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CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATER ANNOUNCES PLAYS AND PROGRAMMING FOR ITS 2017 SEASON

*The first season programmed by Artistic Director Eric Ting emphasizes
the theater's commitment to a multi-layered integration
of community engagement with Main Stage productions*

Main Stage productions include

As You Like It, directed by Desdemona Chiang; *The Glass Menagerie*, directed by Lisa Portes;
the West Coast premiere of Marcus Gardley's *black odyssey*, directed by Eric Ting;
and *Measure for Measure*, director to be announced

Berkeley, CA, California Shakespeare Theater announced plans for its 2017 season, which will feature two of Shakespeare's most thought-provoking comedies, the Bruns debut of one of Tennessee Williams' most poignant and enduring works, and a vibrantly theatrical adaptation of Homer's *The Odyssey*, by Oakland native Marcus Gardley in its West Coast premiere.

Cal Shakes Artistic Director **Eric Ting** says, "Choosing a season of plays was only part of the story; our passion is to take our core offering—the art on our stage—and transform it into an instrument for social impact. We are putting community at the heart of everything we do and how we do it. Whether through the casting of a production or the extraordinary humanity expressed through our Story Circles, Civic Dialogues, and classroom residencies, we are pursuing a culture of participation that values authentic discourse around the work we make and allows everyone—everyone—to see themselves in the stories we tell."

He continues, "The slate of plays we chose for 2017 relate to each other without being related, and celebrate what is unique in all of us. They explore what 'classic' means in the 21st century; and my fellow directors and I will be asking the question: how can we interact, engage with, and enrich a plurality of perspectives using these old stories as a foundation for contemporary discourse?"

Opening the Main Stage season at the Bruns will be Shakespeare's gender-bending comedy ***As You Like It***, directed by **Desdemona Chiang**. Juxtaposing the world of the court and the world of the forest, *As You Like It* highlights the journeys we take as we discover not just where home is, but who our family can be. Ms. Chiang, known for her work at Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Seattle Rep, makes her Cal Shakes debut with this production, which plays **May 24 through June 18**.

Next up, **Lisa Portes**, Artistic Director of Chicago Playworks, also makes her Cal Shakes debut with one of the true American classics, ***The Glass Menagerie***, by **Tennessee Williams**, from **July 5-30**. Williams' semi-autobiographical 'memory play' casts a Depression-era family's joys and struggles into sharp relief as a young artist struggles to come to terms with his obligations to his mother and sister even as he longs for a different life. *The Glass Menagerie* marks the first time Tennessee Williams' work has appeared on the Bruns stage.

Opening in August is the West Coast premiere of ***black odyssey***, directed by **Eric Ting**, from **August 9-September 3**. Playwright **Marcus Gardley** reimagines one of Western civilization's earliest epics, bringing home

2017 season announce

war veteran Ulysses Lincoln, but not before he wanders through the mythical and historical characters of the black American experience.

Closing the Main Stage season will be Shakespeare's "problem comedy," ***Measure for Measure***, from **September 13 through October 8**. Virtuous Isabella, having caught the attention of the evil Duke Angelo, must decide between her chastity and her brother Claudio's life, when Claudio is sentenced to death by Angelo. 'Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall' in this powerful examination of integrity and injustice, of the body politic and the body personal. Directed by Tyne Rafaeli making her Cal Shakes debut, *Measure for Measure* will be co-produced with Santa Cruz Shakespeare.

The Main Stage season will be accompanied by a second annual series of Civic Dialogues designed to highlight issues surfaced by our season in context with local artists, community partners, and thought-leaders. Our conversation will span themes of gentrification, displacement, our entwined communities, and our definitions of home.

Season packages for the four-play season are available now; single and group tickets go on sale March 27, 2017. Prices start at \$130 for a four-play subscription, with discounts available for seniors, youth, and full-time K-12 educators.

For information or to charge tickets by phone with VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express, call the Cal Shakes Box Office at 510.548.9666. Additional information and online ticketing is available at www.calshakes.org.

ABOUT CAL SHAKES

Founded in 1974 as a collective of actors performing for free in the park, California Shakespeare Theater (Cal Shakes), now under the leadership of Artistic Director Eric Ting and Managing Director Susie Falk, welcomes more than 43,000 people annually to the magnificent solar-powered Bruns Amphitheater, located in the Siesta Valley of the East Bay hills. In 2001, Cal Shakes formalized its educational activities with the launch of its Artistic Learning program, which ignites students' creative minds and voices, and reaches more than 4,000 Bay Area youth each year. In 2005, Cal Shakes expanded its work with communities to explore ways to integrate the arts more deeply into community life, investigating what happens when the powerful tools of theater artists are mobilized and integrated into broader civic dialogue. Over the course of the past decade, this work has evolved to become Cal Shakes Artistic Engagement program, which has garnered support from national and local foundations. In 2013, Cal Shakes launched its Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Initiative to create and sustain an equitable arts eco-system; the company became a founding member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG)'s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Institute, and is now among the leaders in the field in this work.

**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS
CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATER'S 2017 SEASON**

As You Like It

May 24-June 18
By William Shakespeare
Directed by Desdemona Chiang
Previews May 24, 25, and 26
Press opening May 28

The Glass Menagerie

July 5-30
By Tennessee Williams
Directed by Lisa Portes
Previews July 5, 6, and 7
Press opening July 8

black odyssey

August 9-September 3
By Marcus Gardley
Directed by Eric Ting
Previews August 9, 10, and 11
Press opening August 12

Measure for Measure

September 13-October 8
By William Shakespeare
Directed by Tyne Rafaeli
Coproducted with Santa Cruz Shakespeare
Previews September 20, 21, and 22
Press opening September 23

Performance Times: Previews (Wed-Thu-Fri before opening) at 8pm
 Weeknights (Tue-Thu) at 7:30pm
 Weekends (Fri-Sat) 8pm
 Matinees (Sun) at 4pm: select Saturdays at 2pm
 Grounds open for picnicking two hours prior to curtain.

Venue: Bruns Amphitheater
 100 California Shakespeare Theater Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Tickets: Season packages starting at \$130 are available now.
 Single and group tickets go on sale March 27, 2017.

Box Office: 510.548.9666

Website: www.calshakes.org

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