



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Katie Pedretty 727.712.2774
Public Relations Manager
Kpedretty@rutherfordhall.net

THE UK'S NATIONAL THEATRE *NT LIVE* SERIES CONTINUES WITH THE FOURTH LIVE PLAY TO CINEMA SCREENS WORLDWIDE, SUPPORTED BY TRAVELEX

**The series concludes with
THE HABIT OF ART
on Sunday, May 16 at 2 pm
at the historic Capitol Theatre
in the Cleveland Street District in Downtown Clearwater**

Tickets go on sale this Friday, March 5 at noon

March 2, 2010, Clearwater, FL – The pilot season of *NT Live*, the new initiative by the UK's National Theatre to broadcast live performances of plays onto cinema screens around the world, concludes with the broadcast event of *THE HABIT OF ART*, at the historic Capitol Theatre in the Cleveland Street District in Downtown Clearwater on Sunday, May 16 at 2 pm. Tickets go on sale this Friday, March 5 at noon at the Ruth Eckerd Hall Ticket Office. This new play by Alan Bennett, which opened in the Lyttelton Theatre on November 2009, is directed by Nicholas Hytner. The production was designed by Bob Crowley, with lighting by Mark Henderson, music by Matthew Scott and sound by Paul Groothuis.

The full cast includes Danny Burns, Martin Chamberlain, Philip Childs, Frances de la Tour, Richard Griffiths, John Heffernan, Alex Jennings, Barbara Kirby, Elliot Levey, Adrian Scarborough and Stephen Wight.

Benjamin Britten, sailing uncomfortably close to the wind with his new opera, *Death in Venice*, seeks advice from his former collaborator and friend, W H Auden. During this imagined meeting, their first for twenty-five years, they are observed and interrupted by, amongst others, their future biographer and a young man from the local bus station.

Alan Bennett's new play is as much about the theatre as it is about poetry or music. It looks at the unsettling desires of two difficult men, and at the ethics of biography. It reflects on growing old, on creativity and inspiration, and on persisting when all passion's spent: ultimately, on the habit of art.

THE HABIT OF ART is Alan Bennett's fifth play for the National Theatre. His last play, *The History Boys*, opened at the Lyttelton in 2004, toured nationally and internationally and played for two seasons in the West End and on Broadway. Among its many awards were the Laurence Olivier, Tony and Critics Circle Awards for Best Play and the South Bank Show Award for Theatre.

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Richard Griffiths created the role of Hector in *The History Boys* at the NT, on international tour, on Broadway and on film, winning the Evening Standard, Critics' Circle, Laurence Olivier and Tony Awards for Best Actor. His film and television work includes the *Harry Potter* films, *Withnail and I*, *Pie in the Sky*, *Gormenghast* and *Bleak House*.

Alex Jennings is an NT Associate. His recent appearances at the National include: *Present Laughter*, *The Alchemist*, *Stuff Happens* and *His Girl Friday*. Frances de la Tour last appeared at the National in *The History Boys* (also on Broadway and on screen).

Since he became Director of the National in April 2003, Nicholas Hytner has directed *Henry V*, *His Dark Materials*, *The History Boys*, *Stuff Happens*, *Henry IV*, *Southwark Fair*, *The Alchemist*, *The Man of Mode*, *The Rose Tattoo* (with Stephen Pimlott), *Rafta, Rafta...*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Major Barbara*, *England People Very Nice* and *Phèdre*.

General Admission tickets priced at \$20.00 will be available at the Ruth Eckerd Hall Ticket Office located at 1111 McMullen Booth Road in Clearwater, by calling 727.791.7400 or by logging onto www.rutheckerdhall.com. The Ruth Eckerd Hall Ticket Office is open Monday through Saturday, from noon to 6 pm and one hour prior to showtime.

The City of Clearwater and Ruth Eckerd Hall have joined forces to renovate and revitalize the intimate Capitol Theatre located on downtown Clearwater's beautiful Cleveland Street. Constructed and established in 1921, this classic structure, complete with a large mezzanine and furnishings reminiscent of a classic Hollywood theater, is one of the oldest operating theatres in the state of Florida. In 2009, the Clearwater City Council designated the Capitol Theatre a historical landmark. This is the first such designation by the city. Ruth Eckerd Hall and the Ruth Eckerd Hall Foundation are 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations.

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