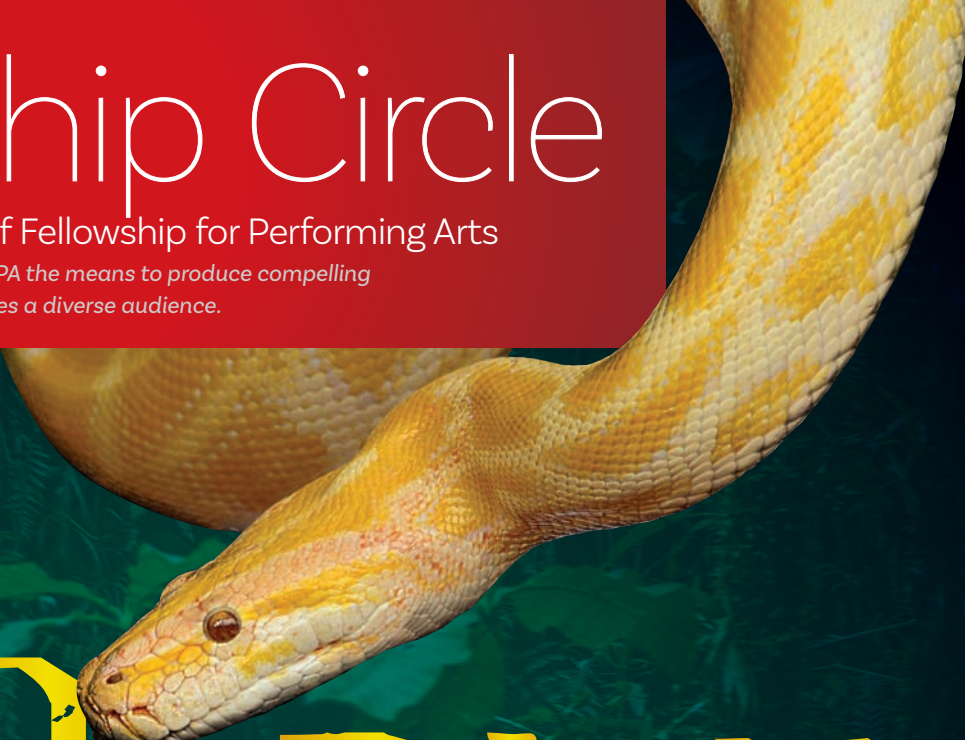


Fellowship Circle

Communicating the mission of Fellowship for Performing Arts

Gifts from Fellowship Circle members provide FPA the means to produce compelling theatre from a Christian worldview that engages a diverse audience.



PARADISE LOST

on Stage!

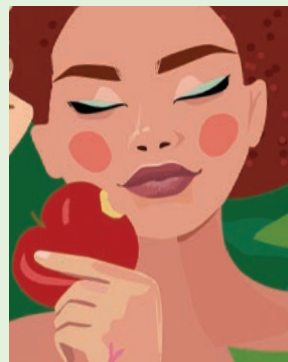
Epic Story Made Accessible & Engaging

PLUS

- **FPA Takes 3 Shows on the Road in 2020**
- **Q&A: Courtney Menking, University Coordinator**
- **From the Desk of Max McLean - The Meaning of Our Mission**

‘PARADISE LOST’ ON STAGE!

Epic Story Made Accessible and Engaging

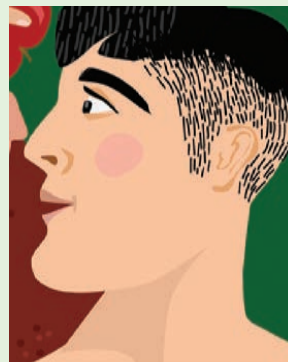


This January, Fellowship for Performing Arts premieres writer Tom Dulack’s new play based on John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* as the featured work of our fifth New York season.

Published in 1667, the book is numbered among the greatest works of the

English language and tells the story of Lucifer’s rebellion and subsequent temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

his many credits, he directed *Irena’s Vow* on Broadway and FPA’s *Martin Luther on Trial*. “At the core of *Paradise Lost* is the story of Eve’s temptation,” Max said. “Very little backstory is given in the Genesis account of Eve’s disobedience. Milton’s poem explores Lucifer’s motivation



in great detail but says little about what motivated Eve’s disobedience. Given all that Eve had in Paradise, why would she give in to temptation and disobey so catastrophically? That is what this play will explore.

“*Paradise Lost* fits FPA’s mission of theatre from a Christian worldview for diverse audiences,” said FPA Founder and Artistic Director Max McLean. “What Tom has done, along with Director Michael Parva, is take this huge 17th-century epic, among the greatest the world has ever known, and create an entertaining, accessible and remarkably current 21st-century, two-hour, modern-language play based on it.”

Tom is an award-winning playwright, a novelist and a professor at the University of Connecticut. And he previously worked with Michael on his play *The Road to Damascus*, an Off-Broadway hit from a few years ago.

Michael is the artistic director of The Directors Company, and among

‘Given all that Eve had in Paradise, why would she give in to temptation and disobey so catastrophically? That is what this play will explore.’



“It also forces us to consider,” Max continued, “how might we respond in that situation?”

“The literary fascination with Lucifer and Satan – from Mephistopheles to *Screwtape* – has been largely shaped by Milton’s portrayal of him in *Paradise Lost*,” Max said. “I trust that people will leave the theatre with a deeper understanding of the root of original sin, of rebellion and, also, the extent of God’s grace.”

“*Paradise Lost*” runs Jan. 15-Feb. 23 at The Acorn Theatre at New York’s Theatre Row. Tickets are available now at FPAtheatre.com.

Three for the Road!

FPA’s 3 C.S. Lewis-Inspired Productions Tour Nationally in 2020

Fellowship for Performing Arts’ three productions based on the works of C.S. Lewis all will be on tour throughout 2020. It marks the first time FPA will have three shows on the road at once.

For part of that time there will be four FPA productions up simultaneously as *Paradise Lost* runs in New York through February, while *The Screwtape Letters*, *C.S. Lewis On Stage* and *The Great Divorce* tour.

“This certainly speaks to Lewis’ enduring appeal, even 56 years after his death,” said FPA Founder and Artistic Director Max McLean. “Our mission is to select works from a Christian worldview that are relevant and engaging and produce them at a level of excellence that earns a place in leading venues across the country. Works based on Lewis’ life and writings allow us to do that.”

In 2020, productions already are scheduled from D.C. to Southern California and Pittsburgh to Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Charlotte, Tulsa and many, many points in between. (FPAtheatre.com will always have the most up-to-date schedule.)

After its 2010, 300-plus performance run in New York, *The Screwtape Letters* toured almost continuously through 2015. Other than a run in London in 2016, the production had been on hiatus until last year when it rebooted in New York before launching a tour that will continue into 2020.

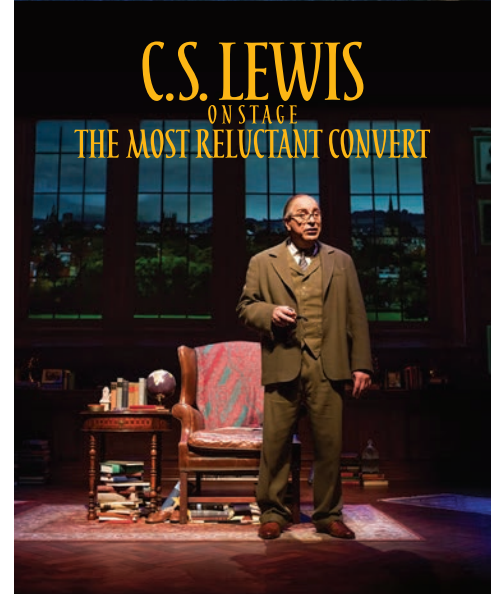
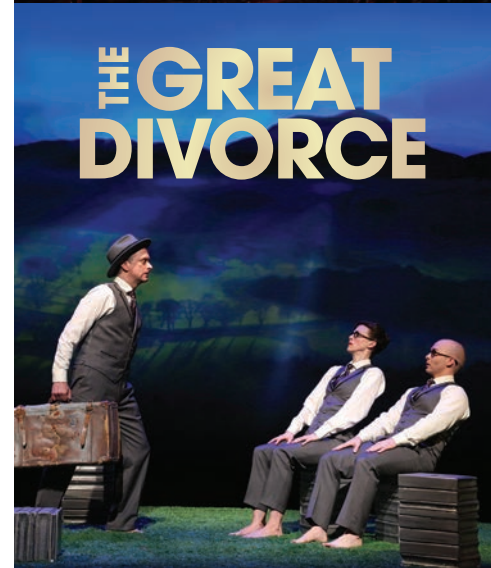
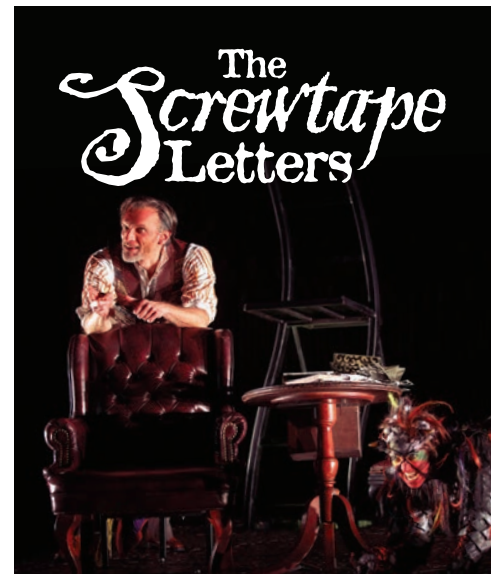
“Lewis wrote the novel *The Screwtape Letters* in 1942, and it brought him international recognition,” Max said. “The inverted moral universe he created, with a demon’s-eye view of a Christian conversion and how spiritual warfare works, continues to capture the imaginations of a new generation.”

The Great Divorce has been out of circulation for four years and returns with a December run as part of our New York season followed by a national tour throughout 2020.

“Even if you saw *The Great Divorce* before, this will be in many ways a new experience for you,” said Director Christa Scott-Reed, who also starred in the original production. “We’ve added new scenes from the book, including the popular character of the unbelieving bishop. We’ve also added a fourth actor who joins the other three in playing many funny and fascinating roles. We are so excited to revisit Lewis’ great work, which tells the story of spiritual warfare from the heavenly perspective. It is in many ways the flip side of the *Screwtape* story.”

Of course, our most recent work based on Lewis – *C.S. Lewis On Stage: The Most Reluctant Convert* – will continue touring in 2020 as it has since 2016.

“Producing a season in New York while touring nationally with three productions is a huge creative and logistical challenge,” Max said. “This is what it takes to have 80,000 to 100,000 people – from seasoned New York theatergoers to curious college students – experience theatre from a Christian worldview. And it simply could not be done without the prayers and support of our Fellowship Circle. We’re so grateful for your vision and partnership.”





C.S. LEWIS ON CAMPUS: A Q&A with Courtney Menking

Fellowship for Performing Arts moves into the second year of its Campus Initiative taking FPA productions to major colleges and universities around the country such as Princeton, Brown, UC-Berkeley, UT-Austin and many more.

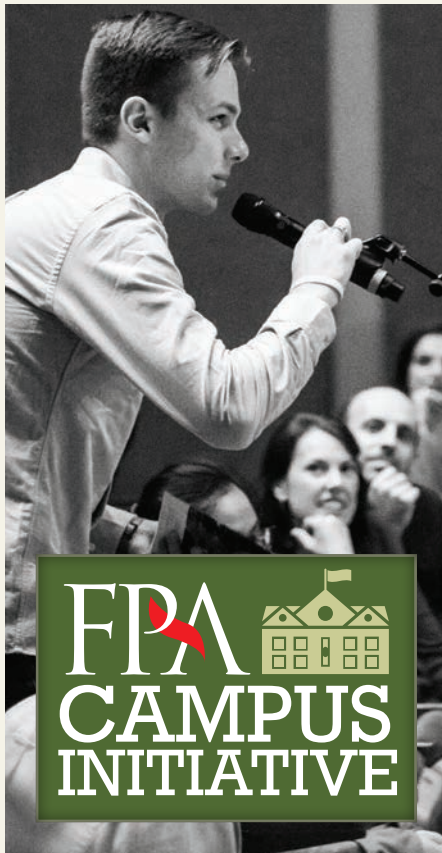
Courtney Menking coordinates these productions for FPA and gives a behind-the-scenes look in this Q&A on taking C.S. Lewis back to school.

How does FPA select a college or university for a production of one of its works?

FPA has a mission to reach major private and state universities in the first years of our Campus Initiative. The choice of where we go begins with an invitation from individual campuses. Then we check our national tour schedule with optimal campus dates and the availability of a campus theater venue. If we can't make it work one semester, we always go back and ask for dates further out that coincide with all of the different factors.

What challenges does a campus production offer that differ from producing in a traditional theatrical venue?

Whereas traditional performing arts centers work pretty much the same way, each campus has its own unique way of working with outside presenters like FPA. Our aim is to take our show to the campus itself, but that is not



always possible. We know student attendance and interest is highest if they don't have to travel to get to the show, so our first choice is to bring the show to the campus itself. Occasionally the on-campus venues aren't able to handle the production's technical requirements, so we will book a nearby performing arts center.

To book a campus venue requires a sponsoring organization that is recognized by the university. Often that means all communications must go through the sponsor. It can be a challenge to communicate the many details required to produce a show like *C.S. Lewis On Stage* through an intermediary. But we find a way!

Almost all FPA productions conclude with a Q&A with Max McLean following the performance. What do students want to know?

Our Q&A sessions vary from school to school. At UC-Berkeley, we had thought-provoking questions about C.S. Lewis' faith journey. At other schools, it took a while for students to warm up to the idea of asking a question in front of their peers.

I will never forget when a Vanderbilt student stood up and earnestly asked about Lewis' moment of conversion. He was nervous but was earnestly seeking *why*, in a moment, Lewis could go from not believing Jesus is the son of God to believing it. I saw him questioning that very thing in his own heart. It's extremely powerful to hear those questions and even to see students who don't stand up! Some of the best conversations come after the Q&As. We want our productions to spark a conversation and to plant seeds in the minds and hearts of students across the U.S.

Most students attending an FPA show were born 35 years after C.S. Lewis died. Why does he remain intriguing to him?

One thing I love about C.S. Lewis is his relevance. His works and thoughts on faith still ring true today, even though the world is a much different place than when he was alive and writing. I

(continued on page 7)

FROM THE DESK
OF MAX MCLEAN



**WE LIVE IN A
CULTURE WHOSE
PRIMARY GRAND
NARRATIVE IS THAT
THERE ARE
NO GRAND
NARRATIVES.**

THE MEANING OF OUR MISSION

I was asked recently how our mission – to produce theatre from a Christian worldview meant to engage a diverse audience – guides our selection of plays. It's a fair question given that we reference that statement repeatedly as the “why” behind what we do.

Our mission is rooted in the lens through which we see the world. C.S. Lewis summed up his worldview with this magnificent climax to his essay *Is Theology Poetry*:

“I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen – not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”

Lewis sees Christianity as the grand narrative in which all his reason and deepest desires are met.

We live in a culture whose primary grand narrative is that there are no grand narratives. This view is based on the assumption that God cannot be known and therefore we must base our deepest desires on humanistic models characterized by broad skepticism of any ideology, religion or worldview. Politics exist primarily to force issues important to a particular group where often the loudest voice wins.

Knowing that culture is increasingly dismissive if not hostile to Christianity, our mission is to put forth a vision of Christianity through artistic expression that is imaginative, multi-layered and convicting so that it offers a counterpoint to the prevailing worldview.

FPA's conviction is that art and theatre give us a little more wiggle room to say things within an engaging theatrical experience that otherwise could not be said. And it looks as if it might be working.

■ One critic described FPA as a “unique company devoted to Christian

theater for secular audiences.... That is no easy thing.... Even a Jewish atheist such as yours truly can find their stuff worthwhile seeing, discussing and even recommending.”

■ *TimeOut NY* called us “a genuine curiosity: unabashed Christian theater tackling weighty moral issues.”

■ *Theatermania* said, “FPA offers something that has been sorely missing from the New York theater scene for far too long; high-quality, challenging theater from a Christian perspective.”

These kinds of responses go to the heart of our presenting theatre from a Christian worldview to engage a diverse audience. Our desire is to appeal to the heart's longing for something greater than ourselves. “God has set eternity in our hearts.”

In the arts world, Christians are seen as cultural critics, not culture makers. Mainstream opinion is that Christianity is a regressive idea that has nothing to add to the cultural conversation. Of course, this is said because they don't engage with Christianity at a deep level. They caricature the Bible as a Stone Age book that can't speak to contemporary issues. They don't engage with the great Christian thinkers like Lewis, Chesterton, Milton, Augustine, Luther, Aquinas, Pascal or Dostoevsky. The picture that is painted of a Christian is as a naïve fundamentalist who needs to be enlightened.

FPA's responsibility is to provide a compelling alternative to that secular world picture by telling stories that capture the imagination and leave room for the Holy Spirit to do His work. Your support, both financially and in cheering us on as we produce such work, is the reason we can present a Christian worldview where it is seldom seen.

THE FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE is a key building block to help Fellowship for Performing Arts achieve our mission of presenting theatre from a Christian worldview that engages a diverse audience. The following Circle Members* provided the financial support to produce our annual New York season and our extensive national and university tours:

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Joley & Mark Wood
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*As of Oct 7, 2019

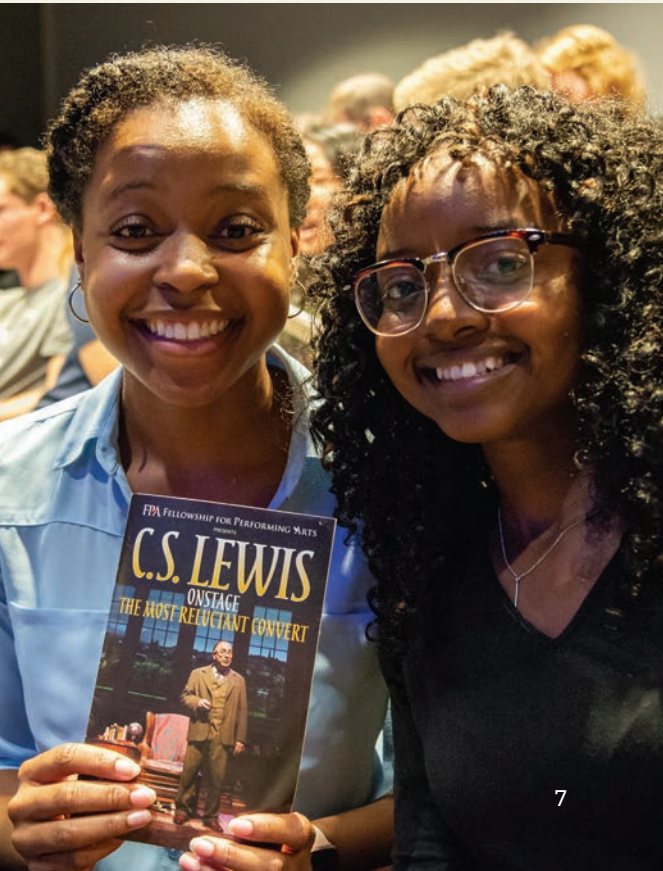
LEWIS ON CAMPUS

(continued from page 4)

truly believe that every human has a yearning for truth, and college campuses are absolutely buzzing with the question: What is true? They are challenged on this question and are told they must make their own truth. Lewis makes it absolutely black and white about what he has discovered to be true. I feel students are drawn to this conviction and want to know just how he knows! There is a passion for finding faith because it takes such faith just to survive on a college campus nowadays. Our shows act as a catalyst to go find out what it is you believe, and I trust God will bless those who begin that journey.

FPA's Fellowship Circle of supporters makes it possible for engaging, challenging works like C.S. Lewis On Stage to be produced literally nationwide on college campuses. FPAtheatre.com is always the latest source on where we're headed.

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FPA PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

As of Oct 7, 2019. New dates added regularly.
Please check FPAtheatre.com.

The Screw Tape Letters

2019

JAN 18-19 • NASHVILLE - TPAC
JAN 29-FEB 3 • WASHINGTON D.C. - Lansburgh Theatre
FEB 16 • PITTSBURGH - Byham Theater
FEB 23 • DALLAS - Eisemann Center
MAR 5-17 • HOUSTON - George Theater
MAR 28-31 • TULSA - Tulsa PAC
APR 12-13 • KANSAS CITY - Kauffman Center
MAY 9-11 • PHOENIX - Herberger Theater Center
MAY 18 • SAN DIEGO - Balboa Theatre
JUNE 1 • MIDLAND, TX - Wagner Noël PAC
JUNE 8-9 • ATLANTA - Ferst Center, Georgia Tech
JUNE 15 • GRAND RAPIDS - DeVos Performance Hall
JUNE 29 • RICHMOND - Carpenter Theatre
JULY 13-14 • CHARLOTTE - Knight Theater
JULY 21 • NORFOLK, VA - Harrison Opera House
OCT 5 • CLEVELAND - Playhouse Square
OCT 13 • SOUTH BEND, IN - Morrison Center
NOV 2 • BUTLER UNIVERSITY - Clowes Hall
NOV 16 • MINNEAPOLIS - Pantages Theater
NOV 22-24 • CINCINNATI - Aronoff Center

2020
JAN 12 • JACKSONVILLE - Times-Union Center
JAN 18-19 • TAMPA - Straz Center
JAN 26 • FT. LAUDERDALE - Parker Playhouse
FEB 8 • BIRMINGHAM - BJCC Concert Hall
MAR 15 • COLORADO SPRINGS - Pikes Peak Center

C.S. LEWIS ON STAGE THE MOST RELUCTANT CONVERT

2019

JAN 31-FEB 3 • UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, AUSTIN
FEB 7 • UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
FEB 10 • FT. LAUDERDALE - Parker Playhouse
FEB 16-17 • TAMPA - Straz Center
MAR 10 • LOUISVILLE - Brown Theatre
MAR 20-24 • CHARLOTTE - Booth Playhouse
APR 14 • BIRMINGHAM - BJCC Concert Hall
APR 17 • VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
APR 27 • CHATTANOOGA - Tivoli Theatre
MAY 3 • SAN ANTONIO - Majestic Theatre
JUNE 14-15 • SACRAMENTO - Harris Center, Folsom
JUN 22-23 • SAN FRANCISCO - Herbst Theatre
JUN 29 • COLORADO SPRINGS - Pikes Peak Center
JUL 11-21 • LOS ANGELES - The Broad, Santa Monica
AUG 2-3 • PORTLAND, OR - Newmark Theatre
AUG 10 • BAY HARBOR, MI - Great Lakes Center for the Arts
OCT 1 • COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
OCT 3 • UNC, CHAPEL HILL
OCT 6 • CHARLESTON, SC - Gaillard Center
OCT 10 • DUKE UNIVERSITY
OCT 13 • COLUMBIA, SC - Koger Center
NOV 6 • UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
NOV 14 • UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

2020
FEB 1 • SANTA BARBARA - Granada Theatre
FEB 7-9 • PALM SPRINGS, CA - Annenberg Theater
FEB 23 • ST. LOUIS - Touhill Performing Arts Center
MAR 4 • NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
MAR 25 • UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
APR 1 • RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

THE GREAT DIVORCE

2020

JAN 24-26 • CHARLOTTE - Blumenthal Center
JAN 30-FEB 9 • WASHINGTON D.C. - Lansburgh Theatre
FEB 15 • PITTSBURGH - Byham Theater
FEB 26-MAR 1 • DALLAS - Eisemann Center
MAR 3-15 • HOUSTON - George Theater
MAR 27-29 • TULSA - Tulsa PAC
JUNE 5-14 • ATLANTA - Alliance Theatre
JULY 8-12 • LA/IRVINE - Barclay Theatre

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