



Media Contact: Susie Falk, Managing Director
510.809.3292 | press@calshakes.org

CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATER ANNOUNCES LEAD ARTISTS FOR 44th SEASON OF EPIC PLAYS

Nationally-acclaimed director and documentary playmaker KJ Sanchez to make her Bruns directing debut; Grammy-nominated actor, DJ, and emcee Juan Amador joins cast; and Emilio Delgado to travel from *Sesame Street* to La Mancha, Texas to play the title role for Octavio Solis' *Quixote Nuevo*

Award-winning director and frequent Branden Jacobs-Jenkins collaborator Nataki Garrett to helm *Everybody* with a "virtuosic" company whose roles will be assigned nightly by lottery

Cal Shakes Artistic Director Eric Ting to direct Shakespeare's epic *The War of the Roses* featuring a Bay Area all-star cast including Danny Scheie as Richard III, Stacy Ross and Aldo Billingslea

Award-winning creative team to reunite for *black odyssey*

Berkeley, CA, March 19, 2018—California Shakespeare Theater (Cal Shakes) today announced key artists for its 2018 Season at the Bruns Amphitheater, including the Cal Shakes directorial debuts of **KJ Sanchez (*Quixote Nuevo*) and **Nataki Garrett** (*Everybody*).**

"I'm thrilled to be working with these fantastic collaborators in 2018," Artistic Director Eric Ting said. "KJ's work with American Records (a theater company whose mission is to make theater that chronicles our time and serves as a bridge between people) and her passion for the communities she makes work with is so close to our own mission at Cal Shakes and an excellent entry point into our reimaged *Quixote Nuevo*. And Nataki's roots in Oakland, reputation as a "change-leader" and champion of new and diverse voices in the American theater, along with her close artistic relationship with Branden Jacobs-Jenkins makes her a perfect fit to direct *Everybody*."

Ting continued, “I’ve already had the pleasure of working with KJ and Nataki on casting for the 2018 Season. All three shows lend themselves to strong ensembles, and each show will have crossovers with several actors joining more than one show. I love that KJ and Nataki are game for helping to create such a vibrant company of new faces and returning favorites. I know our returning audiences love seeing Danny Scheie (*You Never Can Tell*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*), Stacy Ross (*Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*) and Aldo Billingslea (*black odyssey*, *Fences*) on our stages. Many of us know Emilio Delgado from his 30+ years on *Sesame Street* as Luis, the friendly Fix-It Shop owner, and we’re all delighted to welcome him to La Mancha, Texas, the fictional setting of our *Quixote Nuevo*, for the summer!”

Quixote Nuevo marks the return of playwright Octavio Solis (*John Steinbeck’s The Pastures of Heaven*) to the Bruns with his World Premiere adaptation journeying to the fictional modern-day border town of La Mancha, Texas, where Don Quixote loses himself in stories of chivalrous escapades and embarks on a quest of imagination, adventure, and Tejano music. Casting himself as a larger-than-life knight-errant, the old man recruits a hapless but trusty sidekick in his search for lost love. As the community wrestles with containing Quixote’s fantasies, his family and friends discover the joys and perils of being the hero of your own story.

Playwright **Octavio Solis** has conceived this story anew after several productions, including a period-specific commission by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival called *Quixote*, which was modernized for Shakespeare Dallas. This version is so radically different from the previous incarnations that it has been given a new name. Solis says of *Quixote Nuevo*, “Hopefully this is the final evolution of this play—I keep revising it for a different theater every time! This is the first time that a completely Latinx cast will be serving the play, which is helping me greatly with its revisions.” Director **KJ Sanchez** adds, “The Bay Area is chock full of powerhouse Latinx actors who can do anything and everything—from sophisticated language to physical ‘schtick’ and we had to seize on this great opportunity to work with the best of the best.”

Next, a 21st century riff on the medieval morality play: **Everybody** by acclaimed playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (*An Octoroon*) in its West Coast premiere. You can’t take it with you, but everybody tries. When Everybody faces imminent death, which companion—Beauty, Friendship, Stuff, or Love—will make it to the final destination? The core company of actors—whose roles are randomly determined each night by lottery—let fate decide the journey as they play out this new riff on an ancient morality tale with surprising grace, humor, and heart. Director Nataki Garrett says, “Thanks to the lottery, the character of Everybody exists all the times in all the ways, as opposed to one character, one objective, one way of getting there, one outcome, through one climax; the possibilities are endless. I want to put together a group of people who are adventurous, virtuosic, and versatile.” Playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins says, “I love Nataki and this would mark, I think, our third or fourth time together. She’s brilliant and breathes life and smarts into my work like no other.”

Finally, a Shakespearean event of epic proportions: ***The War of the Roses***, a monumental evening of theater spanning four of Shakespeare's histories—the *Henry VI* trilogy and *Richard III*—delivering a fast-paced, far-ranging, vividly theatrical depiction of two powerful families—the Lancasters and the Yorks—and their decades-long fight for English rule that's sure to leave you breathless. When weak leadership and civil strife run rampant, what are the consequences? Who will take the throne?

"I'm delighted to have already begun the process of working on *The War of the Roses*," says Artistic Director Eric Ting. I've been having long discussions with our resident dramaturg, Philippa Kelly on the arc of the tetralogy, beginning with the death of Henry V and moving through the reign of Richard III. Danny and I have been speaking for months about him sinking his teeth into a serious and challenging role, and I know he's up for the challenge of Shakespeare's most monstrous monarch. This piece will be one of the most epic and ambitious evenings of Shakespeare ever seen at the Bruns Amphitheater."

Cal Shakes' 2018 Subscription Season includes the world premiere of ***Quixote Nuevo*** by **Octavio Solis**, adapted from *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, and directed by **KJ Sanchez**, June 13-July 1; the West Coast premiere of ***Everybody*** by **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins**, directed by **Nataki Garrett**, July 18-August 5; and ***The War of the Roses***, adapting **William Shakespeare's** historical tetralogy covering *Henry VI, parts 1, 2, and 3*, and *Richard III*, directed by **Eric Ting**, August 22-September 9. Following the Subscription Season there will be a limited engagement remount of 2017's smash hit, ***black odyssey***, by **Marcus Gardley**, directed by **Eric Ting**, with vocal composition by **Linda Tillery and Molly Holm**, September 25–October 7.

Season packages for the three-play season are available now; single and group tickets go on sale to the public April 16, 2018. Prices start at \$99 for a three-play subscription, with discounts available for seniors, youth, and full-time K-12 educators. Subscribers may add *black odyssey* tickets to their packages now, otherwise they are available to the general public April 16.

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

California Shakespeare Theater (Cal Shakes), under the leadership of Artistic Director Eric Ting and Managing Director Susie Falk, is in its 44th season as a nationally-recognized leader in drawing on the power of authentic, inclusive storytelling to create more vibrant communities. Serving more than 43,000 people annually, Cal Shakes invites people from all walks of life to make deeply-felt connections with our shared humanity through its work onstage, in schools, and with people in non-traditional settings throughout the Bay Area who have little or no access to theater. For more information, visit www.calshakes.org.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATER'S 2018 SEASON

Quixote Nuevo

by Octavio Solis
adapted from *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes
directed by KJ Sanchez
June 13-July 1
Previews June 13, 14, 15
Press opening June 16

Everybody

by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins
directed by Nataki Garrett
July 18-August 5
Previews July 18, 19, 20
Press opening July 21

The War of the Roses

from William Shakespeare's *Henry VI* trilogy and *Richard III*
directed by Eric Ting
August 22-September 9
Previews August 22, 23, 24
Press opening August 25

Non-subscription limited return engagement!

black odyssey

by Marcus Gardley
directed by Eric Ting
vocal composition by Linda Tillery and Molly Holm
September 25-October 7
Previews September 25
Press opening September 26

Performance Times: for *Quixote Nuevo*, *Everybody*, and *black odyssey*:
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.

for *The War of the Roses* (please note time changes):
Evening performances (Tue-Sat) at 7pm
Matinees (Sun) at 3pm: 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: Subscriptions starting at \$99 are available now. Subscribers may purchase tickets to *black odyssey* now before tickets go on sale to the general public. Single and group tickets go on sale to the public April 16, 2018.

Box Office: 510.548.9666

Website: www.calshakes.org

For ticket information, call 510.548.9666 or visit www.calshakes.org