

## Jonathan Slaff & Associates

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### REBECCA SCHULL TO PORTRAY ANNA AKHMATOVA

#### WHERE AND WHEN:

April 12 to May 4, 2008.

Theater for the New City, 155 First Avenue (at East Tenth Street)

Presented by Theater for the New City

Th-Sat at 8:00 pm (\$15), Sun at 3:00 pm (pay what you can); tdf/v.

On Thursday, April 17, the performance will be a benefit for The Actors Center. Tickets will be \$25.00.

Box Office: 212-254-1109 or [www.theaterforthenewcity.net](http://www.theaterforthenewcity.net)

Show's website: [www.nakedsoil.com](http://www.nakedsoil.com)

CRITICS ARE INVITED on or after APRIL 12.

NEW YORK, March 9 -- **Rebecca Schull**, well-known for her work on stage, in film and on television, is the author of "**On Naked Soil - Imagining Anna Akhmatova**," a new three-character play about the Russian poet. She will portray Akhmatova in a production directed by **Susan Einhorn**. **Theater for the New City** will present the work **April 12 to May 4, 2008**.

Born in 1889 in Odessa, **Anna Akhmatova** was a published poet at age 22. Her early poems, remarkable for the intimate tone with which they described love found and betrayed, were immediately popular, and she and her husband, the poet Nikolai Gumiliev, became the stars of the Russian literary scene in the early 1920's. As the political climate in Russia went from crisis to crisis, beginning with World War I, the October Revolution, the Civil War, through the years of terror under Lenin and then Stalin, and finally World War II, Akhmatova's poetry changed radically, reflecting the trauma of the Russian people. Her first husband was shot, her son was imprisoned and her closest friends were condemned to labor camps and death. But even as her own tragedies mirrored those of the Russian people, she created out of her personal experience a poetry that defined the anguish of the times in language and images that marked her as one of Russia's great poets.

The three-character play looks at Anna Akhmatova in two time frames and in the company of two other women: her contemporary Nadezhda Mandelstam, the widow of the poet Osip Mandelstam, in the mid-1960's and Lydia Chukovskaya, a young writer who kept a journal of her meetings with Akhmatova, in the late thirties. Through scenes among the three women, and using documentary film footage and video projections, as well as extensive use of the poetry itself, the play illuminates the life of a literary figure who was, for many, the conscience of her time. Rebecca Schull will play Akhmatova, **Lenore Loveman** will play Nadezhda Mandelstam and **Sue Cremin** will play Lydia Chukovskaya.

This is Rebecca Schull's second play. Her one-woman play, "Journey Into the Whirlwind," adapted from the memoirs of Eugenia Ginzburg, told the story of a woman caught in the Stalinist purges of the 1930's. The Irish Times wrote that it offered "something rare in theatrical, literary, and human terms: revelation." The play premiered in Dublin and was subsequently produced in Los Angeles and New York. She was also the founder and artistic director of Open World Theater Co., whose mission was to present the works of playwrights censored in their own countries.

For more detailed information on Anna Akhmatova, please see the show's website: [www.nakedsoil.com](http://www.nakedsoil.com).

**Rebecca Schull** is one of the country's leading character actresses. Her stage career includes the Broadway productions of "45 Seconds from Broadway," "Golda", and "Herzl." She was in "I Can't Remember Anything" at Signature Theater, directed by Joseph Chaikin, and at the Dublin Theatre Fringe Festival. She was the original Fefu in "Fefu and Her Friends" by Maria Irene Fornes, and appeared in many other Off-Broadway productions. Her regional theater work includes "The Matchmaker" at the La Jolla Playhouse, directed by Des McAnuff, for which she received the Los Angeles Dramalog Award. Her recent film work includes "United 93" directed by Paul Greengrass, "Little Children," with Kate Winslet, and "Flannel Pajamas," featured at Sundance. She is well-known to TV audiences as Fay in the long-running NBC series "Wings." She has guest-starred in numerous television series and movies of the week. Her early training was at the Stanislavski Studio in Dublin and her first professional work was at the Dublin Focus Theatre. She received the all-Ireland Hibernia Award for Best Actress for her work in "A Delicate Balance." She is a member of The Actors Studio and The Actors Center.

Director **Susan Einhorn** has directed over 70 productions and considers her specialty to be nurturing and developing new work. She has directed Rebecca Schull twice before. She was Assistant Director to the legendary Alan Schneider for four Broadway productions. Her first major NY success was "I Can't Keep Running in Place" at the Westside Arts Theater, starring Helen Gallagher. She has also directed in NY at the Promenade, Circle in the Square, the Vineyard, Primary Stages, Playwrights Horizons, La MaMa, HB Playwrights Theatre, Open Space, Ubu Rep, Jewish Rep, and regionally at Milwaukee Rep, Syracuse Stage, Pittsburgh Public, Whole Theatre, and Washington D.C.'s Arena Stage, New Playwrights Theatre and Studio Theatre. She has been a Professor of Theatre and head of the Acting Program at Queens College for 25 years. Her productions at Theater for the New City include "Reed!" by Wilson Lehr (her first professional production), "Before She Is Even Born" by Leah Friedman and "Finding Claire" by Kim Merrill. Most recently she directed the premiere of "Milton Bradley" in the Ensemble Studio Theatre's Marathon.

**Lenore Loveman** (Nadezhda Mandelstam) was a nominee for the 2007 Abbie Award for Best Actress for her performance in Daniel Damiano's "Dreams of Friendly Aliens" at The Abingdon Theatre. She was featured opposite Darren McGavin in "Greetings!" by Tom Dudzick and stood by for both Emma & Aida in "Over the River and Through the Woods" by Joe DiPietro. Her recent film/TV credits include Danielle Montalbano's "David," "Law and Order," Woody Allen's "Crimes and Misdemeanors," "The Gathering" and "Blocked." Her recent new plays include "Our Lady of Stone" (Henry Street Settlement), "Dance Card" (La Mama E.T.C.), "Unorthodox Behavior" (TNC), "Academy Street" (Kampo Cultural Center) and "A Backward Glance of Edith Wharton" (HB Playwrights Foundation). Earlier in her career she starred in Allen Swift's "Checking Out" (Broadway) and played Winnie in Beckett's "Happy Days," Anna in "Toys in the Attic" and Corrinna in Guare's "House of Blue Leaves." She toured opposite Buster Keaton in "Merton of the Movies" and Menasha Skulnick in "The Law and Mr. Simon." Her early TV appearances include "One Life to Live," "Edge of Night," "Studio One," "Armstrong Circle Theatre," and "The Defenders." Ms. Loveman studied with Uta Hagen and organized the Campaign to SAVE the Theatres, which culminated in the preservation of 36 historic theatres.

**Sue Cremin** (Lydia Chukovskaya) has appeared in "Killing The Boss" (Cherry Lane), "A Part of the Story" (MCC), "Dinosaur Dreams" (NY Stage & Film), "A Wrinkle In Time" (Lincoln Center Inst.) and "A Stone Carver" (Belmont Playhouse). Her regional credits include "The Talking Cure" and "The Poison Tree" (Mark Taper Forum), "Intimate Apparel" (Baltimore Center Stage and South Coast Rep), "The School For Wives" (South Coast Rep), "Twelfth Night" (The Old Globe), "The Fair Hope Memorial" (Actors Gang), "Leocadia" (NJ Shakespeare Festival), "Mrs. Warren's Profession" and "The Marriage of Figaro/Figaro Gets a Divorce" (Yale Rep). Her films include "Homeland," "Broken," "The Good War," "Can't Miss Nick," "An Evident Kiss" and "The Tao of Steve." Her TV appearances include "Canterbury's Law," "Law & Order," "Close To Home," "Monk," "Tru Calling," "ER," "Dream Hackers," "NYPD Blue," "Strong Medicine," "Spin City," "Boy Meets World" and "Guiding Light." She earned an M.F.A. at Yale School of Drama.

Set designer **Ursula Belden** has been represented on Broadway by "Amadeus," "Quilters" and "Waitin' in the Wings." Her off Broadway credits feature nearly three dozen new American plays, numerous American and/or New York premieres and several classics including the award-winning revival of Strindberg's "A Dream Play" directed by Susan Einhorn. She also designed Einhorn's last production at TNC, "Finding Claire." Her international credits include productions in Berlin, Prague and Canada. She has over 250 credits in regional theaters. Her design work has regularly been selected for inclusion in the International Design Exhibition in Prague. A graduate of the Yale School of Drama, Belden is a Distinguished Professor at Ohio University and has served as guest professor at London's Central St. Martin's School of Art and Design.

Costumes are by **Mimi Maxmen**, lighting is by **Victor en yu Tan**, video is by **Aaron Rhyne** and sound is by **Megan Henninger**.

#### TALK BACKS

- Michael Scammell will give a talk back following the Sunday, April 13 performance. Mr. Scammell is author of "Solzhenitsyn, A Biography" and editor of "The Solzhenitsyn Files," "Unofficial Art from the Soviet Union" and "Russia's Other Writers," among others.
- Darra Goldstein, the Francis Christopher Oakley Third Century Professor of Russian at Williams College, will lead a talk back following the Saturday, April 26 performance.

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