



Bruce Sevy Interview

Bruce Sevy is the Associate Artistic Director and Director of New Play Development for the Denver Center Theatre Company. Later this month, Sevy will direct Center REP's upcoming production of *2 Pianos, 4 Hands*, a wildly entertaining play that originated in Toronto, Canada. Here the director talks about taking the show on the road to over 20 theatres nationwide and how he got involved with this fun, fresh production.

How did you get involved with *2 Piano, 4 Hands*?

David Goldstein, the Artistic Director at Arizona Theatre Company first brought the play to my attention when he asked me to direct it for his theatre in the Fall of 2001. The production was very successful with critics and audiences. It ran in both Tucson and Phoenix. David brought it back to his theatre two years later, and we recently played again in their third theatre in Mesa, AZ.

What first sparked your interest in the production?

What sparked my interest was the humor and authenticity I found in the play. I grew up playing the piano, taking years of lessons etc. just like the characters in the play---so I found a lot of the play resonated with me. I also was amazed at the casting challenge: find two versatile, skilled actors who could also play all of this very difficult music. Thank God I was able to find Carl and Mark [Carl Danielsen plays Richard Greenblatt and Mark Anders plays Ted Dykstra]!

How did you make the Center REP connection?

Michael [Butler] asked us to bring the production to Center REP. I believe he saw it when we did the play at San Jose Rep a couple of years ago. It will be my first time at Center REP. Carl's parents are from Walnut Creek, so this is especially fun for him.

Since 2001 we have taken this production to a number of different regional theatres across the country. It has been a great experience. Audiences all over seem to embrace the play. And they are always so impressed with Carl and Mark's work--both as actors and pianists. I hope the audiences at Center REP enjoy it as much as we like doing it.

How did you get started in theatre?

I think I always had an interest in theatre. Fortunately I went to a high school with a tremendously active drama department (Lincoln High in Stockton, CA.) The more I learned, the more I wanted to know. My training continued in college, and I had the good fortune to meet and observe some terrific professional directors who took an interest in me and allowed me to watch/assist them in rehearsal and ended up giving me some extraordinary opportunities at a relatively early age.

When did you know that you wanted to pursue theatre as a career?

When I was in seventh grade, the local high school drama teacher allowed a few of us to tag along on a high school overnight field trip to San Francisco. This was in the mid-60s and ACT in San Francisco was in its early years. It really was the early years of the whole regional theatre movement in America. We saw two productions at ACT at the Geary Theatre--I think Bill Ball directed both of them. I was captivated on so many levels. And it was my first encounter with the concept that adult human beings could actually do this for a living in places outside of New York City. I didn't know how I would do it, but I knew that I wanted to be a part of it.

Why should audiences come see this production?

I think it's a very entertaining play, with a lot of humor. And there's a lot of terrific music, though it's not a musical. I also think some poignant things about parent/child and teacher/student relationships are examined within the journey of the play. I wondered when I first directed it if only people who had experience playing the piano, or playing a musical instrument would understand the play. Fortunately that hasn't been the case--though certainly there are knowing laughs and reactions for those who do come from a musical background. All audiences have been able to follow and identify with the amount of training, practice, frustrations and joy that are depicted in this play--it could apply to sports, or any other endeavor that requires the amount of focus and discipline described in the play.

Why were these particular actors chosen for the role?

Casting is of huge importance in any play, but certainly so in this play. Audiences will be able to see how crucial casting is to this play--finding actors who can play a number of different roles of different ages (and in some cases, genders) and to be able to make these very swift transitions; and on top of that they need to be able to play this very sophisticated music! Somewhere we did the play--it might have been Cleveland-- and some audience members just wouldn't believe Carl and Mark were really playing the piano. They insisted that it must have been recorded.

Mark and Carl compliment each other so well in this play---it was a huge stroke of good fortune that I was able to get them and that they have continued to work together so well in so many different venues over the years.

What is something you can tell us about *2 Pianos, 4 Hands*, that most people don't know?

You know, despite how much our production and the Canadian production have played around North America, I don't think the play is a "household name" by any means. Part of the fun for us (and the audience) is that it still feels like a new play, an unknown commodity. I think that makes the experience of seeing it so fresh. So, I think there is a *lot* that most people don't know about *2 Pianos, 4 Hands*---and I'll hope they'll come and find out what they've been missing.