



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Photo by Joan Marcus

Dear Friends,

I first met Larry Wright a decade ago, when he was performing a solo show based on his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Looming Tower*. The play, entitled *My Trip to Al-Qaeda*, was a revelation. Larry was a charming, warm, and confidence-inspiring performer, but the real revelation was how utterly gripping the drama was. Here was one of America's great investigative journalists able to transform his vast knowledge into compelling theatre. How could I not love him?

Dinner after the show confirmed I had found not only a writer I admired, but a man who would go on to be a cherished friend.

Since that time, Larry and I have worked on a number of projects and undertaken some wild adventures. In 2010 we created another show, *The Human Scale*, also a solo performance by Larry. In that show Larry used the kidnapping of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in the Gaza Strip as a way of examining Jewish and Palestinian relations from biblical times to the present. We took that show to the Mideast, performing at the Cameri Theater in Tel Aviv and engaging in the most substantive and heated post-show discussions I have ever experienced. Sadly, we were prevented from performing in the West Bank by the shocking assassination, still unsolved, of Juliano Mer-Khamis. Juliano was the founder of The Freedom Theatre in Jenin, and the theatre's leadership thought it was too dangerous for us to perform there.

The Human Scale, and our tour, was one of the most significant events in my life, and Larry and I went through it together (along with my beloved assistant of many years, the talented director Johanna Gruenhut. She has reunited with us to work on *Camp David*, as well. Her intimate knowledge of the Mideast, along with her fluent Hebrew, has made her especially essential to this project.)

Larry literally wrote the book on Camp David: *Thirteen Days in September*. Who better to bring us into the heart of the most violently contentious region of our time? It's an honor to work with him.

As it is to direct in Rob Melrose's first season here at the Alley. Rob and I have crossed paths and shared duties and theatres for many years, and for the last dozen years been friends and collaborators. He is a man of enormous brains, heart, and integrity, and I am so pleased that he has found a home in Houston. He's going to make great theatre here, and I know he will make you proud. He's certainly made me proud.

Oskar Eustis