

Fellowship Circle

Communicating the mission of Fellowship for Performing Arts

Gifts from Fellowship Circle members provide FPA the means to produce compelling theatre from a Christian worldview that engages a diverse audience.



NYC 2019/2020 SEASON

PLUS

- **Campus Initiative Fall Tour**
- **Taking Next Steps for FPA in Asia**
- **From the Desk of Max McLean**

New Adaptation Anchors FPA's 5th New York Season!

'Paradise Lost' Premieres; 'The Great Divorce' Returns



Fellowship for Performing Arts returns to New York City's Theatre Row with its fifth theatrical season anchored by Tom Dulack's stage adaptation of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a revival of C.S. Lewis' *The*

Great Divorce and the return of the *Imagine This!* staged reading series.

"Developing a new work for the stage is one of the most challenging endeavors theatre affords—for the creative team and, eventually, audiences," said FPA Founder and Artistic Director Max McLean. "Milton's *Paradise Lost* is considered second only to Shakespeare for its impact in the English language, and playwright Tom Dulack has created a faithful, accessible stage adaptation exploring the causes and consequences of Satan's rebellion against God."

Samuel Johnson ranked *Paradise Lost* among the highest "productions of the human mind." And as a work whose pur-

pose was to "justify the ways of God to man," it influenced Lewis in writing both *The Screwtape Letters* and *The Great Divorce*.

"As Lewis was composing *The Screwtape Letters*, he was also writing his famous *A Preface to Paradise Lost*," Max said. "It's a wonderfully lucid critique of the work."

FPA produces theatre from a Christian worldview to engage diverse audiences and does so in leading theatrical venues nationwide. In New York, the season again plays at The Acorn Theatre, the prime venue in the Theatre Row complex of six theatres in the heart of the Theatre District.

The season runs from December 2019 to through February 2020, and FPAtheatre.com always offers the most up-to-date production schedule.

Paradise Lost's retelling of Satan's rebellion, which leads to war in heaven and his banishment to hell, reveals that "big sins" start as small ones.

"Satan's fall begins with 'injured
(continued on page 4)



ImagineThis!
A FESTIVAL OF STAGED READINGS

IMAGINING MORE

'Imagine This!' Staged Reading Series Returns

Fellowship for Performing Arts' produced the first *Imagine This!*, a series of curated staged readings, to start our 2018 New York Season. Two results occurred. One was that over 300 people attended the free readings of *Paradise Lost*, *The Brothers Karamazov* and *We Will Not Be Silent*.

Second, due to the interest and the responses received, FPA decided to continue to develop *Paradise Lost* and just announced that it will be the main event in the 2019-2020 New York season.

In December, *Imagine This!* will return with three new plays to be considered for future development by FPA.

"It's gratifying to see the *Imagine This!* initiative deliver

just what we hoped for—an exciting new work that fits FPA's mission of theatre from a Christian worldview to engage a diverse audience," said FPA Literary Manager Christa Scott-Reed.

"Playwright Tom Dulack's new version of the John Milton classic *Paradise Lost* tells one of the most important stories in Western civilization. And makes it accessible and relevant for today's audiences. It's both profound and entertaining."

This year, *Imagine This!* has several works under consideration and FPA will review a dozen or more scripts before the final selection in the fall.

Imagine This! will take place on three successive nights—Dec. 4, 5 and 6—at The Acorn Theatre on Theatre Row, New York. Tickets will be at no cost,

"It's gratifying to see the *Imagine This!* initiative deliver just what we hoped for—an exciting new work that fits FPA's mission..."

but a reservation is required.

"The readings feature professional actors, directors and stage managers working within a short rehearsal process to deliver a terrific reading of the play so that the audiences receive a good view of what a full production might look like," said FPA Founder and Artistic Director Max McLean. "The Q&A time after each performance is quite lively. The audience members share their view as to how thoroughly the ideas and the plot engaged them as well as some thoughts as to how that particular play might further FPA's mission."

merit, a wound to his pride,” Max said. “That triggered the impulse to exalt himself and seek self-determination above God. Satan famously declares, ‘Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven,’ thus rejecting God’s ‘splendid vasalage’ and seeking to live ‘none accountable, preferring hard liberty before the easy yoke of servile Pomp.’”

From hell, he plots his revenge to corrupt God’s newest creation by tempting Eve in the Garden of Eden and thus bring misery and sin into the world.

Working with Dulack—a veteran playwright—script development continues now with Max, FPA literary manager Christa Scott-Reed and director Michael Parva, who directed FPA’s original work, *Martin Luther on Trial*. Dulack’s works include the comedy *Breaking Legs*, *Solomon’s Child* and *The Misanthropes*, among others. Parva directed the highly-regarded *Irena’s Vow* on Broadway, the premiere of a stage adaptation of *Terms of Endearment* and Dulack’s *The Road to Damascus*.

The Great Divorce Returns

The New York season also will see the return of *The Great Divorce* to the stage for the first

time since it closed in NYC in January 2016. That followed an extensive, nationwide tour of the work adapted from Lewis’ classic theological fantasy about heaven and hell.

The Great Divorce takes audiences to the outskirts of heaven where the decision to stay or return to the familiar “Grey Town” below (Lewis’ metaphor for hell) proves to be harder than imagined. Four actors playing over a dozen roles bring this mesmerizing adaptation to life in an exciting theatrical experience.

“In addition to being influenced by *Paradise Lost*, *The Great Divorce* also was impacted by other works such as Dante’s *Divine Comedy*,” Max said. “Our plan is to open our New York season with it Dec. 14-29 before touring Washington D.C., Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Charlotte, LA and a dozen other cities.”

Adapting Lewis classics, developing other works, presenting them in New York and across the country—none of this is possible without the support of FPA’s Fellowship Circle.

“As a result of your partnership, we are able to produce theatre from a Christian worldview in the heart of the New York ‘cultural marketplace,’” Max said. “Thank you for joining in this mission with us.”

FPA’s Campus Initiative Starts the Fall Term

FPA launched its Campus Initiative last fall with performances of *C.S. Lewis On Stage* at Brown, Princeton and UC-Berkeley, then continued in the spring at the University of Texas, Miami and Vanderbilt.

Now, fall 2019 marks the start of a new term with the production on campuses up and down the East Coast and in the Midwest.

“It’s been so gratifying to see student reaction to C.S. Lewis on their campuses,” said FPA Founder and Artistic Director Max McLean, who wrote *C.S. Lewis On Stage* and brings Lewis to life on stage.

“And our Fellowship Circle of supporters has shown equal enthusiasm for this initiative.”

In fact, at talk-back sessions following our regular productions around the country, mention of producing the work at colleges and universities always draws strong applause and encouragement.

The schedule this fall will take the production to University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, University of South Carolina at Columbia, University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, University of Virginia in Charlottesville and Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

And something new for the Campus Initiative. For the first time, we will be taking *The Screwtape Letters* on campus in South Bend, Indiana for Notre Dame and Indianapolis for Butler University.

FPAtheatre.com will always have the latest information on campus productions.

The partnership of FPA’s Fellowship Circle of supporters makes it possible to produce *C.S. Lewis On Stage* and now *The Screwtape Letters* on campuses across the country.

“It’s both a privilege and a responsibility to take productions based on the works of C.S. Lewis to university campuses today,” Max said. “Your support makes it possible to present theatre from a Christian worldview there and allow it to engage young men and women who often are questioning their assumptions about faith.”



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Taking Next Steps for FPA in Asia

In May, Ken Denison, who serves as FPA's executive producer, traveled to Asia for a second time in the past seven months to negotiate dates for a far-east tour of *The Screwtape Letters* in the fall of 2020.

"Ken met with managing directors at theatre companies from Singapore to Tokyo and several points in between," said FPA Founder and Artistic Director Max McLean. "The theatres are working with us to cement plans to bring C.S. Lewis' play about spiritual warfare to a new international audience."

Singapore Rep Theatre emerged as the most likely city to launch the tour given its reputation for first-rate, English-language theatre and excellent dates in September 2020. From there we can develop a tour that could include performing arts venues in Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Tokyo and Seoul. There was also interest from Australia, but that will likely be a separate tour.

"The opportunity certainly is there for an FPA tour in Asia," Max said. "We will have to address the logistical issues as well as co-

ordination with our U.S. and college tours and our annual season in New York. I'm thrilled that this is on the table for our production, creative and marketing teams along with our board and supporters."

FPA performed in London for six weeks in 2015-16 with *The Screwtape Letters* at the Park Theatre. But an Asian tour would mark a new level of international activity.

To present a work like *The Screwtape Letters* before audiences in cities where religious content faces many restrictions will be both a challenge and an exciting possibility. We will continue to update the Fellowship Circle about international tour developments in Asia, Australia and Europe.

It's your support that makes it possible.

To present a work like *The Screwtape Letters* before audiences in cities where religious content faces many restrictions will be both a challenge and an exciting possibility.

FROM THE DESK OF MAX McLEAN



CAPACITY... WITH EXCELLENCE

Through the support our donors, we have continued to increase our capacity at Fellowship for Performing Arts.

This past year marks a new high. Since last December, we launched our annual New York theatrical season with a series of staged readings called *Imagine This!* (See story page 3.) In the months that followed, we saw the return of *The Screwtape Letters* in New York City and on a national tour that will continue for the rest of 2019.

We revived Robert Bolt's magnificent play, *A Man for All Seasons*, about Sir Thomas More's resistance to Henry VIII, a production that received a welcome response from New York audiences and critics.

And while this was going on, we began our third year of touring C.S. Lewis *Onstage: The Most Reluctant Convert* to both colleges and universities as well as performing arts venues in dozens of cities around the country.

There were several dates this past year when we had three different productions on stage in three different cities on the same night—a first for us.

And as a result of the *Imagine This!* readings, we selected our next play to develop into a full production, an accessible and provocative adaption by Tom Dulack of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. It will be featured in our 2020 New York season.

In the past, all this would have taken several years to accomplish. I'm pleased to say that this has been streamlined into a bit more than eight months.

But increasing capacity is one thing. Maintaining our commitment to excellence is quite another. And it is the main thing.

Above all, at FPA we want to be known for producing theatre that articulates the Christian worldview in way that captures the imagination of a diverse audience. Producing scripts that contain great ideas and stories that are driven by compelling acting and terrific production values is what we strive for in each of our productions.

This is the work we are called to do: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord," Paul wrote in Colossians 3:23.

This is important in every Christian's work, but it is essential to carrying out our mission of producing theatre from a Christian worldview meant to engage a diverse audience. This is because there are many people with negative preconceived notions about the gospel who need to view it through a new lens.

Through the arts, we attempt to "steal past watchful dragons" of skepticism and prejudice, as C.S. Lewis wrote. In order to do that, we have to be at the top of our game and produce theatre that is provocative, imaginative, multi-layered and leaves room for the Holy Spirit to do His work.

As encouraged as I am by our increased capacity, I am equally excited by our entire team's desire to pursue excellence with every bit of creative energy we have.

Increased capacity allows us to extend our reach, but it is our commitment to excellence "as unto the LORD" that makes our work compelling and meaningful to all the people we do reach.

Thank you for standing with us in this unwavering commitment to excellence.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as WORKING FOR THE LORD"

Colossians 3:23



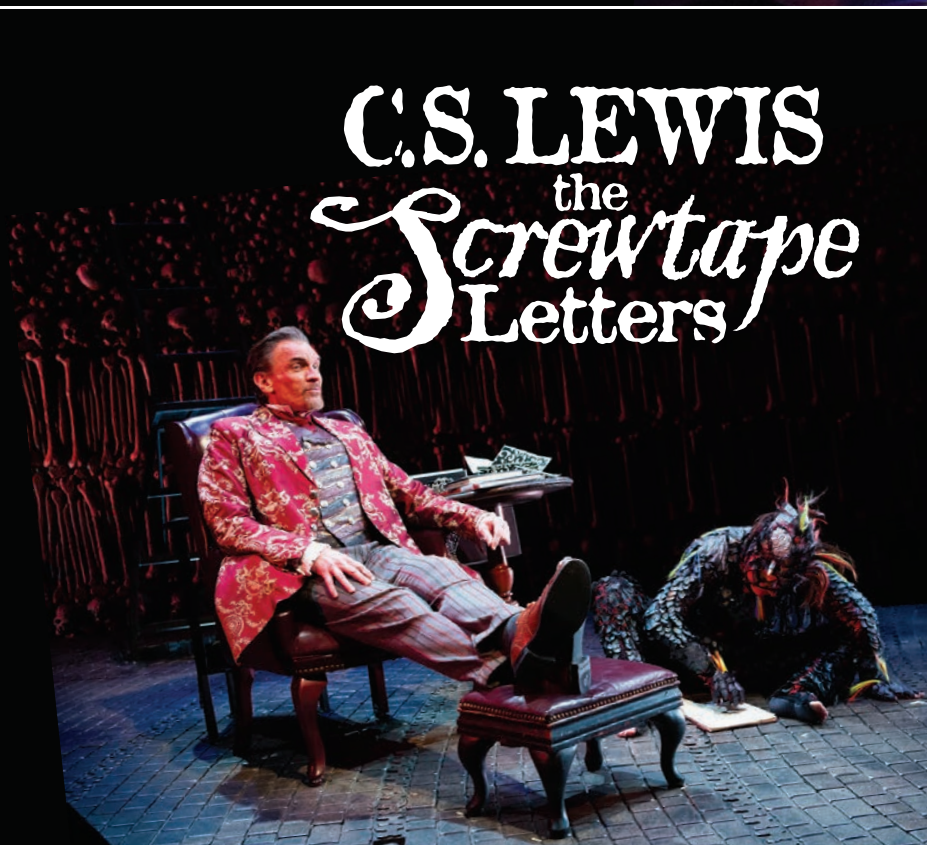
2019 PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

Check FPAtheatre.com for times and venues.

JAN 31-FEB 3 • UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, AUSTIN
FEB 7 • UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
FEB 10 • FT. LAUDERDALE - Parker Playhouse
FEB 16-17 • TAMPA - Straz Center
MAR 10 • LOUISVILLE - Brown Theatre
MAR 20-24 • CHARLOTTE - Booth Playhouse
APR 14 • BIRMINGHAM - BJCC Concert Hall
APR 17 • VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
APR 27 • CHATTANOOGA - Tivoli Theatre
MAY 3 • SAN ANTONIO - Majestic Theatre
JUNE 14-15 • SACRAMENTO - Harris Center, Folsom
JUN 22 • SAN FRANCISCO - Herbst Theatre
JUN 29 • COLORADO SPRINGS - Pikes Peak Center
JUL 11-21 • LOS ANGELES - The Broad, Santa Monica
AUG 2-3 • PORTLAND, OR - Newmark Theatre
AUG 10 • BAY HARBOR, MI - Great Lakes Center for the Arts
OCT 3 • UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA CHAPEL HILL - Memorial Hall
OCT 6 • CHARLESTON, SC - Gaillard Theater
OCT 10 • DUKE UNIVERSITY - Reynolds Theater
OCT 13 • UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA - Koger Center
NOV 6 • UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA - Annenberg Center
NOV 14 • UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA - Paramount Theater



C.S. LEWIS ON STAGE THE MOST RELUCTANT CONVERT



C.S. LEWIS the *Screwtape* Letters

JAN 18-19 • NASHVILLE - TPAC
JAN 29-FEB 3 • WASHINGTON D.C. - Lansburgh Theatre
FEB 23 • DALLAS - Eisemann Center
MAR 5-17 • HOUSTON - George Theater
MAR 28-31 • TULSA - Tulsa PAC
APR 12-13 • KANSAS CITY - Kauffman Center
MAY 10-11 • PHOENIX - Herberger Theatre Center
MAY 18 • SAN DIEGO - Balboa Theatre
JUNE 8-9 • ATLANTA - Ferst Center
JUNE 15 • GRAND RAPIDS - DeVos Performance Hall
JUNE 29 • RICHMOND - Dominion Energy Center
JULY 13 • CHARLOTTE - Knight Theater
JULY 21 • NORFOLK - Harrison Opera House
AUG 8-11 • BOSTON - Calderwood Pavilion
SEP 13-15 • CHICAGO - McAninch Theater
OCT 5-6 • CLEVELAND - Cleveland Playhouse Square
OCT 13 • UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME - Morris Center
NOV 2 • BUTLER UNIVERSITY - Clowes Memorial Hall
NOV 16 • MINNEAPOLIS - Pantages Theatre
NOV 22-24 • CINCINNATI - Jarson-Kaplan Theater

Please make your tax-deductible gift to FPA using the enclosed card. With any gift of \$1,000 or more, your name will be included in our playbill as a member of FPA's Fellowship Circle. (See insert for level details.)

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