



PITTSBURGH IRISH & CLASSICAL THEATRE

Professional Theater in Residence at the University of Pittsburgh

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## Rewriting “History” at PICT

*Fantastic actors, multimedia elements inspire superb, life-enhancing play*

**Pittsburgh, PA – July 1, 2009.** PICT artistic director Andrew S. Paul directs a cast of thirteen in the Pittsburgh professional premiere of Alan Bennett’s award-winning play *The History Boys*. Very funny and deeply moving, the play explores the anarchy of adolescence, the nature of history, and the methods and very purpose of education today. Featured in the production are Bernard Cuffling, Linda Kimbrough, Dave Droxler and Andy Lutz.

Bennett’s brilliant comedy follows the senior year of eight history students in the north of England as they try to crack admission to Oxford and Cambridge. Unruly, bright, talented and amusing, these boys are in natural pursuit of sex, sport and a place at a good university. They are guided in these pursuits by their overeager Headmaster (Martin Giles), a maverick, eccentric English teacher (Bernard Cuffling), and a new instructor (Sam Redford) whose mandate is to get the boys to think outside the box and get noticed.

The design team is comprised of Gianni Downs (set), Jim French (lighting), Pei-Chi Su (costumes), Jessi Sedon (projections) Elizabeth Atkinson (sound), and Cory Goddard (properties).

Canadian-based actor Bernard Cuffling makes his PICT debut as Hector in *The History Boys*. In addition to playing Hector to rave reviews for Arts Club Theatre in Vancouver in the play’s Canadian premiere, his stage credits include productions of *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Sleuth*, and *Noises Off*. Cuffling, who makes his American stage debut in PICT’s *History Boys*, is enshrined in the British Columbia Theatre Hall of Fame.

## Bright, eager students and maverick teachers mark “History Boys”

PICT regular and Pittsburgh favorite Martin Giles returns to PICT from his smashing success as Dr. Rance in PICT’s June production of *What the Butler Saw*. Giles’ other recent PICT productions include *Rock ‘n’ Roll*, Synge Cycle (as an actor and a director), and *St. Nicholas*. Other recent local appearances include *Die Fledermaus* with Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh and *The Seafarer* for City Theatre Company. His play *Beautiful Dreamers*, with the music of Stephen Foster, will receive its world premiere in a co-production between PICT and Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh in April of 2010.

British actor Sam Redford (*Rock ‘n’ Roll*) plays the young teacher brought in to give the boys polish and prepare them for college entrance examinations and interviews. Redford trained at London’s Guildhall School of Drama, and has been seen locally in City Theatre’s productions of *The Seafarer* and *Mother Teresa is Dead*.

Rounding out the teachers is Linda Kimbrough (*Pride & Prejudice*). A veteran of the Chicago stage, Kimbrough is a five-time Joseph Jefferson nominee whose credits include productions at the Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Victory Gardens, and Chicago Shakespeare. Recent roles include Nora in the World Premiere of *Better Late* by Larry Gelbart at Northlight Theatre in Chicago and in Galway, Ireland, and Dottie in *Noises Off* at The Cleveland Play House. She has originated roles in five of David Mamet’s plays: *Edmond*, *Reunion*, *The Water Engine*, *Squirrels*, and his adaptation of Chekov’s *The Cherry Orchard*.

The boys are led by Dave Droxler (Dakin), a Point Park graduate who was recently featured in *Mojo* at The Rep. Other Pittsburgh credits include *As You Like it* (UnSeam’d Shakespeare), and *The Normal Heart* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Pittsburgh Playhouse). Droxler is joined by Andy Lutz (Scripps) a graduate of Ohio University, whose credits include *A Man for All Seasons* on Broadway, and *This Beautiful City* at the Actors’ Theatre of Louisville Humana Festival. CMU graduate Jarid Faubel plays Rudge; he was recently featured in Quantum Theatre’s production of *Yerma*. Posner is played by John Wascavage, currently a third-year student at Point Park. The boys are rounded out by CMU students Eric Berryman, Ethan Saks, and Arya Shahi, and Allegheny College student Corey O’Connor.

The set is designed by PICT Resident Scenic Designer Gianni Downs. His previous PICT credits include: *Doubt*, *What the Butler Saw*, *Boston Marriage*, *Stuff Happens*, Synge Cycle, and *Salome*, among others. Lighting is designed by Jim French (*Rock ‘n’ Roll*, Synge Cycle and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, among others), and

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sound by Elizabeth Atkinson (*Rock ‘n’ Roll*, *Synge Cycle*, *BeckettFest*, *The Pillowman*, *Henry*, and *Copenhagen*, among others). Long-time PICT costume designer Pei-Chi Su returns from New York for the production. Some of her many previous PICT designs include costumes for *King Lear*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Private Lives*, and *BeckettFest*. Jessi Sedon (*Rock ‘n’ Roll*) returns to design projections, with multimedia elements including live and pre-recorded film.

WDUQ, 90.5 FM ([www.wduq.org](http://www.wduq.org)) is the media sponsor for the play. *The History Boys* plays August 6 through 22 in the Charity Randall Theatre, located at the Stephen Foster Memorial in Oakland.

In conjunction with the play, PICT is hosting a panel discussion, “The Nature and Purpose of Education” on August 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m., at the Stephen Foster Memorial in Oakland. Featured panelists include Chip Burke, Chairman of the Grable Foundation and President of the Fox Chapel School Board, Saleem Ghubril, Executive Director of The Pittsburgh Promise, and Melanie Brown, Program Officer for the Heinz Endowments. . Panelists will share thoughts on some of the questions about education raised by Bennett in the play. The panel discussion is free of charge and open to the public.

PICT will also host a post-show talk-back with the company following the Sunday, August 9 matinee performance, as well as two pre-show discussions beginning at 7:00 on Wednesday, August 12 and Thursday, August 13. The pre-show discussions are free of charge and open to the public.

The *Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre* was founded in 1996 to diversify the region’s theatrical offerings by providing Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania audiences with high-quality, text-driven, affordable productions of classical theatre and the works of classical and contemporary Irish playwrights and to significantly improve employment opportunities for local talent in all facets of theatrical presentation and production. PICT is a Small Professional Theatre (SPT) affiliated with Actors’ Equity Association, and a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG) and the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Alliance. PICT is the Professional Theatre in Residence at the University of Pittsburgh and PICT productions at the Charity Randall and Henry Heymann Theatres are presented in cooperation with the University of Pittsburgh – Department of Theatre Arts.

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## *The History Boys* FACT SHEET

### ***The History Boys* by Alan Bennett**

#### **Directed by Andrew S. Paul**

The Charity Randall Theatre in the Stephen Foster Memorial, Oakland  
4301 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh 15213

**Cast:** Eric Berryman, Bernard Cuffling, Dave Droxler, Jarid Faubel, James FitzGerald, Martin Giles, Linda Kimbrough, Andy Lutz, Corey O’Connor, Sam Redford, Ethan Saks, Arya Shahi, and John Wascavage

**Design Team:** Gianni Downs (scenic design), Jim French (lighting design), Pei-Chi Su (costume design), Elizabeth Atkinson (sound design), Cory F. Goddard (Properties), Natalie Baker Shirer (Dialects)

### **Performance Dates and Times:**

**First Week:** Thursday – Friday, August 6, 7, Previews, 8 p.m.  
(New! PICT PANEL DISCUSSIONS-, “The Nature and Purpose of Education Today” August 6 at 6:30 before the 8 p.m. preview, FREE!)  
Saturday, August 8, Opening Night 8 p.m. (followed by reception)  
Sunday, August 9, 2 p.m. (followed by talk-back with the company)

**Second Week:** Tuesday, August 11, 7 p.m. (Professional Tuesdays performance)  
Wednesday – Saturday, August 12 - 15, 8 p.m. \*  
Sunday, August 16, 2 p.m.  
\*Preshow lecture series

- Artistically Speaking – Wednesday, August 12, 7:00 p.m.
- Behind the Scenes – Thursday, August 13, 7:00 p.m.

**Third Week:** Wednesday – Friday, August 19 - 21, 8 p.m.  
Saturday, August 22, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

### **Ticket Prices**

Opening Night:	\$48 Adults, \$45 Seniors
Fri. & Sat. Nights:	\$46 Adults, \$42 Seniors
Wed. & Thurs. Nights, and Sun. Mats:	\$42 Adults, \$40 Seniors
Tues. Nights & Sat. Mats:	\$42 Adults, \$40 Seniors
Preview Thurs. & Fri:	\$36 (all seats, no Senior discounts)
Youth under 25:	\$17 all performances, w/valid ID

For tickets, call ProArtsTickets at 412.394.3353 or visit [www.picttheatre.org](http://www.picttheatre.org)

*Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre. Great Stories. Well Told.*