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Cape May Stage
Presents the Hilarious Comedy
I Hate Hamlet

Cape May Stage

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The Robert Shackleton Playhouse

Bank & Lafayette Streets, Cape May, NJ 08204

www.capemaystage.com

I Hate Hamlet

Written by Paul Rudnick

Directed by Roy Steinberg

Cape May, NJ – Cape May Stage, South Jersey’s premier professional Equity theatre, is proud to announce the staging of the work of another New Jersey native: Paul Rudnick’s *I Hate Hamlet!* Directed by Roy Steinberg and featuring the acting talents of Kate McCauley Hathaway (*Rachel Getting Married*, *Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement*), John Patrick Hayden (*Tartuffe*), Karis Danish (*Days of our Lives*, *The Secretaries*), Marlena Lustik (*Foxy*, *Times Square*), David Birney (*St. Elsewhere*, *The Deadly Game*), and Anthony Reimer (*Rescue Me*, *Chasing Zero*), *I Hate Hamlet* will open Wednesday, June 17 at 8:00pm at the Robert Shackleton Playhouse on Bank and Lafayette Streets.

I Hate Hamlet is an “unapologetically silly” (*New York Times*) romp of a comedy, centering on Andrew Rally (Hayden), a celebrated television actor who, after the demise of his series, makes the transition to New York City for his chance to play Hamlet in Central Park. His confidence at tackling the Bard is marginal at best, and his stress level is compounded by his girlfriend Deirdre’s (Danish) maddening hold on her virginity. His real estate agent, Felicia (McCauley Hathaway), shows him an out-of-place Gothic apartment just off Washington Square – the perfect home for an actor about to play Hamlet for the first time. Little does he know exactly how perfect: when his agent, Lillian (Lustik), comes for a visit, she reveals that she’d once had an affair with “The Great Profile” John Barrymore in the very same apartment while he was playing his legendary Hamlet uptown. Following a séance to determine the veracity of Lillian’s claim, Barrymore’s ghost (Birney), dressed in full Shakespearean garb, appears. Fuelled by brandy and braggadocio, the notorious wastrel explains that he attends to every young actor about to attempt the Melancholy Dane, eventually coaching Andrew in the dual pursuits of acting and love. Hilarity ensues as Andrew wrestles with Barrymore, his sword, his conscience, and his ultimate decision to play Hamlet.

Rudnick (*In & Out*, *Jeffery*), originally from Piscataway, New Jersey, has a relationship to the tale that is more than the typical alliance between a playwright and his work. In 1987, he moved into a “medieval duplex” on the fourth floor of an ancient brownstone, which had, in fact, been occupied by Barrymore during his run as Hamlet seventy years earlier. Rudnick’s literary agent remembered the apartment as being the home of Barrymore’s son-in-law, with whom she’d had an affair. While Barrymore’s ghost remained reservedly at bay

during Rudnick's tenure in the apartment, Cape May fans will nonetheless appreciate the talent and tomfoolery engendered by the months he spent there.

The production at Cape May Stage combines six talented and experienced stage actors. Kate McCauley Hathaway (Felicia) is a lifelong summer resident of Cape May, having made her acting debut at the tender age of 6 on the stage of the Cape May Playhouse. Marlena Lustik (Lillian) had her Broadway debut in the 1964 production of *Foxy* with Bert Lahr before appearing in the original productions of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*. Karis Danish (Deirdre) performed in the world premiere of *A Tale of Two Cities* at Asolo Repertory Theatre, and Anthony Reimer (Gary) starred in *The Drowsy Chaperone* at the Gateway Playhouse. Both John Patrick Hayden (Andrew) and David Birney (Barrymore) have played Hamlet at some point in their careers, Hayden at Northern Stage and Birney in Pennsylvania, and Birney's résumé is as far-reaching as the protean actor he portrays.

I Hate Hamlet opens Thursday, June 17, 2010, at 8:00 pm at the Robert Shackleton Playhouse at the corner of Bank & Lafayette Streets in downtown Cape May. There will be a half-price preview evening on June 16th. Performances thereafter are Tuesday through Sunday at 8:00 pm. Tickets are \$35 adults, \$30 seniors, and \$12.50 students. Assisted listening devices are also available upon request for the hearing impaired. Call (609) 884-1341 for reservations and information or visit the theatre's website, www.capemaystage.com.

I Hate Hamlet is presented through the gracious support of La Mer Beachfront Inn & CapeSCape and The Corner Cottage Apartments. This season's sponsors include 410 Bank Street/Frescos, Exit Zero, The Washington Inn, Cape May Winery, and Lucky Bones.

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