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**GUILD HALL'S JOHN DREW THEATER TO PRESENT *REAWAKENINGS*, A VIRTUAL READING OF POEMS INSPIRED BY SPRING AND THE MUSEUM'S PERMANENT COLLECTION**

**DIRECTED BY PAUL HECHT WITH MUSIC BY RALPH GIBSON**

**Sunday, May 23 at 8pm EST**



April 29, 2021—East Hampton, NY — The winter blues are making way for a sunny spring, and with that Tony® Nominated actor Paul Hecht, in conjunction with Guild Hall's Chief Curator Christina Mossaides Strassfield, Amanda Kate Joshi, and Ralph Gibson, has organized a celebration of the season with a reading of poems focused on rejuvenation, rebirth and creativity. Recited in the spirit of hopefulness for a new season, *REAWAKENINGS* will be voiced by some of America's greatest actors while a survey of curated images from Guild Hall's Permanent Collection scroll on screen. The inspiring program will take place virtually on **Sunday, May 23 at 8pm ET** on Guild Hall's YouTube Channel.

A true marriage of the visual and performing arts, the evening will feature many luminaries from Guild Hall's storied Academy of the Arts, complete with the music of guitar virtuoso Ralph Gibson. The star-studded cast features F. Murray Abraham, Karen Akers, Wyatt Cenac, Michael Cerveris,

Cornelius Eady, Barbara Feldon, Lynnette R. Freeman, Joanna Gleason, Bill Irwin, Cherry Jones, Susan Lucci, Austin Pendleton, Tony Roberts, Mercedes Ruehl, Salman Rushdie, Chris Sarandon, Michael Stuhlbarg, and Harris Yulin.

Paul Hecht has been an actor for quite a long time. He received a Tony® Nomination for Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1968) and an Obie® for Pirandello's *Henry IV* (1990). He has been in dozens of plays in NYC and around the country including the title role of Cyrano in the world premiere of Anthony Burgess' adaptation at the Old Guthrie. He has recorded many books and curated a poetry series at the Cornelia Street Café. Paul lives in the Springs and Brooklyn with lighting designer Peggy Eisenhauer.

"I met with Josh Gladstone at the Springs General Store last fall to share my idea for a poetry fundraiser for the 90th anniversary of Guild Hall. I had no idea it would turn into a 30-minute 'Zoomie' with such a wonderful (and generous) group of actors," says Hecht. "My charge was to use anyone who had been associated with Guild Hall, and I've pretty much kept to that including 5-year-old Ivy Brondo, the son of staff members Jennifer and Joe Brondo, who opens and closes the piece. Christina Strassfield was invaluable in helping me select the images from the extensive Guild Hall Permanent Collection, and Patrick Dawson was equally invaluable in editing the piece. Ralph Gibson donated some atmospheric music, and the piece was born. I was persuaded to add a short and favorite poem, *The Mower*, by Philip Larkin, which ends with 'We should be careful of each other - we should be kind while there is still time'. I couldn't be more delighted with the way it has turned out and I hope many people will be able to enjoy it."

Of the project, Guild Hall's Museum Director/Chief Curator Christina Mossaides Strassfield said "It was a delightful journey to be able to listen to each of the actors read their poems several times. To write down what emotions penetrated my mind and to discuss with Paul what feeling the art we were to select should invoke to enhance the poem. Some images came immediately to mind and I showed those to Paul and others took a little more research and exploration of Guild Hall Museum's permanent collection website to find the perfect fit. The final product is true poetry in motion!"

The [Virtual Benefit Tickets](#) are **\$75** for "Celebrant", **\$50** "Fully Woke", **\$35** "Waking" and **\$20** "Dreamer". Only one registration (per household) is required. A private link will be sent to all ticket holders 24 hours prior to the broadcast.

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# CELEBRATING 90 YEARS

## **ABOUT GUILD HALL**

Guild Hall, one of the first multidisciplinary centers in the country to combine a museum, theater, and education space under one roof, was established in 1931 as a gathering place for community where an appreciation for the arts would serve to encourage greater civic participation. For nine decades, Guild Hall has embraced this open-minded vision and provided a welcoming environment for the public to engage with art exhibitions, performances, and educational offerings. Art and artists have long been the engine of Guild Hall's activities and the institution continues to find innovative ways to support creativity in everyone.

For more information about this and other programs, visit [guildhall.org](http://guildhall.org).

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