

For immediate release

**CASTING ANNOUNCED FOR  
WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCTION OF  
RAJIV JOSEPH'S 'KING JAMES'  
A CO-PRODUCTION WITH STEPPENWOLF THEATRE COMPANY  
AT CENTER THEATRE GROUP / MARK TAPER FORUM  
JUNE 1 – JULY 3**

Casting has been announced for the World premiere production of **Rajiv Joseph's** new work "**King James**," coming to Center Theatre Group / Mark Taper Forum June 1 through July 3, 2022. Tony® and Obie Award-winning director **Kenny Leon** will direct this new play from the Pulitzer Prize-short lister hailed as "wonderfully daring, imaginative and compassionate" (*The New York Times*). "King James" was co-commissioned by Center Theatre Group and Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

The cast features **Glenn Davis** as Shawn and **Chris Perfetti** as Matt. The creative team includes **Todd Rosenthal** (scenic design), **Samantha C. Jones** (costume design), **Lee Fiskness** (lighting design), **Rob Milburn** (sound design) and **Michael Bodeen** (sound design). Casting is by **JC Clementz, CSA** and the production stage manager is **David S. Franklin**.

Basketball great "King" LeBron James' reign in Cleveland brings promise, prosperity and renewal to a city in desperate need of all three. His legacy brings together two friends who communicate best when they are talking and arguing about sports. "King James" is an intimate exploration of the place that sports and athletes occupy in our emotional lives and relationships. It explores the star player's impact on Cleveland, from his rookie season to the city's historic championship, and the lives of these two unlikely friends whose turbulent relationship is best navigated through their shared love of the sport in a verbal game of one-on-one. Though he is never seen in the show, LeBron James serves as a symbol for the hopes, desires and fears that these two characters have bottled up since childhood.

Kenny Leon is a Tony and Obie Award-winning; Emmy-nominated; Broadway and television director. Most recently, he directed Lifetime's Emmy-nominated "Robin Roberts Presents: Mahalia." Last year, he directed the Tony Award-winning Broadway premiere of Charles Fuller's Pulitzer Prize winning masterpiece, "A Soldier's Play," for which he also received a nomination for Best Director.

"King James" is the new play from Cleveland native **Rajiv Joseph** who burst onto the American theatre scene with Pulitzer finalist "Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo,"

which had its World premiere at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in 2009 before being produced at the Taper and then on Broadway. Joseph’s play “Archduke” had its World premiere at the Mark Taper Forum in 2017 as part of the Taper’s 50th season. He has won the Obie Award for Best New American Play twice, in 2016 for “Guards at the Taj” (also a 2016 Lortel Winner for Best Play) and then in 2018 for “Describe the Night.”

**Steppenwolf Theatre Company** is America’s premier ensemble theatre. Formed in 1976 by Gary Sinise, Jeff Perry and Terry Kinney, the ensemble has expanded to 50 celebrated artists. Productions launched at the theater, from “August: Osage County” to “Pass Over,” and accolades including the National Medal of Arts and 12 Tony Awards made the Chicago theatre legendary. 2021 marks the opening of Steppenwolf’s landmark Arts & Education Center — deepening the company’s commitment to Chicagoland teens. [steppenwolf.org](http://steppenwolf.org).

**Center Theatre Group**, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, Managing Director / CEO Meghan Pressman and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1,600 to 2,100-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 for “King James” are currently on sale and start at \$30. They are available through [CenterTheatreGroup.org](http://CenterTheatreGroup.org), Audience Services at (213) 628-2772 or in person at the Center Theatre Group Box Offices (at the Ahmanson Theatre) at The Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue in Downtown L.A. 90012. Performances run Tuesday through Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

For the time being, Center Theatre Group will continue to require masks, along with proof of full vaccination, and a government- or education-issued ID at all of our venues. Booster shots are strongly recommended. This is consistent with the commitments we have made with our artists, staff and audiences to ensure their safety. Per the guidelines set by the CDC, “full vaccination” means that at least 14 days have passed since receiving the final dose of an FDA-authorized or WHO-listed COVID-19 vaccine. Unvaccinated guests, including children or those with a medical or religious reason, must provide proof of a negative PCR COVID-19 test taken no more than 48 hours prior to attendance, or a negative rapid antigen test taken no more than 24 hours prior. All tests must be administered by a professional. At-home tests will not be accepted.

Center Theatre Group will continue working closely with The Music Center and L.A. County officials to ensure they are following all applicable health and safety protocols. Please note that these health and safety measures are subject to change, at Center Theatre Group’s sole discretion and based on evolving health and safety guidance

and conditions. More information regarding safety updates as well as audience vaccination, testing and mask requirements is available at [CenterTheatreGroup.org/Safety](https://CenterTheatreGroup.org/Safety)

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April 29, 2022

## **BIOS**

**Glenn Davis** (*Shawn, he/him/his*) is an actor, TV/film producer and an Artistic Director of Steppenwolf Theatre Company. He has been a Steppenwolf Ensemble member since 2017, where his credits include “Downstate,” “The Christians,” “You Got Older,” “The Brother/Sister Plays” and “Head of Passes.” Broadway credits include “Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo” (also Kirk Douglas Theatre, Mark Taper Forum). Off-Broadway credits include “Transfers” (MCC Theatre) and “Wig Out!” (Vineyard Theatre). Other regional credits include “Moscow x6” (Williamstown Theatre Festival). International credits include “Downstate” (National Theatre, UK), “Edward II,” “The Winter’s Tale” and “As You Like It” (Stratford Festival), as well as “Othello” at The Shakespeare Company. Television credits include “Billions,” “24,” “The Unit,” “Jericho” and “The Good Wife.” Glenn is an artistic associate at the Young Vic in London and at the Vineyard Theatre in New York. In 2021, Glenn founded The Chatham Grove Company, alongside his producing partner Tarell Alvin McCraney, which is currently in an overall deal with Universal Content Productions (UCP). He is also a partner in Cast Iron Entertainment, a collective of artists consisting of Sterling K. Brown, Brian Tyree Henry, Jon Michael Hill, Andre Holland and Tarell Alvin McCraney. Cast Iron is currently in residence at The Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles. He is a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University. He is the first African American graduate of The Stratford Festival’s Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre Training.

**Chris Perfetti** (*Matt*) can currently be seen co-starring in the ABC hit comedy series “Abbott Elementary.” Other television credits include: “What We Do in the Shadows,” “The Night Of,” “Crossbones,” “Looking,” “Bonding,” “Next Caller,” “The Resident” and “In the Dark”. Broadway credits include “Six Degrees of Separation,” “Picnic.” Off-Broadway: “Moscow x6” (MCC; OCC Award Honor and Drama Desk nomination); “The Low Road” (The Public Theater); “Everybody” (Signature Theater); “The Tempest” (The Public Theater/ NYSF); “Sons of the Prophet” (Roundabout Theatre Company; Theater World Award Winner), “The Tutors” (Second Stage). Film: “The Surrogate,” “Minyan,” “The Virtuoso,” “Before I Go.” Education: BFA, SUNY Purchase Conservatory.

**Rajiv Joseph** (*Playwright, he/him/his*) His play “Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo” was a 2010 Pulitzer Prize finalist for Drama and also awarded a grant for Outstanding New American Play by the National Endowment for the Arts. He has twice won the Obie Award for Best New American Play, first in 2016 with “Guards at the Taj” (also a 2016 Lortel Winner for Best Play) and then in 2018 with “Describe the Night.” Other plays

include “Letters of Suresh,” “Archduke,” “Gruesome Playground Injuries” and “Animals Out of Paper.” He has written for TV and film, including the feature film “Draft Day” which he co-wrote with Scott Rothman. He has been awarded artistic grants from the Whiting Foundation, United States Artists and the Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. He served for three years in the Peace Corps in Senegal.

**Kenny Leon** (*Director*) is a Tony Award winning director who also has been honored with The Actors Fund Medal of Honor, an Obie Award and an NAACP Image Award. Mr. Leon is also a proud honoree of the George Abbott Lifetime Achievement for American Theatre. Broadway: “A Soldier’s Play,” “American Son,” “Children of a Lesser God,” “Holler If Ya Hear Me,” “A Raisin in the Sun,” “The Mountaintop,” “Stick Fly,” and August Wilson’s “Fences,” “Gem of the Ocean” and “Radio Golf.” Off-Broadway: “The Underlying Chris,” “Everybody’s Ruby,” “Emergence-See!” (The Public), “Smart People” (Second Stage). Television: “Colin in Black & White,” “4400,” “Amend: The Fight for America,” “American Son” (adapted for Netflix), “Hairspray Live!,” “The Wiz Live!,” “Steel Magnolias,” “Dynasty” “In My Dreams.” Author: “Take You Wherever You Go.” Artistic Director Emeritus, Kenny Leon’s True Colors Theatre Company. Senior Resident Director: Roundabout Theatre.