Throughout history there are eras in which philosophy, art, science, and culture suddenly converge and make a discontinuous leap into the future.

One could argue that we are now in such an era (although I suspect that few would see the current moment as optimistically as they would the time period of our play).

*Picasso at the Lapin Agile* is set in 1904, a time when Paris was the center of the world for innovation, science, technology, and the arts – only 15 years earlier the Eiffel Tower was built to serve as the grand entrance to the 1889 World’s Fair. As Arthur I. Miller writes in *Einstein/Picasso: Space, Time, and the Beauty That Causes Havoc*, “ideas were in the air and so was the desire for change.”
It is hard to imagine two figures who more influenced the world we inhabit today than Picasso and Einstein.

Picasso’s painting, *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* changed forever the way the world looked at art. Before this revolutionary work, most artists painted with one viewpoint in mind in an attempt to capture reality. What made Picasso’s breakthrough painting so stunning was the simultaneousness of multidimensional viewpoints. By showing us the images of five women from multiple perspectives, Picasso overturned the art world; immediately a new movement called Cubism developed and spread, and it remains vital to this day.

Almost at the same time, Einstein initiated a scientific revolution with the publication of his papers on relativity. As Miller explains it in his book, “Page for page, Einstein’s relativity papers are unparalleled in the history of science in their depth, breadth, and sheer intellectual virtuosity as well as in the dramatic break with the past they precipitated in how the world is understood, perceived, and experienced.” Miller goes on, “in the intellectual atmosphere of 1905 it is not surprising that Einstein and Picasso began exploring new notions of space and time almost coincidentally… Picasso and Einstein believed that art and science are means for exploring worlds beyond perception, beyond appearances.”

Enter Steve Martin, that wild and crazy (and incredibly talented) guy, who sums it up thusly, “the play attempts to explain, in a light-hearted way, the similarity of the creative process involved in great leaps of imagination in art and science.”

But, finally, a play like *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* exists to amuse and delight. One of the most valuable experiences that the theatre offers is to make us laugh and thereby leave us, in the words of critic George Nathan, “delighted, reinvigorated, and enlivened.”

It is a great joy to return to the Alley, with its outstanding resident company of actors and designers and its amazing staff and management. In addition to provoking some thought, we hope that our efforts leave you delighted, reinvigorated, and enlivened.