



AHMANSON THEATRE
MARK TAPER FORUM
KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE

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For immediate release

**CENTER THEATRE GROUP ANNOUNCES 2019 – 2020 SEASONS
AT THE MARK TAPER FORUM AND KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE
FEATURING TWO WORLD PREMIERES**

**Works by Pulitzer Winners and Finalists,
A Collection of One Acts from a Celebrated Playwright and Filmmaker,
An Exciting New American Play Straight from Broadway,
A Tony Winner’s Illumination of a Nobel Prize Winner’s Words,
A Peabody Winner’s Return to His Obie-Winning Roots
And the Fourth Annual Block Party**

**The 52nd Season at the Mark Taper Forum Includes “A Play Is a Poem,” “Jitney,”
“What the Constitution Means to Me,” “The Antipodes” and “King James”
In Addition, Subscribers Will See One of the Previously Announced
Ahmanson Productions, “Latin History for Morons” or “The New One,”
To Complete Their Season Which Begins September 11, 2019**

**The 16th Season at the Kirk Douglas Theatre Includes
“On Beckett,” “Until the Flood,”
Block Party: Celebrating Los Angeles Theatre and “Sakina’s Restaurant”
And Begins September 13, 2019**

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

Center Theatre Group Artistic Director Michael Ritchie has set the 2019 – 2020 seasons at both the Mark Taper Forum and Kirk Douglas Theatre. Together, the seasons offer a deep sampling of the best in modern American theatre including the continuation of Block Party, which celebrates the rich array of theatre produced every year in intimate theatres throughout Los Angeles.

“The 2019 – 2020 seasons at the Taper and Douglas are stacked with great American stories and storytellers,” said Ritchie. “It is a collection of artists, some that we have worked with over the years but many are new voices that are joining us for the first time.”

“It all begins with ‘A Play Is a Poem,’ a new collection of short plays by Ethan Coen, who is not only a razor-sharp screenwriter, but a seasoned playwright making his Taper debut with a vision of America shared by the likes of Sam Shepard and Mark

Twain. Then we'll see the return of two signature Taper artists in one play as Ruben Santiago-Hudson directs his Tony Award-winning production of August Wilson's 'Jitney.' It's our second time producing Wilson's classic work, which transports us to the Hill District of Pittsburgh in the 1970s as the promise of urban renewal threatens a community already struggling to survive.

"Newly minted Pulitzer Prize finalist Heidi Schreck will bring her deeply personal American exploration 'What the Constitution Means to Me' which has taken New York by storm and was hailed as 'the most important' play currently on Broadway by The New York Times," said Ritchie. "It's a boundary-breaking piece of theatre that will have you seriously considering the Constitution in a radically new light. Annie Baker is another writer bringing a fresh voice to the theatre landscape. Set in a writers' room, Annie's 'The Antipodes' explores the nature of storytelling to hilarious effect. And we close the season with a new play by our longtime collaborator Rajiv Joseph. 'King James' explores LeBron James' impact on Cleveland, Ohio and his role in America's extreme fascination with sports figures."

Taper subscribers will also receive tickets to one of two powerhouse shows recently announced at the Ahmanson—John Leguizamo in "Latin History for Morons" or Mike Birbiglia in "The New One."

"At the Kirk Douglas Theatre we have more boldly personal stories and the continuation of a favorite program," continued Ritchie. "We begin with one of our most dynamic and inventive artists, Bill Irwin, exploring his lifelong relationship with Samuel Beckett in his compelling new play, 'On Beckett,' which will allow us to experience the words of this master playwright as only Irwin can deliver them.

"In an equally personal and compelling performance, playwright Dael Orlandersmith returns to the Douglas with 'Until the Flood,' presenting a raw and urgent exploration of the community around Ferguson, Missouri following the shooting of Michael Brown. Aasif Mandvi is famous for his biting work on 'The Daily Show,' but became known on stage with his one-man show 'Sakina's Restaurant,' a heartwarming play that centers on an Indian immigrant's search for the American dream. 'Sakina's Restaurant' was written 20 years ago yet feels more urgent than ever.

"And we're proud to continue our tradition of welcoming our fellow Los Angeles theatremakers to the annual Block Party, where we present encores of some amazing work taking place at smaller theatres throughout L.A. Subscribers will receive one of the selected works.

"This promises to be an exciting year at the Taper and Douglas. One filled with artists that grab our imaginations and bring us with them into different times and places, into their process and obsessions and, in doing so, they let us in on experiences we might never have and offer new ways to see the everyday world around us."

First Production at the Mark Taper Forum

“A Play Is a Poem”

By Ethan Coen

Directed by Neil Pepe

World Premiere

In Association with Atlantic Theater Company

September 11 – October 13, 2019

Opens September 21

Center Theatre Group’s 2019 – 2020 season at the Mark Taper Forum opens with Ethan Coen’s **“A Play Is a Poem”** September 11 through October 13, 2019. Directed by Neil Pepe and produced in association with Atlantic Theater Company, “A Play Is a Poem” opens on September 21.

“A Play Is a Poem” is a new collection of five one acts by Ethan Coen set in the hillbilly hollows of Appalachia, the executive suites of Hollywood, a New York tenement apartment, the smoke-filled office of a Los Angeles private eye and a magnolia-scented gazebo in Natchez, Mississippi. Each place holds a different story – together they offer an eccentric look at life across America that only Ethan Coen could deliver.

Ethan Coen has written three previous evenings of one acts, “Happy Hour,” “Almost an Evening” and “Offices,” all three directed by Neil Pepe. His full-length play “Women or Nothing” was directed by David Cromer and premiered at Atlantic Theater Company. He contributed a play to “Relatively Speaking,” a Broadway trio of one acts whose other contributors were Woody Allen and Elaine May. Coen has written 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 also written, produced and directed films with his brother Joel for 35 years.

Neil’s recent directing credits include the New York premiere of Simon Stephens’ “On the Shore of the Wide World,” and the world premieres of George Brant’s “Marie and Rosetta,” Kenneth Lonergan’s “Hold On To Me Darling” and David Mamet’s “The Penitent,” all at the Atlantic Theater Company in New York. Broadway credits include the musical, “Hands on a Hardbody” the acclaimed revival of David Mamet’s “Speed-the-Plow” and “A Life in the Theatre.” Off-Broadway credits at Atlantic Theater Company 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’ “Clean;” Quincy Long’s “Shaker Heights.” Additional off-Broadway credits include David Mamet’s “American Buffalo” (Donmar Warehouse, Atlantic Theater Company); “Romance” and “Two Unrelated Plays by David Mamet” (Center Theatre Group, Atlantic Theater Company); 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 Theater Company); Frank Gilroy’s “The Subject Was Roses” with Martin Sheen (Center Theatre Group) and Eric Bogosian’s “Red Angel” (Williamstown Theatre Festival). Neil

has been the Artistic Director of the award-winning off-Broadway company, Atlantic Theater Company, since 1992.

Second Production
Option One of Two at the Ahmanson Theatre
“Latin History for Morons”
Written and Performed by John Leguizamo
Directed by Tony Taccone
September 5 – October 20, 2019
Opens September 8

Direct from Broadway, Tony Award winner John Leguizamo’s critically acclaimed new one-man play **“Latin History for Morons”** begins previews at the Ahmanson Theatre September 5, opens September 8 and continues through October 20, 2019.

Inspired by the near total absence of Latinos from his son’s American history books, John Leguizamo embarks on an outrageously funny, frenzied search to find a Latin hero for his son’s school project. From a mad recap of the Aztec empire to stories of unknown Latin patriots of the Revolutionary War and beyond, Leguizamo breaks down the 3,000 years between the Mayans and Pitbull into 95 irreverent and uncensored minutes above and beyond his unique style.

Ben Brantley of The New York Times called “Latin History for Morons” a “surprisingly poignant one-man show.” He went on to say, “the show slyly poses sharp and timely questions of what culturally defines American identity and who, in the nationalistic age of Trump, has ‘the right’ to be here.”

David Canfield of Entertainment Weekly concluded, “With ‘Latin History for Morons,’ Leguizamo isn’t merely teaching us what we’ve never been taught. He’s giving us a space to cheer and cry, to laugh and listen.”

Leguizamo began his work on “Latin History for Morons” with celebrated, sold-out development engagements at The Public Theater and Berkeley Repertory Theatre followed by a Tony-nominated run at Broadway’s Studio 54. Directed by Tony Taccone (“Wishful Drinking,” “Bridge & Tunnel”), “Latin History for Morons” is written and performed by Leguizamo, featuring scenic design by Rachel Hauck, lighting design by Alexander V. Nichols and original music and sound design by Bray Poor.

“Latin History for Morons” is the sixth offering for theatre’s most prolific modern Latino playwright and his fourth to be produced on Broadway, joining “Ghetto Klown” (Outer Critics Circle Award, Drama Desk Award), “Freak” (Drama Desk Award) and “Sexaholix...A Love Story”(Tony nomination). “Mambo Mouth” (Obie Award) and “Spic-O-Rama” (Drama Desk Award) each had successful off-Broadway runs. “Mambo Mouth,” “Spic-O-Rama,” “Freak” and “Ghetto Klown” all went on to be filmed for presentation on HBO. “Latin History for Morons” earned Leguizamo a 2018 Special Tony Award.

John Leguizamo’s other theatre credits include “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” “La Puta Vida Trilogy” and “American Buffalo.” His film credits include “The Infiltrator,” “To Wong Foo Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar” (Golden Globe nomination, ALMA Award), “Moulin Rouge” (SAG nomination), “King of the Jungle,” “American Ultra,” “John Wick,” “Chef,” “Summer of Sam,” the “Ice Age” series and

“Romeo and Juliet.” On television, he has appeared in “Bloodline,” “The Kill Point,” “ER,” “My Name is Earl,” “The Brothers Garcia,” “House of Buggin” and “Miami Vice.” His books include “Pimps, Hos, Playa Hatas and All the Rest of My Hollywood Friends: My Life” and “Ghetto Clown” (Eisner Award nomination). Leguizamo has been awarded a Tony, two Obie, three Drama Desk, three Outer Critics Circle, one Emmy and six Cable ACE Awards.

Tony Taccone has served as Artistic Director of Berkeley Rep for the past 23 years, during which time the Tony Award-winning nonprofit has enhanced its reputation as an international leader in innovative theatre. Mr. Taccone has staged more than 40 plays in Berkeley including new work by Julia Cho, Tony Kushner, KJ Sanchez, Danny Hoch, David Edgar, Sarah Jones, Culture Clash and Lemony Snicket. He directed two shows that transferred to London, “Continental Divide” and “Tiny Kushner,” and three that landed on Broadway, “Bridge and Tunnel,” “Wishful Drinking” and “Latin History for Morons.” Prior to working at Berkeley Rep, Taccone served as Artistic Director of the Eureka Theatre, introducing the Bay Area to playwrights ranging from Dario Fo to Caryl Churchill. While there, Taccone and Oskar Eustis commissioned Tony Kushner’s “Angels in America” and co-directed its world premiere in Los Angeles; he directed “Angels in America” again in 2018 at Berkeley Rep.

Second Production
Option Two of Two at the Ahmanson Theatre
“The New One”
Written and Performed by Mike Birbiglia
Directed by Seth Barrish
October 23 – November 24, 2019
Opens October 25

Mike Birbiglia’s one-man comedy **“The New One”** begins previews at the Ahmanson Theatre on October 23, opens October 25 and continues through November 24.

Written by Mike Birbiglia, with additional writing by Jennifer Hope Stein, “The New One” is directed by Seth Barrish with set design by Beowulf Boritt, lighting design by Aaron Copp and sound design by Leon Rothenberg.

Birbiglia’s previous plays “Sleepwalk with Me,” “My Girlfriend’s Boyfriend” and “Thank God for Jokes” all earned Lortel Award nominations for “Best Solo Show” with “My Girlfriend’s Boyfriend” winning the 2011 award. In his Broadway debut, “The New One,” Birbiglia delves back into his own life to tell a new story in a new way with the same heart and humor his fans have come to expect.

When she included “The New One” in her list of the best stage shows of 2018, Entertainment Weekly’s Jessica Derschowitz said “hilarious and poignant observations about becoming a parent and the ways his life changed after the birth of his daughter — the ‘new one’ in this scenario — make for some of his best and most heartfelt work yet.”

Bob Verini of Variety called “The New One” “a brimmingly warm, entertaining [play] on a universally relatable topic. Birbiglia goes through a life-changing journey;

there are surprises and one coup de theatre along the way; and he is most certainly a singular character.”

Mike Birbiglia is a comedian, storyteller, director and actor who has performed in front of audiences worldwide, from the Sydney Opera House to Carnegie Hall. His shows, “My Girlfriend’s Boyfriend” and “Thank God for Jokes,” were both filmed for Netflix. In addition to performing live, Birbiglia is an author and filmmaker who wrote, directed and starred in the films “Sleepwalk with Me” and “Don’t Think Twice.” His book “Sleepwalk with Me and Other Painfully True Stories” was a New York Times bestseller and a finalist for the Thurber Prize for American Humor. As an actor, Birbiglia has appeared on “Inside Amy Schumer,” HBO’s “Girls” and “Broad City,” as well as in the films “Trainwreck,” “The Fault in Our Stars” and “Popstar.” He plays the role of Danny Pearson on “Orange Is the New Black” and Oscar Langstraat on Showtime’s “Billions.” He is a contributor to “This American Life” on public radio and was honored with the 2017 Kurt Vonnegut Award for humor.

Seth Barrish is co-artistic director of The Barrow Group. For the Netflix presentations, Barrish was the director of “Mike Birbiglia: My Girlfriend’s Boyfriend” and co-director of “Thank God for Jokes.” Theatre directing credits include “Thank God for Jokes” (Lucille Lortel nomination), “All the Rage” (Lortel Award, Outer Critics Circle nomination), “My Girlfriend’s Boyfriend” (Lortel Award, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations – final performance at Carnegie Hall), “Sleepwalk with Me” (Nightlife Award), “The Tricky Part” (Obie Award, two Drama Desk nominations), “Pentecost” (Drama Desk nomination), “Old Wicked Songs” (Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award and Garland Award), “Good” (Straw Hat Award) and many more. Barrish is co-director and co-screenplay writer for “Sleepwalk with Me.” As a playwright, he is co-adaptor of “Enemy of the People” (an adaptation of Ibsen’s “An Enemy of the People”). Barrish is consulting producer for “Don’t Think Twice.”

Third Production at the Mark Taper Forum
August Wilson’s
“Jitney”

Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson
November 22 – December 29, 2019
Opens November 24

On the heels of his 2019 hit revival of “Lackawanna Blues,” Ruben Santiago-Hudson returns to the Mark Taper Forum to direct **“Jitney”** – a masterpiece by two-time Pulitzer winner August Wilson – in the production that completed Wilson’s American Century Cycle on Broadway and received the 2017 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play. Originally presented by Manhattan Theatre Club, “Jitney” runs November 22 through December 29, 2019, and opens November 24.

A Tony winner for his performance in Wilson’s “Seven Guitars,” Ruben Santiago-Hudson earned a Tony nomination and Drama Desk Award for his direction of the Broadway debut of “Jitney.”

Set in the early 1970s, this richly textured piece follows a group of men trying to eke out a living by driving unlicensed cabs, or jitneys. When the city threatens to board up the business and the boss' son returns from prison, tempers flare, potent secrets are revealed and the fragile threads binding these people together threaten to come undone at last.

In reviewing Santiago-Hudson's 2017 revival of "Jitney," The New York Times' Ben Brantley said, "How sweet the sound. And how sorrowful and jubilant, as life in a storefront taxi company in an African-American neighborhood in Pittsburgh comes to feel like a free-form urban concerto, shaped by the quick-witted, improvisatory spirit that makes jazz soar." David Rooney of The Hollywood Reporter asked, "Is there a more accomplished living interpreter of the plays of August Wilson than Ruben Santiago-Hudson?" Maya Stanton of Entertainment Weekly added, "It's like eavesdropping on an often funny, occasionally hostile, always honest discussion about race, urban development (or lack thereof), and relationships — between fathers and sons, men and women, coworkers and friends."

Tony and Obie Award winner Ruben Santiago-Hudson recently directed the world premieres of Dominique Morisseau's "Skeleton Crew" at the Atlantic Theater and "Paradise Blue" at the Williamstown Theatre Festival. Other directing credits include "Seven Guitars," "The Piano Lesson," "The First Breeze of Summer," "Cabin in the Sky" and many more. The multi-award-winning director and actor wrote, executive produced and starred in the HBO film of "Lackawanna Blues." It received several honors, including Emmy, Golden Globe, Humanitas, National Board of Review and Christopher Awards. Ruben starred in BET's drama "The Quad," recurs on Showtime's "Billions" and starred in TNT's "Public Morals." The Lackawanna, New York native opened the Ruben Santiago-Hudson Fine Arts Learning Center in 2014 in his hometown.

Center Theatre Group has presented nine of August Wilson's plays: "Gem of the Ocean," "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," "Jitney," "King Hedley II" and "Radio Golf" at the Taper; "Seven Guitars" at the Ahmanson Theatre; and "The Piano Lesson" (1990 Pulitzer Prize) and "Two Trains Running" at the James A. Doolittle Theatre in Hollywood.

In addition, through its Education and Community Partnerships department, Center Theatre Group hosts the annual August Wilson Monologue Competition regional finals in which students in grades 10 through 12 perform monologues from Wilson's Century Cycle. The winners travel to New York to compete in the national finals at the August Wilson Theatre on Broadway. Center Theatre Group also offers an in-school residency as part of the larger August Wilson Program. The August Wilson In-School Residency is a semester-long program that provides Title 1 students with an in-depth study of the work of August Wilson.

Fourth Production at the Mark Taper Forum

“What the Constitution Means to Me”

By Heidi Schreck

Directed by Oliver Butler

January 12 – February 16, 2020

Opens January 15

Center Theatre Group’s 2019 – 2020 season at the Mark Taper Forum continues with the Broadway hit, Tony-nominated “Best Play” and 2019 Pulitzer Prize finalist **“What the Constitution Means to Me”** by two-time Obie Award winner Heidi Schreck. Directed by Oliver Butler, “What the Constitution Means to Me” comes to the Taper January 12 through February 16, 2020. Opening is January 15. Casting will be announced at a later date.

Fifteen-year-old Heidi Schreck earned her college tuition winning Constitutional debate competitions across the United States. In her boundary-breaking new play, the Pulitzer finalist resurrects her teenage self in order to trace the profound relationship between four generations of women in her own family and the founding document that dictated their rights and citizenship. This hilarious, hopeful and “achingly human” (Exeunt Magazine) exploration breathes new life into our Constitution and imagines how it will shape the next generation of American women.

Sara Holdren of New York Magazine calls it “delicately balanced and expansively humane.” Jesse Green of The New York Times calls it “not just the best play to open on Broadway so far this season, but also the most important,” adding “joy comes from watching an imaginative new kind of theater emerge.”

Heidi Schreck’s play “Grand Concourse” was a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and winner of the Stacey Mindich Lilly Award. Other plays, including “Creature,” “There Are No More Big Secrets” and “The Consultant,” have been produced by Berkeley Rep, Long Wharf, Page 73, Seattle Public Theatre, New Georges, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater and more. Heidi’s television writing includes “I Love Dick,” “Billions” and “Nurse Jackie.” She is developing a TV series with Amazon based on Patricia Lockwood’s “Priestdaddy.” As an actor she’s performed at Berkeley Rep, Roundabout, MTC, Playwrights Horizons, Shakespeare in the Park, Clubbed Thumb, Two-Headed Calf and on “Nurse Jackie,” “Billions,” “Law & Order: SVU” and “The Good Wife.” Winner of two Obies, a Drama Desk Award and the Theatre World Award.

Oliver Butler is a co-founder and co-artistic director of The Debate Society (TDS), with whom he has co-created and directed nine full-length plays. He directed the premiere of Will Eno’s “The Open House” (Obie Award for Direction; Lucille Lortel Award for Best Play), Eno’s “Thom Pain” at Signature Theatre and the Geffen Playhouse and the City Center Encores! Off-Center production of Jonathan Larson’s “Tick...Tick...Boom” starring Lin-Manuel Miranda, Leslie Odom and Karen Olivo.

Fifth Production at the Mark Taper Forum

“The Antipodes”

By Annie Baker

Directed by Lila Neugebauer

March 25 – April 26, 2020

Opens April 1

Pulitzer-winning playwright Annie Baker brings her sharp new comedy, **“The Antipodes,”** to the Mark Taper Forum March 25 through April 26, 2020. Lila Neugebauer, who directed the world premiere of “The Antipodes” at Signature Theatre, leads the Center Theatre Group production which opens April 1.

A play about people telling stories about telling stories by the playwright that The New York Times has called “one of the freshest and most talented dramatists to emerge Off Broadway in the past decade,” “The Antipodes” follows nine characters thrown together in an undefined writers’ room.

Ben Brantley of The New York Times called “The Antipodes,” “Annie Baker’s in-all-ways fabulous new play about professional fabulators in pursuit of the ultimate yarn.” Adding, “Directed with a time-blurring seamlessness by Lila Neugebauer ... ‘The Antipodes’ leaves you glowing with a wondering satisfaction. I mean the happy satiety that comes from being in the hands of a real right-brain/left-brain author who channels her ineffable instincts with a master artisan’s practical skills.”

Annie Baker’s other plays include “John” (Obie Award for Collaboration, Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel nominations for Best Play), “The Flick” (Pulitzer, Susan Smith Blackburn Award, Obie Award for Playwriting, UK Critics Circle Award for Best New Play), “Circle Mirror Transformation” (Obie Award for Best New American Play, Drama Desk nomination for Best Play), “The Aliens” (Obie Award for Best New American Play), “Body Awareness” (Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations for Best Play/Emerging Playwright) and an adaptation of Chekhov’s “Uncle Vanya” (Drama Desk nomination for Best Revival), for which she also designed the costumes. Her plays have been produced at over 200 theatres throughout the U.S. and in over a dozen countries. Other honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, Steinberg Playwriting Award, American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award, the Cullman Fellowship at the New York Public Library and a MacArthur Fellowship.

Lila Neugebauer is an Obie, Drama Desk and Princess Grace Award-winning director who recently directed Kenneth Lonergan’s “The Waverly Gallery” on Broadway. Recent off-Broadway credits include Annie Baker’s “The Antipodes,” Tracy Letts’ “Mary Page Marlowe,” Branden Jacobs-Jenkins’ “Everybody,” Sarah DeLappe’s “The Wolves,” Zoe Kazan’s “After the Blast,” Albee’s “At Home at the Zoo,” Albee’s “The Sandbox,” Fornes’ “Drowning,” Kennedy’s “Funnyhouse of a Negro,” Gurney’s “The Wayside Motor Inn,” Abe Koogler’s “Kill Floor” and Lily Thorne’s “Peace for Mary Frances.” As co-Artistic Director of The Mad Ones, Neugebauer conceives and directs ensemble-devised work, including “Mrs. Murray’s Menagerie,” “Miles for Mary,” “Samuel & Alasdair: A Personal History of the Robot War” and “The Essential Straight & Narrow.” She is an alum of the Drama League, Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, Lincoln Center Directors Lab,

an Ensemble Studio Theatre member, New Georges Affiliated Artist, and New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspect. Television credits include “Room 104” (HBO).

Sixth Production at the Mark Taper Forum
“King James”
By Rajiv Joseph
Directed by Anna D. Shapiro
World Premiere Production
In Association with Steppenwolf Theatre Company
July 29 – August 30, 2020
Opens August 2

Center Theatre Group’s 2019 – 2020 season at the Mark Taper Forum concludes with the world premiere production of “King James” by Rajiv Joseph. Directed by Anna D. Shapiro and produced in association with Steppenwolf Theatre Company, **“King James”** was co-commissioned by Center Theatre Group and Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

“King James” was previously announced as part of Center Theatre Group’s 2020 – 2021 season before it was moved into the 2019 – 2020 season at the Taper. Performance dates at the Mark Taper Forum have not been announced. It will be performed at Steppenwolf May 7 through June 21, 2020.

LeBron James’ return to Cleveland brings the promise of hope, prosperity and renewal to a city in desperate need of all three but not everyone is willing to welcome him back. As the city celebrates a long-awaited championship, two estranged friends spar in a verbal game of one-on-one, revealing past secrets, present truths and a possible future after “The King” has left the building.

“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.” Joseph wrote the libretto for the opera “Shalimar the Clown,” based on the novel by Salman Rushdie. He was also the co-writer of the feature film “Draft Day” and wrote for two seasons on the Showtime series “Nurse Jackie.” 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.

Director Anna D. Shapiro won the 2008 Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards for Best Director of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company production of “August: Osage County” by Tracy Letts. In 2011 she received another Tony Award nomination for her direction of “The Motherf**ker with the Hat.” Other Broadway credits include Larry David’s “Fish in the Dark,” the revival of Steppenwolf’s production of “This Is Our Youth” and the Broadway revival of Steinbeck’s “Of Mice and Men,” which

National Theatre Live selected as the first American production to be broadcast to over 700 cinemas across the UK. She has directed off-Broadway at Lincoln Center Theater, Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan Theatre Club and Atlantic Theater Company among others. Ms. Shapiro serves as the Artistic Director of Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago (since 2015/16) where she has directed numerous productions including “Visiting Edna” by David Rabe and “The Man from Nebraska,” “Mary Page Marlowe” and “The Minutes” by Tracy Letts. Additional Steppenwolf directing credits include “A Parallelogram,” “The Unmentionables” and “The Pain and the Itch” all by Bruce Norris, “Side Man” (also in Ireland, Australia and Colorado) by Warren Leight and Richard Greenberg’s “Three Days of Rain” among many others. She is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama and Columbia College and the recipient of a 1996 Princess Grace Award, as well as the 2010 Princess Grace Statue Award. Shapiro began working with Steppenwolf in 1995 as the original director of the New Plays Lab and joined the Ensemble in 2005.

First Production at the Kirk Douglas Theatre

“On Beckett”

Conceived and Performed by Bill Irwin

September 13 – October 27, 2019

Opens September 18

The 2019 – 2020 season at the Kirk Douglas Theatre season opens with the remounting of the Irish Repertory Theatre production of **“On Beckett.”** Conceived and performed by Bill Irwin, “On Beckett” plays September 13 through October 27, 2019 with the opening set for September 18.

Bill Irwin is haunted by the work of Samuel Beckett – language he learned over years as a performer and now finds himself considering and reconsidering. In this intimate 90-minute engaging, funny and illuminating evening, Irwin explores his own personal “actor’s relationship” to the Nobel Prize-winning Irish writer, mining the physical and verbal talents acquired from his years as a master clown and Tony Award-winning actor. Irwin’s approach to the comic, the tragic, to every side of Beckett’s work – including “Waiting for Godot” and “Texts for Nothing” – offers the opportunity to experience Beckett’s language through the lens of a uniquely skilled performer.

In reviewing the 2018 off-Broadway run of “On Beckett,” Ben Brantley of The New York Times said, “Mr. Irwin opens up his bag of performer’s tricks and even spills them out for our inspection. But when these discrete elements coalesce into a moment of radiant, living theater, you still find yourself thinking: ‘How does he do that?’ It’s a reminder of a crucial paradox of great art, in which precise craft becomes a vehicle for profound mystery.”

Sara Holdren of New York Magazine wrote, “The brilliant clown Bill Irwin has brought his utterly delightful almost-solo show to the Irish Rep, and his astute, inquisitive engagement with the work of the existentialist titan feels like an act of professional generosity.”

“On Beckett” received a special Lortel Award for “Outstanding Alternative Theatrical Experience” and Bill Irwin received an Outer Critics Circle Awards nomination for “Outstanding Actor In A Play.”

Bill Irwin is a Tony-winning actor, director, writer and clown. His original works include “The Regard of Flight,” “Largely New York” (four Tony nominations), “Fool Moon” (co-created with David Shiner), “Old Hats” (co-created with David Shiner), “The Happiness Lecture” and others. He has starred in Broadway, off-Broadway and regional productions, including “The Iceman Cometh,” “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf” (Tony for Best Actor in a Play – also at the Ahmanson Theatre), “The Goat, or Who is Sylvia” opposite Sally Field, “Waiting For Godot” with Nathan Lane (2009 for a Drama Desk Award nomination) and “Texts for Nothing.” Current television roles include Mr. Noodle of “Elmo’s World” and Cary Loudermilk of “Legion.” His film credits include “Rachel Getting Married,” “The Grinch Who Stole Christmas,” “Eight Men Out,” “Interstellar,” “Stepping Out” and others. Irwin was an original member of Kraken, a theatre company directed by Herbert Blau, and was also an original member of the Pickle Family Circus of San Francisco. Irwin has received MacArthur, Guggenheim, Fulbright and National Endowment for the Arts Choreographer’s Fellowships.

This production premiered at Irish Repertory Theatre in New York City on October 3, 2018. “On Beckett” was originally developed at the American Conservatory Theater (ACT) in San Francisco in consultation with Artistic Director Carey Perloff, and produced at the Strand Theater in January 2017. On Beckett was also workshopped at Vineyard Theatre and the Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle.

Second Production at the Kirk Douglas Theatre

“Until the Flood”

Written and Performed by Dael Orlandersmith

Directed by Neel Keller

January 24 – February 23, 2020

Opens January 29

Pulitzer Prize finalist and celebrated performer Dael Orlandersmith returns to the Kirk Douglas Theatre to perform her timely, compassionate play **“Until the Flood.”** Directed by Center Theatre Group Associate Artistic Director Neel Keller (who directed the play’s world premiere), “Until the Flood” begins previews January 24 and continues through February 23, 2020. Opening night is set for January 29.

Commissioned by Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, “Until the Flood” explores a community in turmoil following the fatal shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. Orlandersmith drew from her extensive interviews with residents across the greater St. Louis area to create composite characters that reflect a wide range of perspectives and experiences of race to discuss the roots of unrest and the search for healing.

Jesse Green of The New York Times said “‘Until the Flood’ is an urgent moral inquest.” Variety’s Marilyn Stasio called “Until the Flood” “both eye-opening and quietly moving,” adding that Orlandersmith “finds the common humanity of people who are just

... people. Like Michael Brown and Darren Wilson.” Chris Jones of the Chicago Tribune concluded, “‘Until the Flood’ is so palpably compassionate, it achieves a great beauty by bringing us together rather than driving us apart.”

Dael Orlandersmith is a playwright, poet, actor and teacher. Her solo memoir play “Forever” was commissioned by Center Theatre Group and debuted at the Douglas. Her other plays include “Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men,” “Horsedreams,” “Bones” (commissioned and produced by Center Theatre Group), “Suicide Girlz,” “Stoop Stories” “The Blue Album” (a collaboration with David Cale), “Yellowman,” “The Gimmick,” “Beauty’s Daughter” and “Monster.” Orlandersmith was nominated for the 2015 Off-Broadway Alliance Award for Best Solo Performance in “Forever.” “Yellowman” received a Pulitzer nomination, Drama Desk nominations for Outstanding Play and Outstanding Actress in a Play and a Susan Smith Blackburn Award. For “Beauty’s Daughter,” she received an Obie and was a Susan Smith Blackburn Award finalist.

Neel Keller has enjoyed a long and happy collaboration with Dael Orlandersmith. They met almost 30 years ago, on a production of “Romeo and Juliet.” Over the last several years they have worked closely on creating and producing Orlandersmith’s acclaimed plays “Until the Flood” and “Forever” which have played throughout America and the UK. Neel’s other recent productions include the world premieres of Julia Cho’s “Office Hour,” Eliza Clark’s “Quack,” Jennifer Haley’s “The Nether,” Kimber Lee’s “different words for the same thing” and Lucy Alibar’s “Throw Me On The Burnpile and Light Me Up.”

Third Production at the Kirk Douglas Theatre
Block Party: Celebrating Los Angeles Theatre
March 18 – April 19, 2020

Drawing upon the rich local theatre community, **Block Party: Celebrating Los Angeles Theatre** will return to the Kirk Douglas Theatre for its fourth season. Presented over six weeks, March 18 – April 19, 2020, Block Party will feature two productions from local 99-seat or smaller theatres. Openings are set for March 20 and April 10.

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 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 of all sizes in a multitude of ways. Center Theatre Group presented Deaf West’s production of “Big River” at the Mark Taper Forum in 2002, which went on to Broadway before returning to the Ahmanson Theatre in 2005 as part of a national tour. Center Theatre Group also partnered with 24th Street Theatre on “Walking the Tightrope,” which played at the Douglas, and with other companies on productions around the city such as “The Behavior of Broadus” (with Burglars of Hamm and Sacred Fools Theater Company), “Birder” (with The Road Theatre Company) and, most recently, “The Hotel Play” (with Playwrights’ Arena).

Over the first three years, Center Theatre Group has received hundreds of Block Party submissions from theatres throughout the greater Los Angeles area. Previous Block Party productions have included “Ameryka” (Critical Mass Performance Group), “Bloodletting” (Playwrights’ Arena), “Citizen: An American Lyric” (The Fountain Theatre), “Die, Mommie, Die!” (Celebration Theatre), “Dry Land” (The Echo Theater Company), “Failure: A Love Story” (Coourage Theatre Company), “For The Love Of (or, the roller derby play)” (Theatre of NOTE), “Native Son” (Antaeus Theatre Company) and “Rotterdam” (Skylight Theatre Company).

Theatre companies from the greater Los Angeles area are invited to submit shows for the 2020 Block Party. The plays must have opened at a local intimate theatre between January 1, 2018, and May 23, 2019. Applications are being accepted now through May 23, 2019. Theatre companies interested in submitting an application should visit www.CenterTheatreGroup.org/BlockParty.

Fourth Production at the Kirk Douglas Theatre

“Sakina’s Restaurant”

Written and Performed by Aasif Mandvi

Originally Directed and Developed by Kimberley Hughes

Directed by Kimberly Senior

An Audible Theater Production

May 29 – June 28, 2020

Opens June 3

Written and performed by Aasif Mandvi, **“Sakina’s Restaurant”** closes the 2019 – 2020 season at the Kirk Douglas Theatre. Originally directed and developed by Kimberley Hughes in 1998, this production is directed by Kimberly Senior and is an Audible Theater production. Performances dates have not been announced.

Actor, writer and former correspondent for “The Daily Show,” Aasif Mandvi’s “Sakina’s Restaurant” is a vibrant, funny and heartwarming one-man show that centers on an Indian immigrant who comes to New York to work at a restaurant and live the American dream. Mandvi brings his acclaimed performance back to the stage 20 years after its Obie Award-winning debut.

Entertaining and intimate, this story of what it means to be an American was written long before immigration became an intensely polarizing issue. Today, its revival feels necessary and even urgent, and certainly as honest and refreshing as ever.

Reviewing the 2018 off-Broadway production, Frank Scheck of The Hollywood Reporter said the play “feels more relevant than ever.” Thom Geier of The Wrap praised Mandvi’s “tour-de-force acting,” adding “the Mumbai-born performer seamlessly transitions into a half dozen different Indian American characters before our eyes.”

Aasif Mandvi is a Peabody Award-winning actor, writer, creator, comedian, author and producer. He made his name in theatre with “Sakina’s Restaurant” which premiered at the American Place Theatre, earning him an Obie Award. Mandvi was also nominated for a Lucille Lortel Award for his portrayal of Amir Kapoor in Ayad Akhtar’s Pulitzer-winning play “Disgraced” at Lincoln Center. Other stage credits include the Broadway

revival of “Oklahoma,” “Suburbia,” “Trudy Blue” and City Center’s “Brigadoon.” Film credits include “Mother’s Day,” “Million Dollar Arm,” “The Internship,” “The Last Airbender,” “The Dictator,” “Dark Horse,” “Spider-Man 2,” “Premium Rush” and “A Kid Like Jake.” He co-wrote and starred in the film “Today’s Special” as well as HBO’s series “The Brink.” Some of his TV credits include “Blue Bloods,” “Madam Secretary” “Younger,” “A Series of Unfortunate Events,” “Shut Eye” and National Geographic’s “Years of Living Dangerously.” He recently starred in the CBS pilot “Evil” from Robert and Michelle King and will soon be seen in the upcoming film “Human Capital” and the series “This Way Up” for Channel 4/Hulu. Mandvi co-created and starred in the Peabody Award-winning web series “Halal in the Family” and in 2014 wrote a collection of humorous autobiographical stories entitled “No Land’s Man.”

Kimberly Senior directed the Broadway premiere of Ayad Akhtar’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play “Disgraced,” which she also directed off-Broadway at Lincoln Center Theater (LCT3), Goodman Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Rep and Mark Taper Forum. Off-Broadway credits include “The Niceties” (Manhattan Theatre Club), “Career Suicide” (produced by Judd Apatow), “Sakina’s Restaurant” (Audible), “Discord” (Primary Stages), “Engagements” (Second Stage Theater) and “The Who and the What” (LCT3). Regional theatre credits include “Photograph 51” (South Coast Repertory); “Sex with Strangers” and “The Niceties” (Geffen Playhouse); “Disgraced,” “Rapture, Blister, Burn” and “Support Group for Men” (Goodman Theatre); “Sheltered” (Alliance Theatre); “Want” and “The North Plan” (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); “Other Than Honorable” (Geva Theatre Center); among others. Television credits include “Chris Gethard” and “Career Suicide” (HBO). Senior is the recipient of the 2016 Special Non-Equity Jeff Award, 2016 Alan Schneider Award (TCG) and 2018 Einhorn Award (Primary Stages).

Audible is a rich listening destination that offers insight and inspiration to millions of listeners and is the world’s leading audio and spoken-word media service. Audible’s theatre initiative unleashes the artistic creativity of playwrights around the globe to deliver language-driven storytelling and inspire captivating performances on stage and in audio. Off-Broadway, Audible has produced “Harry Clarke” by David Cale starring Billy Crudup, “Girls & Boys” by Dennis Kelly starring Carey Mulligan, “Patti Smith: Words and Music” and many others. In audio, Audible has produced “Stories by Heart” starring John Lithgow, “An Act of God” starring Sean Hayes, “True West” starring Kit Harrington and Johnny Flynn, and more. In 2017, Audible launched a five million-dollar Emerging Playwrights Fund that identifies, nurtures and invests in emerging playwrights, making their works available to millions of listeners around the world. “Proof of Love” is the inaugural stage production from the Emerging Playwrights Fund.

**Center Theatre Group’s 2019 – 2020 Seasons
at the Mark Taper Forum and Kirk Douglas Theatre
Available on Subscription Only**

Tickets for Center Theatre Group’s 2019 – 2020 seasons at the Mark Taper Forum and Kirk Douglas Theatre are currently available by subscription only. For information and to charge subscriptions by phone, call the Exclusive Subscriber Hotline

at (213) 972-4444. To purchase subscriptions online, visit www.CenterTheatreGroup.org/Season.

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.

Center Theatre Group

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation's preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles' leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2100-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
2019 – 2020 Season at the Mark Taper Forum**

First Mark Taper Forum Season Production

September 11 – October 13, 2019
(Opens September 21.)

“A Play Is a Poem”
By Ethan Coen
Directed by Neil Pepe
World Premiere
In Association with
Atlantic Theater Company

Second Mark Taper Forum Season Production – Presented at the Ahmanson Theatre

September 5 – October 20, 2019
(Opens September 8.)

“Latin History for Morons”
Written and Performed by John Leguizamo
Directed by Tony Taccone

or

October 23 – November 24, 2019
(Opens October 25.)

“The New One”
Written and Performed by Mike Birbiglia
Directed by Seth Barrish

Third Mark Taper Forum Season Production

November 22 – December 29, 2019
(Opens November 24.)

August Wilson's
“Jitney”
Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson

Fourth Mark Taper Forum Season Production

January 12 – February 16, 2020
(Opens January 15.)

“What the Constitution Means to Me”
Written by Heidi Schreck
Directed by Oliver Butler

Fifth Mark Taper Forum Season Production

March 25 – April 26, 2020
(Opens April 1.)

“The Antipodes”
By Annie Baker
Directed by Lila Neugebauer

Sixth Mark Taper Forum Season Production

July 29 – August 30, 2020
(Opens August 2.)

“King James”
By Rajiv Joseph
Directed by Anna D. Shapiro
World Premiere Production
In Association with
Steppenwolf Theatre Company

**Center Theatre Group's
2019 – 2020 Season at the Kirk Douglas Theatre**

First Kirk Douglas Theatre Season Production

September 13 – October 27, 2019
(Opens September 18.)

“On Beckett”

Conceived and Performed by Bill Irwin

Second Kirk Douglas Theatre Season Production

January 24 – February 23, 2020
(Opens January 29.)

“Until the Flood”

Written and Performed by
Dael Orlandersmith
Directed by Neel Keller

Third Kirk Douglas Theatre Season Production

March 18 – April 19, 2020
(Openings March 20 and April 10.)

“Block Party:

Celebrating Los Angeles Theatre”

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

Fourth Kirk Douglas Theatre Season Production

May 29 – June 28, 2020
(Opens June 3.)

“Sakina’s Restaurant”

Written and Performed by Aasif Mandvi
Originally Directed and Developed by
Kimberley Hughes
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An Audible Theater Production

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Updated 7/18/19