

# *La*ronde

Lantern Theater Company  
February 2 - 25, 2007  
St. Stephen's Theater



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# LANTERN THEATER COMPANY

presents

## La Ronde

by Arthur Schnitzler

Translated and directed by Charles McMahon

*with*

Ben Dibble\*  
Sarah Sanford

Meghan Jones  
Scenic Designer

Millie Hiibel  
Costume Designer

Janet Embree  
Lighting Designer

Nick Rye  
Sound Designer

Thomas Shotkin\*  
Stage Manager

Kathryn Nocero  
Dramaturg

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

## THE COMPANY

Man ..... Ben Dibble

Woman ..... Sarah Sanford

Setting: Vienna, Austria

Time: Turn of the 20th Century

*La Ronde* will be performed with one twelve-minute intermission.

## ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

It is not surprising that, over the last century, so many literary critics and historians have drawn parallels between Arthur Schnitzler - playwright of *Reigen* (or, as it's known in French, *La Ronde*) - and Sigmund Freud, the oft-proclaimed father of psychoanalysis. These men, physicians and authors both, were controversial for their deep interest in eroticism and the unconscious, examining the human condition from its center, their Vienna. Both were influential Jews living in an increasingly hostile Europe, their sometimes shocking revelations fueling the growing anti-Semitism of the new century. Freud himself suggested the comparison; in a letter to Schnitzler on the occasion of his 60th birthday, Freud writes to him:



*A question disturbs me: why, in fact, during all these years, I never frequented and conversed with you? I think I have been avoiding you for some kind of fear of meeting my double. Not that I have the tendency of easily identifying myself with another person or that I have wished to minimize the difference of talents which separate us; but, when plunging into your splendid creations I always thought I would find—behind the poetical look—the hypothesis, the interests and the results that I knew were mine.*

Historians agree: in his book, *A Nervous Splendor: 1888-1889*, Frederic Morton suggests, “their Doppelgänger-dom rests most significantly on the fact that both focused on the tension between man’s inner motives and the choreography of his adjustments, between the instinctual core and the acquired façade.”

Morton also makes a suggestion that speaks to the keen interest in Schnitzler’s work that continues today. He says, “At his best Schnitzler talked not just about old Vienna but about the aging of any culture; about the late, the very late, the maybe too late hour in search of dawn. Which may be our time of night right now.” Schnitzler has captured the imaginations of contemporary artists concerned with these same themes, including Stanley Kubrick, whose *Eyes Wide Shut* was based on Schnitzler’s *Traumnovelle*, and Tom Stoppard, whose plays *Dalliance* and *Undiscovered Country* were based on *Leibelei* and *Das weite Land*, respectively. *La Ronde* remains Schnitzler’s most popular work. From Max Ophüls’ award-winning film *La Ronde* (1950), a French-language film so influential that it forever changed the popular title of Schnitzler’s German play *Reigen*, to David Hare’s *The Blue Room* (1998), Jack Heifner’s gay adaptation, *Seduction* (2004), and the new translation from director Charles McMahon you see today, artists and audiences after a century respond to Schnitzler’s razor-sharp portrayal of a culture at the 11th hour.

- Kathryn Nocero, Dramaturg

## DIRECTOR’S NOTES

Images of fin de siècle Vienna come down to us in different ways. From histories that show us an exasperating portrait of useless aristocrats clinging to an impossible social system; and from its tremendous outpouring of artistic work, which present it as a grand moment frozen in time. The work of dramatists, musicians and painters, coupled with that of journalists and diarists, bring to us not only an extremely detailed picture of what was happening in this world, but also what was driving the people from the inside.

It was a time of great richness and sophistication, but also a world that lacked any compelling principle at its center. Void of that center, the people, like wandering planets cut loose from the sun, are irresistibly drawn to any source of heat. In Schnitzler’s *La Ronde*, we see a series of snapshots from all the different strata of Vienna, which accumulate into a singular picture of its people at one of their favorite pursuits; that of sexual intrigue, and the intoxicating clouds of fantasy and romance that attended it. It was their peculiar response to their crumbling world.

Much has been written about the social and political ossification that provided the ingredients for this strange brew: of a growing industrial middle class allowed to provide the Empire with art, music, money and manufactured goods, but not to join in its government; of the ambitious children of this class, who had hit a hard glass ceiling on their ascent up the social ladder; of a burgeoning working class, crowded into cold and dirty lodgings, ever more restive, ever more vulnerable to the demagogues who sold visions of a pure and beautiful German state, free from the perversions of “foreign influences;” of a hapless aristocracy addicted to pomp and ceremony, unable to imagine sharing the corridors of power with a pack of brash arrivistes; of the pressures of changing technologies and shifting strategic and military alliances. Amid this impossible tangle of circumstances, the citizens, young and old, rich and poor, were equally unable to affect any meaningful change of course, even as the drift toward ruin became harder and harder to drown out with waltzing and laughter.

Somewhere in each of the lost souls of this foundering ship must have come the sense that “this cannot last.” But if there were to be truly no future for their great and ancient culture, then what was the point? What was the sense of all this opulence, and the massive efforts of armies of citizens necessary to sustain it?

In *La Ronde*, the characters, always fleeing from a sense of the void within, each cling to a mask, which represents for them their ideal self. Each partner is a co-conspirator, an accomplice in mutual self-deception. They are screens on whom to project the fantasy mate who will allow one to feel that one is, in fact, who one wishes to be.

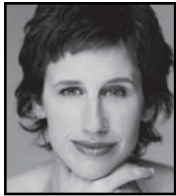
The terrible energies of the mind and heart, even when cut loose from the real productive work of life, nonetheless work on. In idle isolation dreams and fantasies bubble up, which have, for the dreamer, the full force of reality. As their world drifts toward the oblivion of World War I, the characters’ work is not the salvation of their society, but the meticulous construction and furnishing of their inner lives. Living in a state of tension between the ineffable urge to break free of their isolation, and their absolute inability to really see outside themselves, they play at transcendence. If they were powerless to really affect their world, they could at least alleviate their malaise, cultivating the grand gesture and the noble pose. If they couldn’t make contributions to society, they could at least be tragic heroes of love, imagining themselves in the lead roles of the operas, songs, plays and stories which were food and drink to the Viennese; pursuing their individual versions of the romantic ideal even against the back-drop of inevitable ruin.

- Charles McMahon, Director

## WHO'S WHO



**BEN DIBBLE** (*Man*) is thrilled to be making his Lantern debut in *La Ronde*. Ben has appeared at the Arden, Act II Playhouse, the Wilma, Walnut Street Theatre, 1812 Productions, Lenape Regional P.A.C., Prince Music Theatre, Delaware Theatre Company, Boarshead Theatre, Roundhouse Theatre, and the Kimmel Center. Favorite roles include Anthony in *Sweeney Todd*, Toad in *A Year with Frog and Toad*, Guiliano in *Big Love*, Chris in *Miss Saigon*, and the title role in *Bat Boy: The Musical*. Ben has originated roles in seven world premiere musicals in Philadelphia. Ben teaches elementary students through the Arden Theatre Outreach Program and is an adjunct faculty member at West Chester University where he teaches musical theatre performance. Ben was awarded the 2006 F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Artist. Love and thanks to my wife Amy, our daughter Lila, and our little guy on the way.



**SARAH SANFORD** (*Woman*) is thrilled to be appearing at the Lantern for the first time in *La Ronde*. She is a company member of Philly's own Pig Iron Theatre, with whom she has co-created and performed in *Shut Eye*, *The Lucia Joyce Cabaret*, *Love Unpunished*, and the Obie award-winning *Hell Meets Henry Halfway*. She portrayed Betty in 2006's Live Arts sell-out smash, *P's & Q's*. Sarah has also appeared with The Riot Group (*Switch Triptych*, 2005 Edinburgh Fringe First Award), and The Vertical Company in New York. Sarah studied at Swarthmore College and École Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecoq, and has been teaching theatre for five years. Upcoming work includes the Wilma's *Life of Galileo* in April. Many thanks to Charles and the Lantern for this great opportunity.

**CHARLES McMAHON** (*Director*) Charles serves as the Lantern's Artistic

Director in addition to acting and directing for the company. Previous acting roles include Heisenberg in *Copenhagen*, Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*, Guildenstern in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Edmund in *King Lear* and Pete Seeger in *UnAmerican*. For the Lantern, Charles has directed *Richard III* (Barrymore Award, Best Production of a Play), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Comedy of Errors* (Barrymore Nomination), *The Tempest*, *King Lear* and *A Doll's House*. Charles is a graduate of NYU's theater department where he studied acting and directing before returning to Philadelphia for good in 1990.

**MEGHAN JONES** (*Scenic Designer*) has recently finished her MFA in scenic design at Temple University. Her past scenic designs include "*Master Harold*"...and the boys at the Lantern earlier this season, *Hamlet Reduct*, *Company*, *Taking Steps* and *The Seagull*. She has just returned from Missouri where she has designed *Sylvia*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and *My Favorite Year* for The City of Maples Rep Theatre. This is her first season with Lantern Theater Company and she is looking forward to a successful production. Many thanks and enjoy the show.

**MILLIE HIBEL** (*Costume Designer*) is pleased to be back at the Lantern where she previously designed the costumes for *QED*, "*Master Harold*"...and the boys, *Richard III*, *The Lady from the Sea*, *The Comedy of Errors* (2004 Barrymore Nomination), *Death and the King's Horseman*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*. Other recent designs include *I Love You Because* (off-Broadway), *My Children, My Africa!* (Wilma Theatre), *Around the World in Eighty Days* (Bristol Riverside Theatre), *Red Light Winter* (Theatre Exile), *The Violet Hour* (Theater Horizon), and *Daughters of Genius* (1812 Productions). Millie is also the costume designer for the National Constitution Center's production of "Freedom Rising" and has also designed costumes for Delaware Theatre Company, Pig Iron Theatre Company, Center City Opera,

## WHO'S WHO

Temple Theaters, Act II Playhouse, Brat Productions, The Philadelphia Fringe/Live Arts Festival, Philadelphia Young Playwrights Festival and Philadelphia Theatre Company. Currently, she teaches at Moore College of Art and Design, and she has taught and designed at Temple University, University of the Arts, Drexel University, and Arcadia University; and has lectured and held workshops for The Costume Society of America and the 2004 regional USITT conference. Millie was recently awarded an Independence Foundation Fellowship which allowed her to take part in a puppet workshop/performance in Prague. She received an MFA in costume design from Temple University.

**JANET EMBREE** (*Production Designer*) Janet has been designing lights at the Lantern for the past ten seasons. Some favorite Lantern designs include: *Novecento*, *Death and the King's Horseman*, *Copenhagen*, *The Tempest*, *The Birthday Party*, *Lovers and Executioners* and *The Steward of Christendom*. She has designed for 1812 Productions, Act II Playhouse, Freedom Theater, University of the Arts, Bristol Riverside Theater, InterAct Theatre, and Philadelphia Young Playwrights Festival, among others. Janet has, upon occasion, designed costumes (*Travels with My Aunt*, *Underneath the Lintel*, *Betrayal* at the Lantern, *Duet for One* at Act II and *Nixon's Nixon* at InterAct, to name a few) and the set for last season's *Novecento*.

**NICK RYE** (*Sound Designer*) Recent sound designs include: Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Contemporary Stage Company's *Exits and Entrances* and *The Island*, Lantern Theater Company's *QED*, *Novecento* and *Richard III* [awarded the Barrymore for Outstanding Overall Production of a Play]. Previous productions include Lantern Theater Company's *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Death and the King's Horseman* and *The Tempest*, Pig Iron Theatre's *Shut Eye*, Philadelphia Theatre Company's *According To Goldman*. Also: Walnut Street Theatre,

The Arden Theatre, InterAct Theatre, University of the Arts, Brat Productions, Philadelphia Young Playwrights, Azuka Theatre Collective, Play Penn New Play Conference. More information at [nickrye.com](http://nickrye.com).

**THOMAS E. SHOTKIN** (*Stage Manager*) is happy to be working on his first Lantern show. He is currently Production Stage Manager for 1812 Productions. Favorites include: *This Is The Week That Is*, *Daughters of Genius*, *Madame Douce-Amere*, *Recent Tragic Events*, *Always a Lady*, *The Uneasy Chair*, and *Bat Boy: The Musical*. Tom has also worked for People's Light & Theatre Company, Arden Theatre Company, Azuka Theatre Collective, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival, and Act II Playhouse. Thanks to the Lantern gang and MBS.

**ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION** (AEA) was founded in 1913 as the first of the American actor unions. Equity's mission is to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 40,000 actors, singers, dancers and stage managers working in hundreds of theatres across the United States. Equity members are dedicated to working in the theatre as a profession, upholding the highest artistic standards. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions and provides a wide range of benefits including health and pension plans for its members. Through its agreement with Equity, the theatre has committed to the fair treatment of the actors and stage managers employed in this production. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. For more information, visit [www.actorsequity.org](http://www.actorsequity.org).



## FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Technical Director..... Meghan Jones  
 Additional Scenery..... Industrial Bohemian Workshop  
 Prop Master..... Kate Coots  
 Run Crew .....Kate Coots, Jessica Hogan, Sasha Noyes  
 Electrics Crew..... Chris Michaels, David O'Connor  
 Costume Assistant..... Kerry Higgins  
 Stitchers..... Kate Coots, Carey Huntington, Helen McMahon  
 Draper ..... Julie Watson  
 Poster Design ..... Allan Espiritu and Lucy Price  
 Production Photography..... Jeffrey Stockbridge  
 Dramaturgy Intern..... Michael Durkin

## SPECIAL THANKS

St. Stephen's Church, Victoria and Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant, Mary and Bonat-sos Florist, Brett Mapp and Whole Foods, Liliane Weissberg, PhD, Michael Rosenthal and the Arts and Business Council, Pete Pryor, Kate Hurster, Gayle Smith, Deb Miller and Ray Costello, KC Nocero, Teddy Ashmead, Nick Embree, Christine McMahon, Ruth Feuchtwanger, Shelley Langdale, Anthony Lawton, Pat Burns, University of the Arts, Temple University, Walnut Street Theater Scene Shop, University of Delaware, JoMar Fabric

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How we got our name?

Founded in 1994 by Charles McMahon and Michael Brophy, the name of Lantern Theater Company was inspired by the Greek philosopher Diogenes. This colorful figure of the ancient world searched, famously, for an honest man, bearing a lantern in broad daylight. Our mission at Lantern Theater Company is to investigate and illuminate what is essential in the human spirit - the essential sometimes being obscured by what is obvious. We invite audiences to join us on this joyous process of discovery.



*Imagination  
empowers us.*

PECO embraces the power of creativity.  
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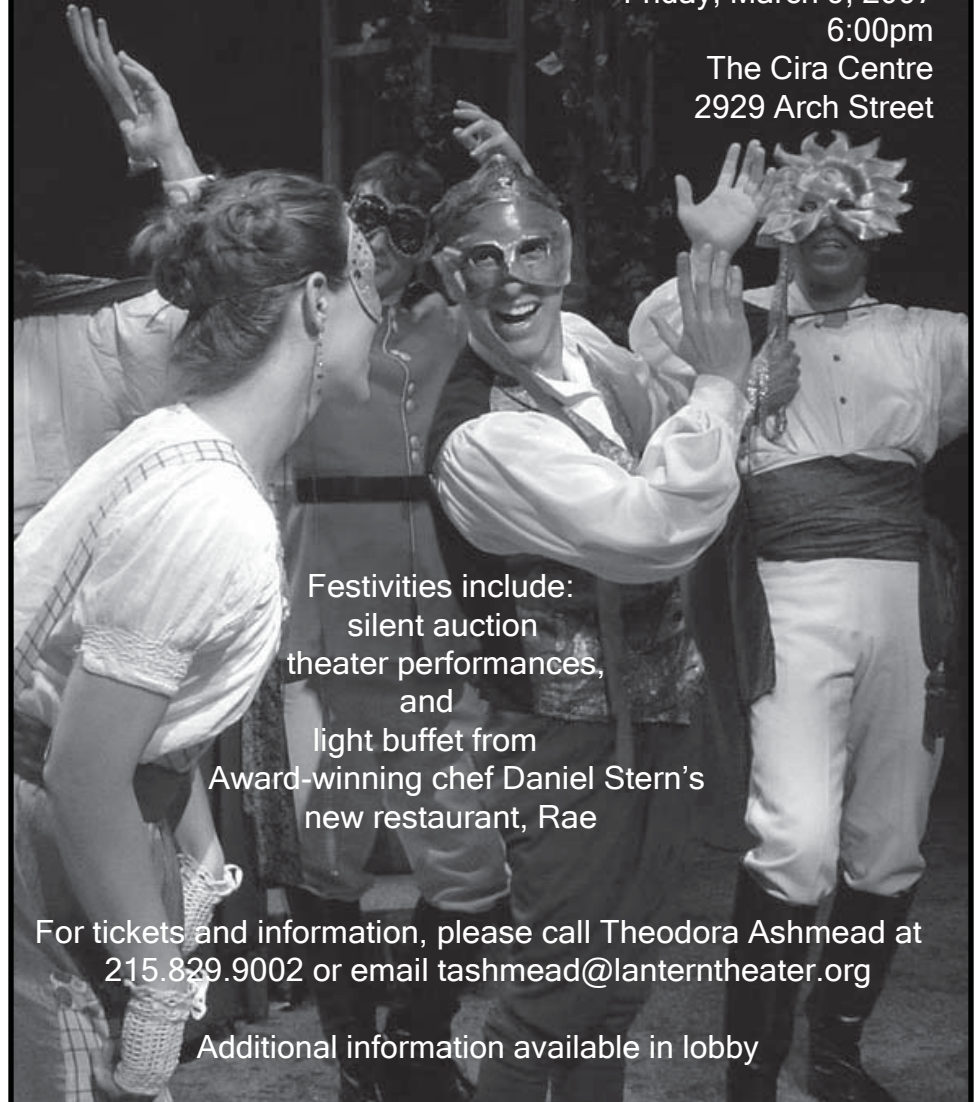
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#### ***The Psychology of Sex: Freud's Legacy Onstage***

Sunday, February 18, 2007 4:00 PM

Moderated by Lantern Theater Company's  
Literary Manager/Education Director, Kathryn C. Nocero

Supported by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### *Box Office*

For your convenience, the Lantern box office is open Monday through Friday between the hours of 10am and 6pm. Additionally, the Lantern will provide Saturday box office hours beginning at noon during performance weeks. As always, the box office will be open one hour prior to curtain on any performance day.

### *Late Seating*

It is often not possible to seat late patrons in the orchestra once a performance has begun. It is distracting both to the performers on stage and the audience enjoying the show. If you arrive late, the Lantern ushers will seat you in the first available seat in the balcony. You may relocate to an available orchestra seat at intermission.

### *Recordings*

The taking of photographs or recordings of any kind is strictly prohibited.

### *Cell Phones*

Please kindly turn off all cell phones, pagers and watch alarms prior before entering the theater so as not to disturb the performance.

### *Contact Information*

Lantern Theater Company  
PO Box 53428  
Philadelphia, PA 19105-3428

Telephone: 215.829.9002

Fax: 215.829.1161

Email: [email@lanterntheater.org](mailto:email@lanterntheater.org)

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~~Great performances need a strong supporting cast. Please join PNC Bank in helping Lantern Theater Company continue to enrich our community.~~

~~Best wishes for a successful season!~~



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## ON STAGE February/March 2007

**Doc and John Miller in a Tree**<sup>W</sup>  
Arden Theatre Company  
1/11/2007 - 3/4/2007  
(215) 922-1122

**Of Mice and Men**  
Walnut Street Theatre  
1/16/2007 - 3/4/2007  
(215) 574-9700

**A House with No Walls**<sup>W</sup>  
EnterAct Theatre Company  
1/15/2007 - 3/18/2007  
(215) 968-8779

**Scotland, Brave!**  
Act II Playhouse  
1/15/2007 - 3/18/2007  
(215) 694-0300

**Labyrinth**  
Luna Theatre Company  
1/20/2007 - 3/25/2007  
(215) 784-0085

**Nerdus // A Musical Software  
Review**  
Philadelphia Theatre Company  
1/26/2007 - 3/25/2007  
(215) 583-0420

**Heroes in Suits**<sup>W</sup>  
Theatre Bait  
2/3/2007 - 2/25/2007  
(215) 922-4462

**La Bamba**<sup>W</sup>  
Luna Theatre Company  
2/3/2007 - 2/25/2007  
(215) 835-9002

**Hotel de Merveilles Gardens**<sup>W</sup>  
Holycross Theatre  
2/3/2007 - 3/11/2007  
(610) 363-4211

**Three Sisters**<sup>W</sup>  
Villanova Theatre  
2/6/2007 - 2/18/2007  
(610) 515-7474

**Reckless**<sup>W</sup>  
Walnut Street Theatre  
2/6/2007 - 2/25/2007  
(215) 574-9700

**For Army**<sup>W</sup>  
Rushpoint Theatre Company  
2/7/2007 - 2/24/2007  
(215) 968-4330

**The Wedding Consultant**<sup>W</sup>  
The Vagabond Acting Troupe  
2/7/2007 - 2/24/2007  
(215) 968-4330

**Handcuffs with Muriel**<sup>W</sup>  
The Daughé Light & Theatre Co.  
2/7/2007 - 3/4/2007  
(610) 644-9900

**Benjamin, A Love Story**<sup>W</sup>  
The Wilson Theater  
2/7/2007 - 3/11/2007  
(215) 346-7834

**Straw Hatlers & Story of Love  
Harold**  
Prince Music Theater  
2/10/2007 - 3/4/2007  
(215) 969-9700

**John Works Festival**<sup>W</sup>  
The Vagabond Acting Troupe  
2/13/2007 - 3/20/2007  
(215) 968-4330

**A Good Look at Betsy Ross**<sup>W</sup>  
Montgomery Theatre  
2/14/2007 - 3/10/2007  
(215) 728-9584

**My Casino Bachel**  
Mayan Club of Swarthmore Theatre  
2/15/2007 - 3/3/2007  
(610) 928-4271

**The Body Harvest Show**  
Drexel University  
2/22/2007 - 3/3/2007  
(215) 895-2787

**Jim Thorpe's Game and Gam**  
Drexel University  
2/23/2007 - 3/4/2007  
(610) 295-8788

**Three Sisters**<sup>W</sup>  
Arcadia Theatre  
2/23/2007 - 3/4/2007  
(215) 372-2112

**Never The Lads**  
Footlights Theatre  
2/23/2007 - 3/10/2007  
(610) 266-9243

**The Holly Faith**  
Reinold Riverside Theatre  
2/27/2007 - 3/18/2007  
(215) 783-0100

**Break Night**  
The Daughé Light & Theatre Co.  
2/28/2007 - 3/7/2007  
(610) 644-9900

**Nikki Off**  
The Stagecoach  
3/2/2007 - 3/17/2007  
(215) 247-8861

**Driving Miss Daisy**<sup>W</sup>  
Delaware Theatre Company  
3/7/2007 - 3/25/2007  
(802) 354-1100

**Pump Up and Dancer**<sup>W</sup>  
The Media Theatre  
3/7/2007 - 4/1/2007  
(610) 881-0100

**Cavalier, or Change**<sup>W</sup>  
Arden Theatre Company  
3/8/2007 - 4/6/2007  
(215) 922-1122

**Almost, Maine**<sup>W</sup>  
Act II Playhouse  
3/9/2007 - 4/6/2007  
(215) 694-0300

**Small World**<sup>W</sup>  
1112 Productions  
3/13/2007 - 3/25/2007  
(215) 352-9268

**Jeffery's Ash**  
Walnut Street Theatre  
3/13/2007 - 4/1/2007  
(215) 574-9700

**Rehearsal April**  
Walnut Street Theatre  
3/13/2007 - 4/29/2007  
(215) 574-9700

continued...

<sup>W</sup>The Philadelphia New Play Festival February 8-18, 2007. Full plays, readings, parties & more!  
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## ON STAGE continued February/March 2007



**They Dancer**  
Prince Music Theater  
3/14/2007 - 4/1/2007  
(215) 969-9700

**The Devils**  
Temple Theatre  
3/15/2007 - 3/24/2007  
(215) 204-1122

**The Elizabethan's Guide to the  
Galaxy, Part II**<sup>W</sup>  
Civic Theatre Company  
3/15/2007 - 4/7/2007  
(215) 525-1970

**March Ain't About Nothing**<sup>W</sup>  
The Ritz Theatre Company  
3/15/2007 - 4/14/2007  
(856) 878-3288

**Outcall**  
The Renaissance  
3/16/2007 - 3/31/2007  
(610) 461-9969

**One in a Lifetime**  
The Deans Group  
3/16/2007 - 3/31/2007  
(215) 844-0724

**In the Christmas**  
Philadelphia Theatre Company  
3/16/2007 - 4/15/2007  
(215) 968-0420

**Victims of Duty**  
Magpie Philadelphia Connection  
3/18/2007 - 3/29/2007  
(215) 283-0472

**ComedySports**<sup>W</sup>  
ComedySports Philadelphia  
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**Marathon the Medical  
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**They w' Their Wedding**  
Verona HD Inc.  
Continuous open-ended run  
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