



reasons to be pretty

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 21, 2011

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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(BOSTON) – From March 4 through April 2, 2011, SpeakEasy Stage will proudly present the New England Premiere of Neil LaBute’s provocative drama **reasons to be pretty**.

Sparked by one man’s offhand remark about his girlfriend’s appearance, **reasons to be pretty** navigates the crumbling relationships of four young friends as they come to terms with their unfulfilling lives and question the American obsession with physical beauty.

The show, which was nominated for a 2009 Tony Award for Best Play, is playwright Neil LaBute’s final installment in a loose trilogy of plays focusing on the modern-day obsession with physical appearance. SpeakEasy Stage also presented the Boston premieres of the other two plays in the series, *Fat Pig* and *The Shape of Things*.

Neil LaBute is a prolific American film director, screenwriter, and playwright praised for his terse, rhythmic, and highly colloquial works. His films include *In the Company of Men*, *Your Friends and Neighbors*, *Nurse Betty* and the recent *Death at a Funeral*. Among his many plays are *The Distance from Here*, *The Mercy Seat*, *Some Girl(s)*, *Wrecks*, and *In a Dark Dark House*.

SpeakEasy Stage Company General Manager Paul Melone will direct the Boston premiere of **reasons to be pretty** having previously directed both *Fat Pig* and *The Shape of Things* for SpeakEasy. A native of Rhode Island and a graduate of Boston University, Mr. Melone was honored with a 2010 Elliot Norton for his direction of SpeakEasy’s acclaimed production of *Adding Machine: A Musical* last spring.

Three exciting new Boston-area talents - Burt Grinstead, Andy MacDonald and Danielle Muehlen - will make their SpeakEasy debut with this production. Recent Norton Award nominee Angie Jepson (Honey in *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*) rounds out the cast.

The design team includes Eric Levenson (scenic); Gail Astrid Buckley (costumes); Jeff Adelberg (lighting) and Rick Brenner (sound). Jayscott Crosley is the Production Stage Manager.

reasons to be pretty will play for five weeks, March 4 through April 2, in the Roberts Studio Theatre in the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts, 527 Tremont Street in Boston’s South End.

Ticket prices range from \$30-\$55 with discounts for students, seniors and persons age 25 and under. For tickets or more information, the public is invited to call 617-933-8600 or visit www.SpeakEasyStage.com.

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reasons to be pretty premiered off-Broadway at the Lucille Lortel Theatre in Greenwich Village, produced by MCC Theater, on June 2, 2008 and ran through July 5. It was directed by Terry Kinney and featured Piper Perabo, Pablo Schreiber, Alison Pill, and Thomas Sadoski.

On March 13, 2009, **reasons to be pretty** began previews on Broadway at the Lyceum Theater, making it the first of Mr. LaBute's works to appear on Broadway. The show opened on April 2, 2009 and closed on June 14 after running 85 performances. Terry Kinney also directed the Broadway production, which again featured Piper Perabo and Thomas Sadoski. Marin Ireland and Steven Pasquale were also in the Broadway production.

reasons to be pretty was nominated for three 2009 Tony awards: Best Play, Best Performance by a Leading Actor (Thomas Sadoski), and Best Performance by a Leading Actress (Marin Ireland).

Playwright Neil LaBute received his Master of Fine Arts in dramatic writing from New York University, received a literary fellowship to study at the Royal Court Theatre in London, and attended the Sundance Institute's Playwrights Lab.

His films include *In the Company of Men* (New York Critics' Circle Award for Best First Feature and the Filmmaker Trophy at the Sundance Film Festival); *Your Friends and Neighbors*; *Nurse Betty*; *Possession*; *The Shape of Things*, a film adaptation of his play by the same title; *The Wicker Man*; *Lakeview Terrace*; and *Death at a Funeral*.

LaBute's plays include: *bash: latter-day plays*; *The Shape of Things*; *The Mercy Seat*; *The Distance From Here*; *Autobahn*; *Fat Pig* (Olivier Award Nominated for Best Comedy); *Some Girl(s)*; *This Is How It Goes*; *Wrecks*; *Filthy Talk for Troubled Times*; *In a Dark Dark House*; *Reasons to Be Pretty* (Tony Award Nominee for Best Play); and *The Break of Noon*. This spring, his play *Fat Pig* opens on Broadway, and *In a Forest, Dark And Deep* will premiere in the West End.

LaBute is also the author of *Seconds of Pleasure*, a collection of short fiction which was published by Grove Atlantic.

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For this New England premiere production of **reasons to be pretty**, director Paul Melone has selected four exciting young actors with strong Boston-area ties.

BURT GRINSTEAD (Kent) is a native of Worcester, Massachusetts, and has appeared Off-Broadway as Will in *The Girl in the Park*, Mitch in *Physical*, and Albert Feather in *Ladies in Retirement*. His regional theatre credits include: Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar*, and Hal Carter in *The Picnic*.

ANGIE JEPSON (Steph) returns to SpeakEasy, having previously appeared in *The Little Dog Laughed* (Ellen) and *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)* (Annie, u/s). Other local credits include: Mabel and Mrs. Chevely in *An Ideal Husband* with Gloucester Stage Company, Honey in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* with the Publick Theatre, Bianca in *The Taming of the Shrew* with Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, and Aramintha in Howard Zinn's *Daughter of Venus* at Suffolk University and Boston Playwrights' Theatre. Angie is also a fight choreographer and teacher in the Boston area, and is a graduate of the MFA Acting program at Brandeis University. She currently resides in Somerville.

ANDY MACDONALD (Greg) grew up in Southborough, MA. His NY credits include: *Power of Sail* (Cherry Lane), *The Heidi Chronicles* (Threads), *The Scarecrow* (Metropolitan Playhouse), *Hamlet* (Producers' Club), *Connie Wilde* (Greenwich St. Theatre), and *Much Ado About Nothing* (The Duplex). Regional credits include *A Doll's House*, *A Trip to Cork*, *Baby with the Bathwater*, and various roles at Trinity Rep. He is a graduate of Wheaton College (IL) and received his MFA at Trinity Rep Conservatory. Andy currently lives in Arlington with his wife Lori, and directs high school theatre in Lexington.

DANIELLE MUEHLEN (Carly) is a graduate of Boston University where she earned a BA in Biology. She is also a former Miss Massachusetts, a Miss Massachusetts USA competitor and a former Miss Bay State. Her acting credits include: Helen/Vinnie in *The Donkey Show* (American Repertory Theater); and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* and Audrey in *As You Like It* (Gurnet Theatre Project). She has also performed with Apollinaire Theatre Company, Makeshift Theatre Company and the Independent Drama Society. Film credits include: Jenny in *Fairhaven*.

For more information on **reasons to be pretty**, the public can call the Boston Theatre Scene Box Office at 617-933-8600 or visit www.BostonTheatreScene.com.

Press inquiries should be directed to **SpeakEasy Marketing Director Jim Torres**:
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Calendar Listing Information

reasons to be pretty

By Neil LaBute

A 2009 Tony nominee for Best Play, this incendiary drama from Neil LaBute (*Fat Pig, The Shape of Things*) asks, “How much is ‘pretty’ worth?” Sparked by one man’s offhand remark about his girlfriend’s appearance, *Reasons to Be Pretty* navigates the crumbling relationships of four young friends as they come to terms with their unfulfilling lives and question the American obsession with physical beauty.

Presented by: SpeakEasy Stage Company, the Calderwood Pavilion Resident Theatre Company at the Boston Center for the Arts; Paul Daigneault, Producing Artistic Director

Cast: Burt Grinstead, Angie Jepson, Andy Macdonald, Danielle Muehlen

Director: Paul Melone

Production Stage Manager: Jayscott Crosley

Design Team: Eric Levenson (Scenic Design)
Gail Astrid Buckley (Costume Design)
Jeff Adelberg (Lighting Design)
Rick Brenner (Sound Design)

Performing at: Nancy and Edward Roberts Studio Theatre
in the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion
at the Boston Center for the Arts,
527 Tremont Street in Boston's South End

Press Performance: Sunday, March 6, 2011, 3:00 PM

Performance Schedule: March 4 – April 2, 2011
Wed. & Thurs. at 7:30PM; Fri at 8PM; Sat. at 4PM & 8PM; Sun. at 3PM

Run Time: 1:45 with no intermission

Ticket Prices: Wed. & Thurs. at 7:30 PM; Fri. at 8PM, -- \$50.00 / \$45.00 seniors
Sat. 4PM & 8PM; Sun. at 3PM -- \$55.00 / \$50.00 seniors

Under Age 25: \$25 at all times.

Student Rush: \$14 with valid college ID, at the box-office only, one hour
before curtain, subject to availability

Box Office: 617-933-8600; www.BostonTheatreScene.com

Press Contact Only: Jim Torres – 617- 529-1670 (cell)

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