



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Two River Theater Company**  
presents

# OPUS

By Michael Hollinger  
Directed by Matthew Arbour

**October 26 – November 14, 2010**

**Red Bank, NJ—Two River Theater Co.** is proud to present *Opus*, a play about a renowned string quartet, written by Michael Hollinger and directed by Little Silver's Matthew Arbour.

*Opus* is the story of an esteemed string quartet that, days before the most important performance of their careers, fires a member of the group, and must quickly find a replacement. The play explores the shockingly difficult dynamics of a string quartet, and how far people will go to create great art. Based in part of the playwright's own experience as a violist, as well as the experiences of the world famous Guarneri quartet, the play is infused with the music of Bach, Bartok, and Beethoven, and has been called "vibrant", "astounding", and "truly remarkable" by critics across the country.

Says Two River Theater Artistic Director John Dias, "The beauty of this play is that although it is ostensibly about the world of classical music, it's getting at something much more universal: the struggle we all face trying to find harmony in our families, our work, our lives. This play has been such a success across the country precisely because you don't need to be a music buff to enjoy it—we can all relate to *Opus*."

Director Matthew Arbour, who grew up in nearby Little Silver, has this to say about the production: "*Opus* is, at its core, about the paradoxical idea that to succeed most well as an individual, one must work collectively and collaboratively with others, and about how difficult it is to achieve that balance." He draws a comparison between the characters that inhabit this play and a recent cover of Sports Illustrated, with four members of the New York Yankees—Rivera, Pettitte, Posada, and Jeter. "These guys have been making their career together for over a decade," he explained. "They are the core of the team. Their bonds are so powerful that any shift in dynamic affects the outcome of the game. Their lives

are on top of each other, but they are still individuals. That is exactly the relationship of the musicians in this quartet.”

It is a particular pleasure for Arbour to be directing this show here at Two River Theater Company. He grew up in nearby Little Silver, where his parents still live, and was a student at Christian Brothers Academy in Lincroft. Today, Arbour directs across the country but acknowledges that there is nothing quite like directing a piece for an audience he knows and loves so well. “When I was growing up in Monmouth County,” he said, “there was no theater of Two River’s caliber in the area. I am thrilled to come home and be a part of this amazing institution.”

He is delighted by the cast he has assembled, calling them “extraordinary, distinct individuals”. The cast is headed up by **Geoffrey Owens**, renowned actor of stage and screen, most well-known for his role of Elvin in *The Cosby Show*.

He is joined by **Saxon Palmer** (*Three Sisters* on Broadway), Two River Theater alum **Kevin Kelly** and **Craig Baldwin** (who were both in *Twelfth Night* at New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater), and **Anjanette Hall** in her LORT theater debut.

**Opus** begins previews on **Tuesday, October 26**, opens **Saturday, October 30**, and runs through **Sunday, November 14**.

### **Biographies**

**Matthew Arbour, Director:** Matthew’s work has been seen at PlayMakers Repertory Company, Chautauqua Theater Company, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Two River Theater Company, New Jersey Repertory, 78th Street Theatre Lab, Ohio Theater, Washington Ensemble Theater, Portland Stage Company, Hangar Theatre, Theatre at Monmouth, and the Penobscot Theatre Company among others. Matthew served as resident dramaturg and literary manager of Portland Stage Company from 1992 to 1998. He is a member of the First Look Theatre Company at NYU, an Associate Artist of the Washington Ensemble Theater, a Usual Suspect of New York Theatre Workshop, and Drama League Directing Fellow. MFA: University of Washington, Seattle.

**Craig Baldwin\*, Dorian:** This is Craig’s first appearance with Two River. New York: *Twelfth Night* for NYSF/ Public Theater at the Delacorte; *Age of Iron, An Oresteia, The Tempest, Richard III* and *Richard II*, Classic Stage Company; *Septimus & Clarissa* for Ripetime and Red Bull Theater; *The Field* for Irish Repertory Theater; *Murder by Poe* and *Richard III* for The Acting Company; *The Passion of George W. Bush* for NYC Fringe and Joe’s Pub; and more. Regional: Repertory Theater of St. Louis, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Shakespeare & Company, Milwaukee Shakespeare, Connecticut Rep, Berkshire Theater Festival; and more. Screen: Title role in *Charles Gilpatrick: Front Desk Clerk*; and *As the World Turns*. Craig is the Associate Artistic Director at Red Bull Theater, an Associate Artist with Classic Stage Company, Resident Director of Outhouse Theatre Company and a member of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors’ Lab. Training: Juilliard

**Anjanette Hall\*, Grace:** Two River Theater Company debut in *Opus*. Credits include: Ilse in *Spring Awakening*, Sarah in *J.B.* with Red Stage Theatre Company. Emily in *Our Town* and Turtle in *A Year with Frog and Toad* with Cardinal Stage Company. Emma in *Betrayal*, Lydia in *Big Love*, Carol in *Oleanna* with Rutgers Theatre Company. Film/Television: Gretchen Huber on NBC’s *ED*, Josie in *Be Still*. Anjanette’s favorite role to date is mother to 6 year old Jack. BFA Western Michigan University, MFA Rutgers University.

**Kevin Kelly\*, Alan:** Previously at Two River Theater Company: *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* and *All My Sons*. New York appearances include Public Theater (*The Brother/Sister Plays*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*) the Acting Company, HERE, Lincoln Center Institute, and 59E59. Regional appearances include Arena Stage, Great Lakes, the Guthrie Theatre, National Playwright's Conference, Peterborough Players, Portland Stage, Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis, Triad Stage, and this past summer, The Adirondack Theater Festival. Film/TV—includes *Law & Order*, *As the World Turns*, *All My Children*, *Guiding Light*, *One Life to Live*. As an accordionist appearances include Erin and Her Cello, Zibaldone, and particular subway stations around the city. Education— NYU/Tisch Grad Acting.

**Geoffrey Owens\*, Carl:** Theater: *Salome* (with Al Pacino); *Romeo and Juliet* (Romeo), *As You Like It* (Orlando) and *Macbeth* (Ross) at The Belasco Theater (director Estelle Parsons, producer Joseph Papp); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Puck), *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, *Richard II* at The New York Shakespeare Festival; *Arms and the Man* (Bluntschli) at Dallas Theater Center; *Tartuffe* (Valere) at Hartford Stage; *The Misanthrope* (Acaste) and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Don Pedro) at Long Wharf Theatre. Television: *The Cosby Show*, *Boston Legal*, *Medium*, *Flash Forward*, *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, *Journeymen*, *Las Vegas*, *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, *Built to Last*, and *That's So Raven*. Film: *The Paper* (director Ron Howard); *Play the Game* (with Andy Griffith); *Salomaybe?* (director Al Pacino).

**Saxon Palmer\*, Elliot:** Broadway: *Three Sisters* and *Design For Living* (Roundabout). Other NY theatre: *Measure for Pleasure* (Public), *Ohio State Murders*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *The Jew of Malta* (TFANA), *The Glass Cage* (The Mint). Regional: *The Pillowman* (Wilma), *Tonight at 8:30* (Williamstown), and *Tragedy: a Tragedy* (Eno, Inc.). TV/Film: *The Dark Fields*, various soaps. Education: FSU and Florida School of the Arts.

\*Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association.

The creative team is made up of **Lee Savage** (scenic designer), **Lesley Sorenson** (costume designer), who is also the resident costume supervisor at Two River, **Tyler Micoleau** (lighting designer), who most recently designed *Orestes A Tragic Romp* last season at Two River, and **Zach Williamson** (sound designer), who was most recently at Two River with *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown* and *26 Miles*.

**Opus** is scheduled to run **Tuesday, October 26** through **Sunday, November 14**. **Tickets start at \$35**. Get more information online at [www.trtc.org](http://www.trtc.org), call **732.345.1400**, or visit the **Two River Theater Company Box Office** in Red Bank, located at 21 Bridge Avenue. Box Office Hours: Monday-Saturday: 10am-6pm; Sunday: 12pm-5pm.

Local musician and music scholar Tom Avakian, who works frequently with the Monmouth Symphony Orchestra, will lead **Before Play**. This **pre-show discussion series** is scheduled 45 minutes prior to every performance and will explain and celebrate some of the great works of classical music that are heard in the play.

**Post-show discussions** are scheduled following the 8pm performance on **Wednesday, November 3** and following the **Sunday matinees: November 7** and **November 14** at 3pm, as well as **Wednesday, November 10** at 1pm. There are two **student matinee performances** scheduled on **Tuesday, November 2** and **Tuesday November 9** at 10am. **Discounted group rates** are available through the Box Office.

Two River Theater Company is accessible to people with disabilities, including wheelchair accessibility, assistive listening devices and large print programs at every performance. Accessible seating is available by reservation. For more information call the Box Office at **732.345.1400**.

#### **CALENDAR NOTICE**

##### **Events for *Opus*:**

**Tuesday, October 26** – Community preview performance. More than 100 members of area civic and community organizations will be treated to the first public performance.

**Saturday, October 30** – Opening Night performance of *Opus* and post-show celebration.

**Wednesday, November 3, 8pm; Sunday November 7, 3pm; Wednesday, November 10, 1pm; Sunday November 14, 3pm** – **Post-show discussions** led by a member of the artistic staff will follow each performance.

**Wednesday, November 10, 1pm** – An **audio-described performance** is scheduled at 1pm. Tickets are \$15 for those needing audio-description. Call 732.345.1400.

**Saturday, November 13, 3pm** – An **open-captioned performance** is scheduled at 3pm. Tickets are \$15 for those needing open-captioning. Call 732.345.1400.

Members of the press are invited to the opening night performance of *Opus* on **Saturday, October 30 at 8pm**. Please schedule tickets through Deeksha Gaur, Director of PR and Marketing, by phone at **732.345.1400 ext. 1830** or via email at [dgaur@trtc.org](mailto:dgaur@trtc.org).

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**TWO RIVER THEATER COMPANY** is a professional not-for-profit regional theater company providing outstanding plays and educational programs for audiences of central New Jersey and beyond. Two River was founded in 1994 by Joan and Robert Rechnitz and over the past 16 seasons has grown into one of the most vital and dynamic arts organizations in the region. The theater has co-produced plays with theaters around the country and received “Theatre of the Year” awards from the New Jersey Theatre Alliance and The Star-Ledger. Two River is a member of the League of Resident Theaters (LORT), Theatre Communications Group (TCG), The New Jersey Theatre Alliance and ArtPride New Jersey.