



## New City Stage Company

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### ***PRESS RELEASE***

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## Award-winning controversial play HURLYBURLY gets its professional Philadelphia debut with New City Stage Company

**PHILADELPHIA** – New City Stage Company is pleased to announce the third show of our 2012-13 season, the Philadelphia professional premiere of *Hurlyburly* by David Rabe, staged by Barrymore Award-winning director James J. Christy. This award-winning play part of New City Stage's 7th season, entitled *The New American Dysfunctional Family*. This is the first time the show is receiving a professional production in the greater Philadelphia area. Performances will be held February 28 through March 24, 2013 at the Adrienne Theater Main Stage at 2030 Sansom Street in downtown Philadelphia. **Opening night is Saturday, March 2 at 8 PM.** Tickets are \$10 - 35 and available on line at [www.NewCityStage.org](http://www.NewCityStage.org) and by calling the box office at **215-563-7500**.

This riveting drama took New York by storm in 1984. Two casting directors live together and provide as close to a "home life" as they can for their friends and a runaway girl. These sad socialites are nose deep in the decadent, perverse, cocaine culture that is 1980s Hollywood, pursuing a sex crazed, drug-addled vision of the American Dream.

"A powerful permanent contribution to American drama...Riveting, disturbing, fearsomely funny... This deeply felt play deserves as wide an audience as possible." -- *Newsweek*

**David Rabe** (born March 10, 1940) is an American playwright and screenwriter. He won the Tony Award for Best Play in 1972 for *Sticks and Bones* and also received Tony award nominations for Best Play for his plays *In the Boom Boom Room*, *Streamers* and *Hurlyburly*. He was also nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for *Casualties of War*, based on the actual events of the incident on Hill 192 in 1966 during the Vietnam War.

Born in Dubuque, Iowa, he began graduate studies in theater at Villanova University in the mid-1960's, but dropped out and was drafted into the army in 1965. He served until 1967, spending his last eleven

months of service in Vietnam. After leaving the military, Rabe returned to Villanova, earned his M.A. in 1968. He was the first graduate of Villanova's M.A. in theatre program. During this time, he began work on the play *Sticks and Bones*, in which the family represents the ugly underbelly of the Nelson family when they are faced with their hopeless son David returning home from Vietnam as a blinded vet.

One of Villanova's most celebrated graduates gets one of Philadelphia's most celebrated directors for the first professional production of his most controversial script. **James J. Christy** has accumulated numerous regional and off-Broadway credits during his 35 year career. He also won the Barrymore Award for Outstanding Direction for staging *The Laramie Project* for Philadelphia Theatre Company in 2001. Mr. Christy taught at in the graduate program in Villanova's Theatre Department for 30 years. Mr. Rabe had his first class with Mr. Christy, and Mr. Christy work-shopped the first draft of *Sticks and Bones*. Producing Artistic Director **Ginger Dayle** also graduated from Villanova's M.A. Theatre program and wrote her dramaturgy thesis on *Hurlyburly*. She also took her first directing class with Mr. Christy.

After seeing New City Stage's highly **acclaimed production of *RFK***, directed by Ms. Dayle and starring Russ Widdall, Mr. Christy approached the company about directing *Hurlyburly*. "It's a play I've always wanted to do and I thought it would be great to do with one of Philadelphia's most exciting young theatre companies," says Christy. "It's also great to support a Villanova graduate who's really making her mark in the local theatre community." He was equally impressed with Mr. Widdall's tour de force performance as Robert F. Kennedy and cast him in the lead role of Eddie. "Russ is an actor who can really command the stage and showed a great deal of range and nuance as Bobby Kennedy. I'm excited to finally get the chance to direct him."

**Russ Widdall** has been performing professionally in Philadelphia and nationally for over 20 years and has been Co-Artistic Director at New City Stage Company for 3 years. He has performed in television, film and theatre, featuring several productions at the Walnut Street Theatre and the regular role of Ron Lowenthal on HBO's *The Wire*. He will reprise his role as Senator Kennedy in July in Washington, D.C. and in November in Philadelphia. "Having to run the motor of an 80's drug addict with big existential questions will test the endurance and creativity of any performer. I embrace the challenge," says Widdall

The production also features several other notable local actors including Barrymore Award nominee **Christie Parker** (recently seen in Theatre Horizon's *How I Learned to Drive*), Barrymore Award winner **Robert Smythe** (Broadway's *The Little Prince*), Barrymore Award winner **MaryLee Bednarek** (Best Ensemble for Theatre Exile's *Killer Joe*) and Barrymore Award-winning playwright **Bruce Graham**, whose most recent play, *The Outgoing Tide*, was directed by Mr. Christy at Philadelphia Theatre Company. The show will also feature up and coming University of the Arts graduate **Sarah Van Auken**.

The play has been accused of being misogynistic, however Mrs. Dayle sees it differently. "The male characters in this play treat the women in their lives badly and it reflects badly on them. In many ways, the play is pro-female because the women's lives get better when they leave these men and their bad behavior behind." The three-act play focuses on the intersecting lives of several low to mid-level Hollywood players in the 1980s. Fueled by massive amounts of drugs, they attempt to find some meaning in their isolated, empty lives by engaging in endless discussions laced with misogyny. The central character Eddie's oft-repeated apathetic question "How does it pertain to me?" sums up his spiritual agony as he heads for catharsis. The show is a realistic portrayal in an existential setting, making it a unique and highly regarded contemporary classic.

ABOUT THE SHOW:

*Hurlyburly*

Written by David Rabe

Directed by James J. Christy \*\*

Previews begin February 28 at 8 PM

**Opening Performance: Saturday, March 2 at 8 PM**

Closing Performance: Sunday, March 24 at 3 PM

Cast:

<i>Eddie</i>	Russ Widdall *
<i>Mickey</i>	Robert Smythe *
<i>Artie</i>	Bruce Graham *
<i>Phil</i>	<i>to be announced shortly</i>
<i>Darlene</i>	Christie Parker *
<i>Bonnie</i>	MaryLee Bednarek
<i>Donna</i>	Sarah Van Auken

Production staff:

Director	James J. Christy **
Stage Manager	Janelle Caso *
Assistant Director/Dramaturge	Kevin Rodden
Assistant Stage manager	Sarah Scholl
Production Manager	Ginger Dayle
Scenic Designer	S. Cory Palmer
Lighting Designer	Matt Sharp
Sound Designer	Ren Manley
Costume & Prop Designers	Becca Austin & Rebecca Kanach

\* Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association. \*\* Denotes member of the Society of Directors and Choreographers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Interviews:** Contact Publicist Ginger Dayle at [Ginger.Dayle@NewCityStage.org](mailto:Ginger.Dayle@NewCityStage.org) or 215-603-9600

**Press tickets:** Contact Marketing Associate Sarah Scholl at [Sarah.Scholl@NewCityStage.org](mailto:Sarah.Scholl@NewCityStage.org) or 717-421-3834.

***Please request all interviews and complimentary press tickets at least 24 hours in advance.***

About New City Stage Company:

New City Stage Company, founded in 2006, is dedicated to presenting high quality professional theatre that engages audiences on a variety of levels; not only entertaining them but also encouraging awareness of issues relevant to the community. We draw our season from contemporary and classical works, with a special focus on including Philadelphia premieres from local playwrights, and form storytellers whose work is not normally found in the region.

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