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THE MORNING CALL

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Theater: Patricia Richardson ('Home Improvement') returns to Bucks County Playhouse



Patricia Richardson stars as Polly Wyeth in 'Other Desert Cities' at Bucks County Playhouse Aug. 18-Sept. 2. (Bucks County Playhouse / CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

By Daniel Friedman

Four-time Emmy nominee Patricia Richardson will star in the Broadway hit play “Other Desert Cities” by Jon Robin Baitz at Bucks County Playhouse, opening Aug. 18. Richardson was at Bucks last summer for a record-breaking, star-studded production of “Steel Magnolias.”

A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, “Other Desert Cities” premiered on Broadway in 2011. Focusing on a family of opposing political views, and a long-held family secret, the play takes its name from a highway sign on the eastbound 10 freeway in California, heading into the desert landscapes of the southwestern United States.

Cocktails are poured and Christmas Eve reservations are made and the zingers fly as Brooke Wyeth returns to Palm Springs and the home of her parents, Polly and Lyman Wyeth, toting an explosive, about-to-be-published tell-all memoir. Polly and Lyman are Republicans, while Polly’s sister Silda is a liberal who has fallen into alcoholism. While Brooke is ready to battle it out for their blessing to publish the book, nothing prepares her for what her parents have in store.

Richardson is not the only artist returning to the Playhouse for “Other Desert Cities.”

“The jolt of excitement emulating from the family reunion at the center of ‘Other Desert Cities’ is virtually matched by the artistic reunion we are having at the Playhouse with this production,” says

Producing Director Alexander Fraser. “We are thrilled to welcome back director Sheryl Kaller who helmed Terrence McNally’s ‘Mothers and Sons’ here prior to Broadway, and two of our favorite actresses, Patricia Richardson from ‘Steel Magnolias’ and Deirdre Madigan from ‘Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike.’ Along with Clarke Dunham, whose scenic designs first graced the Bucks County Playhouse stage in the 1960s, and an incomparable trio of actors who are making their Playhouse debuts, we can’t wait to see the drama and intrigue of Jon Robin Baitz’s play come to life in the hands of this extraordinary team.”

Richardson (TV’s “Home Improvement” and BCP’s “Steel Magnolias”) stars as Polly Wyeth. Kevin Kilner (Broadway’s “The Glass Menagerie” and TV’s “House of Cards”) plays her husband Lyman. Deirdre Madigan (Broadway’s “After the Night and the Music” and BCP’s “Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike”) is Silda, Polly’s sister; Liza J. Bennett (“12 Years a Slave” and Broadway’s “Merchant of Venice” with Al Pacino) is Brooke Wyeth and Charles Socarides (“Sons of Prophets” and TV’s “When We Rise”) is Trip Wyeth.

The creative team features Clarke Dunham (scenic designer), Michael Gilliam (lighting designer), Nicole V. Moody (costume designer) and Alex Neumann (sound designer).

The Playhouse will hold a special LGBT Night performance with a post-show talkback on Aug. 22 and a Ladies Night performance Aug. 31. Fireworks follow the show Sept 1.

“Other Desert Cities,” Tuesday through Sunday, Aug. 18-Sept. 2, Bucks County Playhouse, 70 S. Main St., New Hope. Tickets: \$40-\$75. www.buckscountypayhouse.org, 215-862-2121.