

Media Release - Flat Earth Theatre

For more information contact

Coriana Hunt Swartz

Publicity & Marketing Manager

media@flatearththeatre.com

RE: MADE-UP LANGUAGES AND UPROARIOUS COMEDY IN HAVEL'S *THE MEMORANDUM*

This January, Flat Earth Theatre celebrates the legacy of legendary Czech playwright, president, and revolutionary leader Václav Havel with a production of his absurd comedy, *The Memorandum*, in an English translation by Vera Blackwell. When an office abruptly adopts a new “scientific” language, Ptydepe, a bewildered executive is forced to navigate a labyrinth of red tape in an effort to have an indecipherable memo translated. First performed in Prague under the shadow of Soviet-backed totalitarianism, *The Memorandum* lampoons the bureaucratic appropriation of language with a satirical spin still representative of today's global office culture.

Director Victoria Rose Townsend's treatment examines the thin line between our recognizable reality and a world of bureaucratic chaos evocative of Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* and Mike Judge's *Office Space*. The language of Ptydepe, intended to optimize efficiency and accuracy in communication, is brought to life with the help of company linguist Devon Jones, who worked with the cast and director to create order and meaning from the untranslated gobbledegook of Havel's absurd linguistic creation.

The Flat Earth production accentuates the humor and camaraderie in the adventures of Josef Gross, whose unexpected wanderings through the ranks of his department inadvertently parallel Havel's own improbable journey from protest playwright to political prisoner to president. When he receives an interoffice memo in Ptydepe, Gross discovers that affairs in his department are not entirely under his control. Without proper documentation, the befuddled Managing Director finds himself running in circles in search of a translation. To complicate matters, the Deputy Director attempts to usurp Gross's job, everyone in the Ptydepe Translation Center has gone to lunch, and the Staff Watcher is keeping a close eye on the supply of cigars. Yxap tseror najx!

The Memorandum runs January 11th through 19th in the Black Box Theater of the Arsenal Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal Street, Watertown. Performances are at 8 PM on Fridays and Saturdays, with a 2PM matinee on Sunday, January 13th. Tickets are \$20 when purchased in advance through <http://flatearththeatre.com> or by calling 1-800-838-3006, or \$25 (cash only) at the door. Students with valid ID can purchase \$10 student rush tickets at the theater starting one hour before the show, and there will be a Pay-What-You-Can performance on Thursday, January 17th at 8PM.

Flat Earth Theatre has been collaboratively crafting paradigm-challenging theatre in greater Boston since 2006. Recent productions include the world premier of *Pirate Lives! The Musical!* last spring, and August's *The Pillowman* featuring the shadow puppetry of Woellert&Clark. Flat Earth's 2013 season at the Arsenal Center for the Arts continues in April with *Enigma Variations* by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt, and concludes in August with Steven Dietz's *Rocket Man*.

When

January 11th 8PM

January 12th 8PM

January 13th 2PM

January 17th 8PM (Pay-What-You-Can Performance)

January 18th 8PM

January 19th 8PM

Run time: 2 hours plus intermission

Media Release - Flat Earth Theatre

For more information contact
Coriana Hunt Swartz
Publicity & Marketing Manager
media@flatearththeatre.com

Where

Black Box Theater at the Arsenal Center for the Arts
321 Arsenal Street
Watertown, MA 02472

Free Parking

70 and 70A Bus Routes from Central Square, Cambridge

Tickets

\$20 General Admission in advance / \$25 at the door

\$10 Student Rush tickets available 1 hour before show cash only at the door

Purchase online at <http://flatearththeatre.com>

By phone: (800) 838-3006

Group sales (10 or more) email tickets@flatearththeatre.com

Cast

Jim Remmes as Josef Gross
Chris Chiampa as Jan Ballas
Patrick Curran as Otto Stroll
Kevin E. Parise as Alex Savant
Lindsay Eagle as Helena
Dori Levit as Maria
Marty Seeger Mason as Hana
Kevin Kordis as Mark Lear
Chris Anton as Ferdinand Pillar
Matt Arnold as George
Emily Hecht as Thumb

Production Staff

Producer: Coriana Hunt Swartz
Director: Victoria Rose Townsend
Stage Manager: Amy Lehrmitt
Ptydepist: Devon Jones
Set Designer: Jake Scaltreto
Costume Designer: Cara Chiaramonte
Lighting Designer: Adam J. Teti
Props Designer: Stewart Holmes
Sound Designer: Kyle Lampe
Build Chief: Leigh Downes
Graphic Designer: Jennifer Jermantowicz
Electrician: Becca Dunham