



AHMANSON THEATRE
MARK TAPER FORUM
KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE

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For immediate release

**CENTER THEATRE GROUP ANNOUNCES
2017-2018 SEASON AT THE KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE**

**Center Theatre Group's 14th Season at the Douglas Features
a World Premiere Comedy, a Pulitzer Finalist Drama,
the West Coast Premiere of a Smash Hit Parody of a Mega-Hit Musical,
Plus the Continuation of an Exciting New Tradition**

**Paul Rudnick's "Big Night," Gerard Alessandrini's "Spamilton"
Quiara Alegria Hudes' "Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue," and the Second Annual Block Party
Make Up the New Season at Center Theatre Group's Kirk Douglas Theatre**

The New Season Begins September 3, 2017, and Runs Through May 20, 2018.
For a complete listing of plays and performance dates, please see final page of this release.

Center Theatre Group Artistic Director Michael Ritchie has set the 2017-2018 season at Center Theatre Group's Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City.

"This is a diverse season of productions at the Douglas," said Ritchie. "But one thing they all have in common is that they resonate with the arts and culture of Los Angeles.

"We open with humorist Paul Rudnick's hilarious but moving look at that uniquely L.A. holiday, Oscar night. In 'Big Night,' Paul begins his story on a day when Hollywood seems to be the center of the universe and then turns the world upside down.

"The next work also looks toward Hollywood, where the run of 'Hamilton' promises to be a juggernaut," said Ritchie. "And for the people who come out of 'Hamilton' wanting more or those just left wanting tickets, Gerard Alessandrini's 'Spamilton' salutes and skewers Lin-Manuel Miranda's masterwork ... and it's a flat-out funny night in the theatre.

"Next we looked to our own theatre across town, the Mark Taper Forum, where we are producing Quiara Alegria Hudes' 'Water by the Spoonful.' It's a powerful work, but it is only one chapter in Quiara's stunning trilogy. By producing 'Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue' at the Douglas, we are able to dive more deeply into the work of this exciting playwright.

“And finally, while we are only halfway through our inaugural Block Party, it is already clear that this is a tradition that needs to continue. We chose three productions from Southern California’s many intimate theatres for this year’s Block Party. It has allowed us to introduce our audiences to three amazing theatre companies and deepen our connections with the deep pool of talent and creativity that makes the L.A. theatre community such a singular force.

“Theatre is a collaborative art form that, at its best, sparks conversations among the artists that create it and the audience members that experience it. This season’s productions are guaranteed to keep people talking – at times they may change the way you see your neighbor, at other times they may change the lyrics you sing to your favorite tune – but over the course of the season they will make you laugh, cry, dance and explore the countless theatrical opportunities the city has to offer.”

“Big Night”
by Paul Rudnick

Obie-winning playwright and renowned humorist Paul Rudnick brings his sharp wit and insightful eye to “Big Night,” getting its world premiere as the first play of the 2017-2018 season at Center Theatre Group’s Kirk Douglas Theatre. Directed by Walter Bobbie, “Big Night” runs September 3 through October 1, 2017, with the opening set for September 10.

It is the night of the Oscars and a working actor turned Oscar nominee knows that his life is about to change – he just doesn’t know how profoundly. His transgender nephew has plans for his speech, his young agent has plans for his future, his unstoppable mother has plans for the catering and his partner is nowhere to be found. Master satirist Paul Rudnick blends a deep humanity with a honed sense of hilarity in this powerful and funny play about family and fame, the personal and the political, and the drive to stand up and speak out.

Paul Rudnick is a playwright, novelist, essayist and screenwriter, whom The New York Times has called “one of our pre-eminent humorists.” His plays have been produced both on and Off-Broadway and include “I Hate Hamlet,” “Jeffrey,” “The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told,” “Regrets Only” and “The New Century.” He’s won an Obie Award, two Outer Critics Circle Awards and the John Gassner Playwriting Award. Rudnick’s novels include “Social Disease” and “I’ll Take It,” both from Knopf. He’s a regular contributor to The New Yorker and his articles and essays have appeared in Vanity Fair, Esquire, Vogue and The New York Times. HarperCollins published his “Collected Plays” and a book of essays entitled “I Shudder.” He’s rumored to be quite close to Premiere magazine’s film critic, Libby Gelman-Waxner, whose collected columns were published under the title “If You Ask Me.” His screenplays include “Addams Family Values,” the screen adaptation of “Jeffrey” and “In & Out.”

“Spamilton”
by Gerard Alessandrini

Center Theatre Group will produce the West Coast premiere of the hit musical parody “Spamilton,” November 5 through December 31, 2017, with opening set for November 12. Created, written and directed by Gerard Alessandrini, “Spamilton” celebrates and satirizes the Broadway blockbuster with a versatile cast of five.

The world premiere Off-Broadway production of “Spamilton” has been extended several times and had Lin-Manuel Miranda exclaiming, “I laughed my brains out!”

Marilyn Stasio of Variety mused, “Hip-hop, Broadway showtunes, Viennese waltzes – is there anything this guy can’t write? No, not ‘Hamilton’ creator Lin-Manuel Miranda, but Gerard Alessandrini, whose ingenious parody ‘Spamilton’ simultaneously salutes and sends up Miranda and his signature musical.” And Ben Brantley of The New York Times said, “This smart, silly and often convulsively funny thesis, performed by a motor-mouthed cast that is fluent in many tongues, is the work of that eminent specialist in Broadway anatomy, pathology and gossip, Gerard Alessandrini.”

“We’re very excited about expanding the show a bit,” Alessandrini said. “We will also be adding up-to-date references to ‘Hamilton,’ Lin-Manuel Miranda and their impact on the current Broadway season. So look out Glenn Close, Bette Midler and Evan Hansen!”

Gerard Alessandrini is best known for creating and writing all 25 editions of “Forbidden Broadway” in Los Angeles, New York, London and around the world. Alessandrini was featured in the 1982 cast of “Forbidden Broadway” and can be heard on four of the 12 “Forbidden Broadway” cast albums. Television writing credits include comedy specials for Bob Hope, Angela Lansbury and Carol Burnett. Directing credits include Maury Yeston’s “In the Beginning.” As a director, he is currently working on an upcoming revue focusing on the songs of Maury Yeston, entitled “Anything Can Happen (In the Theatre).” Alessandrini is the recipient of an Obie Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, two Lucille Lortel Awards, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Drama League and seven Drama Desk Awards (including two for Best Lyrics for “Forbidden Broadway” and two special lifetime awards). Alessandrini was also awarded an Honorary Tony Award for “excellence in the theatre.”

“Elliot, A Soldier’s Fugue”
by Quiara Alegría Hudes

The 2007 Pulitzer Prize finalist “Elliot, A Soldier’s Fugue” by Quiara Alegría Hudes will be produced at the Douglas January 27 through February 25, 2018. Directed by Shishir Kurup, the opening is set for February 3.

A soldier, like his father and his father’s father, 19-year-old Elliot is back from Iraq with a Purple Heart. As he recovers from his injuries and decides whether to return to Iraq, he yearns for a truer connection with his father and considers his own limited options outside the military.

Phoebe Hoban of The New York Times said “‘Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue’ is that rare and rewarding thing: a theater work that succeeds on every level, while creating something new. The playwright, Quiara Alegría Hudes, who has degrees in music (a bachelor's from Yale) and playwriting (a master's from Brown), combines a lyrical ear with a sophisticated sense of structure to trace the legacy of war through three generations of a Puerto Rican family.”

“Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue,” the first in a trilogy of plays, will be produced at the Douglas at the same time as Center Theatre Group is presenting the second play in that trilogy, Hudes' Pulitzer-winning “Water by the Spoonful” at the Mark Taper Forum. Presented together, they offer Los Angeles theatre audiences a rare opportunity to immerse themselves in the work of this exciting playwright's work.

Quiara Alegría Hudes' trilogy continues with “The Happiest Song Plays Last” (2012). “Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue” premiered Off-Off-Broadway by Page 73 Productions and was a finalist for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. “Water by the Spoonful” premiered at Hartford Stage Company and won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. “The Happiest Song Plays Last” premiered at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago in 2013. Hudes wrote the book for the Broadway musical “In the Heights,” which received the 2008 Tony Award for Best Musical, a Tony nomination for Best Book of a Musical and was a 2009 Pulitzer Prize finalist. Other works include the plays “26 Miles” and “Yemaya's Belly” and the children's musical “Barrio Grrr!” Hudes grew up in West Philadelphia where she studied music with Don Rappaport, Dolly Krantzapolski and Linda Hudes. She was later mentored by playwright Paula Vogel at Brown University. Hudes is an alumna of New Dramatists and sits on the board of Philadelphia Young Playwrights, which produced her first play in the 10th grade.

Block Party: Celebrating Los Angeles Theatre

Drawing upon the rich local theatre community, Block Party: Celebrating Los Angeles Theatre will return to the Kirk Douglas Theatre for its second season. Presented over six weeks, March 29 – May 20, 2018, Block Party will feature three productions from local 99-seat or smaller theatres.

Los Angeles is home to over 250 theatre companies that feature an abundance of talent, diversity and ingenuity. Center Theatre Group is tapping into this deep pool of artists for Block Party – a selection of three recent productions from local theatre companies, highlighting some of the best work the city has to offer.

Center Theatre Group has a long history of pairing with local theatre companies including the Deaf West production of “Big River” which was produced at the Mark Taper Forum in 2003 and went on to Broadway before returning to the Ahmanson Theatre in 2005 as part of a national tour. More recently, Center Theatre Group partnered with Ebony Repertory Theatre for the remounting of “A Raisin in the Sun” (which played at the Douglas in conversation with the play's sequel/prequel “Clybourne Park” which was presented simultaneously at the Taper), with 24th Street Theatre for “Walking the Tightrope” (also at the Douglas) and participated in other productions

around the city such as “The Behavior of Broadus” (with Burglars of Hamm and Sacred Fools Theater Company) and “Birder” (with the Road Theatre Company).

Center Theatre Group received 76 submissions for the inaugural Block Party, which is currently running at the Douglas. The plays selected for the current Block Party are Coeurage Theatre Company's production of “Failure: A Love Story” by Philip Dawkins, The Echo Theater Company's production of “Dry Land” by Ruby Rae Spiegel and The Fountain Theatre's production of “Citizen: An American Lyric” by Claudia Rankine and adapted for the stage by Stephen Sachs.

Theatre companies from the greater Los Angeles area are invited to submit shows for the 2018 Block Party. The plays must have opened at a local intimate theatre between January 1, 2016, and May 30, 2017. Applications are being accepted beginning Friday, April 28 and continuing through May 30, 2017. Theatre companies interested in submitting an application should visit www.CenterTheatreGroup.org/BlockParty.

2017-2018 Season is Currently Available by Season Ticket Memberships Only

The 2017-2018 season at the Douglas is currently available by season ticket memberships only. For information and to purchase season tickets by phone, call the Exclusive Season Ticket Membership Hotline at (213) 972-4444. For more information about season tickets visit CenterTheatreGroup.org/Douglas.

The Douglas Experience

A popular feature of the Kirk Douglas Theatre is The Lounge, where patrons can enjoy a cocktail before the show in the comfortable lobby of the theatre, and chat with the well-informed and engaging staff. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks can be taken into the seating area. (Many of the productions feature themed cocktails – Tiny Timtinis for The Second City's “A Christmas Carol: Twist Your Dickens!”)

Patrons are encouraged to come early and explore the interactive displays and activities in The Lounge that are specially crafted for each production. Past productions have included experiences as diverse as a photo booth where patrons could have their photo taken laughing alone with the salad of their choice (for “Women Laughing Alone with Salad”), a timeline showing the history of Chavez Ravine with an area left blank for patrons to add their own memories of Los Angeles (for “Chavez Ravine”), and an electric guitar in the historic ticket booth of the theatre for patrons to rock out with (for “The Black Suits”).

In addition, the productions are followed by Audience Talks – post-show conversations in The Lounge facilitated by Center Theatre Group's knowledgeable and specially trained staff.

The Kirk Douglas Theatre is located at 9820 Washington Blvd. in Culver City. Parking is free in the nearby Culver City's City Hall garage, and a number of the restaurants within steps of the theatre offer exclusive discounts to Kirk Douglas Theatre ticket holders.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation's preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles' leading nonprofit theatre company, programming seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2000-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation's leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

Center Theatre Group's 2017-2018 Season at the Kirk Douglas Theatre

First Season Production:

September 3 – October 1, 2017
(Opens September 10)

“Big Night”

Written by Paul Rudnick
Directed by Walter Bobbie.
World Premiere.

Second Season Production:

November 5 – December 31, 2017
(Opens November 12)

“Spamilton”

Created, Written and Directed by
Gerard Alessandrini.
West Coast Premiere.

Third Season Production:

January 27 – February 25, 2018
(Opens February 3)

“Elliot, A Soldier’s Fugue”

by Quiara Alegría Hudes
Directed by Shishir Kurup.

Fourth Season Production:

March 29 – May 20, 2018
(Openings March 31, April 21
and May 12, 2018)

Block Party:

Celebrating Los Angeles Theatre

Three productions selected from local
theatre companies, highlighting some of
the best work of L.A.

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April 27, 2017