

BACKSTORY



PARADISE LOST



Your behind-the-scenes look at TimeLine productions

YESTERDAY'S STORIES.
TODAY'S TOPICS.

TimeLine
Theatre Company

a message

Dear Friends,

On behalf of TimeLine's entire company, I am thrilled to welcome you to our 11th season! Each year we go through a series of discussions about the issues and types of stories we want explore, and this year our deliberations seemed even more extensive and passionate than at any time during our 10 previous years. There was a lot on our minds and an abundance of topics quite worthy of examining on stage.

There was one moment, however, that turned the tide for how I was approaching our planning. At the end of 2006, *Time* magazine announced

that their "Person of the Year" was You. Me. Us. The average citizen.

Admittedly, upon first hearing that, I thought it was a poor excuse for not choosing a person of national prominence — a single someone who had made a sizeable imprint on issues of global importance. But soon I recognized an opportunity to explore *Time's* idea.

Quite often TimeLine is drawn to stories about legendary figures who defined their times and claimed their chapters in history books. But it's equally important to tell the stories of how average individuals — you, me, us

— can influence history through activism, be it personal, social or political.

There are many complex issues — not the least of which will be a Presidential election — that will demand great thoughtfulness in the coming year. Each of us will play some role in the history that will be made, and it's up to us as individuals to determine how active (or passive) that role will be.

With that in mind, TimeLine is pleased to present four plays that showcase ordinary people living in extraordinary times. They are filled with probing questions, refreshing humor and the notion that history



is made not only in government buildings and at corporate

board tables, but in the homes and workplaces of people like you and me.

We begin our season-long conversation by revisiting an old friend — Clifford Odets. If you saw Louis Contey's Jeff Citation-winning production of Odets' *Awake and Sing!* at TimeLine in 2002, you may attest that Odets is a playwright who seems custom-made for our company and that Contey is a director who has a tremendous gift for making Odets' urban poetry shine.

With his blend of social commentary and emotional complexity, Odets revolutionized the American theater during The Depression by putting the struggles and longings of everyday citizens on the stage. With *Paradise Lost*, he gives voice to those individuals and exposes a family's quest for utopia amid a sea of economic and political turmoil.

With a vast landscape of ideas, this is an Odets

classic for the ages. You just might be surprised that the age in which it was written really is not our own!

As we usher in a second decade of making history at TimeLine, we're delighted to share another Odets play with you. With much to discuss, I hope our little theater again this season will be a place where big conversations take place!



"It's equally important to tell the stories of how average individuals —you, me, us —can influence history."

Special Events and Resources

the conversation

Sunday Scholars Series

Immediately following the performance on **Sunday, September 9**, TimeLine will host our Sunday Scholars Series. This one-hour panel discussion features experts talking about the themes and issues of the play. **Tickets are \$10; \$5 for TimeLine subscribers**; call the Box Office to order.

The panel is moderated by TimeLine Board member **Peter H. Kuntz**, managing director of programs and production for the Chicago Humanities Festival.

Please note that you do not need to attend the September 9 performance of *Paradise Lost* to attend the Sunday Scholars panel.

Post-Show Discussions

Stay after performances on **Thursday, August 30; Sunday, September 2; Thursday, September 6; Thursday, September 13 and Sunday, September 16** for **free post-show discussions**. Moderated by a TimeLine Company member and featuring the

production dramaturg, these brief, informal discussions are your opportunity to hear from the cast and production team about their experiences, ask questions about and comment on the performance and engage fellow audience members in conversation about the themes of the play.

Lobby Displays

Don't miss our **historical lobby displays**, available for perusal before and after each performance. They also can be downloaded at www.timelinetheatre.com.

Study Guide

Also online, you may obtain a **production study guide**, our compilation of all the historical background, contextual articles and additional resources collected during production of *Paradise Lost*.

the playwright

Clifford Odets was the son of Eastern European, Jewish immigrants. He was born in Philadelphia on July 18, 1906. His mother, Pearl, who suffered from tuberculosis and bouts of depression, was often remote and emotionally inaccessible when he was a child. His father, Lou, was both an ambitious businessman and womanizer who had high expectations for his son.

Lou Odets was obsessed with the American dream, and, as he grew more successful, he distanced himself from his immigrant past. The family was forbidden to visit his mother's grave for fear they would see the family name, Gorodetsky, on the gravestone. After moving to New York City, he added the initial "J" to his name and expanded his first name to Louis. He also began claiming he had been born in Philadelphia.

Caught between the emotional distance of his mother and the severity and ambition of his often-absent father, Clifford Odets was a bookish child who craved approval and a family.

He grew up living upstairs from an aunt and uncle in Philadelphia, then in a series

of increasingly expensive apartments in New York City. They were in social neighborhoods, and Odets, always seeking family, was often in the homes of his neighbors, observing their lives with his prominent blue eyes.

Odets' childhood journals are filled with precocious and self-conscious accounts of his dreams of becoming an actor or a writer. Early successes in theatrical performances in grade school and high school cemented his desire to act.

His father, however, did not appreciate his son's artistic



Clifford Odets at age 28. (Photograph by Carl Van Vechten)

“Dear American friend. That miserable patch of event, that mélange of nothing, while you were looking ahead for something to happen, that was it! That was life! You lived it!”

— Clifford Odets, 1963

inclinations and refused to send him to college, hoping instead to train him in his own printing and copywriting business. Odets was not a success in his father's business and drifted from job to job before finding like-minded actors and writers with whom he shared ragged apartments paid for by bit parts in plays and, occasionally, financial contributions from his mother.

Throughout this time, Odets suffered from depression and entertained thoughts of suicide, even as he worked to educate himself in the theater, art and music.

After a performance in a small role with the Theatre Guild, Odets met Harold Clurman, who invited him to meet with a group of actors and directors who were holding weekly meetings to discuss the state of theater, the need for more training and rehearsal time, and the method of acting pioneered by Konstantin Stanislavski. These meetings would ultimately grow into the Group Theatre, and Clurman would become Odets' friend and the director of many of his plays. It was the Group that, for a time, offered Odets a family and artistic home.

Clifford Odets and Luise Rainer circa 1937. (Photograph by Carl Van Vechten)



A TIMELINE

- **July 18, 1906** Clifford Odets is born in Philadelphia.
- **1912** Odets' family moves to New York City.
- **June 28, 1914** Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and his wife are assassinated. In the months that follow, Austro-Hungary, Serbia, Russia, Belgium, France and Germany all are drawn into what would become the World War I.
- **April 6, 1917** The U.S. Congress declares war on Germany.
- **November 11, 1918** World War I ends with the signing of the Armistice.
- **1920** Adolf Hitler, as head of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or Nazi Party) announces his 25-point program which provided the permanent basis of the party.
- **October 24, 1929** The stock market crashes; it came to be known as Black Thursday.
- **October 29, 1929** Five days later, there is a second stock-market crash. Soon known as Black Tuesday, this crash causes widespread panic. Most historians now believe these crashes were symptoms of the Great Depression, not the cause.
- **1930** Harold Clurman, Lee Strasberg and Cheryl Crawford begin holding meetings to discuss theater; Odets is among a number of actors attending these gatherings that would become the basis for the Group Theatre.

Directors Harold Clurman, Lee Strasberg and Cheryl Crawford organized the Group Theatre in 1931. They called it the Group because the three directors had been holding weekly meetings to discuss theater with their group of actors in volunteered apartments since November 1930. Notable members included Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, Elia Kazan, Howard Da Silva, Paul Green, Lee J. Cobb, Morris Carnovsky and Franchot Tone.

The name of the theater derived from one of its guiding principles, that the plays were meant to be part of a whole in which all actors' performances were important. There were no stars, nor were the playwright and director superiors in the production of a play. Similarly, all members were paid, and, while there was some salary variation, the size of the part did not determine the size of the paycheck.

The company devoted itself to long days of summer rehearsals in rented camps and homes in the country. They studied movement, their version of Stanislavski's method of acting, and rehearsed. All their efforts were designed to bring

about an authenticity they felt was lacking in the theater. The young company struggled; while some plays were well reviewed, there were also financial failures and pressures. Many members of the Group shared run-down apartments to save money.

Odets played several small roles in their productions but did not immediately reveal his literary ambitions. Strasberg worried that Odets was not a very good actor and expressed his doubts about his inclusion in the Group, but Clurman maintained that Odets was "stewing" and would produce something interesting in time.

As the Great Depression wore on, Odets and other members of the Group



The Group Theatre taking a movement class at Dover Furnace in 1932. (Photograph by Ralph Steiner, courtesy of Caroline Steiner)

Theatre became increasingly socially aware. For a time Odets joined the American Communist Party but found it artistically restricting and abandoned it, though his desire to address social issues remained the driving force of his plays throughout the 1930s. Socially conscious and topical subject matter and striking, naturalistic language would become the hallmark of Odets' early plays.

Writing became a way to act on his desire to address the social problems of poverty, homelessness and labor abuses. In 1935, the Group Theatre performed his one-act play, *Waiting for Lefty*, in which a group of taxi drivers come to the decision to strike. It was performed first as a benefit perfor-



Waiting For Lefty, with Elia Kazan at center, arms raised. (Courtesy Theatre Collection, Museum of the City of New York)

mance. *Waiting for Lefty* was remounted, paired with his anti-Nazi one-act, *Till the Day I Die*, with great critical success. *Till the Day I Die* was one of the first anti-Nazi plays produced on the American stage and Odets had written it in a single week.

The audience response to *Waiting for Lefty* was even stronger than the critics'. Clurman recounted how, at the pivotal moment at the end of the play, the audience would call out,

"Strike! Strike!," joining the characters in their moment of decision.

1935 was a banner year for Odets: After the success of *Waiting for Lefty*, the Group Theatre also produced his *Awake and Sing!*, which follows the trials of the Berger family in 1933.

With *Awake and Sing!* the Group Theatre hit a pinnacle of critical success and social awareness. It rushed to produce Odets' *Paradise Lost*, later that year. It opened to mixed

“There were to be no stars in our theatre, not for the negative purpose of avoiding distinction, but because all distinction — and we would strive to attain the highest — was to be embodied in the production as a whole.”

— Harold Clurman, *The Fervent Years: The Group Theatre and the Thirties*

- **1931** Banks suspend operations by the end of the year.
- **November 8, 1932** Franklin Delano Roosevelt defeats Herbert Hoover and is elected the 32nd president of the United States.
- **January 1, 1933** Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany.
- **1933** President Roosevelt commences his plan to alleviate the economic privations of the Great Depression with a series of legislation, creating social and public-works programs that would collectively be known as the New Deal.
- **1935** Legislation to create the Works Progress Administration, which would ultimately include the Federal Art, Music, Theatre and Writers' Projects, is passed by Congress. The Group Theatre's work was a forerunner to this only American attempt to develop a nationalized theater program in the form of the Federal Theatre Project. Many Group actors work for the Federal Theatre Project and the style of acting pioneered by the Group Theatre would strongly influence Federal Theatre productions.
- **1935** Odets' play *Waiting for Lefty* is performed as a benefit for the Group Theatre; it is later remounted and performed with his anti-Nazi play *Till the Day I Die*, with great critical success. *Waiting for Lefty* wins the George Pierce Baker Drama Cup and the Yale University and New Theatre drama awards.
- **1935** The Group Theatre performs Odets' plays *Awake and Sing!* and *Paradise Lost*, both directed by Clurman.

reviews. But in spite of loyal audiences, it failed to be the financial success the company hoped it would be.

Odets, who had resisted the lure of lucrative Hollywood screenwriting jobs, finally left for Los Angeles and sent back money to help pay the actors' salaries for *Paradise Lost*.

The utopian theater experiment began unraveling in the late 1930s as infight-

ing, ever-present financial problems and the departure of various members for Hollywood took their toll. In 1937, after a harsh critique of their skills from a committee of Group actors, Strasberg and Crawford resigned. Clurman, who was working in Hollywood and trying to shore up his financial situation, returned from Los Angeles to direct Odets' *Golden Boy*, which became the Group Theatre's great-

est financial success. Its 1938 production of Odets' *Rocket to the Moon* received mixed responses from critics and audiences. In spite of the financial success of *Golden Boy*, the financial burdens of producing subsequent seasons and the increasing pressure to cast outside actors already had started a downward slide for the Group Theatre, which dissolved in 1941.



Group Theatre directors (from left) Lee Strasberg, Harold Clurman and Cheryl Crawford at Brookfield Center.

“From consideration of acting and plays we were plunged into a chaos of life questions, with the desire and hope of making possible some new order and integration. From an experiment in the theatre we were in some way impelled to an experiment in living.”

— Harold Clurman, *The Fervent Years: The Group Theatre and the Thirties*

“Whenever people talk to me of the advantages of America, I think of all these broken middle-class lives which I know so well.”

— Clifford Odets, 1940

It is difficult to understand the juxtaposition of the Roaring '20s with the Great Depression. The change from economic security to financial duress happened within a few years, or even a few months, for many families.

As Harold Clurman wrote in *The Fervent Years: The Group Theatre and the Thirties*: “Between 1921 and 1927, society's headlong rush looked as if it would never end. Between '27 and '29, a slowing down became perceptible, notes of doubt, fear, loneliness, stole into the picture.”

A set of government case studies on the unemployed between 1921 and 1929 compiled by the Unemployment Committee of the National Federation of Settlements suggests that this anxiety was growing well before the stock market crashes of 1929. The chapter of the government study entitled “Effects on the Spirit” suggests that, “The man who, with the loss of his job, has lost his sense of belonging, and with it his place in the scheme of

his own household, is on new and unsteady footing. Under the emotional upset of fathers and mothers is the sense of trying to build on quicksand. ... If you have been hungry, you may build up when you get food. But your whole outlook on life changes when you have been discouraged too often or too long.”

At the height of the Great Depression in 1933, nearly one quarter of the population was unemployed, according to the Franklin Delano Roosevelt library. Odets and other members of the Group Theatre saw and experienced the economic reality of the Depression. These hardships proved to be the catalyst Odets needed to drive his playwrighting.

“No one talks about the depression of the modern man's spirit”

— Lucas Pike, *Paradise Lost*

- **1935** Odets, as a representative of the League of American Writers, is among a group of artists who make a protest trip to Cuba, to investigate the treatment of students under Fulgencio Batista. He is arrested and deported.
- **1936** Odets writes *I Can't Sleep*.
- **January 8, 1937** Odets marries actress Luise Rainer.
- **1937** He writes the film scenario for *The General Died at Dawn*.
- **April 1937** Lee Strasberg and Cheryl Crawford resign from the Group Theatre.
- **August 23, 1937** Clurman returns from Los Angeles to direct Odets' *Golden Boy* for the Group Theatre; it becomes the Group Theatre's most profitable play.
- **1938** Martin Dies is named head of the newly formed House Un-American Activities Committee.
- **1938** The Group Theatre produces Odets' *Rocket to the Moon*.
- **June 25, 1938** The Fair Labor Standards Act passes, creating a minimum wage.
- **December 5, 1938** A photograph of Odets appears on the cover of *Time* magazine with the Malraux quote as a caption, “Down with the general fraud!” The *Time* feature claims “Odets defines the general fraud” because of his Cinderella story and rise to affluence.
- **1939** *Six Plays of Clifford Odets* is published.

In 1935, the Group Theatre and Odets were flush with the success of *Awake and Sing!*.

Odets had been offered writing contracts in Hollywood but still clung to the Group Theatre's ideals and found it his artistic home. He also was struggling through multiple revisions of *Paradise Lost*, afraid the play would seem like a pale shadow of *Awake and Sing!* with the references to the family's Jewish faith removed.

In fact, he was striving to find a balance between the naturalism and street

language of his other plays and a more allegorical style that might speak to universal themes. The play still features the slangy language Odets heard from his father — whose favorite slang, always monetary, was “a million bucks” — but at the same time he also used poetic, symbolic language.

The title of the play, a reference to John Milton's epic poem of the same name, suggests this shift to a more metaphorical landscape. Milton's poem retells the story of the angel Satan as he overreaches himself in attempting to become a god and is cast out of paradise by God. While Odets draws on language that references Milton — there are images of fruit, fire, sickness, death and failed ambitions — the world of the play is a decidedly fallen one. Odets described *Paradise Lost* as “about a man, Leo, who was trying to be a good man in the world and meets raw, evil, and confused conditions where his goodness comes to nothing.”

In spite of some praise, the play struggled financially, and Odets decided to go to Hollywood in order to help finance it. He experienced his own “fall” as New York critics and some in the

Group Theatre called him a “sell-out.” He surprised his critics by returning to the company with 1937's production of *Golden Boy*

It would not be the last time Odets would be accused of compromising his ideals. A 1938 article in *Time* magazine was heralded by a photograph of Odets on the magazine's cover with the André Malraux quote as a caption “Down with the general Fraud.”

Attacking the general fraud was a task Odets openly set for himself. With his earliest plays critics praised him as a voice for social reform but even in 1938, the *Time* article pointed out the paradox of Odets' financial success allying him with the middle-class fraud he sought to attack. By 1953, however, Odets, like his friend Elia Kazan, would name names in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Safe from blacklisting, Odets wrote for film, television and the stage. Toward the end of his life, Odets frequently told others of his plans for another play, but *The Flowering Peach*, produced in 1954, would be his last.

Janet Ulrich Brooks began working with TimeLine in 2003, appearing in *Paragon Springs*. She next appeared in *A Man For All Seasons* in 2005 and gained widespread acclaim for last season's one-woman production of *Lillian*. She was named a TimeLine Associate Artist this season and plays a prominent role at TimeLine this year, appearing in *Paradise Lost* and *Tesla's Letters*.

Two weeks into rehearsals for *Paradise Lost*, TimeLine Artistic Director PJ Powers (PJP) chatted with Brooks (JUB) about her career and her work at TimeLine.



(PJP) How long have you been acting in Chicago and how did you get your start?

(JUB) I was in my early 30s when I moved to Chicago in '88 to nanny my niece and start a new chapter.

I'd been entertaining in Branson, Mo., acting in Kansas City, marrying the wrong guy and getting a divorce. In '91 I landed a full-time acting job (with benefits! Woo-hoo!) with Child's Play Touring Theatre.

I toured for 4½ years and, after the death of Artistic Director Victor Podagrosi, began directing the acting companies and education programs. I did that for the next eight years.

I missed acting, wasn't getting any younger, didn't have any kids to put through college and had ripened into proper “character-actor” age — so off I went to start yet another new chapter. It was tough

- **September 1939** Germany invades Poland and annexes the Danzig region; France and England declare war on Germany. World War II begins.
- **1940** Odets writes *Night Music*.
- **1941** Odets writes *Clash by Night*. He and Luise Rainer divorce.
- **1943** Odets writes the film scenario and directs *None But the Lonely Heart*.
- **1944** Odets writes the film scenario for *Deadline at Dawn*.
- **May 8, 1945** Winston Churchill announces the end of World War II on the European front.
- **September 2, 1945** Japan signs its unconditional surrender, ending World War II on the Pacific Front.
- **May 14, 1943** Odets marries actress Bette Grayson.
- **1948** Odets writes *The Big Knife*.
- **1950** Odets writes *The Country Girl*.
- **1953** Odets is called before the House Un-American Activities Committee as a “friendly witness.” He disavows communism and names fellow communists.
- **1954** Odets' writes *The Flowering Peach*, and it is produced on Broadway. Bette Grayson dies.
- **1961** Odets receives the Award of Merit Medal for Drama from the American Academy of Arts and Letters for his body of dramatic work.
- **August 18, 1963** Clifford Odets dies in Los Angeles of stomach cancer.

Clifford Odets on the cover of the December 5, 1938 issue of *Time* magazine. (Photo by Lara Goetsch)



getting back on the audition horse, but luckily it has worked out for me! I also have an extremely supportive partner, Paul Roeder, who helps subsidize my lack of a full-time job.

(PJP) Your career has included a lot of work in arts education and in children's theater. Can you talk about that work and how it has fed what you do as an actor?

(JUB) Children's theater — the red-headed stepchild of the theater world, but a wonderful place for a character actor to work while aging. Victor Podagrosi was a huge influence for me, with his deep respect for the sophistication and intelligence of children. Their honesty is so valuable to a

performer. When you have a group of 300 students rapt, not in noisy response to hilarious hi-jinks, but rapt with attention to live storytelling, you have achieved something — and it takes skill, craft, honesty. What you give, you get back ten-fold.

Inviting the energy of the audience into the story, as opposed to a one-way communication, is probably the most important quality I got from doing children's theater. Also, we performed stories and poems written by children so I got to play characters ranging in age, gender and matter. I've played broccoli — as well as mice, mothers, bad boys, cookies, rocks, flowers and God (not in a public school, though).

As for arts education, while teaching I learn more about my process. I have to articulate concepts in ways that communicate with the learning styles represented in any group of students. Also, seeing how easily young people “play” and create ideas inspires me to trust the creative process and open up to the creative energies of the folks I'm working with. I still teach part time and will probably continue to for a while.

(PJP) What do you see as the biggest need or challenge facing the world of arts education today?

(JUB) Yikes! How much time have you got? Time and money come to mind. Also, fear. We seem to be in a quagmire in this country. Everyone talks about how important education is, but no one can agree on what should be taught or how it should be taught — or who should be teaching it. And, meanwhile, there's so much to learn!!

Connecting the arts to school curriculum is essential. Take away the humanities, and you take away humanity. The sciences and arts go hand in hand. They hold the same principles — line, shape, form, color, rhythm, tempo,



As Lillian Hellman, testifying before the House Un-American Activities Committee in *Lillian*.

energy, abstraction, as well as critical thinking, problem-solving, etc.

The arts are the language, the form of communication people have used since time began to express themselves and document their societies. So for absorbing history, I don't know how you can do that without studying the arts. As we blend cultures in our big melting pot, we can find connection and understanding through the language of the arts. Maybe if we understood more about each other, we wouldn't be so afraid of each other. Without fear, we might actually enjoy learning so much that testing would

become unnecessary!

(PJP) In a relatively short period of time, *TimeLine* has become an artistic home for you. What is it that you like about doing plays here?

(JUB) *TimeLine* has a passion for quality. I like that. Every time I've returned to *TimeLine* there has been growth. I like that. And you make me laugh, PJ! I really like that!

I always feel artistically challenged here and at the same time, comfortable and supported — safe. I also like the connection with history. Like [poet and philosopher] George Santayana's quote: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

(PJP) Your portrayal of Lillian Hellman in last season's production of *Lillian* was one of the surprise hits of the season. The show played to large crowds for six weeks on off-nights during *The Children's Hour*, and it received tremendous press and acclaim. Can you talk about what the experience was like for you?

(JUB) It was thrilling, a pinnacle for me. On first read I fell in love with the script.

I had never done a one-woman play, and wondered about acting without an ensemble. Good God, what if I belched? I'd have to be very careful about what I ate!

I knew I'd have to have this story in my bones in order to invite the audience in, so I got an early start by reading it aloud every day for more than a month before rehearsals started. I also read Lillian's memoirs and re-read all her plays. The play drew on all of my experiences to date and seemed to validate all my life choices, as I used every one of them to connect with the journey.

I also turned 50 during the run — over the hill with Lill! — and it was an amazing birthday present to be doing what I most love to do at such a milestone.

I still only feel articulate when saying other people's words, but the Lillian experience gave me a new level of confidence in my abilities as

As Alice More (with David Parkes, center, as Sir Thomas More and Joey Honsa, right, as Margaret), preparing for her husband's execution in *TimeLine*'s 2005 production of *A Man for All Seasons*.



“[Lillian] drew on all of my experiences to date and seemed to validate all my life choices, as I used every one of them to connect with the journey.”

an actor. I proved to myself that I could do things I had only dreamed of doing. But, I gotta say, that one drag off that opening cigarette was a great nerve stabilizer on opening night!

(PJP) So now you're reunited with *Lillian* director Lou Contey for *Paradise Lost*. Is the process different since you have already done one show with him?

(JUB) Yeah. I feel like he doesn't pay as much attention to me. Kidding! Now I just have to share him with everybody else. I like watching him work his magic on others.

(PJP) Why do you think Odets' writing is still resonating in 2007?

(JUB) Probably because his writing is so socially minded. Lots of different ideals are represented in this play for us to consider. When Odets was writing, folks were questioning capitalism, exploring options — socialism, communism, etc. Odets reminds us to wake up: When you get complacent, things can happen around you that you don't notice until it's too late. And the political climate today is so charged. People are frightened and searching. Politics and social idealism clash at all turns. We still question



Brooks with fellow cast and production staff, rehearsing *Paradise Lost*.

what's good for one or the other: The "haves" and "have-nots." Who's in power. The consequences of our actions. The consequences of industrial power. Religious freedoms vs. religious reign.

I think once someone has decided they have the answers they close themselves off from possibilities. I think Odets wants us to remain open to ideas and possibilities.

(PJP) Tell us about your character, Clara, the matriarch of the Gordon family in *Paradise Lost*.

"I love the first time you look up, connect with a fellow actor and are able to catch a wave and ride it together for a while."

(JUB) Right now, I wonder why Clara doesn't walk through Act II saying "I told you so." She seems to me the most pragmatic character in the play — interesting for a woman written by a man. I'm intrigued with how outspoken she is, yet still deferential to her husband. She is loyal to her family and welcoming to her friends. Clara suffers great loss, as do others in the play, and I'm still navigating that journey.

(PJP) How do you prepare before rehearsals begin?

(JUB) I like to read a play aloud several times

before going into rehearsal. Otherwise, I start picturing the character as someone else and am startled at the sound of my voice at the first reading! Finding the rhythm of the play is essential — which feeds into the movement of the character, which informs emotional underpinnings. Then I love the first time you look up, connect with a fellow actor and are able to catch a wave and ride it together for a while. This always lands you somewhere new.

(PJP) Our dramaturg, Maren Robinson, has supplied you with a wealth of information about life in the 1930s and the world in which Odets was writing. How does that information inform rehearsal?

(JUB) Maren's been great! We had some good table talk for the first few rehearsals. We talked about the Group Theatre and ensemble acting as it connected to socialist and humanist values. It's always fun to find the roots of slang and catch phrases — makes me wonder what actors 100 years from now will do if they find an old Second City script! But I think all the discussion gets everyone focused on the task at hand and excited at the prospect of bringing the play to life

in a way that would make the playwright proud. It is honoring the past and informing our work.

(PJP) About one-third of the way through the run of *Paradise Lost* you will start doing double-duty as you begin rehearsals here for *Tesla's Letters*, the second show in our season. How will you juggle two vastly different plays?

(JUB) This speaks to my inner schizophrenic. The different dialects will be the biggest challenge, as I tend to let dialects bleed into my everyday life anyway. I have to make sure I get enough sleep, too! But it also comes at a time in the production process where I am ready to begin creating something new. Does that sound like I have a short attention span? Ooh, look! A shiny penny!

(PJP) What else do you have coming up this year?

(JUB) Soon after *Tesla's Letters* I'll start rehearsals for *Richard III* at Strawdog Theatre. It opens in late February. And opening in May, I'll be playing Golda Meir in *Golda's Balcony* at Pegasus Players — another one-woman play! This will come with a whole new set of challenges that seem a bit daunting right now, so I'll think about that tomorrow.

BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

Dramaturgy @
Historical Research
by Maren Robinson

Written by Maren
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and Lara Goetsch

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way and Lara Goetsch

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Paradise Lost Cover
Photo by Ryan Robinson

Backstory is published
four times each season.

Pictured on front cover
(from left): Costume
designer Alex Wren
Meadows; cast and
production staff at the
first read-through of the
script; actor Mechelle
Moe; set model by scenic
designer Karen Hoffman;
actors Aaron Golden and
Michael Kingston.

Pictured on back cover
(from left): Actors
Michael Kingston, Hanlon
Smith-Dorsey and Angela
Bullard; actor Jeremy
Glickstein; scenic designer
Karen Hoffman; actor
Janet Ulrich Brooks;
actor Aaron Golden;
director Louis Contey
with dramaturg Maren
Robinson; actors Craig
Degel and Whit Spurgeon.



August 25 - October 21, 2007 *previews 8/21 - 8/24*

by **CLIFFORD ODETS**
 directed by **LOUIS CONTEY**

Reportedly considered by Odets himself to be his best and most significant work, *Paradise Lost* is an intense family drama set amid the vast landscape of the Great Depression. How will financial misfortune affect the values, relationships and aspirations of the well-educated, middle-class Gordons and their circle of friends? Odets' passionate characters speak with a fast-talking language that sings with big dreams and optimism for the future, despite daunting odds.

The Cast

(in alphabetical order)

Scott Aiello: *Lucas Pike*

Angela Bullard: *Bertha Katz*

Janet Ulrich Brooks:
Clara Gordon

Craig Degel: *Phil Foley*
 @ *Mr. Rogo*

Tien Doman: *Libby Michaels*

Jeremy Glickstein: *Kewpie*

Aaron Golden: *Ben Gordon*

Jürgen Hooper: *Julie Gordon*

Michael Kingston:
Leo Gordon

Brian McCartney: *Sam Katz*
 @ *Detective Milton*

Mechelle Moe: *Pearl Gordon*

Hanlon Smith-Dorsey: *Dave Post*
 @ *Mr. Schnabel*
 @ *Williams*

Whit Spurgeon:
Gus Michaels

Clayton Smerican: *Felix*
 @ *Mr. May*
 @ *Paul*

The Production Team

Karen Hoffman:
Scenic Designer

Alex Wren Meadows:
Costume Designer

Keith Parham:
Lighting Designer

Andrew Hansen:
Sound Designer

Julia Eberhardt:
Props Designer

Maren Robinson:
Dramaturg

Jennifer Martin:
Stage Manager

Seth Vermilyea:
Production Manager

Lara Goetsch:
Director of Marketing
 and *Communications*

PJ Powers: *Artistic Director*

John Bierbusse: *Interim*
Managing Director

AUGUST 2007

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

SEPTEMBER 2007

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

OCTOBER 2007

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21						

- **Regular Performance**
- **Preview Performance**
- **Opening #1** featuring post-show reception *Sold Out*
- **Opening #2** featuring post-show reception *Sold Out*
- **Post-Show Discussion** with cast & production crew *Free*
- **Sunday Scholars** a one-hour post-show panel discussion with experts on the themes and issues of the play *Tickets \$10; \$5 for subscribers*

SHOW TIMES

PREVIEWS 8 PM
 THURSDAYS 7:30 PM
 FRIDAYS 8 PM
 SATURDAYS 4 PM & 8 PM
 SUNDAYS 2 PM
 SELECT WEDNESDAYS 7:30 PM

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