

FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE

COMMUNICATING THE MISSION OF FELLOWSHIP FOR PERFORMING ARTS

Gifts from Fellowship Circle members provide FPA the means to produce compelling theatre from a Christian worldview that engages a diverse audience.

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NATIONAL TOURS

C.S. LEWIS THE GREAT DIVORCE

Portland Newmark Theatre, Mar 13-14
Chicago College of DuPage, Mar 26-29
Milwaukee Pabst Theatre, Apr 10-11
Grand Rapids DeVos Hall, Apr 18
Minneapolis Pantages Theatre, Apr 24-25
Cincinnati Proctor Gamble Hall, May 1-2
Visit CSLewisOnStage.com for up-to-date tour info.
Above dates as of Feb. 16.

C.S. LEWIS THE *Screwtape* LETTERS

Iowa State University Stephens Auditorium, Apr 14
Louisville Kentucky Arts Center, Apr 16-17
Cleveland Playhouse Square, Apr 19
Reading, PA Santander Performing Arts Center, Apr 21
Charlotte Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, Apr 26
Visit ScrewtapeOnStage.com for up-to-date tour info.
Above dates as of Feb. 16.

MARK'S GOSPEL

Houston St. Martin's, Mar 25
New York City Redeemer Presbyterian, Apr 1
Visit MarkOnStage.com for more information

CURTAINS UP ON FPA'S EXCITING YEAR



MARK'S GOSPEL
in Houston and New York
for Holy Week

THE GREAT DIVORCE
resonates in D.C.



MARTIN LUTHER
ON TRIAL
lab production



SCREWTAPE back on tour



How does theatre from a Christian worldview make a difference?

Just a few months into an exciting 2015 for Fellowship for Performing Arts—an answer is emerging.

Consider:

FPA's theatrical adaptation of C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce* extended from nine to 16 performances in Washington, D.C. ... and played to sold-out audiences. *The Washington Post* featured it on its short list of "recommended" shows.

The Screwtape Letters is back on the road in major universities and performing arts centers. This new tour is represented by William Morris Endeavor, the agency that books the most popular theatrical productions in the world.

After a five-year hiatus, FPA Founder and Artistic Director, Max McLean's, solo rendition of *Mark's Gospel* is back on the road

for Lent. Performances will be at St. Martin's in Houston, the largest Episcopal church in the country, and McLean's home church, Redeemer Presbyterian, in New York City. The last time McLean presented *Mark's Gospel* (the text is directly from the Bible) it received a Jeff Award for excellence, Chicago theatre's highest honor.

And this summer, FPA will stage a developmental lab production of its first original work, *Martin Luther on Trial*.

"It's gratifying to see FPA producing four great works from the canon of Christian literature and drawing new audiences across the country," McLean said. "But more importantly, these classics capture the imagination and express the depth, humor and pathos of the Christian life in ways that entertain, convict and, for some people, are life-changing."

Continued on back

LONGING FOR GLORY

Special FPA Weekend Creates a Committed Fellowship

Last fall, 140 supporters of Fellowship for Performing Arts gathered in New York City from across the country.

They came for a variety of reasons: To experience the sights and sounds of Midtown Manhattan in glorious fall weather and the historic Villard Mansion, the centerpiece of the elegant Palace Hotel where the Fall Weekend Donor Briefing took place. To hear leading Christian thinkers like Tim Keller, Max McLean and Matt Heard discuss art, the Bible, theology and culture.

To experience seven Broadway actors give a staged presentation of FPA's new play now in development—*Martin Luther on Trial*. To experience a moving rendition of C.S. Lewis' *The Weight of Glory*.

To worship together, encouraging each other and growing in their understanding of how theatre from a Christian worldview is making a difference.

"Bring together 140 like-minded people for three days who love the Lord and have a deep appreciation for the Bible, arts and theatre, as well as the insights of C. S. Lewis," McLean said, "and there's going to be some spiritual combustion."

So many reasons for attending. But whatever drew each attendee, the impact was the same:

"The weekend gave me a greater longing for the glory of God," Mary MacRae said.

"I didn't expect the level of spiritual depth in that room," Don and Fara Avery said. "It was like a youth retreat that we didn't want to end."

"We were blessed in so many ways," Don and Roberta Livesay said. "You have much more than our congratulations for a well-run event; you have our gratitude for not holding back, not mincing words in sharing how God is leading you. Both of us were inspired deeply."



Individuals arrived in New York. But they left it a fellowship.

"It's easy to overlook that the word 'fellowship' is in our name," McLean said. "And not just any fellowship ... a Fellowship *for* Performing Arts."

The event's purpose was straightforward—to encourage those who support us by demonstrating the spiritual power of art, to more deeply explore where God is leading FPA and to seek the support of those who connect with our mission.

And our Fellowship responded. Pledges made totaled more than \$2.5 million.

"Our fellowship circle of supporters makes it possible for FPA to share the Christian worldview with diverse audiences nationwide," McLean said. "This was just one weekend, but the effect is similar to the connections we seek to make with audiences who attend our shows in performing arts venues across the country."

In the meantime, *The Great Divorce* is on the road. *The Screwtape Letters* will begin touring again in the U. S. while continuing to look for a London home. Our production of *Mark's Gospel* comes back for the first time in five years. *Martin Luther on Trial* moves toward its June developmental lab. And FPA will host a similar donor event in New York this year.

Thank you for your vital part in helping all these curtains rise. ■



They're Still Listening

After 20 years, *The Listener's Bible* continues touching lives

The spoken word has power.

At Fellowship for Performing Arts, we see this week in and week out as audiences respond to the national tour of C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce*.

But before this production hit the road, before *The Screwtape Letters* began its long run in New York and nationally ... other words were being spoken.

And they, too, had power.

They still do.

"I am an over-the-road truck driver," Dale Szarmack recently wrote to FPA about *The Listener's Bible*, narrated by Max McLean.

"Driving for a living does not allow me to read as much as I should, but with this audio Bible, I can listen as I drive."

In its early days, FPA's reach was limited to the one-man presentations of books of the Bible such as *Mark's Gospel*, *Genesis* and *Acts* that Max staged nationwide. Recording and distributing *The Listener's Bible*—on tape, CD, by MP3

download, on the radio, in daily devotionals—offered new avenues for the power of the spoken word to do its work: namely, to touch lives.

And we engage millions of listeners around the world with McLean's vocal performance of the NIV, KJV and ESV Bible on BibleGateway.com and the free YouVersion Bible app.

In fact, we've recently launched a redesigned and more robust website, www.ListenersBible.com.

"The recording is crystal clear, and Mr. McLean reads the text with just the right amount of inflection," Szarmack wrote. "Hats off to Fellowship for Performing Arts and Max McLean for a quality product."

And our hats are off to Dale and the millions of others who continue to tap into God's word as it is spoken on *The Listener's Bible*.

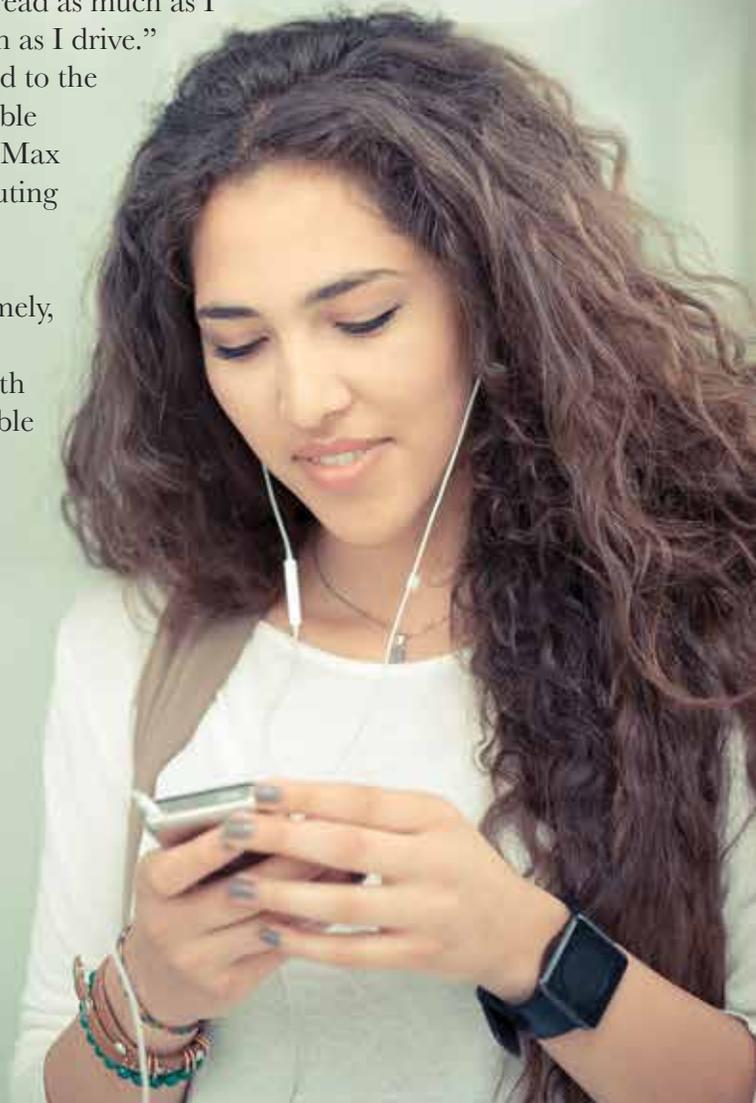
"I'm humbled by the response over the years to *The Listener's Bible*," said McLean, who was twice nominated for Best Inspirational Audio by the Audio Publisher's Association. "Knowing it continues to touch lives fills me with delight." ■

"This is a powerful recording. McLean conveys excitement and conviction, which sweeps the listener into the heart of the Word of God."

— AudioFile Magazine



"We still engage diverse listeners around the world with *The Listener's Bible* in various versions."



Discerning God's Will for FPA



When I was in my 30s, the subject of God's will often came up in my prayer life. Being a theatre artist in an evangelical environment increased my desire for a clear answer. Most Christians didn't understand the power of expressing their faith through the arts, and there weren't any models to follow.

One Sunday morning about 15 years ago, my pastor, Tim Keller, outlined how he discerns God's will and shared it with the congregation. His message resonated deeply with me, and I have since shared it with others, especially young people who have approached me with the same question.

The three points Tim gave on how to discern God's will are affinity, ability and opportunity. Let me explain each.

Affinity—What are you passionate about? What has the Holy Spirit put into your heart that captures your imagination and desire so that you would be willing to invest the necessary time, resources and training to do it? God uses our passions to direct us to where he wants us to contribute to the body of Christ.

Ability—What are you really, really good at? Passion is not enough. What gifts, talents and special abilities has God given you so that you can make a significant contribution to the body of Christ? My life

verse is Eph. 2:10: We are "created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." In my case, he gave me the skill sets to express the Christian worldview imaginatively through theatrical storytelling.

Opportunity—Where has God opened doors?

When I founded Fellowship for Performing Arts 23 years ago, I had no idea where God would take it. I was not ambitious for it. I was just hoping to survive. But little by little He began to open doors. And through the long view of almost a quarter century, I can see how key people he brought alongside me in prayer, encouragement and support inspired me to "to press on toward the goal . . . for which God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

I write this because Fellowship Circle members like you have clearly provided the open door for FPA to visibly express the passion and skills God has provided us as a team to contribute to the body of Christ in our culture in order to make him known. Thank you for being such an important part of what we do. ■

THANK YOU
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CURTAINS UP *Continued from front*

One couple—longtime Fellowship Circle members—took Jewish friends to see *The Great Divorce*.

"One of them is usually very talkative. But she was quiet and thoughtful. The other one was full of curiosity. 'What is FPA?' 'Who is Max McLean?' 'Let's start a book club and make *The Great Divorce* our first book.'"

"I expect that sort of response," McLean said. "If Christianity is true and we execute its message with excellence, people will experience God's presence and reality. It brings the Holy Spirit into the room."

And our new partnership with William Morris Endeavor will open doors for *The Screwtape Letters* to engage audiences in venues where FPA has not been before and may not otherwise have had access to. Most of these venues rarely, if ever, promote programming from a Christian worldview.

"These opportunities to fulfill our mission excite all of us at FPA," McLean said. "And it makes us even more mindful of the thanks we owe to our Fellowship Circle of supporters. FPA develops these shows and puts them in front of audiences. Your support makes it possible." ■

Please make your tax-deductible gift to FPA using the enclosed card. With any gift of \$1,000 or more, your name will be included in our playbill as a member of FPA's Fellowship Circle. (See insert for level details.)

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