



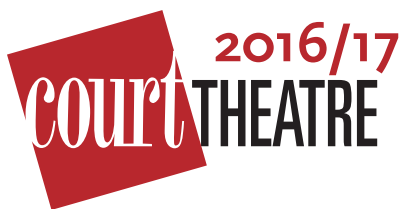
WORLD PREMIERE

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,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "SJA".

Stephen J. Albert, *Executive Director*



CHARLES NEWELL
Marilyn F. Vitale
Artistic Director

STEPHEN J. ALBERT
Executive Director

Court Theatre's 2016/17 Season is sponsored by **Barbara and Richard Franke.**

WORLD PREMIERE MAN in the RING

by MICHAEL CRISTOFER
directed by CHARLES NEWELL

Scenic Design by John Culbert U.S.A. *Nora Titone, Dramaturg*
Costume Design by Jacqueline Firkins U.S.A. *Adam Goldstein, Dialect Coach*
Lighting Design by Keith Parham U.S.A. *Amanda Weener-Frederick,* Production Stage Manager*
Sound Design by Andre Pluess U.S.A. *Erin Albrecht,* Stage Manager*
Choreography by Tommy Rapley
Casting by Cree Rankin

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



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*Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

CAST

Emile Griffith..... Allen Gilmore*
Young Emile Kamal Angelo Bolden*
Howie/Ensemble Thomas J. Cox*
Emelda/Ensemble Jacqueline Williams*
Sadie/Lucia/Ensemble Melanie Brezill*
Luis/Ensemble..... Gabriel Ruiz*
Bennie/Bennie Jr./Ensemble..... Sheldon Brown
Manuel/Ensemble Sean Michael Sullivan*

Understudies: Bernard Gilbert (Young Emile and Bennie/Bennie Jr.); Leea Ayers (Sadie/Lucia and Emelda); Brian Nelson, Jr. (Luis); Kenneth Johnson (Emile Griffith); John Victor Allen (Ensemble)

*Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Director..... Taylor Barfield
Scenic Artists..... Scott Gerwitz U.S.A. and Julie Ruscitti U.S.A.
Carpenters..... Andrew Hildner, Andrew Halvorsen, Chris Walls,
Daniel Drust, Theron Seckington, Tony Cooper
Tailor Fox Brothers Tailors
Draper..... Beth Uber
Sticher Alex Rutherford
Wig Designer Christina Carlson
Wardrobe Crew Alex Rutherford
Assistant Lighting Designer Rachel Levy
Assistant Master Electrician..... Billy Murphy
Electricians Andy Kauff, Garrett Steinke, Cameron Petti, Arianna Brown, Jess Fialko
Floor Manager Gabriella Welsh
Boxing Consultant Sam Colonna
Medical Consultant William Harper, MD
Scenic Artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, I.A.T.S.E. Local USA829, AFL-CIO, CLC.

Court Theatre performs in the intimate Abelson Auditorium, made possible through a gift from Hope and Lester Abelson.

Cover photo of Kamal Angelo Bolden by Joe Mazza.

Please turn off all phones, pagers, and chiming watches. Photographs and video recording are strictly prohibited.

Court Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. Productions are made possible, in part, by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. Court Theatre is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the American Theatre, the League of Resident Theatres, the Illinois Humanities Council, Arts Alliance Illinois, and the League of Chicago Theatres.



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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*deceased

Photo of Kamal Angelo Bolden by Joe Mazza.

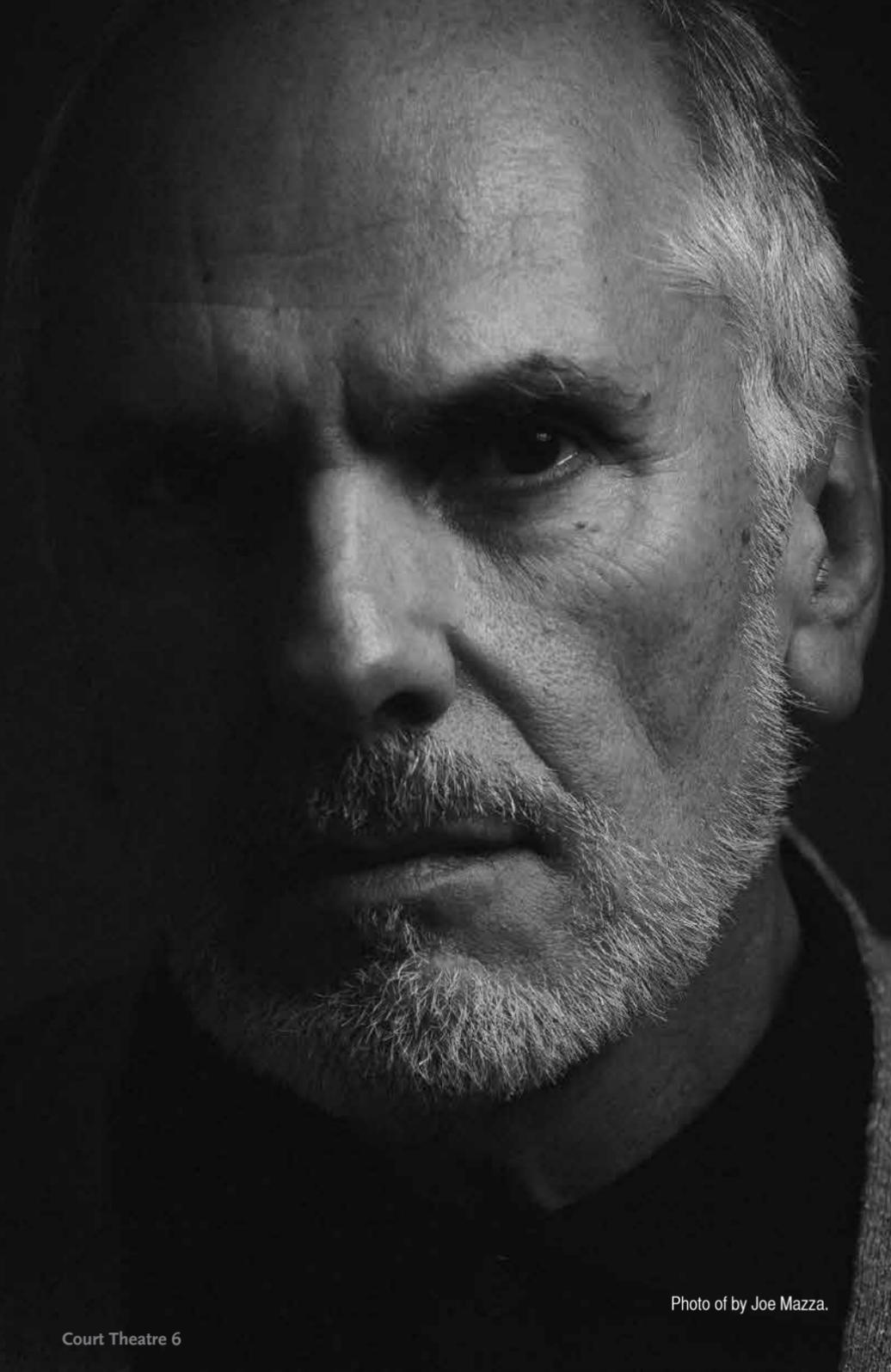


Court Theatre is pleased to announce the creation of the Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director position in appreciation of David and Marilyn Vitale's significant gift to the theatre in June 2016, as well as their previous generosity to Court's Center for Classic Theatre Campaign.

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.

Photo of Charles Newell and Marilyn Vitale by Joe Mazza.



Playwright
MICHAEL CRISTOFER

By Shelby Krick

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 playwrighting 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.

Photo of by Joe Mazza.

CONTINUED ON P 8

“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.”

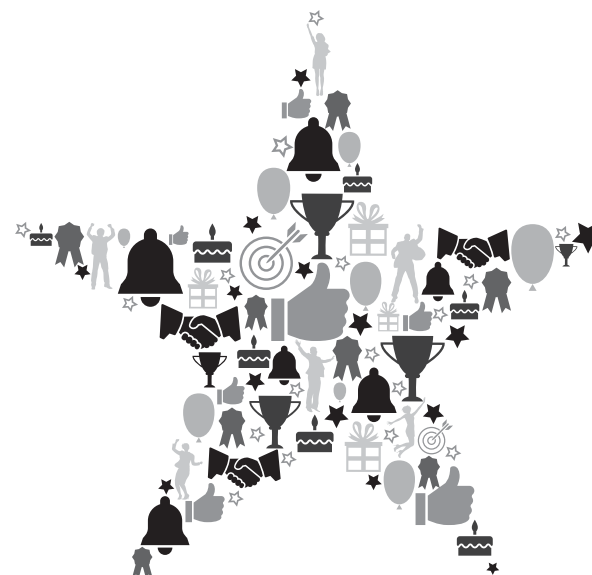
You’ve previously written *Champion*, a libretto about Emile Griffith’s life. Why is a stage play the best outlet to tell Emile’s story now?

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.

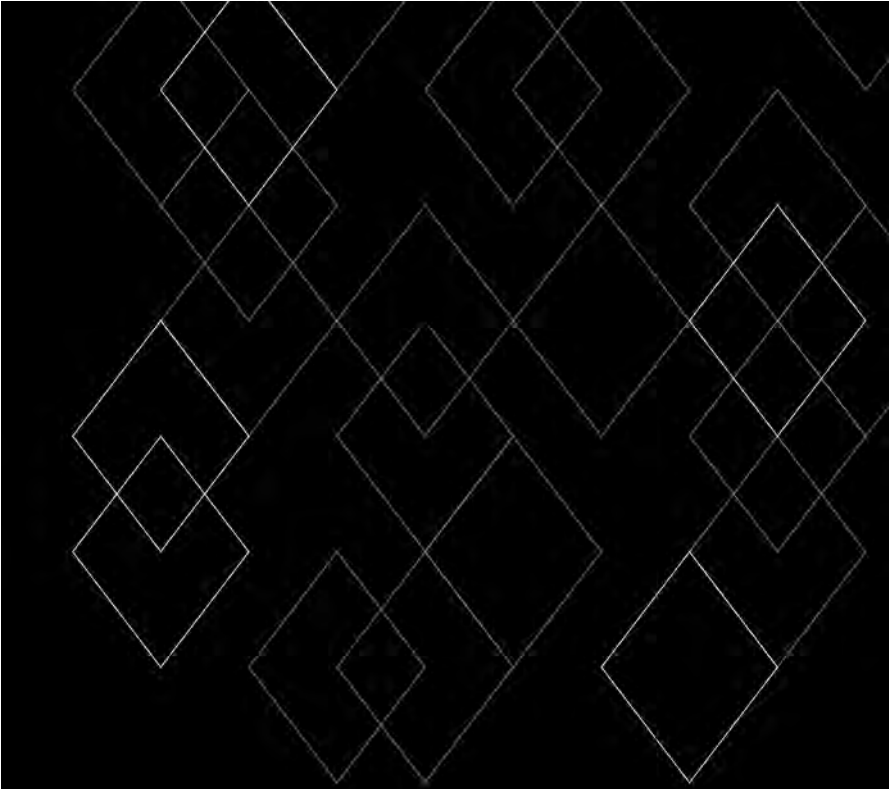


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University of Chicago neurologist Dr. Will Harper shared his experience working with patients with similar physical and mental health conditions as Emile Griffith's. Tell us a bit about that experience.

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

(1938-2013)

By Nora Titone

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.

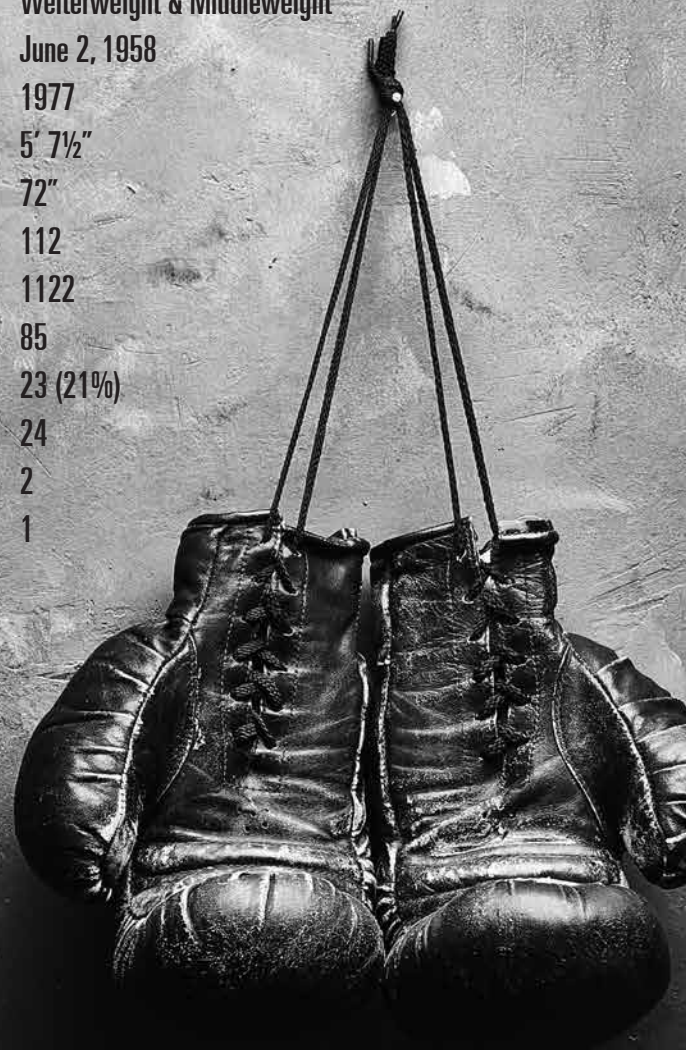
Emile trained tirelessly and enthusiastically, and his career soared. His formidable gifts ultimately made him a six-time champion of the world, and wealthy enough to bring his entire family to the United States from the island of St Thomas, settling them comfortably in a rambling, 10-bedroom mansion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

BOXING STATS

Division	Welterweight & Middleweight
Prof. Debut	June 2, 1958
Retirement	1977
Height	5' 7½"
Reach	72"
Total bouts	112
Total rounds	1122
Wins	85
Wins by KO	23 (21%)
Losses	24
Draws	2
No contests	1



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 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

DEMENTIA PUGILISTICA

Emile Griffith boxed professionally from 1958 to 1977, winning five World Championship titles before his retirement at age 39. Halfway through his career, Emile began to complain of cognitive difficulties, saying "he felt muffled in the head, as if his brain were lined with soft cotton." His speech began to slow; tremors developed in his hands. Long before he quit boxing, Griffith showed looming signs of *dementia pugilistica*.

Boxers who fight professionally are at risk for developing this degenerative condition, a form of progressive brain damage that is the cumulative effect of sustaining repeated blows to the head.

A typical boxer is capable of throwing six hundred punches in a twelve-round fight; over his entire career, he may absorb thousands of such blows. No one in the history of boxing fought more world title rounds than Emile Griffith: he battled 337 rounds in the championship ring. For him, *dementia pugilistica* was perhaps an unavoidable consequence of a distinguished athletic career.

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. ■

TRAINING WITH SAM COLONNA

To prepare for this performance, actors in *Man in the Ring* worked closely with legendary Chicago boxing trainer Sam Colonna. For two decades, Mr. Colonna was head trainer at Windy City Gym, the famed West Side boxing institution where Sonny Liston, Sugar Ray Robinson, and Muhammed Ali once sparred. Now he is the proprietor of Sam Colonna Boxing, a South Side boxing gym that is home to countless professional and amateur boxers, including numerous World Champions and scores of Golden Gloves champions.

Mr. Colonna invited Court Theatre to use his gym as an artistic resource for this production. Under his watchful eye, actors practiced their footwork in the ring, studied the intricacies of sparring, and spent time working the speed bag. His wife, professional boxing announcer Tina Wonogas, volunteered to coach company members in the correct method for calling fights. The excellent facilities at Sam Colonna Boxing helped to inspire multiple elements of this production’s design.



Photo by Joe Mazza.

PROFILES



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); *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Actors Theatre of Louisville). 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 Unspeakable, 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).

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PROFILES



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.



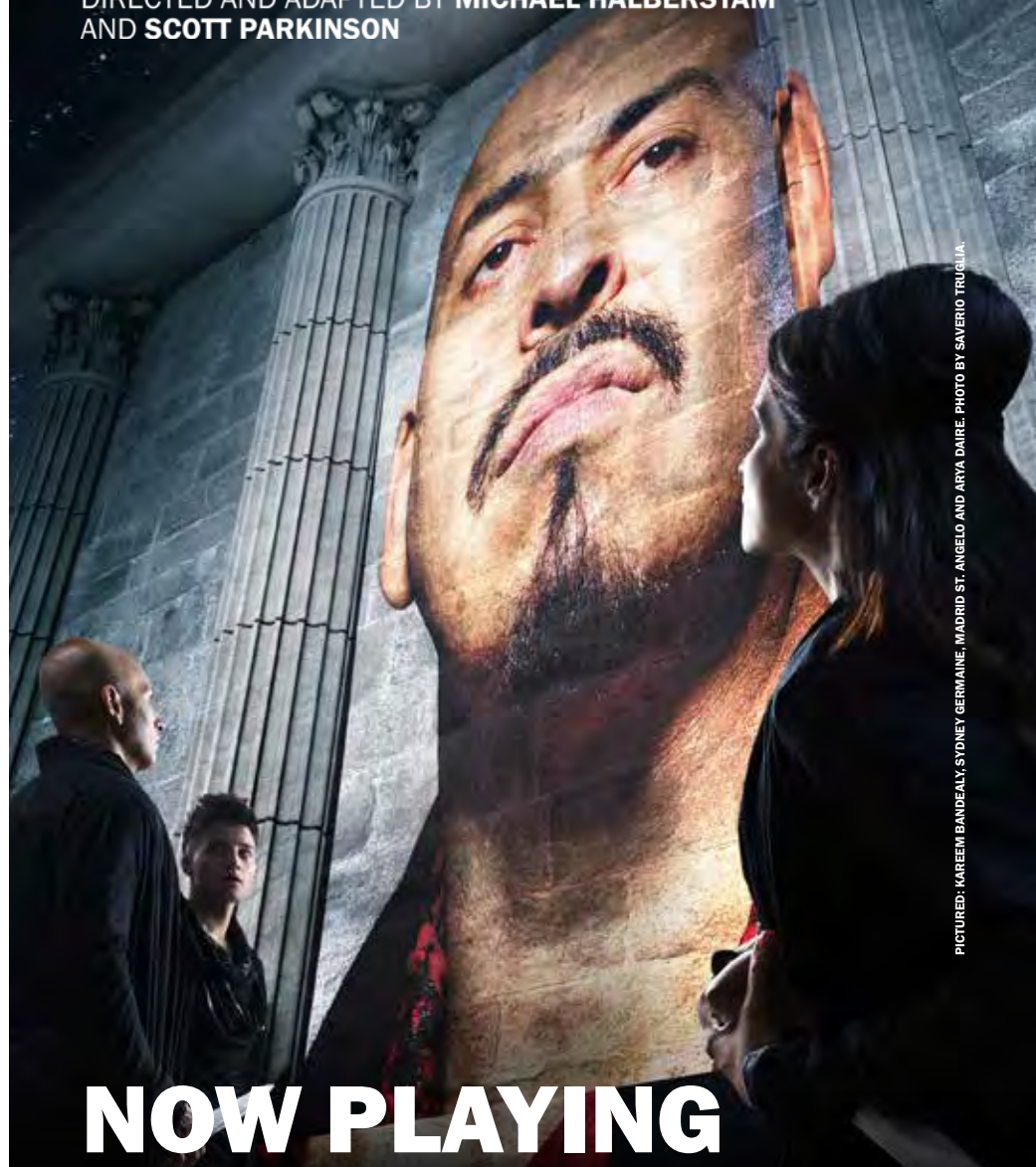
GABRIEL RUIZ (*Luis/Ensemble*) is a graduate of the DePaul Theatre School and a proud ensemble member of Teatro Vista. Chicago credits include *Agamemnon* at Court Theatre, *Arcadia* and *Company* at Writers Theatre, *City of Angels* at Marriott Theatre, *The Upstairs Concierge* at Goodman Theatre, *White 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.

JULIUS CAESAR

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JACQUELINE WILLIAMS (*Emelda/Ensemble*) returns to Court where she appeared in *Gem of the Ocean* (Aunt Ester); *The Good Book*; *Caroline, or Change* (Dotty); *Fences* (Rose, Jeff award); *Electra* (title role); and *The First Breeze of Summer*. Most recently, she played Makeda in *The House That Will Not Stand* at Victory Gardens. Her long association with Goodman Theatre includes *stop.reset.*, *Pullman Porter Blues* (some performances), *Blues for An Alabama Sky*, *Camino Real*, *The Trinity River Plays*, *The Amen Corner*, *Richard II*, and many others. Chicago: *Steppenwolf* (*Airline Highway*, *Head of Passes*, *The Hot L Baltimore*, *The Brother/Sister Plays*, *Othello*, and others); *Victory Gardens* (*Gospel of Lovingkindness*, *The Colored Museum*, and others); *Northlight* (*Gees Bend*, *The Miser*, and others); *Next* (*Yellowman*, *Fabulation*); and *Fleetwood-Jourdain* (Maya Angelou in the premiere of *Maya's Last Poem*, *Going to St. Ives*, *Having Our Say*). Regional: Asolo Repertory, La Jolla, Huntington Playhouse, ACT Seattle, Berkeley Rep, Portland Stage Co., Arena Stage, and more. Tours: *Crowns* and *Born in the RSA* with Market Theatre of Johannesburg. Broadway: *The Young Man from Atlanta*. Off-Broadway: *From the Mississippi Delta* (co-produced by Oprah Winfrey), *Mill Fire*, and *The Talented Tenth*. TV/Film: cast of *Turks*, recurring as Officer Beccera on *Chicago PD* and *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Code*, *Prison Break*, *Heartlock*, *The Break Up*, *The Lake House*, and *Hardball*. Awards/Nominations: Jeff, Helen Hayes, BTAA, Lunt-Fontanne Shakespeare Fellow, 3Arts, American Arts Council, Drama Desk, Sarah Siddons, Excellence in the Arts, After Dark, among others. Jacqueline holds a BFA from Goodman/Theatre School. Her greatest blessing is her daughter, Kara.



MICHAEL CRISTOFER (*Playwright*) was awarded a Pulitzer Prize and an Antoinette Perry "Tony" Award for the Broadway production of his play, *The Shadow Box*. Other plays include *Breaking Up* (Primary Stages); *Ice* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Black Angel* (Circle Repertory Company); *The Lady and the Clarinet* starring Stockard Channing; and *Amazing Grace* starring Marsha Mason which received the American Theater Critics Award for best American play. Mr. Cristofer's film work includes the screenplays for *The Shadow Box* directed by Paul Newman (Golden Globe Award, Emmy nomination), *Falling in Love* with Meryl Streep and Robert DeNiro, *The Witches of Eastwick* with Jack Nicholson, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* directed by Brian DePalma, *Breaking Up* starring Russell Crowe and Salma Hayek, *Georgia O'Keefe* with Joan Allen and Jeremy Irons, and *Casanova* starring Heath Ledger. His directing credits include *Gia* for HBO Pictures starring Angelina Jolie, Mercedes Ruehl, and Faye Dunaway which was nominated for 5 Emmys and for which he won a Director's Guild Award. He next directed *Body Shots* for New Line Cinema and *Original Sin* starring Angelina Jolie and Antonio Banderas. As an actor, he has appeared in over a hundred plays including *Romeo and Juliet* (NY Shakespeare Festival), *Trumpet* by Peter Parnell, *Chinchilla* (Obie Award), *Three Sisters* (Williamstown Theater), *Body of Water* with Christine Lahti, *The Seagull* with Joanne Woodward, *The Cherry Orchard* with Irene Worth (Theater World Award), and the acclaimed Broadway revival of *A View from the Bridge* with Liev Schreiber and Scarlett Johansson. He was Truxton Spangler in the AMC series *Rubicon*, he created the role of Gus in Tony Kushner's *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures* at the Public Theater, appeared on the NBC series *Smash* and *American Horror Story*, and plays Phillip Price on the USA series *Mr. Robot*.



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 Jeffs. 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 Director 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 Theater’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.

KEITH PARHAM (*Lighting Designer*) Court credits include: *An Iliad*, *Angels in America*, *Proof*, *The Misanthrope*, *Tartuffe*, *M. Butterfly*, *The Good Book*, *Satchmo at the Waldorf* and *One Man, Two Guvnors*. Broadway: *Thérèse Raquin* (Roundabout Theatre Company).

Off-Broadway: *The Purple Lights of Joppa Illinois* (Atlantic Theater Company); *Between Riverside and Crazy* (2econd Stage Theatre/Atlantic Theater Company); *The Model Apartment* (Primary Stages); *Tribes*, *Mistakes Were Made*, and *Red Light Winter* (Barrow Street Theatre); *Stop the Virgens* (Karen O at St. Ann’s Warehouse/Sydney Opera House); *Ivanov*, *Three Sisters* (CSC); *A Minister’s Wife* (Lincoln Center Theater); *Adding Machine* (Minetta Lane). International: *Homebody/Kabul* (National Theatre in Belgrade, Serbia). Regional: TUTA, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, The Mark Taper Forum, and Arena Stage, among others. Awards: Obie, Lortel.

ANDRE PLUESS (*Sound Designer*) returns to Court Theatre where previous credits include *Satchmo at the Waldorf*, *Agamemnon*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *An Iliad*, *Travesties*, *Cyrano*, *The Romance Cycle*, and *Mary Stuart*, among others. Broadway credits: *Metamorphoses*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *33 Variations*, and *The Clean House* (Lincoln Center Theater). Regional: *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare Theatre D.C.); *Legacy of Light* (Arena Stage); *Ghostwritten* (Goodman Theatre); *Palomino* (Center Theatre Group); *Equivocation* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); *Merchant of Venice* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Marcus* (American Conservatory Theatre); *Macbeth* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (California Shakespeare Festival). Mr. Pluess is an Artistic Associate at Lookingglass Theatre Company and the California Shakespeare Festival, resident designer at Victory Gardens Theater, and teaches Sound Design at Northwestern University.

TOMMY RAPLEY (*Choreographer*) is a proud Company Member with The House Theatre of Chicago where he has choreographed over 20 world premiere productions including *The Sparrow* (Jeff Award), *Cave With Man* (Jeff Award), *The Terrible Tragedy of Peter Pan*, *The Valentine Trilogy*, and *Death and Harry Houdini*. Directing credits for The House include: *The Great and Terrible Wizard of Oz*, *All the Fame of Lofty Deeds*, *Hope Springs Infernal*, *DORIAN*, and their critically acclaimed productions of *The Nutcracker*. Other notable Chicago credits: *AIDA* (Drury Lane Oakbrook), *Detroit* (Steppenwolf), *The Threepenny Opera* (The Hypocrites), *100 Dresses* (Chicago Children’s Theatre), *Yeast Nation* (American Theater Company), *Days Like Today* (Writers Theatre), *The King and I*, and *City of Angels* (Marriott Theatre). He has worked regionally with Hartford Stage Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Kansas City Rep, Olney Theatre Center, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Goodman Theatre, The Adrienne Arsht Center, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He is thrilled to be returning to Court with this beautiful play. Much love to Scott.

ADAM GOLDSTEIN (*Dialect Coach*) Currently running: *Wastwater* (Steep) and *Mister Punch* (House). Recent: *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* (Court); *The Distance* (Haven); *After Miss Julie* and *Conversations on a Homecoming* (Strawdog); *Titanic* and *Men Should Weep* (Griffin); *Melancholy Play*, *The Language Archive*, and *Dead Man Walking* (Piven); *If There is I Haven’t Found it Yet*, *Strangers*, *Babies*, and *Motortown* (Steep); *Take Me Back* (Poor Theatre); *Crimes of the Heart* (Step Up); *Women on the Verge...*, *Getting Out*, and *Violet*, (Columbia College); Tennessee Williams Project (Hypocrites); *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* (WildClaw); *Compulsion* and *The Exonerated* (Next); and *American Storm* (T7). He is a faculty member at Columbia College, Northwestern, Actors Training Center, and North Central. Adam earned an MFA in Directing from Northwestern and a BFA in Acting from NYU. Visit www.adamgoldsteintheatre.com.

NORA TITONE (*Resident Dramaturg*) is the author of the 19th-century theater history *My Thoughts Be Bloody: The Bitter Rivalry of Edwin and John Wilkes Booth* (Simon &

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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

PROFILES

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.

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- 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
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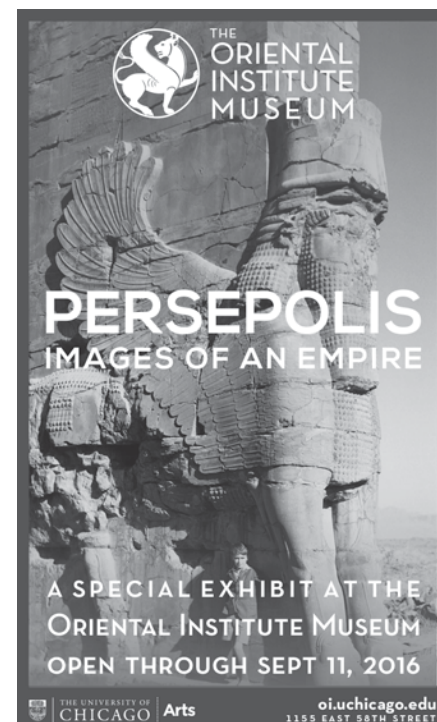
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