

FPA FELLOWSHIP FOR PERFORMING ARTS

PRESENTS

C.S. LEWIS

ONSTAGE

THE MOST RELUCTANT CONVERT



Photo: Lancia E. Smith



FELLOWSHIP FOR PERFORMING ARTS

presents

C.S. LEWIS

ONSTAGE

THE MOST RELUCTANT CONVERT

Written and Performed by

Max McLean

<i>Scenic Design</i>	<i>Costume Design</i>	<i>Lighting Design</i>	<i>Original Music & Sound Design</i>	<i>Projections Designer</i>
Kelly James Tighe	Michael Bevins	Geoffrey D. Fishburn	John Gromada	Rocco DiSanti

<i>Wig & Hair Designer</i>	<i>Dialect Coach</i>
Leah J. Loukas	Claudia Hill-Sparks

<i>Marketing, Advertising and Press</i>	<i>Digital Advertising</i>
Southside Entertainment	The Pekoe Group

<i>General Management</i>	<i>Production Stage Manager</i>
Aruba Productions	Lew Mead

Executive Producer
Ken Denison

Co-Directed by
Ken Denison and Max McLean

There will be no intermission. Please turn off cell phones and personal electronic devices before the performance begins. Thank you.

CAST AND LOCATION

C.S. LewisMax McLean

LocationLewis' Study, Magdalen College, Oxford, 1950

A NOTE ABOUT THE PLAY

In 1950, C.S. Lewis received a letter from a young American writer expressing his struggle to believe Christianity because he thought it "too good to be true." Lewis responded, "My own position at the threshold of Christianity was exactly the opposite of yours. You wish it were true; I strongly hoped it was not...Do you think people like Stalin, Hitler, Haldane, Stapledon (a corking good writer, by the way) would be pleased on waking up one morning to find that they were not their own masters...that there was nothing even in the deepest recesses of their thoughts about which they could say to Him, 'Keep out! Private. This is my business'? Do you? Rats!...Their first reaction would be (as mine was) rage and terror."

This was Lewis' mindset before he "gave in" as he put it. Lewis embraced materialism, a worldview also known as "atheism," "naturalism," "determinism" or "reductionism". What they all hold in common is the view that all of life, every action, emotion or perception, can be reduced to pre-existing physical causes all the way back to the Big Bang. There is no need to appeal to a supernatural source. God is not required to explain or define origin, meaning, ethics or destiny.

For many years, Lewis was a defender of this view. And given his rhetorical gifts and love of debate one could see him fit into the "New Atheist" camp

with the likes of the late Christopher Hitchens or Sam Harris.

This play is an exploration of Lewis' dramatic conversion from this position to Christianity. It is my view that his vibrancy and resonance as a Christian apologist is rooted in this experience.

The primary sources for this play were Lewis' autobiography *Surprised by Joy* as well as his *Collected Letters*. I also relied on several of his books and essay collections including *The Problem of Pain*, *The Weight of Glory*, *Mere Christianity*, *God in the Dock*, *Present Concerns* and *Christian Reflections*. Last, I was greatly helped by the many biographies and critical insights by Douglas Gresham, Walter Hooper, Devin Brown, Tim Keller, Alan Jacobs, Jerry Root, Andrew Lazo, George Sayer, David Downing, Alister McGrath, Armand Nicholi, Sheldon Vanauken, Kenneth Tynan and A.N. Wilson to name a few.

This play takes place prior to the publication of Lewis' first Narnia story and well before he met his wife, Joy Davidman. That may beg the question "will there be a sequel"? We shall see.



Max McLean

WHO'S WHO

MAX McLEAN (C.S. Lewis, Playwright, Co-Director) Created the role of Screwtape (NYC, London, National tour), Mark in *Mark's Gospel* (Chicago, Jeff Award for Solo Performance), *Genesis* (NYC, National Tour). As playwright/adaptor C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *Genesis* and *Mark's Gospel*. Co-writer with Chris Cragin-Day of *Martin Luther on Trial*. Favorite roles include Stanley, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Snoopy, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. McLean has narrated the Bible five times as well as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Classics of the Christian Faith*. His narrations received four Audie Award nominations. Max enjoys a round of golf. Ephesians 2:10

KELLY JAMES TIGHE (Scenic Designer)
OFF BROADWAY/NATIONAL TOURS: *Shadowlands* (Fellowship for Performing Arts), *The Fantasticks*, *Almost Heaven*, *The Time of Mendel's Trouble*, *Nunsense* (Anniversary production at the Cherry Lane), *Movin' Out*, *Shear Madness*, *Mooseltoe - A New Musical*, *101 Dalmatians*, *Triumph* (Las Vegas Hilton). REGIONAL: San Jose Rep, Laguna Playhouse, Michigan's Cherry County Playhouse, Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, Sacramento Theater Company, Diablo Theater Company, Contra Costa Musical Theater, Center Repertory Company, Gateway Playhouse. Several National Television shows and commercials including Disney, KitKat, Oxygen Network, Animal Planet, etc. Online at Kellyjamestighe.com

MICHAEL BEVINS (Costume Designer)
Michael is excited to design another proj-

ect with FPA after *The Screwtape Letters* and *Shadowlands*. He has designed costumes for television, film and theater. Recent television credits include two seasons of Garry Trudeau's series *Alpha House* starring John Goodman and Bill Murray, and three seasons of the web series *Cop Show* with Colin Quinn and Jerry Seinfeld. Select film credits include the award winning *In The Family* and *The Grief of Others* by Patrick Wang, *The Killing of John Lennon* (2007 Tribeca Film Festival Special Jury Prize), *Down the Shore* with James Gandolfini and *A Novel Romance* with Steve Guttenberg. He has also designed costumes for numerous Off-Broadway plays, including *Sidd*, *White's Lies*, *All Eyes and Ears*, *Machiavelli* and *Good Ol' Girls*. www.michaelbevins.com

GEOFFREY D. FISHBURN (Lighting Designer). Lighting Design - New York: *Almost Heaven* and *Martin Luther on Trial*. Lighting Design - Regional: *Mary Poppins*, *Miss Saigon*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Addams Family*, *Titanic*, *Peter Pan*, *Hairspray*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Phantom*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Gypsy*, *The Wiz*, *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*. Assistant Sound Design - New York & National Tours: *Dreamgirls*, *West Side Story*, *The Secret Garden*, *Nixon in China*, Jerome Robbins' *Broadway*. Associate Sound Design - Regional: *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *My Fair Lady*, The Spoleto Festival.

JOHN GROMADA (Composer/Sound Designer) John has composed scores and designed sound for more than 35 Broadway productions, including *The*

Elephant Man with Bradley Cooper, *The Trip to Bountiful* (Tony nomination), *The Best Man* (Drama Desk Award), *Clybourne Park*, *Seminar*, *The Columnist*, *Next Fall*, *A Bronx Tale*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Proof*, *Rabbit Hole*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Twelve Angry Men* and *A Few Good Men*. For FPA: *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce* and *Shadowlands*. His other New York credits include *Dada*, *Woof Papa Hot*, *Incident at Vichy*, *Ripcord*, *Old Hats*, *My Name is Asher Lev*, *Measure for Measure* (Delacorte Theater), *The Orphans' Home Cycle* (Drama Desk and Henry Hewes Awards), *Shipwrecked!* (Lucille Lortel Award), *Julius Caesar*, *The Skriker* (Drama Desk Award), *Machinal* (OBIE Award) and many more. His television and film credits include a score for the Emmy-nominated *The Trip to Bountiful* and *Showing Roots*. For more information and music, visit www.johngromada.com.

ROCCO DISANTI (Projection Design). Broadway: *The Snow Geese*, *The Columnist*, *Wit*, *Collected Stories*, *Time Stands Still*. Off Broadway: *Incident at Vichy* (Signature), *Desire*, *Lift*, *Inner Voices*, *Wide Awake Hearts* (59E59), *Completeness* (Playwrights Horizons), *A Second Chance* (The Public) and more. Regional: *Fly*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Spin*, *Company*, *A Second Chance* (Signature Theatre). *Kansas City Swing*, *Lift*, *The Adventure of Fishy Waters in Bed With The Blues* (Crossroads). AWARDS: Nominated for a 2012 Henry Hewes Design Award for Completeness.

LEAH J. LOUKAS (Wig & Hair Designer). Broadway: *The Great Comet*, *The Heidi*

Chronicles, *On the Town*, *A Night with Janis Joplin*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *American Idiot*, *Irena's Vow*. Off Broadway: *The Royale* (Lincoln Center); *The Robber Bridegroom* (Roundabout); *Barbecue*, *Fortress of Solitude* (The Public Theater); *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Into the Woods* (Shakespeare in the Park series); *Heathers: The Musical*; *Tribes*; *Our Lady of Kibeho* (Signature Theatre, NY); *Jelly's Last Jam* (Signature Theatre, DC); *The Pirates of Penzance* (Barrington Stage Company); *Ever After* (Paper Mill Playhouse); *Butler* (59E59). Leah holds a BFA from the University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music.

CLAUDIA HILL-SPARKS (Voice & Dialect Coach) Broadway: *Anastasia*, *Dance of the Vampires*. Off Broadway: *An Octoroon* (Soho Rep/TFANA), *The Merchant of Venice* (TFANA), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (The Public Theater, Shakespeare in the Park), *Polish Joke* (MTC), *Time and the Conways* (Epic Theater Ensemble), *Stone Cold*, *Dead Serious* (The Edge Theater Company), *Shadowlands* (Fellowship for Performing Arts). Regional: 2008–2010 Summer Shakespeare Festivals, 8 years as Resident Vocal Coach for The Old Globe, Hartford Stage, Barrington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Huntington Theater Company, North Shore Music Theater, American Players Theatre, Chautauqua Theater Company. Numerous National Tours for Network Presentations. Television: Dialect Coach for Richard Easton as Ben Franklin for PBS. Faculty: The Old Globe/USD MFA Professional Actor Training Program,

Boston University BFA Professional Actor Training Program, The American Academy of Dramatic Arts, The Wilma Theater. Education: MFA in Acting, Temple University.

LEW MEAD (Production Stage Manager). Broadway engineering credits include: *A Chorus Line*, *Dreamgirls* and *Bring Back Birdie*. Broadway Design credits include: *Onward Victoria*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Urinetown*, *The King and I* and *Wonderful Town*. Touring credits include Julie Andrews, Leslie Uggams and *The Screwtape Letters*. Lew was the founder of ProMix, a theatrical audio company; Syntonic Design Group, a corporate audio company; and Autograph A2D, an audio distribution company located in New York City and London.

KEN DENISON/ARUBA PRODUCTIONS

Ken is the Executive Producer for Fellowship for Performing Arts. His company Aruba Productions, along with senior staff members Brian Letchworth and Amy Polan-Clarke, are also the General Managers for FPA's productions of C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce*, *Martin Luther on Trial* and *Shadowlands*. Other projects include *Human Nature* at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas and *Worldwide and Back Home Again* featuring the songs of John Denver. Recent credits include *Doctor Zhivago* (Australia and Broadway), *Broadway & The Bard* starring Len Cariou and *Songbird* (Off Broadway), *Tony n' Tina's Wedding* and *The Mary Wilson Holiday Spectacular with the Four Tops* (Chicago). Ken's experience as a Producer and General

Manager extends over 25 years, including numerous pre-Broadway and Broadway Productions. He was the Associate Producer of the original Tony Award-winning production of Disney's *The Lion King* and was the General Manager and Director of Production and Operations for the renowned Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, CA. for 15 years.

FELLOWSHIP FOR PERFORMING ARTS

(Producer) creates theatre from a Christian worldview that engages a diverse audience. Founded by Max McLean in 1992, FPA has developed and presented theatrical productions such as *Shadowlands*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce*, *Mark's Gospel*, *Genesis*, *Martin Luther on Trial* and *C. S. Lewis On Stage: The Most Reluctant Convert* in theatres and performing arts centers in New York, London and across America. It has also produced critically acclaimed audiobook narrations of classic Christian works. FPA board members include Glenn Gault, Roberta Livesay, Max McLean, Hardie Morgan, Daniel Quigley, John Rogers and Michael Tarwater. A member of ECFA since 1996, FPA is 501(c)3 non-profit, donor- supported arts organization.

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Max McLean, Founder & Artistic Director

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Ken Denison

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Special thanks to Tommy Kurzman for makeup and wig concepts.

Scenery built and painted by Center Line Studios Inc., New Windsor New York.



The Actors and Stage Managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE

The Fellowship Circle is a key building block to help Fellowship for Performing Arts achieve our mission of presenting theatre from a Christian worldview that engages a diverse audience. The following Circle Members provided the financial support to produce *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce*, *Mark's Gospel*, *Martin Luther on Trial*, *C.S. Lewis Onstage: The Most Reluctant Convert* and *Shadowlands*:

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The names on this list were last updated on 1/5/2018. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. Please call us with any questions or corrections. FPA values the donations of our many other supporters and friends and extends our deepest gratitude to all. To join our Fellowship Circle, visit CSLewisOnStage.com/donate or call us at 212.582.2920 and ask for Melissa Mollner or Sarah Mills.



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NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

While experiencing a production by Fellowship for Performing Arts, some people become curious about what drives our work.

FPA's objective is to engage and entertain its patrons by telling stories from a Christian worldview that can capture the imagination of a diverse audience.

Our process begins with careful attention to selecting works we think can accomplish this objective. *Shadowlands*—our most recent New York production—is a good example. It is an award-winning play with a gripping, yet humorous, story of love and loss, grief and doubt, and, ultimately, faith. It's been captivating audiences for nearly three decades.

We also strive to execute our artistic vision to the highest level of excellence our budgets allow. In this case that objective was executed by attracting a first-rate cast, production and creative team.

I'm aware that, despite the best of intentions, the notion of a "religious" play might send up a yellow flag.

During our first season in New York a few years back, several reviewers expressed this skepticism in print. One critic, upon discovering the worldview of the producers, wrote "my heart sank." Another made the understatement that presenting plays from a place of complete religious conviction "to a general audience is no easy thing."

In both cases, it was the work itself that turned them around. The first declared, "I expected a preachy bore, not this deliciously witty, theatrical treat that still resonates and amuses the day after." He went on, "I expect that, like the first, [the next

production] will be entertaining, very well staged, canny and imbued with serious Christian thought and an earnest invitation to introspection."

The second critic began by stating that he was "Jewish by birth, liberal by conviction and an atheist by observation and introspection." He went on to express "how much I admire the approach of Fellowship for Performing Arts...They do their work through a careful combination of good storytelling—craft comes first...allowing any message implicit in the material to take care of itself."

Last season, a third critic commented that "Fellowship for Performing Arts offers something that has been sorely missing from the New York theater


scene for far too long: high-quality, challenging theater from a Christian perspective. Most impressively...they let the drama lead

the way, allowing us to debate what we have witnessed on the trip home."

Such feedback is reassuring. Art hints at the deeper structures of reality. FPA desires to create theatre that contributes to a better understanding of that reality. To do that requires honest, clear-eyed storytelling that entertains and engages its audiences. If a play doesn't do that, it really doesn't matter what else it does.

Thank you for the privilege of attempting to do just that at this performance.

"Art hints at the deeper structures of reality. FPA desires to create theatre that contributes to a better understanding of that reality."


Max McLean,
Founder and Artistic Director
Fellowship for Performing Arts



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Be the first to know about new FPA productions in New York and in your city. Receive our Fellowship Circle Newsletter and go behind the scenes with C.S. Lewis Onstage: *The Most Reluctant Convert*, *Shadowlands*, *Martin Luther on Trial*, *Mark's Gospel* and *The Screwtape Letters*.



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FPA FELLOWSHIP FOR PERFORMING ARTS

Max McLean, Artistic Director

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