

BILL W. AND DR. BOB

BILL W. AND DR. BOB, a play by Samuel Shem and Janet Surrey, is the award-winning Off Broadway hit of 2007 directed by Rick Lombardo, the new Artistic Director of the San Jose Repertory Theatre. It captures a remarkable moment in human history: the relationship between the two men that led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in Akron Ohio on June 10, 1935. It is a great American success story, told onstage with passion, humor, authenticity and insight.

We wish to alert your theatre to a unique opportunity: 2010 will be the 75th anniversary of the founding of AA, with tremendous media attention all over the world. In San Antonio there will be the 75th anniversary international convention of AA, attended by up to 100,00 people, and in every community in America there will be celebratory events. Since closing Off Broadway on June 10, 2007 after a run of 154 performances at the 350-seat New World Stages, BILL W. AND DR. BOB has been produced in small theatres all over the United States, and several main stage productions at regional theatres are planned for 2009-2010, including the Cleveland Playhouse and the Illusion Theatre in Minneapolis. The play has been done in Britain, and translated into French (for Paris production and national tour), Spanish (Mexico City), Portuguese (Rio and national tour of Brazil), Slovenian, and Russian (St. Petersburg).

The play is unique: in addition to the usual theatre audience, it attracts a second, culturally-diverse group: those in 12-step programs and family members, and health care professionals and community groups who deal with addiction. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, which awarded the play its 2007 performing Arts Award, is providing support in every community in which the play is done, and there are partnerships with local treatment centers. "Word is out" among the AA community. All over America, those who missed the Off Broadway show have heard of it, and are buying tickets.

2010-2011 is the perfect time to launch the play in your community. In the 68-Cent Theatre in Los Angeles, the play has been running to sold-out houses for six years (80 equity-waiver performances a year). At its pre-New York run in Boston, it broke the box office record for non-musicals at the award winning 350-seat New Rep Theatre.

Talkbacks with the audience and reviews have clarified the play's appeal to this diverse audience: it is a universal human story of the dangers of isolation and the healing power of good connection.

A top-quality DVD of the Off Broadway show filmed before a live audience is available. www.billwanddrbob.com and www.samuelshem.com

--Cast: six actors, with either a live piano onstage or tape (the Off-Broadway score, by world-renowned jazz pianist Ray Kennedy, faithful to the era, is available)

--Staging: elegantly simple: five chairs, two tables, a bed, props, and a moveable "bar"

--Costumes: vintage 1930s

--Samuel Shem, the pen name of Dr. Stephen Bergman, is the author of the classic American medical novels THE HOUSE OF GOD and THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE

--Read the reviews and script and be stunned by this rare theatrical experience. For more information about the play, authors, and the real Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, visit: www.billwanddrbob.com and www.samuelshem.com

"An insightful new play"—The New York Times

"An endearing portrait of friendship uplifted by warm humor"—The New Yorker

"Deeply humane, audience-embracing, intelligent writing, a leavening of humor and an innate power of biographical storytelling. A remarkable story!"—Variety

"Something rare and exciting is happening at the New World Theatre. Producers often aspire to find 'new audiences' (and its happening here). Profoundly moving and highly dramatic. It is theatre for a new audience"—WBAI, Pacifica Radio New York

"Holds the audience in the palm of its hand from the very start...The stakes are life-or-death throughout...Captures the wild exciting uncertainty of invention.. An uplifting reminder of the power of the human spirit. The sleeper hit of the season"—nytheatre.com

"A textured, truthful telling of AA's story. Inspiring!"—The Boston Globe

"A funny, poignant, compelling new play. A universal message"—The Boston Herald

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