

PRESS RELEASE
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Strawberry Theatre Workshop
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THE BELLS IS STRAWSHOP'S ANSWER TO POPULAR DEMAND

SEATTLE – Strawberry Theatre Workshop is the only Seattle company to have been nominated for the TPS Gregory Award for Outstanding Production three years in a row. This achievement is even more notable when one considers that during the three years of voting, Strawshop has only produced two plays each season.

Throughout 2011, Strawshop asked its loyal patrons if they wanted a third show and the answer was a resounded "yes!". Produced mostly from funds solicited from the public, the response to popular demand is Theresa Rebeck's *The Bells*, opening at the **Erickson Theatre Off Broadway** on January 26, 2012.

Directed by **Julie Beckman** (who last piloted *The Elephant Man* at Strawshop) *The Bells* is a complex mystery set on the Northwest frontier at the height of the Alaskan Gold Rush. The play centers on a group of loners and eccentrics still eking out a living in the vast Alaskan wilderness. In their midst is Mathias, innkeeper in a derelict town, who is haunted by a secret that changed the direction of his life. *The Bells* is both an epic and deeply personal play confronting questions of guilt and responsibility while spinning an absorbing fireside ghost story.

The Strawshop production features **Peter Crook** (from Book-It's *The Cider House Rules*) and **Brenda Joyner** (NCTC's *On the Nature of Dust*) as the father/daughter family surviving in a world of individualists. **Patrick Allcorn** (*Border Songs* at Book-It) is the stranger from Quebec who is investigating a disappearance. **Galen Joseph Osier** (who appeared in both *The Laramie Project* and *Breaking the Code* at Strawshop in 2010) joins **Lisa Viertel** and **John Quince Smith** as hard-luck prospectors. Designs are by **Anastasia Armes** and **Reed Nakayama**. *The Bells* is stage-managed by **Claire Branch**.

Though it premiered at the **McCarter Theatre** in Princeton, New Jersey, *The Bells* has its developmental roots in the Northwest. Former Intiman Artistic Director **Bartlett Sher** directed a staged reading of the play at the **Hedgebrook Women's Playwrights Festival** at ACT in 2001. At the time, Rebeck said, "It's an amazing opportunity to find a community of people willing to nurture you as a writer like this." When contacted by Strawshop, Rebeck was thrilled to hear that *The Bells* was finally receiving a full production in Seattle--an area with a rich historic connection to the Alaskan Gold Rush.

Listing Information:

Opening Night: Thursday, January 26, 2012
Venue: Erickson Theatre Off Broadway (1524 Harvard Ave, Capitol Hill)
Run of Show: Thursday, January 26 – Saturday, February 18
Performance Times: All performances at 7:30pm
Ticket Prices: \$30 General, \$25 Groups (4 or more), \$15 Students/Seniors
All Thursday tickets are \$15
Phone Sales: 1-800-838-3006
Online Sales: www.brownpapertickets.com/event/211014
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Additional Info: www.strawshop.org