Entertaining and Tender, *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play* by Sarah Ruhl Explores Victorian Mores and Sexuality in a Stimulating New Comedy at ACT Theatre

*In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*
By Sarah Ruhl
Directed by Kurt Beattie
July 29 – August 28

**Tickets/Times**
*Members of Teen Tix*: $5
*Students/people 25 and under*: $15/$20
*Adults*: start at $37.50

*Groups (10+)*: Save up to 25% off! Call Ticket Office for reservations

*Day of Show Rush*: 50% off. Use code RUSH (day of show only)

*Pay-What-You-Will*: July 31 at 7:30 p.m., August 11 at 2:00 p.m.

*ACTPass*: included!

Tues-Thurs 7:30 p.m.; Fri & Sat 8:00 p.m.; Sat & Sun 2:00 p.m.; Sun 7:00 p.m.

**ACT Theatre**
Ticket Office: (206) 292-7676
700 Union Street, Seattle WA 98101
[www.acttheatre.org](http://www.acttheatre.org)

**Seattle, WA – July 12, 2011** – ACT – A Contemporary Theatre prepares to stage another scintillating Sarah Ruhl modern masterpiece, *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play* (*July 29-August 28*), a finalist for the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and nominated for three Tony Awards, including Best Play. The gifted Ruhl weaves real history of the treatment (and mistreatment) of women in the 1880s, and the misunderstandings and fears surrounding female sexuality, into a tender and smart comedy that ponders love, sex, marriage, intimacy, and how electricity came along to fuse them.

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At the dawn of electricity, in a prim upper class Victorian home, a gentleman doctor (Jeff Cummings) has invented a most extraordinary and mysterious device for treating “hysteria.” When his increasingly despondent wife (Jennifer Sue Johnson) overhears the strange sounds emanating from the operating theatre and sees patients (Deborah King, Connor Toms) leaving in the pink of health, she is compelled to investigate - even if it means risking domesticity for desire.

“The advent of electricity extended man’s active life deep into the night. It was immediately used to expand human pleasure as well as productivity, and it filled the language with new expressions: lovers ‘sparked.’ A new affair could ‘recharge’ you. A certain person ‘turned you on.’ Sarah Ruhl’s characters, Dr. Givings and Mrs. Givings, are perched on the edge of a new light, a new consciousness,” said Director Kurt Beattie. “Dr. Givings could be thought of as the new hero who would appear in popular literature in the 19th century: the scientist/engineer who would bring rationality to the fore in transforming society. Mrs. Givings has the seeds of the new progressive woman, who will call for equality, intellectual opportunities, and a broad reaching freedom. But in fact, there is a much richer journey underway in this play than simply an evocation of history. They must live with the problem of the ideal of conjugal love, and the reality. And that is where we turn the lights on, and the story begins.”

*In the Next Room, or the vibrator play* was first produced at the Berkeley Repertory Theater in Berkeley, CA in February 2009 directed by Les Waters. In November 2009, it debuted on Broadway, a first for both Sarah Ruhl and director Les Waters. Ruhl’s plays include *The Clean House* (2004 Susan Smith Blackburn Award, Pulitzer Prize finalist, Pen Award, seen at ACT in 2007); *Eurydice* (seen at ACT in 2008); *Passion Play, a cycle* (Pen American Award, Fourth Freedom Forum Playwriting Award from the Kennedy Center); *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* (Helen Hayes Award for Best New Play); and *Demeter in the City* (nine NAACP Image Award nominations). Ruhl is also the recipient of the Helen Merrill Emerging Playwrights Award, the Whiting Writers’ Award, the PEN Center Award for a mid-career playwright and a 2006 MacArthur Foundation “genius” grant. Originally from Chicago, Ruhl received her MFA from Brown University, where she studied with Paula Vogel. Her plays have been translated into German, Polish, Korean, Russian and Spanish, and have been produced internationally in London, Canada, Germany, Latvia, and Poland.

The *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play* creative team and cast members are available for interviews. For more information or to arrange interviews, please contact Jennifer Rice at (206) 285-5175 or rice1234@yahoo.com, or Jacquelyn Rardin at (206) 292-7660 ext. 1327 or jacquelyn.rardin@acttheatre.org.

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**CAST (in alphabetical order):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Cummings</td>
<td>Dr. Givings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracy Michelle Hughes</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Kae Irvin</td>
<td>Annie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Sue Johnson</td>
<td>Catherine Givings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah King</td>
<td>Sabrina Daldry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Patten</td>
<td>Mr. Daldry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connor Toms</td>
<td>Leo Irving</td>
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**Creative Team**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurt Beattie</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew Smucker</td>
<td>Scenic Designer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine Hunt</td>
<td>Costume Designer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ben Zamora</td>
<td>Lighting Designer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brendan Patrick Hogan</td>
<td>Sound Designer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evan Ritter</td>
<td>Assistant Lighting Designer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeffrey K. Hanson</td>
<td>Stage Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verhanika Wood</td>
<td>Assistant Stage Manager</td>
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</tbody>
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**Performance Schedule:**

- Fri., July 29, 8:00 p.m. (Previews begin)
- Sat., July 30, 8:00 p.m.
- Sun., July 31, 7:30 p.m.
- Tue., August 2, 7:30 p.m. (Behind the Scenes, 6:00 p.m.)
- Wed., August 3, 7:30 p.m. (Apple Series, 6:00 p.m.)
- **Thurs., August 4, 7:30 p.m. OPENING NIGHT**
  - Fri., August 5, 8:00 p.m.
  - Sat., August 6, 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
  - Sun., August 7, 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
  - Tue., August 9, 7:30 p.m.
  - Wed., August 10, 7:30 p.m.
  - Thurs., August 11, 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
  - Fri., August 12, 8:00 p.m.
  - Sat., August 13, 8:00 p.m.
  - Sun., August 14, 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
  - Tue., August 16, 7:30 p.m.
  - Wed., August 17, 7:30 p.m.
  - Thurs., August 18, 7:30 p.m.
  - Fri., August 19, 8:00 p.m.
  - Sat., August 20, 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
  - Sun., August 21, 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
  - Wed., August 24, 7:30 p.m.
  - Thurs., August 25, 7:30 p.m.
  - Fri., August 26, 8:00 p.m.
  - Sat., August 27, 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
  - Sun., August 28, 2:00 p.m.

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ACT Special Events (FREE and open to the public):

Behind the Scenes, Tuesday, August 2, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.
Before the Tuesday night preview of a Mainstage production, Artistic Director Kurt Beattie and members of ACT’s artistic team give you the heads-up and the lowdown on what it takes to make that night’s magic. Seeing the show another night? Don’t let that stop you; we still welcome you to come for the Behind-the-Scenes chat! Brought to you by KING FM with delicious bites provided by a preferred ACT caterer.

Apple Series, Wednesday, August 3, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.
ACT’s Apple Series includes a ticket to each Wednesday preview on the 2010 Mainstage season and features a pre-show conversation with the artistic staff and guest speakers on topics including themes of the show, production elements, collaborating with artists, and more that will have every educator’s mouth watering. The Apple Series is for current Washington state teachers and administrators.

Post Play Discussions, following performances on Aug 9 evening, Aug 14 matinee, Aug 21 evening.
Wondering about creative choice or dying to explore the themes of a play? Here's your chance! Stick around and participate in a post-show discussion with the director and actors following select performances of each Mainstage play.

Tastings, Friday, August 12, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.
ACT unveils a delicious new tradition: beers, wines, and beverages from around the world, paired with local artisan foods—all matched to fit the theme of our mainstage productions! Keith Johnsen, host of last year's Beer Tastings, will search his vast collection of spirits, as well as the bountiful variety of local markets, to procure the perfect show-themed treats for you. Please join us for this new and exciting FREE event!

About ACT: A Theatre of New Ideas - Raising Consciousness Through Theatre
Located in the heart of downtown Seattle and serving a population of curious, open-minded, and brave audiences, ACT - A Contemporary Theatre is the only theatre in Seattle dedicated to producing contemporary work with promising playwrights and local performing artists since 1965. A theatre of new ideas, ACT serves as a cultural engine that makes plays, dance, music, and film that touch us through its annual Mainstage play series and new works generated from the Young Playwrights Program, The Hansberry Project, the Central Heating Lab, and New Works for the American Stage commissioning program. Because contemporary life demands examination, ACT is driven to inspire and strengthen our diverse community through works that advance our understanding of human life. With more than 100,000 people who attend shows annually, ACT is an interactive community where artists and the public witness, contemplate, and engage in dialogue on today’s thought-provoking issues, ideas and art, presented with intelligence, insight, and humor.


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