

the **gospel** according to thomas  
**jefferson**, charles **dickens**, and  
count leo **tolstoy**:

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Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2019

Playwright: Scott Carter

Company: White Rabbit Theatre Company

Prepared By: Courtney Beamish, Ciaran Corsar, Tomi Gustaf, Luke Walker, and Claudia Wicki



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Overview**

This document is intended for potential financial supports and outlines The Company's plan, budget and production details for bringing the play *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord* to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2019. The estimated total cost to raise is 15,000 CHF (~13,200€) to produce a run of ten (10) performances (and 3 previews) with White Rabbit Theatre Company.

### **The Play**

Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy find themselves locked in a room with no exit. The brisk and poignant theological romp of these three men yields a blistering battle of wits in a whip-smart comedy.



### **The Fringe Festival**

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival is one of, if not *the*, largest theatre and performance art festivals in the world. It has been held annually in August since 1947. In 1989, a sister festival, The Toronto Fringe Festival, first took root in Canada, and in 1997 New York City joined in as well. However, Edinburgh still remains the heart of fringe theatre worldwide.

### **Rehearsals and the Run**

The show will be rehearsed in July 2019, over two weeks, from 10am - 6pm, Mon-Sat, with an additional on-site rehearsal before opening night in August.

The play will be performed a total of ten (10) times in the afternoon slot (14:00) during the 2019 Edinburgh Fringe Festival, over a two-week period. The afternoon slot was chosen to avoid competing with larger evening productions, to maximize exposure to our target audience, and for cost benefits (afternoon slots are cheaper than the evening). The play will be produced by White Rabbit Theatre Company and will also include three (3) preview nights hosted by the venue (Greenside@Infirmay Street) before the official Opening Night, for a total of thirteen (13) performances.



## ABOUT THE PLAY

Three historical heavyweights walk into a room and ...

*The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord* by Scott Carter.

**Time:** yes

**Place:** a room

**Characters:** Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens, Count Leo Tolstoy

**Runtime:** approximately 1 hour, 20 minutes. *Discord* is performed without an interval/intermission.

Thomas Jefferson (yes, the Founding Father), Charles Dickens (yes, the Victorian Novelist) and Count Leo Tolstoy (yes, the Russian revolutionary) find themselves locked in a room with no exit. Attempting to discern why they are in this room together, they ransack the philosophies of their lives and work, searching for a truth; why us? And why, in God's name, together?!

*Discord* wades through life's most primal, perplexing concepts (morality, mortality, etymology) from the prism of these great, but decisively human, thinkers. Throughout their lives, Tolstoy, Jefferson, and Dickens made decisions that directly contradicted with the morals they propagated. On top of their individual achievements, they succumbed to infidelity, remained materialistic, and acted selfishly.

The brisk and poignant theoretical romp of these men desperate to leave this "cosmic foyer", yields a blistering battle of wits in a whip-smart comedy. Inevitably, their celestial escape room spawns many probing inquiries: Where do we go when we die? And where the hell are we now?

At once uproarious, raw and painfully honest, *Discord* unveils the many virtues and vices of these towering icons and discovers a universal truth: no human is human without flaws.

A note from this production's director, Claudia Wicki:

"What I love about this piece, besides it being fascinating and very funny, is the debate and discussion. My personal view is that in today's world the thing that we are lacking is debate and discussion. Everyone wants their version of life, religion and politics to be the 'right' one. And while they want to be right, they close their eyes and minds to any other opinion and refuse to entertain the possible veracity of another point of view. These three characters are stuck in a room and forced to hear each other out. And in the end, they write and write and write - for further generations to discuss."



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## WHITE RABBIT THEATRE COMPANY

To learn more about *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson*, *Charles Dickens* and *Count Leo Tolstoy*:  
*Discord* please visit: [www.whiterabbittheatre.org/fringe-2019](http://www.whiterabbittheatre.org/fringe-2019).

### The Cast and Crew

Executive Producer / Artistic Director: White Rabbit Theatre Company / Courtney Beamish

Director: Claudia Wicki

Cast (in order of appearance):

Luke Walker	...	Thomas Jefferson
Ciaran Corsar	...	Charles Dickens
Tomi Gustaf	...	Count Leo Tolstoy / Associate Producer



#### Courtney Beamish

Artistic Director / Executive Producer

Courtney has acted in plays both in Canada and Switzerland, as well as assistant directing *Contractions* (Mike Bartlett) and *White Out: A Comedy in Three Acts* (Jason Vikse). Most recently, Courtney established White Rabbit Theatre Company in Zurich, Switzerland, through which she produced and acted in a very successful production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Having been production manager on a team at the Toronto Fringe Festival in 2005, Courtney is very much looking forward to bringing her new company's second project, *Discord*, to Edinburgh in 2019.



#### Claudia Wicki

Director

Since moving to Switzerland in 1994, Claudia has brought in and directed an original musical, *Inside Out* (Doug Haverty and Adryan Russ) as a European premiere. She has also directed productions of: *The Extraordinary Revelations of Orca the Goldfish* (David Tristram); *Don't Dress for Dinner* (Robin Hawdon); *Taking Leave* (Nagle Jackson); and *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (Christopher Durang). In addition, she wrote, produced, directed and performed a one-woman show about the music of Doris Day called *Sentimental Journey, Inspired by the Music of Doris Day*.

[www.claudawicki.com](http://www.claudawicki.com)

[http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=claudia+wicki](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=claudia+wicki)





**Luke Walker**  
Thomas Jefferson

Since beginning his Swiss stage career in 1996, Luke has acted in several productions including: Conrade in *Much Ado About Nothing* (1996); Tom in *Sylvia* (2007); Gerald Croft in *An Inspector Calls*; Robert Dubadat in *Don't Dress for Dinner* (2013); and Hortensio in *The Taming of the Shrew* (2014). Most recently, Luke appeared as Man in *Lunch Hour*, as part of a series of one-act plays.



**Ciaran Corsar**  
Charles Dickens

Since training at both Royal Holloway, University of London and The Academy of Drama School (under The Stage scholarship), Ciaran has garnered much stage experience. Working with In Medias Res Theatre Company, he has performed twice before at the Edinburgh Fringe - *Measure for Measure* and *A View from the Bridge*. Other notable roles include: Alan in *Equus*; Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*; Cyrano in *Cyrano de Bergerac*; and most recently Jack in White Rabbit Theatre Company's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.



**Tomi Gustaf**  
Count Leo Tolstoy / Associate Producer

Tomi has more than a decade of stage experience from predominantly improv theatre but has gradually made the shift to scripted theatre, as well as film. He has appeared on stage as Spike in *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*; as Le Bret in *Cyrano de Bergerac*; and continues to be an active member of English improv troupe *Wisdom of Wombats* in Zurich. His most recent film credits include feature *Burn Out* (Md productions, Mich  l   D   ). In November 2018 he also acted in and assistant directed for the Zurich Comedy Club's production of *Parfumerie*.



## THE VENUE

We are very happy that we will be performing at Greenside@Infirmarary Street, in their Ivy Studio. Located in the heart of Edinburgh's old town, minutes from so many other fantastic Festival venues, Greenside has been a part of the Fringe for 13 years and, in 2018, their programme was the 5th biggest of the whole event.

Our experience with the venue so far has been excellent, and this was a big deciding factor in helping us to choose Greenside. They have been wonderfully helpful, clear, friendly and accommodating. We also contacted some of the companies who were at the venue last year, and they said the same, so our hopes are high!

For more information about Greenside and the Ivy Studio, please visit their website:  
[www.greensidevenue.co.uk](http://www.greensidevenue.co.uk).

## ADDITIONAL DATES AND PERFORMANCES

Apart from our main performances in Edinburgh (August 2019) we are also planning a few smaller performances of Discord here in Switzerland.

### **January 2019**

We will be holding a first Rehearsed Reading of Discord at the St. Andrew's Community Center in Zurich on January 25. The event will be hosted by the Zurich Comedy Club and is a chance for the public to get a first glimpse of the show as well as an opportunity for the actors to have a first experience with this text in front of a live audience. The reading will be held for one night only and tickets are limited to 50 seats. For more information, or to book a ticket, please email [rehearsedreadings@zcc.ch](mailto:rehearsedreadings@zcc.ch).

### **March 2019**

Later in the spring, there will be a second Rehearsed Reading of Discord at the Theater am Gleis in Winterthur. Although this performance will still be a rehearsed reading, it will be a more formal chance for audience members - and particularly those interested in helping to financially support the project - to see how the show is progressing and developing. The performance will be for one night only on March 22. If you are interested in tickets to this performance, or would like more information please email [courtney@whiterabbittheatre.org](mailto:courtney@whiterabbittheatre.org).

### **October 2019**

Finally, in the fall of 2019 we are planning a full post-Fringe run of the polished show at the Theater am Gleis in Winterthur. This run will follow the same format as White Rabbit Theatre Company's previous production, The Importance of Being Earnest, with three (3) evening performances on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, as well



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## WHITE RABBIT THEATRE COMPANY

as a late afternoon performance on Saturday. These performances will run October 9-12. If you are interested in tickets to this performance, or would like more information, please email [courtney@whiterabbittheatre.org](mailto:courtney@whiterabbittheatre.org).

## ABOUT WHITE RABBIT THEATRE COMPANY

White Rabbit Theatre Company was founded by Courtney Beamish in July 2017. In October 2018, The Company produced its first show, *The Importance of Being Earnest* in Winterthur, Switzerland, and on the back of that success has decided to embark on an ambitious second project, to bring *Discord* to Zurich, Edinburgh and Winterthur, all in the space of one year!

### **Our Mission**

White Rabbit Theatre Company is based in Zurich, Switzerland and is on a mission to provide English theatre experiences for audiences and creative people in the local community. With profit-sharing and an open-book policy at its heart, White Rabbit Theatre Company is dedicated to transparency and equality for all involved.

### **Transparency is Key**

One of White Rabbit's driving forces in its creation is the idea that theatre should be transparent and fair for all. The Company operates under a profit-sharing umbrella, meaning that everyone who works on each production gets a fair share of the profit. Similarly, we strive to create transparency with our audience and donors. Through our website and blog, we aim to keep all interested parties informed of our progress and where the money we raise is going. We want our audience and our donors to feel like they are as much a part of the production as anyone else!

For more information about The Company, and to keep up-to-date with our happens, please visit our website: [www.whiterabbittheatre.org](http://www.whiterabbittheatre.org).



## HOW WE GOT HERE

*The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord* was first performed in Zurich as a reading at the Zurich Comedy Club (ZCC) organized by Claudia Wicki, with Ciaran Corsar and Luke Walker both part of the original cast. Claudia had seen the play performed at Arizona Theatre Company ([arizonatheatre.org](http://arizonatheatre.org)) and fell in love with the piece. Ciaran and Luke were deeply affected by the strong characters (based on celebrated authors) and the razor-sharp, witty humour, all wrapped in an intriguing plot based on little known historical facts.

The reading received a standing ovation, the only one ever at the ZCC in recent memory.

Afterward, Ciaran and Luke were unable to shake off the feeling that this was something they really wanted to, but the play was not the right fit for the ZCC. So, they started looking for other possibilities to bring the play to life. They knew it would require a lot of work and dedication to get there ... not to mention money.

After a rehearsal for the November 2017 production of *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, over a plate of hummus and a glass of Malbec in D'Vino Wine Bar, the idea of producing it for the Fringe came alive. Ciaran had previous Fringe Festival experience and thought the play would be perfect for Edinburgh. Tomi Gustaf overheard the conversation and, admiring the skill of both Ciaran and Luke, and looking for a project to work on with the pair, immediately jumped on board without having seen the reading or read the script.

The planning was intended to reach a certain stage before the idea would be floated to Claudia and it did not begin in earnest until March 2018. The breakthrough came when White Rabbit Theatre Company expressed interest in producing the play. Things escalated quickly from there with Courtney Beamish bringing further Fringe experience and a solid plan was quickly produced.

By August 2018, the details, financials, logistics and scenarios had been mapped out and a meeting with Claudia was set up in the place where it all started - D'Vino Wine Bar, in Seefeld, Zurich, Switzerland. The team had agreed beforehand that without Claudia's support, the project would be abandoned, as she had been the one to introduce everyone to it in the first place. The meeting had been rehearsed and possible objections had been accounted for and thoroughly thought out.

However, as it turned out, not much convincing was needed; it took two minutes for Claudia to go into scene blocking and technical plans.

Now, for us to be able to continue the journey, we need outside help and support. We cannot do this without you!

Sincerely,

The Discord Team



## DONATIONS

Donations and budget are handled and overseen by White Rabbit Theatre Company (WRTC, [www.whiterabbittheatre.org](http://www.whiterabbittheatre.org)). Donations are possible through the Company's GoFundMe page, <http://www.gofundme.com/white-rabbit-at-edinburgh-fringe> or by contacting Courtney Beamish (artistic director of WRTC) directly at [courtney@whiterabbittheatre.org](mailto:courtney@whiterabbittheatre.org).

### Private Donors

All donors (unless anonymity is requested) will be mentioned on either the WRTC website or in the production programme (or both) according to the following guidelines:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Donation</b>	<b>Incentive</b>
"Friends"	1 - 100 CHF	(A) Donors name will be mentioned on the GoFundMe and White Rabbit websites.
"Supporters"	101 - 250 CHF	(B) as above (A), plus donor's name will appear in performance programme.
"Patrons"	251 - 500 CHF	(C) as above (B), plus a free place at the January or April 2019 rehearsed reading of the play*.
"Backers"	501 - 2500 CHF	(D) as above (B), plus two (2) free tickets to either the show in Edinburgh (August 2019) or Winterthur (October 2019)*.
"Producers"	2501 - 5000 CHF	(E) as above (D), plus donor will appear as "producer" of the show.
"Angels of the Arts"	5001+ CHF	(F) as above (B), plus donor will appear as "producer" of the show <i>and</i> will be provided with a free trip to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2019, which will include flights for two (2), two (2) nights in a hotel, free tickets to the show and an insider's guide to the Fringe shows*.

\*Subject to availability. Please contact Courtney at [courtney@whiterabbittheatre.org](mailto:courtney@whiterabbittheatre.org) for more information.



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## WHITE RABBIT THEATRE COMPANY

### Business Donors

Donation	Incentive
500 - 1000 CHF	(A) Donor company / organization's logo will appear on the White Rabbit Theatre Company website for the duration of the <i>Discord</i> production (January - October 2019).
1001 - 2500 CHF	(B) as above (A) plus donor company / organization's logo will appear in the show's programme.
2501 - 5000 CHF	(C) as above (B), plus donor company / organization's logo will appear on the back of all production flyers (alongside the play description).
5001+ CHF	(D) as above (C), plus donor company / organization's logo will appear as "sponsored by" on the front of all production flyers and posters.

For further information regarding donations please feel free to email [courtney@whiterabbittheatre.org](mailto:courtney@whiterabbittheatre.org).

## ABOUT THE FRINGE FESTIVAL

### What the Fringe Festival itself has to say:

"The Edinburgh Fringe Festival is arguably the single biggest celebration of arts and culture on the planet. For three weeks in August the city of Edinburgh, Scotland's capital, welcomes an explosion creative energy with artists from around the globe. With 52,232 performances of 3,398 shows in 300 venues in 2017, there are quite literally thousands of reasons to visit the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

"Every year, thousands of performers take to hundreds of stages all over Edinburgh to present shows for every taste. From big names in the world of entertainment to unknown artists looking to build their careers, the festival caters to everyone and includes theatre, comedy, dance, physical theatre, circus, cabaret, children's shows, musicals, opera, music, spoken word, and exhibitions." ([www.edfringe.com](http://www.edfringe.com))

### By far our favourite quote about the Fringe comes from Danny Wallace at Condé Nast:

"Be warned: time works differently during the festival. It's 71 years old but it parties like a teenager. You will lose track of days. You will think only in hours, as you navigate your way up steep hills through a city small enough to walk in but big enough to get lost in, on your way to whatever random show you've chosen to see. You will find yourself still out at 2am and wondering what's next. You will eat well but badly, if you remember to eat at all. You will see shows by people you've never heard of, who this time next year will be all you ever hear about. But you will not - cannot - leave this shining city without knowing you had fun, and knowing that you'll be back, along with those two million other people, the very next chance you get.

