



# West End Players Guild News Release

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*Come for the music, stay for the show...*

## West End Players Guild presents Michael Hollinger's *Opus*

ST. LOUIS, MO (March 19, 2013) – Four chairs, five people. That's one way to describe the story of Michael Hollinger's *Opus* – only this game of musical chairs is played not at a children's party, but at the highest levels of musical art.

West End Players Guild will wrap its season of St. Louis premieres with this staging of Hollinger's 2006 play, directed by Jerry McAdams.

In the play, the world-renowned Lazara String Quartet is feverishly prepping for its biggest performance ever – nationally-televised from the White House. It is probably the worst possible time for the group to fire Dorian (played by Stephen Peirick), the group's most gifted but most troublesome member. However, that is exactly what they have done; Dorian's chair will be given to Grace, a talented but untested young violist (Caitlin Mickey). Dorian has disappeared, but he is not gone forever.

Thus is set the stage for a play that the Rep's Steven Woolf calls "A special look at what happens backstage in the world of chamber music. This theatrical and unique play shares the joy, tension and dedication required to make great music." (The Rep recently announced that it will present *Opus* as the fourth show of its 2013-14 Mainstage season.) The *New York Times* also praised *Opus* in its 2007 review, noting "Mr. Hollinger, a former violist who moved on to theater after studying music at Oberlin, generates plenty of subtle heat in his play about the unstrung lives of the members of a string quartet."

Dennis Folwarczny, Jon Hey and John Wolbers complete the ensemble cast as the musicians of the Lazara String Quartet.

However, the fictional Lazara String Quartet will not be the only musical ensemble gracing the West End stage during the run of *Opus*. One-half hour before most performances patrons will be treated to a set by one of three talented local chamber music groups. On opening night, Friday, April 5, the Cahokia String Quartet will play. A Fifth Above Woodwind Quintet will play on Saturday, April 6. The Quartet Brioso will play before four performances, including the evening shows Thursday-Saturday, April 11-13, and the Sunday matinee on April 14. Patrons are encouraged to arrive early and enjoy the pre-show music.

Evening performances of *Opus* will be April 5-6 and 11-13 at 8:00 p.m.; Sunday matinees will be April 7 and 14 at 2:00 p.m. New for the 2012-2013 season, WEPG has added a Thursday evening show to the second weekend of each run. All shows are in the theatre at the Union Avenue Christian Church, 733 Union Blvd. (just north of Delmar). There is ample free parking in the lot at the rear of the building, near the theatre entrance. Tickets for all shows can be purchased on-line at [www.WestEndPlayers.org](http://www.WestEndPlayers.org); telephone reservations are accepted at 314/367-0025.

West End Players Guild is St. Louis's oldest continuously-operating theatre company, providing "big theatre in a small space" since November, 1911, and now presenting its second century of performances. For more information on our history, season tickets and volunteer opportunities, please visit us online at [www.WestEndPlayers.org](http://www.WestEndPlayers.org).

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Violist Grace (played by Caitlin Mickey) occupies the chair formerly held by Dorian (Stephen Peirick), the most gifted but also most temperamental player in the Lazara String Quartet. The group has replaced Dorian as it begins preparation for its most important concert ever, but Dorian may not be gone for good. The West End Players Guild presents Michael Hollinger's ***Opus***, directed by Jerry McAdams, April 5-14 at the theatre in the Union Avenue Christian Church. (Photo by John Lamb)