## PICNIC

by William Inge





Theatre To Think About

16th Year In The Palm Beaches

Don & Ann Brown Theatre



### Note from the Director

Welcome to William Inge's *Picnic*, and the start of Palm Beach Dramaworks' 2015-2016 season.

I'm delighted to open the season with this Pulitzer Prize-winning play, which is also Inge's most popular work and a wonderful example of mid-twentieth century realism. Many of you have likely seen a revival somewhere, or are familiar with the film. My hope is that after you see our production, you'll realize you didn't know this masterpiece as well as you thought you did.

Many productions of *Picnic* – and this is true of the movie as well - take a heightened, overly theatrical approach to the piece, which was very much the style of the 1950s. The characters can easily become stereotypes and clichés. But much of Picnic is based on people Inge knew, or his own personal experiences and struggles. We have re-examined every inch of the play, imbuing it with a freshness and immediacy that we hope will speak to contemporary audiences. Our goal was to create realistic and complex characters: these are flesh-and-blood people, and our talented actors are delving into their inner lives. It may come as a surprise that, if played truthfully and without affectation, Picnic is a funny piece in addition to being sexy and provocative.

On the surface, *Picnic* is about the effect a drifter named Hal has on a group of lonely women who live in neighboring houses. Hal is young, handsome, rough around the edges and sexy, and became the archetype of the sensitive, disaffected male youth of the 1950s. In fact, he was likely the inspiration for

the James Dean character in *Rebel Without a Cause*.

But *Picnic* runs much deeper than the portrait of a bunch of desperate women responding to a sexy stranger. This is a play about hope and loss, about people trying to hold on, people grasping for something better. It's a play about the dreams and desires of youth, and what happens to those longings as we age. It's about people trying to figure out how to live a better life. And our production will make clear that all the characters, including the men, are changed by the end.

I hope you will be, too.



William Hayes
Producing Artistic Director

William Hayes *Producing Artistic Director*Sue Ellen Beryl *Managing Director* 

# PICNIC

by William Inge

director William Hayes
producer Susan Bloom
assistant director Paula Bennett
stage manager Suzanne Clement Jones
scenic design Michael Amico
costume design Brian O'Keefe
lighting design Donald Edmund Thomas
composer/sound design Steve Brush
wig design Omayra Diaz Rodriguez



#### Did You Know?

## William Inge, "Playwright of the Midwest"

William Inge, born and raised in Independence, Kansas, was called the "Playwright of the Midwest." He once said, "I've often wondered how people raised in our great cities ever develop any knowledge of humankind. People who grow up in small towns get to know each other so much more closely than they do in cities."

After graduating from the University of Kansas in 1935, Inge wanted to head to Broadway but couldn't afford to do so. He accepted a scholarship to George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville to pursue a master's degree, but soon dropped out. "Having given up the theatre I had given up the basis that I'd set my life upon. . . . I went home to Kansas and began to flounder." He eventually returned to Peabody and got his degree.

It was while working as a critic for the *St. Louis Star-Times* that he met Tennessee Williams. He went with Williams to see *The Glass Menagerie* in Chicago. "I thought it was the finest [play] I had seen in many years," he said. "I went back to St. Louis and felt, 'Well, I've got to write a play."

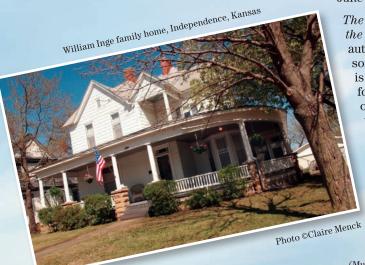
Inge's first play, Farther Off From Heaven, was staged in Dallas. He made it to Broadway in 1950 with Come Back, Little Sheba, and followed that with three more successes during the decade: Picnic, Bus Stop, and The Dark at the Top of the Stairs. All four were made into films. He also won an Academy Award for the screenplay of Splendor in the Grass in 1961.

Inge never had another successful Broadway play after the '50s. He once told an interviewer, "They [the critics] treated me as if I'd spit on the floor."

Shy, lonely, and unhappy, Inge never came to terms with being gay. He was often severely depressed, and was an alcoholic. Having dreamed as a child of making it on Broadway, he said that none of the hit plays brought him "the kind of joy, the hilarity, I had craved as a boy."

Inge committed suicide on June 10, 1973 in Hollywood, CA.

The Dark at the Top of the Stairs was his most autobiographical play, and some believe that the title is something of a metaphor for his career. But Williams once claimed the opposite was true. He said that in Inge's life "the stairs rise from darkness to light through something remarkably fine and gallant in his own nature."



(Much of this information and most of the quotes came from ingecenter.org)

Palm Beach Dramaworks Presents

## PICNIC

#### CAST

Madge Owens	KELLY GIBSON *
Hal Carter	MERLIN HUFF *
Flo Owens	PATTI GARDNER *
Millie Owens	MAREN SEARLE *
Helen Potts	ELIZABETH DIMON *
Rosemary Sydney	MARGERY LOWE *
Alan Seymour	TAYLOR MILLER *
Howard Bevans	MICHAEL McKEEVER *
Irma Kronkite	JULIE ROWE *
Christine Schoenwalder	NATALIA COEGO *
Bomber	RILEY ANTHONY

#### **SETTING**

Time: The early 1950s.

Place: A small Kansas town, in the yards shared by Flo Owens and Helen Potts.

#### ACTI

Labor Day, early morning.

#### **ACT II**

Same day, just before sunset.

#### **ACT III**

Scene 1: Early next morning, before daylight. Scene 2: Later the same morning, after sunrise.

#### There will be one 15-minute intermission.

#### **Production Crew**

Stage Manager	Suzanne Clement Jones*
Assistant Stage Managers	Ashley Horowitz and Lara Kinzel*
Choreographer	Michelle Petrucci
Wardrobe Supervisor	Omayra Diaz Rodriguez
Wardrobe Running Crew	Jane Lynch
Scenic Artist	Kristin Myrick



Member of Actors' Equity Association the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

The videotaping or other video or audio recording or the taking of photographs of this production is strictly prohibited.

## KELLY GIBSON (Madge Owens)

Originally from Denver and now based in NYC, Kelly was most recently seen as Roxanne in Cyrano De Bergerac at Riverside Theatre, and Cecile in PBD's production of Les



Liaisons Dangereuses. International: Dead on Her Feet (Arcola Theatre, London). NYC: The Tempest (New York Classical Theatre), Alone in the U.S. and Petrified (staged musical readings, CAP21). She has also performed regionally with Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Unicorn Theatre, Coterie Theatre, Kansas City Actors Theatre, and Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Education: MFA from University of Missouri at Kansas City, BFA from University of Colorado at Denver, additional NYC training at CAP21 and Fiasco Theater.

## MERLIN HUFF (Hal Carter)

received his MFA in Acting from the Yale School of Drama in 2014. He graduated from UC Santa Barbara in 2011 with a double major, receiving a BFA in Acting and a BA



in Philosophy. Merlin is very excited to be making his regional theatre debut. Credits include Yale School of Drama: Vieux Carré (Tye McCool), Blueberry Toast, Twelfth Night (Orsino), A Midsummer Night's Dream (Bottom); Yale Cabaret: This., Carnival/Invisible; Feature film: Lackadaisical Baby; Short films: A Visitor in Time (Hemingway), Take Care. Web series: The Fireturtles: An Indie Rockumentary, Off Prospect, Swerve. He currently lives in sunny Los Angeles with his wife and doggie. www.merlinhuff.com

## PATTI GARDNER (Flo Owens)

PBD: Our Town; Lips Together, Teeth Apart (Carbonell Award); The Price; The Fourth Wall. Daryl Roth Productions: Stars of David; GableStage: Casa Valentina, Sons of the



Prophet, Defiance, The Guys; Arts Garage: The Trouble With Doug; Boca Raton Theatre Guild: Pippin, Chicago, The Tale of the Allergist's Wife, Sylvia, The Anarchist; Caldwell Theatre: Clybourne Park; Actors' Playhouse: Bombshells, Unreasonable Doubt; Women's Theatre Project: The Interview; Plaza Theatre: Luv; Stage Door Theatre: 1776, The Immigrant, Damn Yankees; Mosaic Theatre: The Elephant Man. National tour: Menopause The Musical. Silver Palm Award recipient and Carbonell multi-nominee.

#### MAREN SEARLE (Millie Owens)

PBD debut.
Off-Broadway: Fashions
for Men (Mint Theater
Company). Regional:
Assassins, The Tempest,
Metamorphoses, Cabaret,
It's A Wonderful Life, The
Imaginary Invalid, Henry



IV, Henry V, (PlayMaker's Repertory Company); A Christmas Carol (Guthrie Theater); Prom, Antigone, A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings, Dragonwings (Children's Theater Company, Minneapolis). Training: MFA from University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

## ELIZABETH DIMON (Helen Potts)

Previous productions at PBD include Our Town, Dividing the Estate, Exit the King, All My Sons, Souvenir, Copenhagen, Berlin to Broadway, and The Dresser. Other Florida credits include nine



seasons of Summer Shorts for City Theatre, 20 years with Florida Stage, multiple seasons with Caldwell Theatre, as well as Maltz Jupiter Theatre, American Stage, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Gulfshore Playhouse, TheatreZone, Mosaic Theatre, GableStage, Actors' Playhouse, Riverside Theatre, Arts Garage, Women's Theatre Project, and more. Beth is a three-time Carbonell winner, and recipient of the 2010 Frank Prize for Performing Artist. Next up is Billy Elliot at Maltz Jupiter Theatre.



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#### **MARGERY LOWE** (Rosemary Sydney)

Florida credits include PBD, Caldwell Theatre, Zoetic Stage, Coconut Grove Playhouse, Actors' Playhouse, Royal Poinciana Playhouse, Parker Playhouse, Florida Shakespeare Theatre,



American Stage, Naked Stage, and Stage Door Theatre. As a company member of Stratford Shakespeare Festival, she was the recipient of a Tyrone Guthrie Award. Margery has performed in New York and across the country in national tours, as well as such venues as Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, The Muny, Canadian Stage, Fox Atlanta, Theatre Off Park, Sanford Meisner Theatre, Shakespearean Theatre of Maine, Kansas City Starlight, Stages St. Louis, and Maine State, among others. She has received numerous Carbonell Award nominations, and was named New Times Best Actress for 2010.

#### **TAYLOR MILLER** (Alan Seymour)

is happy to be making his debut with PBD. Recent New York credits include The Believers (Storm Theatre/ BAM Fisher), 2015 NYIT Award nomination for Outstanding Lead



Actor; Much Ado About Nothing (American Globe Theatre); and Clean (Looking Glass Theatre). He has also worked regionally with the Peterborough Players and Allentown Shakespeare in the Park. TV includes Law & Order, Burn Notice, Magic City, Leverage, Chicago PD. You can also find his successful web shorts, Boats and Jennifer Lawrence is Coming, on YouTube and Vimeo. Taylor would like to thank his family and Rachel for their constant support.

#### MICHAEL McKEEVER (Howard Bevans)

Recent performances include GableStage's Mothers and Sons (Carbonell nomination for Best Actor in a Play), Zoetic Stage's world premiere of Clark Gable Slept Here, and Island



City Stage's production of The Timekeepers

(Carbonell Award for Best Actor in a Play). He is also an award-winning playwright and designer, whose plays continue to be produced around the world. Michael is the recipient of numerous Carbonell Awards, three Silver Palm Awards, and three Florida Individual Artist Fellowships. He is a member of Actors' Equity and a founding member of Zoetic Stage in Miami. www.michaelmckeeverplays.com

#### **JULIE ROWE** (Irma Kronkite)

is a graduate of Idaho State University, where she received the Professional Achievement Award for Arts and Humanities from the College of Arts and Sciences. She was



most recently seen at PBD as Kate in Dancing at Lughnasa. Other favorite productions include August: Osage County (Barbara), A Moon for the Misbegotten (Josie), The Little Dog Laughed (Diane), and the one-woman show 9 Parts of Desire. A member of Actors' Equity Association, Julie is the Director of Education at Maltz Jupiter Theatre.

#### **NATALIA COEGO** (Christine Schoenwalder)

returns to PBD for the third time, having previously appeared here in Company and Dividing the Estate. She was most recently seen in Bad Jews at



GableStage (Carbonell Award for Best Actress in a Play). Other credits include The Journey and Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson at Outré Theatre Company, and The Red Thread at Miami Theater Center. Natalia earned a BFA in Musical Theatre from New World School of the Arts and is a proud member of Actors' Equity. www.nataliacoego.com



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#### **RILEY ANTHONY** (Bomber)

A recent graduate of Dreyfoos School of the Arts, Riley has performed on multiple stages throughout Palm Beach County, playing a variety of roles from dramatic to musical theatre. He



performed in two world premieres at Maltz Jupiter theatre, Through the Looking Glass (as the Mad Hatter in 2013 and 2014, and as Tweedledum in the 2012 premiere) and Academy (ensemble). Other acting credits include The Sound of Music at Maltz Jupiter Theatre; Thoroughly Modern Millie, Legally Blonde, Guys and Dolls, and Metamorphoses at Dreyfoos School of the Arts; and multiple community theatre productions, including Big River, Oklahoma!, and Hollywood Arms.

#### **WILLIAM HAYES** (Director)

is a founding member of Palm Beach Dramaworks. Originally from Syracuse, Bill has an extensive list of directing credits and is a multi-Carbonell Award nominee. A short list of his acclaimed



productions at PBD includes Who's Afraid of *Virginia Woolf?, American Buffalo, A Delicate* Balance, Exit the King, The Lion in Winter, and, most recently, My Old Lady starring Estelle Parsons. As an actor, PBD highlights include Cradeau in No Exit and Norman in The Dresser. Also a playwright, he is the recipient of the Charles M. Getchell Award, and a member of the Dramatists Guild of America. Locally, he adjudicates the drama portion of the annual Pathfinders Awards sponsored by The Palm Beach Post, and is a member of the board of directors of the Economic Forum of Palm Beach County. He is the recipient of the 2014 Clyde Fyfe Award, presented by the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County, and a 2014 Silver Palm Award, presented by the South Florida Theatre League, "for his outstanding work as Producing Artistic Director" of PBD. Bill also serves as President of the Florida Professional Theatres Association and is a National Ambassador for The Actors Fund.

#### **WILLIAM INGE** (Playwright)

was known as the "Playwright of the Midwest." Inge (1913-1973) graduated from the University of Kansas in 1935, then went on to George Peabody College for Teachers, where he



received his MA. In 1943, after teaching for a few years, he became the drama critic for the St. Louis Star-Times, a position he held for three years. He had his first Broadway success in 1950 with Come Back, Little Sheba. That was followed by Picnic, Bus Stop, and The Dark at the Top of the Stairs. All four plays were written in the 1950s, and all later became films. Although he would go on to write more plays, he never had another hit. He also wrote the script for the film Splendor in the Grass, which earned him an Academy Award.

#### **PAULA BENNETT** (Assistant Director)

Directing credits include Radio Hour at Yale Cabaret; The Living Dolls, which she co-wrote. produced by Yale Cabaret at GPSCY; two devised pieces, Feast I and Feast *II*, at Lucid Jazz Lounge



in Seattle. Paula recently graduated from the MFA Directing Program at the University of Washington in Seattle, where she directed the American premiere of Rona Munro's The Last Witch, Translations by Brian Friel, and The Mystery Plays by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa. Her short film, Dolci, was seen at film festivals across the country and was nominated for several awards. Before graduate school, Paula directed numerous productions, including Edgar Lee Masters' Spoon River Anthology with Seattle's homeless teens. She is the recipient of a Directing Internship from Milwaukee Repertory Theater and a Career Development Award from the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. She most recently worked with Joe Haj as assistant director on Cabaret at PlayMakers Repertory Company. www.paulabennett.net



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## MICHELLE PETRUCCI (Choreographer)

Originally from New Jersey, Michelle is currently on the faculty at Dreyfoos School of the Arts. Choreography highlights: 110 in the Shade (PBD); Pal Joey (Stoneham Theatre);



Snoopy: The Musical, Urinetown, and Bat Boy: The Musical (Area Stage Company); Andrew Lippa's The Wild Party (Outré Theatre Company). Performing highlights: Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (national tour), Camelot (dance captain, national tour), Princess Cruise Lines (lead singer/dancer), A Chorus Line (Bebe) and Hello, Dolly! (Maltz Jupiter Theatre), A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Pal Joey, Fiddler on the Roof, West Side Story, and Pippin. BFA: The Boston Conservatory. Proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

## SUZANNE CLEMENT JONES (Stage Manager)

was Florida Stage's resident stage manager and lighting designer for 23 years. At PBD she has stage managed A Little Night Music, Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Buried



Child, and Our Town. As a lighting designer, productions include That Championship Season, The Price, and The Subject Was Roses at PBD; Cane and The Cha-Cha of a Camel Spider at Florida Stage; Death and the Maiden and The Birds at Mosaic Theatre, and Ring of Fire at ArtsGarage. Suzanne has an MFA in Design from Northwestern University, a red Saturn, two cats (Saranac and Genesee–named after upstate NY beers), and an aversion to lima beans. She is proud to be a member of Actors' Equity Association, and is presently serving on the South Florida Equity Liaison Committee.

MICHAEL AMICO (Scenic Design) Past productions at PBD include Of Mice and Men, Talley's Folly (Carbonell Award winner), All My Sons, The Pitmen Painters, The Beauty Queen of Leenane, The Gin Game, American Buffalo, Copenhagen, The Weir, Private Lives, A Moon for the Misbegotten (Carbonell nomination), The Chairs (Carbonell nomination), Betrayal, Jacques Brel..., Seascape, and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?. Mr. Amico has designed scenery for theatres throughout Florida,

including Aida at Actors' Playhouse, Dial M for Murder (Carbonell nomination) for Maltz Jupiter Theatre, Fully Committed at the Broward Center, As Thousands Cheer at the Kravis Center, Benedict Arnold at Florida Stage, Ten Unknowns at Florida Studio Theatre, and Bequiled Again at Riverside Theatre.

BRIAN O'KEEFE (Costume Design) recently joined the staff as costume shop manager and resident designer. He has designed over 25 productions for PBD since 2009, and has been nominated for four Carbonell Awards, winning for A Doll's House and The Lion in Winter. Other regional credits: Orlando Repertory Theatre, Limelight Theatre (St. Augustine), Winter Park Playhouse, and Daytona Stage College. A UNC-Chapel Hill graduate, Brian spent his early career as a patternmaker for the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC, Candlewood Playhouse in Connecticut, and several major New York costume houses including Barbara Matera, Ltd.; Parsons-Meares, Ltd.; Michael-Jon Costumes; and Eaves-Brooks. More recent patternmaking credits include several productions at both the Alabama and Utah Shakespeare Festivals. Brian also spent 16 years as resident designer and shop manager for Seaside Music Theatre in Daytona Beach, where he designed over 75 shows and supervised more than 90 others.

**DONALD EDMUND THOMAS (Lighting Design)** previously designed *Tryst* for PBD. He has designed 15 shows for Maltz Jupiter Theatre including *Annie*, for which he received a Carbonell nomination. He has designed 11 productions for Palm Beach Opera and 10 for Florida Grand Opera, including Così fan tutte and The Pearl Fishers earlier this year. Other credits include the world premiere of the opera Cyrano, Alcazar de Paris on Broadway, a national tour of Fiddler on the Roof, and A Moon for the Misbegotten for American Repertory Theatre. Upcoming projects include Long Day's Journey Into Night at PBD, Macbeth for Michigan Opera, and The Barber of Seville for Lyric Opera Baltimore. Mr. Thomas is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

#### STEVE BRUSH (Composer / Sound Design)

is a Brooklyn-based composer and sound designer. His theatre credits include As You Like It (Shakespeare Theatre Company); A Streetcar Named Desire (Yale Repertory Theatre); Bells Are Ringing, The Cat and the Canary, A Hatful of Rain, and Design for Living (Berkshire Theatre Festival); Buzz (Synapse Productions). He received his MFA in Sound Design from Yale School of Drama where he was awarded the

Frieda Shaw, Dr. Diana Mason OBE, and Denise Suttor Prize in Sound Design. He is a two-time winner of the Best Orchestration Award at the Garden State Film Festival.

#### OMAYRA DIAZ RODRIGUEZ (Wig Design)

PBD: A Little Night Music, Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill, Les Liaisons Dangereuses. Omayra worked as wig master and makeup designer for the past five years at Alabama Shakespeare Festival (ASF). Recent ASF credits: King Lear, The Importance of Being Earnest, Mary Poppins, and The Great Gatsby. Other credits include Alliance Theatre, Utah Festival Opera & Musical Theatre, Cincinnati Opera, Ensemble Theater Cincinnati. Omayra holds an MFA in Theater Design & Production: Makeup and Wig Design from the University of Cincinnati, Conservatory of Music.

#### **ASHLEY HOROWITZ (Assistant Stage**

**Manager**) Professional stage management credits include The Women's Theatre Project's *Red Hot Patriot*. For PBD, she was assistant stage manager for all of the 2014-2015 season, including the summer musicals in concert. Ashley received her BA in Design/Technical Theatre from Florida Atlantic University. She would like to thank her parents for all their encouragement and support.

#### LARA KINZEL (Assistant Stage Manager)

has worked on more than two dozen productions at PBD since 2005, including 110 in the Shade, A Little Night Music, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Of Mice and Men, All My Sons, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Betrayal, Side by Side by Sondheim, Benefactors, and The Chairs. Prior to her work with PBD she was the assistant stage manager at Florida Stage for the 2004-2005 season. Other professional credits include seasons at New Harmony Theatre (Indiana) and Iowa Summer Repertory. She was also stage manager of Fool For Love at Take Heed Theater Company in Lake Worth. Lara received her MFA in stage management from the University of Iowa.

Actors' Equity Association (AEA) was founded in 1913 as the first of the American actor unions. Equity's mission is to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 40,000 actors, singers, dancers and stage managers working in hundreds of theatres across the United States. Equity members are dedicated to working in the theatre as a profession, upholding the highest artistics standards.

Equity negotiates wages and working conditions and provides a wide range of benefits including health and pension plans for its members. Through its agreement with Equity, this theatre has committed to the fair treatment of the actors and state managers employed in this production.

AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions.

For more information, visit www.actorseguitv.org.

