

PAPA /PROVINCETOWN THEATER COMPANY PRESENTS

THE REAL THING

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS BY TOM STOPPARD



DIRECTED BY **MICHAEL PREVULSKY**
PRODUCED BY **KEVIN SHENK**

THE REAL THING

A Comedy In Two Acts by
Tom Stoppard

Directed by **Michael Prevlusky**

THE CAST

(In order of appearance)

Max	James Forrest
Charlotte	Sandra Hricko
Henry	Ken-Nelson Suggs
Annie	Susan Grilli
Billy	David Matias
Debbie	Ann Siegle
Brodie	John Andert

THE ACTION

ACT I

- Scene 1: An apartment
- Scene 2: Henry and Charlotte's apartment two days later
- Scene 3: Max and Annie's apartment the next day
- Scene 4: Henry's apartment three weeks later

There will be a 15 minute intermission

ACT II

- Scene 1: Henry's apartment two years later
- Scene 2: A train to Glasgow
- Scene 3: Charlotte's apartment
- Scene 4: A rehearsal Hall
- Scene 5: Henry and Annie's apartment three weeks later
- Scene 6: A train
- Scene 7: Henry and Annie's apartment one week later
- Scene 8: Henry and Annie's apartment two months later

PRODUCTION

Producer/Production Manager	Kevin Shenk
Stage Manager	Anthony Jackman
Set Design	Michael Prevlusky, Kevin Shenk, and Anthony Jackman
Lighting and Sound Design	Michael Prevlusky
Sound Technician	Roger McCord
Lighting Technician	Anthony Jackman
Costumes and Properties	Anna Duart
Author of <i>Desert Island Disc</i>	Roger McCord
Set Construction and Decoration	Michael Prevlusky, Kevin Shenk, Anthony Jackman, Rob Bramley, Kim Nelson, Anna Duart, Tom McKenna, Roger McCord, and Butch Francis

NOTE: The railroad artifacts used in Act II, Scenes 2 and 6, are on loan from the 1950 Pullman car *Sheyenne River*, which is being restored for charter operation by Frank Ackerman of Orleans, Massachusetts.

Stage curtains have been fabricated by Margaret MacNeil of Interior Accents, formerly Lower Cape Window Care.

Special Thanks to all who have helped, especially:

Brooke and Evan Evans of the Provincetown Inn, Rus Elden and John at Provincetown Reservation Systems, WOMR, Ruthie's Boutique, Scotti's Florist, Kent Isham, Barney Howard, Ann Rosen, Jesse McGinn, Outer Cape Health Services, Richard Olsen, Nick Viatty, and Barbara Dennis for her special moral support

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The *Real Thing* is a play that I have always wanted to direct. I find its characters honest as well as entertaining and its steadfast belief that love is not just loving someone at their best, but loving them at their worst to be something we can all understand. There is truth here. The "real thing" is never easy. It requires careful tending, like a garden, but you'll find the rewards can be enormous.

WHO'S WHO

Michael Prevulsky (Director) has worked extensively both on and off Broadway as well as at regional theatres across the country. He is a member of the Board of Directors of P.A.P.A./The Provincetown Theatre Company. *The Real Thing* is his gift to Roger.

James Forrest (MAX) is appearing for the first time with the Provincetown Theater Company. This is his first appearance on stage for many years. While attending college in Hong Kong, he was a member of a pantomime theatre group and has studied acting and improvisational theatre with several teachers in New York.

Sandra Busa Hricko (Charlotte) is currently the Hostess of a program entitled "Outer Cape Health Talk" on Continental Cable Television. Although her career is psychiatric social work, her therapy is the theatre. Her involvement with the Provincetown Theatre Company includes acting roles in *Bell, Book and Candle*; *Play It Again Sam*; *The Unforgiving*; and *Hello from Bertha*. She has also starred in New Stages of Provincetown's *Staying Together* by Ron Weissenberger. In addition, she was the assistant director and choreographer for *School for Scandal*; choreographer/dancer in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*; and appeared in Charles Horne's T.V. soap opera, *Sauce for Tomorrow*. Her Provincetown Theatre Company involvement also includes costuming for *the Dining Room* and House Manager for numerous productions.

Ken-Nelson Suggs (HENRY) appeared last year in the *Dresser* and *Celebration*, making this his third outing with the Provincetown Theatre Company. It is also his third Stoppard performance; having played leads in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties*. He has appeared in cafe theatres as Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Jesus in *Superstar*; Bob in *Beyond Therapy*; and his favorite(s) as Orin (et al.) in *Little Shop Of Horrors*. He is currently working with the new Ad Hoc Stage in Chatham where he has played *The Foreigner* and will soon direct *Vanities*. He is especially proud of his 1988 Evelyn Lawson Award for directing the musical *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Susan Grilli (ANNIE) has been involved with theatre forever. Returning to Provincetown for the 735th time last fall, she founded the Provincetown Theatreworks which has since produced *Crimes of the Heart*, *Isn't It Romantic*, and *Execution of Justice* which she directed. While the Provincetown Theatreworks searches for performing space, she is delighted to be working and having fun with P.A.P.A./Provincetown Theatre Company.

David Matias (BILLY) is a Texan writer/actor who earned his B.A. in Speech and Drama from Trinity University and his M.A. in Theatre Arts from UND. His acting credits include characters in *Indian Wants the Bronx*, *Servant of Two Masters*, *As You Like It*, *Richard III*, *Exit The King*, *Rashomon*, *Electra*, *Twelfth Night*, *As Is*, and *How I Got That Story*. He most recently wrote and performed a one man show at the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center for an Art/Word benefit. He has also had the fortunate experience of directing a Tom Stoppard One Act presented to the famous playwright.

Ann Siegle (DEBBIE) is a newcomer to Provincetown, recently arriving from Minnesota where she taught English and Theatre. Her regional credits include *Red Noses* and *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*, and this fall, the prosecuting attorney in the Provincetown Theatreworks' production of *Execution of Justice*. Most recently, she appeared as Jenny in The Provincetown Theatre Company's play reading series production of *Jenny St. Joan*. She teaches at Provincetown High School and will be studying Shakespearean Theatre in Oxford this summer.

John Andert (BRODIE) is an actor and artist who has lived in Provincetown since the spring of 1986. He appears nightly at Gallerani's Cafe and was last seen by the Provincetown Theatre Company audiences in Max Reagan's production of the *Dining Room* in 1987.

'The Real Thing': succeeds on many levels

"The Real Thing," a comedy in two acts by Tom Stoppard, directed by Michael Prevulsky, PAPA/Provincetown Theater Company presentation, Mayflower Room, Provincetown Inn, 1 Commercial St., Provincetown. Performances Thurs. through Sun. through April 2, 8 pm. Reservations: 487-2400.

THEATRE

Move over Eric Segal, love isn't never having to say you're sorry. According to Tom Stoppard love is love when you not only love someone at their best but at their worst.

Stoppard's 1982 play, "The Real Thing" concerns itself with the topic of love, especially true love, "the real thing." The play is a romantic comedy exploring the complexities and the many layers of emotions within love and marriage. It is also a play about the language of love. The characters spend a good deal of time talking about love and relationships.

The characters are all theater artists, writers and actors -- people who excel at stylish deception. The play is therefore based on the appearances which cover the ultimate truth in relationships. It is a work which succeeds on many levels -- it is at once intellectual, emotional and theatrical.

Stoppard writes radiantly about the real thing. His characters are honest people, speaking real words -- yet they all the while manage to entertain their audience with their humanity.

The production by the Provincetown Theater Company more than does justice to Stoppard's words. The direction by Michael Prevulsky is crisp, highlighting the characters and their relationships. A clever set design by Prevulsky, Kevin Shenk and Anthony Jackman efficiently utilizes the main stage and two smaller side stages to allow the action of the play to flow smoothly. It is a nice way to handle the many involved scene changes without losing the momentum of the work.

Prevulsky has cast his character well. Right down to the character with the least amount of lines there is definition and attention to detail. The British accents affected are subtle and for the most part consistent.

Ken-Nelson Suggs and Susan Grilli fill the demanding roles of Henry and Annie admirably. They control their characters with just the right amount of intellectualism

and emotionalism. They make Henry and Annie well-matched adversaries in the game of love.

Rounding out the cast are James Forrest and Sandra Hricko as Max and Charlotte, the mates cast aside by Annie and Henry in their realization of the real thing. Ann Siegle brings Charlotte and Henry's daughter to life without overdoing obvious punk touches. David Matias as Billy, Annie's young co-star and John Andert as Brodie, the young man with a cause Annie supports, both are well-defined characters completing a fine ensemble cast.

In the play Max says to Henry, "Having all the right words is not what life is all about." Well, it certainly is what "The Real Thing" is all about -- that and all the right direction and acting.

"The Real Thing" is Stoppard at his best. If you make the drive to Provincetown you'll find Provincetown Theater Company's current production is worth the trip. ■

--Peg Vektorino

THE REGISTER

March 23, 1989

Theater Review

The Real Thing

Circular is a word to describe Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing*, currently being presented by the Provincetown Theater Company.

Here's a play within a play, a movie in a play, and a "real life" relationship that mirrors the play within the play. Whew!

Stoppard weaves the classic *'Tis Pity She's A Whore* into his own work, and spins the theme of a rebellious army protester in and out of both acts with precision.

The dialogue sings, whirls circles around the audience. Great monologues on the language and writing, witty living room banter, and a persistent tongue-in-cheek attitude prevails. Stoppard writes about a playwright's life, and love "among the architecture set," as one character says of the social elite. Life imitates art, which mirrors life, which....and on and on.

This reviewer's judgment? A great play, and a good production flawed only by a lack of credibility on the part of some actors.

Director Michael Prevulsky and crew have designed an interesting set, employing the main stage and two smaller areas at either wing. The clever design allows for about eight or nine different scene changes in this whirlwind production. Especially noteworthy are the costumes and set in the brief rehearsal hall scene.

Susan Grilli as Annie stands out as the woman who leaves her husband to live with the playwright Henry, played by Ken-Nelson Suggs. Not burdened with a wacky English accent, she eases through her lines hitting all the right stops along the way.

Sandra Hricko as the dumped wife (and probably better off for it) also excels, playing a British theater person with a sharp tongue.

Mr Suggs gives a good performance as the playwright who demands precision in language and his life. Henry's a bit of a poseur, always aware of how the public is viewing his life and work. Mr Suggs gets all the good lines here, the sharp putdowns and speeches dripping with irony. And he handles it all well. His accent does border on a prim Noel Coward tenor at times. Along with James Forrest, who plays the somewhat wimpy Max, Mr Suggs could have

succeeded just as well without the accent. After all, this play is universal, not necessarily British.

David Matias as Billy is also good, but he, too, is a bit unbelievable as the young seducer of Henry's wife.

Everyone is sleeping with everyone else here, or is suspected of infidelity. The characters are looking for "the real thing," the love that transcends all the everyday problems and transgressions. And herein lies the problem with the production. Are these characters pals or lovers? You can't really tell from their actions or from the lack of tension and passion on stage. Tom Stoppard has written some great love-and-sex lines here, but it takes something more than memorization to make them come alive.

JOHN LoDICO