

ANOTHER CHAPTER ADDED TO *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, CHARLES DICKENS AND COUNT LEO TOLSTOY: DISCORD*

FEATURING LARRY CEDAR, DAVID MELVILLE AND ARMIN SHIMERMAN
WRITTEN BY SCOTT CARTER
DIRECTED BY MATT AUGUST

SECOND EXTENSION ANNOUNCED – NOW THROUGH DECEMBER 7
IN THE AUDREY SKIRBALL KENIS THEATER AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

LOS ANGELES (October 30, 2014) – The Geffen Playhouse production of *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*, is extending again, now through December 7. The production, in the Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater at the Geffen Playhouse, is written by **Scott Carter**, executive producer and writer for **Bill Maher’s** *Politically Incorrect* and *Real Time*.

This philosophical comedy features **Larry Cedar** (*Deadwood*, PBS’s *Square One TV*), **David Melville** (Travel Channel *Lawrence of America*, film *Ironclad*) and **Armin Shimerman** (Quark on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, Associate Artistic Director at The Antaeus Company) and is helmed by director, **Matt August** (Broadway: *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*).

Discord is based on the historical fact that Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens, and Leo Tolstoy all wrote, or re-wrote their own versions of the Gospels. The three are brought together in a blistering battle of wits for the ages. Examine what happens when great men of history are forced to repeat it.

“Funny and thought-provoking. Carter knows a thing or two about lively, accessible formats for the engagement of ideas,” said Philip Brandes in the *Los Angeles Times*. “Critic’s Choice. Hilariously theatrical. Funny and thought provoking. Imagine the dramaturgical love-child of Steve Allen’s *Meeting of Minds* and Jean-Paul Sartre’s *No Exit*.”

Bob Verini in *Variety* said, “Carter knows something about assembling a sharp, entertaining meeting of minds ... and is in the assured hands of helmer Matt August ... [it is] catnip for [those] yearning for a little food for thought with their fun.” Dany Margolies in the *Los Angeles Daily News* said, “Witty, provocative, brainy, fun. Don’t miss it.” Shari Barrett in *BroadwayWorld.com* said, “Whip-smart .. a blistering battle of wits.” Taryn Hillin in the *Huffington Post* said, “If religion and comedy had a baby, this would be it ... Scott Carter is up to the task ... makes you think and laugh.” Myron Meisel praised the *Discord* cast in *The Hollywood Reporter* as, “exemplary.”

Carter had the first inspiration for *Discord* in June 1986 when he had a near-fatal asthma attack. After a weeklong hospital stay he said he “experienced an epiphany like Scrooge on Christmas morning going from cynical comedian to non-affiliated deist. I entered into a bliss state, which is a not uncommon phenomenon. I loved all that I met and forgave any previous transgression done to me. It was the most vital extended experience of my life. It lasted about a week.”

“I wanted to permanently become the better man that I had been during that time. So I began a spiritual journey, making a pledge to the universe that I would henceforth consider anyone who wanted to talk with me about God, have me read their literature or attend a ceremony.”

Some time later, Carter called his friend, Garry Shandling, and said, “I’ve been writing a play for 20 years that I’ve never told you about. Could I come over to your house and just read it? I had brought over three little sticks. On them were the heads of Jefferson, Dickens and Tolstoy. I was halfway through the text when Garry said, ‘Let’s stop and talk about what we’ve heard so far.’ And he gave me 23 pages of great notes. And it was late so he said, ‘Do the rest tomorrow night.’ So, like Scheherazade. I finished it the next night and got another rounds of notes.”

Over the course of several years, Carter did 50 different readings, and 200 drafts until the first full production of the play in 2014 at the NoHo Arts Center.

The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord

Written by **Scott Carter**

Directed by **Matt August**

Now Extended: Through Sunday, December 7, 2014

CAST

Larry Cedar as Thomas Jefferson

David Melville as Charles Dickens

Armin Shimerman as Leo Tolstoy

Greg Bryan understudy for Charles Dickens and Leo Tolstoy

Steve Marvel understudy for Thomas Jefferson

PRODUCTION TEAM

Scenic Design: **Takeshi Kata**

Costume Design: **Ann Closs-Farley**

Lighting Design: **Luke Moyer**

Sound Design: **Cricket S. Myers**

Projection Design: **Jeffrey Elias Teeter**

Music: **Michael Nyman**

Production Stage Manager: **Maggie Swing**

Dramaturg: **Amy Levinson**

Casting: **Michael Donovan, CSA**

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Monday No performance

Tuesday – Friday 8:00pm

Saturday 3:00pm; 8:00pm

Sunday 2:00pm; 7:00pm

*There will be no performances on November 19, 26, 27 or 28.

TICKET INFORMATION

Ticket prices are currently \$39 - \$74 and are available in-person at the Geffen Playhouse box office, via phone at 310.208.5454 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.com. Fees may apply.

LOCATION

Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater at the Geffen Playhouse
10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024

BIOGRAPHIES

Larry Cedar (Thomas Jefferson) recently debuted his original one-man play, *Orwellian*, based on the works of renowned author George Orwell, at the Hollywood Fringe Festival followed by an extended run at the Odyssey Theatre. Other plays: *American Misfit* (Boston Court), *Lear in King Lear* (produced by The Porters of Hellsgate), *American Fiesta*, *Celadine*, *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, and *Around the World in 80 Days* (Colony Theatre). Musicals: *Nightmare Alley* (Geffen Playhouse), *She Loves Me* (Ovation Award - Best Featured Actor in a Musical), *1776* (Reprise!), and as Hoagy Carmichael in *Hoagy, Bix and Wolfgang Beethoven Bunkhaus* (Mark Taper Forum). Larry played opium addict "Leon" for three seasons on the critically acclaimed *Deadwood* (HBO) and starred for six seasons on PBS's *Square One TV*. Other television: *Community*, *House*, *Terminator*, *NCIS*, *Enterprise*, *Alias*, *The Closer*, *Gilmore Girls* and *Boston Legal*. Film work includes *The Crazies*, *Midnight Son*, *Towelhead*, *Hollywoodland*, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, and a starring role in the upcoming independent feature, *She Sings to the Stars*. Please visit Larry on Facebook or go to www.larrycedar.com

David Melville (Charles Dickens) is co-founder of Independent Shakespeare Co. and the *Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival*. Roles for ISC include Hamlet, Richard II, Iago, Macbeth, Henry V, Benedick, Dr. Pinch, Feste, 8 seasons as Charles Dickens performing *A Christmas Carol*, a one-person *Nicholas Nickleby*, Charles Dickens in *Discord*, WH Ireland in the one man show *Solemn Mockeries* and Beauty Smith in the original musical *Red Barn*. As a composer David has written the music for most of ISC's Shakespeare productions, *Red Barn* and many of the songs for Dr Pinch's vaudeville show. London appearances include the Almeida Theatre productions of *Hamlet*

(also Broadway) and *Ivanov* (both of which featured Ralph Fiennes), *Mother Courage* (with Glenda Jackson) and Henry VI in *The Wax King* (The Man in the Moon). TV and film includes: *Lawrence of America*; *Ironclad*; *The Understudy* and *Perfection*. Earlier in his career, David was a private detective and then brand ambassador for Bombay Sapphire – traveling the United States preaching the virtues of gin and discussing golf with liquor executives. David trained at the Webber-Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London.

Armin Shimerman (Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy) is well known as Quark, on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Broadway – *Three Penny Opera*, *St. Joan*, *I Remember Mama*, and *Broadway*. Selected Regional Theater: San Diego Repertory Theater: *Lear's Fool*, Marius in *Fugard's Road to Mecca*, Richard in *Seafarer* (San Diego Critics Circle Award for best actor); American Shakespeare Festival: *Henry V*; Indiana Repertory Theatre: *Hoagy*, *Bix*, *Wolfgang Beethoven Bunkhouse*; Guthrie Theatre: *Three Penny Opera*, *Camille*, *Wild Oats*. Selected Los Angeles Theatre: Matrix Theatre: *The Birthday Party* (LA Drama Critics Circle Nom. Lead Performance); Odyssey Theatre: *Misalliance*, *Juno and the Paycock* (with wife, Kitty Swink), *Standup Shakespeare*; Mark Taper: *Richard II*. Associate Artistic Director at Antaeus Theater where he teaches Shakespeare, co-directed *The Crucible*, and performed *The Seagull*, *Macbeth*, many classic fests. TV - 80 different guest star roles, including *Stargate*, Principal Snyder on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Judge Hooper on *Boston Legal*, and recently *CSI*, *Castle*, *Franklin and Bash*. Voice-over - General Skarr, for three animated shows, many game voices, acclaimed for Dr. Nefarious in *Ratchet and Clank* franchise and Andrew Ryan in *Bioshock*.

Scott Carter (Playwright) has served as Executive Producer for *Real Time with Bill Maher* since it debuted on HBO in 2003. He produced the first 1,100 episodes of *Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher* from its 1993 Comedy Central debut to its 1997 move to ABC. While at "P.I.", Carter received eight Emmy nominations and three consecutive CableAce Awards for Best Talk Series. He has served as creator, producer and/or writer for, among others, *Curb the Discussion with Susie Essman* (TV Guide, 2010), *Root of All Evil with Lewis Black* (Comedy Central, 2008), *Earth to America* (TBS, 2005), *The Conspiracy Zone with Kevin Nealon* (Spike, 2002/2003) and *Exhale with Candice Bergen* (Oxygen, 2000/2001). In 1997, *Variety* named him one of the "50 Creatives to Watch." In 2007, he was a corecipient of the Producer's Guild of America's Johnny Carson Award for *Real Time*. A former standup comedian, Carter has written and performed two full-length monologues, "Heavy Breathing" and "Suspension Bridge," at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, The Aspen Comedy Arts Festival, The Kilkenny (Ireland) Murphy's Cats Laugh Festival, the Cleveland Performance Festival, Dixon Place, Primary Stages, Manhattan Punchline, etc. He is former producing director and a founding member of The Invisible Theatre, now in its 44th season in Tucson, Arizona. Scott is represented by Joe Cohen and George Lane at Creative Artists Agency and by Nancy Rose at the firm of Schreck Rose Dapello & Adams LLP. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, interior designer Bebe Johnson, and their two daughters, Calla and Colette.

Matt August (Director) Broadway: *Dr. Suess' How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (also all national tours, Madison Square Garden and Pantages); Broadway as Associate Director: *Henry IV*, *Invention of Love*, *Imaginary Friends*, *Full Monty*. Regional: Old Globe - *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Time Flies* (by David Ives) *Pig Farm* (co-world premiere by Greg Kotis), *Food Chain*. Pioneer Theatre - *In the Heights*; *Much Ado About Nothing*; Ford's Theatre - *Liberty Smith*, *A Christmas Carol*; TheatreWorks - *Baby Taj*; The Acting Company (NYC): *Two Gentlemen...*, *Merry Wives...*, Staff Repertory Director; Hanger Theatre: *Complete History of America Abridged*, *All in the Timing*, *Tempest*; NoHo Arts Center - *...Discord*, *Fourth Messenger* (upcoming); Long Wharf: *Sixteen Wounded* (starring Martin Landau); LA Theatre Works - *The Real Dr. Strangelove*, *Speech and Debate*, *Intelligence Slave* (upcoming). He's received fellowships and residencies from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Old Globe Theatre, Drama League, Robert Wilson's Watermill Center, the Juilliard School, San Francisco's Zen Center, received the Panavision New Filmmaker's Grant and mentored upcoming directors through the SDC Observership Program and Drama League Fellowship. His productions have been recognized by the Helen Hayes, Bay Area Critics and Australia's Helpmann Awards and appeared on year end top-ten lists in the *LA Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Oakland Tribune*, *SJ Mercury News* and NPR/KQED. His award winning short family film *How to Get to Candybar* has played at festivals around the world. MFA from California Institute of the Arts.

ABOUT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

The Geffen Playhouse has been a hub of the Los Angeles theater scene since opening its doors in 1995. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its world-renowned mix of classic and contemporary plays, provocative new works and second productions, the Geffen Playhouse continues to present a body of work that has garnered national recognition. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who made the initial donation to the theater, the company was founded by Gilbert Cates, and is currently helmed by Artistic Director Randall Arney, Managing Director Ken Novice, Chief Development Officer Regina Miller and Co-Chairs of the Board Martha Henderson and Pamela Robinson Hollander. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen Playhouse welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains an extensive education and outreach program, designed to engage young people and the community at large in the arts. For more information, please visit www.geffenplayhouse.com.

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