

From Page to Stage: The Philadelphia Theater Season

Instructor: Toby Zinman, *Philadelphia Inquirer* Theater Critic

5 meetings, Saturdays 2-4 pm, September-January: 9/21, 10/19, 11/16, 12/14, 1/18

Tuition: \$250

Students will be encouraged to see the productions, but not required. Theater tickets not included in tuition.

We'll meet five times. We'll see five shows. We'll read five scripts. We'll discuss it all. I've chosen five productions from the coming theater season in Philadelphia; they are all of different types and all of major interest, both theatrically and literarily. We'll try to coordinate dates to see the shows together, but students can see them on their own if that works better for their schedule. Class meetings at The Rosenbach will always remain on the listed Saturdays.

Each meeting will begin with a short lecture providing background and context, followed by a film clip, followed by conversation during which we'll discuss what we've read and what we've seen.

9/21: Lantern Theater. Bertolt Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*.

Brecht is a major figure in German drama, famous for the controversial acting technique called "the alienation effect." This play, written in 1941, is about a Chicago thug who rises to become a mob boss, and is often considered a parable about Hitler.

10/19: Inis Nua. Conor McPherson's *The Night Alive*

The Night Alive won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play 2013–14. Like many of McPherson's dramas, it is a world of down-and-out Irish men whose lives change when a woman enters. McPherson's best known plays are *The Weir*, *Shining City* and *The Seafarer*. Inis Nua is a theater company dedicated to producing work by English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh playwrights.

11/9: EgoPo Classic Theater. Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*.

Part of his "family trilogy," this drama won the Pulitzer Prize in 1978. A very American play, it takes place on a Midwestern farm and reveals a family with a very dark secret.

12/14: Arden Studio. Petersen and O'Hare's *An Iliad*.

This brilliant monologue gives us Homer, the ancient Greek bard, funny and tragic, retelling his epic of the Trojan War.

1/18: Arden Theater. Lorene Cary's *My General Tubman*.

This is a world premiere by a Philadelphia author about the escaped slave and famed abolitionist Harriet Tubman.

About Toby Zinman:

Toby Zinman is a recently retired Professor of English at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia; she was a Fulbright professor at Tel Aviv University and a visiting professor in China; she publishes widely and lectures internationally on American drama; her fifth book, *Replay: Classic Modern Drama Reimagined* (Methuen), and her essay, "American Theatre Since 1990" is included in the newly published, *Visions of Tragedy in Modern American Drama*.

Toby Zinman is also the chief theater critic for the Philadelphia *Inquirer* where she reviews New York and London as well as Philadelphia. She was named by *American Theatre* magazine, "one of the twelve most influential critics in America."