



TC Squared Theatre Company presents

The Great War Theatre Project: Messengers of a Bitter Truth

Rosalind Thomas-Clark, Artistic Director

Susan E. Werbe, Executive Producer

With the approach of the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War One, the Boston-based TC Squared Theatre Company has created a multi-media performance piece, *The Great War Theatre Project: Messengers of a Bitter Truth*. The work bears

witness to a cataclysmic chapter in human history and pays tribute to the tragic loss – on both sides – of so much human potential.

Development of this piece presents a unique opportunity to participate, through the medium of the spoken word and dramatic performance, in the ongoing conversation of the Great War that has continued to this day, engaging scholars, artists, writers, politicians, and philosophers. We continue to look at these four years and try to place them in some context that makes sense. We continue to ask: why *this* war and, ultimately, why *war*?

The finished work, directed by Rosalind Thomas-Clark, Founder and Artistic Director of TC Squared, serves eloquently to illustrate the power of using the arts as a pathway into a specific period of history. Author Paul Fussell, in his seminal work, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, calls this conflict the most literary of all wars. The written words as well as the visual arts created on the battlefield and on the home front are potent examples of people using the arts to reflect upon and process their experiences – in many cases as they were occurring.

TC Squared has taken the war's iconic poetry as well as letters, journals, and novels, written by the men and women whose lives were either lost or forever changed by this first global conflict of the 20th Century, to create the spoken word script that serves as the centerpiece of the work. The poetry and prose writings of English, French, German, and American soldiers are woven together with excerpts from the journals and letters of women on the home front – all powerful voices that well evoke the individual (and changing) perceptions of the war by those who were experiencing it at firsthand. The words of these young men and women are spoken by four actors – two men and two women – who are themselves close in age to the writers.

Dramatization of the spoken word script is enriched by projected images – archival film footage and still photographs, as well as artwork produced either during the war (paintings produced on the frontlines) or in response to the war in the years that followed. Commissioned contemporary music complements the spoken word script and projected images. The music underscores the tension between modern technological warfare and the outmoded weapons and strategies of earlier times.

The finished work runs for approximately 25 minutes, with an audience conversation at the end of the piece running an additional 20 minutes.



The Great War Theatre Project: Messengers of a Bitter Truth

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Rehearsal photos from *The Great War Theatre Project*





Artistic Director, The Great War Theatre Project

Rosalind Thomas-Clark AGSM, LRAM, MA, is a life-long teacher and lover of literature, theatre and the arts.

Ms. Thomas-Clark received her undergraduate degree from the **Guildhall School of Music and Drama**, London, with an education degree from **London University**, and an associate degree from the **London Academy of Music and Drama**. She received her master's degree in theatre, with a directing emphasis, at **Brown University**, where she taught theatre and public speaking, as well as founding an Outreach Youth Theatre program.

Ms. Thomas-Clark has worked professionally as an actor and director for stage, radio, and film, but her passion has always been the development of arts and education. As founder and director, she was involved in several start-up arts organizations in Britain, New Zealand, and the United States.

She originally moved to the Boston area as a theatre teacher and director at **The Winsor School**, where she returns annually to direct Shakespeare, one of her many loves. Once the **Boston Arts Academy** became a reality in 1998, she was appointed to her dream position to head and develop the theatre department in Boston's first public high school for the visual and performing arts. She continues her connection with the school as a member of the Council of Advocates.

Ms. Thomas-Clark heads the team for **British Cultural Connections**, an experiential summer program which has been affording high school students a unique and enriching experience since 1996, and which is now offering this methodology to educators world-wide. She continues coaching professional actors at **Company One Theatre**, where she also serves on the theatre's board of directors. She works with corporate employee groups and individuals as a **Personal Communication Consultant** and theatre coach.

Committed to theatre for social change, Ms. Thomas-Clark started her own theatre company in 1999 - **TC Squared: New Theatre Outside the Box** - and directs productions with local playwrights and actors which address relevant contemporary issues. Her latest project, in collaboration with Executive Producer Susan Werbe, commemorates the centenary of World War One: **The Great War Theatre Project: Messengers of a Bitter Truth**. The world premiere will be in Boston, MA, in spring 2014. Among her numerous productions, including directing teen movies for **Boston Casting**, Ms. Thomas-Clark directed the premiere of John ADEkoje's *The Sing Song Show*, a political satirical musical. Ms. Thomas-Clark recently played Hecuba in Boston-based Whistler in the Dark Theatre's acclaimed production of *Trojan Women*.

Ms. Thomas-Clark has received many honors and awards. In 2003, she was the recipient of a **SURDNA Arts Teacher's Fellowship** to study with Augusto Boal in Brazil, at the Center for the Theatre of the Oppressed. She was awarded **Boston's Teacher of the Year Award** in 2005, and a **SURDNA Artist Colony Grant** in 2008.

She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, near her three children and five grandchildren.



Executive Producer, The Great War Theatre Project

Susan Werbe, Executive Producer and Dramaturg, *The Great War Theatre Project: Messengers of a Bitter Truth* (GWTP). Susan is an independent scholar who for thirty years has pursued her interest in the social, cultural, and political history of early 20th Century England, including a focus on the social and cultural history of World War One. She has engaged in WWI primary source research at the Special Collections of the Boston Public Library, the Bodleian Library and Balliol College Library of Oxford University, and the Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library to create the GWTP spoken word script. In July 2011, Susan led a three-day unit on WWI as an instructor in *British Cultural Connections*, a London-based two-week English history and culture program for American high school students.

In March 2013, she served as an invited panelist at the National World War I Museum’s International Centennial Planning Conference: *A Century in the Shadow of the Great War*, held in Kansas City. The panel discussed “The Great War through the Lens of Art”; in addition to Susan, panelists included the curator of 20th Century art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum, the executive director of the Kansas City Symphony, and a professor of theatre from Dartmouth College.

In her role as director of development for several Boston area educational and arts organizations and institutions, including the Boston Arts Academy, she has produced a range of events, from 1,200-person annual galas to concerts and performance pieces.

Susan is currently collaborating with Rosalind Thomas-Clark, artistic director of TC Squared Theatre Company, on the creation of the multimedia theatre piece – ***The Great War Theatre Project*** – that commemorates the 100th anniversary of WWI, using the lens of art to communicate and help achieve better understanding of this cataclysmic chapter in human history.

Susan holds a BA in English Literature from New York University and a Masters in Education from the University of Massachusetts/Amherst.