20 South Street

20 South Street is a new company that seeks to create collaborative theatre with a breadth of vision.

Taking as an inspiration the work of Robert Lepage, Steppenwolf Theatre Company and Katie Mitchell, 20 South Street look to release the actor's freedom on stage to create visceral, emotional performances and work closely with designers to produce a unique environment in which the actors and audience can discover a play.

Current projects in development for 2011 and beyond are:
Hamlet—a revisionist one man version of the tragedy with New York actor Bryan Kaplan
Summer by Edith Wharton—a stage adaptation of the short novel by the first female Pulitzer prize winner

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Desire
Premiere in Catalan—Teatre Romea, Barcelona, 8 February 1991, directed by Sergi Belbel.

Premiere of the English translation—Rehearsed reading in The Studio, Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, 11 November 1999, directed by Suzanne Bell (as part of the *Made in Spain* series).
The Husband—Simon Coury; She—Julia Stubbs; The Man—David Crellin; The Woman—Martine Brown.

Desire is published by Methuen as part as Modern Catalan Plays.

20 South Street would like to thank the following for their assistance and support with the production of *Desire*:
Josep Maria Benet i Jornet and Sharon G. Feldman; Michael Kingsbury at the White Bear Theatre; Nuria Corominas at the Institut Ramon Llull; Kate Harrison at Wells & Young, Estrella Damm; Corrina Stokes; Phil Underwood; Suzanne Bell; Maddy Pickard; Lawrence Till; Richard Williamson; Yukiko Kato.

20 South Street presents the UK premiere of

Desire

by Josep Maria Benet i Jornet
translated by Sharon G. Feldman
White Bear Theatre, London
13th–31st July 2010

The Cast

The Husband	Simon de Deney
She	Annabel Cleare
The Man	Stephen Connery-Brown
The Woman	Isabelle Gregson

The Creative Team

Director	Julia Stubbs
Designer	Mike Lees
Lighting Designer	Rei Kurosaki
Sound Designer	Damian Reynolds
Flyer Design	Positive Design
PR, Marketing & Photography	Grey Swan

Josep M. Benet i Jornet has authored more than forty plays in Catalan. His many honours include the Josep M. de Sagarra Prize, four Serra d'Or Critics' Prizes, the National Catalan Literature Prize for Theatre, the National Theatre Prize from the Spanish Ministry of Culture, the Cross of Saint George from the Autonomous Government of Catalunya, and the Max Prize for best Catalan play. In May 2010, he received the prestigious Max Award of Honour for his entire professional trajectory in the theatre in Spain.

Sharon G. Feldman is Professor of Spanish and Catalan Studies and Chair of the Department of Latin American and Iberian Studies at the University of Richmond (Virginia). A specialist in theatre and performance from the Iberian Peninsula, she has held visiting appointments in the graduate programs in scenic arts at the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela and the Institut del Teatre de la Diputació de Barcelona/Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Her recent publications include the book *In the Eye of the Storm: Contemporary Theater in Barcelona* (Serra d'Or Critics' Prize for Research in Catalan Studies) and *Barcelona Plays*, a co-edited collection of Catalan drama in translation. Her translations of Catalan plays by Carles Batlle, Sergi Belbel, Josep M. Benet i Jornet, Lluïsa Cunillé, and Pau Miró have been staged and read in Canada, England, Germany, Ireland, and the United States. She is grateful to John London for his assistance in translating *Desire*.

REI KUROSAKI – Lighting Designer

Trained at London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Previous lighting design credits include: *Smokey Joe's Cafe* at Twickenham RFU St George's Suite, *Pages* at Pacific Playhouse, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Oval House, *Fight Night* at MacOwan Theatre. As assistant lighting designer her work includes: *Studies for Portrait* at White Bear Theatre, *Godspell* at Twickenham RFU Live Room, and recently worked as associate lighting designer for *Tape* at Old Red Lion Theatre.

DAMIAN REYNOLDS – Sound Designer

Damian is a multi-award winning sound designer. His sound design and dubbing mixer work is produced through the acclaimed Farm Group. His recent TV credits include: ITV's Bafta winning *The X Factor* and *Britain's Got Talent*, for the BBC, *Gavin and Stacey*, *The Mighty Boo*sh, *Victoria Wood's Xmas Special*, RTS award winners *The Satanic Versus* and *Apparitions*.

Damian also composes and produces music for TV and Theatre. He has just finished writing a new children's animation TV series and is currently writing two new musicals that will be performed in 2011.

GREY SWAN – PR, Marketing & Photography

A visionary arts consultancy company that aims to support new and experimental work by providing personal attention to the next generation of theatre makers.

Through our expert knowledge in press, marketing, fundraising and producing theatre, we can assist in the development of your production's goals and your artistic ambitions. Our focus is to provide a bespoke service that responds to the specific needs of your project, whether that is a single press campaign, assistance in a funding application or the complete tailor made package of a national tour.

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THE CREATIVE TEAM

JULIA STUBBS – Director

Trained as an actor at Manchester Polytechnic School of Theatre and is part of the Young Vic Directors Program and an Associate Member of Old Vic New Voices.

Directing credits include *One September Night* by Beverly Andrews (Lost Theatre One Act Festival); *Tape* by Stephen Belber (Old Red Lion, Yaller Skunk Theatre Company); the World Premiere of *Burn* by Andy McQuade (Underbelly, Edinburgh Festival Fringe—co directed with Timothy Hughes); the West End transfer of *In My Name* by Steven Hevey (Trafalgar Studios, Yaller Skunk Theatre Company); the World Premieres of *Thin Toes* by Laura Stevens (Pleasance, Islington) and *Remembering You like something I'd Forgotten* by Louise Buchler (National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa – co directed with Hazel Barnes) and *It's a Girl* by John Burrows (B-FIT: Bucharest Festival of International Theatre), as well as readings of new work by Alexandra Denye, Richard Appleby and Nick Harrop.

Julia was Joint Artistic Director of Weaver Hughes Ensemble from 1997-2008, whose acclaimed productions included the London premiere of *Fanny and Faggot* by Jack Thorne (Finborough Theatre and Pleasance Courtyard), the UK premiere of *Valparaiso* by Don DeLillo (Old Red Lion Theatre) and world premieres of new work by writers including Philip de Gouveia, Amy Evans, Rhiannon Tise, Darren Murphy, Paul Tucker and Dominic Francis.

MIKE LEES – Designer

Mike trained in production design, having previously worked as an actor, stage-manager, make up and scenic artist. Mike has created costumes, set, installations and styled for various publications, events and performers throughout the UK, Europe and America. Recent set and costume designs include *Holding Hands at Paschendale* (Lyric Belfast); *Bones* (Bush Theatre); *Still Life at the Penguin Cafe* (Savoy Ballroom); *Fred Astaire: his Daughter's Tribute* (London palladium); *Gone* (New Ambassadors); *What I Heard About Iraq* (Arts Theatre and UK tour); *Scouts in Bondage* (Kings Head); *Cinderella* (Harrow Playhouse); *High School Musical* (Garden Square Beirut); *jet set go!* (Jermyn Street Theatre); *On the Ceiling*; *Alvaros Balcony*; *Loving Art*; *Blood Wedd*ing; the UK premiere of Sondheim's *Do I hear a Waltz* and *Assassins* (Landor Theatre); *A Tale of Two Cities the musical* (directed by Paul Nicholas); *Big Bruvva the musical*; *Dinner*; *Forever Plaid*; *The Young Ones*, *Humble Boy*; *Talent* (all upstairs at the Gatehouse Highgate); *Happy End* (Chelsea Theatre); the workshop production of *Mathilde* (directed by Simon Callow at the Vaudeville Theatre London and Edinburgh) *Pete & Dud Come Again* (the Venue Leicester Square). Mike is currently concept designer for several forthcoming new musicals and has just completed his first film.

THE CAST

SIMON DE DENEY – The Husband

Theatre includes *The Country Wife*, (Mermaid); *Christmas Carol*, (Dukes); *Spider's Web*, (Wolsey); *Charley's Aunt*, (Middsboro); *Beneath The Waves*, (Eastern Angles); *Twelfth Night* (Canizaro Park); *Miss Chester*, (Player's); *Frankenstein*, (Jackson's Lane), *The Duchess of Malfi*, (Tristan Bates); *Felix*, (King's Head), *Unmanned*, (Arcola). Television includes *House of Elliot*; *The Upper Hand*; *Rose Cottage*. Film includes *Damage*; *Shining Through*; *Another Country.*

ANNABEL CLEARE – She

Annabel trained at Drama Centre. Theatre credits include *Pebbles on the Beach* by Joanna Pinto (Edinburgh 2008 / Old Red Lion); Genevieve in *Lost* (Pentameters Theatre at the Etcetera Theatre); Carrie in *Ballad of a Thin Man* by Judy Upton for Channel Theatre and Vi Poulton in *Too Much Punch for Judy* for Ape Theatre Company. Film and Television roles include Catherine in *Killing Time*; the *Minoan Snake Goddess* for Time Watch; Judith Campbell in Channel 4's *JFK Revealed* and the Farmer's Wife in the *McCain Homefries* Rooftop Commercial (Chips Glorious Chips…).

STEPHEN CONNERY-BROWN – The Man

Stephen graduated from East 15 Acting School in 2006 - and since then has completed five theatre tours, and appeared in several fringe shows and various short films and corporate films. He has just completed a series of short radio plays.

ISABELLE GREGSON—The Woman

Isabelle Gregson graduated from East 15 Acting School in 2006. *There's Something in the Fridge that Wants to Kill Me!* (Underbelly, Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2008) was her debut one woman show, based on her colourful life to date including her career changes (peep show dancer to international advertising executive) and her multiple national identities (she speaks fluent French and Spanish). Since then, Isabelle has appeared on TV in *Wire in the Blood* and *Law & Order: UK*. Recently, she was cast as Séverine opposite Jim Broadbent in William Boyd's adaptation of his novel *Any Human Heart*. Directed by Michael Samuels for Carnival films, the four part drama will air on Channel 4 later on this year. Isabelle is also writing her first novel *The Shy Exhibitionist*.

“Who I am and Why I write”

At my childhood home in the Sant Antoni neighbourhood of Barcelona, where I was born in 1940, there were very few books. We didn’t go to the theatre; nevertheless, as soon as I learned to read, books became a passion for me. If the choice were a toy or a book (we didn’t have the means for both), I would always prefer a book. In fact, I always wanted to be a writer. I wanted to be a writer like the boy who wants to be an astronaut, knowing that it’s a lie, that it can never be. I was a typical neighbourhood child, adapted to my surroundings but without any other points of reference. Lacking in self-esteem and, with even less confidence in my intellectual abilities, with two parents who were anxious about my ineptitudes, I began to write. And I knew that I would never stop writing: first novels, then plays. You can imagine what they were like.

During the misery and unhappiness of the post-Civil War period, my constant distraction for many years were comic books (they would arrive in a slow trickle, one each five or six months), and with any scrap of paper that I could find —usually the paper that was used to wrap food at the market—, I would create my own comic books, entire collections, including drawings and text. At home they thought I liked to draw and that I had talent (a lie), and they didn’t pay much attention to the fact that my drawings were always accompanied by a plot. Those clumsy drawings, image and dialogue, served as the bridge that led me to the theatre. But why the theatre? I don’t understand it; it’s a mystery: the origin of this obsession is incomprehensible to me. With plenty of sacrifices (I was continually reminded of them), my father wanted me to accomplish what he could not: that I study Industrial Engineering.

I would skip class and escape to the National Library of Catalunya and would avoid my responsibilities, reading new and different writers who were slightly beyond the purely commercial authors. I had the instinct to break through my own ceiling of interests, and I did it feeling my way around in the dark, with absolutely nobody to guide me and tell me that perhaps I was mistaken.

My rebellion, I believe, took place at the age of eighteen. After Christmas vacation, I announced to my parents that I had no plans to return to the Industrial School. My father, generously, desperately, asked me what it was that I wanted to do with my life. I wasn’t expecting the question but, instinctively, I replied that wanted to study Philosophy and Letters. They agreed to pay. My time at the University of Barcelona was very important to me. My objective was not to have an academic career; it was to find a way to write for the theatre. My classmates gave me lessons in literature, in modern thought. The professors did not, but my classmates did. For the first time I was able to find relevant points of reference and, for the first time, there were people who valued my work. Not so much, but at least a bit.

At the University I finally began to understand that I had to forge linkages with Catalan culture, and I participated, without any sort of protagonism, in the struggle against the Franco regime. But I wasn’t a militant member of any party. With Professor Joaquim Molas and my friend Joan-Lluís Marfany, in clandestine classes, I learned most of what I know about Catalan literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the Adrià Gual School of Drama, I was able to connect with people who were key players in the theatrical renewal that was taking place in Barcelona. The year 1963, unexpectedly, I was awarded the first Josep M. de Sagarra Theatre Prize. It was the beginning of a career as a playwright —one that I had dreamt of but had considered impossible— .

I am a playwright, I would say, because of an unavoidable stroke of fate, in spite of myself, in spite of my limitations, in spite of my weaknesses. There should be another more rational analysis than this one, but my love for the theatre has been, and is, an obsession that completely conditions my life. I have very little confidence in myself, but I know that I’ll never stop writing for the theatre, I’ll never stop struggling to create plays that are each time more rigorous and ambitious than those that I have written previously.

I still stumble, but I stumble while trying to raise the bar. Writing is not easy. Writing a play can be likened to wanting to construct a cathedral, a work with infinite problems, without any certainty that they will be resolved. Whatever the theme may be, a sense of terror always overtakes me when I finish a new play. My texts, of course, are often converted into theatrical spectacles and, despite an instinctive misanthropy, I love to be with theatre people. I find the rehearsal process to be a fascinating, enriching experience. The night of the premiere is the most angst-ridden thing in the world. But it is also the most beautiful, and I wouldn’t trade it for anything.

I don’t know whether I could say that Desire is one of my most beloved plays, but I could say that it has been one of the most cherished works on the part of critics and audiences. It represented a turning point in my career as a playwright. I wrote it in 1989, when I was in the midst of a creative crisis, and, from then on, almost nothing has ever been the same.

Josep M. Benet i Jornet

(Translated by Sharon G. Feldman)