



**JASON MARTIN**  
Head of Publicity

T: 213.972.7376 | CTGMedia@CTGLA.org

601 W TEMPLE ST | LOS ANGELES, CA 90012 | [CenterTheatreGroup.org](http://CenterTheatreGroup.org)

For immediate release.

**CAST IS SET FOR CENTER THEATRE GROUP'S PRODUCTION OF "HEAD OF PASSES"  
AT THE MARK TAPER FORUM SEPTEMBER 13 THROUGH OCTOBER 22, 2017  
Phylicia Rashad Returns to the Taper in Tarell Alvin McCraney's Piercing New Play**

Center Theatre Group has announced the cast for "Head of Passes" by Oscar winner and playwright **Tarell Alvin McCraney**. Directed by **Tina Landau** and featuring Tony winner **Phylicia Rashad**, "Head of Passes" begins previews September 13, opens September 24 and continues through October 22, 2017, at the Mark Taper Forum.

Joining the previously announced Rashad, the cast includes, in alphabetical order, **Alana Arenas, Francois Battiste, Kyle Beltran, J. Bernard Calloway, James Carpenter, John Earl Jelks** and **Jacqueline Williams**.

The creative team includes scenic design by **G.W. Mercier**, costume design by **Toni-Leslie James**, lighting design by **Jeff Croiter** and sound design by **Rob Milburn** and **Michael Bodeen**. The production stage manager is **David S. Franklin**.

Family and friends are gathering to celebrate Shelah's (Rashad) birthday under the leaky roof of her home at the mouth of the Mississippi River. But an unwanted birthday party and unrelenting rains are only the first challenges in this contemporary parable inspired by the Book of Job in which unexpected events turn the reunion into the ultimate test of faith and love. As her world seems to collapse around her, Shelah must fight to survive the rising flood of life's greatest challenges in this poetic and piercing new play.

When "Head of Passes" was presented at The Public Theater, Ben Brantley of The New York Times said, "... in her remarkable, pull-out-all-the-stops performance in Tarell Alvin McCraney's 'Head of Passes,' Ms. Rashad gives the impression that she could definitely hold her own on Shakespeare's blasted heath. Portraying a sorely tested Southern matriarch, she can be found railing against God and the elements with a harrowingly Lear-like rage." Linda Winer of Newsday observed, "If Phylicia Rashad had not already taken us on formidable journeys through the world of August Wilson and so many other formidable dramas, it would be tempting to call Shelah, the matriarch in 'Head of Passes,' the role of a lifetime."

Phylicia Rashad last performed at the Taper in 2003 in the world premiere production of August Wilson's "Gem of the Ocean," a role that would earn her a 2005 Tony

nomination. She won the 2004 Tony for Best Actress in a Play for her performance as Lena Younger in “A Raisin in the Sun.”

Tarell Alvin McCraney co-wrote the Oscar-winning film “Moonlight,” which is based on his play “In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue.” The film earned him an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay. McCraney is an ensemble member at Steppenwolf Theatre Company and founding member of Teo Castellanos/D-Projects. In addition to the MacArthur “Genius” Grant, he has received the Doris Duke Artist Award, Whiting Award, Steinberg Playwright Award, Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright, The New York Times Outstanding Playwright Award, the Paula Vogel Playwriting Award and the Windham Campbell Award. He was International Writer in Residence for the Royal Shakespeare Company (2009 to 2011) where he remains an associate artist. He is a professor of theatre and civic engagement for the University of Miami’s department of theatre. McCraney is the Artistic Director of the Youth Arts Leadership Summer Program. His Public Theater productions include “Head of Passes,” “The Brother/Sister Plays” and an edit of “Antony and Cleopatra.” “The Brothers Size” was a part of the Under the Radar Festival and other credits include “Choir Boy” and “Wig Out.”

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.

Tickets to “Head of Passes” are available by calling (213) 628-2772, online at [www.CenterTheatreGroup.org](http://www.CenterTheatreGroup.org) or at the Center Theatre Group Box Office located at the Ahmanson Theatre. Tickets range from \$25 – \$95 (ticket prices are subject to change). The Mark Taper Forum is located at The Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue in Downtown L.A. 90012.

# # #

July 20, 2017