

HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

HENNEPIN THEATRE DISTRICT • MINNEAPOLIS

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All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914, **The Holiday Tradition Continues at the Pantages, Dec. 17-20, 2009**

Tickets On Sale Friday, Sept. 18 at 11 a.m.
Presented by Cantus, Theater Latté Da and Hennepin Theatre Trust

"... a classic to be repeated for years to come"—Mpls. Star Tribune
"A dramatic, real-life musing about the power this season has to make us stop, reflect, and decide to operate in a mode of peace."—Mpls. St. Paul Magazine
"A work of beauty..."—St. Paul Pioneer Press

MINNEAPOLIS—Returning by popular demand and as part of a new holiday tradition, ***All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914***, will run for six performances on **December 17-20, 2009** at the **Pantages Theatre**, 710 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis. *All Is Calm* is a theatrical concert and musical radio docudrama created by playwright/director **Peter Rothstein** from **Theater Latté Da** and presented by **Hennepin Theatre Trust**, featuring three actors and the singers of **Cantus**, one of America's finest professional male vocal ensembles. An ode to peace with musical arrangements by Erick Lichte and Timothy C. Takach, ***All Is Calm*** is based on real stories from an extraordinary event during the first year of World War I when men from opposing forces on the Western front laid down their arms in a spontaneous truce. **Tickets go on sale Friday, Sept. 18 at 11 a.m.** To purchase tickets and for more information, visit www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org.

After its 2007 sold-out, world premiere in Minneapolis, interest in *All Is Calm* remained so strong that the creators joined forces with Hennepin Theatre Trust to present the first Minnesota Pantages' run in 2008 and now its return in 2009. The work was conceived by Rothstein as a radio musical docudrama and features actors John Catron, David Roberts and Alan Sorenson portraying more than 30 characters, with the Cantus singers providing the *a cappella* voices that rang out along the 80-mile front. Rothstein used a rich audio format, not only because radio was the primary communication tool at that point in history, but because audiences are drawn to engage their imagination to inhabit the story.

The production begins with a set of Christmas carols arranged by English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams for his battalion while serving in World War I. The opening is followed by text and songs from Allied and German soldiers who laid down their arms and met in No Man's Land to celebrate Christmas together. This dramatic re-telling contains quotes from 30 World War I figures and music ranging from patriotic tunes and trench songs to medieval Scottish ballads and holiday carols from England, Wales, France and Germany. In some places the truce lasted just for a night, in others until New Year's Day, but during that remarkable and cold period in 1914, enemy troops traded carols, food and drink, played soccer matches and helped each other bury the dead who had lain frozen on the battlefield. Once it was over, the fighting resumed again for four more years—"with a vengeance," remembered one soldier.

Rothstein, also Theater Latté Da's artistic director, said "I wanted to tell the story in their words, so I've created the dialogue primarily through found text from sources including letters, official war documents, autobiographies, World War I poetry, grave stone inscriptions and even an old radio broadcast. It was an epic event, but very personal. I felt a responsibility to put a human face on war."

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He developed the piece for five years, adding, "I was able to spend time along the Western Front and conduct extensive research in Brussels, Ieper, Paris and London. It was incredibly powerful to stand on the very spot, and to go to the primary sources. For decades, the Christmas truce was considered a romantic fable, however there is no doubt thousands of men took part in this extraordinary event. Current research suggests there were eight truces along the front."

Said musical arranger Erick Lichte, "*All Is Calm* allows us to sing Christmas carols that everyone knows and loves, but when set in the context of trench warfare, take on a new poignancy. Music was an important part of life in the trenches and was one of the primary factors that instigated the truce. The soldiers would hold impromptu concerts and exchange songs across No Man's Land. And one brave German soldier put down his gun and stepped in the field singing '*Stille Nacht*'."

The world premiere was broadcast live on Minnesota Public Radio and heard across the globe through live web streaming. In 2008, *All Is Calm* was broadcast internationally through American Public Media and the European Broadcast Union.

Tom Hoch, President/CEO of Hennepin Theatre Trust, commented "*All Is Calm* is a moving and innovative production based on a remarkable true story that fosters the hope that we can rise above conflict. It's a pleasure to again collaborate with Theater Latté Da and Cantus to give Twin Cities' audiences another opportunity to experience such an important work. We would like to make this a treasured holiday tradition."

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets, which go on sale at **11 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 18, 2009**, are priced at **\$27.50** and **\$35 for adults; \$25 and \$15 for Seniors age 62+ and Students (ages 6-18)**. Prices depend on seating preference. Additional fees may apply. Tickets may be purchased in person at the State Theatre Box Office (805 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, 55402), online at *HennepinTheatreTrust.org*, or through Ticketmaster by calling 800-982-2787 or visiting a Ticketmaster Ticket Center. Groups of 10 are eligible for discounts and should call 612-373-5665 for information and reservations.

Performance dates for *All Is Calm* are Thursday, Dec. 17 through Sunday, Dec. 20, 2009 at the Pantages Theatre, 710 Hennepin Ave., Mpls., 55403. Show times are Thursday, Dec. 17 and Friday, Dec. 18 at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 19 at 2 and 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 20 at 1 and 6:30 p.m.

For more information on *All Is Calm* and other work by Theater Latté Da and Cantus, please visit their respective web sites at *latteda.org* and *cantusonline.org*.

Hennepin Theatre Trust, owner of the historic State, Orpheum and Pantages Theatres, is a non-profit organization devoted to enriching the vibrant cultural atmosphere of the Twin Cities. The Trust's programs include Broadway touring productions, the *SpotLight Musical Theatre Program* for high schools, *Critical View* student reviewer program, the *Access Program* and Kids' Night.

Theater Latté Da is a Twin Cities musical theater company recognized for its ability to connect artists, audiences and communities through diverse stories that are both entertaining and enlightening. The company seeks to create new connections between story, music, artists and audience by exploring and expanding the art of musical theater.

Cantus, one of America's finest professional male vocal ensembles, enjoys a vigorous schedule of national tours, subscription concerts in its home of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, educational outreach programs, and recording. The *Washington Post* hails the ensemble's sound as having both "exalting finesse" and "expressive power," and refers to their music-making as "spontaneous grace." The ensemble is known for adventurous programming spanning many periods and genres, including chant, Renaissance music, contemporary works, art song, folk, spirituals, world music, and pop.