



West End Players Guild News Release

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A Picasso Opens the 100th Season of West End Players Guild

ST. LOUIS (September 8, 2010) – The West End Players Guild’s 100th season kicks off on Friday, September 24, with Jeffrey Hatcher’s *A Picasso*, directed by Steve Callahan and featuring Kevin Beyer and Maggie Murphy.

The time is October, 1941. The place is a vault beneath the streets of Paris. The Nazis have occupied the City of Light and Picasso (Beyer) has been summoned to meet the beautiful Miss Fischer (Murphy), a German cultural attaché. Her mission is to persuade Picasso to authenticate three of his drawings so they can be put on display by the Nazis and then burned as examples of “degenerate art.”

As Picasso realizes the purpose of the interview a battle of wits ensues. Can Miss Fischer persuade Picasso to identify the drawings, thus consigning them to the bonfire? Or can Picasso swallow his considerable pride and disavow his own works in order to save them? Will Miss Fischer’s attraction to Picasso overcome her sense of duty? Will Picasso be able to humble himself to save his work? The literate and often witty repartee builds to a surprise ending, in which both Picasso and Miss Fischer somehow seem to get exactly what they want from each other.

Kevin Beyer, most recently seen as Coach in Dramatic License Productions’ *That Championship Season*, is a two-time recipient of the Riverfront Times “Best Actor” award. Critics lauded his work in the role of Coach as “the performance of a lifetime” (Talkin’ Broadway) and “a thundering portrayal” (Riverfront Times).

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Maggie Murphy, a 2009 theatre graduate of Lindenwood University, recently appeared as Joby in the St. Louis Shakespeare production of *Anton in Show Business* and as Rose Mary in ACT Inc.'s production of *Abie's Irish Rose*.

A Picasso premiered in Philadelphia in 2003 and won a Barrymore award for best new play of that year. It will be presented by WEPG Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 and Sunday afternoons at 2:00 through October 3. All performances are at the theatre at Union Avenue Christian Church, 733 Union Blvd. Tickets are available at the box office or online at www.WestEndPlayers.org.

West End Players Guild began as The Players, presenting their first show in 1911. The Guild's 100th season continues in November with *A Woman's Place*, an evening of one-acts about ordinary women in extraordinary circumstances; in February with Shelagh Stevenson's *Memory of Water*; and concludes in April with the St. Louis premiere of Kathryn Chetkovich's *Acts of Love*.

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Miss Fischer (Maggie Murphy) lights her fire for Pablo Picasso (Kevin Beyer) in the West End Players Guild production of Jeffrey Hatcher's *A Picasso*, directed by Steve Callahan. Miss Fischer, a Nazi cultural attaché in occupied Paris, must convince Picasso to authenticate three of his drawings so that they can be burned as examples of "degenerate art." The intense battle of wits between them leads to a surprise ending in Hatcher's literate and witty one-act play. (Photo Credit: John Lamb)