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**CUTTING BALL THEATER  
ANNOUNCES 2011-2012 SEASON**

*Acclaimed SF theater celebrates 12<sup>th</sup> season with two World Premieres, new translations, Risk is This...The Cutting Ball New Experimental Plays Festival, and celebration of Strindberg*

SAN FRANCISCO (May 14, 2011) - San Francisco's cutting-edge **Cutting Ball Theater** proudly announces the lineup for its 12<sup>th</sup> season. The ambitious season opens in October with Maurice Maeterlinck's **PELLEAS AND MELISANDE** in a new translation by Cutting Ball Artistic Director Rob Melrose, who will also direct. The company is also poised to present the World Premiere of Eugenie Chan's evocative take on an ancient Estonian folk tale, **TONTLAWLAD**, directed by Paige Rogers and Annie Paladino, in February. Documentary theater veteran Annie Elias presents the World Premiere of her latest work for the stage, **TENDERLOIN**, in April; Elias will also direct. **RISK IS THIS...THE CUTTING BALL NEW EXPERIMENTAL PLAYS FESTIVAL** returns to round out the season in June with two exhilarating new works for the stage and five Risk Translations of August Strindberg's Chamber Plays in new translations by Paul Walsh; the staged readings of Walsh's translations are in preparation for Cutting Ball's main stage production of *Strindberg Cycle: The Chamber Plays in Rep* in Fall of 2012. In addition to the main stage season, Cutting Ball Theater continues its **Hidden Classics Reading Series** with six new installments. The entire 2011-12 season will be staged in San Francisco at the Cutting Ball Theater in residence at EXIT on Taylor (277 Taylor Street at Ellis). For tickets and information, the public may visit [cuttingball.com](http://cuttingball.com) or call **415-419-3584**.

"I couldn't be more enthusiastic about our upcoming season," said Cutting Ball Artistic Director Rob Melrose. "My new translation of *Pelléas et Mélisande* will feature original music by Cliff Caruthers, choreography by Laura Arrington, and the theater will be transformed into one giant video installation for the production. Directors Paige Rogers and Annie Paladino and choreographer Laura Arrington have been working with our resident playwright Eugenie Chan and a company of actor/singer/dancers on an ensemble-based theater piece called *Tontlawald*, inspired by their work with the acclaimed Polish theater company Teatr ZAR. Documentary theater-maker Annie Elias moves us from the realm of fantasy to reality, working with a company of actors on a piece about the people and places of the Tenderloin, a play about Cutting Ball's neighborhood that I am thrilled to have commissioned."

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Continues Melrose, “We are also devoting much of our Hidden Classics series and *Risk is This...* to the celebration of August Strindberg’s centennial; I am so grateful to the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation for their generous grant which allows us to spend a dedicated amount of time on this profoundly important artist. Our work on Strindberg will culminate in a full production of all five of his Chamber Plays in the following season. Meanwhile, this season, Hidden Classics and *Risk is This...* will allow our audience to become more familiar with all aspects of his work. In addition to Paul Walsh’s Strindberg translations, we will hold staged readings of new works from playwrights Anthony Clarvoe and Christopher Chen. This will indeed be a very full and a very exciting season!”

**In chronological order, The Cutting Ball Theater 2011-12 season is as follows:**

### **PELLEAS AND MELISANDE**

By Maurice Maeterlinck  
in a new translation by Rob Melrose  
Directed by Rob Melrose  
Original music by Cliff Caruthers  
Choreography by Laura Arrington  
October 21 – November 27, 2011  
Press opening: October 27  
Gala opening: October 28

Cutting Ball Theater opens its 12<sup>th</sup> season with Maeterlinck’s seminal avant-garde play **PELLEAS AND MELISANDE**, in a new translation by Cutting Ball Artistic Director Rob Melrose (previous translations include *The Bald Soprano* by Eugène Ionesco, *Woyzeck* by Georg Büchner, *No Exit* by Jean-Paul Sartre, *Ubu Roi* by Alfred Jarry, and Maeterlinck’s *The Blind*). In this mysterious fairytale of a play, which inspired musical works by Claude Debussy, Arnold Schoenberg, Gabriel Faure, and Jean Sibelius, a beautiful young woman is found in the woods by a hunter who also happens to be a prince. He takes her to his castle and marries her, but the honeymoon ends when she falls in love with his younger brother. When the love triangle explodes, she wants to return to her own world, but can she? Melrose directs this nine-person production, featuring a musical score by composer Cliff Caruthers and choreography by Laura Arrington.

### **TONTLAWALD** (*World Premiere, Cutting Ball Commission*)

By Eugenie Chan  
Directed by Paige Rogers and Annie Paladino  
Choreography by Laura Arrington  
February 17 – March 11, 2012  
Press opening: February 23  
Gala opening: February 24

Cutting Ball Theater continues its 12<sup>th</sup> season with the World Premiere of **TONTLAWALD**. This original ensemble-based piece weaves evocative a capella harmonies and visceral movement into a multilayered retelling of an ancient Estonian tale. Part concert, part dance, part fairytale, and inspired by the work of Poland’s famed Teatr ZAR, **TONTLAWALD** follows a mistreated girl who flees her

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tormentors and unexpectedly finds a safe home in the mysterious, forbidden *Tontlawald* – the ghost forest. Written by Cutting Ball’s resident playwright Eugenie Chan and directed by Associate Artistic Director Paige Rogers and Annie Paladino, with choreography by Laura Arrington, **TONTLAWALD** was workshopped during Cutting Ball’s 2011 *Risk is This...* festival.

### **TENDERLOIN** (*World Premiere, Cutting Ball Commission*)

Written by Annie Elias with Tristan Cunningham, Siobhan Doherty, Rebecca Frank, Michael Kelly, Leigh Shaw, David Sinaiko, and David Westley Skillman

Directed by Annie Elias

April 27 – May 27, 2012

Press opening: May 3

Gala opening: May 4

Annie Elias brings her years of experience in documentary theater to Cutting Ball with the World Premiere of **TENDERLOIN**, an unforgettable piece about the people and places in Cutting Ball Theater’s neighborhood. Using transcripts of interviews conducted by Elias and her group of actors, **TENDERLOIN** strives not only to bring Cutting Ball fully into its community, but literally brings the neighborhood into the theater. Seven actors portray the subjects they interview, creating living portraits from which a portrait of the Tenderloin itself emerges. A powerful and confirming experience, **TENDERLOIN** honors the essence of the Tenderloin through the stories of the everyday people that make up this historic downtown San Francisco district.

### **RISK IS THIS...THE CUTTING BALL NEW EXPERIMENTAL PLAYS FESTIVAL**

June 8 – July 14, 2012

*Risk is This...The Cutting Ball New Experimental Plays Festival* is one of the only play festivals in America solely dedicated to experimental works for the stage. This year’s festival features two new works and five new translations in staged readings that push the boundaries of what theater can be.

### **anomiனால்**

By Christopher Chen

June 8 – 9, 2012

**anomiனால்** is Christopher Chen’s bold post-modern take on Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Aulis*. In this harrowing portrait of heart-wrenching choices, Agamemnon and his armies are set to sail for Troy, but are unable to depart due to a strange lack of wind. This is no mere meteorological abnormality, but rather the will of the gods. In order for the winds to blow again, Agamemnon must sacrifice his only daughter Iphigenia, or condemn his entire army, and nation, to defeat.

### **GIZMO**

By Anthony Clarvoe

June 15 – 16, 2012

In **GIZMO**, playwright Anthony Clarvoe (*Show and Tell, Pick Up Ax*) wrestles with the topic of technology today. This new play was inspired by Karel Čapek’s play *R.U.R.* (or Rossum’s Universal Robots); considered the first science fiction play, it was written in 1921 and introduced the world to the word “robot.”

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### **Risk Translations**

Workshops of August Strindberg's Chamber Plays in new translations by Paul Walsh

### **THE GHOST SONATA**

June 29 – 30, 2012

**THE GHOST SONATA** tells the story of a strange encounter between a student and an old man and begins the morning after a terrible fire. A “ghost supper” ensues in a round room, secrets are shared, plots are foiled, illusions are shattered, and the true haunting nature of things is revealed. The most well known of Strindberg's Chamber Plays, **THE GHOST SONATA** will serve as the centerpiece of Cutting Ball's upcoming *Strindberg Cycle: The Chamber Plays in Rep.*

### **THE PELICAN and THE BLACK GLOVE**

July 6 – 7, 2012

Based on the belief that a Pelican sheds its own blood to feed its young, **THE PELICAN** presents a family where the exact opposite is true. The widow Elise plots with her lover to steal her children's inheritance while they starve in their own home. When the children discover the truth, the revelation sparks a small revolution.

In **THE BLACK GLOVE**, it is the day before Christmas Eve in a five-story apartment building. An old man and a caretaker find a black glove in the entryway, precipitating a strange chain of events involving a young wife, two maids, two fairies, a missing ring, and child.

### **STORM and BURNED HOUSE**

July 13 – 14, 2012

In **STORM**, an elderly gentleman near the end of his life lives peacefully in a building neighbors call “the quiet house.” His peace is shattered, however, when the new neighbors upstairs, the young wife and child he left so many years ago, and her new husband, plan to turn their home into a private casino. Years of jealousy and resentment rise to the surface as he tries to help his former wife out of a bind and finds that the ghosts of his past still haunt him.

In **BURNED HOUSE**, Arvid arrives in his hometown of Stockholm after decades of living in the United States only to find that his childhood home burned down the night before. While detectives search through the rubble for clues about the cause of the fire, Arvid sifts through the ashes to uncover the dark secrets hidden by his family and the town. As more secrets are revealed, Arvid finds the tools he needs to exact revenge on his brother for crimes committed long, long ago.

### **Hidden Classics Reading Series**

This season, Cutting Ball's Hidden Classics Reading Series explores and celebrates the work of August Strindberg. The series offers a profound look at one of the greatest authors ever to write for the stage in a program that continues to be one of San Francisco's best-kept secrets.

### **PLAY STRINDBERG**

By Friedrich Dürrenmatt

November 6, 2011, 1pm

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Cutting Ball opens the Hidden Classics Reading Series with **PLAY STRINDBERG**, Friedrich Dürrenmatt's adaptation of August Strindberg's *The Dance of Death*. This searing portrait of marriage, a tight, gripping three-person play, finds a man and a woman who can not live without each other but without the help of their mutual friend might wind up killing each other.

### **CAMINO REAL**

By Tennessee Williams

December 4, 2011, 1pm

**CAMINO REAL** is Tennessee Williams' dream play that borrows heavily from Strindberg's *A Dream Play* and *The Great Highway*. Peopled with characters from literature and pop culture, including Casanova, Camille, Don Quixote, and Kilroy, **CAMINO REAL**, one of William's most imaginative and touching plays, takes place in a bizarre afterworld where the royal road of the unconscious empties out onto a real road littered with life's misfits.

### **Strindberg Centennial:**

#### **MISS JULIE and A DREAM PLAY**

By August Strindberg

"Two Radical Visions of Theater"

January 29, 2012, 3pm (Swedish dinner between shows)

Cutting Ball begins the 2012 celebration of Strindberg's centennial with two plays that encapsulate Strindberg's two major contributions to drama: realism and expressionism. In **MISS JULIE**, Strindberg examines class tensions through a sexual encounter between an unmarried young lady and her father's valet. In **A DREAM PLAY**, Indra's daughter comes down to earth to better understand the plight of man. Through this surreal journey, she meets an officer, a lawyer, and a poet. Strindberg structured the play using a dream logic that was later adopted by Expressionist playwrights.

There will be a traditional Swedish dinner served between the two readings, as well as a discussion of these two vastly different visions of theater.

### **EASTER**

By August Strindberg

"Strindberg and Painting"

April 8, 2012, 1pm

Thought by many to be Strindberg's most successful marrying of his realistic and expressionistic styles, **EASTER** tells the story of a family on the brink of bankruptcy who finds salvation in the daughter, newly arrived from an asylum, who speaks from beyond this world.

This reading will be followed by a discussion of the play and Strindberg's career as a painter.

### **THE STRONGER, PARIAH, and SIMOON**

By August Strindberg

"Strindberg and the Occult"

May 6, 2012, 1pm

These three one-act plays show the power of Strindberg's invention. In **THE STRONGER**, two women sit at a table. One speaks and the other never says a word. The subject in question is the fidelity of the talkative woman's husband. Which of the two women is the stronger? **PARIAH** tells the story of two

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men and their fight over gold. In **SIMOON**, a soldier is bewitched by a mysterious woman from the desert.

The readings will be followed by a discussion of the plays and Strindberg's relationship to the occult.

### **THE KEYS TO HEAVEN**

By August Strindberg

"Strindberg and Expressionism"

May 20, 2012, 1pm

In **THE KEYS TO HEAVEN**, the death of a man's three children from the plague causes him to go on a surreal journey to the afterworld. His travels take him to the ruins of the tower of Babel, Jacob's Ladder, and the Gate of Heaven. Along the way, he meets Romeo and Juliet, Tom Thumb, Don Quixote, Bluebeard, Hamlet, and Ophelia. One of Strindberg's most peculiar plays, **THE KEYS TO HEAVEN** was never performed during his lifetime.

This reading will be followed by a discussion of the play and Strindberg's influence on expressionism.

Co-founded in 1999 by theater artists Rob Melrose and Paige Rogers, Cutting Ball Theater presents avant-garde works of the past, present, and future by re-envisioning classics, exploring seminal avant-garde texts, and developing new experimental plays. Cutting Ball Theater has partnered with Playwrights Foundation, the Magic Theatre, and Z Space New Plays Initiative to commission new experimental works. The company has produced a number of World Premieres, West Coast Premieres, and re-imagined various classics. Voted "Best Theater Company" in the 2010 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Best of The Bay issue, Cutting Ball Theater also earned the Best of SF award in 2006 from *SF Weekly*, was selected by *San Francisco Magazine* as Best Classic Theater in 2007, and received the 2008 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Goldie award for outstanding talent in the performing arts. Cutting Ball Theater was featured in the February 2010 issue of *American Theatre Magazine*, and the company's production of Marcus Gardley's *...and Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi* won three Bay Area Theater Critics Circle awards for 2010.

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### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

#### **WHAT:**

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#### **SCHEDULE:**

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**All main stage performances Thursday-Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 5pm  
All Hidden Classics readings are Sundays at 1pm (except MISS JULIE and A DREAM PLAY  
which will start at 3pm)**

**WHERE:**

The Cutting Ball Theater in residence at EXIT on Taylor  
277 Taylor Street (at Ellis), San Francisco

**TICKETS:**

For tickets or more information, the public may visit **cuttingball.com** or call **415-419-3584**; discounts available for students, seniors, and groups

*Risk is This...The Cutting Ball New Experimental Plays Festival* is funded by The Kenneth Rainin Foundation and The San Francisco Foundation

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