SYRACUSE, NY – Did artistic rivalry and jealousy lead to the murder of one of the world’s greatest composers? This intriguing question is at the heart of Peter Shaffer’s 1979 play “Amadeus,” which Syracuse Stage presents March 11 – 29, directed by artistic director Robert Hupp. Tickets are on sale now and start at $25.

“Since its opening in 1979, ‘Amadeus’ has proven to be a contemporary classic that is a favorite among audiences worldwide,” said Hupp. “Playwright Peter Shaffer rewrote ‘Amadeus’ six times, and 18 years ago Stage produced his original version. Now, we are presenting the final version, which I believe offers a more mature and nuanced protagonist and delivers a more devastating ending.”

Set mostly in Vienna at the court of Emperor Joseph II, Amadeus speculates as to whether the composer Antonio Salieri poisoned the genius Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. In the play, it is Salieri himself who poses the question in the form of his last musical composition. On his death bed some 30 years after Mozart’s passing, he writes “The Death of Mozart – or, Did I Do It?”
“This play uses real events that happened in Mozart’s life, but it is a work of fiction,” said Hupp. “The relationship that’s portrayed in the play between Salieri and Mozart is taken to an extreme. They may have been rivals but they were not bitter enemies.”

Historically, the supposed enmity between the composers derived from two unsubstantiated rumors. When Mozart at age 35 was stricken with high fever and swelling without apparent cause, he seized on the notion that he had been poisoned. Family members, especially the composer’s father Leopold, were inclined to agree and cast suspicion on Salieri. Years later, in ill-health and mental decline, Salieri reportedly confessed to Mozart’s murder then attempted suicide. Neither were apparently true.

The fictional feud between the composers originated with the Russian writer Alexander Pushkin who used the rumors of jealousy and murder as the basis for his 1830 play “Mozart and Salieri.” In 1897, composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov created a one-act opera of the same name, using Pushkin’s play almost verbatim as his libretto. In writing his version, Shaffer once stated, “The conflict between virtuous mediocrity and feckless genius took hold of my imagination and wouldn’t leave me alone.”

Salieri, the virtuous mediocrity, is the true protagonist of Shaffer’s play. He is a deeply pious man who has devoted his life and artistry to God and he finds it unbearable that God’s reward for such devotion is to bestow musical genius on another, a particularly undeserving other.

“There’s nothing about Mozart that Salieri respects except the genius of his music,” Hupp said. In Salieri’s eyes Mozart is vulgar, uncouth and utterly unworthy; “God’s preferred Creature,” Salieri calls him as he determines that “the Creature had to be destroyed.”

In “Amadeus,” Salieri and Mozart are plum roles and Hupp has cast exceptional actors in each. Veteran New York actor Jason O’Connell plays Salieri. O’Connell (recently married to playwright Kate Hamill) directed last season’s “Pride and Prejudice.” His many credits include appearances off-Broadway, most recently in Richard Jones’s “Judgment Day” at Park Avenue Armory.

Mickey Rowe, who received critical and popular acclaim as Christopher Boone in Stage’s production of “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time,” returns in the role of Mozart. Rowe was the first autistic actor to portray Christopher in a professional production. His performance drew attention from many media outlets including the New York Times, PBS, “Teen Vogue,” “Playbill,” NPR, CNN, “Huffington Post” and “Salon.” Since last appearing at Stage, he founded and became co-executive director of National Disability Theatre, which has garnered national and international attention.

Rounding out the principal roles are Lisa Helmi Johanson as Constanze Weber, Mozart’s wife, and Avery Glymph as Emperor Joseph II. Glymph returns to Syracuse Stage where he made his professional regional debut in 1998 as Belize in “Angels in America.” Johanson’s New York credits include “Avenue Q” off-Broadway.

“Amadeus” was first performed at The National Theatre in London directed by Sir Peter Hall. Opening night was October 26, 1979 and the play ran for almost three years until closing on June 4, 1981, a total of 1,181 performances. After receiving rave reviews, it was performed in America for the first time in 1980 at the National Theatre in Washington D.C. It then opened on Broadway a month later at the Broadhurst Theatre. There, it ran from December 1980 until October 1983. Amadeus went on to receive seven Tony Award nominations and won a total of five, including Best Play. In 1984, the play was adapted into a film directed by Milos Forman and won eight Academy Awards, including Best Film.

Throughout the run of “Amadeus,” Syracuse Stage will partner with Symphoria to enhance patrons’ experiences at the theatre. At select performances, Symphoria musicians will play selections from Mozart
and Salieri before the show in the lobby. The March 26 prologue, an intimate, pre-show discussion, will feature a Symphoria conductor who will speak about the music of Mozart and Salieri. Additionally, Symphoria will present a Spark Concert on March 16 at 7 p.m. at Syracuse Stage in the Archbold Thetare. The program includes MOZART: “Overture to Abduction from the Seraglio”. SALIERI: “Sinfonia in D Major (Venizia)”. MOZART: “Overture to Don Giovanni”. MOZART: “Papagano’s Aria”. MOZART: “Symphony No. 25 in G minor (Mvt. 1)”. Tickets available through Symphoria.

“Amadeus”
By Peter Shaffer
Directed by Robert Hupp
Scenic Design by Misha Kachman
Costume Design by Tracy Dorman
Lighting Design by Dawn Chiang
Sound Design by Victoria Deiorio
Hair and Wig Design by Robert Pickens
Intimacy Coach and Fight Director: Alec Barbour
Vocal Music Coach: Rebecca Karpoff
Piano and Music Consultant: Milton Rubén Laufer
Foreign Language Consultant: Marina de Ratmiroff
Production Stage Manager: Laura Jane Collins*
Casting: Harriet Bass Casting
Co-produced with the Syracuse University Department of Drama

Cast
Ames Adamson* ................................................................. Count Franz Orsini-Rosenberg
Kayla Amani ................................................................. Ensemble
Michael Breese Barbour* ........................................................... Kappellmeister Bonno
Isaiah Carmichael Harden Brooks† ................................................. Priest, Ensemble
Bill Christ* ............................................................................... Count Johann Kilian von Strack
Avery Glymph* ................................................................................. Emperor Joseph II
Jeff Gonzalez* .............................................................................. Venticello 2
Lisa Helmi Johanson* ............................................................. Constanze Weber
Hayden Kerzie† .................................................................................... Livery
Thomas Montgomery† ................................................................. Major-Domo, Ensemble
Kevin Morrison† ............................................................................. Salieri’s Valet, Ensemble
Jason O’Connell* .............................................................................. Antonio Salieri
Caroline Portner† ............................................................................ Katherina Cavalieri, Ensemble
Mickey Rowe* ........................................................................... Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Blake Segal* .................................................................................. Venticello 1
Michael Sloan† ................................................................................ Livery
Sara Anne Vaccaro† ........................................................................ Teresa Salieri, Ensemble
J.D. Webster* .................................................................................. Baron Gottfried van Swieten
Damon Robert Williams† ............................................................... Salieri’s Cook, Ensemble

Understudies
Ames Adamson* (Salieri)
Kayla Amani† (Constanze)
Michael Breese Barbour* (Rosenberg, Strack, Swieten)
Hayden Kerzi† (Venticello 1)
Blake Segal* (Mozart)
Michael Sloan† (Venticello 2)
*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.
†Student, Syracuse University Department of Drama

Special Events

March 11  **Pay-What-You-Will Performance @ 7:30 p.m.**
There will be 76 tickets available for whatever price patrons wish to pay. Pay-what-you-will tickets must be claimed in person at the Box Office on the day of the performance, subject to availability. The Box Office opens at 10 a.m. and will remain open until the start of the show. There is a limit of two tickets per person.

March 13  **Opening Night Party** (free for ticket holders)
Join the cast for a post-show celebration with live music presented by CNY Jazz, featuring Richard Koons and Cathleen O’Briend, food and drinks.

March 15  **Prologue at 1 p.m.** (free for ticket holders)
An intimate, pre-show discussion with “Amadeus” director Robert Hupp one hour prior to curtain. Prologues will be held in the Archbold Theatre.

**Actor Talkback** (free for ticket holders)
A Q&A session with the actors following the 7:30 p.m. performance. The talkback will be held in the Archbold Theatre.

March 18  **Wednesday @ 1 Lecture** (free for ticket holders)
Go behind the music in a special Wednesday @ 1 lecture with flutist and Cornell professor Neal Zaslaw. Dubbed “Mr. Mozart” by the New York Times for his work performing and recording Mozart’s work, Zaslaw has taught at Cornell since 1970 where continues to expound the history of western music from the 9th to 21st century. He has also authored more than 75 articles on baroque music, historical performance practices, Mozart and the history of the orchestra in addition to lecturing and performing around the world. The lecture will be held in the Archbold Theatre.

**Open Captioning at 2 p.m. Performance** for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

March 19  **Happy Hour at 6 p.m.** (free for ticket holders)
Enjoy complimentary light fare from local restaurants, half-priced drinks and $5 drink specials at the bar.

March 21  **Prologue at 1 p.m.** (free for ticket holders)
An intimate, pre-show discussion with “Amadeus” director Robert Hupp one hour prior to curtain. Prologues will be held in the Archbold Theatre.

**ASL Interpreted Performance at 2 p.m.** for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

March 22  **Poetry & Play @ 1 p.m.** (free and open to the public)
Join Syracuse Stage for a poetry series that connects the literary arts to the work on our stage with readings by Spencer Hupp, a poet and critic from Little Rock, Arkansas. Spencer Hupp is a 2017 graduate of the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, and currently serves as an assistant editor for his alma mater’s “Sewanee Review.” His recent work appears in that magazine, as well as “Hopkins Review,” “New Criterion” and
“Measure.” Spencer Hupp will be entering the Johns Hopkins Writing Seminars as an MFA candidate in the fall. An additional featured author will be announced at a later date.

March 25  **Dinner & Show** ($60, includes dinner and show admission)
Enjoy a buffet dinner at 6 p.m. with fellow theater lovers in the Sutton Pavilion. Seasonal fare prepared by Phoebe’s Restaurant followed by great theater.

March 26  **Prologue at 6:30 p.m.** (free for ticket holders)
An intimate, pre-show discussion with a conductor from Symphoria one hour prior to curtain. Prologues will be held in the Archbold Theatre.

March 27  **Last Call**
The Syracuse Stage bar will remain open after the show. Mix and mingle with fellow patrons—the perfect chance to chat about the show!

March 28  **Audio Described Performance at 2 p.m.** for patrons who are blind or visually impaired.
**Open Captioning at 7:30 p.m. performance** for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

March 29  **Open Captioning at 2 p.m. performance** for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

ABOUT SYRACUSE STAGE
Founded in 1974, Syracuse Stage is the non-profit, professional theatre company in residence at Syracuse University. It is nationally recognized for creating stimulating theatrical work that engages Central New York and significantly contributes to the artistic life of Syracuse University, where it is a vital partner in achieving the educational mission of the University’s Department of Drama. Syracuse Stage’s mission is to tell stories that engage, entertain and inspire people to see life beyond their own experience. Each season 70,000 patrons enjoy an adventurous mix of new plays, and bold interpretations of classics and musicals, featuring the finest theatre artists. In addition, Stage maintains a vital educational outreach program that annually serves more than 15,000 students from 14 counties. Syracuse Stage is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, and a member of the Arts and Cultural Leadership Alliance (ACLA), the University Hill Corporation and the East Genesee Regent Association. Syracuse Stage is a member of The League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the largest professional theatre association in the country.

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Syracuse Stage  I  Artistic Director: Robert M. Hupp  I  Managing Director: Jill A. Anderson

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