smart fun. So rare. Perhaps the most profoundly human of all forms is tragicomedy. Stoppard knows this, as do the men who inspired his first plays: Shakespeare and Beckett. In a world where we fear people and things that are too smart—and would rather vote for guys with whom we can have a beer—these writers keep the fire of new thought, art, civilization, imagination and grace burning bright. Working on their plays is a privilege.

Last season I had the good fortune to direct *The Winter's Tale* at The Gamm. I cannot help but notice how Shakespeare's beautiful late-romance shares a wonderful thematic similarity to *Arcadia*: two distinct worlds separated by a "wide gap of time." In *The Winter's Tale*, the gap is 16 years. In *Arcadia* it is almost two centuries. The older I get, the passage of time and the lessons of history could not be more fascinating.

So here is Tom Stoppard firing up both lobes, his funny bone in overdrive, juggling science and poetry, the factual and the fantastic, the cerebral and the passionate, and we are the luckier for it. He creates brilliant, complex characters and scenes in this modern masterpiece, this comedy of ideas; but most importantly, he creates a stage poetry of perfect syntax expressing individual and universal truths that stir and change us. Amazing. It is an honor to be celebrating my 20th season at The Gamm. The cast, staff and designers are first-rate. All we need now is you.

Fred Sullivan, Jr.

# EVEN IN ARCADIA—SEX, LITERATURE AND DEATH AT SIDLEY PARK by Jennifer Madden, Gamm Resident Scholar

We shed as we pick up... and what we let fall will be picked up by those left behind. The procession is very long and life is very short. We die on the march. But there is nothing outside the march so nothing can be lost to it. The missing plays of Sophocles will turn up piece by piece, or be written again in another language. Ancient cures for diseases will reveal themselves once more. Mathematical discoveries glimpsed and lost to view will have their time again. –Septimus Hodge, Arcadia

It's wanting to know that makes us matter. -Hannah Jarvis, Arcadia

... It's all because of sex. That's what I think. The universe is deterministic all right, just like Newton said, I mean it's trying to be, but the only thing going wrong is people fancying people who aren't supposed to be in that part of the plan. -Chloë Coverly, Arcadia

Tom Stoppard's Arcadia opens in 1809 in the drawing room of Sidley Park, a British country manor. There, 13-year-old math prodigy Thomasina Coverly (loosely based on mathematical genius Ada Lovelace, daughter of Romantic poet Lord Byron) and her tutor, Septimus Hodge, tackle the mechanics of sexual intercourse, Fermat's Last Theorem (a fiendishly difficult math problem formulated by Pierre de Fermat in 1637 and not solved until 1995) and the Second Law of Thermodynamics (the process of inexorable, irreversible entropy that ensures everything, from the post-Big Bang universe to a white-hot love affair, must eventually cool and die). Thomasina is also on the cusp of discovering a form of "irregular geometry" through iterated algorithms (mathematical equations depicting patterns found in nature).

Scene 2 opens in the present day in the same room. Hannah Jarvis, author of a bestselling but critically panned book about writer Lady Caroline Lamb, Byron's lover who famously called him "mad, bad and dangerous to know," is researching the history of Sidley's renowned garden. Transformed two centuries earlier from the Classical (symmetrical and pastoral) to Romantic (disordered and intensely artificial) style, the garden symbolizes for Hannah a decline from the intellectual rigor of the Enlightenment to the excesses of the Romantic imagination captivated by "cheap thrills and false emotion." She also hopes to uncover the identity of the fabled "Sidley hermit," a mad recluse who lived in the garden for years. (Fashionable gentry did in fact employ "hermits" to inhabit their garden hermitages as living lawn ornaments). Enter deliciously obnoxious Byron scholar Bernard Nightingale. He hopes to achieve pop fame by establishing that Byron's role in an 1809 duel at Sidley caused him to mysteriously flee England.

The two scenes establish several thematic dichotomies: order/chaos, Classicism/Romanticism, past/present, intellect/emotion, life/death and love/lust. Arcadia percolates with heady ideas while it simmers with heat and desire. Stoppard uses physics to echo the complexity of human relationships: want, need, unrequited love, atoms that attract or repel. Sex and science share a common foundation. In his review of the play's 2011 Broadway revival, Ben Brantley of the New York Times observed:

Good old lust is only one complicating element within the deeper impulse that animates both the characters... and the play itself. That is the unquenchable human urge to acquire knowledge, whether carnal, mathematical, historical or metaphysical. It is the itch to discover what lurks beneath concealing clothes and clouds and dusty layers of accumulated years. Success in these quests is irrelevant, since full and true knowledge of anything is impossible.

Ultimately Arcadia is a play about heat: the Promethean fire cherished by the Romantics, the burning excitement of intellectual inquiry, and the consuming inferno of love.

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



- 1. How did the set design aid in the telling of the story? What would you change and why?
- 2. What sort of atmosphere was created with the lighting, sound, and music?
- 3. What does the Gamm poster (also the cover of this study guide) tell you about the play? What sort of poster would you design for this play and why?

#### What is Arcadia?

Arcadia is a region in modern Greece that got its name from the mythological character Arcas and, according to Greek Mythology, is the home of Pan, the god of the wild. The dictionary defines Arcadia as "a real or imaginary place offering peace and simplicity". The idea of a utopic Arcadia became particularly popular during the Renaissance and was a place of inspiration for many poets, painters, and sculptors. Tom Stoppard's play, Arcadia, takes place in Sidley Park, which Lady Croom describes below.

LADY CROOM: But Sidley Park is already a picture, and a most amiable picture too. The slopes are green and gentle. The trees are companionably grouped at intervals that show them to advantage. The rill is a serpentine ribbon unwound from the lake peaceable contained by meadows on which the right amount of sheep are tastefully arranged – in short, it is nature as God intended, and I can say with the painter, 'Et in Arcadia ego!' 'Here I am in Arcadia.'

#### Questions for Free Write or Discussion:

- Why do you think the playwright chose this title?
- · How does the title relate to the story?
- Why do you think Lady Croom chose to describe her home as such?
- How did the Gamm set designer capture the description of Arcadia?

#### Time and Theory

Arcadia straddles two very different periods of time and history. Stoppard keeps these two stories separate but the characters interact with each other through the artifacts they leave behind. Stoppard explores the question of the second law of thermodynamics, which states that the increase in entropy accounts for the irreversibility of natural processes, and the asymmetry between future and past. Thomasina explains "When you stir your rice pudding, Septimus, the spoonful of jam spreads itself round making red trails like the picture of a meteor in my astronomical atlas. But if you stir backward, the jam will not come together again. Indeed, the pudding does not notice and continues to turn pink just as before."

Stoppard also brings up many ideas that are explained by Chaos Theory, which gained popularity around the time Stoppard wrote Arcadia. Chaos Theory studies the behavior of systems that are extremely sensitive to initial conditions (often called the butterfly effect.) These systems, when unaffected or uninterrupted are predictable, but are inevitably thrown off course and are no longer reliable.

#### Questions for Free Write or Discussion:

• In what other ways does Stoppard explore and play with the concept of time?

(continued)

- Why do you think Stoppard chose to intertwine the two time periods, rather than tell the story chronologically?
- In what ways does Stoppard use storytelling to illustrate the second law of thermodynamics?
- In what ways does Stoppard use storytelling to illustrate Chaos Theory?

#### **Lord Byron**

Historical fiction is a literary genre in which the plot takes place in the past. It is often used to describe a novel, but can be applied to other forms such as television, comics, movies, and theatre. A fundamental element of historical fiction is that the text stays true to the manners, social conditions, and other details of the time period. The text may also reference or include important historical figures.

Lord Byron plays a huge role in *Arcadia* but is never actually seen on stage. The character of Lord Byron is a catalyst for a lot of the play's action and his enigmatic background (both in real life and in the world of *Arcadia*) is still very much a mystery that fascinates many.

George Gordon Byron was born in London, England in 1788. Byron was an important figure in the Romantic Movement and is considered to be one of the greatest British poets. Some of his best-known works include Don Juan, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, and She Walks in Beauty. There was a lot of talk and controversy surrounding Byron's actions including his many substantial debts and his love affairs (with men, women, and possibly his half-sister.) At first, Byron embraced and welcomed fame, but he later turned from it and went into a self-inflicted exile from Britain. He passed away from sepsis in 1824.

#### Questions for Free Write or Discussion:

- Why do you think Stoppard chooses never to have Lord Byron appear on stage?
- Why did Stoppard feature Lord Byron as opposed to other famous 18th century poets?
- What other historical facts did you notice in Arcαdia?

#### **British Landscaping**

Arcadia largely revolves around the landscape of Sidley Park. English landscape gardens in the 18th century were a symbol of status and class. The English Garden had many influences from Chinese gardens of the east and were inspired by landscape artists such as Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin. The gardens usually included a lake, rolling hills covered in luscious green grass, groves of trees, recreations of famous architecture, and hermitages. The hermitage, in particular, plays a very important role in Arcadia. Garden hermits or ornamental hermits were real people who were encouraged to live in hermitages and often dressed like druids. They remained permanently on-site and were cared-for, fed, and



Representation of an ornamental hermit in Germany in the late 18th century. [Wikipedia]

were turned to for advice. They were seen as entertainment and were popular with wealthy land-owners in the 18th century. A hermit was usually employed for seven years, during which they were not allowed to wash their hair or cut their nails. Once they completed their term, the hermits were paid up to 600 pounds, which was more than enough to never work again. In the play, Hannah Jarvis spends most of her time hunting down any information she can find about the hermit that used to live on the grounds.

#### Questions for Free Write or Discussion:

- Why do you think Stoppard focused so much of Arcadia's plot on the landscape of Sidley Park?
- After seeing the play, what was the importance of the Hermit of Sidley Park?
- Why do you think hermitages were so popular in the 18th century?
- Can you think of a modern equivalent to the 18th century garden hermit?

#### **ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM**

### **ACTIVITY #1: COSTUME DESIGN**

As you learned in the Themes and Questions for Discussion, the play takes place in two vastly different time periods: in 1809 and the early 1990's. The Gamm chose to hire two costume designers for the two time periods. Why do you think this decision was made? What do you think some benefits of having two costume designers might be? What do you think are some challenges that may arise?

Have your students sketch out two costumes: one from each time period. Examine and discuss any correlations between the characters in different times. How can you incorporate those similarities? How can you make them distinct?

On the right are some images from

Jessie Darrell Jarbadan's of The Gamm's costume designers.

How did they compare to your own drawings? Did anything surprise you?





Costume drawing by David T. Howard

## **ACTIVITY #2: SET DESIGN**

Though Arcadia takes place in two different time periods, all of the action occurs in one location, Sidley Park. Stoppard gives a detailed description of the room at the beginning of the play (see stage directions below). If you were the set designer, how would you make your set unique and distinct while also following the playwright's guidelines? Try to sketch out a layout for the set on a piece of paper. Compare and contrast your ideas with other students. Below is a sketch of the set used in The Gamm's production. How do you think the set designer incorporated the playwright's instructions while still making the design her own? How did The Gamm's set compare to yours, what are the similarities and the differences?

A room on the garden front of a very large country house in Derbyshire in April 1809. Nowadays, the house would be called a stately home. The upstage wall is mainly tall, shapely, uncurtained windows, one or more of which work as doors. Nothing much need be said or seen of the exterior beyond. We come to learn that the house stands in the typical English park of the time. Perhaps we see an indication of this, perhaps only light and air and sky.

The room looks bare despite the large table which occupies the center of it. The table, the straight backed chairs and, the only other item of furniture, the architect's stand or reading stand, would all be collectable pieces now but here, on an uncarpeted wood floor, they have no more pretension than a schoolroom, which is indeed the main use of this room at this time. What elegance there is, is architectural, and nothing is impressive but the scale. There is a door in each of the side walls. These are closed but one of the French windows is open to a bright but sunless morning.





# SUPPORTING MATERIALS

TOM STOPPARD'S "ARCADIA," AT TWENTY
The New Yorker | August 8, 2013
http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/tom-stoppards-arcadia-at-twenty

IS TOM STOPPARD'S "ARCADIA" THE GREATEST PLAY OF OUR AGE? The Independent, UK | May 21, 2009 http://tinyurl.com/o5snog

"IT'S WANTING TO KNOW THAT MAKES US MATTER": EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND DRAMATIC ISSUES IN TOM STOPPARD'S "ARCADIA" by John Flemming

## **GAMM INSIDER MAGAZINE: SPOTLIGHT ON "ARCADIA"**

An email-based collection of reviews and articles gathered from across the web. Email susie@gammtheatre.org to request it be sent to your email address.

THANK YOU for joining us for Arcadia and for working with this Study Guide to ensure the best,



# MORE TO COME

# **EPILOGUE**

most comprehensive theatrical and educational experience. Please be in touch if you would like us to visit your classroom before or after you attend *Arcadia*.

Our Education Department provides classes for students of various grade levels, as well as a month-long Gamm Summer Intensive for summer time theatre fun. We hope you will join us for more student matinees at The Gamm!

## **MATINEES STILL TO COME:**

## **AMERICAN BUFFALO** by David Mamet

- Friday, Nov. 18, 2016 @10am
- Friday, Dec. 2, 2016 @10am

# THE CHILDREN'S HOUR by Lillian Hellman

- Friday, Jan. 13, 2017 @10am
- Friday, Jan. 27, 2017 @10am

# KING ELIZABETH by Friedrich Schiller

freely adapted by Tony Estrella

• Friday, Apr. 28, 2017 @10am

## TO BOOK A MATINEE

contact Tracy at tracy@gammtheatre.org or 401-723-4266 ext. 111.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GAMM EDUCATION find us on the web at gammtheatre.org or reach Susie Schutt at 401 723 4266 ext. 121.

# A LOOK AT THE GAMM'S 32ND SEASON

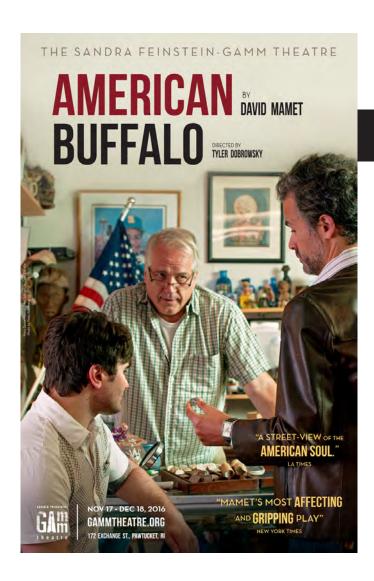
"We strive mightily to make sure every Gamm season is even more than the sum of its plays. Season 32 is no exception. The line-up is perhaps our most ambitious, provocative and stylistically diverse yet. It includes masterpieces by three of the greatest writers of the modern era, a classic work of 16th-century political intrigue reinvented for today, and a darkly compelling new play about life in a virtual world. Together they tell a thrilling story of living in the present with the lurking shadows of the past and the looming unknowns of the future."

-Tony Estrella, Artistic Director

sandra feinstein-



theatre



**■** COMING NEXT

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► LEARN MORE AT GAMMTHEATRE.ORG