

PARK SQUARE theatre

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Richard Ooms and Emily Gunyou Halaas Open Park Square Theatre's 2007-08 Season with *Trying*, a Story of Life's Most Inevitable Adventure—Growing Old

Saint Paul, MN—Park Square Theatre pairs Guthrie veteran **Richard Ooms** with rising talent **Emily Gunyou Halaas** for the area premiere of *Trying* by **Joanna McClelland Glass**. The show, directed by **Warren C. Bowles**, opens September 21 (previews begin September 14) and runs through October 7.

Trying is an affectionate, bittersweet tale of the brilliant and irascible Judge Francis Biddle and fresh-faced Sarah Schorr, the latest in a string of secretaries who is hired to help the aging justice with his memoirs. This rich story of life's most inevitable adventure—growing old—is inspired by the playwright's personal experience with the real Judge Biddle, FDR's Attorney General and the Chief Justice of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. The elegant but cantankerous Biddle and young Sarah struggle to find a way to communicate, eventually discovering how people in dramatically different places in their lives can unexpectedly and forever influence each other.

Trying had its world premiere in 2004 at Chicago's Victory Gardens Theater before moving Off-Broadway. The *Chicago Sun-Times* critic called *Trying* "one of the finest pieces of theater I have seen in many years, with a script that unquestionably should be a Pulitzer Prize contender," and *Variety* commented that "Glass' writing is literate, touching and laugh-out-loud funny."

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Director Warren C. Bowles returns to Park Square having directed the company's acclaimed production of *Constant Star* last season. Richard Ooms, who made his Park Square debut last season in *Democracy*, returns to play Judge Biddle. Ooms' prolific career includes numerous leading roles over three decades at the Guthrie Theater as well as shows on and Off Broadway. He is paired with Emily Gunyou Halaas, one of the Twin Cities newest talents who just completed a run of *The Deception* with Theatre de la Jeune Lune at La Jolla Playhouse. Gunyou Halaas was a Children's Theater Company performing apprentice and is a graduate of Circle in the Square Theatre School.

Canadian-born playwright and novelist Joanna McClelland Glass is the author of *Canadian Gothic and American Modern* (premiered at the Manhattan Theatre Club), *To Grandmother's House We Go* (first produced at the Alley Theatre in Houston and subsequently moved to Broadway), and *Play Memory* (premiered at the McCarter Theatre, moved to Broadway, directed by Harold Prince). In 1967, young McClelland Glass moved with her husband from the plains of Saskatchewan to Washington D.C., where she accepted a position as secretary to the distinguished Francis Biddle. McClelland Glass was one in a long line of secretaries, all of whom had been unable to work with the brilliant but demanding judge. She persevered and the two developed a deep friendship that lasted until Biddle's death a year later. *Trying* is the story of that year and that friendship.

Performance Schedule & Ticket Information

Previews of *Trying* are Friday, September 14, through Thursday, September 20; the show opens Friday, September 21, at 7:30 p.m. Performances are Thursdays–Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., with 2:00 p.m. matinees on Sundays through October 7. Tickets are \$20 for previews (with a 99¢ preview Tuesday, September 18); \$33 on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays; and \$36 on Saturdays. Tickets are available at 651-291-7005 or www.parksquaretheatre.org. All performances are in the company's intimate theatre in the historic Hamm Building in downtown St. Paul. (*full performance schedule follows on page 3*)

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Park Square Theatre's 2007–08 Season

Park Square Theatre's 2007–08 season, opening with *Trying*, also features three other area premieres (Lisa Kron's 2006 Broadway hit *Well*, directed by Michael Bigelow Dixon in his Park Square debut; the 2004 Tony nominee *Frozen* by Bryony Lavery; and Stephen Dietz's retelling of *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*) and three familiar favorites (John Pielmeier's *Agnes of God*, Lanie Robertson's *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, and John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*).

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Park Square Theatre
Presenting entertainment that matters
through familiar favorites and fresh discoveries

TRYING Performance Schedule

September 21–October 7 (*previews September 14*)

Historic Hamm Building, 20 West Seventh Place, downtown St. Paul

Tickets & Information: (651) 291-7005 or www.parksquaretheatre.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>SEPTEMBER</u>					14 (P) 7:30pm \$20	15 (P) 7:30pm \$20
16 (P) 2:00pm \$20		18 (P) 7:30pm 99¢	19 (P) 7:30pm \$20	20 (P) 7:30pm \$20	21 (O) 7:30pm \$33	22 7:30pm \$36
23 2:00pm \$33				27 (D) 7:30pm \$33	28 7:30pm \$33	29 (A) 7:30pm \$36
30 2:00pm \$33	<u>OCTOBER</u>			4 7:30pm \$33	5 7:30pm \$33	6 7:30pm \$36
7 (C) 2:00pm \$33						

P=Preview O=Opening D=Post-show discussion A=ASL/AD C=Closing