



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**January 20, 2010**

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**Two River Theater Company**  
presents



By **Neil Simon**  
Directed by **Robert M. Rechnitz**

**February 9 – 28, 2010**

**Red Bank, NJ—Two River Theater Co.** is proud to present Neil Simon’s Tony Award nominated romantic comedy: ***Barefoot in the Park***, directed by Two River Founder and Executive Producer, Robert M. Rechnitz.

Says director Rechnitz: “When I founded the theater sixteen years ago, it was with the intent to produce ‘serious’ theater—that is, plays of significance and import—be they the great tragedies, dramas, *and* comedies. *Barefoot in the Park* is just one of those plays. In its structure and form, it is incredibly ‘serious’. Henry Irving said on his deathbed that “comedy is hard”. Well, Neil Simon knows comedy, and in this play, he makes it look seriously easy. It will be a delight to share his mastery of the comic form with our audiences.”

Two River audiences will remember cast members **Meg Chambers Steedle** (*Frog and Toad*), and **Christopher Coucill** (*Curse of the Starving Class*: the first production directed by Robert M. Rechnitz at Two River Theater Co.). The cast also includes **Dori Legg, John Wernke, Paul Nixon, Gary Powell,** and **Demetrios Bonaros.**

***Barefoot in the Park*** begins previews on **Tuesday, February 9**, opens **Saturday, February 13**, and runs through **Sunday, February 28.**

## **Biographies**

**Robert M. Rechnitz (Director)** (PhD, University of Colorado) was Professor of American Literature at Monmouth University for over thirty years. He published scholarly articles and short stories in various academic journals. In 1994, he founded and is now the Executive Producer of Two River Theater Company. For Two River Theater Company he has directed *Curse of the Starving Class* (for which he received Newark's *Star-Ledger's* nomination for Best Director of a Comedy), *True West*, *A View from the Bridge*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Thieves' Carnival*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *American Buffalo*. For the opening production in the new theater, he directed the classic American comedy, *You Can't Take It with You*. In 1996, Newark's *Star-Ledger* named him one of "20 New Jerseyans to Watch" in the new century. In 2001, Monmouth University awarded Dr. Rechnitz the Maurice Pollak Award for Distinguished Community Service. Dr. Rechnitz was honored in 2007 by the Monmouth County Arts Council with the Celebration of Excellence Award.

**Demetrios Bonaros (Telephone Man)** is a NY-based actor, singer and composer. Various credits: *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Hipgnosis Theatre Co; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hudson Warehouse); *Opa!*, Queens Theatre in the Park; *Dinner and Delusion*, Center for Contemporary Opera; *The Island*, Pig Iron Theatre Co. and *Sogno di una Notte di Mezza Estate*, International Opera Theatre, Orvieto, Italy. Studies: mathematics, theatre (Swarthmore College, Villanova University); piano/music theory/harmony (Conservatory of Athens); Commedia dell'Arte with Antonio Fava; neutral mask/clown/bouffon with Sarah Sanford and Giovanni Fusetti; and voice with Julian Rodescu.

**Christopher Coucill\* (Victor Velasco)** appeared in Robert Rechnitz's acclaimed production of *The Curse of the Starving Class* at TRTC. Broadway: Buffalo Bill in *Annie Get Your Gun* with Bernadette Peters; Gen. Harrison Howell in *Kiss Me Kate* with Brian Stokes Mitchell; and *The Graduate* with Lorraine Bracco. Tours: Lank Hawkins in the First National Company of *Crazy for You*. Regional favorites: Lear in *King Lear*, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival; Hamlet in *Hamlet*, Shakespeare & Company; Caesar in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Playmakers Repertory; and solo performances of *Underneath the Lintel*, Delaware Theatre Company. Television: "Margaret Mead: An Observer Observed", "Law & Order", "American Playhouse", "Deadline", and "One Life to Live".

**Dori Legg\* (Ethel)** Off-Broadway : *Shaving The Pickle*, Origin Theatre 1<sup>st</sup> Irish Festival. Regionally: *The Women*, Arena Stage; *This Beautiful City*, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Humana Festival; *Twelfth Night*, *Melissa Arctic* (both directed by Aaron Posner), *Macbeth*, *Great Expectations*, Folger Shakespeare Theatre; *Recent Tragic Events* (Helen Hayes nomination), Woolly Mammoth Theatre; *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Delaware Theatre Co; *Escape From Happiness*, *Season's Greetings*, Round House Theatre; *Durang*, *Durang*, *The Women*, Studio Theatre; *A Christmas Carol*, Ford's Theatre; *Prides Crossing*, *Enchanted April*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Glorious*, Fulton Opera House. Films: *El Camino*, *Double Negative*, *Guilty As Charged*. TV: *Law and Order: CI*, *Homicide*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, *As The World Turns*.

**Paul Nixon** (Delivery Man) is a retired high school teacher who lives in Manchester, NJ. Since his retirement he has been very active in community theater in Ocean and Monmouth counties, playing leading roles in *The Sunshine Boys*, *I Never Sang For My Father*, *Ten Little Indians*, and *Visiting Mr. Green*, among many others. He is very excited about appearing at the Two River Theater Co. with such a

talented cast. He wishes to express his appreciation to his beloved wife for enduring his love of the theater for so many years before she left this world several years ago.

**Gary Powell** (Delivery Man) is making his debut Two River Theater Company, but is certainly no stranger to the stage. He has performed for over 40 years in such theaters as 13<sup>th</sup> Street Theatre, Village Gate and Actors Playhouse in NYC, as well as such regional theaters as Club, Princeton Players, Westwood Dinner Theatre, Kobe Dinner Theatre and Spring Lake Theatre Company. His credits include leading roles in *The Star-Spangled Girl*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Anything Goes, 1776*, and *Camelot*. For the past 8 years he has performed as Scrooge in the Strand Theatre's production of *Scrooge, The Musical* in Lakewood.

**Meg Chambers Steedle\* (Corie Bratter)** is thrilled to return to Two River Theater Company! Previously, she appeared as Turtle/Bird among other fun critters in TRTC's production of *A Year with Frog and Toad*. Regional: *Picnic*, Triad Stage; *Real Girls Can't Win*, Victory Gardens Theater. American Music Theatre Project: *Asphalt Beach*, world premiere musical by Andrew Lipa; *The Boys are Coming Home*, directed by Gary Griffin. Northwestern University: Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* (William Daniels Award); *The Bald Soprano* (Mary). Education: B.A. in Theatre Arts (cum laude) from Northwestern University.

**John Wernke\* (Paul Bratter)** was most recently in *The Royal Family* on Broadway at Manhattan Theatre Club. Other MTC productions include *The American Plan* and *Accent On Youth*. Regionally notable shows include *The Fantasticks* and *Theophilous North*, People's Light and Theatre Co.; *Twelfth Night* and *Beard of Avon*, Portland Center Stage; and *Betrayal*, Hangar Theatre. TV/Film : "The Good Shepherd", "NYC Serenade", "Broken English", and "Life on Mars".

\*Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association.

The creative team is made up of **Marion Williams** (scenic and costume designer) who was most recently at Two River Theater Co. designing the costumes for *26 Miles*, **F. Mitchell Dana (Lighting Designer)** who was most recently at Two River with *Heartbreak House*, and **Karin Graybash (Sound Designer)** who most recently designed the sound for *Macbeth*, as well as *True West*, and *You Can't Take It With You*.

***Barefoot in the Park*** is scheduled to run **Tuesday, February 9** through **Sunday, February 28**. Tickets are **\$35 - \$61**. Get more information online at [www.trtc.org](http://www.trtc.org), call **732.345.1400**, or visit the **Two River Theater Company Box Office** in Red Bank, located at 21 Bridge Avenue. Box Office Hours: Monday-Saturday: 10am-6pm; Sunday: 12pm-5pm.

Two River Theater's Marketing Manager, Sean Murphy, will join the artistic department to lead **Before Play**, which will be an updated version of the classic game show ***The Newlywed Game***. This **pre-show event** is scheduled 45 minutes prior to every performance. For interested participants, please contact Liz Green at [lgreen@trtc.org](mailto:lgreen@trtc.org). **Post-show discussions** are scheduled following the 8pm performance on **Wednesday, February 17 at 8pm** and following each of the **Sunday matinees: February 14, February 21, and February 28 at 3pm**, as well as **Wednesday, February 24 at 1pm**. There is one **student matinee performance** scheduled on **February 16 at 10am (SOLD OUT)**. **Discounted group rates** are available through the Box Office.

TRTC is accessible to people with disabilities, including wheelchair accessibility, assistive 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 *Barefoot in the Park*:

**Tuesday, February 9** – Community preview performance. More than 150 volunteers from Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties, The Arc of Monmouth, Eastern Monmouth Area Chamber of Commerce Educational Foundation, St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center Foundation, UNICO Lincroft Chapter, Trinity Church, Marlboro Educational Foundation, UNICO Pt. Pleasant Chapter, and the Oceanport Garden Club will be treated to the first public performance.

**Saturday, February 13** – Opening Night performance of *Barefoot in the Park* and post-show celebration.

**Sunday, February 14** – **FYI Series**: A lively and in-depth conversation about the play. These discussions with scholars, experts and artists are designed to ignite passionate and thought-provoking dialogue, discourse and further investigation. The panel for this discussion includes actor William Parry; TRTC executive producer and director of this production, Robert M. Rechnitz; TRTC board member and actor Maureen Silliman; and psychiatrist Dr. Marty Tashman.

**Wednesday, February 17, 8pm; Sunday, February 21, 3pm; Wednesday, February 24, 1pm** – **Post-show discussions** led by a member of the artistic staff will follow each performance.

**Wednesday, February 24** – An **audio-described performance** is scheduled at 1pm. Tickets are \$15 for those needing audio-description. Call 732.345.1400.

**Wednesday, February 27**—An **open-captioned performance** is scheduled for the 3pm performance that Saturday. Tickets are \$15 for those needing audio-description. Call 732.345.1400.

**Sunday, February 28** – “**So What Was That?**” Brand new this season, join TRTC Executive Producer Robert Rechnitz for wine, cheese, and a lively exploration of the play following the 3pm performance. Whether you were amazed or confused, enthralled or appalled, this is the conversation for you.

Members of the press are invited to the opening night performance of *Barefoot in the Park* on **Saturday, February 13 at 8pm**. Please schedule tickets through Sean P. Murphy, Marketing Manager, by phone at **732.345.1400 ext. 834** or via email at [smurphy@trtc.org](mailto:smurphy@trtc.org).

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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. Two River was founded in 1994 by Joan and Robert Rechnitz and over the past 15 seasons has grown into one of the most vital and dynamic arts organizations in the region. From Shakespeare to Quiara Alegría Hudes, the Tony-nominated author of the Broadway smash hit *In The Heights*, Two River produces a range of great theater to inspire and engage our audiences. Two River received great acclaim for its production of *Macbeth*, co-directed and co-conceived by Teller and the theater's artistic director Aaron Posner. The theater has co-produced plays with theaters around the country including California Shakespeare Theater in Orinda, California, the Folger Theatre in Washington D.C., and the Roundhouse Theatre in Bethesda, Maryland. The company received "Theatre of the Year" awards from the New Jersey Theatre Alliance in 2006 and from The Star-Ledger in both 2006 and 2008.