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**REVISED\***

For immediate release

**CENTER THEATRE GROUP CELEBRATES 50 YEARS  
AT THE MARK TAPER FORUM**

**THE 2017-2018 SEASON FEATURES ONE WORLD PREMIERE,  
A PULITZER PRIZE WINNER, A NEW WORK BY A MACARTHUR “GENIUS”  
AND THE RETURN OF A GROUNDBREAKING TAPER PLAY**

**IN ADDITION TO FIVE PLAYS IN THE THEATRE,  
“REMOTE L.A.” WILL TAKE THE CELEBRATION TO THE STREETS**

**The 2017-2018 Season at the Mark Taper Forum  
Begins January 31, 2017, and Runs Through March 11, 2018**

**[For complete listing of plays and performance dates, please see final page of release.]**

**\*Please note the dates of “Zoot Suit” and “Archduke” are different from the originally announced schedule, “Heisenberg” has been added and “Soft Power” is no longer part of the Mark Taper Forum 2017-18 Season**

Center Theatre Group celebrates 50 years in the iconic Mark Taper Forum with the 2017-2018 season announced today by Artistic Director Michael Ritchie. The new season features five plays that represent the past, present and future of the theatre, plus a special immersive event on the streets of Los Angeles.

“Theatre has always created an extraordinary connection between artists and audiences,” said Ritchie. “Nowhere is that more clear than in the uniquely intimate space of the Mark Taper Forum. And that connection continues well beyond the curtain call in plays like Luis Valdez’s ‘Zoot Suit,’ which changed the cultural landscape when it premiered at the Taper almost four decades ago and will continue to offer a vital insight when it opens our 50th season at the Taper in 2017.”

“I am also excited to welcome back Rajiv Joseph with the world premiere of ‘Archduke,’” Ritchie continued. “Drawing on Rajiv’s signature dark comedy and ability to

draw parallels between current and historical events, this new work offers a fascinatingly personal look at the path to terrorism.”

“MacArthur ‘Genius’ Grant winner Tarell Alvin McCraney comes to the Taper for the first time with his powerful new work ‘Head of Passes.’ Phylicia Rashad is recreating her tour de force performance from the production at The Public Theater earlier this year. And we will present our first play by Quiara Alegria Hudes with her Pulitzer-winning ‘Water by the Spoonful.’”

“Our 50th anniversary also includes a special event,” added Ritchie. “‘Remote L.A.’ is a production that literally takes the performance out of the theatre, changing the way we see our city and interact with the community at large.”

“Over the past 50 years the Taper has been a place to explore diverse perspectives, experience new ideas and be entertained by amazing storytellers. This theatre has sparked countless conversations, and as I look at our upcoming season and many seasons to come, I know it will spark a million more,” Ritchie concluded.

### **“Zoot Suit”**

Written and Directed by Luis Valdez

Center Theatre Group’s 50th anniversary season at the Mark Taper Forum kicks off with one of the most iconic works from the Taper’s past, “Zoot Suit,” written and directed by Luis Valdez, January 31 through March 19, 2017.\* Presented in association with El Teatro Campesino, the opening night of “Zoot Suit” is February 12.

“Zoot Suit” was originally commissioned and developed by Center Theatre Group, playing for nearly a year in Los Angeles first at the Taper from August 6 to October 1, 1978, then from October 10, 1978, through July 1, 1979, at the Aquarius in Hollywood, and went on to become Broadway’s first Chicano play, was made into a major motion picture and became a cultural phenomenon.

Nearly forty years after its world premiere, the original creator will once again fill the Taper’s stage with a company of 25 actors, singers and dancers weaving fact and fiction together as they portray the events surrounding the infamous 1942 Sleepy Lagoon murder in Los Angeles. Filled with heart, sly wit and the infectious songs of Lalo Guerrero, “Zoot Suit” remains an urgent portrayal of the clash between generations in a Chicano family, the rifts between cultures in America and how racism and injustice can haunt a city and a society.

Luis Valdez founded the internationally renowned and Obie Award-winning El Teatro Campesino (The Farm Workers’ Theater) in 1965 during the United Farm Workers (UFW) struggle and the Great Delano Grape Strike in California’s Central Valley. His involvement with Cesar Chavez, the UFW and the early Chicano Movement left an indelible mark that remains embodied in all his work: his early actos (short plays written to encourage campesinos to leave the fields and join the UFW), his mitos (mythic plays) gave Chicanos their own contemporary mythology, his examinations of Chicano urban life

in “I Don’t Have To Show You No Stinkin’ Badges,” his Chicano re-visioning of classic Mexican folktales in “Corridos” and his exploration of his indigenous Yaqui roots in “Mummified Deer.”

Valdez’s screen credits include “Zoot Suit” (featuring Edward James Olmos), “La Bamba” (starring Lou Diamond Phillips), “The Cisco Kid” (featuring Jimmy Smits and Cheech Marin) and “Corridos: Tales of Passion and Revolution” (with Linda Ronstadt). Awards include LA Drama Critic Circle Awards, Bay Area Critics Awards, the George Peabody Award for excellence in television, the Presidential Medal of the Arts, the Governor’s Award from the California Arts Council and Mexico’s prestigious Aguila Azteca Award given to individuals whose work promotes cultural excellence and exchange between the U.S. and Mexico. He was inducted into the College of Fellows of the American Theatre at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. In 2007, he was awarded a Rockefeller fellowship as one of the 50 U.S. artists so honored across the United States. Valdez was recently inducted into the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences as a director.

### **“Archduke”**

By Rajiv Joseph

Directed by Giovanna Sardelli

World Premiere

Pulitzer finalist Rajiv Joseph returns to Center Theatre Group with the world premiere of “Archduke.” Directed by Giovanna Sardelli, Joseph’s insightful and darkly comic play, a Center Theatre Group commission, begins April 25, 2017, and runs through June 4. Opening night is May 7.\*

“Archduke” follows the unlikely path to terrorism as three strangers, already struggling to get by, receive a death sentence in the form of a tuberculosis diagnosis. But being young men with nothing to lose in Belgrade, 1914, makes them the perfect recruits for a secret organization looking to strike a blow in the name of Serbian nationalism.

“Archduke” explores the short journey from individual hardship to public harm as personal desperation is cultivated into an act with international significance and a few average men spark World War I.

Rajiv Joseph’s “Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo” premiered at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in 2009 before moving to the Taper in 2010 and Broadway in 2011. “Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo” was named a 2010 Pulitzer Prize finalist for Drama and was also awarded a grant for Outstanding New American Play by the National Endowment for the Arts. Joseph’s play “Guards at the Taj” was a 2016 Obie winner for Best New American Play and 2016 Lucille Lortel winner for Best Play. His other plays include

“The North Pool,” “Gruesome Playground Injuries,” “Animals Out of Paper” and “The Lake Effect.” His plays have been translated and produced worldwide.

Rajiv Joseph has written for television and film and is the librettist for the opera “Shalimar the Clown,” adapted from the novel of the same name by Salman Rushdie, which had its premiere this past June at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

He has been awarded artistic grants from the Whiting Foundation, United States Artists and the Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. Joseph received his B.A. in creative writing from Miami University and his MFA in dramatic writing from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. He served for three years in the Peace Corps in Senegal.

### **“Heisenberg”**

By Simon Stephens

Directed by Mark Brokaw

Manhattan Theatre Club’s acclaimed production of “Heisenberg” by Tony Award and two-time Olivier Award winner Simon Stephens has been announced as part of Center Theatre Group’s 50th Anniversary Season. This insightful and entertaining new play comes to the Taper June 28 through August 6, 2017. Opening is set for July 6.

Directed by Drama Desk Award winner Mark Brokaw and featuring Denis Arndt and Tony, Emmy and Golden Globe winner Mary-Louise Parker, the creative team for “Heisenberg” includes Mark Wendland (scenic design), Michael Krass (costume design), Austin R. Smith (lighting design) and David Van Tieghem (sound design).

Amidst the bustle of a crowded London train station, Georgie (Parker) spots Alex (Arndt), a much older man, and plants a kiss on his neck. This electric encounter thrusts these two strangers into a fascinating and life-changing game as “Heisenberg” brings to blazing, theatrical life the uncertain and often comical sparring match that is human connection.

When “Heisenberg” received its world premiere at Manhattan Theatre Club in 2015, Ben Brantley of The New York Times called the play “a probing work that considers the multiplicity of alternatives that could shape our lives at every moment.” On returning to see the Broadway run in 2016, Brantley said “Heisenberg” “seems more shimmeringly and satisfyingly elusive each time I see it.” Adding that Parker and Arndt are “the sexiest couple on a New York stage just now.”

Mark Kennedy of Associated Press said playwright Simon Stephens “does nothing less than alchemy here. He captures new love and old love at the same time, hope and fear, the new world and the old. He’s turned the simplest of tales — boy meets girl — into an unexpectedly rich thing with just two chairs, two tables and two actors.” Jesse Green of New York Magazine added, “Under Mark Brokaw’s exquisite direction, the two actors could not be better.”

“Heisenberg” was commissioned by Manhattan Theatre Club and received its world premiere in the summer of 2015 as part of The Studio at Stage II – Harold and Mimi Steinberg New Play Series, MTC's initiative to bring bold new work to audiences. “Heisenberg” was then transferred to the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre in 2016.

**“Head of Passes”**

By Tarell Alvin McCraney

Directed by Tina Landau

Tony Award-winning actress Phylicia Rashad returns to the Taper stage in “Head of Passes,” an astonishing, deeply moving new drama about family, acceptance and the power of faith by MacArthur “Genius” Grant recipient, playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney (“The Brother/Sister Plays”). Directed by Tina Landau, “Head of Passes” begins performances on September 13 and continues through October 22, 2017. The opening night is set for September 24.

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 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."

**"Water by the Spoonful"**

By Quiara Alegría Hudes

Directed by Lileana Blain-Cruz

The 2012 Pulitzer Prize-winning play "Water by the Spoonful" by Quiara Alegría Hudes will be presented at the Taper January 31 through March 11, 2018. Directed by Lileana Blain-Cruz, the opening of "Water by the Spoonful" is set for February 11.

A janitor, a software mogul, a college grad and an IRS paper-pusher have one thing in common. Although they live thousands of miles apart, these four people share a secret: they're recovering addicts who have found a safe haven in an online chat room. There, with liberal doses of jokes and bullying, they help each other navigate the broken terrain of their lives. But when an Iraq War veteran's tragedy spills over into their cyberhome, everything changes. In this fearless play by Quiara Alegría Hudes ("In the Heights"), worlds virtual and real unfold onstage, challenging our notions of family, forgiveness, community and courage.

When it played off-Broadway, Charles Isherwood of The New York Times said, "'Water by the Spoonful' gives off a shimmering, sustaining warmth. Ms. Hudes writes with such empathy and vibrant humor that regeneration and renewal always seem to be just around the corner."

Quiara Alegría Hudes is the author of a trilogy of plays including "Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue" (2006), "Water by the Spoonful" (2011) and "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 Krantzopolski 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 tenth grade.

**“Remote L.A.”**

By Rimini Protokoll

Concept, script and direction by Stefan Kaegi

Co-directed by Jörg Karrenbauer

Presented outside of the Mark Taper Forum as a bonus production in addition to the regular subscription, “Remote L.A.” runs March 12 through April 2, 2017. Opening is set for March 14.

Written and directed by award-winning international documentary theatre team Rimini Protokoll, “Remote L.A.” invites audience members to join a group of 50 people venturing out into Los Angeles on a guided audio tour that seems to follow its audience members as much the audience is following it. Audience members meet up, put on headphones and have their perspectives changed as they are provided with a soundtrack to the streets, parking garages and rooftops of Los Angeles. A computer-generated voice guides the group’s movements on a course through the city in real time. The performance reveals a “secret Los Angeles,” continuing to places normally unseen, places where humans encounter their limits, places where crowds gather, hidden alleys, back hallways and common areas seen through a new lens. At times the group is given tasks—take the Metro, travel at a new pace. They are not just audience members—they become actors and spectators, observers and observed, individuals and hordes, all at the same time.

Helgard Haug, Stefan Kaegi and Daniel Wetzels have been working as a team since 2000, and since 2002 they have written collectively under the label Rimini Protokoll. At the focus of their work is the continuous development of the tools of the theatre to allow for unusual perspectives on our reality. They have created works in dozens of cities around the world, winning the NRW Impulse Preis, the European Theatre Prize for “New Realities,” the Faust Theatre Prize and the European Prize for New Theatre Forms among others.

Jörg Karrenbauer has collaborated with Rimini Protokoll since 2003. Together with Stefan Kaegi he's focused on site-specific projects. He adapted Kaegi's “Remote“ for more than 30 cities in Europe, India and the US.

**Center Theatre Group's 2017 – 2018 Mark Taper Forum Season  
Available on Membership Only**

Tickets for the Mark Taper Forum's 50th season are currently available by season ticket membership only. For information and to charge season tickets by phone, call the Exclusive Season Ticket Hotline at (213) 972-4444. To purchase season memberships online, visit [www.CenterTheatreGroup.org/Taper](http://www.CenterTheatreGroup.org/Taper).

Center Theatre Group offers a number of services to accommodate persons requiring mobility, vision, and hearing access. For more information, please visit [www.centertheatregroup.org/access](http://www.centertheatregroup.org/access)

**Center Theatre Group**

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 Mark Taper Forum**

**First Season Production**

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January 31 — March 19, 2017\*  
(Opens February 12.)

**“Zoot Suit”**

Written and Directed by  
Luis Valdez  
Presented in association with  
El Teatro Campesino

**Bonus Production**

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March 12 — April 2, 2017  
(Opens March 14.)

**“Remote L.A.”**

By Rimini Protokoll  
Concept, script and direction  
by Stefan Kaegi  
Co-directed by Jörg Karrenbauer

**Second Season Production**

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April 25 — June 4, 2017\*  
(Opens May 7.)

**“Archduke”**

By Rajiv Joseph  
Directed by Giovanna Sardelli  
World Premiere

**Third Season Production**

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June 28 — August 6, 2017  
(Opens July 6.)

**“Heisenberg”**

By Simon Stephens  
Directed by Mark Brokaw

**Fourth Season Production**

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September 13 — October 22, 2017  
(Opens September 24.)

**“Head of Passes”**

By Tarell Alvin McCraney  
Directed by Tina Landau

**Fifth Season Production**

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January 31 — March 11, 2018  
(Opens February 11.)

**“Water by the Spoonful”**

By Quiara Alegria Hudes  
Directed by Lileana Blain-Cruz

**\*Please note the dates of “Zoot Suit” and “Archduke” are different from the originally announced schedule, “Heisenberg” has been added and “Soft Power” is no longer part of the Mark Taper Forum 2017-18 Season**

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