

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Simple Machine presents “The Turn of the Screw” Classic ghost story staged in two historic Boston homes

(BOSTON)-From November 8 through November 23, 2013, Simple Machine proudly presents Henry James’ *The Turn of the Screw*, adapted for the stage by Jeffrey Hatcher and directed by M. Bevin O’Gara.

James’ classic story of a young governess charged with caring for two orphaned children at a lonely English country estate is one of the most famous Victorian ghost stories ever written. Hatcher’s adaptation ratchets up the psychological suspense and intimacy of the story with two actors playing all the roles.

The Turn of the Screw will be staged in two historic houses in Boston. The Gibson House Museum in Boston’s famous Back Bay is a beautifully preserved 19th century home that has served as a museum for over 40 years. The Taylor House Bed & Breakfast was built as a residence in the 1850s at the height of Jamaica Plain’s golden age and has been lovingly restored in recent years to its former glory. Although both houses are from the same era, the staging in each will be unique to that location; these remarkable settings will give audiences an authentic and exhilarating atmosphere in which to experience this classic Gothic thriller.

Last March, Simple Machine launched with the New England premiere of the meta-theatrical comedy *rogerandtom* by Julian Schwab (a play about a play within a play). *The Turn of the Screw* is Simple Machine’s second venture. The company’s mission is simple: Simple Machine makes theatre that is engaging, accessible, and affordable. Productions focus on the basic elements of, and the necessity of, storytelling. By bringing the audience into the intimate spaces at the Taylor House and the Gibson House, Simple Machine co-founder Stephen Libby hopes to “bring this story to life in a way that no medium other than live theatre ever could. We create work that proves that live theatre is as vital and immediate as ever.”

The story takes place at a secluded English country estate, where a young woman takes a job as a governess to a pair of recently orphaned children. But soon after her arrival, ghostly visions and strange occurrences reveal a sinister presence around her young charges. Is the estate haunted by restless spirits? Are the children somehow complicit? Or has her fear and imagination taken hold of her?

Simple Machine co-founder Anna Waldron plays the eager young governess, determined to protect the children in her care at all costs. Stephen Libby takes on the rest of the characters of the story, from the children’s distant uncle, to the estate’s housekeeper, to the troubled 10-year-old boy.

Director M. Bevin O’Gara says “*The Turn of the Screw* is the ultimate ghost story. I’ve never done a site-specific show quite like this, so it’s very exciting. It’s a challenge because these are two very different locations. And the potential to see a ghost in these houses...that would be cool...I hope.”

The design team for *The Turn of the Screw* includes costume design by Emily Woods Hogue and Lighting Design by Ian King. Elizabeth Ramirez will be the Stage Manager.

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Performance dates are as follows:

November 8, 9, 10, 15, 21, & 22
Gibson House Museum
137 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02116

November 14, 16, 17, & 23
Taylor House Bed & Breakfast
50 Burroughs Street
Boston, MA 02130

All performances will start at 7:30 pm. The performance runs approximately 80 minutes with no intermission. Due to the intimate nature of the venues, there will be no late seating.

Tickets are available through www.simplemachinetheatre.com for \$25.

The press is invited to attend the performance on **November 9th at 7:30 pm** at the Gibson House.

There will be a reception after the opening night performance on **November 8th** at the Gibson House.

Please direct all press inquiries to Stephen Libby at **857-574-0550**.

ARTIST INFORMATION

HENRY JAMES (Author) was born in 1843 in New York City, but much of his youth was spent traveling in and around Europe. He briefly attended Harvard law school, but ultimately preferred literature to the law, publishing his first short story at the age of 21. James would go on to become a prolific writer of essays, short stories, letters and novels, and is known as one of the key figures of 19th century realism. His most famous works include: *Daisy Miller* (1879), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Bostonians* (1886), *What Maisie Knew* (1897), *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), and he was a regular contributor to *The Atlantic Monthly*. His novella, *The Turn of the Screw*, was originally published in 1898, and has been retold countless times on film and stage, even inspiring an opera. James never married, and in his own words was “hopelessly celibate.” In 1876 he moved to England, living first in London and then retiring to Rye in Sussex. James officially became a British citizen in 1915 after the outbreak of World War I. He was awarded the Order of Merit January 1, 1916. Sadly, his health was already failing and he died February 28, 1916. His ashes are interred in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

JEFFREY HATCHER (Playwright) Broadway: *Never Gonna Dance* (book). Off-Broadway: *Three Viewings* and *A Picasso* at Manhattan Theatre Club; *Scotland Road* and *The Turn of the Screw* at Primary Stages; *Tuesdays with Morrie* (with Mitch Albom) at The Minetta Lane; *Murder by Poe*, *The Turn of the Screw*, and *The Spy* at The Acting Company; *Neddy* at American Place; and *Fellow Travelers* at Manhattan Punchline. Other Plays/Theaters: *Compleat*

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Female Stage Beauty, Mrs. Mannerly, Murderers, Mercy of a Storm, Smash, Armadale, Korczak's Children, To Fool the Eye, The Falls, A Piece of the Rope, All the Way with LBJ, The Government Inspector, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and others at The Guthrie, Old Globe, Yale Rep, The Geffen, Seattle Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, South Coast Rep, Arizona Theater Company, San Jose Rep, The Empty Space, Indiana Rep, Children's Theater Company, History Theater, Madison Rep, Intiman, Illusion, Denver Center, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Rep, Repertory Theater of St. Louis, Actors Theater of Louisville, Philadelphia Theater Company, Asolo, City Theater, Studio Arena and dozens more in the U.S. and abroad. Film/ TV: *Stage Beauty, Casanova, The Duchess*, and episodes of *Columbo*. Grants/Awards: NEA, TCG, Lila Wallace Fund, Rosenthal New Play Prize, Frankel Award, Charles MacArthur Fellowship Award, McKnight Foundation, Jerome Foundation, and Barrymore Award Best New Play. He is a member and/or alumnus of The Playwrights Center, the Dramatists Guild, the Writers Guild, and New Dramatists.

M. BEVIN O'GARA (Director) Local directing credits include *Clybourne Park* and *Tribes* (SpeakEasy Stage); *You for Me For You, Love Person*, and *The Pain and the Itch* (Company One); *Matt and Ben* (Central Square Theater); *Two Wives in India* and *Gary* (Boston Playwrights' Theatre); *2.5 Minute Ride* (Downstage @ New Rep); *Othello* and *The Crucible* (New Rep On Tour); *Melancholy Play* (Holland Productions); *Bat Boy: The Musical* (Metro Stage); *Tattoo Girl, Painting You*, and *Artifacts* (Williamstown Theatre Festival Workshop); and *ANTI-KISS* (3 Monkeys Theatrical Productions). She has also worked with New Repertory Theatre, the Gaiety Theatre of Dublin, and the Actors Centre of Australia. Ms. O'Gara is an Associate Producer at the Huntington Theatre Company where she will be directing Melinda Lopez's *Becoming Cuba* this spring. She has a BFA from Boston University in Theatre Studies.

STEPHEN LIBBY (Man) is thrilled to be appearing with Simple Machine, having directed our premiere production, *rogerandtom*, last year. He has appeared locally playing Dylan Thomas in Boston Playwrights' Theatre and Boston Children's Theatre's production of *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. Audiences may remember him as Guildenstern in Bad Habit Productions' *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, or as Rosencrantz in TheatreZone's production. He has also appeared with Bad Habit as Rulon Stacey in *The Laramie Project* and as Milton and Don in *All in the Timing*. At TheatreZone, he has appeared as the Non-Believer in *Anger Box*, Dad / Elvis in *Cooking with Elvis*, Eisenring in *The Firebugs*, and Berenger in *Rhinoceros*. With the Publick Theatre, Stephen has appeared as Bunny in *Misalliance*, Dromio of Ephesus in *Comedy of Errors*, and Starveling in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He has also appeared locally with Wheelock Family Theatre, Exquisite Corps, Shakespeare Now!, Opera Boston, Makeshift Theatre Co., and on tour with Shakespeare & Company. Stephen has a BFA in Acting from Syracuse University.

ANNA WALDRON (Governess) is the co-founder of Simple Machine, and appeared in our inaugural production, *rogerandtom*, last Spring. Other performances in and around Boston include Tiffany in *You For Me For You* (Company One), Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Arts After Hours), Edith in *Blithe Spirit* (Lyric Stage), Alex in *On the Verge* (The Nora), Felicity in *The Real Inspector Hound* (The Publick Theatre), Nell/May in Caryl Churchill's *Fen* (Whistler in the Dark), Ruth in *Book of Days*, Mabel/Mrs. Cheveley in *An Ideal Husband*, *All in the Timing*, *The Laramie Project* (Bad Habit Productions), *Luther, Rhinoceros, The Firebugs, Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, and *Cooking with Elvis* (Apollinaire Theatre), *The Comedy of Errors* (Imaginary Beasts), *Rock n' Roll, As You Like It*, and *The Importance of Being Ernest* (The Longwood Players). Directing credits include *Stop Kiss* (Bad Habit Productions) and *Alice in Wonderland* (Makeshift Theatre Co.) This Spring Anna is directing *Kiss Me Kate* for The Longwood Players. www.annawaldron.com

CALENDAR LISTING INFORMATION

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THE TURN OF THE SCREW

By Jeffrey Hatcher, from the story by Henry James

The Turn of the Screw is a haunting adaptation of the classic ghost story, told by two actors in 19th century houses in Boston. The story takes place at a secluded English country estate, where a young woman takes a job as a governess to a pair of recently orphaned children. But soon after her arrival, ghostly visions and strange occurrences reveal a sinister presence around her young charges. Is the estate haunted by restless spirits? Are the children somehow complicit? Or has her fear and imagination taken hold of her?

Presented by: Simple Machine

Cast: Stephen Libby, Anna Waldron

Director: M. Bevin O’Gara

Production Stage Manager: Elizabeth Ramirez

Design Team: Costumes: Emily Woods Hogue
Lighting: Ian W. King
Dialect Consultant: Liz Hayes

Performing at: The Gibson House Museum
137 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02116

AND

The Taylor House Bed & Breakfast
50 Burroughs Street
Boston, MA 02130

Press Performance: November 9, 2013 – 7:30 pm

Performance Schedule: **November 8 13 – November 23, 2013**
Thursday-Sunday, 7:30 pm

Run Time: 80 minutes, no intermission

Ticket Prices: Tickets are \$25

Box Office: 857-574-0550; www.simplemachinetheatre.com

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