

2019/20 SEASON

FIRST SEASON PRODUCTION

A PLAY IS A POEM

By Ethan Coen

Directed by Neil Pepe

World Premiere

Sep 11 – Oct 13, 2019

SECOND SEASON PRODUCTION

LATIN HISTORY FOR MORONS

Written by & Starring John Leguizamo

Directed by Tony Taccone

Sep 5 – Oct 20, 2019

Presented at the Ahmanson Theatre

OR

THE NEW ONE

Written & Performed by Mike Birbiglia

Directed by Seth Barrish

Oct 23 – Nov 24, 2019

Presented at the Ahmanson Theatre

THIRD SEASON PRODUCTION

AUGUST WILSON'S JITNEY

Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson

Nov 22 – Dec 29, 2019

FOURTH SEASON PRODUCTION

WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME

By Heidi Schreck

Directed by Oliver Butler

Jan 12 – Feb 16, 2020

FIFTH SEASON PRODUCTION

THE ANTIPODES

By Annie Baker

Directed by Lila Neugebauer

Mar 25 – Apr 26, 2020

SIXTH SEASON PRODUCTION

KING JAMES

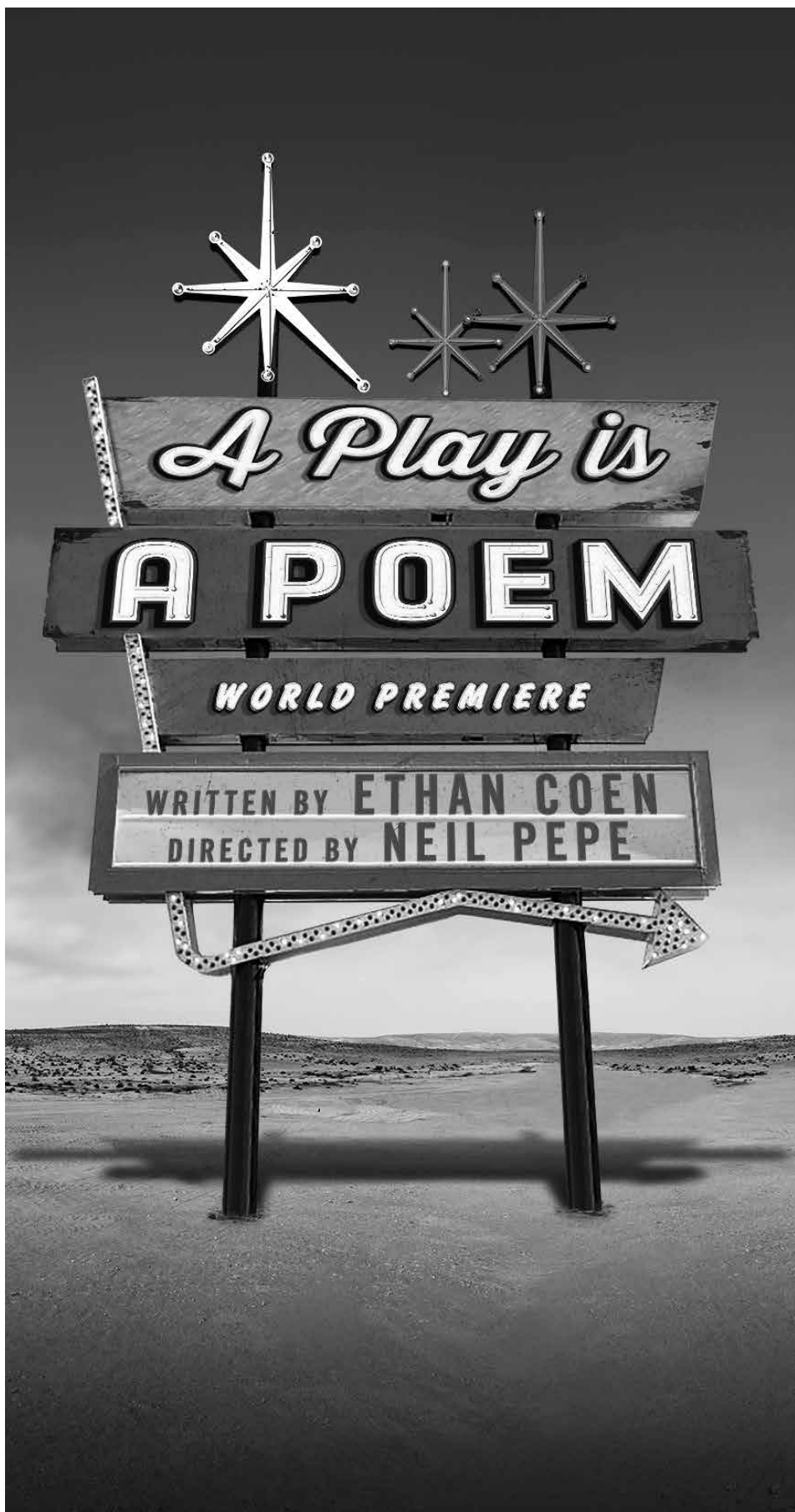
By Rajiv Joseph

Directed by Anna D. Shapiro

World Premiere Production

Jul 29 – Aug 30, 2020

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MICHAEL RITCHIE Artistic Director | MEGHAN PRESSMAN Managing Director | DOUGLAS C. BAKER Producing Director
GORDON DAVIDSON Founding Artistic Director

Presents the World premiere of

A Play is A POEM

By

Ethan Coen

Presented in association with Atlantic Theater Company

With

Ro Boddie

Peter Jacobson

Saul Rubinek

Sam Vartholomeos

Max Casella

Jason Kravits

Miriam Silverman

CJ Wilson

Micaela Diamond

Nellie McKay

Joey Slotnick

Original Music

Nellie McKay

Scenic Design

Riccardo Hernández

Hair & Wig Design

Charles G. LaPointe

Associate Artistic Director

Kelley Kirkpatrick

Costume Design

Sarah Laux

Fight Direction

Steve Rankin

Production Stage Manager

David S. Franklin

Lighting Design

Tyler Micoletau

Casting

**Telsey + Company
William Cantler, CSA**

Karyn Casl, CSA

Sound Design

Leon Rothenberg

Directed by

Neil Pepe

SEPTEMBER 11 – OCTOBER 13, 2019 **MARK TAPER FORUM**

CAST (In Order of Appearance)

THE REDEEMERS

Cal.....MAX CASELLA
 Wes.....JOEY SLOTNICK
 Gary Allen.....CJ WILSON

A TOUGH CASE

Ed Curtin.....JOEY SLOTNICK
 Don Baines.....CJ WILSON
 Arthur Threadgill.....SAUL RUBINEK
 Lindy.....MICAELA DIAMOND
 LuAnne.....NELLIE MCKAY
 Johnny Branco.....PETER JACOBSON

AT THE GAZEBO

Carter.....SAM VARTHOLOMEOS
 Dorothy.....MICAELA DIAMOND
 Gadsden.....RO BODDIE

THE URBANES

Cabbie.....MAX CASELLA
 The Wife.....MIRIAM SILVERMAN
 Joey Falcone.....JOEY SLOTNICK
 Steve Tudik.....RO BODDIE

INSIDE TALK

Movie Executive.....PETER JACOBSON
 Lou Wald.....JASON KRAVITS
 Jerry Sterling.....SAUL RUBINEK
 The Writer.....SAM VARTHOLOMEOS

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for a listed performer unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance.

STAGE MANAGERS

Michelle Blair
 Katherine Shea

INTERMISSION

A Play Is a Poem will be performed without an intermission.

Please turn off all electronic devices such as cellular phones and watch alarms. The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, with or without flash, is strictly prohibited.



THE REDEEMERS



A TOUGH CASE

A Play is A POEM



AT THE GAZEBO



THE URBANES



INSIDE TALK

Clockwise from top left: Joey Slotnick, CJ Wilson, and Max Casella. Saul Rubinek, Nellie McKay, Joey Slotnick, CJ Wilson, Peter Jacobson, and Micaela Diamond. Saul Rubinek, Sam Vartholomeos, Peter Jacobson, and Jason Kravits. Max Casella, Miriam Silverman, Ro Boddie, and Joey Slotnick. Ro Boddie, Micaela Diamond, and Sam Vartholomeos. Photos by Benedict Evans.

COLLABORATION CAST AND POETRY WHAT MAKES A PLAY?

HOW PLAYWRIGHT

ETHAN COEN AND

DIRECTOR NEIL PEPE

BROUGHT A PLAY IS

A POEM FROM THE

PAGE TO THE STAGE



L-R: Director Neil Pepe and playwright Ethan Coen.

FROM APPALACHIA TO HOLLYWOOD, drama to comedy, *A Play Is a Poem* is a cross-country cross-section of American theatrical history. Consisting of five short plays of disparate settings and genres, the fundamental connection these pieces share doesn't begin onstage. Rather, it all starts with over a decade's worth of collaboration between playwright Ethan Coen and director Neil Pepe.

The roots of the duo's collaboration go back to the mid-2000s, when Ethan and his brother, Joel Coen, co-wrote a radio play that was staged in New York. "I've always loved not only the richness of their writing but the surprise of their storytelling," said Pepe. "I was intrigued that they were getting into something near playwriting." Connected by mutual friends for a lunch meeting, Coen later shared some one-act plays he had been working on with Pepe, who was instantly smitten: "I read them and I loved them. They were incredibly funny and irreverent, just sort of bite-sized pieces of the brilliance of Ethan's writing for film but applied to a theatrical form, which was exciting to me."

Three of those one-acts eventually turned into 2008's *Almost an Evening* at Atlantic Theater Company, where Pepe, who directed, is Artistic Director. Pepe and Coen quickly followed up their first collaboration with 2009's *Offices* and 2011's *Happy Hour* (also evenings of three plays). Now on their fourth collaboration with *A Play Is a Poem*, the duo have developed a comfortable rhythm together.

"Neil has a hyper-developed ear for what's working, what's not working, and a perfect touch with the actors, a way to show them how they can make it go better, keep the hoop rolling," said Coen of the rehearsal process. "I've spent hours and hours over the years in a rehearsal room with him, and I still don't know how he does it."

Pepe, for his part, feels the same. "He's so used to working with actors and has such an inherent understanding of story and dramaturgy, it feels completely collaborative—where the writer begins and the director stops," said Pepe of Coen.

They are also in basic agreement about the format and subject of *A Play Is a Poem*. "This play is five different stories, five little jaunts, the scenery different in each, the setting different—Neil and I haven't talked about what ties them together; I don't think either of us thinks about

it," explained Coen. "The aim is to get the play to that point, where it's become a great big joyride for actors and audience. Neil knows how to get it there, but it's an elusive place."

Pepe offered a hint of how he sees that journey. "There's something inherently iconic about the plays in an American way," said Pepe. "But I think the thing that is of course surprising and deeply funny is Ethan's take on it. So in a certain way it's both his take on these stories and America, but also a take on some of the forms that these stories have taken over the years."

They both prefer to keep the work uncategorizable. "It doesn't matter where you put the play on that spectrum, high or low, tragedy or comedy—Neil cares about that as little as I do," said Coen. "We've never even talked about that, over the course of many years of working together—whether what we're working on is a comedy or not. Or what the play is in any generic sense. It's a play, and it's either working or not working, either going or not going."

One asset they have in getting the play going is a robust ensemble that includes many actors who have worked with both Pepe and Coen previously in both theatre and film.



L-R: Center Theatre Group Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, Ethan Coen, and Neil Pepe at the first rehearsal for the World premiere of *A Play Is a Poem*.

**“THERE’S SOMETHING
INHERENTLY
ICONIC ABOUT THE
PLAYS IN AN
AMERICAN WAY.”**



L-R: Nellie McKay, C.J. Wilson, Sam Vartholomeos, Saul Rubinek, Micaela Diamond, Ro Boddie, Ethan Coen, Max Casella, Joey Slotnick, Miriam Silverman, Jason Kravits, Peter Jacobson, and Neil Pepe.

"Doing one-acts with a great ensemble of actors, I feel like it's where I come from—having come of age in a theatre company with a closely knit acting ensemble," said Pepe. "I think Ethan also comes from a background and aesthetic of great ensemble actors, and that's how we approach these."

But of course theatre has its limitations as well, which just might be part of the appeal. "In my mind, in theatre there's an essential truth and simplicity to the form, which allows the words to kind of spark the imagination as opposed to having the capacity to show and realize everything, which I think you can really do very effectively in film," said Pepe. "There's something about poetry and language and the essential nature of a poem and the essential nature of a short play that is exciting in its economy."

With all of that in mind, for both collaborators, at the end of the day, the crux of the piece—or any piece—is trying to coax out the essence of theatre; the thing that keeps an audience engaged with the art. Coen describes it as "the mad state that joins actors and audience when the play's working; a mad thing that makes sense in the moment but nobody can describe it afterward."

Or, as Pepe put it: "We do the best we can with the words that we have and we hope everybody enjoys the evening."

Photos by Benedict Evans.

**“THE AIM IS TO GET
THE PLAY TO THAT
POINT, WHERE IT’S
BECOME A GREAT BIG
JOYRIDE FOR ACTORS
AND AUDIENCE.”**

WHO'S WHO



RO BODDIE (*Gadsden, Steve Tudik*) is thrilled to be making his Mark Taper Forum debut. Off-Broadway credits: The Public Theater (*Socrates*), Summer Shorts at 59E59 Theaters (*Appomattox*). Regional credits: La Jolla Playhouse (*Blueprints to Freedom*), Old Globe (*Skeleton Crew* tour), Cleveland Play House (*The Mountaintop*), Milwaukee Repertory Theater (*The Whipping Man*), Baltimore Center Stage (*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*), Studio Theatre (*Dirt, Three Sisters, No Sisters*), Round House Theatre (*Master Harold and the Boys*), Cygnet Theatre (*Every Brilliant Thing, Seven Guitars, King Hedley II*). TV credits: *The Good Wife, Person of Interest, Elementary, Unforgettable*. Awards: San Diego Critics Circle Award. Education: University of the North Carolina School of the Arts.



MAX CASELLA (*Cal, Cabbie*). This is the third time Max has worked with Ethan Coen—previously appearing in *Relatively Speaking* on Broadway and *Inside Llewyn Davis*. Other film credits include *Late Night, Night Comes On, Live by Night, Jackie, Wonder Wheel, Blue Jasmine, Old Boy, Killing Them Softly, Revolutionary Road, Analyze This, Ed Wood, Newsies, and The Rhythm Section* (upcoming, directed by Reed Morano). Currently recurring on *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and the recent season of *Ray Donovan*. Other television credits include *Vinyl* (series regular), *Boardwalk Empire* (recurring), *The Sopranos* (five seasons), and Vinnie Delpino on *Doogie Howser, M.D.* Broadway: Timon in the original cast of *The Lion King* (multiple award noms). Other theatre credits include: *Troilus and Cressida, Timon Of Athens* (Public Theater); Julie Taymor's *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Endgame* (BAM); and Simon McBurney's adaptation of *The Kid Stays in the Picture*.



MICAELA DIAMOND (*Lindy, Dorothy*) made her Broadway debut as Babe—the youngest Cher—in *The Cher Show*, a role she auditioned for just weeks after graduating high school. She made her television debut in NBC's *Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert*, appearing in the ensemble and understudying for Sara Bareilles. Diamond grew up in New York City and is a graduate of LaGuardia High School

of Music & Art and Performing Arts in New York. Favorite roles include Louise in *Gypsy* and Sally Bowles in *Cabaret*. @micaela_diamond



PETER JACOBSON (*Johnny Branco, Movie Executive*). Atlantic Theater Company: *The Water Engine* and *Once in a Lifetime*. Off-Broadway: original New York productions of Steve Martin's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile, Four Dogs and a Bone* (John Patrick Shanley dir.), *The Compleat Wrks of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged), Taming of the Shrew, and Comedy of Errors* (Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park), Obie Award-winning *June Moon, and Waiting for Lefty*. TV: Dr. Taub on *House, Proxy Snyder on Colony, and recurring roles on Fear the Walking Dead, NCIS: L.A., The Americans, Ray Donovan, Law & Order: SVU, and Law & Order, as well as Billions, Paterno, It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, Genius, Madam Secretary, and Chicago PD*. Film: *White House Down, Good Night and Good Luck, and upcoming The Goldfinch, Joyful, Before You Know It, and Violet*. Peter is from Chicago.



JASON KRAVITS (*Lou Wald*) last appeared at Center Theatre Group in the pre-Broadway run of *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Other Broadway credits include *Relatively Speaking* (by Ethan Coen, Elaine May, and Woody Allen) and *Sly Fox*. Recent TV credits include *The Kominsky Method, Big Bang Theory, Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt, Young Sheldon, and The Deuce*, as well as upcoming episodes of *The Undoing* and *The Hunt*. Other favorite appearances include *The Practice* (ADA Richard Bay), *Curb Your Enthusiasm, Grey's Anatomy, Gilmore Girls, Everybody Loves Raymond, 30 Rock, and the final episode of Friends*. Movie credits include *Morning Glory, Chinese Puzzle, Stepford Wives, and the upcoming What is Life Worth?* His one-man, improvised cabaret *Off the Top* has been produced in Edinburgh, London, Amsterdam, and Adelaide, and can be seen regularly at Birdland, NYC.



NELLIE MCKAY (*Original Music, LuAnne, Musician*) has released seven critically acclaimed albums, with a new EP, "Bagatelles," coming in October. Broadway Theatre World Award for Polly Peachum in *The Threepenny Opera*,

co-created/starred in Off-Broadway's *Old Hats*, created musical biographies of Barbara Graham, Rachel Carson, Joan Rivers, and Billy Tipton (Best Concerts of the Year—*The New York Times*). Film roles in *P.S. I Love You* and *Downtown Express*, music for *Rumor Has It, Monster -In-Law, Last Holiday, Gasland, and Private Life*. TV appearances on David Letterman, Conan O'Brien, Craig Ferguson, *The View*, and Jimmy Dore. Music heard on *Mad Men, Boardwalk Empire, Weeds, Grey's Anatomy, NCIS, Nurse Jackie*. A recipient of PETA's Humanitarian Award for dedication to animal rights, and an annoyingly vocal critic of endless war, capitalism, and the two-party system that sustains it.



SAUL RUBINEK (*Arthur Threadgill, Jerry Sterling*) started his career dedicated to the development of over 50 Canadian plays. Saul's work in television and features spans four decades including *Frasier, Warehouse 13*, upcoming Amazon series *The Hunt* with Al Pacino, Clint Eastwood's Oscar-winning *Unforgiven*, Tony Scott and Quentin Tarantino's *True Romance*, and Joel and Ethan Coen's *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*. His play *Terrible Advice* (starring Scott Bakula and Sharon Horgan) premiered in London in 2011. Saul directed Paramount/Showtime's *Club Land* (starring Steven Weber and Alan Alda), *Jerry and Tom* (Sundance 1998, starring Joe Mantegna and Sam Rockwell), and the award-winning indie *Cruel But Necessary*—the latter two produced by his wife and partner Elinor Reid. Saul also produced an award-winning documentary, *So Many Miracles*, chronicling his parents' reunion with the people who saved their lives during the Holocaust.



MIRIAM SILVERMAN (*The Wife*). Broadway: *Junk*. Off-Broadway: *Plano* (Clubbed Thumb); *Finks* (Drama Desk nomination, EST); *Tiny Beautiful Things, Hamlet* (The Public); *A Delicate Ship* (Playwrights Realm); *You Got Older* (Page 73); *Everything You Touch* (Rattlestick); *The Witch of Edmonton* (Red Bull Theater). Regional: *Mary Jane, The Moors* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window* (Jeff nom, Goodman); *Measure for Measure, All's Well That Ends Well, As You Like It, The Dog in the Manger* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *Peer*

Gynt (Guthrie Theater); *Awake and Sing!* (Arena Stage). Film: *Bad Education* (upcoming), *Sand Mama, Better Days Ahead*. TV: *The Village, NOS4A2, Elementary, Pan Am, Law & Order: Criminal Intent*. Education: BA and MFA, Brown University.



JOEY SLOTNICK (*Wes, Ed Curtin, Joey Falcone*). Broadway: *Junk, The Front Page, The Big Knife*. Off-Broadway: *Dying for It, Happy Hour, The New York Idea, Offices, Almost an Evening* (Atlantic); *The Altruists* (Vineyard); *Tchaikovsky* (Signature). Regional: *Chapter Two* (Bucks County); *Animal Crackers* (Williamstown and The Goodman); *Arabian Nights, Up Against It, Master & Margarita, Great Men of Science, Our Town, Wants & Needs* (Lookingglass); *Romance* (Bay Street). TV: *Boston Public* (series regular); *The Single Guy* (series regular); *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (recurring); *The Good Wife* (recurring); *Nip/Tuck* (recurring); *The Goldbergs, Murphy Brown, Blue Bloods, Psych, Boston Legal, The Office, Medium, Curb Your Enthusiasm, Law & Order: SVU, Family Guy, Entourage*. Film: *Pirates of Silicon Valley, The Cobbler, Humor Me, The Secret Life of Walter Mitty, Brief Interviews with Hideous Men, Blast from the Past, Hollow Man, Twister, A League of Their Own*.



SAM VARTHOLOMEOS (*Carter, The Writer*) was born and raised in Queens, New York, a proud first-generation American. He is a graduate of LaGuardia H.S. of Music & Art and Performing Arts, and made his Off-Broadway debut in John Patrick Shanley's *Prodigal Son* at Manhattan Theatre Club. TV/film credits include: *Law & Order: SVU, Bull, The Following, Truth Slash Fiction*, and as Ensign Danby Connor on *Star Trek: Discovery*. Sam holds degrees in psychology and philosophy from the City College of New York.



CJ WILSON (*Gary Allen, Don Baines*). Broadway: *Bronx Bombers, The Big Knife, Festen, Henry IV, The Best Man*. Off-Broadway: *On the Shore of the Wide World, Hold on to Me Darling* (Lucille Lortel nom.), *Dying for It, Our New Girl, Offices, The Voyage Inheritance* (Atlantic Theater); *Medieval Play, The Lady from*

Dubuque (Signature); *Bronx Bombers*, *Happy Now?* (Lucille Lortel nom., Primary Stages); *All-American* (LCT3). Regional: Old Globe, Shakespeare Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Group, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Wilma. Film: *Manchester by the Sea*, *A Vigilante*, *Demolition*, *Easy Living*, *The Intern*. Upcoming: *Irresistible*. Television: *The Blacklist*, *Quantico*, *Bull*, *Elementary*, *The Looming Tower*, *The Sinner*, *Homeland*, *The Characters*, *House of Cards*, *The Sound of Music Live!*, *The Following*, *The Good Wife*, *Blue Bloods*, *Onion Sportsdome*, *The Americans*, *Brotherhood*, *Law & Order*, L&O: SVU, L&O: CI, *Without a Trace*. Fox Fellow.



ETHAN COEN (*Playwright*). Previous plays: *Almost an Evening*, *Offices*, *Happy Hour*, and *Women or Nothing*; also “Talking Cure,” part of an evening of one-acts whose other contributors were Woody Allen and Elaine May. A collection of stories, *Gates of Eden*, and two collections of poems, *The Drunken*

Driver Has the Right of Way and *The Day the World Ends*. Coen has written, produced, and directed movies with his brother Joel for 35 years.



NEIL PEPE (*Director*). Recent directing credits: *Juno and the Paycock* at Irish Repertory Theatre; Simon Stephens’ *On the Shore of the Wide World*; Kenneth Lonergan’s *Hold on to Me Darling*; and David Mamet’s *The Penitent*, all at Atlantic Theater Company in New York. Broadway credits include the musical

Hands on a Hardbody and Mamet’s *Speed-the-Plow* and *A Life in the Theatre*. Off-Broadway credits include John Guare’s *3 Kinds of Exile*; Moira Buffini’s *Dying for It*; Jez Butterworth’s *Parlour Song*, *Mojo*, and *The Night Heron*; Ethan Coen’s *Happy Hour*, *Offices*, and *Almost an Evening*; Harold Pinter’s *Celebration* and *The Room*; Adam Rapp’s *Dreams of Flying Dreams of Falling*; Joe Penhall’s *Blue/Orange*; Hilary Bell’s *Wolf Lullaby*; David Pittu’s *What’s That Smell?*; Howard Korder’s *Sea of Tranquility*; Edwin Sanchez’s *Clean*; and Quincy Long’s *Shaker Heights*, all at Atlantic. Additional credits: *American Buffalo* (Donmar Warehouse, Atlantic); *Romance*, *Keep Your Pantheon*, and *School* (Center Theatre Group, Atlantic); Frank D. Gilroy’s *The Subject Was Roses* (Center Theatre Group); Zinnie Harris’ *Further Than the Furthest Thing* (Manhattan Theatre Club); Jessica Goldberg’s *Refuge* (Playwrights Horizons); Tom Donaghy’s *The Beginning of August* (South Coast Repertory, Atlantic); and Eric Bogosian’s *Red Angel*

(Williamstown Theatre Festival). Neil has been the Artistic Director of Atlantic Theater Company since 1992.

RICCARDO HERNÁNDEZ (*Scenic Designer*). Broadway: *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*; *Indecent*; *The Gin Game*; *The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess*; *The People in the Picture*; *Caroline, or Change* (National Theatre London); *Elaine Stritch at Liberty* (The Old Vic, London); *Topdog/Underdog* (Royal Court); *Bells Are Ringing*; *Parade* (Hal Prince director, Tony and Drama Desk nominations); *Bring in ’Da Noise, Bring in ’Da Funk*; *The Tempest*. Recent: *Jagged Little Pill* (Diane Paulus director, ART); *Lempicka* (Rachel Chavkin director, WTF); *Admissions* (LCT); *La Dame aux camélias* (France); *Mlima’s Tale* (Public Theater); *The Invisible Hand* (NYTW—Hewes Design Award for Scenic Design); *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *The Father*, and *A Doll’s House* (Arin Arbus director, TFANA); *La Mouette* (Cour d’honneur, Palais des papes—Avignon Festival). He has designed over 250 productions in the US and internationally. Obie Award: Sustained Excellence; Yale School of Drama design faculty.

SARAH LAUX (*Costume Designer*). Broadway: *The Band’s Visit*, *Fully Committed*, *The Humans*. Selected Off-Broadway/regional: *Before the Meeting* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *Superhero* (Second Stage), *Downstairs* (Primary Stages), *Blue Ridge* (Atlantic Theater Company), *This Ain’t No Disco* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Jerry Springer: The Opera* (The New Group—Obie Award), *On the Shore of the Wide World* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Bad Dates* (Huntington Theatre Company), *The End of Longing* (MCC Theater), *Bad Jews* (George Street Playhouse), *Man From Nebraska* (Second Stage), *The Band’s Visit* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Ultimate Beauty Bible* (Page 73) *The Effect* (Barrow Street Theatre), *The Humans* (Roundabout Theatre Company), *Thresh/Hold* (Pilobolus Dance Theater), *Come Back*, *Little Sheba* (Huntington Theatre Company), *Women or Nothing* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Really Really* (MCC Theater). Feature film: *Freak Show* (Maven). Television: *High Fidelity* (Hulu).

TYLER MICOLEAU (*Lighting Designer*). Center Theatre Group debut. Broadway: *Be More Chill*, *The Band’s Visit* (2018 Tony Award for Lighting Design of a Musical). Recent Off-Broadway: *Hercules* (Public Works), *Dying City* (Second Stage Theater), *Socrates* (The Public Theater). Other notable Off-Broadway: *When the Rain Stops Falling* (Lucille Lortel Award), *Blasted* (ATW Hewes Design Award), *Bug* (Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards). 2010 Obie Award for

Sustained Excellence. Regional designs for the Huntington Theatre, Alley Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, The Old Globe, La Jolla Playhouse, Trinity Repertory Company, Arena Stage, Shakespeare Theatre, Kansas City Rep, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Wilma Theater, Pig Iron Theatre, Folger Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, and many others. *A Play Is a Poem* is Tyler’s fourth collaboration with director Neil Pepe. tylermicoleau.com

LEON ROTHENBERG (*Sound Designer*). Recent L.A. area: *1776* at La Mirada Performing Arts Center, *Ironbound* at the Geffen, *Our Town* at Pasadena Playhouse. Recent Broadway: *Hillary and Clinton*, *The Waverly Gallery*, Mike Birbiglia’s *The New One*, *The Boys in the Band*. Recent regional: Huntington Theatre, Two River Theater, Second Stage, Manhattan Theatre Club, A.C.T., City Theatre Pittsburgh, Arena Stage, Old Globe, Portland Center Stage, Seattle Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, Williamstown Theatre Festival, NY Stage and Film. International: Cirque du Soleil, National Theatre of Cyprus, and Dijon International Festival. Tony Award for Sound Design: *The Nance*. klaxson.net

CHARLES G. LAPOINTE (*Hair & Wig Designer*). Numerous Broadway, touring, West End, and international productions, including *Hamilton*, *The Cher Show* (Drama Desk Award); *The Band’s Visit*; *Beautiful*; *Ain’t Too Proud*; *Beetlejuice*; *The Lifespan of a Fact*; *SpongeBob SquarePants* (Drama Desk Award); *Jersey Boys*; *Motown*; *Memphis*; *On Your Feet!*; *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder*; *The Color Purple*; *Newsies*; *In the Heights*. Television: *The Wiz Live!* (Emmy Award nomination); *Jesus Christ Superstar Live!* (Emmy Award nomination and Make-Up Artists & Hair Stylist Guild Award); *Hairspray*.

STEVE RANKIN (*Fight Director*). Broadway: *Ain’t Too Proud*, *Carousel* (Drama Desk Outstanding Fight Choreography), *Summer*, *Jersey Boys*, *Memphis*, *Henry IV*, *Macbeth*, *Guys and Dolls*, *The Who’s Tommy*, *Getting Away With Murder*, *Two Shakespearean Actors*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Real Inspector Hound*, *Anna Christie*. Off-Broadway: *The Third Story*, *Pig Farm*, *The Night Hank Williams Died*, *Below The Belt*. Taper: *Archduke*, *Zoot Suit*, *Bent*, *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, *Immediate Family*, *What the Butler Saw*, *Burn This*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Palestine*, *New Mexico*, *The House of Blue Leaves*, *Water & Power*, *Electricidad*, *The Talking Cure*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*. Other theatre: Stratford Shakespeare Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, The Old Globe (Associate Artist), Metropolitan Opera, LA Opera, et al. Mr. Rankin plays mandolin with The Susie Glaze New Folk Ensemble.

TELSEY + COMPANY (*Casting*). Broadway/tours: *West Side Story*, *Tina*, *The Sound Inside*, *Linda Vista*, *Freestyle Love Supreme*, *Beetlejuice*, *Oklahoma!*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Mean Girls*, *Frozen*, *Come From Away*, *Waitress*, *Hamilton*, *Wicked*, *My Fair Lady*, *Once on This Island*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Anastasia*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Off-Broadway: Atlantic Theater Company, Classic Stage Company, MCC Theater, New Group, Park Avenue Armory, Second Stage Theater. Film: *The Kitchen*, *Mary Poppins Returns*, *Ben Is Back*, *The Greatest Showman*, *Into the Woods*, *Rachel Getting Married*. TV: *Tales of the City*, *Fosse/Verdon*, *NOS4A2*, *This Is Us*, *NCIS: New Orleans*, *One Day at a Time*, *Rent*, commercials. telseyandco.com

DAVID S. FRANKLIN (*Production Stage Manager*). Center Theatre Group highlights: *An Enemy of the People*, Baz Luhrmann’s *La Bohème*, *Art*, *Romance*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Curtains*, *Nightingale*, *The History Boys*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *Two Unrelated Plays by David Mamet*, *Ain’t Misbehavin’*, *Parade*, *The Subject Was Roses*, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, Randy Newman’s *Harps and Angels*, *God of Carnage*, *Vigil*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Los Otros*, *Red*, *Seminar*, *Tribes*, *Humor Abuse*, *The Steward of Christendom*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *Bent*, *The Christians*, *Disgraced*, *A View From The Bridge*, *Zoot Suit*, *Archduke*, *King of the Yees*, *Head of Passes*, *Water by the Spoonful*, *Sweat*, *Valley of the Heart*, *Linda Vista*, *Lackawanna Blues*, and had the pleasure of assisting on *Soft Power*. Other Los Angeles: Los Angeles Theatre Center in its heyday from 1985–1990, Pasadena Playhouse, and the Geffen Playhouse. Regional: Seattle Rep, Intiman Theatre. New York: Public Theater. Tours: Europe—*Quotations from a Ruined City*, *Law of Remains* (with Reza Abdoh’s Dar a Luz company).

MICHELLE BLAIR (*Stage Manager, L.A.*) has worked on over 30 productions for Center Theatre Group. Some highlights include *Lackawanna Blues*, *Linda Vista*, *Sweat*, *Water by the Spoonful*, *Head of Passes*, *Heisenberg*, *Archduke*, *Zoot Suit*, *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, *Bent*, *The Sunshine Boys*, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*, *Red*, *Leap of Faith*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Parade*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *all wear bowlers*, *Topdog/Underdog*, and “QED” at Lincoln Center Theater. Other favorites include *La Traviata* with the Los Angeles Opera, *The Tempest* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, *Henry IV* with Shakespeare Center Los Angeles, *The Pee-wee Herman Show* at Club Nokia, and *Jersey Boys* in Las Vegas. Graduate of the University of Southern California and the University of Amsterdam. Mom to 11-year-old Liam and 7-year-old Imogen.

KATHERINE SHEA (*Stage Manager, N.Y.*). Broadway: *Travesties*, Arthur Miller's *The Price*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *It Shoulda Been You*, *Once*. Off-Broadway: *Apologia* (Roundabout Theatre Company), *Once* (New York Theatre Workshop). Regional theatre: *Prometheus Bound*, *The Blue Flower*, *Cabaret*, *Endgame*, *Donnie Darko* (American Repertory Theater). Love to my friends, family, and #dorothyfranz!

ATLANTIC THEATER COMPANY (*Neil Pepe, Artistic Director; Jeffery Lawson, Managing Director*). At Atlantic, our aim is singular—to empower simple and honest storytelling that fosters greater understanding of our shared world. We are a family of artists dedicated to exploring essential truths onstage, be it a show at Atlantic Theater Company or a class at Atlantic Acting School. Founded as an ensemble of impassioned artists in 1985, Atlantic Theater Company has grown into a powerhouse Off-Broadway company, premiering 200+ works from new and established writers. From our Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning productions to our community-based education programs, we are committed to uncovering and celebrating the stories of our varied human existence. For more information, visit atlantictheater.org.

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

MICHAEL RITCHIE (*Artistic Director*) is in his 15TH season as Center Theatre Group's Artistic Director, and has led over 200 productions to the Ahmanson Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, and Kirk Douglas Theatre stages, including the premieres of six musicals that moved to Broadway—*The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Curtains*, *13, 9 to 5: The Musical*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, and *Leap of Faith*—and the Pulitzer Prize in Drama finalist *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*.

MEGHAN PRESSMAN (*Managing Director*) joined Center Theatre Group as Managing Director in 2019. Previously, she served as Managing Director of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company (D.C.), Director of Development for Signature Theatre (N.Y.), and Associate Managing Director of Berkeley Rep, in addition to working at numerous other theatre and arts organizations across the country. She is the Vice-Chair of the National Board for the Theatre Communications Group (TCG).

DOUGLAS C. BAKER (*Producing Director*) is now in his 30TH season at Center Theatre Group. He is an active member of the Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network, and is a proud member of the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers. In May 2013, Doug received the Broadway League's prestigious Outstanding Achievement in Presenter Management Award.

KELLEY KIRKPATRICK (*Associate Artistic Director*). Since arriving at Center Theatre Group in 2005, Kelley has produced over 60 productions at the Ahmanson Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, and Kirk Douglas Theatre, many of which have gone on to future lives on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and beyond. In addition to producing shows across Center Theatre Group's three stages, he has had the privilege of collaborating with numerous local and national artists to commission and develop new works.

NAUSICA STERGIU (*General Manager*) has worked supporting artists in theatres of all shapes, sizes, and locales including Center Theatre Group as General Manager and, previously, as Audience Development Director. She oversees productions at the Taper and Douglas, as well as new play commissions and developmental productions. Nausica has taught at USC's School of Dramatic Arts and works with local nonprofits including Hollywood Orchard.

GORDON DAVIDSON (*Founding Artistic Director*) led the Taper throughout its first 38 seasons, guiding over 300 productions to its stage and winning countless awards for himself and the theatre—including the Tony Award for theatrical excellence, Margo Jones Award, The Governor's Award for the Arts, and a Guggenheim fellowship. *The Kentucky Cycle* and *Angels in America (Part One)* won the Pulitzer in consecutive years and, in 1994, three of the four plays nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play were from the Taper (*Angels in America* won). In 1989, Gordon took over the Ahmanson and, in 2004, he produced the inaugural season in the Kirk Douglas Theatre.

Production photography by Craig Schwartz.

ADDITIONAL STAFF FOR A PLAY IS A POEM

Assistant Director.....Sky Smith
Dialect Coach.....Kate Wilson
Los Angeles Casting.....Michael Donovan Casting
Associate Scenic Designer.....Riw Rakkulchon
Assistant Costume Designer, N.Y.....Jacob A. Climer
Stitcher.....Cosmo Martinelli
Resident Assistant Lighting Designer.....Zachary Heffner
Assistant Sound Designer.....Anna Grossman
Prop Carpenter.....Ryan Howard
Rehearsal Prop Coordinator, N.Y.Kate Stack
Production Assistant, N.Y.Lauren Fitzgerald Veit
Production Assistant, L.A.Liv Scott

CREDITS

Scenery constructed by F&D Scene Changes, Ltd. Scenery drops printed by Rose Brand. Costumes provided by the Center Theatre Group Costume Shop. Additional costumes for Ms. McKay and Ms. Diamond provided by Tricone, Inc. Piano rental provided by Keyboard Concepts. Additional musical instrument rental provided by L.A. Percussion Rentals. Production photography by Craig Schwartz.

MUSIC CREDITS

"Solitude"
Written by: Duke Ellington, Irving Mills, and Eddie De Lange.
Published by: Sony/ATV Harmony, EMI Mills Music Inc., and Scarsdale Music Corp.


Music Supervision by Duotone Audio Group:
Music Supervisor.....David Leinhardt
Music Coordinator.....Dana Hom


SPECIAL THANKS


Special thanks to Camron Parker, Associate General Manager at the Atlantic Theater Company.

A Play Is a Poem was rehearsed at Manhattan Theatre Club's Creative Center.

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Follow us on Instagram **@CTGLA**

 The Actors and Stage Managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association. This theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

 The following employees are represented by the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Machine Operators, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, its Territories and Canada, AFL-CIO, CLC: Stage Crew Local 33; Local Treasurers and Ticket Sellers Local 857; Wardrobe Crew Local 768; Makeup Artists and Hair Stylists Local 706. The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829.

 The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, Inc., an independent national labor union.

Center Theatre Group is a member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the American Arts Alliance, the Broadway League, Independent Producers' Network (IPN), LA Stage Alliance, National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT) and the Theatre Communications Group (TCG).



L-R: Costume designer Sarah Laux, cast members Micaela Diamond, Ro Boddie, Saul Rubinek, and Sam Vartholomeos, and assistant costume designer Jacob A. Climer at the first rehearsal. Photo by Benedict Evans.

Center Theatre Group would like to thank its exceptional staff for their ongoing commitment, dedication, and extraordinary efforts.

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 NEEL KELLER Associate Artistic Director/Literary Director
 KELLEY KIRKPATRICK Associate Artistic Director
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 MICHAEL DONOVAN CASTING Casting Consultant
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 IAN-JULIAN WILLIAMS Program Coordinator, Block Party
 TIFFANY SLAGLE Literary Assistant

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 ANNA D. SHAPIRO Associate Artists

KRISTINA WONG Sherwood Award Recipient, 2019

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ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMISSIONS

As part of our commitment to supporting a new generation of playwrights, we foster and develop a broad range of theatrical work from artists within the diverse communities of Los Angeles as well as from across the nation and abroad.

Artists creating new work commissioned by Center Theatre Group this season:

DAVID ADIMI	ALESHEA HARRIS	TREY LYFORD	SARAH RUHL
JON ROBIN BAITZ	RAJIV JOSEPH	RICHARD MONTOYA	ROGER GUENVEUR SMITH
STEVE CUIFFO	LISA KRON	JANINE NABERS	GEOFF SOBELLE
LISA D'AMOUR	KIMBER LEE	QUI NGUYEN	LUIS VALDEZ
WILL ENO	YOUNG JEAN LEE	LYNN NOTTAGE	PAULA VOGEL
JENNIFER HALEY	MATTHEW LOPEZ	MARCO RAMIREZ	TRACEY SCOTT WILSON
			KAREN ZACARIAS

Since 2005, we have invited local playwrights to spend a year researching and writing a new work with the feedback of their fellow writers and artistic staff as part of our **L.A. Writers' Workshop**. Our growing community currently contains 96 playwrights. 2018/19 Season members:

LUIS ALFARO	ADITI BRENNAN KAPIL
AZIZA BARNES	BRIAN O'ANO
DIANA BURBANO	RUBY RAE SPIEGEL
NOAH HADLE	