



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two River Theater Company
presents
Mark Twain's
A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage

Book and Lyrics by **Aaron Posner**
Music by **James Sugg**
Directed by **Aaron Posner**

May 13 – June 8, 2008

Red Bank, NJ – Two River Theater Company closes out the season with a new bluegrass musical comedy adapted from a little known short story by Mark Twain. Set in Deer Lick, Missouri in 1876, ***A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage*** is a foot-stompin', barn-burnin' good ol' time for the whole family. Directed by TRTC's Artistic Director **AARON POSNER**, with original music by **JAMES SUGG**, **M3** begins previews on Tuesday, May 13 and opens Saturday, May 17. Originally scheduled to run through June 1, **M3** was extended for an extra week of performances months ago due to an early high volume of ticket sales. The show will close on Sunday, June 8.

"This one is all about fun." says director **Aaron Posner**. "This play is designed to be a pure delight. With music! The story has Twain's signature wit, loving irreverence for his characters, and a sense of sheer exuberance. We tried to match that energy in every step of the process, from writing the songs, to the playful American design, and, of course, casting amazingly talented actors and singers who are able to catch that Twainian spirit. This Twain is meant to be enjoyed by all. It's a chance to revel in all things homespun, handcrafted and American. I have had more fun writing and directing this show than pretty much anything I have ever done in the theater."

"I have to say that writing music to a classic new Twain tale and to Aaron's adaptation made easy music sense," says composer **James Sugg**. "Both country music and Twain capture the complex spirit of this nation, from a carefree joy to a dusty wisdom. I wanted to find musical styles that would enlighten and enhance the familiar nooks and crannies of a tale filled with, well, murder, mystery and marriage." The musical score is filled with bluegrass, country, and gospel music plus some gypsy jazz. "Ultimately, all of the music in **M3** is folk music and the score gives our band and singers the same freedom they would find if they were playing at Aunt Lyla's Thursday night square dances."

Author **MARK TWAIN** (1835 – 1910) is one of America's most famous literary icons. Known as a satirist, humorist, lecturer and writer, Twain established and popularized a unique type of American literature. He focused on American themes and language. Throughout his life, he composed 28 books, and numerous short stories, letters and sketches. He is most celebrated for *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the Great American Novel as well as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

The cast of seven includes **TRIP PLYMALE** (Broadway and Off-Broadway: ...*Charlie Brown*, *Greater Tuna*, *The Robber Bridegroom*, *Forum*, *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *1776*, *The House of Blue Leaves*) and **BERTILLA BAKER** (Broadway and National Tours: *Titanic*, *Les Miserables*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Black Patent Leather Shoes*) playing husband and wife John and Sally Gray. The young lovers are played by **DUSTIN SULLIVAN** (London: *Shakespeare's R&J*, New York: *Anne of Green Gables: the Musical*) making his Two River Theater Company debut and **ERIN WEAVER** (*The Tempest*, *Mary's Wedding*, *Into the Woods*, *Treasure Island*, *Robin Hood*) who played Emily in TRTC's *Our Town* last fall. Making Two River Theater Company debuts are **TOM TETI** (*Theophilus North*, *Treasure Island: An American Pantone*) who plays the wealthy David Gray and **DAMIAN BALDET** (National Tour: *The Lion King*, New York: *Attempts On Her Life*, *Gone Missing*, *Paris Commune*, *Nobody's Lunch*) who is A Stranger. Playing double-duty, **DAN SHARKEY** (Broadway: Susan Stroman's *The Music Man* and Harold Prince's *Showboat*. National Tours: *The Will Rogers Follies*, *Grand Hotel*, *The Sound of Music*. Regional: title role in *Sweeney Todd* at the Guthrie) portrays both the narrator, Clem, and the preacher, Reverend Hurley.

In addition to the premiere of *A Murder*, *A Mystery*, & *A Marriage* at Delaware Theatre Company and Round House Theatre, Scenic Designer **TONY CISEK** has collaborated with Mr. Posner on the premiere of *Sometimes A Great Notion* at Portland Center Stage, *Headman's Holiday* with Theatre Alliance, *As you Like It* and the premiere of *Daedalus* at Arden Theatre Company, and *The Tempest*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night* and *As you Like It* at Folger Theatre. Costume Designer **KATE TURNER-WALKER** designed the costumes for the world premiere of *M3*. She also collaborated with Mr. Posner on his productions of *The Tempest*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Melissa Arctic*, and *Headman's Holiday*. New to TRTC are Lighting Designer **JAMES LEITNER** and Sound Designer **DANIEL KLUGER**. Choreography is by **KARMA CAMP** (Broadway: *The Graduate* with Kathleen Turner, National Tour: *big*, Signature Theater: *Merrily We Roll Along*, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Into the Woods*, *My Fair Lady*, *Assassins*, *Urinetown*) and **KRIS KUKUL** is the Musical Director.

In his first foray into theater since his fifth grade portrayal of the Cowardly Lion, Jersey Shore music legend **PAT GUADAGNO** (Band Leader, Guitar) leads the band. Guadagno has appeared on stage with legends B.B. King, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Tanya Tucker, Roger McGuinn, and America (most all of whom were unaware of his presence). In addition to performing up and down the Jersey Shore and BobFest, his annual Bob Dylan tribute concert at Two River Theater Company, Guadagno has sung our National Anthem at Major League Ballparks, and performed on board an aircraft carrier for Navy Troops in the Persian Gulf. Guadagno's unique adaptations have been featured on film and television soundtracks, most recently in the hit Showtime series *Californication*.

JOSEPH M. PETERSON (Bass) of West Long Branch, has performed for NENA productions, *Twelfth Night*, and NJCU production of *Les Miserables*. He has produced and co-hosted radio programs for Jazz 88.3FM WBGO, and Jersey Shore podcast. **YURI TURCHIN** (Fiddle/Banjo), a founding member of the music group Kinderhook, leads the Latin Jazz and World Music sextet, Grupo Yuri. **JACK PYRAH** (Accordion/Piano), a native of Camden, Gloucester, rounds out the 4-piece ensemble

Mark Twain's A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage is sponsored in part by Lucas Capital Management. *M3* is scheduled to run **Tuesday, May 13** through **Sunday, June 8**. Tickets are \$30 - \$56. For more information, call **732.345.1400**, visit www.trtc.org or visit the **Two River Theater Company Box Office**, located at 21 Bridge Avenue in Red Bank, NJ. Subscriptions for the 2008/2009 season and single tickets for TRTC's summer show ***Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*** are now on sale. Subscription prices range from \$136 - \$240 and are discounted at least **20%**. **Discounted group rates** and **dinner/theater packages** are available by calling TRTC's Sales Hotline at 732.345.1400 ext 813. Box Office Hours: Monday-Saturday: 10am-6pm; Sunday: Noon-5pm

B4 Play, TRTC's **free, pre-show discussion series**, is scheduled 45 minutes prior to every performance. ***Get your facts first, then distort them as you please - A Pre-Show Discussion and Laugh Riot*** is a window into the creative process, will be hosted by Artistic Associate and Casting Director Liz Green.

Post-show discussions are scheduled following the 8pm performance on Wednesday, May 21, and following the matinees on Sunday, May 25 at 3pm and Wednesday, May 28 at 1pm. One **student matinee performance** is scheduled on Tuesday, May 20 at 10am. **Discounted group rates** and **dinner / theater packages** are available through the Box Office or by calling TRTC's Sales Line at 732.345.1400 ext 813.

TRTC is accessible to people with disabilities, including wheelchair accessibility, assisted listening devices and large print programs at every performance. Accessible seating is available by reservation. For more information call the Box Office at **732.345.1400**.

CALENDAR NOTICE

Events for *Mark Twain's A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage*:

Tuesday, May 13 – Community preview performance sponsored by Zager, Fuchs PC. More than 100 local educators will be treated to the first public performance of *Mark Twain's A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage*.

Saturday, May 17 – Opening Night performance of *Mark Twain's A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage* and post-show celebration.

Wednesday, May 21, 8pm; Sunday, May 25, 3pm; Wednesday, May 28, 1pm – **Post-show discussions** led by a member of the artistic staff will follow each performance.

Wednesday, May 28 – An **American Sign Language (ASL)** performance is scheduled at 8pm. Tickets are \$12 for those using ASL interpretation. Call 732.345.1400.

Thursday, May 29 – An **audio-described performance** is scheduled at 8pm. Tickets are \$12 for those needing audio-description. Call 732.345.1400.

Members of the press are invited to the opening night performance of *Mark Twain's A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage* on **Saturday, May 17 at 8pm**. Please schedule tickets through Jayme Powers, Director of Communications, by phone at **732.345.1400 ext. 830** or via email at jpowers@trtc.org.

WHERE:

Two River Theater Company
21 Bridge Street
Red Bank, NJ 07701

WHEN:

May 13 – June 8, 2008

WHO:

Book and Lyrics by **Aaron Posner**
Music by **James Sugg**
Adapted from the story by **Mark Twain**
Scenic Design by **Tony Cisek**
Costume Design by **Kate Turner-Walker**
Lighting Design by **James Leitner**
Sound Design by **Daniel Kluger**
Choreography by **Karma Camp**
Musical Direction by **Kris Kukul**
Production Stage Management by **Lisa McGinn**
Assistant Director **Chip Klose**

CAST:

Bertilla Baker*...Sally Gray
Damian Baldet*...A Stranger
Trip Plymale*...John Gray/Sheriff Thwacker
Dan Sharkey*...Clem/Hurley
Dustin Sullivan*...Hugh Gregory
Tom Teti*...David Gray
Erin Weaver*...Mary Gray

BAND:

Pat Guadagno...band leader, guitar
Joseph M. Peterson...bass
Yuri Turchin...fiddle, banjo
Jack Pyrah...accordion, piano

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TWO RIVER THEATER COMPANY is a professional not-for-profit regional theater company, providing outstanding plays and educational programs for audiences of central New Jersey and beyond. TRTC was founded in 1994 by Robert and Joan Rechnitz as Monmouth County's first professional regional theater in 30 years, and over the past 13 seasons has grown into one of the most vital and dynamic arts organizations in the region. Since opening its new theater in May of 2005, TRTC has hosted a number of luminaries and award winners, including Bruce Springsteen, Olympia Dukakis, Jackson Browne, Jon Bon Jovi, Edward Albee, and Sheldon Harnick. In 2006, the company received "Theatre of the Year" awards from both *The Star Ledger* and the New Jersey Theatre Alliance. TRTC is supported in part by grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Dept. of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and contributions from hundreds of local and national corporations, foundations, businesses and individuals. Continental Airlines is TRTC's official airline. Two River Theater Company is a member of Theatre Communications Group and the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.