

For Immediate Release  
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**Van Hill Entertainment**  
**Presents**  
**In**  
**The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual TRU VOICES Musicals Reading Series**



## Saint Heaven

**Featuring**  
**Cheryl Alexander, Chuck Cooper,**  
**Montego Glover, Rebecca Luker,**  
**Darren Ritchie, and Patrick Ryan Sullivan**

**Book by Martin Casella**  
**Music and lyrics by Keith Gordon**  
**Directed Matt Lenz**  
**Based on the novel The Gift of Tongues by Steve Lyons**

**One Night Only! December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005 at 7:00 pm**  
**Blue Heron Arts Center**  
**123 E. 24<sup>th</sup> St. (b/w Lex. & Park)**  
**New York, NY**  
[www.saintheaven.com](http://www.saintheaven.com)

**Van Hill Entertainment** presents in **Theater Resources Unlimited's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual TRU Voices Musicals Reading Series, *Saint Heaven***, a new musical playing **December 21<sup>st</sup>** for one night only! (Blue Heron Arts Center, 123 E. 24<sup>th</sup> street, NYC). ***Saint Heaven*** features **book** by **Martin Casella**, **music and lyrics** by **Keith Gordon** with **direction** by **Matt Lenz**.

**Saint Heaven** concerns the story of Thom Rivers, a young doctor, who returns home for his father's funeral. Met with unhappy memories— and strong pressure to follow in his beloved father's footsteps, Thom is determined to forget the pain of his past, settle Daddy's affairs, and head back north. But his plans change when he falls in love with a black preacher who speaks in tongues. Believing her to be suffering from epilepsy, he attempts to treat her, sparking a chain of events that affect their lives and all those who live in the small town of Saint Heaven.

**Saint Heaven** stars **Cheryl Alexander** (*Caroline, Or Change; It Ain't Nothin But The Blues; Once On This Island, Dreamgirls*) as Millie Walden, **Chuck Cooper** (*The Life, Lennon; Caroline, Or Change; Chicago*) as Pastor Joe Bertram, **Montego Glover** (NYC: *Dreamgirls* (20th Anniversary Concert); *The Pirates Of Penzance; Radiant Baby*) as Eshie Willington, **Rebecca Luker** (*Nine; The Music Man; The Sound of Music; The Secret Garden*) as Maggie Hartford, **Darren Ritchie** (*Dracula; Thoroughly Modern Millie; Les Miserables; Bells Are Ringing*) as Thomas Rivers, and **Patrick Ryan Sullivan** (*42nd Street; Titanic; Beauty and the Beast; Bingo - The Musical*) as Garrison Martin.

**Diana Calderazzo** is the Assistant Director for *Saint Heaven* and **Kelsey Halbert** serves as Musical Director.

### **PRODUCTION HISTORY**

**Saint Heaven** was most recently seen in The York Theatre's Developmental Reading Series in 2004. Prior to that, **Saint Heaven** was featured at Theatre Building Chicago's "Stages 2003 Festival of New Musicals." Previously, this show had two workshops at the Miranda Theatre in New York and has been developed in the BMI Musical Theater Workshop

### **CAST BIOGRAPHIES**

**Cheryl Alexander (Millie Walden)** Broadway/ National Tour Credits include: *Caroline, Or Change; It Ain't Nothin But The Blues; Once On This Island, Senator Joe/ Nimrod; The News; Sophisticated Ladies; Dreamgirls* (Original Cast). Off Broadway: *The Three Sisters; Little Ham; It Ain't Nothin But The Blues; Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin; Power Failure; Just One World; Language Of The Soul; Saint Tous*. Regional: *Mandela; Bubblin' Brown Sugar; Camino Real; A Streetcar Named Desire; Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin; Thunder Knockin' On The Door; Blackbirds Of Broadway; Avenue X; The Odd Couple; Man Of La Mancha; The News; Sunset*; Television/Film: *Chappelle's Show; Law & Order: SVU; NYPD Blue; Entropy; First Love, Second Chance; A Matter Of Principal; Saturday Night Live* (in concert w/ Jennifer Holliday); *Multiple Personalities; Story Of America*.

**Chuck Cooper (Pastor Joe Bertram)** won the 1996 Tony Award for Best Featured Actor in a musical for his portrayal of Memphis in *The Life*. His other Broadway credits include: *Lennon; Caroline, Or Change; Chicago; Passion; Someone to Watch Over Me; Rumors; Amen Corner; Getting Away With Murder; Hair* (BCEFA concert event); and *St. Louis Woman* in City Center's acclaimed Encore series. National tours: *The Tap Dance Kid; Eubie and Whistle Down the Wind*. Off-Broadway credits include *Caroline, Or Change* (the Public Theatre); *Thunder Knocking On The Door* (Minetta Lane); *Marco Polo Sings a Solo* (Signature Theatre) and *Avenue X*. Regional Theatre credits include *Robeson* (Passage Theatre); *Othello; Julius Caesar; The Doctor Is Out; Coriolanus and Timon of Athens* (The Old Globe Theatre); *The Tempest, Lost And Found* (Alliance Theatre) Television credits: *Hack; 100 Centre Street; Law & Order; Law & Order: SVU; Oz; Strangers with Candy; NYPD Blue; Cosby; The Cosby Mysteries; New York Undercover; I'll Fly Away; The Bold and the Beautiful; As The World Turns* Film credits include *Our Song; The Hurricane; The Opportunists; Gloria; The Peacemaker; The Juror; North; Criminal Justice and Find Me Guilty*

**Montego Glover (Eshie Willington)** NYC: *Dreamgirls* (20th Anniversary Concert); *The Pirates Of Penzance* (Mabel/Lucille Lortel nomination); *Radiant Baby* directed by George C. Wolfe with the Public Theatre; *Ghetto Superstar* with the Public Theatre; *Me & Juliet* (York Theatre Company) Regional credits include: *Aida* (IRNE Award – Best Actress in a Musical), *Once On This Island, Ragtime, Dreamgirls; Oklahoma!; Ain't Misbehavin'; A Midsummer Night's Dream; Jesus Christ Superstar; Into The Woods*, and *Cookin' At The Cookery* (IRNE & Dora Award nominations). Ms. Glover can be heard on the new cast recording of *Dreamgirls* (Nonesuch Records), the original cast recording

of *Festival of the Lion King* and *Rhythm Of One* (Disney/ Buena Vista Records), the new concept recording of the *Pirates Of Penzance* reprising her role as Mabel. TV: "The Guiding Light", "Wonderful World of Disney". Montego has appeared in numerous concerts including The Chicago Humanities Festival (Symphony Center, Chicago); The Museum of Television & Radio's Harold Arlen Celebration (Mer Theatre, New York); Broadway Meets Country (Jazz at Lincoln Center, New York); and the Broadway Inspirational Voices Annual Fall Concert (Town Hall, New York).

**Rebecca Luker (Maggie Hartford)** was last seen on Broadway starring in Maury Yeston's *Nine*. She also starred in Meredith Wilson's acclaimed musical, *The Music Man*, for which she received Tony, Drama Desk & Outer Critics Circle Award nominations. Other Broadway: *The Sound of Music*, *Showboat* (Tony Award Nomination), *The Secret Garden* (Drama Desk Nomination) and *The Phantom of the Opera*. Off Broadway plays: *Vagina Monologues* and *Can't Let Go*. Regional: *She Loves Me* (LA's Reprise); *Time and Again* (Old Globe) and *Harmony* (La Jolla Playhouse/DramaLogue Award). Concerts: Solo evening with Lincoln Center's American Songbook Series; *No, No Nanette*; *Gay Divorce*; *My Favorite Broadway: The Leading Ladies* (all at Carnegie Hall); *The Boys From Syracuse* (Encores!), and has performed symphonies across the United States and Europe. Recordings: *Leaving Home* (PS Classics), *Anything Goes: Rebecca Luker Sings Cole Porter* (Fynsworth Alley), *Aria*, *Aria 2* (Profile) & *Aria 3* (Koch), *Wonderful Town*, *Jerome Kern Treasury*, *Broadway Showstoppers*, *Brigadoon*, and *Strike Up the Band*.

**Darren Ritchie (Thomas Rivers)** Broadway Credits: Frank Wildhorn's *Dracula* (Jonathan Harker), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Jimmy Smith), *Les Miserables* (Babet/Enjolras), *Bells Are Ringing* (Blake Barton) and *South Pacific* at Lincoln Center. First National Tour: *Fame* (Nick Piazza). His New York City workshops and staged readings include: *Alter Boyz*, *The 60's Project*, *Surfs Up*, *Emohruo*, *Twelve Days of Christmas*, and *Me and Mrs. Jones*. Regionally Mr. Ritchie worked at North Shore Musical Theater: *Full Monty* (Jerry), *Goodspeed*: Frank Wildhorn's debut of *Camille Claudell*, as well as Pittsburgh Music Theater and Wagon Wheel Playhouse. Television Credits include: "Days of Our Lives", "All My Children", "As the World Turns", "Guiding Light" and "Law & Order SUV".

**Patrick Ryan Sullivan (Garrison Martin)** has been seen on Broadway in *42nd Street*; *Titanic* and *Beauty and the Beast*. Other credits include *Bingo - The Musical*; *Auntie Mame* and the CD cast recording of *Sundown*.

### **THE CREATIVE TEAM**

**Keith Gordon (Composer/Lyricist)** is currently writing the scores for the forthcoming musicals, *Little Mary*, with playwright Michele Aldin, and *Free Money*, with Martin Casella and Barbara Multer-Wellin. Keith is an alumni of the BMI Musical Theatre Workshop and has been a featured composer in the ASCAP East Coast Pop Music Workshop. His songs have been recorded by artists including the Valli Girls (Sony/BMG), JoJo David (Arrhae Press), and Anne Marie David (Arrhae Press). He has also written jingles for numerous national advertising campaigns, sung by a variety of people including Diane Schuur, Valerie Simpson, and even Howard Stern.

**Martin Casella (Book)** is the author of the plays *Mates* (L.A. Weekly Award and Drama-Logue Award for Best New Play), *Paydirt*, *Desert Fire*, *Beautiful Dreamer*, *The Big Enchilada* and *Grand Junction*. He also wrote the book for the musicals *Paper Moon*, *Survival Crackers*, *Happy Holidays*, *Taking Care of Mrs. Carroll* and *Doo-Dah!* (Stages 2004). His play, *Scituate*, was included in the Stamford Center for the Performing Arts New Plays Festival and his one-act play "George Bush Goes To Hell" was included in the Access Theatre's Last Chance Texaco Festival in July of 2004. Casella's newest play, *The Irish Curse*, was performed in the 2005 New York International Fringe Festival, where its received rave reviews and an award for Outstanding Playwriting. It is scheduled to open Off-Broadway on St. Patrick's Day of 2006. Casella's work has been seen at such venues as the Pasadena Playhouse, Crossroads Theatre (Los Angeles); Ernie Martin Theatre (New York); Group Theatre (Seattle); Bailiwick, Theatre Building (Chicago); Paper Mill Playhouse (New Jersey); Goodspeed Opera House (Connecticut); Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia); Ford's Theatre (Washington); and Bunkamura Theatre (Tokyo).

**Matt Lenz (Director)** is the Supervising Associate Director of *Hairspray* on Broadway, as well as for the First National Tour and Toronto productions. Previously, he served as Resident Director for *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* on Broadway and for the national tours. Also for Disney, he was Asst. Director for the Elton John/Tim Rice musical *Aida* in its World Premiere developmental production as *Elaborate Lives: The Legend of Aida* at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta. Other recent directing credits include: *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* at The MUNY in St. Louis, The North Carolina Theater and for Michigan Opera Theater in Detroit, *Dirty Blonde* and *Love! Valour! Compassion!* at the Zachary Scott Theatre Center in Austin, the world premiere of *Scituate* by Martin Casella at the Stamford Center for the Arts, the L.A. production of *Confidentially, Cole* at the Tiffany Theatre on Sunset, *Twelfth Night*, *Hair*, *The Ten Percent Revue* in Provincetown, *The Who's Tommy* (national tour). In March he will direct Martin Casella's award-winning comedy *The Irish Curse* Off-Broadway.

**Diana Calderazzo (Asst. Director)** has directed for the Missoula Children's Theatre in Montana (*Alice in Wonderland* and *Red Riding Hood*) and The Aracoma Story, Inc., in West Virginia (*Footloose*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *The Aracoma Story*). She has assistant directed productions of *Picnic*, *Three Sisters*, and *The Seagull* and served as dramaturg for *Three Sisters*, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, *Picnic*, *Once on this Island* and others. Diana is a regional winner of the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival Dramaturgy Award; and her article, "Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins* and the Wartime Political Climate," will appear in *Theatre Symposium* in 2006.

**Kelsey Halbert (Music Director)** Broadway: *Taboo*, Associate Conductor; keyboards for *Grease!* and *Chicago*. National tours: Music Director for *Saturday Night Fever*, *Annie Get Your Gun* (starring Marilu Henner and Tom Wopat), Associate Conductor for *The Wizard Of Oz*, *Grease!*, *Chicago*. National and European tours of *Crazy For You* and *West Side Story*. Frequent conductor at the St. Louis Muny, including premier of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. guest conductor, Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon. Conductor and pianist with Rosemary Clooney, Donald O'Connor, Rich Little, Charo, Lauren Kennedy and Alan Campbell.

**Van Hill Entertainment (Producer)** co-founded by Van Dean and Hillary Cutter, recently co-produced a sold out run of *The Mistress Cycle* at the NY Musical Theatre Festival. Van Hill was recently involved in *Once Around The Sun* (dir. Jace Alexander, The Zipper Theater, Off-Broadway). Cutter has served as Associate Producer for the Obie Award Winning play *Gone Missing* (The Civilians: The Belt Theater NYC, The Gate Theatre London); *Nobody's Lunch*; *Question Love* (2004 Fringe Festival) and with WET (Women's Expressive Theater), *St. Scarlet* (Ontological Theater) and *Scab* (Greenwich Street Theater). Cutter is also a producer for television and film. Dean is currently writing the book, music and lyrics for *A Rose in Winter* and *The Eyes Of Midnight*. In 1995, he wrote new lyrics and arrangements of the Rodgers and Hart song, "Dear Old Syracuse" for Syracuse University's 125th Anniversary Celebration hosted by Dick Clark at the Carrier Dome stadium. Other past projects include composing the quintet "Stolen Youth" and contributing a song to Tada! Theater's musical review *Everything About School (Almost)*. Dean has consulted for several Broadway composers and serves on the advisory board for AWOL (Artists Without Limits). Dean and Cutter are both graduates of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University.

**VAN HILL**  
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