

# FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE

COMMUNICATING THE MISSION OF FELLOWSHIP FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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

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## NATIONAL TOURS

### C.S. LEWIS THE GREAT DIVORCE

- Cleveland** Playhouse Square, 3/14-15
- Nashville** TPAC, 3/29-30
- Columbus** Capitol Theatre, 4/11-12
- Colorado Springs** Pikes Peak Center, 4/26
- Atlanta** Woodruff Center, 6/8-15
- LA/Glendale** Alex Theatre, 7/12
- LA/Irvine** Barclay Theatre, 7/17-20
- Chattanooga** Tivoli Theatre, 9/20
- Tampa** Straz Center, 9/26-27
- Durham** Carolina Theatre 10/3-4
- San Jose** California Theatre, 10/10-11
- San Diego** Balboa Theatre, 10/25
- Dallas** Eisemann Center, 11/1
- Houston** Hobby Center, 11/5-9
- Indianapolis** Clowes Hall, 11/15

Visit [GreatDivorceOnStage.com](http://GreatDivorceOnStage.com) for up-to-date tour info. Above dates as of 3/7.

### CS LEWIS THE *Screwtape* LETTERS

- Omaha** Orpheum Theater, 4/5
- Ft. Lauderdale** Parker Playhouse, 4/11-12

Visit [ScrewtapeOnStage.com](http://ScrewtapeOnStage.com) for up-to-date tour info. Above dates as of 3/7.

## INFLUENCING AN INFLUENCER

*The Great Divorce* encourages an artist to encourage artists

Just after seeing the Phoenix world premiere of C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce*, Stella Atkinson knew something had changed.

"It made me want to follow the Lord 100 percent," she said. "And anything I was holding onto that would prevent it, I just wanted to release it."

But there was more. For Stella, who entered the theatre hoping to be encouraged, it offered a concrete example of excellence she can take back to her students at Experience Arts in School, where the 27-year-old Mesa, Ariz., resident teaches dance.

"It's so wonderful to see excellent Christian-based art," she said. "Too often the world thinks Christians don't get it when it comes to the arts."

Stella does get it, and like FPA, it's something she wants others to get. For a couple of years, she trained and performed with Ballet Magnificat. Then she returned to Arizona and embraced the opportunity to influence the next generation of artists and performers. There are currently 300 students at Experience Arts in School, and the 10-year-old program is striving to equip artists in Arizona and around the world to share their faith through dance, music, theatre, media and the entirety of artistic expression.

In FPA's presentation of Lewis' life-changing insight, Stella also sees a tool to touch *Continued on back*



### Audiences Spurred to Action by *The Great Divorce*

"It helped me reflect on the choices I make every day. I want to become more 'solid' every day until I reach heaven."

"Wonderful, life-impacting performance. I re-read the book after I got home, and God continued to speak to my heart."

"We really want to share this with family and friends."

"I was thrilled at the opportunity to tell everyone I could think of about another of your plays!"

"As a priest, I have already preached on aspects of the play several times."

# SCREWTAPE LOOKS TO LONDON

FPA and an award-winning British producer eye the West End

Seven years after its New York debut and four years into a U.S. national tour, Fellowship for the Performing Art's production of *The Screwtape Letters* is working its way across the pond to London's West End, the Broadway of British theatre.

"It seems fitting that on the 50th anniversary of C.S. Lewis' passing, the year a plaque honoring him is placed in Westminster Abbey's famed Poet's Corner, one of his best-known works is making serious progress toward a debut in Great Britain," said FPA Founder and Artistic Director Max McLean.

Recently, *Screwtape* General Manager Ken Denison journeyed to London to meet with Producer Lee Menzies, a three-time winner of the Olivier Award, the Tony of British theatre. Menzies' work currently can be seen on the West End, in U.K. tours and international tours.



"With an agreement signed, we're working with Lee and a London casting agency to review a list of marquee names who could headline an eventual West End production of *Screwtape*," Denison said. "We're in total agreement with Lee that casting the right actor in that role is the key issue, and this is where we're focused."

Presenting excellent theater from a Christian worldview that engages a diverse audience always sets the timeline, but FPA hopes to see a West End production develop in 2015, McLean said.

"An effective production on London's premiere stage also launches *Screwtape* toward the Continent, Asia and Australia," Denison said.

FPA's Fellowship Circle of supporters helps us continue the impact *The Screwtape Letters* has had across the U.S. and, now, around the world. ■

## MARTIN LUTHER ON TRIAL

FPA's First Original Play



Dan Roche is lead producer of *Martin Luther on Trial*, the first play Fellowship for the Performing Arts will produce from an original script.

**Q: Is *Luther on Trial* a new direction for the organization?**

**A:** Instead of a new direction, think of it as adding a lane to the road we're on. Our direction, or mission, is exactly the same—engaging a diverse audience with theatre from a Christian worldview. We started with Max McLean's presentations of *Mark's Gospel*—which received a Jeff Award, Chicago Theatre's highest honor—and *Genesis*, straight from the Bible.

Next, we adapted thought-provoking and entertaining works by C.S. Lewis. But the goal was the same—use excellent theatre to capture the imaginations of our audiences and start conversations that continue once the curtain is down. Now, with *Martin Luther on Trial*, which is an original script based on Luther's legacy, we hope to do the same thing.

**Q: Why Luther?**

**A:** It comes down to our mission again. He was a complex man—some see him positively, others negatively—but people tend to see those complexities from their own point of view. Regardless of how he is viewed, Martin Luther was a controversial

character who undeniably affected the course of Western civilization. *That's* a good conversation starter for a diverse audience.

**Q: When can we expect to see *Luther on Trial* on stage?**

**A:** The best answer is, "When it's ready." FPA audiences expect excellence. So rushing to the stage is not an option. We have a developmental process of readings, labs and workshops. Still, we'd love to see the show premiere in 2015. The 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation is in 2017. We want the play to add to the worldwide conversation taking place around that. I'm working with Chris Cragin Day, whom we commissioned to write the piece. She's on her third draft of the script, and we're seeing exciting developments. ■

# NEW YEAR. NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

## Fellowship for the Performing Arts Puts Two Shows on the Road

Early on a mid-January morning, a tractor-trailer rig pulls away from the load-in dock at Santa Barbara's Granada Theatre and heads cross-country for Baton Rouge. En route, it may pass a similar semi headed to Kansas City.

The eastbound truck bears the full set of the hit play *The Screwtape Letters*, now in its fourth year. Westbound, the set for *The Great Divorce* winds its way toward the next stop on that show's inaugural tour.

Welcome to the brave new world of Fellowship for the Performing Arts. Two shows. Two sets. Two casts. Two crews. But one mission—engaging diverse audiences with theatre from a Christian worldview.

"It's exciting to see these new opportunities," said Max McLean, FPA's founder and artistic director. "But we're mindful opportunities come with responsibilities. While meeting the challenge of mounting two shows at the same time, the burden remains on us to be excellent, relevant, challenging and winsome all at once."

For a new show, such as *The Great Divorce*, the challenge is to establish credibility and viability. And initial reports are encouraging. *The Arizona Republic* calls *The Great Divorce* "fascinating...brings Lewis to life with lively wit and generous humor!"

"World class theater," *World Magazine* writes. "Rises to the challenge, raising questions of eternal significance with disarming ease. Fantastic!"

And audience responses reflect the critics. "Inspirational and amazing." "Thought provoking." "Mesmerizing." And one patron simply said: "See it!"

Meanwhile, the established hit *The Screwtape Letters* remains vibrant and relevant as shown by five sold-out shows in the Los Angeles area during the busy holiday season—where *Screwtape* has been half a dozen times before. In fact, one *Great Divorce* audience member, upon seeing the show's premiere in Phoenix, flew to L.A. to see *Screwtape*.

"That kind of engagement is our goal," McLean said. "We're not about mounting two productions just because we can. Instead, we want to engage people with excellence, capture their imaginations

with well-told stories and start meaningful conversations that can change lives. And the more the better."

Along with these challenges and opportunities comes greater need for support, making FPA's Fellowship Circle of patrons more vital to the mission than ever. Thank you for helping FPA break new ground with two touring shows in 2014, and thank you for increasing the opportunities we have to touch people in life-changing ways. ■

AUDIENCES  
RESPOND TO  
*THE GREAT DIVORCE*

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AND AMAZING."

"THOUGHT  
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"SEE IT!"



TWO SHOWS. TWO SETS.  
TWO CASTS. TWO CREWS.  
BUT ONE MISSION —

ENGAGING DIVERSE AUDIENCES WITH THEATRE FROM A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW.



# WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH *THE GREAT DIVORCE*?



C. S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce* appeared as a novel in 1945. In it, he countered ideas from William Blake written in 1790.

Fellowship for the Performing Arts just launched a national tour of our theatrical adaptation of *The Great Divorce*. And anyone can be forgiven for asking, "Why stage a play based on a 69-year-old book that argues against a 224-year-old view of the world?" In other words: Does this discussion still matter?

FPA's answer should be obvious; after all, we produced *The Great Divorce*. But it's still worth considering why.

Blake's book *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* argues for a moral relativism where good or evil will not really matter in the end. Eventually, Blake says, there will be a union—a marriage—of what we view as "evil" and what we view as "good." His ideas have come into full flower and are prevalent now.

Lewis used a strong word to describe this line of thought: "Disastrous."

Why? Because it means choice doesn't really matter, moral law doesn't exist and redemption is unnecessary. This ran completely counter to Lewis' view that *every* choice matters, and it matters forever.

Far from an esoteric discussion, we see this argument played out today—in the arts, at universities, in the public square. What is right? What is wrong? Does this matter? And so you begin to see our excitement at FPA for continuing such conversations on stage.

"The universe rings true wherever you fairly test it," Lewis said. Our mission at FPA is creating theatre from a Christian worldview that invites a diverse audience to engage in a fair test.

*The Great Divorce* was written some time ago, but it poses timeless questions on an important subject, and that seems worthy of theatrical exploration.

It's through our Fellowship Circle of supporters that we can stage works like *The Great Divorce*, *The Screwtape Letters* and future shows. Please consider joining us as we strive to start meaningful conversations in cities across the country. ■



## INFLUENCING AN INFLUENCER Continued from front

people of different beliefs.

"It didn't spell everything out for the audience and that gave us more to discuss. That's really good art. The mystery," she said. "Sometimes people feel we have to explain everything fully, but *The Great Divorce* struck a nice balance in entertaining, informing and

challenging the audience. This is a show you can take unbelievers to and not offend them."

The support of our Fellowship Circle makes it possible for FPA to positively influence those who are influencing others, like Stella, and to continue touching lives nationwide. ■

Please make your tax-deductible gift to FPA using the enclosed card. With any gift of \$500 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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