

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Columbia University School of the Arts,
Theatre Arts Program**
Presents

BLACK SNOW

Written by **MIKHAIL BULGAKOV**

Adapted by **KEITH REDDIN**

A world premiere event with music by **ANDREW GERLE** and
lyrics by **ROYCE VAVREK**

Directed by **MIKHAEL TARA GARVER**

Produced in association with The New Ensemble

February 3-6, 2010

The Riverside Theatre
91 Claremont Avenue
Between 120th and 122nd Streets

\$15 General Admission

\$5 Seniors

FREE with Columbia University ID or any other valid student ID
(Subject to availability)

Columbia Stages presents *Black Snow* by Mikhail Bulgakov, directed by Mikhael Tara Garver and produced in association with The New Ensemble. On a stormy night, Sergei sits alone with his first great novel in a small room in Moscow. A knock at the door propels him down the rabbit hole into an adventure of ridiculous proportions. This world premiere event melds together the hilarious and stunning adaptation by Keith Reddin with an epic original score by Andrew Gerle and Royce Vavrek. From the thunderous sound of the keys, the true music of a man's voice battles with your expectations.

Performances are Wednesday, February 3 - Saturday, February 6 at 8pm & Saturday, February 6 at 2pm. All performances will be held at the Riverside Theatre, 91 Claremont Ave.

Created by Ken Barnett*, Alexander Borinsky, Joe Cassidy*, Seth Reiser, Jeremiah Matthew Davis, Stephen Dobbie, Ava Eisenson, Jason Fleitz*, Mary Ethelwyn Guiteras, Dani Karliner, Beth Ann Leone*, Sydney Maresca, Justin Ness*, Will Pickens, Alexandra Seal, Eric Slater*, Eric Southern, D. Westerholm, Paul Wolfram, & Cassie Wooley*.

* Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

The New Ensemble is a company of experienced theatre artists based out of New York City making sensory immersive stories. Through a lucky series of events, this particular group of designers, actors, composers, and lyricists came together in the spring of 2009 to create *nonplay*, an original journey where the audience moved through the danger, music, poetry, and humor of the signs in one's own dreaming life. This group of theatre-makers is led by Artistic Director Mikhael Tara Garver, who made a name for herself creating work in Chicago with Uma Productions (a beloved storefront theater company known for its unique *umaenvironments*) and has spent the past ten years developing and now teaching immersive theater nationally. She now leads The New Ensemble in making both fantastical and truthful productions. By acknowledging the ridiculous event of making theatre, and the wondrous possibility between audience and performance, The New Ensemble surrounds you with musicality, physicality, and honesty of the shared moment. Currently the ensemble is continuing its development of *nonplay* (which is inspired by Strindberg's dream play & e.e. cummings' writing, with original composition by Andrew Gerle and Royce Vavrek); developing a new rock experience titled *Fornicated* with music from the Beatles, and performing *Black Snow*—the world premiere event that marries Keith Reddin's adaptation of Bulgakov's novel to an epic score by Andrew Gerle and Royce Vavrek. The New Ensemble is comprised of Nathan Dame, Ava Eisenson, Mikhael Tara Garver, Mary Guiteras, Kyra Miller, Will Pickens, Seith Reiser, Elizabeth Rich, Alexandra Seal, Eric Slater, Taylor Valentine, Royce Vavrek, and Cassie Wooley. This particular group of individuals bring varied talents and lengthy experience to The New Ensemble, and look forward to including you in our unique community. More information on all of these artists and our work is available at www.thenewensemble.org

The cast includes:

Ken Barnett* Most recently, Ken performed in a new adaptation of Schnitzler's *La Ronde* at the 2009 NYC Fringe Festival, for which he won a Best Actor award. On Broadway: *Wonderful Town*, and Julie Taymor's *The Green Bird*. Off-Broadway: *Debbie Does Dallas*; *Imperfect Chemistry*; *Joy*; Susan Stroman's *A Christmas Carol* at Madison Square Garden; *Houdini*; and *The Whore of Sheridan Square*, for which he received a Best Featured Actor nomination (NYIT). In L.A., Ken originated the roles of Paul in *Atlanta* at the Geffen Playhouse; Matt in *The Id & Bob* at the Lillian Theatre. Regional theatre productions include *Glass Menagerie* (Tom); Maury Yeston's *Hans Christian Andersen* (Hans); Adam Guettel's *Myths + Hymns* (nomination: Best Leading Actor, Philly Awards); *Merrily We Roll Along* (Frank) at the Guthrie; *Little Shop of Horrors* (Seymour); *Blood Brothers*; *Balm in Gilead*; and *Mame* (opposite Christine Ebersole). Feature film credits include appearances in *Polar Opposites*; *Ira & Abby*; *Puccini for Beginners*; *The Producers*; and *Game Six*. Television: *Grey's Anatomy*; *How I Met Your Mother*; *Entourage*; *Monk*; *Guiding Light*; *Big Red* (pilot); and several commercials. Ken is a graduate of Wesleyan University.

Alexander Borinsky is a writer and actor who last appeared in *Hee-Haw* at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe and *The Archery Contest* at P.S.122. He has directed and performed Shakespeare and

Chekhov in backyards, bars, houses, parks, and theaters. As an undergraduate, he was a member and co-director of The Control Group--Yale's friendly experimental ensemble. His play, *The Polish Egg Man*, premiered at Upstream Theater in St. Louis.

Joseph Cassidy* Broadway: *Next To Normal*; *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*; *1776*; *Show Boat*; *Les Miserables*; and *A Christmas Carol* at Madison Square Garden. TV/Film: *Law & Order*; *Freefall*. Other New York credits: *Next to Normal* (Dan) @ NYMF; *Listen To My Heart*; *Joe Cassidy*, *Rockstar*, both at Joe's Pub & Ars Nova; *Grind* at the York Theater; a frequent guest artist with NYU's Graduate Music Theatre Writing Program. Soloist with over 16 symphony orchestras across the U.S. and Canada. Regional: The Old Globe, La Jolla Playhouse, TheaterWorks (Palo Alto), Denver Center, Asolo Repertory Theater, Ford's Theatre, Hartford Theaterworks, TUTS, Casa Manana, NYSAF, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. Please visit www.joecassidy.net

Ava Eisenson is an actor and director. She was most recently seen in *Full*, a new physical theatre piece directed by Lee Sunday Evans, and *nonplay*, directed by Mikhael Tara Garver. She recently finished a year and a half working as assistant to the managing director at La MaMa E.T.C, and co-created a cabaret series called *The Heat is On* to support the La MaMa archives. She looks forward to assisting musician/writer Stew on *Making It*--his upcoming show at St. Ann's Warehouse. She is a founding member of The New Ensemble.

Jason Fleitz* New York: *The Shot* (Bone Orchard); *Times 365:24:7* (Bone Orchard); *365 Days/365 Plays* (Public Theater/Barrow Street Theatre); *Red Light Winter* (Barrow Street Theatre). Regional: *Red Light Winter* (Studio Theatre/Steppenwolf - standby); *The Two Character Play* (EL2 StageWorks); *Back Porch Secrets* (Chicago Dramatists); *13th Annual Winter Pageant* (Redmoon); *Enter Alice* (Uma Productions) and *The Middling Season* (Collision Theatre). Film: *In Memory of the Days to Come* (The Bureau/Crossed-Eyed Productions) with Elodie Bouchez. Training: B.F.A. in Acting from DePaul University. Jason is a member of Actor's Equity.

Mary Ethelwyn Guiteras NY Theatre: *nonplay* with The New Ensemble; *This is a Cowboy Poem My Daddy Taught Me* with the Cardinal Group; *Don't Eat the Neighbors* with Phare Play; *Calm Undoing* with Trisklion Arts; *Thick Like Piano Legs* with Disgraced Productions; *La Turista*, and *Bringing It All Back Home* with Solid Hang. Mary can also be seen in Disgraced Productions' Web series *Apartment 1B* as Julia. Training: NYU Tisch School of the Arts; Playwrights Horizons; Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts; and Experimental Theatre Wing; Funny Training at People's Improv Theater (The PIT) with Chris Grace, Kevin Scott and Nate Starkey. In addition to acting, Mary also teaches middle school theatre at Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate Charter School.

Beth Ann Leone* Recent credits include *Cycatrix Adaptitude* with the Inverse Theatre Co. & *Henry V* with Actor's Shakespeare Company. She also participated in a summer intensive at Columbia University, with Anne Bogart and the SITI Company, as well as a follow up two week advanced class with their company members. Beth's next production will be *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with ASC in March 2010. This is Beth's first production with the New Ensemble.

Justin Ness* New York credits include: *The Lost - A World Elsewhere: Arias in the Key of Clown* (NYC Fringe); Dan Dilinger in *The Spin Cycle*; Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*; Creon in *Medea*; Son/Hanging Man in *Baaahhh* (NYC Fringe); Lieutenant in *Plays for the Sunni Triangle*;

Officer in *Hugging the Shoulder* (NYC Fringe); Don Pedro in *Much Ado About Nothing*; Lincoln County Sherriff in *The Ascetic of Lincoln County* (NYC Fringe). Regional Credits: Leroy Lumpkin in *Smoke and Mirrors*; Daniel in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, Abridged*; Homer Collyer in *The Dazzle*; Teddy Hodell in *Valparaiso*; BabbyBobby in *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. Film: *Searching for Bobby D* opposite Kevin Dobson and Carmen Electra. Justin proudly serves as the Managing Director for Wide Eyed Productions, which just received "Person Of The Year" from NYTheatre.com. Justin received his B.A., Theater Arts, Performance and Directing from Boise State University.

Alexandra Seal Previous New York credits under the direction of Ms. Garver: Lucy in *nonplay*; Masha in *Three Sisters*; Chorus 1 in *Mourning*. NYC Theatre: MTS in Chekhov's *Chick's*; *Hanging Women* (workshop at Eugene O'Neill Center); *Hanging Women* (NYC Premiere Where Eagles Dare); *Spring Street* (Juilliard School of Music). MCTC: *Chicago*; *The Dreammaker's Perdition*. Training: B.A. Ithaca College; National Theater Institute; Moscow Art Theater. TV: *As the World Turns*; *Guiding Light*; *One Life to Live*; *The CollegeHumor Show*. Internet: *The Onion*; *CollegeHumor*. Film: *Bingo!*; *A Big Ball of Foil in a Small NY Apartment*. Member of The New Ensemble.

Eric Slater* is a member of the The New Ensemble. He was most recently seen in *The Juvenal Players* at Grand Arts in Kansas City (MO). He was also in last season's *nonplay* and *Three Sisters*, both directed by Mikael Garver. Some other credits include: *Permanent Collection* at Madison Repertory (WI); *What the Butler Saw* at Court Theatre Chicago; *Revenge of the Space Pandas* and *Honus and Me* at Goodman Theater (IL); *Spite For Spite, Butley*, and *Misalliance* at Writer's Theatre Chicago; *Major Barbara* at Remy Bumpo Theatre Co. (IL); *Measure For Measure* at Next Theatre Chicago, and *Hunchback* at Redmoon Theatre (IL), among many others. A long-time company member of the Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, Eric has appeared in *Silence*, *Expecting Isabelle*, and *Self Defense* which was co-produced by the Steppenwolf Theatre Ensemble. Film credits include *Inside* and *Melting Crayons* directed by Scott McCall, and *Slappy's Sliding Scale* a Mike Rosette film.

Cassie Wooley* is a founding member of The New Ensemble. She spent the first five years of her career in Chicago where she received a Jeff Award for her performance as Mary in *Merrily We Roll Along*. She grew up in Sioux City, IA where her parents own Lamb Productions Theatre and received her B.F.A. from The Theatre School at DePaul. Cassie was recently named NYMF's Next Broadway Sensation. Later this month you can find her at Joe's Pub in her very own solo show produced by NYMF and Sh-K Boom records. For more information: www.cassiewooley.com.

In addition to **Mikhael Tara Garver**, the creative team includes **Jeremiah Matthew Davis** (Dramaturg), **Andrew Gerle** (Composer), **Danielle Karliner** (Producer/General Manager), **Sydney Maresca** (Costume Design), **William J. Pickens** (Sound Design), **Seth Reiser** (Lighting Design), **Eric Southern** (Set Design), **Royce Vavrek** (Lyricist), **Tiffany Vega** (Company Manager), and **D. Westerholm** (Production Stage Manager).

Jeremiah Matthew Davis (Dramaturg) is a theater maker and social scientist from Green Country, Oklahoma. He has worked as a dramaturg, director, actor, and educator in the United States and abroad. Jeremiah is currently pursuing an M.F.A. in Dramaturgy at Columbia

University where he is a Dean's Fellow. Recent New York credits, director: *Blood Knot* by Athol Fugard; *Tell It To Me Slowly* by Daniella Shoshan (NYC FRINGE); dramaturg: world premiere of *Mourning* by Jason Platt; world premiere of *nonplay* by Mikhael Tara Garver; *The Frankenstein Project*, adapted and directed by Matt Torney; librettist: *Nach Dieser, Nicht*, music composed by Andile Khumalo.

Andrew Gerle (Composer) is an award-winning composer and pianist whose works for the theater have earned him three Richard Rodgers Awards, a Jonathan Larson Award, and the Burton Lane Fellowship from the Theater Hall of Fame. With lyricist Eddie Sugarman, he wrote the musical *Meet John Doe*, which had its world premiere at the Ford's Theatre in D.C. in 2007 and was nominated for seven Helen Hayes Awards. He has been a Fellow at the MacDowell Artists' Colony and a writer-in-residence at the Sundance Theater Institute and the O'Neill Musical Theater Conference. As a classical pianist, he has appeared with the Baltimore Symphony, the Yale Symphony and the National Symphony as winner of their Young Artists' Competition. Please visit www.AndrewGerle.com.

Danielle Karliner (Producer/General Manager) Currently Danielle is pursuing an M.F.A. at Columbia University's School of the Arts in Theatre Management & Producing. In NY, Danielle has worked with Camp Broadway, The Atlantic Theater Company and Jujamcyn Theaters. She served as line producer for the SPF 2009 (Summer Play Festival) production of Ken Urban's *The Happy Sad* directed by Trip Cullman. Recently she produced *Ether Steeds*, a new play by Jason Williamson directed by Niegel Smith as part of FringeNYC 2009 (winner Best Ensemble) and James Ryan Caldwell's new play *The Private Life of Inga Snyder* directed by Stephen Brackett. Upcoming, Danielle will be company manager for Charles Busch's new production of *The Divine Sister* at Theater for the New City, directed by Carl Andress.

Sydney Maresca (Costume Design) recently designed costumes for *Red-Haired Thomas* (Soho Think Tank); *Strangers* (Ontological/Hysteric); *MilkMilkLemonade* and *Rift* (NYU). She is a resident designer with The Debate Society and her work with them includes *You're Welcome* (The Brick), *Cape Disappointment* (PS 122), *The Eaten Heart* (Ontological/Hysteric), *A Thought about Raya*, and *The Snow Hen*. Sydney is finishing her M.F.A. at NYU and is also part of the The Hazzards, a New York ukulele band.

William J. Pickens (Sound Design) Mr. Pickens has worked with Mikhael on *Three Sisters/Mourning* and *nonplay*. Recently he has worked on Broadway: *Present Laughter* (American Airlines Theatre); Off Broadway: *Red and Brown Water*, *Brother Size* and *Marcus* (Public Theatre); *Heroes*, *Beasley's Christmas Party* (Keen Company) and Regionally: *Richard III* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *The Illusion* (University of Rochester); and *House in Hydesville* (Geva Theatre Center). www.willpickens.com

Seth Reiser (Lighting Design) Seth designs for theatre and dance in and around New York City. Recent credits include: *The Lily's Revenge/Taylor Mac* (Here); *Middlemen/Josie Whittlesey* (Human Animals Collective); *His Greatness/Tom Gualtieri, nonplay/Mikhael Garver* (The New Ensemble); *Radio Play/Tommy Smith* (Ars Nova); *The Woman/Andrea Ferran* (Columbia Stages); *Transition/Tommy Smith* (OtB, Public Theatre); *The Vanished/Awoye Timpo* (Novisi); *The Seagull/Adrianna Baer* (Columbia Stages); *The Sleeping Giant/Larry Goldhuber, Shakespeare's*

Tap Sonnets/Awoye Timpo (Novisi). Upcoming: *Transformations*/Ed Berkely (Juilliard Opera). Seth is a member of the New Ensemble, and the resident designer of Novisi. www.sethreiserdesign.com

Eric Southern (Set Design) *The Storm* (Michael Sexton, NYU); *Whore* (Stephen Brackett, SPF); *Do Not Do This Ever Again* (Maria Goyanes/ Ohio Theater); *Fatboy, The Intervention* (John Clancy/ Ohio Theater); *Burn This, A Map of the World* (NYU); *Stomp and Shout, A Good Place to be From* (Babel Theater Project); *Cinephelia* (Theater Row); *An Inspector Calls, Measure for Measure* (Franklin Stages); *Hamlet* (Anya Saffir/Atlantic Stage 2); *Never the Sinner* (The Woodshed Collective); *The Intervention, Suspicious Package* and *Goner* (Brian Parks). For over five years, Eric was the resident lighting and set designer for the Atlantic Acting School where he designed many productions. He was also a leading associate of the architectural design team for the Atlantic's Stage 2, and a design consultant on their current main-stage renovation. B.F.A. Tisch; M.F.A. Candidate Tisch, 2010.

Royce Vavrek (Lyricist) made his Carnegie Hall debut this past May with scenes from his opera-in-progress *Dog Days* with composer David T. Little. He wrote the libretti for *Bully Pulpit* (Metropolis Opera Project); *The Hunger Art* (American Lyric Theater; Center City Opera Theater); and *Nora at the Altar-Rail* (A.L.T.). Upcoming projects include *Vinkensport or the Finch Opera* with David T. Little (Bard College); *The Bear Dance* with Nick Martin; and a triptych of one-act operas (*Mermaid in the Jar, Prairie Dogs, and Hollywood Saints*) with Rachel Peters. Also with Mikhael Garver/The New Ensemble: *nonplay*. Artistic Director of the new opera-theater company The Coterie. B.F.A: Concordia University, Montreal; M.F.A: NYU.

Tiffany Vega (Company Manager) is a first year Theatre Management and Producing M.F.A. candidate at Columbia University. She has a B.A. in Theatre from the University of Maryland-College Park and has directed, stage managed, and produced several productions that were part of The Ultimate Latina Theater Festival in New York City in 2008 and 2009. She is a member of Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc., and is very active with the Latino theatre community in NYC.

D. Westerholm (Production Stage Manager) graduated with a B.A. in Theatre Management from Western Washington University and is currently pursuing an M.F.A. in Stage Management at Columbia University.

Mikhael Tara Garver (Director) is a director, choreographer and writer from Washington, D.C. She was the Artistic Director and Co-founder of Uma Productions in Chicago, IL for seven years. With Uma, her directing credits include *Moment: Three Days of Rain & The Author's Voice; The Lover; why they invented dancing*, an adaptation she also choreographed and co-wrote from several plays by Charles Mee produced in Chicago, IL and at the Bank Street Theater in New York; *The Pool of Bethesda* (After Dark Award); *Enter Alice*, which she also choreographed; the Chicago premiere of *Recent Tragic Events* by Craig Wright (top ten shows, *Time Out/Chicago Tribune*); *The Violet Hour; Faith Healer* (Jeff Award); and the Midwest premiere of *Orange Lemon Egg Canary*. While making her own work, Garver assisted Martha Clarke, Charlie Newell, Gary Griffin, Jeremy Cohen and Anne Bogart. Mikhael received a B.S. from Northwestern University and is currently a candidate for her M.F.A. in directing at Columbia University. At

Columbia University she is a recipient of the Heyward Fellowship Award and has developed around forty pieces of work. Some of her favorites have been *Alcestis deconstructed*, *six stages of a floating life*, and *don juan/the seaside*; *Mourning* by Jason Platt and *Three Sisters* translated by Curt Columbus. Outside of Columbia, she has worked at Collaboration Theater, American Conservatory Theater, NYU – Steinhardt, American Theater Company, Timeline Theatre, Court Theatre, and Steppenwolf Theater Company. She has taught at Columbia University, American Repertory Theater, Boston College, and in Chicago on the craft of immersive theater. In New York she has directed & developed the world premieres of *For Homeostasis*; *The Legislative Process*; *Checkpoint*; and *First Odd Prime*. In the Spring of 2009 she created the piece *nonplay: shadows of a dream*, inspired by Strindberg’s dream play and e.e. cummings’ poetry with original music by Andrew Gerle and lyrics by Royce Vavrek. In the Summer of 2009 she was the associate director on *Juvenal Players* by Pablo Helguera at Grand Arts Center in Kansas City, MO and selected as one of the National Theater of Scotland’s emerging artists at the Edinburgh International Festival. She is currently the staff director of *Sleep No More*: a production by punchdrunk at American Repertory Theater. Mikhael is the associate producer of the 2010 Emerging America Festival at A.R.T. and the Artistic Director of The New Ensemble.

Performance Schedule:

(all performances at The Riverside Theatre, 91 Claremont Avenue between 120th and 122nd Sts.)
Wednesday, February 3 at 8PM
Thursday, February 4 at 8PM
Friday, February 5 at 8PM
Saturday, February 6 at 2PM & 8PM

Tickets for events at The Riverside Theatre can be purchased online (www.ColumbiaStages.org) or by visiting the box office of The Riverside Theatre. Box Office hours are Thursday-Saturday, 4-8pm; Sunday 12-4pm and 1 hour prior to all performances.

Columbia Stages is the producing arm of the Oscar Hammerstein II Center for Theatre Studies of Columbia University’s School of the Arts. Columbia Stages presents a season of graduate actor and director productions as well as an annual festival of new plays by emerging playwrights. The theatre program offers M.F.A. degrees in acting, directing, playwriting, dramaturgy, stage management, and theatre management and producing. The goal of the program is to provide each student with the foundation for a career in professional theatre as well as the tools to embrace an ever-changing theatrical landscape and shape the future of the theatre.

For more information, visit www.ColumbiaStages.org

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