William Massolia
Artistic Director

Presents

GHOSTS OF WAR

Based on the novel by Ryan Smithson

Directed by Jason Gerace
Adapted for the stage by William Massolia

GHOSTS OF WAR is performed without intermission

Lighting Design
John Kelly

Costume Design
Rachel Sypniewski

Set Design
Alan Donahue

Original Sound Design
Stephen Ptacek

Original Projection Design
Michael Stanfill

Production Manager
Jennifer Aparicio

Stage Manager
Sara Beaman

FEATURING
Sam Krey as Ryan Smithson

THE GRIFFIN’S 2017/2018 PREMIERE SEASON SPONSORS
Michael and Mona Heath

The Griffin Theatre Company is a member of the League of Chicago Theatres, Theatre Communications Group, Western Arts Alliance, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, International Performing Arts for Youth and is partially supported by a grant the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.
SAM KREY (Ryan Smithson) is very excited to be returning to Griffin Theatre, where he was lucky enough to go on tour with Ghosts of War last fall, and now, is so happy to share it with the Chicago community. Sam was last seen in the Goodman Theater’s world premiere production of Blind Date, as well as First Folio’s original production of Captain Blood. Sam has recently understudied Jackalope Theater’s production of Ideation, Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s Short Shakespeare: Twelfth Night, and TimeLine Theater’s production of The Last Wife, where he was lucky enough to perform. Sam hails from St. Paul Minnesota, where he spent ten years training and performing with Circus Juventas. He performed in nine of their original productions, including being cast in three leading roles. He has recently graduated with a BFA in Acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University and he is also proud to hold the rank of Advanced Actor Combatant with the Society of American Fight Directors.

JASON GERACE (Director) is a freelance director in Chicago, and is so thrilled to be working with Griffin Theatre. He was the recipient of the 2014 Non-Equity Jeff Award in Outstanding Direction for Great Expectations with Strawdog Theatre Company, which broke box office records, was twice remounted, and led to the adaptation’s first publication. Upcoming productions: Suddenly Last Summer (Raven Theatre), You Can’t Take it With You (OPFT). Regional credits: Last Train to Nibroc (Haven Theatre), The Source (Route 66 Theatre), Threesome (Other Theatre), Wrecks (with John Judd; Chicago), Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? and Opus (Redtwist Theatre, Chicago). Jason originally hails from Anchorage, Alaska and holds an MFA in Directing from The University of Oklahoma. When not directing plays he is happy to be a husband to Amy and a daddy to Ruby and Brooks. He is an associate member of SDC, and was Artistic Associate of American Theater Company since 2008.

JOHN KELLY (Lighting Design) is very excited to be working with Griffin Theatre Company for the first time. Other recent and upcoming designs include; Pillars of the Community, Damascus (Strawdog Theatre), The Food Show, Tangles & Plaques, Empty Theats (The Neofuturists), MacBeth (Assistant LD - Chicago Shakespeare Theatre). John has also designed for companies including About Face Theatre, Lifeline Theatre, The Second City, Theatre Wit, The Gift Theatre, Oracle Productions, The New Colony, Red Twist and Stage Left Theatre. He is an ensemble member at Strawdog Theatre and is the Lighting Supervisor at Chicago Children’s Theatre. www.johnkellydesigns.com

ALAN DONAHUE (Set Design) is thrilled to return to the Griffin having previously designed Little Brother and Angus, Thongs, and Full Frontal Snogging, among others. Alan is ensemble member at Lifeline Theatre and will be designing scenery for Neverwhere there for early summer. On other fronts he is designing a new spring concert show for Dollywood, My People My Music and a new musical romp Quest for Silver Dollar City for 2019 and the touring production for Lifeline Theatre of Giggle, Giggle, Quack.

RACHEL SYPNIEWSKI (Costume Design) Previously for the Griffin designed In to America, London Wall (Non-Equity Jeff Nominated Best Costume Design), Titanic: The Musical (Non-Equity Jeff Nominated Best Costume Design); The Birds; and Ghosts of War. Ms. Sypniewski has designed over 300 productions in the Chicago area. Among her favorite credits are Merch (16th
RYAN SMITHSON (Author) served with the Army Corps of Engineers from 2004–2005 in Iraq where he conducted road repair, base fortifications, and various earth-moving operations. When he came home, he went to college on the GI Bill and began writing about his war experiences. With the encouragement of a professor, he kept writing and eventually published his memoir, *Ghosts of War: The True Story of a 19-Year-Old GI*. He has had several short stories and poems published in various journals and anthologies, and enjoys visiting schools to talk with young people about writing, war, and life. He wrote a play, “Ten Klicks South of Whiskey” for his Master’s thesis. Ryan lives in Rotterdam, NY with his wife and two crazy kids. His advice for young people is, “You’re put here to climb your mountain, so don’t give up. Others are climbing their own, so encourage them -- there is nothing gained by judging them against your incline.”

STEPHEN PTACEK (Original Sound Design) hopes you like what you’re hearing. Most recently for the Griffin he designed the sound for *Ragtime* and the sound and music for *Into America*. Stephen has designed sound and music for a lot of plays with a great many theatre companies in Chicago and abroad, but he doesn’t want to bore you with a long list of all the shows he’s closed over the past 10 years. He’s a company member with Dog & Pony and also engineers sound as an I.A.T.S.E. Local 2 stagehand. Stephen is a percussionist with *El Is A Sound of Joy*, and composes music for a variety of spaces and media. He won a Jeff Award for Sound Design in 2008, 2014 & 2017.

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FEATURING
Peter Byrne, Elliot Cruz, Zachary DeNardi, Mario Guzman, Jennifer Lowe, Ryan McBride, Andrew Neftalí Perez, Leah Raidt, Lynda Shadrake, Jessica Dean Turner, Jason Von Rohn

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LETTERS HOME BIOGRAPHIES

**Peter Byrne**
(Ensemble) is ecstatic to finally be performing *Letters Home* in Chicago. After 4 years of touring this show around the country, it is wonderful to finally be bringing it back home. A native of Chicago, Peter received a BFA in Acting from the Chicago College of Performing Arts. He also tours with Griffin Theatre’s children show, *Frindle*. Peter would like to thank his family, Sgt. Daniel McCright, and all the men and women of the armed forces.

**Elliot Cruz**
(Ensemble) is very grateful to be working with Griffin Theatre on this show. Elliot lives and works as an actor in Chicago and has previously worked with the Griffin on their production of *Balm in Gilead*. He has also worked with Muse of Fire Theatre Company. Big thanks to my family, my friends and the cast for their hard work. And of course thank you to our nation’s armed forces.

**Zachary Denardi**
(Ensemble) is thrilled to be making his Chicago Griffin Debut. He recently finished the *Letters Home* tour this past fall. Zach has also worked with multiple theaters in the Chicagoland area including Redtwist, Steep, Sideshow, and Steppenwolf. He graduated from The Theater School at DePaul University with his MFA in acting and he grew up in Northeast Ohio.

**Mario Guzman**
(Ensemble) is thrilled to make his Griffin Theatre debut. Originally from Florida, he transferred from Florida school of the Arts with an associates degree to the Chicago College of Performing Arts where he recently graduated with a B.F.A., he now calls Chicago his home. Some of his recent appearances around town include *Loves Labours Lost* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), *Coriolanus* (Commission Theater Co.) and *Lolita de Lares* (Urban Theater Company).

**Jennifer Lowe**
(Ensemble) has been touring *Letters Home* for the last 5 years and is proud to be performing the production in Chicago. She is originally from Newton, MA. Jennifer received her M.F.A. in acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University, and subsequently taught acting at Lake Forest College for ten years. Jennifer has been touring with the children’s show *Frindle* since 2001, also with the Griffin Theatre Company.

**Ryan Mcbride**
(Ensemble) is excited to return to *Letters Home*! Selected Chicago credits include *Continuity* with Goodman Theatre (New Stages); *Shakespeare in Love* and *Julius Caesar* with Chicago Shakespeare Theater; *West Side Story* (Jeff Award for Best Musical) and *Mamma Mia!* with Paramount Theatre; *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with Chicago Shakespeare Theater; *Brilliant Adventures* and *Fallow* with Steep Theatre; *Sita Ram* at the Harris Theatre with Lookingglass Theatre Company and Chicago Children’s Choir. Two tours with *Letter’s Home* and *Ghosts of War* (Workshop) with Griffin Theatre Company. National tour: *Evil Dead: The Musical!* Regional: *Hand to God* (Helen Hayes Nominee) with Studio Theatre. TV: *Chicago Med* (NBC), *Chicago Justice* (NBC) and *The Good Wife* (CBS). Mr. Mcbride received his BFA from The Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

**Andrew Neftalí Perez**
(Ensemble) is honored and thrilled to be making his Griffin Theatre debut in *Letters Home*. Andrew is a Chicago native who was born and raised in Logan Square.
Square and is a current ensemble member with Urban Theater Company (UTC). He graduated from the University of Illinois (UIC) with a BFA in Theatre Performance. Previous credits include: Ashes of Light (Destinos Theatre Festival), La Havana Madrid (Teatro Vista), Water & Power (Urban Theater Company), Life's a Dream (UIC), The Secret in the Wings (UIC), Lolita de Lares (UTC), Adoration of the Old Woman (UTC), The Oxcart (Court Theatre). TV credits: THE CHI (Showtime).

LEAH RAIDT (Ensemble) is proud to return to Griffin Theatre where she appeared in numerous national tours of Letters Home, and the Jeff-Award sweeping production of Punk Rock directed by Jonathan Berry. Credits include the world premiere of T directed by Margot Bordelon, and Columbinus 2.0 directed by PJ Paparelli at American Theatre Company, as well as work with Steppenwolf Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Jackalope Theatre, Emerald City Children’s Theatre, Pavement Group, The Blind Owl, and Halcyon Theatre. Current projects include assistant directing under Jonathan Berry in Steep Theatre’s Birdland. Leah holds a B.F.A from The Theatre School at DePaul University, and is a graduate of The School at Steppenwolf. She is an acting teacher and private coach at The Green Room Studio, and is proudly represented by Paonessa Talent.

LYNDA SHADRAKE (Ensemble) is a Griffin ensemble member, has toured extensively with Letters Home and is delighted to perform it here in Chicago at the beautiful Den Theatre. Other Griffin shows include the acclaimed productions of Pocatello and Balm in Gilead, both directed by Jonathan Berry, and Frindle. Other credits include Pygmalion and The Importance of Being Earnest with Oak Park Festival Theatre; Flanagan’s Wake and Don’t Drink the Water with Noble Fool, and playing Sister in Late Nite Catechism. Improv: The Spew (co-creator), League of Improv Heroes (Open Door Rep), ComedySportz, Cast on a Hot Tin Roof (Free Associates, founding member), and the Chicago Improv Festival. TV/Film: Trading Spaces (prank episode). Web series: The Dreamers (Lily) and The Adventures of Jacketman (Daniel’s Mother). Independent films: Teenage Ghost Punk, Dear Mr. Fidyrcz, and Hunter. Lynda is represented by Big Mouth Talent. Thanks and love to Paul, Caylee, Jake, and the tribe. www.lyndashadrake.com

JESSICA DEAN TURNER (Ensemble) is excited to return to Griffin Theatre in Letters Home where she appeared in the 2012 tour. Her previous Chicago credits include Fear and Misery in the Third Reich at Haven Theatre. United Flight 232 and Season on the Line at the House Theatre of Chicago, The America Play and Pink Milk at Oracle Productions, A Kid Like Jake at About Face Theatre, and Fall of Heaven with Congo Square. Other credits include Arkansas Shakespeare Festival where she appeared in Two Gentlemen of Verona and Comedy of Errors. She holds a BFA in Acting from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and an MA in Applied Theatre from NYU.

JASON VON ROHN (Ensemble) is excited to be in Chicago for this production of Letters Home, having toured the show for the past 4 seasons. He is a Wisconsin native and received his BFA at UW-Whitewater, and his MFA at The Theatre School at DePaul University. He has acted as a teaching artist for the tour of Ghosts of War with Griffin Theatre and his most recent credits include, HomoAndronicus with The Antidote Theatre, In to America (World Premiere) and the touring show The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales, with the Griffin Theatre.
WILLIAM MASSOLIA (Director/Adapter) is a founding member of the Griffin Theatre Company. He is the author of over 30 plays and adaptations including, Be More Chill, Little Brother, Stardust, Loving Little Egypt, Shakespeare’s Dog, In to America, and Frindle. His play Letters Home has been seen in more than 100 cities nationwide and his children’s play, Frindle was presented in 70 US cities since 2009. A graduate of Southern Illinois University, Massola is a 7-time Joseph Jefferson Award nominee for his work as a playwright, is a past member of the League of Chicago Theatres Board of Directors, the theater advisory panel for the Illinois Arts Council and is a recipient of an IAC Playwriting Fellowship Award. His next project will be a world premiere adaptation the Emmy Award-winning television show Innovation Nation.

SARA BEAMAN (Stage Manager) Sara is excited to return for her third production with Griffin Theatre. She has stage managed national tours of Griffin’s productions of Ghosts of War and Frindle. Based in Chicago, Sara has also worked with Other Theatre Company, The Hypocrites, and serves as the Production Stage Manager for Theater Unspeakable. As the PSM for TU, she has stage managed regional and national tours of TU’s original productions Moon Shot, The American Revolution, and Superman 2050. Sara previously was a stage management intern for South Coast Repertory Theatre in Orange County and the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. Originally from North Dakota, Sara has a B.A. in Theatre Direction and Management from the Johnny Carson School of Theatre & Film at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

JENNIFER APARICIO (Production Manager) has been working in the Chicago theater scene for the past few years as a production manager and stage manager. Previous production manager credits include work with Teatro Vista (The Madres, La Havana Madrid, The Wolf at the End of the Block, Parachute Men, In the Time of the Butterflies, Where Did We Sit on the Bus?, My Mariana Comes, Between You, Me, and the Lampshade, Tamer of Horses, A View from the Bridge), Oak Park Festival Theatre (A Dickens’ Carol), Broken Nose (At the Table remount), Pegasus Players (Blacula, The Youth Playwright’s Festival), and 16th Street Theater (Book Club Play, Living Large in a Mini Kind of Way). As a stage manager, credits include work with 16th Street Theater (Carroll Gardens, Book Club Play, Mariposa Nocturna, Graveyard of Empires, The Gun Show, Empanada for a Dream), Lifeline Theatre (Sparky!, The True Story of the Three Little Pigs, Arnie the Doughnut, Last of the Dragons), and Teatro Luna (Machos, S-E-X Oh!). She is an Artistic Associate with Teatro Vista and 16th Street Theater.

DAVD MORELAND (Tehnical Director) is a Chicago actor and carpenter who is heavily involved in the local theatre community. On stage he was recently seen in Big Noise’s The Last Five Years and Big Fish, as well as Theo Ubique’s Jacques Brel revue Lonesome Losers of the Night. Off stage he has built multiple shows such as Violet for Griffin Theatre, Significant Other for About Face Theatre, Boy for Timeline Theatre, Billy Elliott for Porchlight Music Theatre, and many many others. He thanks you for coming tonight, and hopes you enjoy the show.
The Griffin Theatre Company would like to gratefully acknowledge the contributions made by individuals, corporations, foundations and government agencies throughout the year, which have enabled our arts organization to continue to produce quality arts programming for young and old. If you would like to find out more about supporting the Griffin Theatre Company please call 872-806-2660 or use the form attached.

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Our mission: The Griffin Theatre Company exists to create extraordinary and meaningful theatrical experiences for both children and adults by building bridges of understanding between generations that instill in its audience an appreciation of the performing arts. Through artistic collaboration the Griffin Theatre Company produces literary adaptations, original work and classic plays that challenge and inspire, with wit, style and compassion for the audience.

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