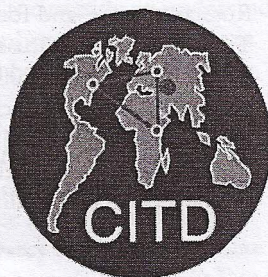


**Breaking String Theater Company**  
in association with  
**Fusebox Festival**  
and  
**The Center for International Theater Development**  
proudly presents...

**The Schooling of Bento Bonchev**  
*The True Story of the Famous  
Bulgarian Student*

By **Maksym Kurochkin**  
Translated by **John Freedman**  
Directed by **Graham Schmidt**

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**ABOUT THE PLAY...** Somewhere in the not-too-distant future, a grad student named Bento runs out of patience at his typical American university. He no longer wants to study that ancient relic of human behavior called love. He no longer believes it even ever existed. It was just a myth someone dreamed up to market useless products. As Bento breaks with his mentor-professor, shuns the attentions of a young student named Sandy and feels his life falling apart, he sees the world engulfed in a furious sexual revolution and falls into happily married life - all as he strives to just connect.

**MAKSYM KUROCHKIN (Playwright)** is recognized as one of the most imaginative playwrights in Moscow today, "the ideal playwright for the global age," as Moscow Times critic John Freedman defined him. Kurochkin is the recipient of the Boldest Experiment of the Year award from the Moskovsky Komsomolets daily for *Kitchen*, the Moscow New Drama award for the futuristic comedy *Titus the Irreproachable*, and the Russian Anti-Booker award for experimenting with new avenues in drama. In Afisha magazine, Russian critic Yelena Kovalskaya named *Kitchen* one of the top 20 plays in Russia in the first decade of the century. The Moscow Times named his *Repress and Excite* the best play of the 2006-7 Moscow season. Translations of that play and *Vodka, Fucking, and Television*, his trailblazing work from 2003, appeared in TheatreForum magazine. A translation of *The Schooling of Bento Bonchev* was workshopped at Towson University in 2010 and published in Performing Arts Journal. *Titus the Irreproachable*, translated by Noah Birksted-Breen, was a featured reading at the Russian Theatre Festival in London in February 2010. John J. Hanlon's translation of *Mooncrazed* was presented at the HotINK festival at NYU in January 2010. In December 2010 Kurochkin and Hanlon attended a retreat hosted by the Lark Theatre in New York and began working together on a new play, provisionally titled *Escape*.

**JOHN FREEDMAN (Translator, Dramaturg)** has translated three dozen Russian plays which have been performed in the United States, Canada, England, Australia and South Africa, including five works by Maksym Kurochkin. His translation of Olga Mukhina's "Flying" was produced in 2011 at Breaking String Theater. He has published and/or edited nine books about Russian theater, and for two decades has been the theater critic of The Moscow Times. He was the Russia director of The New Russian Drama project at Towson University, 2007- 2010, and the director of the U.S.-government supported New American Plays for Russia program, 2010-2012. With the company and Jennifer Johnson he was co-author of the Double Edge Theatre performance "The Firebird" in 2010, and his play "Dancing, Not Dead" won the new play competition conducted by The Internationalists in 2011.

~ CAST ~

**SERGIO ALVARADO (Sapiridis, Simon, Ensemble)**, originally from South Texas, received his M. F. A. at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He has been seen and heard in San Antonio, Louisville, and New York City, but is happy to call Austin his new home. Recent credits include Present Company's, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Winter's Tale*, as well as Poison Apple Initiative's, *Woyzeck*. Much love and thanks to all my family, friends, and especially Amanda.

**RONIS ALVARENGA (Ensemble)** is excited to be a part of this amazing production. He has enjoyed working with both the cast and production team. Ronis has done productions with The Scottish Rite Children's Theatre, Chaotic Theatre Company, Weird City Theatre and Transit Theatre. He has also worked with The Emily Ann Theatre, Doctuh Mistuh, MMNT and Breaking String. He would like to thank Graham, the production team and the Cast.

**JESSE BERTRON (Bento Bonchev)** made his first appearance with Breaking String Theater as Maniac in BST's American premiere of *Flying*, by Olga Mukhina. He also recently delighted the children of New York City as a corpse in John Sheehy's MORGUE THAN YOU KNOW, as part of the 52nd Street Project's ALL THE PLAYS YOU CAN EAT. Previous Austin roles include Romeo (ROMEO & JULIET, Shakespeare at Winedale) and Arthur (THE SWORD AND THE STONE, Scottish Rite Children's Theatre). At St. John's College, he played Mitch in A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, and directed and played Lysander/Flute in A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. He performs locally with the improv troupe Second Hand, as well as with GNAP! Theater Projects' SHOWDOWN.

**VICTORIA EISELE (Cecilia, Ensemble)** can't wait to break a leg with Breaking String Theater! A local Austin actress, she attended Baylor University to pursue her BFA. While there, Victoria appeared in *All My Sons*, *Blood Wedding*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* and *Enchanted April*. She has also performed regionally in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Austin Scriptworks' *The Out of Ink Festival*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and FronteraFest's *Baby in the Basement*. After graduation, she has been seen in several short films, commercials, and is currently an understudy for *Life Lines*, a ongoing suicide prevention program at Fort Hood. Victoria is thankful for the support of her family, friends and her husband, Joey.

**CHRIS HUMPHREY (Emma)** is thrilled to be returning to Breaking String again after performing Uncle Vanya with them last year. Other acting credits include Nanna in Shrewd Production's MilkMilkLemonade (B Iden Payne award for featured actress in a Comedy); Constance in the Weird Sisters' Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet); Darcy in Gobotrick's One Flea Spare; and the mother of the dead gay son in Yellowtape's I Love My Dead Gay

Son: The Musical! She has appeared in Friday Night Lights and, most recently, as Roselyn in Rick Linklater's upcoming film Bernie which is scheduled to open in theaters in May. Chris is an active musician (Compass Rose), composer (The Elementals: AIR (B Iden Payne Award for music director); Lucy Dies in Fives; The Watcher), and sound designer (The Eye in the Sky Project; Far Away; Betty's Summer Vacation). You can visit her and see what else she's up to at [www.chrishumphrey.org](http://www.chrishumphrey.org).

**JOE PENROD (Professor Tirce)** is thrilled to make his first appearance with Breaking String Theater. He was recently seen as Avery in the Street Corner Arts production of MEN OF TORTUGA, George in the Capital T Theatre production of PRECIOUS LITTLE TALENT, and as Joseph Harris in Paradox Players' GUEST ARTIST. His local appearances include North by Northwest's I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE (B. Iden Payne award – Outstanding Cast Performance); Lawrence Jameson in DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS, Don Quixote in MAN OF LA MANCHA, and Frederik Egerman in A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC at the Georgetown Palace; El Gallo in THE FANTASTICKS for Trinity Street Players; the Actors Co-op production of SIDE BY SIDE BY SONDHEIM; and I'LL BE SEEING YOU and GOLF: THE MUSICAL at Tex-Arts. He has performed nationally in roles that include Sweeney Todd, Salieri in AMADEUS, Richard Roma in GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS, and Serge in ART. Joe has worked with such illustrious composers and conductors as Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, and Zubin Mehta. He has appeared at the Berkshire Music Festival at Tanglewood, Aspen Music Festival, and the New England Bach Festival. He was a prize winner in the International American Music Competition at Carnegie Hall.

**GARRY PETERS (Frank)** has been performing in theater, film, and animation productions for over ten years. His most recent stage appearance was as Kit Maxwell in Men of Tortuga. Previous theater credits include Of Mice and Men (Candy), A Soldier's Story (at the 2011 Round Top Festival), Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (2010 B. Iden Payne Award winner as Big Daddy), Shakespeare's Husbands and Wives (Julius Caesar), As You Like It (both Dukes), An Inspector Calls (Inspector Goole), American Misfit (George Washington et. al.), Molly Sweeney (Mr. Rice), and Hedda (Judge Brack and Aunt Julie). Among his film credits are the features 12 Year Movie (working title -- directed by Richard Linklater), Mars, The Life of David Gale and Master of the Game. He has also appeared in the shorts The Man Who Never Cried, Perils in Nude Modeling, Gay by Dawn (the last two visible on YOUTUBE), and 9-zillion UT student films. His (disembodied) voice can also be heard in the animated short Flatland: the Movie (starring Martin Sheen and Michael York). Garry is excited to perform with Breaking String Theatre for the first time, and to be a part of the New Russian Play Festival. Thanks Graham.

**DEVYN RAY (Sandy)** has studied in the Theatre program at St. Edward's University. She was also company member at the Scottish Rite Children's Theatre appearing in *Alice in Wonderland* (Cheshire Cat/Dormouse), *The Princess and the Pea* (Darla the Cat), *Goldilocks* (Goldilocks), *Rapunzel* (Tina the Witch), and *A Merry Fairy Christmas Carol* (Snow White). Her previous credits include *Holier than Thou* (Poison Apple Initiative), *Hamlet* (Black Swan Events), and *Assassins* (Summerstock Austin). She is very excited to be making her Breaking String debut and would like to thank all of the love in her life for getting her here.

**BRADLEY WRIGHT (Jeda, Ensemble)** is thrilled to be working on his first production with Breaking String. It is a very exciting opportunity to explore contemporary Russian theatre with such a talented cast and well-versed company. Bradley is a graduate of UT's English Department where he gained the bulk of his theatrical experience through its association to Dr. James Loehlin and Shakespeare at Winedale during the summers of 2008 and 2009 where he worked on several of Shakespeare's plays including Richard III, Romeo and Juliet, and Much Ado About Nothing. Bradley has been involved in the Austin theatre scene since 2010 where he has had the distinct fortune of having worked with some incredible folks like Beth Burns and the Hidden Room's production of Taming of the Shrew, City on a Hill's production of Agamemnon, and The Baron's Men's production of Henry V to name a few. Although his roots are in early modern drama, the chance to work on a piece from one of Russia's pioneering playwrights is both thrilling and challenging. The rich context of the language is quite similar to that of The Bard and dissecting the multiple layers and ironies of Bento has been a most excellent adventure.

**DAWN YOUNGS (Journalist, Ensemble)** received her BFA in performing arts from American University. She taught acting and stage managed for Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp and worked as a hair and make-up artist for The Utah Shakespeare Festival. Dawn received her MFA in acting from the University of Missouri (Kansas City), during which time she held a directing internship with Lookingglass Theater Company. She has taught Shakespearean performance for the Great Lakes Theater Festival, and later served as the head of theater education for the Beck Center for the Arts. Since moving to Austin, she has worked with the Wimberley Players, Frontera Fest, The Encyclopedia Show and The Loaded Gun Theory. Her recurring gigs include work as the Moderatrix with the Dionysium, and freelance graphic designing and writing for CultureMap. Dawn practices yoga regularly, loves to sing to her guitar especially around a camp fire, loves a good hike, and is excited about working with Breaking String.

~ CREW ~

**BLAKE ADDYSON (Music / Sound)** is a composer, musician, technical director and stage manager for theater and for professional music ensembles. Previous collaborative partners include Tongue In Groove Theatre, Theatre En Bloc and Hidden Room Theatre. Blake has also stage managed for Austin's Okkervil River on their 2011 national summer tour. He is excited to be working his first show with Breaking String Theater.

**IA ENSTERÄ (Scenic)** Originally from Finland, Ia is an award-winning scenic and costume designer whose work in the past 18 years have been for both stage and screen. She is the Resident Production Designer for Pollyanna Theatre Company, with whom she has been with for the past ten years (including such shows as *Tempest*, *Just Bee*, *Pattern Nation* series, *Ducks vs. Squirrels*, etc). You might have caught some of her previous (and FAVORITE!) work with Breaking String Theatre in *Flying*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *Ghosts*... or perhaps in some 70+ other wondrous productions. Some of her previous film work can be seen in "The Two Bobs", "The King", "Idiocracy", "The Ringer", "Man From Orlando", and "The Association". Her commercial projects have included World Wildlife Fund, Maidenform, HEB, etc. She also fills her workdays as an interior designer for retail and hospitality, and as a storyboard artist and illustrator for films, publishing companies, and clothing manufacturers. Ia loves her work and it shows. She has been nominated for quite a few B.Iden Payne Awards, and has been the lucky recipient of five of them...and is always on the hunt for the next project.

**PAM FLETCHER FRIDAY (Costumes)** has worked with dozens of companies over the years and she has been nominated for and received awards for excellent design from the B. Iden Payne Council, the Austin Critics' Table, and most recently was nominated for a Playshakespeare.com Falstaff award for her costume design for Austin Shakespeare's 2011 *Hamlet*. Pam is excited to be working with Breaking String for the first time.

**LAUREN HAYES (Assistant Stage Manager)** is a stage manager in Austin's performing arts community. She graduated from St. Edward's University with a focus on stage management. She is excited to be working on her first production with Breaking String Theater.

**ANGELICA MANEZ (Production Stage Manager)** After graduating from St. Edward's University with a focus on Stage Management, Angelica has worked with a range of companies over the years and while continuing to provide stage and production management support in the performing arts community, she also takes great joy in teaching third graders about the magic of theater. She is excited to be working with Breaking String Theater after stage managing BST's 2011 American Premiere of *Flying*, by Olga Mukhina.

**STEVEN SHIREY (Lighting)** has a MFA in lighting design from the University of South Carolina and was the Technical Director for the Stephen F. Austin State University School of Theatre from 2001 to 2007. Austin design credits include *A THOUGHT IN THREE PARTS*, *NO ONE ELSE IN THE WOODS TONIGHT*, and *FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF LIGHT*.

**GRAHAM SCHMIDT (Director)** is the resident translator, director and artistic director of Breaking String Theater Co. in Austin, TX. In 2003 and 2005, he studied at UT's Shakespeare at Winedale program under James Loehlin. While an MA candidate in UT's Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies, Graham received a grant to research the early history of Chekhov's plays at the Moscow Art Theatre (Moscow, Russia). Also at DSES, he contributed to the *Cambridge Introduction to Chekhov* (Loehlin, 2009). Recent credits for Breaking String include Lyudmila Petrushevskaya's *Cinzano* (director, translator), Chekhov's *The Seagull* (director, translator), *The Cherry Orchard* (director, translator), *Uncle Vanya* (director, translator), Olga Mukhina's 2004 play, *Flying* (director), and Ibsen's *Ghosts* (director, adaptor). Graham is honored and thrilled to work with Max, John, and an exceptional cast and crew on this exciting play.

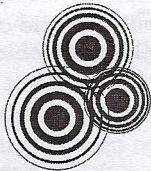
### Special Thanks

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- Tom and Jan Schmidt
- Paul Woodruff

**BREAKING STRING THEATER** is a professional theater company in Austin, TX that presents drama important to Russian history and to create context and content-rich encounters between our Austin audiences and Moscow's contemporary theater community. We seek to connect people across time and culture. We do this by staging excellent productions of Russian avant-garde and traditional plays, and with our New Russian Drama Festival, we harness our partnerships with the Center for International Theatre Development's Philip Arnoult, and Moscow-based critic/translator John Freedman. The name of our company derives from a mysterious stage direction from Act II of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*: Suddenly, as if from the sky, the sound of a breaking string, dying away, forlorn. Breaking String is proud to be a sponsored project of the Austin Creative Alliance, a 501(c)-3 non-profit organization serving Austin's arts community. Breaking String was awarded a contract from the Austin Cultural Arts Committee in 2010, in its first year of eligibility.



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