

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**For hi-res color press photos:**[**http://zspace.phanfare.com/14438754**](http://zspace.phanfare.com/14438754)

**Word for Word** <http://www.zspace.org/aboutwordforword/>
**Z SPACE:** [**https://www.zspace.org**](https://www.zspace.org)

**Word for Word’s First Production of the 2017 Season**

***SMUT: An Unseemly Story***

***(The Greening of Mrs. Donaldson)***

**By Alan Bennett**

**Directed by Amy Kossow**

**Associate Producers Bruce Colman, Sheldeen Osborne**

**May 13 - Jun 11**

 **(previews May 10- 12)**

 **Z Below, 470 Florida St.**

***SMUT: An Unseemly Story (The Greening of Mrs. Donaldson)***by Alan Bennett Word for Word’s first production of the 2017 Season, running May 13 - Jun 11 (previews May 10-12) with a press night on May 13 in the Z Below Theater in San Francisco. Alan Bennett is one of England’s finest and wittiest writers who explores the uncomfortable and tragicomic gap between people’s public appearance and their private desires in this tender and surprising story. Bennett is known for authoring a range of plays and screenplays including the plays: *The History Boys* (Tony 2006), *Kafka's Dick, The Wind in The Willows,The Madness of George III* and for film: *The Lady in*

*The Van*, *A Private Function*, *Prick Up Your Ears*, and *The Madness of King George*. *“A master storyteller who dissects a very English form of secrecy with this story of the unexpected in otherwise apparently ordinary lives,”* remarks co-artistic director JoAnne Winter. **On-stage Seating:** For this production there is a special on-stage seating opportunity. Four patrons at each performance will have an intimate experience of the show, sitting amongst the actors as they perform

In *The Greening of Mrs. Donaldson*, (first of the two novella-sized stories in Smut) a recently bereaved widow finds interesting ways to supplement her income by performing as a patient for medical students, and renting out her spare room. Quiet, middle-class, and middle-aged, Mrs. Donaldson soon discovers that she rather enjoys role-play at the hospital, and the irregular and startling entertainment provided by her tenants.

***SMUT: An Unseemly Story (The Greening of Mrs. Donaldson)*** is directed by Amy Kossow and features Word for Word Charter Members Nancy Shelby (as Mrs. Donaldson), Patricia Silver and Delia MacDougall. Returning to Word for Word are Søren Oliver, Rosie Hallett, Robert Parsons, as well as actors Phil Wong and Andre Amarotico. This production is adapted to the stage by Word for Word Performing Arts Company from *Smut: Stories by Alan Bennett,* a Picador paperback (Farrar Strauss and Giroux Publishers).

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***SMUT: An Unseemly Story (The Greening of Mrs. Donaldson)* By Alan Bennett**

**Directed by Amy Kossow**

**May 13 - Jun 11 (previews May 10- 12) Press Night Saturday May 13, 8pm**

**At:** Z Below, Z Space's second venue, at 470 Florida St.

**Performances;** Wednesday-Thursday 7 pm, Friday-Saturday 8 pm, Sunday 3 pm

**On-stage Seating:** For this production there is a special on-stage seating opportunity. Four patrons at each performance will have an intimate experience of the show, sitting amongst the actors as they perform.

**Ticket prices:** Previews $20, $40-$60. with no additional fees. Tickets: 415-626-0453 or at [www.zspace.org](http://www.zspace.org)

*"The Greening of Mrs Donaldson,” is the first of the two novella-sized stories in Smut. Underneath the story’s gentle demeanor stirs a plot that leads straight to a sort of deep radicalism.“There is a joyous anarchism here—a tale of a late life liberation, told with a narrative tone both tender and comic towards its heroine-protagonist. Bennett brings out the nuances of English life in a fully clothed story, as Mrs Donaldson welcomes her radical adventure with a furious bout of tea-making, the boiling kettle a suggestive substitute for her own fulminating yet impossibly English sensibility.” (JS Tennant, The Guardian, 3/12)*

**Alan Bennett (author)** studied at Exeter College, Oxford. Bennett co-wrote and starred in *Beyond the Fringe*, a satirical review, along with Dudley Moore, Peter Cook and Jonathan Miller, at the Edinburgh Festival in 1960. Later the show travelled to the West End and to New York. After this, he started writing for the stage, and later, plays for television. His work focuses on the everyday and the mundane; on people with typically British characteristics and obsessions.

His first stage play was *Forty Years On*. Other well-known stage plays include *People, The Habit of Art, Untold Stories, Kafka's Dick, The Wind in The Willows, and The Madness of George III.* Bennett’sphenomenally successful play *The History Boys* won the Tony for Best Play 2006, as well as the Olivier in the same year. Alan Bennett has also written for film, including *The Lady in The Van*, *A Private Function*, *Prick Up Your Ears*, and *The Madness of King George*, for which he was nominated for an Oscar for his screenplay adaptation.

**Amy Kossow (director)** was a founding member of the Z Space Studio, and is a Charter Member of Word for Word. With Word for Word, Amy has directed productions of stories by Sam Shepard, Siobhan Fallon, and Mavis Gallant, and readings of stories by Ron Rash, Elizabeth McCracken, Nathan Englander, Dan Chaon, Kay Boyle and Lawrence Block. Favorite WFW acting roles include Ottaline in *The Bunchgrass Edge of the World*, Rose in *Three Blooms*, Abby Borden in *The Fall River Axe Murders*, and Miss Van Vluyck in *Xingu*. Amy appeared as Sadie in the American premiere of *Any Given Day* and as Mary Prime Deity in the rolling world premiere of *The Lily’s Revenge*, both at Magic Theatre. She also originated the roles of Hilda, Ma Humbert, and Miss Martin in Octavio Solis’s adaptation of *John Steinbeck’s The Pastures of Heaven* at CalShakes and at the Arena Stage 2011 New Play Convening.

**Note:Expanded Author Bio and Actor Bios follow release**

**WORD FOR WORD** Performing Arts Company, a program of Z SPACE, is an ensemble whose mission is to tell great stories with elegant theatricality, staging performances of classic and contemporary fiction. Founded in 1993 by Susan Harloe and JoAnne Winter, Word for Word believes in the power of the short story to provide solace, compassion, and insight into our daily lives.

**Z SPACE:** Operating two venues in San Francisco’s historic Mission District, a mainstage and a black box theater, Z Space hosts new works from a variety of performance disciplines year-round. Under Artistic Director Lisa Steindler, keystone initiatives include *New Work*, a development program that supports artists and ensembles from conception to realization of unique works, *Word for Word*, a resident theatre company that transforms works of literature verbatim to the stage, and *Youth Arts*, an arts education program promoting literacy and engaging students’ creativity.

We foster opportunities around the nation for these works and we engage diverse audiences through direct interactions with the process, the projects, and the artists.

**For more information about Z SPACE on the web and social media**:

**WEBSITE:** [**https://www.zspace.org**](https://www.zspace.org)

**FACEBOOK:** [**https://www.facebook.com/zspaceSF/**](https://www.facebook.com/zspaceSF/)

**TWITTER:** [**https://twitter.com/zspaceSF**](https://twitter.com/zspaceSF)

**INSTAGRAM:** [**https://www.instagram.com/zspace\_theatre/**](https://www.instagram.com/zspace_theatre/)

**CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

***SMUT: An Unseemly Story (The Greening of Mrs. Donaldson)***by Alan Bennett opens Word for Word's 2017 season, running May 13 - Jun 11 (previews May 10-12) with a press night on May 13 in the Z Below Theater at 470 Florida St in San Francisco. Alan Bennett is one of England’s finest and wittiest writers who explores the uncomfortable and tragicomic gap between people’s public appearance and their private desires in this tender and surprising story. Bennett is known for authoring a range of plays and screenplays including the plays: *The History Boys* (Tony 2006), *Kafka's Dick, The Wind in The Willows,The Madness of George III* and for film: *The Lady in The Van*, *A Private Function*, *Prick Up Your Ears*, and *The Madness of King George*.

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**Expanded Author Bio and Actor Bios**

**AUTHOR BIO:**

**Alan Bennett** was born in 1934 in Leeds. He studied at Exeter College, Oxford. He co-wrote and starred in *Beyond the Fringe*, a satirical review, along with Dudley Moore, Peter Cook and Jonathan Miller, at the Edinburgh Festival in 1960. Later the show travelled to the West End and to New York. After this, he started writing for the stage, and later, plays for television. His work focuses on the everyday and the mundane; on people with typically British characteristics and obsessions.

His first stage play was *Forty Years On*. Other well-known stage plays include *People, The Habit of Art, Untold Stories, Kafka's Dick, The Wind in The Willows, and The Madness of George III. Bennett’s* phenomenally successful play *The History Boys* won the Tony for Best Play 2006, as well as the Olivier in the same year.

Alan Bennett has also written for film, including *The Lady in The Van*, *A Private Function*, *Prick Up Your Ears*, and *The Madness of King George*, for which he was nominated for an Oscar for his screenplay adaptation.

Alan Bennett’s diffident, often shy public persona and slight aura of coziness belies a sharpness of intellect and wit that has proved adept at dissecting the mores of the English and their institutions across a variety of genres. Bennett’s attitude to England and its institutions lies somewhere in this space between fidelity and detached skepticism. The comic works of Bennett’s early career built his reputation as a playwright concerned with Englishness under strain

His work expresses a fundamental if unfashionable belief in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. The subversive potential inherent in reading and writing is heavily acknowledged, but the enduring impression is of Bennett’s belief in the value of the consumption and enjoyment of literature as a good in itself.

**Actors:**

**Word for Word Charter Members**

**Nancy Shelby** began her career in San Francisco as Mrs. Pascal in the premier production of *The House of Yes* at the Magic Theater*. S*he has performed with companies on both sides of the Bay and in Los Angeles, but for nearly 25 years her artistic home, as both an actor and director, has been with Word for Word and Z Space. She has appeared in more than 15 Word for Word productions, including the award winning ensembles of *In Friendship, Olive Kitteridge, Stories by Tobias Wolff, and Winesburg, Ohio*, and in stories by T.C. Boyle, Dino Buzzati, Angela Carter, Richard Ford, Andrew Sean Greer, Barbara Kingsolver, Alice Munro, John Sayles, Edith Wharton and Virginia Woolf. Nancy has played socialites, school-girls, professors, writers, waitresses, dolls and ghosts, but among these many fictional women, she is most honored to give life on stage to Jane Donaldson.

**Patricia Silver** came to San Francisco in 1968 to work with the San Francisco Mime Troupe; she was in the collective until 1982, then she was part of the Z Collective—which became the Z Space. There she met Susan Harloe and JoAnne Winter as they started Word For Word; she most happily began working in this brilliant form turning literature into theatre; originating characters in dozens of stories including Olive in *Olive Kitteridge.* Other theaters she has worked with: Shotgun, AlterTheater, Marin Theatre Company, Pacific Stage Alliance, Brava!, Agora, TheatreFirst.

**Delia MacDougall** is an actor, director, teaching artist and Charter Member of Word for Word. She last performed with Word for Word in Sam Shepard's *36 Stories*. Other shows for Word for Word include; *Sorry Fugu, The Necklace, Rose Johnny, The Islanders, Friend of my Youth* and *In Friendship*, which she also directed. Other directing credits for the company include; *Immortal Heart, Winesburg, Ohio, Oil!:The Ride, Mrs. Dalloway's Party.*

**Actors:**

**Søren Oliver** is an actor, writer and director and has been performing in Bay Area theatre since the late 70’s. Nationally, Søren has appeared at The Denver Center Theatre Company, The Huntington Theatre Company, The McCarter Theatre Company, The Shakespeare Theatre Company in D.C. and the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Locally, Søren has worked at the Magic Theatre, the California Shakespeare Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, the Aurora Theatre Company, the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Jewish Theatre of San Francisco, Theatre Works, and Word for Word.In the summer of 2015Søren produced and performed in his own play, *Demetrius Unbound (or the Homeric Midlife Crisis),* a farcical sequel to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In spring of 2016 Søren directed “Play it Again, Sam” for the Town Hall Theatre in Lafayette for which he was nominated for a TBA award. Most recently Søren was seen in the Potrero Nuevo Project, produced by PlayGround.

**Rosie Hallett** is an Associate Artist with Word for Word, where she has appeared in the SF and touring productions of *Stories by Emma Donoghue and Colm Tóibín* and *You Know When the Men are Gone* and the French tour of *In Friendship*. Other recent credits include *peerless*, *Native Son*, and *The Way West* at Marin Theatre Company; *The Country House* at TheatreWorks; *Top Girls* and *Harry Thaw Hates Everybody* with Shotgun Players; and *The Winter’s Tale* with SF Shakespeare Festival. When not in the Bay Area, Ms. Hallett can often be found in Paris, where she performs with Big Funk Company in English-language productions. She is a company member of PlayGround, a graduate of Stanford University, and a rising member of Actors’ Equity Association.

**Robert Parsons’**local credits include work at American Conservatory Theatre, Magic Theatre, SF Playhouse, Aurora Theatre, TheatreWorks, Word for Word, Cutting Ball, Shotgun Players and Berkeley Rep. Regional credits include work at Ford’s Theatre, Ahmanson Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Sydney Festival and The Huntington, Alley and Arizona Theatre Companies.

**Phil Wong** is an actor, musician, comedian, and teaching artist from Oakland. His past theatre credits include work with The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Bay Area Children's Theatre, Quantum Dragon Theatre, The Free Theatre, EXIT Theatre, Overcast Theatre, Palo Alto Players, The Breadbox, Boxcar Theatre, The Lamplighters, Los Altos Stage Company, The Bonfire Makers, and TheatreWorks. Mr. Wong is a Resident Artist with SF Shakes, a graduate of Oberlin College, and received his physical theatre training at the Accademia dell' Arte in Arezzo, Italy.

**Andre Amarotico** is a recent graduate of Stanford University, where he earned his bachelor's degrees in both Theater and Political Science, with a minor in Classics. He served as the Executive Director of Stanford Theater Laboratory, a student-run organization that provides free theater to the Stanford community. Theater credits include title roles in both Hamlet and Macbeth. He has appeared in productions at the Cutting Ball Theater, Stanford Repertory Theater, and Ram’s Head Theatrical Society. Andre is a recipient of the Muses Award from the department of Classics at Stanford, as well as the Evelyn M. Draper Prize in Performance from the Stanford Department of Theater and Performance Studies. You can see him next in the Ross Valley Players production of *The 39 Steps*.

(30)

