

new leaf



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 12, 2004 Contact: Bill Hyland – 312-527-6833

*New Leaf Theatre premieres adaptation of the New York Times Bestseller
GIRL IN HYACINTH BLUE by Susan Vreeland*

Opens: April 16, 2004, Closes: May 23, 2004

CHICAGO, IL, APRIL 2004

Could a lost Vermeer painting have survived into the twentieth century? From the best-selling novel *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* by Susan Vreeland, *New Leaf Theatre* presents a world premiere adaptation of *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* adapted and directed by Morgan Leavitt, *New Leaf's* Associate Artistic Director.

A Dutch painting of a young girl, possibly a Vermeer, survives three and a half centuries through loss, flood, anonymity, theft, secrecy and even Holocaust. This is the story of its owners whose lives are influenced by its beauty and mystery. Despite their unsatisfied longings, their own and others' flaws, the girl in hyacinth blue has the power to engender love in all its human variety.

This production opens April 16th 2004 through May 23rd 2004 at the Lincoln Park Cultural Center – 2045 N. Lincoln Park West, Chicago, 60614 – Fridays, Saturdays at 8:00pm and Sundays at 2:00pm with a preview performance on Thursday, April 15th 2004 at 8:00pm. Ticket prices are \$15.00 for general admission, \$12.00 seniors and \$10.00 for students with ID. Sundays are \$5.00 industry tickets with headshot, resume or business card and preview admission is \$5.00. Tickets can be reserved by telephone at 773-274-9026 or by email at newleaftheatre@hotmail.com.

ABOUT VERMEER

If a work of art is an expression of the artist's temperament, Johannes Vermeer might be considered a deeply contemplative man. And if his work were said to have a theme, it might be termed the power of woman to hallow home and the sacredness of the quiet or private moment. Yet with eleven children and creditors at the door, his home was hardly peaceful, and he probably had little time for contemplation.

Born in 1632 to a weaver of cloth and occasional dealer in art, Vermeer spent his entire life in Delft, eventually gaining in reputation to become one of the heads of the Guild of St. Luke before his death in 1675. Only some 36-40 paintings can definitely be ascribed to him, his oeuvre missing any apprentice works, studies and sketches.

Although his early paintings were biblical, genre scenes and townscapes, and his later compositions were allegorical, he is most known for quiet domestic scenes catching a moment in great stillness. Enigma is his hallmark quality. There is often an ambiguity of situation, a mystery of what the painted figure is actually thinking.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Girl in Hyacinth Blue marks Ms. Leavitt's directorial debut with *New Leaf Theatre*, who was appointed associate artistic director in November 2003. In her new role, Morgan supports *New Leaf's* artistic and educational development. Morgan previously served as dramaturg and assistant director for *New Leaf's* production of last fall. She received her BFA in Theatre Studies at The Theatre School at DePaul University, with an emphasis on directing and a minor in art history/visual art. She has interned with Northlight Theatre and Piven Theatre Workshop. At Piven Theatre, she studied under both Byrne and Joyce Piven, assisted on numerous productions, and trained as a teaching apprentice. Morgan also worked as a teacher with the Office of the Public Guardian Arts Training Program, teaching drama to foster youth. Other activities include directing with The Theatre School Spring Playwright's Festival, working on the ABC Entertainment Television Group's Casting Project, and assisting on the remounting of *Orlando* with Joyce Piven at Actors' Gang Theatre Company in Los Angeles.

NEW LEAF THEATRE

Bill Hyland –
Executive Director
Brandon Ray –
Artistic Director
Morgan Leavitt –
Artistic Associate
Tanya Ray –
Managing Director
Lisa Baney –
Board President

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THE CAST

The following Chicago actors make up the cast for *Girl in Hyacinth Blue*:

- Ryan Driscoll (Magdalena)
- Sarah Ball (Hannah/Marta)
- Anne Marie Welty (Mother/Saskia/Catharina)
- Jennifer Goode (Hilde/Grandmother/Maria Thins),
- Brendon Martin (Tobias/Piet)
- Jack Rucker (Cornelius/Mateus de Neff)
- Brandon Ray (Father/Jan Veermer)

GIRL IN HYACINTH BLUE

Girl in Hyacinth Blue was a finalist for Book Sense Book of the Year in 1999, a nominee for the Dublin International Literary Award. *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* also won the Theodore Geisel Award presented by The San Diego Book Awards for the "best of the best."

PERFORMANCES

Girl in Hyacinth Blue by Susan Vreeland adapted and directed by Morgan Leavitt previews Thursday, April 15th at 8:00pm with \$5.00 admission and opens Friday, April 16, 2004 and runs through Sunday, May 23, 2004 at the Lincoln Park Cultural Center – 2045 N. Lincoln Park West, Chicago. Performances are Friday and Saturday nights at 8:00pm and Sunday matinees at 2pm. Tickets are \$10.00 –\$15.00.

Reservations can be made in advance at 773-274-9026 or at newleaftheatre@hotmail.com.

New Leaf Theatre is committed to immersing both audience and players in the passion and intimacy of live performance and story telling through the exploration of new and lesser-produced works looking at the beauty in human existence by examining the soul and opening up to revelation.

NEW LEAF THEATRE

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FACT SHEET

GIRL IN HYACINTH BLUE by Susan Vreeland
Adapted and Directed by Morgan Leavitt

Theatre:

Lincoln Park Cultural Center – 2045 North Lincoln Park West

Dates:

April 16, 2004 through May 23, 2004

Synopsis:

A professor invites a colleague from the art department to his home to see a painting that he has kept secret for decades; a Dutch painting of a young girl. The professor swears it is a Vermeer –why has he hidden this important work for so long? The reasons unfold in a series of stories that trace ownership of the painting and the influence of the mysterious girl in blue. She is idolized and coveted by a German man and his son, secreted away to hide past misdeeds. She is quietly befriended by a young Jewish girl in WWII Amsterdam, whose silence becomes acceptance in the face of a life of constant criticism and fear. She is the light in a country woman's life, and the innocent onlooker to the slow dissolution of a marriage. These stories follow the painting back to Vermeer himself and the exact moment of the work's inspiration. As the painting moves through each owner's hands, what was long hidden quietly surfaces, illuminating poignant moments in human lives. The characters remind us, through their love of the mysterious painting, how beauty transforms and why we reach for it, what lasts, and what in our lives is singular and unforgettable.

Schedule:

Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00pm / Sundays at 2:00pm

Preview:

Thursday, April 15th at 8:00pm

Ticket Prices:

- \$ 15.00 general admission
- \$ 12.00 for senior citizens
- \$ 10.00 for students with ID
- \$ 5.00 for industry on Sundays
- \$ 5.00 for preview

Reservations:

773-274-9026 or email at newleaftheatre@hotmail.com

Web Site:

www.newleaftheatre.org

NEW LEAF THEATRE



Our Mission

New Leaf Theatre is committed to immersing both audience and players in the passion and intimacy of live performance and story telling through the exploration of new and lesser-produced works looking at the beauty in human existence by examining the soul and opening up to revelation.

Our History

New Leaf Theatre is an Illinois not-for-profit, 501(c)3 status (pending application approval) charitable organization that provides the Chicago community with entertaining and educational theatre experiences.

Established in April 2001, *New Leaf Theatre* was created to offer opportunities to aspiring artists through collaboration, celebration and love of theatre by blending talent, creativity and passion to entertain and bring people closer together.

Founding company members Bill Hyland and Lisa Baney began their stage collaboration with Brandon Ray and Tanya Ray in September 2001 with *New Leaf Theatre's* first public performance showcasing the dreamer examines his pillow by John Patrick Shanley. It was performed as part of the Arts Alive Theater One-Act Festival sponsored by the Lincoln Park Cultural Center in affiliation with the Chicago Park District. *New Leaf* was chosen from more than 30 Chicago theatre company applicants to participate in this festival. Because of its success, *New Leaf* was invited in May 2002 to participate in the Spring One-Act Theater Festival at the Lincoln Park Cultural Center with its performance of *Top of 16* and *Take Five* directed by Lisa Baney.

New Leaf Theatre continued to develop a strong relationship with the Lincoln Park Cultural Center through its success and passion to do quality theatre in a highly professional manner. In May 2002,

was invited by Cindy Jahraus, center director at the Lincoln Park Cultural Center in association with the Chicago Park District to be its resident theatre company. *New Leaf* officially has a home.

In October 2002, *New Leaf Theatre* kicked off its inaugural production with *Picasso* at the Lapin Agile by Steve Martin directed by Brandon Bruce, which opened October 17, 2002 through November 21, 2002 at the Lincoln Park Cultural Center.

New Leaf Theatre began its second season with *Reckless* by Craig Lucas directed by Brandon Ray in fall 2003 and will produce *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* by Susan Vreeland adapted and directed by Morgan Leavitt in spring 2004.

Our Production History

<i>The Dreamer Examines His Pillow</i>	Directed by William Mayer, September 2001
<i>Top of 16 and Take Five</i>	Directed by Lisa Baney, May 2002
<i>Off The Hook and Hidden In This Picture</i>	Directed by Brandon Bruce, August 2002
<i>Picasso at the Lapin Agile</i>	Directed by Brandon Bruce, October 2002
In The Spotlight – <i>An Idle King, Faultless, Faster Than A Speeding Bullet</i>	Directed by Lila M. Stromer, May 2003
<i>Reckless</i>	Directed by Brandon Ray, October 2003
<i>Girl in Hyacinth Blue</i>	Directed by Morgan Leavitt, April 2004