WORLD PREMIERE

MAN in the RING

BY MICHAEL CRISTOFER

DIRECTED BY CHARLES NEWELL

court THEATRE
Dear Court Theatre Family,

I first discovered the power of this art form as an undergraduate student in Los Angeles. My theatre was the Mark Taper Forum, which was the most progressive and daring theatre in the country outside of New York City: in less than two decades, the Taper produced five new plays that were awarded the Pulitzer Prize. It was on that stage I was introduced to the talent of Michael Cristofer, an actor of incredible depth and power, in three different and unforgettable productions. The Taper produced his play *The Shadow Box*, a moving exploration of confronting the end of life. It was a tremendous success in LA and moved east to Broadway, ultimately winning both a Pulitzer Prize and a Tony Award.

Michael's career has been totally unique. As he continued to write plays, he became a highly sought-after screenwriter, adapting several major novels for the screen. He directed for both film and television and he continued to work as an actor. He is a rare and gifted artist. Court is so honored to introduce Michael's work to you, our audience.

This production has been inspired by Kamal Angelo Bolden. He approached us a few years ago after reading the definitive biography *Nine... Ten... And Out! The Two Worlds of Emile Griffith* by Ron Ross. Kamal felt there was a play in Emile's story, and I remembered the drama of watching the fateful fight between Benny “Kid” Paret and Emile as a young boy, when the Friday Night Fights were an important event in our home. Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director Charles Newell and I were aware that Michael Cristofer had just written the libretto to a new opera, *Champion*, based on the life of Emile. We reached out to Michael and the journey began. We are particularly pleased that Kamal has joined us to play young Emile.

Six years ago, when Charlie and I began to work together, we dreamed of a theatre where distinguished artists would be willing to bring their newest and most daring work to our stage. We built a strategic plan that both our Board of Trustees and the University of Chicago embraced. Over these past six seasons, Court has made continuous progress towards our goals because of our audience and our patrons. In this first production of the 62nd season, Court has achieved our early vision. *Man in the Ring* is a world premiere commissioned by Court from a distinguished artist, and brought to life on our stage in the able hands of our artistic director.

Welcome back,

Stephen J. Albert, Executive Director
WORLD PREMIERE
MAN in the RING
by MICHAEL CRISTOFR
directed by CHARLES NEWELL

SETTING: Various locations in New York City and on the island of St. Thomas from the 1950s to the present.

There will be a 15-minute intermission.

WARNING: Please keep the aisles clear as actors will be using them during the performance. This production contains the use of water-based haze and strobe lights.

Man in the Ring is sponsored by

Court Theatre’s 2016/17 Season is sponsored by Barbara and Richard Franke.
Court Theatre recognizes those individuals whose generosity supported the creation of the Center for Classic Theatre at Court Theatre and the University of Chicago.

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Dana Levinson and James Noonan
Michael Lowenthal and Amy Osler
Helen and Roland* Baker

*deceased

Photo of Kamal Angelo Bolden by Joe Mazza.

Court Theatre is pleased to announce the creation of the Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director position in appreciation of David and Marilyn Vitale’s significant gift to the theatre in June 2016, as well as their previous generosity to Court’s Center for Classic Theatre Campaign.

For more than 20 years, Marilyn has provided tremendous passion and loyalty for the work of Court Theatre. The theatre grew during her tenure as board chair and will continue to thrive, thanks to her extraordinary generosity.

Charles Newell, who joined Court in 1993 and has since directed more than 50 productions, is the inaugural Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director of Court Theatre.
You have been director, actor, and writer at different points throughout your career. How do all of the hats you wear come into this project?

What’s interesting right now is to go back to being the playwright. I started out working as an actor and then became a playwright. From there I was hired to start writing screenplays, [which I did] for a while [but became] somewhat frustrated with what was going on with that work. I then moved into film directing—I directed three movies, and then slowly moved myself back to the theatre to start acting and playwriting again. I’ve sort of come full circle, and now the great thing about having done all of those things is that I like to say [I’ve] sat on both sides of that table. You’ve been in the director/writer seat and the actor seat. You really do understand what the job is and it’s easier to not let things like ego or emotions get in the way of what’s going on. Too often I think actors misinterpret what’s going on with the playwright and the director because they don’t understand that they’re struggling to make something happen, and the playwright and director don’t understand that the actor is also trying to make something happen. The nice thing about being as experienced and as old as I am is that the process is just much clearer to me.
“The basic story of the play is a man who is slipping into dementia trying to make sense of his life—in this case, a life that was very dramatic in lots of ways.”

You’ve previously written *Champion*, a libretto about Emile Griffith’s life. Why is a stage play the best outlet to tell Emile’s story now?

The story of Emile Griffith was first introduced to me by Terence Blanchard, who is a great composer and jazz trumpet player. Terence and I worked on two of the pictures that I directed, he wrote music for them. He was commissioned by the Opera Theatre of St. Louis to write an opera, and he chose the subject of Emile Griffith. He came to me to write a libretto for it, and at that time I didn’t know anything about Emile. I did some of the research and realized what an extraordinary story his life is. Having never written a libretto before, when I sat down to work on it I basically wrote a play and then adapted that play into what was needed for the libretto. [But] there was still so much material that I had written in this play form that we hadn’t been able to get into the opera because a libretto has to be much shorter than a play and the music is the center. So when Court contacted me and asked me if I was interested in doing the play about Emile based on the libretto, it was really the reverse of that. I already had most of the play and much of the material that I wanted to use—aspects of his life and story that I just couldn’t get into the opera. This has been a really great opportunity for me to finish telling the story of Emile’s life.

How has being a part of the rehearsal process with director Charlie Newell and the cast helped you think about Emile’s story in new or interesting ways?

The basic story of the play is a man who is slipping into dementia trying to make sense of his life—in this case, a life that was very dramatic in lots of ways. One of the words we’ve been using in the rehearsal process and in the writing process is the word “fractured.” Because he is slipping into dementia, his view and his memory are very sharp in some ways [but] not sharp in other[s]. What we see, and what he sees, is a fractured version of his past: people appearing and disappearing, events happening and re-happening, pieces of his own story. This has been the guiding way we’ve looked at what we’re doing in terms of the sound, music, movement. What we’re watching is how a man facing all of the fractured pieces of his past is trying to make some sense out of it—trying to come to some peace about his life.

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University of Chicago neurologist Dr. Will Harper shared his experience working with patients with similar physical and mental health conditions as Emile Griffith’s. Tell us a bit about that experience.

One of the great things about doing the play here [at Court] is the theatre’s connection with the university and community here. In this community, we had a neurologist who has dealt with dementia patients for most of his life. He first read the play, and then talked to us about specific aspects of the play as they relate to real life cases. He talked us through a lot of the physical, emotional, and mental stages that a person will go through, which was really helpful because the character of Emile is not in dementia but approaching dementia. He has very lucid times and then has episodes where he slips, he doesn’t understand what a word or object is, and we learned from [Dr. Harper] that we were on the right track with telling his story.

What is it about Emile Griffith’s experience that drives you to continue sharing this powerful story in new ways?

The important thing about doing the play now is that it’s so relevant to what’s still going on in the sports world and the damage that’s been done to athletes, and also in the world of gay and lesbian rights. This is the story of an athlete who was gay and couldn’t come out in the 1950s and 1960s, and I’m not sure how much different it is now in the boxing world. Although Emile’s story takes place mainly from 1959-1962, there is a real relevance to what’s going on in the world today, and there’s a great opportunity to tell this story now.

It’s also a tribute to a man who had a really difficult life, and who was a joyful presence through most of it. And that’s why the things that I’m trying to get into the play—even though it’s a somewhat sad story, it’s the story of someone who succeeds in pulling together the fragments of his life, making some sense of it, and coming to some peace. I think it can be a joyful experience for the audience, and that’s why we’re using all of these old traditional Caribbean children’s games that have little songs and proverbs. All of those are interwoven into the structure of the play and how we tell the story. I’m hoping that, finally, it will be not only a satisfying theatrical experience, but also a joyful theatrical experience.

“What we see, and what he sees, is a fractured version of his past: people appearing and disappearing, events happening and re-happening, pieces of his own story.”
Emile Griffith, the greatest welterweight fighter in the history of boxing, was discovered at age sixteen working in a hat factory in Manhattan's Garment District. Howie Albert, the factory's owner, recognized an extraordinary talent in his young employee and volunteered in 1956 to launch and manage Emile's professional career as a fighter. Emile and his mother, Emelda, recent immigrants to New York from the U.S. Virgin Islands, accepted Albert's offer immediately, believing that boxing would be a path to a better life.

Emile trained tirelessly and enthusiastically, and his career soared. His formidable gifts ultimately made him a six-time champion of the world, and wealthy enough to bring his entire family to the United States from the island of St Thomas, settling them comfortably in a rambling, 10-bedroom mansion in Queens.

Griffith's astonishing rise coincided with boxing's popularity as a televised sport; the young fighter proved a natural fit for television. As an athlete, he not only displayed exceptional power and artistry in the ring, but also his exuberant personality, brilliant smile, and irresistible warmth and charm were evident to all. For millions of viewers across the country who regularly tuned in to ABC's Friday Night Fights, Emile Griffith was a popular and widely admired figure.

Social conventions in the 1960s proscribed public discussions of an athlete's sexual orientation. At a time when homosexuality was criminalized by the laws of the State of New York, Emile Griffith's sexual identity was quietly accepted within the tight-knit brotherhood of the boxing community. Emile was known to pursue romantic relationships with both men and women. He invited boyfriends to watch his sparring practices at Gleason's Gym in the Bronx, and visited gay bars in Manhattan's Times Square. His phenomenal success as a fighter, and the steady support of his manager, Albert, seemed to protect him from criticism.
Occasionally, sports reporters tacitly acknowledged Emile’s unique status in the boxing world by writing articles about his one creative interest outside the ring: designing ladies’ hats. Yet for every story focusing on Emile’s work in high fashion, his manager released publicity photos of the fighter posed with various women—well-known models and nightclub stars—described as his girlfriends.

The delicate balance between Emile Griffith’s private life and his career as a professional boxer began to shift in 1961, the year he seized the welterweight world championship title from Cuban fighter Benny Paret. Born in a sugar-farming region of central Cuba, Paret left school at age six to work in the cane fields. Unable to read or write, and earning just $2 per day as a cane-cutter, Paret turned to boxing as a route out of grinding poverty. The biggest payday of the his career came when he won the world championship title in 1961 at age 25. Paret was crushed a few months later when Emile Griffith vanquished him in a challenge match and claimed the gold belt as his own.

It was during the fight for the 1962 world welterweight championship title that Emile’s private life suddenly became a public issue. Paret and his manager, Manuel Alfaro, believed they could rattle Griffith and throw him off his game by breaking the code of silence that protected Emile’s identity. In pre-fight interviews with New York sportswriters, Alfaro described Griffith as effeminate and unmanly, calling him unworthy opponent for any boxer—such as Paret—who prided himself on his masculinity.

On March 24, 1962, at the weigh-in before their decisive fight at Madison Square Garden, Paret hurled anti-gay slurs at Griffith. Paret and his manager, Manuel Alfaro, believed they could rattle Griffith and throw him off his game by breaking the code of silence that protected Emile’s identity. In pre-fight interviews with New York sportswriters, Alfaro described Griffith as effeminate and unmanly, calling him unworthy opponent for any boxer—such as Paret—who prided himself on his masculinity.

Dementia pugilistica causes a range of cognitive, psychiatric and motor problems, including:

• slurred speech
• memory loss
• impaired reasoning
• emotional outbursts
• personality changes
• lack of impulse control
• slowed movement
• diminished fine motor skills
• physical tremors

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Emile that were witnessed by members of the press and officials from the New York Boxing Commission. Hours later, in the twelfth round of their match, Emile would trap Benny on the ropes and deliver 23 uppercuts to his head. The match referee, Ruby Goldstein, remained frozen in place, doing nothing to stop the fight. Paret collapsed in the ring and never regained consciousness. He died ten days later in hospital.

Norman Mailer, present that night, wrote his famous essay, “The Death of Benny Paret,” that would become part of a growing body of writings questioning the ethics of boxing as a spectator sport. Though others pointed to the failure of the referee and the extensive head injuries Paret suffered in an earlier fight with middleweight Gene Fullmer, Emile blamed himself. His exuberant personality deserted him, and boxing became almost impossible. Retirement was not an option, however. As he explained to reporters: “I have eight people to support, and no other profession than boxing.”

In 1977, Albert urged Emile to quit. After nineteen years in the ring, his shaky hands, fragmenting memory, and slow speech were tokens of greater problems that lie ahead. Emile left the sport knowing no other boxer had fought more championship rounds than he had: not even Sugar Ray Leonard or Muhammad Ali. Luis Rodrigo, Emile’s partner for over thirty years, became the former world champion’s guide and caregiver, helping Emile stay oriented in time and space as dementia pugilistica increasingly took a toll.

In 2004, friends arranged for Emile to meet and reconcile with Benny Paret, Jr., his former opponent’s son. The encounter was a milestone in Emile’s life, helping him achieve a measure of peace.

In 2012, Puerto Rican fighter Orlando Cruz became the first boxer to publicly announce his homosexuality. Cruz dedicated his first fight as an openly gay athlete to Emile Griffith.

On July 23, 2013, the International Boxing Hall of Fame announced that Emile had died of kidney failure and complications of dementia at an extended-care facility in Hempstead, N.Y.
KAMAL ANGELO BOLDEN (Young Emile) OFF
BROADWAY: The Opponent (59E59 Theater) REGIONAL: Immediate Family (Mark Taper Forum); Hands Up (National Black Theatre); Jitney, Home, The Misanthrope (Court Theatre); SS: Romeo & Juliet (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); Detroit '67 (Northlight Theatre); The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity, We Are Proud… (Victory Gardens); The Island (Remy Bumppo); Coriolanus (Nashville Shakespeare); Jackie and Me, Bud Not Buddy (Chicago Children’s Theater); Glengarry Glen Ross (Tennessee Repertory). FILM: Elvis & Nixon, The Night Before, Consumed, Generational Curses. TELEVISION: Insecure, Rosewood, Major Crimes, Law & Order: SVU, Chicago Fire, Betrayal, Crisis, Low Winter Sun, Boss, Lights Out. Kamal is a proud ensemble member of A Red Orchid Theatre and an artistic associate of Erasing the Distance.

MELANIE BREZILL (Sadie/Lucia/Ensemble) is excited to return to Court Theatre! Other Court Theatre credits include Caroline, or Change. She recently appeared in the Broadway cast and National Tour of The Book of Mormon. Her Chicago credits include The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane (Chicago Children’s Theatre); A Christmas Carol, Crowns (Goodman Theatre); the one-woman show, The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights (Writers Theatre); Aida (Drury Lane Oakbrook); Yeast Nation (American Theater Company); Living Green (Victory Gardens Theater); High School Musical (Marriott Theatre Lincolnshire); Once on This Island (Porchlight Music Theatre); Seussical!, Willy Wonka (Chicago Shakespeare Theater). Other tours include the National Tour of Mamma Mia! Ms. Brezill is a graduate of Northwestern University.

SHELDON BROWN (Bennie/Bennie Jr./Ensemble) is a 2014 graduate of acting at Emerson College in Boston. He is fresh to Chicago and happy to make his debut with Court Theatre. His recent credits include Feral with MPAACT Theatre Company, American Revolution with Theater Unspokenable, and the stage reading of The Gospel of Lovingkindness with Victory Gardens. He has numerous credits in Boston, including The Grand Inquisitor directed by Peter Brook and a collaborative new work with friends, The Shakespearean Jazz Show, which turns Shakespeare into New Orleans Jazz.

THOMAS J. COX (Howie/Ensemble) is grateful to return to Court Theatre, where he previously appeared in Fräulein Else, Raisin, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, Orlando, and Agamemnon. He is an ensemble member with Lookingglass Theatre, where he has worked on more than forty productions since 1988. Regionally, he has performed in End of the Rainbow (Milwaukee Rep); Elephant Man (Steppenwolf Young Audiences); Rock n Roll (Goodman); Season on the Line (House); Pride and Prejudice, Jekyll and Hyde, and Outgoing Tide (Northlight); and Richard III (Gift); as well as seven seasons at the Weston Playhouse in Vermont. He serves as Master Teacher for Lookingglass, and teaches theatre around the Chicago area. Film/TV: Since You’ve Been Gone (Miramax); Brotherhood (Showtime); Chicago Fire (NBC).
ALLEN GILMORE (Emile) is excited to return to Court Theatre, where he previously appeared in Scapin, the title role of Cyrano, Endgame, the title role in Sizwe Banzi Is Dead (Jeff, BTA, and Black Excellence nominations), Jitney, The Misanthrope, Tartuffe, Seven Guitars, Waiting for Godot (Jeff, BTA, Black Excellence nominations), The Good Book, and One Man, Two Guvnors. He is (Alt.) Scrooge in Goodman Theatre’s annual production of A Christmas Carol. Other favorite Chicago performances include Joe Turner’s Come and Gone (Jeff, BTA nominations) and The African Company Presents Richard the Third with Congo Square Theatre Company; Argonautika and Arabian Nights with Lookingglass Theatre; and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (BroadwayWorld nomination) with Writers Theatre. Originally from Houston, he is a U.S. Army Infantry veteran, a 2015 3Arts prize awardee, a 2015 Lunt-Fontanne fellow, and a proud ensemble member of Congo Square. With love and gratitude, Allen dedicates these performances of Man in the Ring to his parents, Lena, and the late Gerald A. Gilmore.

GABRIEL RUIZ (Luis/Ensemble) is a graduate of the DePaul Theatre School and a proud ensemble member of Teatro Vista. Chicago credits include Agamemnon at Court Theatre, Arcadia and Company at Writers Theatre, City of Angels at Marriott Theatre, The Upstairs Concierge at Goodman Theatre, White Tie Ball for Teatro Vista, Creditors at Remy Bumppo, How Long Will I Cry? and Motherfucker with the Hat at Steppenwolf, Sita Ram for the Chicago Children’s Choir, Working: The Musical at Broadway Playhouse, Richard III and Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night’s Dream at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and Arabian Nights at Lookingglass Theatre. Regional credits include Native Gardens at The Cincinnati Playhouse, Harvey at Milwaukee Repertory; Why Torture is Wrong, and the People Who Love Them at Forward Theater Company; and Blood and Gifts at Lincoln Center in New York. He can be seen as Dilip Singh in both seasons of Boss on the Starz Network, and he appears on an episode of Chicago Fire.

SEAN MICHAEL SULLIVAN (Manuel/Ensemble) Along with his wife, Sean is the co-director of The Sullivan Chicago Studio of Performing Arts (www.thescspa.com). He hails from Ohio, where he earned a BA in theatre from The Ohio State University and began working in Chicago in 2002. Sean has appeared on stage in Chicago as Johnny Cash in Million Dollar Quartet; as Harlan ‘Mountain’ McClintock in Requiem for a Heavyweight at Shattered Globe (Jeff nomination for Outstanding Actor in a Principle Role); as M’Ling in The Island of Dr. Moreau with Lifeline Theatre; and as Floyd in Fiorello! and Joe in The Children’s Hour with TimeLine Theatre. Sean’s television credits include episodes of Boss; The Beast; Crisis; Chicago Fire and Chicago PD; Empire; ABC’s In an Instant; and as a featured guest on The Rosie Show. Sean is a freelance scenic carpenter and stagehand in theatre and television. Sean was an ensemble member with BackStage Theatre Company, serving as an actor, master carpenter, scenic designer, and technical supervisor. Sean can be found playing his guitar and singing throughout Chicagoland as a founding member of the Blue-Irish-Folk-Grass band, One of the Girls (www.oneofthegirls.net). Sean takes the most pride in having met and married SCSPA partner and best friend, Megan Sullivan.
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CHARLES NEWELL (Director/Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director) was awarded the SDCF Zelda Fichandler Award, “which recognizes an outstanding director or choreographer who is transforming the regional arts landscape through singular creativity and artistry in theatre.” Charlie has been Artistic Director of Court Theatre since 1994, where he has directed over 50 productions. He made his Chicago directorial debut in 1993 with The Triumph of Love, which won the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best Production. Charlie’s productions of Man of La Mancha and Caroline, or Change have also won Best Production Jefts. Other directorial highlights at Court include Satchmo at the Waldorf, Agamemnon, The Secret Garden, Iphigenia in Aulis, The Misanthrope, Tartuffe, Proof, Angels in America, An Iliad, Porgy and Bess, Three Tall Women, Titus Andronicus, Arcadia, Uncle Vanya, Raisin, The Glass Menagerie, Travesties, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, The Invention of Love, and Hamlet. Charlie has also directed at Goodman Theatre (Rock ‘n’ Roll), Guthrie Theater (The History Cycle, Cymbeline), Arena Stage, John Houseman’s The Acting Company (Staff Repertory Director), the California and Alabama Shakespeare Festivals, Juilliard, and New York University. He has served on the Board of TCG, as well as on several panels for the NEA. Opera directing credits include Marc Blitzstein’s Regina (Lyric Opera of Chicago), Rigoletto (Opera Theatre of St. Louis), Don Giovanni and The Jewel Box (Chicago Opera Theater), and Carousel (Glimmerglass Festival). Charlie was the recipient of the 1992 TCG Alan Schneider Director Award, and has been nominated for 16 Joseph Jefferson Awards, winning four times. In 2012, Charlie was honored by the League of Chicago Theatres with its Artistic Achievement Award.

JOHN CULBERT (Scenic Designer) designed scenery or lighting for Court Theatre’s productions of Satchmo at the Waldorf, Agamemnon, Iphigenia in Aulis, Invisible Man, and Porgy and Bess; Goodman Theatre’s Two Trains Running; Chicago Shakespeare Theatre’s Merry Wives of Windsor; TimeLine Theatre’s Chimerica; Northlight Theatre’s White Guy on the Bus; Writers Theatre’s Arcadia; and Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Regina. He also designed Lookingglass Theatre’s Argonautika; Goodman Theatre’s Buzzer and Mirror of the Invisible World; and Glimmerglass Opera Festival’s Carousel. He has designed productions for the Singapore Repertory, Opera National du Rhin, Berkeley Rep, McCarter Theatre, and Shakespeare Theatre. He serves as the dean of The Theatre School at DePaul University.

JACQUELINE FIRKINS (Costume Designer) is pleased to return to Court Theatre. Design work includes sets and/or costumes for Victory Gardens Theater, TimeLine Theatre Company, The House Theatre of Chicago, Marin Theatre Company, Hartford Stage, Dallas Theater Center, Portland Center Stage, Goodman Theatre, Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Virginia Stage Company, Westport Playhouse, Shakespeare & Company, Shakespeare Festival of Tulane, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Brave New Repertory, About Face Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Yale School of Drama, and Dorset Theatre Festival. Jacqueline is a recipient of a 2001 Princess Grace Award and teaches design at the University of British Columbia. Her recent research project, “Fashioning Cancer: The Correlation Between Destruction and Beauty,” was featured in media outlets around the world.

ERIN ALBRECHT (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be back at Court having previously worked on One Man, Two Guvnors; Long Day’s Journey Into Night; Agamemnon; The Good Book; and Iphigenia in Aulis. Off Broadway: And Away We Go (original workshop with Terrence McNally); In Acting Shakespeare, The Philanderer, The Bald Soprano, and Wittenberg (The Pearl Theatre); Richard III and Hamlet (New York Classical Theatre); A Touch of the Poet (Friendly Fire); and The Marvelous Wonderettes (West Side Theatre—original cast). Regional Theatre: American Players Theatre, Arena Stage, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, Blue Man Group Chicago, Phoenix Theatre, Quest Visual Theatre, BARD Summerscape, and 14 productions at Utah Shakespeare Festival. Erin holds a Bachelor’s degree in Music from The Catholic University of America and a MFA in Stage Management from Virginia Tech. She is a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association.

AMANDA WEENER-FREDERICK (Production Stage Manager) is thrilled to be spending her fourth season with Court Theatre. Amanda previously stage managed Water by the Spoonful; M. Butterfly, Native Son, Iphigenia in Aulis, Waiting for Godot, The Good Book, The Secret Garden, Gem of the Ocean, Agamemnon, Satchmo at the Waldorf, Long Day’s Journey Into Night, and most recently, One Man, Two Guvnors here at Court Theatre. Since moving to Chicago, Amanda has also worked with Lookingglass Theatre Company and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Before that, Amanda spent eight seasons with Milwaukee Repertory Theater and seven summers with Great River Shakespeare Festival in Winona, Minnesota. Amanda is a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association.

STEPHEN J. ALBERT (Executive Director) is a founding partner in Albert Hall & Associates, LLC, a leading arts consulting firm. Prior to forming the consulting practice, Albert was recognized as a leading arts manager. He has led some of America’s most prestigious theatres, including the Mark Taper Forum/Center Theatre Group, Alley Theatre, and Hartford Stage Company. Albert began his career with the Mark Taper Forum/Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles where he worked in senior management positions for over a decade, rising to Managing Director. He went on to become Executive Director of Houston’s Alley Theatre where he led a turnaround that stabilized the organization, enabling the Alley to return to national standing, and drove a capital campaign that secured the organization’s future. At Hartford Stage, his partnership with Mark Lamos resulted in some of the theatre’s most successful seasons and reinforced Hartford Stage’s position at the forefront of the regional theatre movement. During his tenure in Hartford, Mr. Albert led the initiative to create a 25,000 square foot, state-of-the-art production center, securing the donation of the facility and the funding for its renovation. Albert has served as both president and vice president of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and as a board member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG). He has also written and produced a variety of productions for television, is an ACE award nominee, and has been an associate producer of numerous acclaimed Broadway productions. He is a Senior Fellow with the American Leadership Forum, a graduate of the University of Southern California, and holds an MBA from the UCLA Graduate School of Management. Stephen is on the Board of the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce and the St. Thomas the Apostle Finance Committee.

Schuster, 2010). As a dramaturg and historical researcher, Titone has collaborated with a range of artists and scholars including playwright Anna Deavere Smith and historian Doris Kearns Goodwin. She also contributed to projects at Arena Stage and DreamWorks Studios. Titone studied history at Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley, and is represented by ICM Partners.

TAYLOR BARFIELD (Assistant Director) is a dramaturg and theatre-maker from Baltimore. This is his first production with Court Theatre. His new play dramaturgy credits include This Land was Made and The Children (Yale School of Drama); 50:13, The Untitled Project, The Hotel Nepenthe, and The Defendant (Yale Cabaret); and WAR (Yale Repertory Theatre). He has also worked on classic plays such as Paradise Lost (Yale School of Drama); Dutch Masters, Trouble in Tahiti, and The Brothers Size (Yale Cabaret); and Cymbeline (Yale Repertory Theatre). Taylor has also worked for the Dwight/Edgewood Project and Young Playwrights Inc., teaching playwriting to students in middle and high school. He received his M.F.A. in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from Yale School of Drama and his B.A. in English and biology from Johns Hopkins University.

AMANDA WEENER-FREDERICK (Production Stage Manager) is thrilled to be spending her fourth season with Court Theatre. Amanda previously stage managed Water by the Spoonful; M. Butterfly, Native Son, Iphigenia in Aulis, Waiting for Godot, The Good Book, The Secret Garden, Gem of the Ocean, Agamemnon, Satchmo at the Waldorf, Long Day’s Journey Into Night, and most recently, One Man, Two Guvnors here at Court Theatre. Since moving to Chicago, Amanda has also worked with Lookingglass Theatre Company and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Before that, Amanda spent eight seasons with Milwaukee Repertory Theater and seven summers with Great River Shakespeare Festival in Winona, Minnesota. Amanda is a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association.

ERIN ALBRECHT (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be back at Court having previously worked on One Man, Two Guvnors; Long Day’s Journey Into Night; Agamemnon; The Good Book; and Iphigenia in Aulis. Off Broadway: And Away We Go (original workshop with Terrence McNally); In Acting Shakespeare, The Philanderer, The Bald Soprano, and Wittenberg (The Pearl Theatre); Richard III and Hamlet (New York Classical Theatre); A Touch of the Poet (Friendly Fire); and The Marvelous Wonderettes (West Side Theatre—original cast). Regional Theatre: American Players Theatre, Arena Stage, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, Blue Man Group Chicago, Phoenix Theatre, Quest Visual Theatre, BARD Summerscape, and 14 productions at Utah Shakespeare Festival. Erin holds a Bachelor’s degree in Music from The Catholic University of America and a MFA in Stage Management from Virginia Tech. She is a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association.

STEPHEN J. ALBERT (Executive Director) is a founding partner in Albert Hall & Associates, LLC, a leading arts consulting firm. Prior to forming the consulting practice, Albert was recognized as a leading arts manager. He has led some of America’s most prestigious theatres, including the Mark Taper Forum/Center Theatre Group, Alley Theatre, and Hartford Stage Company. Albert began his career with the Mark Taper Forum/Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles where he worked in senior management positions for over a decade, rising to Managing Director. He went on to become Executive Director of Houston’s Alley Theatre where he led a turnaround that stabilized the organization, enabling the Alley to return to national standing, and drove a capital campaign that secured the organization’s future. At Hartford Stage, his partnership with Mark Lamos resulted in some of the theatre’s most successful seasons and reinforced Hartford Stage’s position at the forefront of the regional theatre movement. During his tenure in Hartford, Mr. Albert led the initiative to create a 25,000 square foot, state-of-the-art production center, securing the donation of the facility and the funding for its renovation. Albert has served as both president and vice president of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and as a board member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG). He has also written and produced a variety of productions for television, is an ACE award nominee, and has been an associate producer of numerous acclaimed Broadway productions. He is a Senior Fellow with the American Leadership Forum, a graduate of the University of Southern California, and holds an MBA from the UCLA Graduate School of Management. Stephen is on the Board of the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce and the St. Thomas the Apostle Finance Committee.
ABOUT COURT THEATRE

MISSION
Court Theatre is the professional theatre of the University of Chicago, dedicated to innovation, inquiry, intellectual engagement, and community service. Functioning as the University’s Center for Classic Theatre, Court mounts theatrical productions and audience enrichment programs in collaboration with faculty. These collaborations enable a re-examination of classic texts that pose the enduring and provocative questions that define the human experience.

VISION
Court Theatre’s vision is to foster growth of the Center for Classic Theatre at the University of Chicago. The Center for Classic Theatre is:

• An organization dedicated to creating excellent productions of classic plays, where “classic” is defined as enduring dramatic works that teach us about the human experience
• A hub of intellectual activity that unites artists and scholars and fosters collaboration between the theatre and a myriad of other academic disciplines
• A home to an expanding, inquisitive audience
• A laboratory that fosters unique learning experiences for students and audiences
• A force in creating and producing new adaptations, new works, and translations of classic texts
• A leader in the successful integration of scholarly theory and artistic practice
• A model of the mutually beneficial relationship that can exist between a professional performing arts organization and a top-tier research university

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Court Theatre’s Premier Chocolatier

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