



A 'Zoo Story' first act, 50 years later

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THE HOMECOMING

A chronicler of Philadelphians, playwright **Bruce Graham** now calls Philly home

Bruce Graham in the lobby at Arden Theatre Company. "Something Intangible" is his third play to be produced by the Arden.

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Philadelphia's best-known playwright — and screenwriter not named M. Night Shayamalan for that matter — only technically moved to Philly this year. Born and raised in Ridley, Delaware County, and a longtime Media resident, Bruce Graham has spent the better part of his 52 years just a stone's throw from the characters and language of Philadelphia.

Perhaps no other writer has so successfully brought the daily rhythms of Philly's everyman to the stage, and his recent move to South Philly is like a Hollywood ending for the writer and his muse. "I was 35 and still living on my old street. So I'm not big on change," says Graham with a short laugh. "It's so much more exciting here. I see more theater, more movies. Just walking the dog is fun."

Graham's latest, "Something Intangible," begins

previews at the Arden Theater Co. next week. And it's a bit of a departure for this chronicler of everyday lives. Inspired in part by the relationship between Walt and Roy Disney, the play is centered on a relationship between brothers, both producers in the Hollywood of 1941. Graham thought up the first act, and scribbled it down feverishly, while on a fishing trip in Alaska. A confessed write-aholic, he found himself in the pristine serenity of Alaska

with little to do. "You're only allowed to catch one King Salmon a day. Well, I caught mine at 6:15 in the morning," he explains between sips of coffee just a block away from the Arden. "So I pulled out my notebook and wrote the first act in one week, cause I always caught my fish first. So we'd go back and fry up some fish and I'd write looking out at the

water. Perfect."

While his plays have been produced around the country, Off-Broadway and on London's West End ("Coyote On a Fence," starring Ben Cross), it's the nitty-gritty of the initial staging that he finds most enticing. A notorious perfectionist, he will likely be at all of the previews for his latest, keeping himself busy by trimming and nib-

bling on the text right up until opening. "I really check out the first couple of audiences. They can teach you a lot, especially with the jokes," he explains. "I don't freeze the script usually until two nights before opening. I need that audience to jazz me up."

'Something Intangible'
Arden Theatre Co.
20 N. 2nd Street
Apr. 9 – Jun. 7
\$29 - \$48, 215-922-1122
www.ardentheatre.org

'Something Intangible' opens April 9



The language is always organic with Bruce. He writes for the time period. This play is set in the 1940s, and it has a real 40s flair." **Ian Merrill Peaks, actor**