Welcome to Center Theatre Group’s production of the World premiere of *Archduke* by Rajiv Joseph, which follows a group of young men on their surprising journey from high school to terrorism, and to the event that started World War I: the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie on June 28, 1914.

We meet three young men—Gavrilo, Nedejlko, and Trifko—in Belgrade, Serbia. Poor and alone, each is diagnosed with tuberculosis and told he only has a few months to live. They have nothing to lose, which makes them the perfect recruits for a secret, violent organization fighting for Serbian independence. Apis, the organization’s charismatic leader, explains to them that they have two options: die from a senseless illness and be forgotten, or take action and be remembered forever. All they have to do is pull the trigger.

“Everyone’s gonna die, but the bein’ forgotten part that is what’s getting me.”

—Gavrilo

Why is the idea of being forgotten frightening? Is it important to you to be remembered? What do you hope to be remembered for?
The byproduct of oppression... our young men and women, unable to breath,

—Apis

The assassination took place just two weeks before his 20th birthday. Since Princip was a minor, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison instead of receiving a death sentence. He died of tuberculosis in a prison hospital in 1918.

Gavrilo Princip
The Assassin
Princip was born in a small town in present-day northwest Bosnia. In 1912, at age 19, he traveled to Belgrade after being expelled from his last year of high school and volunteered to join Serbian rebels fighting against Turkey. The rebels, however, would not take him because of his poor health.

Dragutin “Apis” Dimitrijevic
The Mastermind
Apis founded The Black Hand to remove foreign rule permanently, liberating all Serbs and creating an independent Kingdom of Serbia.

He had a reputation for extreme violence, and even before organizing the plot to kill the Archduke, was already famous for his brutal involvement in other assassinations and his ability to recruit young people for the nationalist movement.

Following the assassination of Ferdinand, Apis was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death by firing squad.

We are not meant to be ruled by men who do not share our past.

—Apis

Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease that most often affects the lungs. If left untreated, TB kills about half of those infected, by destroying the body’s ability to process oxygen and patients eventually suffocate. We now have vaccines and treatments, but still one-third of the world’s population is thought to be infected with TB.

Many felt they could only break free of Austria-Hungary through rebellion. Several underground rebel groups were formed, most notoriously The Black Hand, a secret nationalist organization willing to combat violence with violence in order to establish an independent Serbian nation.

In June 1914, The Black Hand recruited a small group of young men to assassinate Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne and soon to be king of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Exactly one month after the assassination, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Germany sided with Austria-Hungary, and Russia, Belgium, France, and Great Britain took Serbia’s side, beginning World War I.

What does it feel like when someone has power over you?
What would you do if you found yourself ruled by someone who didn’t know your culture or values?

What would it be like to be a teenager living in Serbia over 100 years ago? Does focusing on the people, change the way you think about the history?

Written by Megan Matthews

The characters we meet in Archduke live in a country where outsiders make the decisions and have the power.

What does it feel like when someone has power over you?

What would you do if you found yourself ruled by someone who didn’t know your culture or values?

What would it be like to be a teenager living in Serbia over 100 years ago? Does focusing on the people, change the way you think about the history?

Why tell a story about an event in the past?

Can learning history change our actions in the present?

What can history tell us about our world today?
WELCOME TO THE THEATRE!

WHERE?

Archduke will be performed at Center Theatre Group’s Mark Taper Forum in downtown Los Angeles.

Founded in 1967, Center Theatre Group, a nonprofit organization, is one of the largest and most active theatre companies in the nation, programming shows year-round at the Ahmanson Theatre and Mark Taper Forum in Downtown Los Angeles and the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Downtown Culver City.

WHO?

Theatre involves many people working together to tell a story: Playwright, director, actors, designers, musicians, stage manager, crew members, make-up artists, house manager, ushers, maintenance staff, producers, educators, administrative staff.

WHAT?

Theatre is LIVE, right there in front of you, in real time. The performers respond to the way you listen, laugh, gasp and applaud. Live theatre can’t happen without you!

WHY?

“When those two things collide, the political forces of the world and the primal nature of one’s own being, sparks fly... that intersection of the primal and the political has been the guiding force for me as the playwright.”

—Rajiv Joseph

Bank of America  |  JPMorgan Chase & Co.  |  Wells Fargo

The real Trifko Grabež, Nedeljko Ćabrinović and Gavrilo Princip.

This play is a recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. Center Theatre Group’s production of Archduke is also supported by the Laurents/Hatcher Foundation.

The Student Matinee Program also receives generous support from Renee & Meyer Luskin, Deena & Edward Nahmias, Laura & James Rosenwald & Orinoco Foundation, Eva & Marc Stern, the Artists & Educators Forum and the Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation.

CenterTheatreGroup.org  |  213.972.8030  |  @CTGLA

CENTER THEATRE GROUP