

THE ACTORS' GANG

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE ACTORS' GANG ADAPTS "GULLIVER'S TRAVELS." *Jonathan Swift's Audacious Fairy Tale for Adults* runs July 7 - September 8.

CULVER CITY, CA - **The Actors' Gang** combines puppets, music, songs and theater magic to create a brashly exuberant adaptation of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* for the stage.

Keythe Farley (co-author, *Bat Boy-The Musical*) as Gulliver is joined by **Chris Bell**, **Corey G. Lovett**, **Vanessa Mizzzone**, **Molly O'Neill**, **Steven M. Porter** and **Malcolm Foster Smith** in Swift's fairy tale for adults, adapted by company member **Joshua Zeller** and directed by **P. Adam Walsh**. *Gulliver's Travels* opens **Saturday, July 7** and continues through September 8 at The Gang's home in Culver City's Ivy Substation, with low-priced previews beginning June 28.

In Jonathan Swift's eighteenth century social satire, Lemuel Gulliver, a ship's surgeon, encounters a series of mishaps on the way to recognized ports, and ends up instead on several unknown islands living with people and animals of unusual sizes, behaviors and philosophies that lead him to a new understanding of humanity and his world.

"*Gulliver's Travels* is a fun, comedic, bawdy, irreverent romp," remarks Walsh. "People think of it as a children' story, but it's an adult tale that's been hijacked for kids. This is the grown-up version."

Although in its abridged form *Gulliver's Travels* is known as a classic children's adventure story, it's actually a biting work of political and social satire by an Anglican priest, historian, and political commentator. Published anonymously in 1726, *Gulliver's Travels* was intended, according to Swift, "to vex the world, not to divert it." Although much of the novel is an acidic attack on the vanity and pretense of contemporary courts, statesmen, and political parties, Swift saved his ripest satire for the foibles of human nature, thus ensuring that *Gulliver's Travels* remains relevant today - a timeless classic that mocks all humankind. Some of Swift's targets include man's pride, hypocrisy, ingratitude and cruelty; war; lawyers; money; and imperialism.

The Actors' Gang version promises to be a visual and auditory feast, with set and lighting design by **François-Pierre Couture**, a *Los Angeles Times* 2007 "Face to Watch" for his design of last season's *Love's Labor's Lost*, and original music by **Ara Dabandjian**, whose music also graced that production. Costume design is by **Shannon Kennedy**; sound design is by **Jason Tuttle**; and puppets are by **John Burton**, a visual and theater artist whose custom-built six-foot pop-up books were recently seen on the stage of the Walt Disney Concert Hall for a youth concert.

"The thing that makes *Gulliver's Travels* such fun to do live on stage is that it's so much about scale and perspective," explains Burton. "In the land of Lilliput, Gulliver's a giant and everyone around him is small. But then he goes to the land of Brobdingnag, and it's inhabited by giants and Gulliver is the one looking up. There are four journeys in all. We'll be using lots of puppetry, including Bunraku and various types of shadow play, to help bring our version of Swift's stories to life."

Says Zeller, "We're bringing a heightened sense of reality to the story in a demented, Monty Python-like way that's true to the book."

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Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was an Irish cleric, satirist, essayist, political pamphleteer (first for Whigs then for Tories), and poet, famous for works like *Gulliver's Travels*, *A Modest Proposal*, *A Journal to Stella*, *The Drapier's Letters*, *The Battle of the Books*, and *A Tale of a Tub*. Swift is probably the foremost prose satirist in the English language, although he is less well known for his poetry. He is also known for being a master of two styles of satire; the Horatian and Juvenalian styles. In his latter days Swift sank into dementia, having become progressively morose and morbidly suspicious. He died on October 19th, 1745, leaving sufficient fortune behind for the building of St. Patrick's mental institution in Dublin, the first of its kind in Ireland. He is buried in St. Patrick's cathedral. Published in his sixtieth year, *Gulliver's Travels* is the most famous example of Jonathan Swift's satirical works and was the only one he received payment for (£200) since most of his works were vehemently and dangerously political, and were published under one of his many pen-names - such as Lemuel Gulliver, Isaac Bickerstaff, M.B. Drapier - or anonymously.

The Actors' Gang, founded in 1982 by a group of renegade theater artists, has over 90 productions and more than 100 awards to its credit, and consistently wins acclaim for its daring interpretations of Shakespeare, Brecht, Moliere, Aeschylus, Ibsen and Chekhov, while also developing bold new plays that address the world today through a prism of satire, popular culture, and raucous stagecraft. The Gang is currently touring nationally with Michael Gene Sullivan's adaptation of George Orwell's *1984*, directed by the company's artistic director, Tim Robbins, and recently completed international dates in New Zealand, Australia, and Hong Kong. Other Actors' Gang productions that have toured to cities across the U.S include Tim Robbins' *Embedded*, Anne Nelson's *The Guys*, and Jessica Blank's and Erik Jensen's *The Exonerated*.

The Actors' Gang actively reaches out to the community with its Artist Residency in Local Schools program; by running lower, middle and high school after school programs with children from the community; by performing special matinees for local schools; and with accessibility performances for the hearing- and sight-impaired.

Performances of *Gulliver's Travels* take place **Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm and Sundays at 3 pm, July 7 through September 8**. Five preview performances take place on Thursdays, June 28 & July 5 at 8 pm; Friday, June 29 at 8 pm; Saturday, June 30 at 8 pm; and Sunday, July 1 at 3 pm. Tickets are **\$25.00** Friday through Sunday (**\$20.00** for students and seniors) and **\$15.00** for previews, except Friday July 7, a gala performance for which tickets are \$95.00 and include a catered post-show reception with the cast. All Thursday evening performances are **Pay-What-You-Can**. The performance on **Friday, July 13** will be **sign-language interpreted** and **audio described for the hearing and sight impaired**.

The Actors' Gang is located in the **Ivy Substation** at **9070 Venice Boulevard** (near the intersection of Culver and Venice Blvds.) in **Culver City**. Two hours free parking is available throughout downtown Culver City; the Ince Parking Lot (corner of Culver and Ince) is directly across the street from the theater. In addition, several restaurants (Italian, French, Thai, Japanese, and more) are only a few blocks' walk from The Actors' Gang and offer a variety of dining options before and after the theater. The Ivy Substation is air-conditioned and wheelchair accessible. For reservations and information, call The Actors' Gang Box Office at **310-838-GANG** (310-838-4264) or go to www.theactorsgang.com.

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DETAILS FOR CALENDAR LISTINGS

"Gulliver's Travels"

WHAT:

Gulliver's Travels - In this World Premiere adaptation of Jonathan Swift's timeless classic, Lemuel Gulliver, a ship's surgeon, encounters a series of mishaps on the way to recognized ports, and ends up instead on several unknown islands living with people and animals of unusual sizes, behaviors and philosophies. Share Gulliver's wonder as his explorations lead him to a new understanding of humanity and his world. Combining puppets, music, songs and theater magic, *Gulliver's Travels* is presented as only The Actors' Gang can.

WHO:

Adapted for the stage by **Joshua Zeller**

From the novel by **Jonathan Swift**

Directed by **P. Adam Walsh**

Featuring **Chris Bell, Keythe Farley, Corey G. Lovett, Vanessa Mizzone, Molly O'Neill, Steven M. Porter, Malcolm Foster Smith**

Original Music by **Ara Dabandjian**

Set and Lighting Design by **François-Pierre Couture,**

Costume Design by **Shannon Kennedy**

Sound Design by **Jason Tuttle**

Puppet Design by **John Burton**

WHEN:

Previews: June 28, 29, 30, July 5 at 8 pm and July 1 at 2 pm

Gala performance with post-show catered reception: Friday, July 6 at 8 pm

Opens for press on Saturday, July 7 and continues through September 8:

Thursdays at 8 pm: July 12, 19, 26; August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 September 6

Fridays at 8 pm: July 13*, 20, 27; August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; September 7

Saturdays at 8 pm: July 7, 14, 21, 28; August 4, 11, 18, 25; September 1, 8

Sundays at 3 pm: July 8, 15, 22, 29; August 5, 12, 19, 26; September 2

**The performance on Friday, July 13 will be sign-language interpreted and audio described for the hearing and sight impaired.*

WHERE:

THE ACTORS' GANG

Ivy Substation

9070 Venice Boulevard (corner of Culver and Venice Blvds.)

Culver City, CA 90230

(two hours free parking available across the street in Ince Parking Lot, corner of Culver and Ince)

HOW:

310-838-GANG (310-838-4264) or www.theactorsgang.com

TICKETS:

Single tickets, Fridays through Sundays: **\$25**

Students/seniors single tickets: **\$20**

Preview performances: **\$15**

Gala performance: **\$95.00**

*All Thursday night performances are **Pay-What-You-Can***

Single ticket purchases are unreserved seating

(Subscribers receive reserved seating)

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