

Gerald Schwarz
Dramaturg
Jim Turner
Producer

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THE
ELIZABETH RIVER THEATRE COMPANY
FOUNDED IN 2000

Where we are ... and where we go

If this is not your first newsletter from us - yes, it's been a while since the last one... not least because of the strain that *Nathan the Wise*, our great theatrical rumination on religious identity and religious strife last October and November at the Chrysler Museum theatre, has put on our energies. 2003 finds the ERT pondering an assortment of next moves.

One of the pleasant results of *Nathan* is the groundwork we've laid for the kind of acting company feel we're trying to create in all ERT productions. All of us involved are eager to renew the spirit we kindled working together on *Nathan*. When all is said and done, that spirit is what we were after when we created this company in the first place. Furthermore, and most importantly to Gerald and me, it is that ensemble spirit that generates compelling productions - local artists working together, sharing common artistic ideals, aiming for uncompromising, challenging, exciting theatre.

Nathan proved that we have the artists. We're grateful for their involvement with our company.

Nathan also proved that the audience exists. And again, we're grateful for their support.

The tasks at hand are to provide opportunities for "our" artists, and to continue cultivating our audience, serving the theatre-lovers who want the type of production we are shooting for.

Together, artists and audience, we can all get there.

The tricky part is how (and where).

One thing we are working on is our website: elizabethrivertheatre.com. Look there soon for our mission statement, past newsletters, info and pictures from past productions and, of course, the latest on what's ahead for the ERT.

4760 River Shore Road
Portsmouth, VA 23703

ERTCO@AOL.com

From the Desk of the Dramaturg

As you regulars know, we do not plan in seasons. Rather, we stick projects in our pipeline and see if and when and where, after their individual healthy gestation period, they drop out. So, here goes:

For a while, we have been looking at Wallace SHAWN's *The Fever*, one of the most provocative, conscience-stirring plays of the last fifteen years. As it turns out, it seems to say more about the American psyche in our world with every headline in the newspapers ...

Then there are two musical projects, built around two of our most treasured artists: *Honey and Rue / I've seen the Day*, which has been workshopped and gone through a lot of thinking, will eventually

present Anwei KILGORE (our inaugural *Fledermaus* lead) in all her vocal and dramatic splendour; and a Cole PORTER evening (tentatively titled *What is this Thing called Love ?*) will ask and try to answer exactly that question, through the voice and stage presence of Virginia VAIL (Grandma in *Sandbox* and Princess Sittah in *Nathan*).

A new entry in our pipeline is *The Shape of Things* by Neil LaBUTE, one of the handful of exciting new voices in American drama - two young couples (if you can call them that) out to test how far you can mess with somebody else's life - after all, what, really, is this thing called Love? It is cool, it is hot, it is funny and dangerous - if we work the details out, it will be on the menu.

Last but not least, we won't let go of a play that has successfully challenged audiences everywhere to think about such seemingly far-fetched issues as quantum theory and as obviously urgent as our responsibility in the face of "weapons of mass destruction". So, we are still looking at Michael FRAYN's *Copenhagen*, and we promise our casting ideas will excite you...

And by the way: No matter when our website goes up - we will keep you posted in this old-fashioned way too - so, stay tuned for our next newsletter - SOON!



Leonardo da VINCI, *Studies of Currents*
(Detail from Sketchbook, ca. 1513)
Florence, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe