

NEWS RELEASE



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For immediate release

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www.compasstheatreproductions.org



Strolling Player

with Richard Sheridan Willis

directed by Robert Richmond

At his father's theatre on the island of Guernsey, a boy watches a play, entranced...and remembers his future. Opening night in London's West End. A backstage brawl, a wedding ring flung into a parking lot. Falling off the stage, falling in love. Dr. Who, Wilde, Richard Burton, and Shakespeare. Always, Shakespeare.

Tickets \$10

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TARRAGON THEATRE
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Wednesday	July 3rd:	6.30pm - 8.00pm
Friday	July 5th:	3.30pm - 5.00pm
Sunday	July 7th:	8.15pm - 9.45pm
Monday	July 8th:	4.30pm - 6.00pm
Wednesday	July 10th:	12.00pm - 1.30pm
Friday	July 12th:	5.15pm - 6.45pm
Saturday	July 13th:	10.30pm - Midnight

www.richardwillis.org/SP5.html
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Strolling Player **Strolling Player** *With Richard Sheridan Willis*

Online: <http://www.richardwillis.org/SP5.html>

Compass website: www.compasstheatreproductions.org

Strolling Player is a creative project with a utilitarian inspiration. When English actor Richard Sheridan Willis married Canadian writer Heidi Reimer, they applied for his Canadian residency. One grueling immigration form demanded a list of Richard's location and activities each month since his eighteenth birthday. The years had been dictated by the vagaries and upheavals of an actor's life. Age eighteen was a long time ago.

Strolling Player began as a blog giving the heart behind the facts on the government form, and metamorphosed into theatre when producer Lisa Dent-Couturier asked Richard for a one-man performance. Together Richard and Heidi shaped this accounting into a celebration of love and artistic dreams.

There's the paparazzi stalking a doomed marriage. There's the fall off the stage on an opening night. A backstage brawl and a wedding ring, flung into a parking lot. Debilitating tours across America. A father's seaside theatre, where the dream began, and that father's death many years later. Rehearsal in New York on **9/11**, a performance for **George Bush** at **The White House**, a break-up in Venice. Brushes with **Daniel Day Lewis**, **Richard Burton**, **Dr. Who**, **Oscar Wilde**. And Shakespeare, his first love. Always, there is **Shakespeare**.

And there is that beautiful, dark Northern Ontario girl, and a redemptive wedding at a Northern Ontario Lake, and a life story written out for Canadian Immigration so that they could be together. A life story turned into a play.

Richard has appeared on **Flashpoint**, **Law & Order**, **Nikita**, **Dr. Who**, **Lost Girl**, and numerous TV series. He appeared in Toronto in **The Master Builder** at the Royal Alexandra Theatre with Alan Bates and Gemma Jones, and was last seen in Toronto as the Father in **The Railway Children**. He has just finished performing in Washington DC at the Folger Shakespeare Theatre, playing the Chorus in **Henry V** and his acclaimed performance as Malvolio in **Twelfth Night**.

Lucas Wilson is Strolling Player's Technical Director and is best known for his work as an illusionist. He has appeared on **Canada's Got Talent** and made a successful pitch on **The Dragon's Den**. According to **The Guinness Book of World Records**, Lucas is officially the world's fastest straitjacket escape artist. Here he helps Richard and the

Strolling Player team make theatre magic.

Lisa Dent-Couturier as well as being producer of Strolling Player will be dividing her time between Toronto and Stratford where her son Arden is playing the young Tommy in the Stratford Festival's **Tommy** directed by Des McAnuff.

Robert Richmond directs Strolling Player. He lives in Columbia, SC, where he is an Associate Professor in Theatre at the University of South Carolina. He has known and collaborated with Richard for 25 years. He is known for his inventive productions of Shakespeare. His off-Broadway hit production of **Comedy of Errors** was brought to La Jolla Playhouse by **Des McAnuff**. This year he directed the critically acclaimed **Henry V** at the Folger Shakespeare Theatre in Washington DC, which became the best-selling show in the theatre's history. He has just directed **Twelfth Night** at the Folger and will return there to direct **Richard III** in 2014.

The Creative Team:

Heidi Reimer, *writer.*

Heidi Reimer's short stories and essays have appeared in Literary Mama, Little Fiction, Stealing Time, Hip Mama, Outcrops: Northeastern Ontario Short Stories, and an anthology forthcoming from Goose Lane Editions called Truth, Dare, Doubledare: Stories About Motherhood. She is currently completing a novel, and she blogs at www.emergencejourney.com.

Robert Richmond, *director.*

Robert is originally from Hastings, England, and studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He now lives in Columbia, SC where he is an Associate Professor in Theatre at the University of South Carolina. He has known and collaborated with Richard for 25 years. He is known for his inventive productions of Shakespeare. This year he has directed the best-selling and critically acclaimed *Henry V*, and *Twelfth Night* at Folger Theatre in Washington, DC. He directs **Richard III** at the Folger in 2014.

Credits include: Folger Theatre *Othello*, *Henry VIII*, *Julius Caesar*. Regional: *The Lost Colony*; La Jolla Playhouse; Denver Center for the Performing Arts; Two River Theater Company. Off-Broadway: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Comedy Of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Cyrano De Bergerac*, *The Iliad: Book One*, *King Lear*, *Twelfth Night*, *Agamemnon*. Associate Professor at the University of South Carolina Theatre and Dance Department, Head of Undergraduate Performance. Directed *Dreadful Sorry*, winner of the South Carolina Film Commissions 2010 Production Grant. Education: Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. www.robertrichmond.com, DreadfulSorrymovie.com

Dougal Rose, *composer.*

Dougal was part of songwriting team 'RADAR', which included Richard Willis and his brother Robin during the 70's. Dougal had a top 30 hit with one release in the UK and went on to record with Alan Merrill (writer of "I Love Rock n Roll") and at EMI Records with Herbie Flowers. More recent projects include performing with Bill Legend and Glam Rock tribute band Glam Busters in the UK.

Lisa Dent-Couturier, producer.

Lisa is the General Director of Compass Theatre Productions. In addition to her work on Strolling Player, she can be found preparing for Compass' 2013 Season, which begins with a tour of *The Little Prince* and performances at the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts. Lisa is the creative director of Currents Film Series in partnership with the Strand theatre & TIFF Film Circuit. A passionate promoter of the arts, Lisa has championed Strolling Player from its inception.

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Lucas Wilson, technical director.

Lucas works as a theatre technician part time and spends the rest of his time as an illusionist. He has appeared on Canada's Got Talent and made a successful pitch on The Dragon's Den. According to The Guinness Book of World Records Lucas is officially the world's fastest straitjacket escape artist. Whether it's building a set, making a unique prop or performing magic, you can always find Lucas at a theatre or in a workshop. For more information about Lucas please visit: www.theillusionist.ca.

Richard Sheridan Willis, writer/performer

Trained: RADA

Canadian Theatre: The Father in *The Railway Children* (Roundhouse Theatre, Toronto) Kemp in *Vigil*, Mann in *The Clockmaker* (Sudbury Theatre Centre) Ragnor in *The Master Builder* (Peter Hall Productions, Royal Alexander Theatre)

UK Theatre: Arnold in *Torch Song Trilogy* (Albery Theatre, London) Jean in *Miss Julie*, (BAC, London) Hedda Gabler (Leicester Haymarket), Allmers in *Little Eyolf* (National Theatre of Norway), *Tis Pity She's a Whore* (Dundee Rep), *The Normal Heart* (Channel Theatre Co), *A Woman of No Importance* (Leicester Haymarket), *The Master Builder* (Peter Hall Company), *Into the Woods* (Leicester Haymarket), *The Tempest* (Shared Experience), Captain von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* (Leicester Haymarket) George in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (New Vic), *The White Devil*, *Single Spies* (Leicester Haymarket), *Things We Do For Love* (Salisbury Playhouse).

USA Theatre: Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Chorus in *Henry V* (Folger Shakespeare Theatre, Washington DC) Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady* (Summer Theatre of New Canaan) Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Elkins Shakespeare Festival), Jack in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Aquila Theatre Co, Baruch, NYC), Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Aquila Theatre Co, New Victory Theatre, New York), *Night & Day* (Wilma Theatre), *Mrs Warren's Profession* (Denver Centre Theatre Co), Prospero in *The Tempest*, Claudius in *Hamlet*, Peachey in *The Man Who Would Be King*, Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, *Catch 22* (Aquila Theatre Co, NYC) Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Friar Lawrence in *Romeo & Juliet*, King Henry in *Henry IV Part 1* (Summer Theatre of New Canaan)

TV: *Dangerous Persuasions* (History Channel) *Dr Who* (BBC), *Law & Order* (NBC), and *Flashpoint* (CBS) *Lost Girl* (Showcase) *Nikita* (Warner Bros TV) *Stand By Your Booth* (Rob Fisher Films), *Flesh & Blood*, *Rebecca*, *Diary of a Nobody* (BBC), *Soldier & Me* (Granada), *Doombolt Chase* (HTV), *The Feathered Serpent* (Thames TV) (Film: *Dreadful Sorry*, *Absolution*, *Ghost in the Noonday Sun*, & *The Big Bad Swim*. www.richardwillis.org

Compass Theatre Productions provides exceptional professional theatrical training to youth, experienced local performers, emerging artists and technicians. The theatre currently stages performances at venues in Toronto, Brant, Norfolk and Perth counties. Discover more at CompassTheatreProductions.org