

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.

C.S. Lewis on Campus



**A Man for All Seasons
Is a Show for Our Times.**

**Delight in the Details
—Martin Luther on Trial Tour**

**Q&A—Christa Scott-Reed
FPA's Literary Manager**

From the Desk of Max McLean



School Is in Session!

Dates Set for FPA's Return to University Campuses

After almost a year of planning, the stage is set for Fellowship for Performing Arts to return to university campuses with a production of *C.S. Lewis Onstage: The Most Reluctant Convert* for student audiences beginning this fall.

"When we first announced plans to take *Convert* to student audiences on major college campuses, it generated so much excitement among our patrons," FPA Founder and Artistic Director Max McLean said. "Now, that plan is becoming reality. After much preparation, we'll be onstage beginning in October."

The campus performances for students begin at Brown University on Sept. 26, followed by Princeton on Oct. 5, Columbia on Oct. 6 and the University of California—Berkeley on Nov. 8, with several more in the pipeline.

FPA plans to produce six to 10 such campus productions each year.

"The process of presenting on campus has proved quite challenging," Max said. "Our works utilize a level of art, technology and production that is not required for most university events. And there are very few venues on campus that can accommodate us, and they are heavily booked. So we have had a challenge finding a date when the appropriate venue is available or readjusting our production to work in a non-traditional venue without compromising the experience."

But the opportunity to engage young audiences at a time when they often are more open to considering new ideas is worth the effort. Christianity once played a leading role in Western universities. Now it is considered an alien idea.

"Most colleges were started with powerful mission statements that were thoroughly Christian," Max said. "Over the years, this was lost. Lewis offers a good response. His razor-sharp wit and ability to articulate profound ideas can help students realize what has been lost and what can be gained by a re-examination of Christian truths."



Christianity once played a leading role in Western universities. Now it is considered an alien idea.

Into this spiritual desert, the harvest is plentiful. Our Fellowship Circle of supporters enthusiastically embraced the idea of on-campus performances, and because of their support, FPA can be among the few workers who can sow seeds for new beginnings at American universities.

(For additional insight on the opportunities offered by FPA's campus initiative, see From the Desk of Max McLean on page 6.)

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**BROWN, PRINCETON,
COLUMBIA
& UC-BERKELEY**



he Tony Award-winning play *A Man for All Seasons* anchors Fellowship for Performing Arts' fourth New York theatrical season Nov. 29, 2018, through Feb. 24, 2019, which will also feature FPA's inaugural series of staged theatrical readings and a revival of *The Screwtape Letters*.

Robert Bolt's play earned the Best Play Tony in its two-year run in 1961-63, telling the story of Sir Thomas More's refusal to support British King Henry VIII in his quest for an annulment—a stand that would cost More his life.

Here is how one critic described the play, "If you took the claustrophobic political turmoil of *Game of Thrones*, stirred in some of Oscar Wilde's witty banter and a few Arthur Miller-style stirring speeches added the period piece awesomeness of *The Tudors*, and created a starring role that's as stand-up as Atticus Finch in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, you might end up with *A Man for All Seasons*."

The play is also deeply relevant in the moral climate playing out in almost every area of contemporary life.

"Standing on principle has always been costly, and this is an opportune time to explore that dynamic onstage," Max said.

A Man for All Seasons is directed by Christa Scott-Reed, the critically acclaimed director of FPA's revival of *Shadowlands* in its third New York season. Many people remember Christa for

her outstanding performance in FPA's production of C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce*. She also serves as FPA's literary manager and will oversee the reading series. (See article on Page 5.)

The new production of *A Man for All Seasons* features 10 actors playing 14 roles and will be staged at The Acorn Theatre on Theatre Row, where FPA has performed the past two years.

"Earlier this year, we staged a developmental reading of *A Man for All Seasons* for a gathering of FPA patrons," Max said. "Many had heard of either the play or the Academy Award-winning movie based on it, but few knew what to expect from this 60-year-old work set in the 16th century. The audience was amazed by the power of it and, as mentioned, its clear relevance to today. It fueled our enthusiasm to produce it in New York."

A Man for All Seasons is based on a true story. When Henry VIII's wife, Catherine of Aragon, failed to produce a male heir after over 20 years of marriage, he wanted to divorce her to marry his mistress, Anne Boleyn. More, Henry's chancellor, refused to sign a letter to the pope supporting the request for an annulment. This simple act of moral conscience over convenience would ultimately cost him his life.

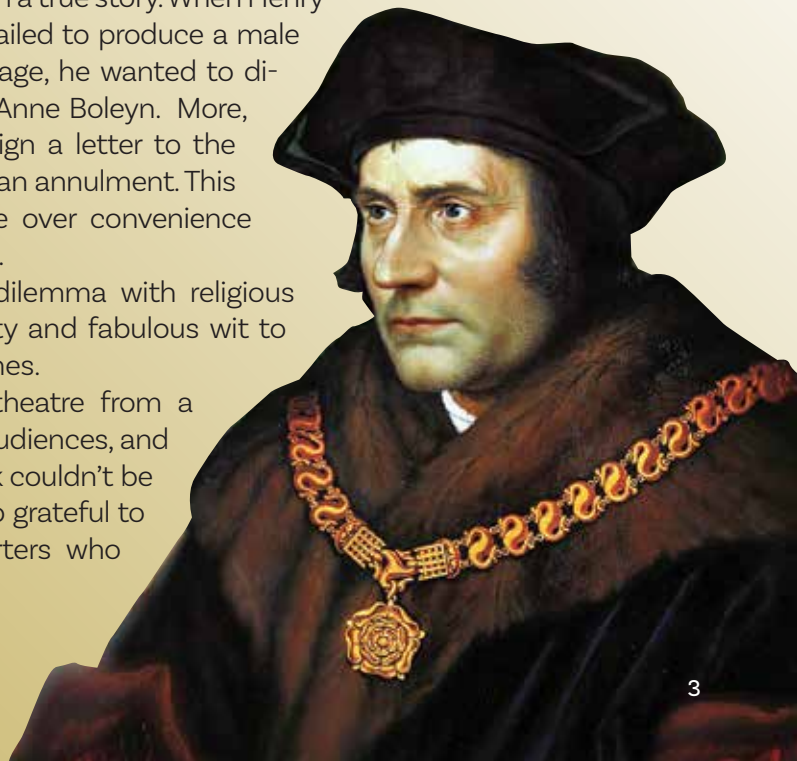
The play combines a moral dilemma with religious conviction, immense theatricality and fabulous wit to tell a compelling story for our times.

"Our mission is to produce theatre from a Christian worldview for diverse audiences, and *A Man for All Seasons* in New York couldn't be more on target," Max said. "I'm so grateful to our Fellowship Circle of supporters who make this possible."

A New York Revival of *A Man for All Seasons*



"The play combines a moral dilemma with religious conviction, immense theatricality and fabulous wit to tell a compelling story for our times."





The Delight Is in the Details

A National Tour for ‘Martin Luther on Trial’

Fellowship for Performing Arts’ acclaimed original work, *Martin Luther on Trial*, now in the midst of its second national tour, unfolds in a fantastical courtroom drama in the afterlife with the Devil as prosecutor and Martin Luther’s soul in the balance.

In one pivotal scene, with Pope Francis on the witness stand, Lucifer says, “Martin Luther is the Roman Catholic Church’s greatest enemy.”

After a pause for consideration, the Pope responds, “That would be you, actually.”

The eruption of laughter from the audience is just one of many examples of humor being the bloom of the argument in this engaging work.

“When *Luther* toured last year, no FPA production had ever drawn such energetic audience reaction,” said Max McLean, FPA founder and artistic director. “The play is quite sweeping in scope, covering much of Luther’s life and exploring his motivations, achievements and controversies through witnesses that range from Pope Francis, to Saint Paul, to Rabbi Josel, to Adolph Hitler.

“Against this epic backdrop, the production comes to life in many profound and provocative moments that, taken together, paint a richly textured portrait of this complex man and his complex legacy.”

Without giving away too much from the script by Max and Chris Cragin-Day, a few of those detailed looks at Luther include:

- More biographies have been written about him than all but six figures in history.
- Luther battled deep depression his entire life.
- Near the end of his life he wrote a scathing treatise called *On the Jews and Their Lies* that cast a long shadow in German history.

“When *Luther* toured last year, no FPA production had ever drawn such energetic audience reaction.”

“Many stories about Luther shy away from the controversial aspects of his life,” Max said. “We try to show him ‘warts and all’ to help audiences understand the multiple facets of the man who made the Bible available to the common folk; championed the concept of grace and salvation by faith; and also led to a divided church.

“Despite his flaws, what cannot be argued is his wide-ranging impact. Through Luther’s stand, the gospel was liberated by scripture alone, through grace alone, through faith alone, through Christ alone for God’s glory alone. Consciences were set free.”

After Luther the priesthood was extended, not just to priests, pastors or evangelists, but to all believers guided by the Holy Spirit. Luther vastly expanded the notion of divine calling beyond professional clerics to almost all vocations whose practitioners lived out their Christian commitment—doctors, lawyers, butchers and bakers all the way to actors and theatre people.

The production drew praise from a widely diverse array of critics.

The New Yorker called it “brave and brilliant.” *World Magazine*, which writes from a Protestant worldview,

described *Luther* as “a fresh approach to reviewing Luther’s life and legacy.”

The writer for *The Catholic Tablet* in New York City said, “I cannot recall when my imagination was as ‘sparked’ as it was last evening at *Martin Luther on Trial*. I liked everything about the production.”

Due to the play’s willingness to tackle Luther’s controversial legacy, the production attracted a diverse audience including a group of 80 Jewish prep school boys from a conservative yeshiva who following the performance gave it a standing ovation.

“It is due to the visionary generosity of our Fellowship Circle of supporters that FPA is able to produce plays like *Martin Luther on Trial*,” Max said.

See back page for tour dates and cities

Q & A . FPA Literary Manager Christa Scott-Reed



Christa Scott-Reed joined Fellowship for Performing Arts last year as Literary Manager, but she was already well-known to the FPA family for her stunning performance in *The Great Divorce* on tour in 2013-15

and in our first New York season in 2015-16. Additionally, she recently received well-deserved accolades for her directing debut with *Shadowlands* and will direct FPA's upcoming production of *A Man for All Seasons* in New York and our first reading series called *Imagine This!*

What does a literary manager do? A Literary Manager assists Max McLean, FPA's Artistic Director, and Executive Producer Ken Denison in identifying and developing new works. I talk to Max about his vision and ideas then research works that could help bring those ideas to life in keeping with our mission of producing theatre from a Christian worldview that engages a diverse audience. For example, he may be interested in a certain piece of literature such as from Dostoevsky or G.K. Chesterton. I then work to find existing play adaptations of that material or I will help him identify playwrights who could adapt it. I read and evaluate play submissions and am always on the hunt for scripts that are sharp, engaging and consistent with our mission and values. I cast and direct play readings for Max and Ken and join in on the post-read discussion. It's all exciting and challenging work because FPA's mission is so specific. I am a Christian myself so on a personal note, it's a huge blessing (and one that's rare in the theatre world) to be able to so directly join together my faith life and my work life.

What excites you about the opportunity to direct *A Man for All Seasons*? My excitement is inspired by both the ideas of the play and theatricality of the

show. The play tells the true story of Sir Thomas More, a devout Christian and good friend of King Henry VIII, who when pressed to swear an oath that explicitly betrayed his beliefs, chose to oppose his king and remain true to his faith. Robert Bolt wrote it to examine the questions Who Am I? And how do I locate my true self? Bolt said in the preface to the 1960 edition, and it's even truer now, that with all the possibilities in society, "We are anything. But if anything, then nothing." Though not a Christian, Bolt admitted: "It may be that a clear sense of the self can only crystallize round something transcendental." Thomas More found his own true self in his relationship with God and knew that his word was a non-negotiable contract with God. It's thrilling how More navigated a corrupt political landscape, speaking truth to power while maintaining his grace and integrity. Nothing could be more fitting for our world right now.

Tell us about the reading series—a first for FPA—that will kick off the organization's fourth New York season. We are very excited to offer FPA audiences something new—a series of staged readings of shows we are considering for future FPA productions. Audiences will have the chance to come see free readings of shows and offer feedback about the experience. It is all part of that development process that I mentioned. Seeing great actors rehearse and read the scripts aloud, and gauging audience response, helps us to identify the next FPA production to invest in. And even if a script isn't selected, our audiences will get a fun sneak-peek at theater-making and respond with their own thoughts about them too. Audiences might see a brand-new play, an intriguing new musical, an older play that deserves to be looked at again...nothing is off the table as long as that show reflects FPA's very special mission. Good art starts meaningful conversations, and I'm looking forward to engaging with our audiences even more through these readings!

"Good art starts meaningful conversations."



Why FPA Is going to College

This fall, Fellowship for Performing Arts begins our new campus initiative at Brown, Columbia, Princeton and University of California at Berkeley with several more campuses to come.

I thought it might be good to share some of my thoughts as to why performing *C.S. Lewis On Stage: The Most Reluctant Convert* on campus is a priority for FPA and our Fellowship Circle of patrons.

Os Guinness describes the campus attitude toward faith this way. “At best, the Christian faith is now regarded as purely private and irrelevant to academic thought. At worst, Christians are dismissed as ‘faith-heads,’ with beliefs that are untrue, irrational, reactionary, bigoted and on the wrong side of history.”

This is a remarkable departure from the original purpose of many universities. The crest of Princeton bears a Latin inscription translated as “Under God She Flourishes.” The original motto of Harvard was (in Latin): “Truth for Christ and the Church.” Later it was reduced to “Truth” (Veritas). The University of Michigan once required chapel twice each



week. Inscribed across the tallest building at my alma mater, the University of Texas, is “Ye Shall Know the Truth and the Truth Shall Make You Free.” Those words haunted me during my time there and were one of the reasons I read John’s Gospel, which ultimately led me to Christ.

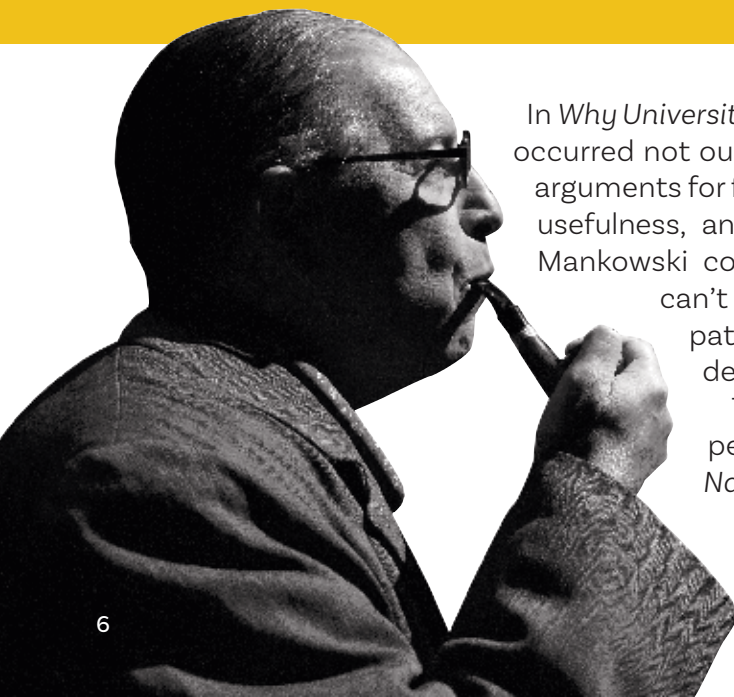
Now administrators are compelled to protect students with “a range of campus policies aimed at ‘liberating’ the various minorities that Christians have allegedly oppressed over the centuries,” writes Os.

In *Why Universities Went Secular?* Paul Mankowski argues that this transition occurred not out of hostility but due to the inability to make sound public arguments for faith’s inclusion as universities drifted toward “technological usefulness, and in the shaping of consumer and therapeutic culture.” Mankowski concluded that “when believers [at academic institutions] can’t explain...what precisely is to be gained by the academy’s patronage of religion, it seems that secularization occurs by default.”

The consequences of this default position inevitably permeate into the culture. As David French pointed out in his *National Review* column:

“The academy, pop culture, mainstream media, corporate America—all of these spaces have drunk deeply of [this] cul-

We need to tell stories on campus that are thoughtful, provocative, multi-layered and that capture the imagination and leave room for the Holy Spirit to do His work.





tural Kool-Aid...The holdouts are in the church and synagogue, and their borders are shrinking under relentless cultural assault.

The problem, however, is a failure to thrive. This new culture has left too many young men behind. The new fractured family claimed too many lives. When ‘deaths of despair’ are so prevalent that the world’s wealthiest and most powerful nation now faces declining life expectancies, it’s hard to argue for the unqualified success of the modern cultural project. In the spiritual wasteland of secularized America, the harvest is plentiful and the ancient truth can indeed provide the seed for new beginnings.”

I’m grateful there are groups on campus such as Christian Union, Veritas Forum, Ratio Christi, CRU, InterVarsity, Aquinas and Newman Societies to name a few who are working to sow seeds in this secularized spiritual wasteland. FPA looks forward to working with these great organizations to bring *C.S. Lewis Onstage: The Most Reluctant Convert* to these academic institutions.

In the academic world, Christianity often is perceived as a regressive idea that has nothing to add to the cultural conversation. The picture painted of a Christian is a naïve, narrow-minded fundamentalist who needs to be enlightened.

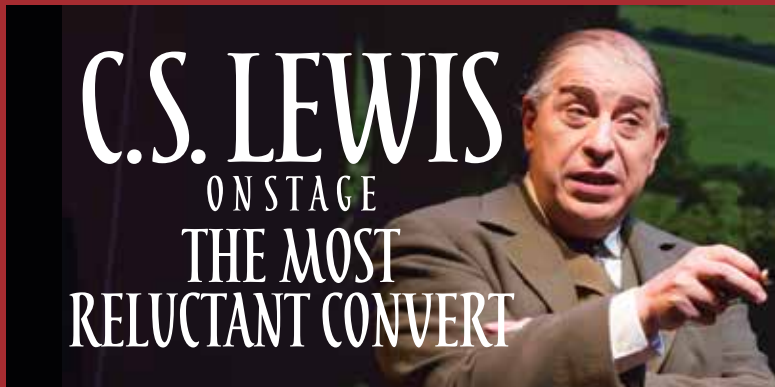
And this view is gaining traction partly due to the Christian community not providing a compelling alternative to the world picture secular culture paints. Millennials are leaving the church in droves. Today’s teens are the most non-Christian generation in American history according to the Barna Research Group.

FPA’s responsibility is to help paint an alternative picture by telling stories on campus that are thoughtful, provocative, multi-layered and that capture the imagination and leave room for the Holy Spirit to do His work.

We are deeply grateful to our Fellowship Circle of supporters who have seized on this university initiative and helped to make it happen.

TOUR SCHEDULE

Check FPAtheatre.com for times and venues.



C.S. LEWIS
ON STAGE
**THE MOST
RELUCTANT CONVERT**

SANTA FE	JUL 18-19
ASHEVILLE	AUG 2-3
BOSTON	AUG 8-12
DETROIT	OCT 13-14
PHOENIX	OCT 24-25
SAN DIEGO	OCT 27-28
SEATTLE	NOV 18
THOUSAND OAKS	NOV 3



**MARTIN
LUTHER
ON TRIAL**

ATLANTA	JULY 6-7
LA/ORANGE COUNTY	JULY 13-15
CHICAGO	JULY 21-22
COLUMBUS	JULY 27-28
<u>RECENT CITIES</u>	
WASHINGTON D.C.	MAY 31-JUNE 3
INDIANAPOLIS	JUNE 23-24
CHARLOTTE	JUNE 29-30

NEWS SPOTLIGHT



This fall, FPA kicks off our 4th New York season with an exciting new initiative—a staged reading series called **Imagine This!**—featuring a first look at possible new productions. Learn more on page 5.



Be the first to know when FPA is headed your way. Sign up for our eblasts and get the most up-to-date information about our productions.

Go to fpatheater.com and click “Stay in Touch”

Please make your tax-deductible gift to FPA using the enclosed card. With any gift of \$1,000 or more, your name will be included in our playbill as a member of FPA’s Fellowship Circle. (See insert for level details.)

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