

RED BULL THEATER

JESSE BERGER | FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JIM BREDESON | MANAGING DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

PARADISE LOST

PART 1: THE FALL OF LUCIFER

PART 2: EVE AND ADAM

BY JOHN MILTON

ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY MICHAEL BARAKIVA

FEATURING

STEPHEN BEL DAVIES | SHELDON BEST | GISELA CHÍPE | ROBERT CUCCIOLI

SAIDAH ARRIKA EKULONA | CAROL HALSTEAD | JASON BUTLER HARNER

GREGORY LININGTON | DANIEL JOSÉ MOLINA | SAM MORALES

HOWARD OVERSHOWN | CHERIE CORINNE RICE

SPEECH AND VOICE | DAWN-ELIN FRASER

OBS DESIGNER | EMMA ROSA WENT

ZOOM COORDINATOR | BETSY AYER

OBS MANAGER | JESSICA FORNEAR

PRODUCING DIRECTOR | NATHAN WINKELSTEIN

GENERAL MANAGER | SHERRI KOTIMSKY

PRODUCTION INTERN | SARAH PRESTON

DRAMATURGICAL CONSULTANTS | KATHLEEN DIMMICK, DAVID SCOTT KASTAN,
K. ANN MCDONALD AND HOWARD OWENS

PART 1 | MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2021 | A LIVESTREAM PRESENTATION

A RECORDING OF THE LIVESTREAM WILL BE AVAILABLE UNTIL 7:00 PM EDT ON
FRIDAY, APRIL 16– THEN IT DISAPPEARS.

PART 2 | MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2021 | A LIVESTREAM PRESENTATION

A RECORDING OF THE LIVESTREAM WILL BE AVAILABLE UNTIL 7:00 PM EDT ON
FRIDAY, APRIL 30– THEN IT DISAPPEARS.

RED BULL THEATER WISHES TO EXPRESS ITS GRATITUDE TO THE PERFORMERS' UNIONS: ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION, AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS, AMERICAN GUILD OF VARIETY ARTISTS, AND SAG-AFTRA THROUGH THEATRE AUTHORITY, INC. FOR THEIR COOPERATION IN PERMITTING THE ARTISTS TO APPEAR IN THIS PROGRAM.

RED BULL THEATER IS SUPPORTED, IN PART, BY PUBLIC FUNDS FROM THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY COUNCIL, AND THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS, WITH THE SUPPORT OF GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO AND THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE.

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RED BULL THEATER IS A PROUD MEMBER OF THE ALLIANCE OF RESIDENT THEATERS/NEW YORK, THE OFF-BROADWAY LEAGUE, AND THEATER COMMUNICATIONS GROUP.



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DONATE TODAY TO SUPPORT RED BULL THEATER AND INVEST IN THE VITALITY OF CLASSICAL THEATER FOR A CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCE. FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS, RED BULL THEATER HAS TRANSFORMED THE CLASSICAL THEATER EXPERIENCE WITH SPECTACULAR, HIGH-OCTANE PRODUCTIONS OF SHAKESPEARE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES, RAUCOUS READINGS OF RARELY-PRODUCED PLAYS, AND VIVID REIMAGININGS OF ICONIC WORKS.

WE'RE DEDICATED TO REVITALIZING THE CLASSICS FOR TODAY'S AUDIENCES, AND WHILE WE TREASURE THESE CLASSICS, OUR APPROACH IS ANYTHING BUT PRECIOUS. YOUR SUPPORT IS.

WE'RE COMMITTED TO CONTINUING CONNECTION DURING THIS HISTORIC TIME.
YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP MAKE THAT POSSIBLE.

REDBULLTHEATER.COM/makeagift

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE DIVINE

The Father - *Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent* ..SAIDAH ARRIKA EKULONA
The Son, *The Embodiment of All Good*..... DANIEL JOSÉ MOLINA

THE LOYAL ANGELS

Michael, *Archangel Warrior*..... SAM MORALES
Raphael, *Archangel Messenger*.....CHERIE CORINNE RICE
Gabriel, *Archangel Guardian*.....CAROL HALSTEAD
Abdiel, *a loyal cherubim*..... GISELA CHÍPE
Ithuriel, *one of the cherubim swiftest*STEPHEN BEL DAVIES
Zephon, *one of the cherubim swiftest*.....HOWARD OVERSHOWN

THE REBEL ANGELS

Lucifer - *most beautiful angel, first among equals*..... JASON BUTLER HARNER
Satan - *the embodiment of Evil, the great seducer*
Toad Satan
Cherub Satan
Serpent Satan
Beelzebub, *Satan's confidante* GREGORY LININGTON
Moloch, *Rebel General Angel*..... ROBERT CUCCIOLI
Belial, *Rebel Messenger Angel*STEPHEN BEL DAVIES
Mammon, *Rebel Forger Angel*.....HOWARD OVERSHOWN

CHILDREN OF THE REBELLION

Sin, *child of Satan*CAROL HALSTEAD
Death, *child of Sin* ROBERT CUCCIOLI

UPSTART CREATURES

Adam, *first man* SHELDON BEST
Eve, *first woman* GISELA CHÍPE

—THERE WILL BE ONE 10-MINUTE INTERMISSION FOR EACH PART—



POST-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION

Thursday, April 29, 2021

7:30 PM EDT | LIVESTREAM

Join an interactive discussion with
adaptor/director **MICHAEL BARAKIVA**,
scholar **KATHLEEN DIMMICK**,
and some of the artists involved.

REGISTER at REDBULLTHEATER.COM

Born in 1608, **JOHN MILTON** stands by wide acclaim as one of the three greatest poets in the history of the English language, together with Chaucer and Shakespeare. Milton's first published poem was, indeed, a brief poem about Shakespeare, included in the prefatory material to Shakespeare's Second Folio of 1632. Milton himself dabbled as a playwright in his youth, yet from a very early age, he aspired to join the ranks of England's greatest literary figures not as a playwright but as the author of an epic poem, the genre of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Moreover, though he was perhaps the most accomplished English writer of Latin in his day, Milton aspired to do this in his own native language, thereby doing for English what Dante had done for Italian. He would come to fulfill this ambition and then some in the form of *Paradise Lost*, first published in 1667.

MICHAEL BARAKIVA is an Armenian/Israeli American writer and director based in NYC. His plays include *The Nature of Things* (EST/Sloan Project Commission), and *String Theory*, co-authored with Sarah Braunstein and Amy Boyce Holtcamp. YA novels include the award-winning *One Man Guy* and its stand-alone sequel, *Hold My Hand* (Macmillan, FSG). He is currently working on his third novel, a contemporary epic fantasy, *These Precious Stones*. He has directed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Primary Stage, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Syracuse Stage and the Hangar Theatre, where he served as Artistic Director for five years. He is the Founding Artistic Director of the Upstart Creatures, a theatre company based in NYC that throws (meta)physical feasts. He is also the Founder and Creative director of Novel Readings, a company that uses new play collaborative techniques to help novelists develop work (www.novelreadings.com). Education: Vassar College, The Juilliard School.

ABOUT THE POEM

Milton's "Great Argument"

Paradise Lost is a great poem—to my mind the greatest written in English, or possibly in any other language. And I am hardly the only one to think this about John Milton's epic. In 1667, as the poem was still being printed in London, it was said that Sir John Denham, a member of Parliament and himself a fine poet, walked into the House of Commons waving a sheet from *Paradise Lost*, "still wet from the press." This, he excitedly proclaimed, was "part of the noblest poem that was ever wrote in any language or in any age."

Certainly it is the most ambitious. Milton insists he will accomplish "Things / Unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" (though typically he makes this claim of radical originality by quoting an earlier poet). He writes an epic -- the genre, as he says, "of highest hope and hardest attempting"—or, rather, he rewrites the epic, undermining its deepest logic and claiming the form as his own.

Milton writes about God and about Satan, about Heaven and Hell, about the beginning of creation and about the end of time; and of course, he writes about warfare, but also about love, sex, food, music, prayer, anger, sadness, appetite, ambition, temptation, free will, and even farts. That is, he writes about almost everything that makes us human, created in the image of God but fallen, potentially noble but often falling (as one might say) so very short of that perfection.

But the poem's "great argument," as Milton says, is nothing less than to "justify the ways of God to men." The always presumptuous Milton will at once imply that God's ways need justification and that he is capable of providing that.

Milton refuses to hide behind the familiar mystifications of God's ways. Suffering, death, inequality, and injustice are all too evident in the world to be accepted as the just results of the Fall. Certainly, Milton felt them powerfully and personally. He had gone blind in 1652, and by 1660 the political cause for which he had served as the chief propagandist—the "hot" Protestant and anti-monarchical Republicanism of the 1640s, which he thought would herald the coming of the Kingdom of God—had clearly failed. The Monarchy was restored, and Milton was probably lucky not to have been killed. He knew, as he writes, that he had "Fallen" (there's that word again) "on evil days" and that now he lived "In darkness and with dangers compassed round."

No wonder God's ways seemed to him in need of justification. And he makes it hard for us to think any differently. If God is the creator of all things, how does He escape

responsibility for the evil one sees around us? Monotheistic religions have that problem. If God is good, where does evil come from?

“Unde malum” is the Latin phrase for that question—and that, by the way, explains why the forbidden fruit of Genesis and Milton’s poem becomes an apple. Genesis says only that it was a fruit; and in Milton’s poem, it is worth remembering, it is only Satan who calls it an apple. Why an apple? Because in Latin the word malum means both evil and apple.

But the real problem is with the unde (“from where”) not with the malum. God cannot be responsible for evil if He is good, and God isn’t God if there is a rival principle of creation. The orthodox answer provided by some of the Church Fathers is that evil exists only in relation to the good. It comes into being only by the conscious turning away from the good (which is more or less what the word “perverse” etymologically means). Good is primary; evil is secondary. God doesn’t create evil. Angels and humans, created with “free will,” may reject the good, and, in that choice, they bring evil into the world.

But even if Milton ultimately believes that, he struggles—and makes us struggle—to get there.

Evil in the poem, as so often in the world, seems every bit as real as good does. Satan seems a worthy antagonist for God, and often seems dramatically more compelling—so much so that a later poet, William Blake, could say that Milton was “of the Devil’s party without knowing it.” I don’t think Milton was, but I do think he knew that being “of the Devil’s party” might be a plausible reaction to the world as we experience it.

Maybe even an inevitable one. How could a God who was perfectly good allow the suffering and misery that is all around us? If humans are created “sufficient to have stood though free to fall,” as God insists in the poem, why, almost immediately after He speaks, does Milton show us an archangel fooled by Satan? His hypocrisy is “unperceived,” since, as Milton writes, it is the “only evil that walks / Invisible, except to God alone, / By his permissive will through heaven and earth.” If Satan can fool an angel, what chance of standing did Adam and Eve have? Why is it that evil here, and so often in the poem, seems to succeed only through the cooperation of God’s “permissive will”?

These are just some of the unsettling questions Milton asks, and that he makes us ask—and which do seem to demand that someone “justify the ways of God to men.”

Does Milton successfully do it? Well, readers of *Paradise Lost* must decide that for themselves. But whether he does or does not, he succeeds in making us feel the urgency of the questions he poses. He makes us feel the pressure of the hard choices forced upon us as we make our uncertain way in the postlapsarian world we call "history." But he ensures that we are somewhat better prepared for our "wandering" by the very act of reading his great poem.

—DAVID SCOTT KASTAN | Yale University

ABOUT THE ADAPTATION

"O miserable of happy!"

Part I of adaptor/director Michael Barakiva's adaptation of *Paradise Lost* opens with God's Anointment of his Son, an act that so consumes Lucifer, "most beautiful among the angels," with envy that he gives birth to Sin out of the left side of his head, (recalling Athena's birth and a dark pre-figuring of the creation of Eve). The War in Heaven follows, the Rebel Angels are banished to Hell and Lucifer becomes Satan; God then creates the Earth and all living creatures, including Adam, the first human.

Barakiva chose to structure the events of the poem chronologically, creating a dramatic progression that intensifies the profound thematic antitheses of the poem. The contrasting movements in the play continue, with striking juxtapositions: the birth of Eve followed by Sin's ghastly account of giving birth to Death (Satan's son); Satan awaking in hell, then Adam in Eden; the Fall of man and the triumph of Sin and Death, followed by the ultimate promise of redemption -- the hope of eternal life through the sacrifice of the Son of God for man's Original Sin.

Satan, with his power to change shape, becomes not only the Serpent, the "subtlest of all creatures," but also a Cherub and a Toad, and embodies the most powerful oppositions: "Evil, be thou my good." Momentarily "abstracted from his own evil" by Eve's innocence and beauty, he reminds himself:

What hither brought us, hate, not love; nor hope
Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste
Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,
Save what is in destroying, other joy
To me is lost.

When Satan offers the forbidden fruit to Eve (both destroyer and giver of life), we encounter the essential mystery of the poem -- the nature of good and evil -- and ask, along with Satan:

Or will God incense his ire
For such a petty trespass? and not praise
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of death denounced, whatever thing death be,
Deterred not from achieving what might lead
To happier life, knowledge of good and evil;
Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?

In 2013, Barakiva and a group of actors presented a day-long, concert reading of his adaptation of the poem at a church in Brooklyn. Two meals were included, with spectators dining alongside actors, who had prepared the food, creating a communal and sensual beginning to the journey of this adaptation of Milton's great poem. And the theater, with its physical immediacy and inherent capacity for metamorphosis, offers the perfect instrument to engage with what the critic Frank Kermode calls "the sensuous logic of the poem" [Eve eats Death] that moves between "delight and woe ... the fall into darkness and disorder, the return to light and order."

– Kathleen Dimmick | Dramaturg





RED BULL THEATER

JESSE BERGER | FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JIM BREDESON | MANAGING DIRECTOR

Red Bull Theater brings rarely seen classic plays to dynamic new life for contemporary audiences. Our work unites a respect for tradition with a modern sensibility.

Red Bull Theater is named for the rowdy Jacobean playhouse that illegally performed plays in England during the years of Puritan rule, and was the first London theater to reopen after the Restoration. This bold spirit is central to our identity. With the Jacobean plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries as our cornerstone, Red Bull Theater is New York City's home for dynamic performances of great plays that stand the test of time. The company also produces new works that are in conversation with the classics.

Red Bull Theater delights and engages the intellect and imagination of audiences. A home for artists, scholars and students, we strive to make our work accessible, diverse, and welcoming to all theatergoers. Educational as well as entertaining, our work keeps a rich and vital tradition thriving.

Red Bull Theater believes in the power of great classic stories and plays of heightened language to deepen our understanding of the human condition. We believe in the special ability of live theater to create unique, collective experiences. And we believe in the timeless capacity of classical theater to illuminate the events of our times.

Founded in 2003 with a production of Shakespeare's *Pericles*, Red Bull Theater has been acclaimed by *The New York Times* as "a dynamic producer of classic plays" and by *Time Out New York* as "the most exciting classical theater in New York."

Red Bull Theater serves adventurous theatergoers with OFF-BROADWAY PRODUCTIONS, REVELATION READINGS, and the annual SHORT NEW PLAY FESTIVAL. The company also offers outreach programs including SHAKESPEARE IN SCHOOLS, bringing professional actors and teaching artists into public school classrooms, BULL SESSIONS, free post-play discussions with top scholars, and MASTER CLASSES in classical actor training led by veteran theater professionals.

In our 17-year history, Red Bull Theater has produced 21 Off-Broadway Productions and nearly 200 Revelation Readings of rarely seen classics, serving 5,000 artists and providing quality artistic programming to an audience of 65,000. The company's unique programming has received ongoing critical acclaim, and has been recognized with Lortel, Drama Desk, Drama League, Calloway, Off Broadway Alliance, and Obie nominations and Awards.

Visit REDBULLTHEATER.COM for more information.

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