

COURT THEATRE

THE BELLE OF AMHERST

by WILLIAM LUCE

directed by SEAN GRANEY

featuring KATE FRY
as EMILY DICKINSON



Dear Court Theatre Family,

Welcome to *The Belle of Amherst*. With this new production, Court Theatre moves from the jumping jazz of Louis Jordan to the transcendent poetry of Emily Dickinson. We are delighted to be able to launch our season with portraits of two such innovative, individualistic American artists. Jordan and Dickinson, separated by a century, stand as giants in their fields of creative action, both gifted with the ability to find and celebrate the sublime in the everyday. Their musical and poetic creations endure, illuminating our present moment with their particular genius. We are proud of being able to pivot from one giant to another.

People often ask us how we choose the plays that we produce in a season. We pride ourselves on being an artist-driven theatre: many projects are born from our conversation with artists who are longtime members of the Court family. *Five Guys Named Moe* emerged from Resident Artist Ron OJ Parson and Felicia P. Fields' strong belief that now was the perfect time to revive Jordan's pioneering sound and share it with Chicago audiences.

We had been talking with Sean Graney for months, eager to light upon a project that could bring one of Chicago's most creative directors back to Court. When Sean mentioned his admiration for *The Belle of Amherst*, the timing could not have better: Kate Fry was then on our stage in the title role of *Electra*. Kate indicated she was interested in exploring the role of Emily Dickinson, and all of the creative pieces fell perfectly into place.

Being an artist-driven theatre means engaging in long-term conversations with artists, weighing the aspirations of all the members of our creative family, and steering the organization to respond to the most promising ideas. Thank you for joining us, and we hope you enjoy.



Charles Newell
Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director



Stephen J. Albert
Executive Director



CHARLES NEWELL
Marilyn F. Vitale
Artistic Director

STEPHEN J. ALBERT
Executive Director

Court Theatre's 2017/18 Season is sponsored by **Barbara and Richard Franke.**

THE BELLE OF AMHERST

November 2 - December 3, 2017

BY **WILLIAM LUCE**
DIRECTED BY **SEAN GRANEY**
FEATURING **KATE FRY**

Scenic Design by Arnel Sancianco
Costume Design by Samantha Jones U.S.A.
Lighting Design by Mike Durst U.S.A.
Sound Design by Andre Pluess U.S.A.
and Chris LaPorte

Dialect Design by Eva Breneman
Aileen McGroddy, *Production Dramaturg*
Amanda Weener-Frederick,* *Production Stage Manager*
Erin Albrecht,* *Assistant Stage Manager*

PLACE: The Dickinson household in Amherst, Massachusetts TIME: 1845–1886

Please be advised: Production utilizes water-based haze.

There will be a 15-minute intermission.

Sponsored by



THE BELLE OF AMHERST is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.
Designers and Scenic Artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, I.A.T.S.E. Local USA829, AFL-CIO, CLC.
*Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

CAST

Kate Fry*Emily Dickinson

Understudy: Tien Doman

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

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Director..... Aileen McGroddy
Scenic Artists..... Scott Gerwitz U.S.A, Julie Ruscitti U.S.A
Carpenters.....Tony Cooper, Emily Graver, Mariana Noga, Theron Seckington,
Colleen Schuldeis, Devonte Washington
Costume Shop Assistant Jerica Hucke
Costume Construction Steppenwolf Costume Shop
Wig Design Christina Carlson
Assistant Lighting Designer Claire Chrzan
Assistant Master Electrician..... Raphael Grimes
ElectriciansBilly Murphy, Andy Kauff, Victoria Fox, Kendall Cole, Shelbi Arndt,
Jonah White, Megan Turnquist, Jenn Thompson, Andrew Chien, Billy Borst
Workshop Stage Manager.....Miranda Anderson*
Floor ManagerGabriella Welsh

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.

The Belle of Amherst is this season's Honorary David Bevington Production.

Cover photo of Kate Fry by Joe Mazza.

Please turn off all phones and chiming watches. Photography, videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is 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.





Q&A

Production Dramaturg and Assistant Director Aileen McGroddy chats with Director Sean Graney and Actress Kate Fry

What drew you both to *The Belle of Amherst*? What are you discovering about Emily Dickinson through this process?

Sean Graney: When I was in college, I would spend a lot of time in the library reading as many plays as I could. When I came across *The Belle of Amherst*, I loved it. It has a darker theatrical quality, where Emily Dickinson is actively trying to solve problems.

There is existential questioning underpinning the charm of *The Belle of Amherst*. Why are we on this earth? What am I doing with my time on this earth? Emily is reflecting on her life, her definition of success, her relationship to writing, and her relationship to society and withdrawal from it. She actively questions her choices as she relives them. As Emily's time on earth is ending, she wonders if she spent it well.

Kate Fry: In the famous Dickinson daguerreotype, Emily looks prim and docile. This is not the woman I am meeting at all. She is playful and witty, and there is an enormous depth of feeling. I can't think of anything she does halfway: life, work, relationships, gardening, baking, reading—nothing is trivial. Her love is forceful. I'm sure that was off-putting to people. There's something so bold about that.

However, we are never going to know her completely. Anyone that claims to know her is reaching for something impossible. I think she is purposely oblique and that is part of her mystery.

What was your relationship to Emily Dickinson prior to working on *The Belle of Amherst*?

Kate: I have admired Emily Dickinson's poetry and used some of her poems in working on other characters, particularly as Viola in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* [at Court Theatre in 2001] and Sonia in Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. I didn't perform the poems, but used them to understand something that was happening in the character.

In working on Viola, what reminded me of Dickinson was being isolated, intense, harboring very strong feelings, and not being sure that they are being returned in the same way. I found that "'Hope' is the thing with feathers" fit particularly well. There is an intensity and distillation of passion that I found useful.

When I started preparing for this production, months before rehearsals began, I didn't read letters or biographies—I started with the poems. I wanted to start with

just her words and her thoughts, without other people's lenses. Once that process was sufficiently underway, it was only then that I felt like I could focus on the script.

Emily Dickinson herself was subject to a society with very limited options for women to be heard, and chose to recuse herself from it. The legacy that she left is a story that has been told and retold, from being a shrinking violet to a courageous revolutionary.

Sean: Emily Dickinson is one of the geniuses of American literature, and I don't think that she gets the credit that she deserves. It certainly has to do with misogyny, and also that the choices that she made—to not marry, to isolate herself—made her a bit of a pariah. She has been seen as provincial as opposed to canonical.

She was living in a farmhouse and asking deep, universal questions—similar to the ideas that Henry David Thoreau was interrogating at Walden Pond. Why doesn't she get credit for that? If she had built a hut in the woods and lived in it, what would our relationship with her be? It probably would have made her even more of a pariah.

Emily Dickinson died in 1886. *The Belle of Amherst* was written in 1976. What function does this play serve for an audience living in 2017?

Sean: I think we need to listen to women more. When women are speaking, a lot of society dismisses what they are saying, interrupts them, or doesn't give their words as much weight as what men say. We need to address that as a society.

I think that this is an opportunity for a woman to hold space, and where people must listen to her. I think that if people who have a hard time imagining women in charge can listen to Kate for two hours, they leave the theatre knowing that they can listen to women.

Kate: I love that we are doing this play now. I think there is so much meaningless information floating out in the ether right now. There is something so refreshing about having this prim looking woman penetrating like a laser beam into some of the most confusing emotions and conundrums of being alive.

My current favorite poem is "I tie my hat - I crease my shawl." It reflects people who are overly attached to their routines, to their trivial acts, the seemingly meaningless ritual of an average day: cleaning, putting flowers in a vase. You think she's just enumerating her tasks, but then you realize, she is hanging onto life by her fingernails. There is something so modern about that.

I would like to see her in 2017. I can't imagine her "liking" something on social media; she would be like, "I'm in LOVE with that." She wouldn't be tepid about anything—she would do it her own way. She didn't like any of the options so she chose to create her own. ■

"Emily Dickinson is one of the geniuses of American literature, and I don't think that she gets the credit that she deserves."

—Director Sean Graney



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A Poem for Mr. Higginson

Excerpted from *Religion Around Emily Dickinson* by W. Clark Gilpin

Act One of William Luce’s *The Belle of Amherst* concludes with Emily Dickinson reaching a decision. An essay in the *Atlantic Monthly* for April 1862 had caught her eye and emboldened her to announce her vocation as a poet. Entitled “A Letter to a Young Contributor,” the essay offered advice about writing for publication. Its author, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, was a noted New England abolitionist, Unitarian minister, literary critic, and the colonel of a Union regiment of freed slaves, the First South Carolina Volunteers. Here, declared Dickinson to her sister-in-law and confidant Susan Gilbert Dickinson, was the preceptor who could launch her career: “I want him to see that I’m different, not just a country poetess sending little verses to the city editor.” She decided to write a letter to Higginson, asking him “to say if my Verse is Alive.” This, of course, required sending some specimen verses.

The fourth and final poem Dickinson selected for inclusion in her letter—recited at length in *The Belle of Amherst*—challenged nineteenth-century New England’s received wisdom on the human transit from life, to death, to a resurrection from the dead. For eighteen months, from late 1859 to the summer of 1861, Dickinson had wrestled with the poem, which began “Safe in their Alabaster Chambers.” In the course of revision, Dickinson juxtaposed this supernatural progression from time to eternity with images of the natural cycles of time. She puzzled over—but refused to resolve—the transience of all things human.

Her austere verse, in the earliest extant transcription (late 1859), began by meditating on an ornate tomb.

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers –
Untouched by morning
And untouched by noon –
Sleep the meek members of the Resurrection –
Rafter of satin,
And Roof of stone.

The dead were smoothly sealed in a timeless sleep, “untouched” by the passage of days. But deciding on the second stanza to follow this one became a puzzle. Dickinson’s first effort contrasted the timelessness of death with an ephemeral

CONTINUED ON P 10

Left: This daguerreotype taken at Mount Holyoke, December 1846 or early 1847 is the only authenticated portrait of Emily Dickinson later than childhood. The original is held by Amherst College Archives and Special Collections.

morning, on whose breezes a bee “Babbles” and “the Sweet Birds [sing] in ignorant cadence,” oblivious to the “sagacity” about life’s impermanence that slept nearby in “Alabaster Chambers.” Dickinson sent the poem to her sister-in-law, but, apparently, Susan objected to the second stanza, and Dickinson tried another approach. This time, her second stanza contrasted death’s eternity not simply with an ephemeral summer day but instead with the sweeping circuits of nature and the eclipse of nations. The world of time and change now moved at a dramatically different cadence, and laughing breezes, babbling bees, and piping birds have been replaced by “Soundless” geometry: crescents, arcs, rows, dots, and discs.

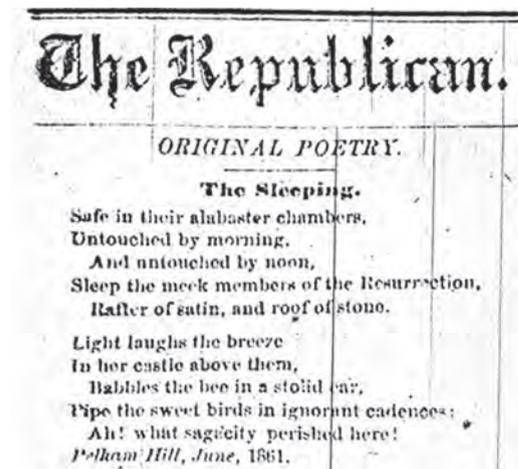
Grand go the Years – in the Crescent – above them –
 Worlds scoop their Arcs –
 And Firmaments – row –
 Diadems – drop – and Doges – surrender –
 Soundless as dots – on a Disc of Snow.

Susan would not relent easily: “I am not suited dear Emily with the second verse ... It just occurs to me that the first verse is complete in itself ... and can’t be coupled—Strange things always go alone... You never made a peer for that verse, and I guess you[r] kingdom doesn’t hold one—I always go to the fire and get warm after thinking of it, but I never can again.”

But Emily Dickinson remained challenged by the singular stanza she had created. It held death’s meaning within sealed, cool architecture—“Rafter of satin / And Roof of stone”—and she sought the analogy or the contrast that would relate it, in fruitful honesty, to the passages of life. She tried a third version, and sent it to Sue with a query: “Is this frostier?” Dickinson had shifted perspectives, away not only from the light breezes of an ephemeral summer but also from the cosmic horizon of “Arcs” and “Firmaments.” She now focused her attention on reconsidering the “Alabaster Chambers” themselves. Whereas the first two options for a second stanza had contrasted the temporal world with tombs “untouched by noon,” these last two revisions obliquely reintroduced time and change into the crypt itself.

Springs – shake the Sills –
 But – the Echoes – stiffen –
 Hoar – is the Window – and numb – the door –
 Tribes of Eclipse – in Tents of Marble –
 Staples of Ages – have buckled – there –

In this third experiment, the first stanza’s architectural images remain, but the smoothly sealed alabaster has been replaced by weather worn windows and doors, stiff and frozen but not, perhaps, impassable. In another intriguing alteration, the silent repose of the dead in stanza one has now become nomadic movement, “Tribes



“Safe in their Alabaster Chambers –,” titled “The Sleeping,” as it was published in the Springfield Republican in 1862.

of Eclipse,” whose crypts have been transformed to “Tents of Marble” for a journey that somehow, mysteriously continues the pilgrimage begun in life and time.

Pursuing her experiments during the second half of 1861, Dickinson copied all these stanzas onto a sheet of stationery, adding yet another revisionary stanza.

Springs – shake the seals –
 But the silence – stiffens –
 Frosts unhook – in the Northern Zones –
 Icicles – crawl from polar Caverns –
 Midnight in Marble –
 Refutes – the Suns –

In this version, the cycles of nature contested one another for possession of the tombs. Spring’s warmth has shaken “the seals” of the chambers, but frost and icicles from “polar Caverns” return to stiffen them into wintery silence. Midnight supplants noon and “Refutes – the Suns.” Although winter and midnight clearly held sway, the poet gave no indication that their contest with spring and sunlight had ended. Here was a poem for Mr. Higginson to ponder. ■

W. Clark Gilpin is the Margaret E. Burton Professor, emeritus, at the University of Chicago Divinity School, where he served as dean from 1990 to 2000, and as director of the Martin Marty Center from 2000 to 2004. Gilpin studies the history of modern Christianity, especially in relation to literature. He adapted this comment on the *The Belle of Amherst* from his book *Religion Around Emily Dickinson* (Penn State University Press, 2014), which employs Dickinson’s poetry as a lens through which to view the cultural work performed by religious thought, practice, and imagination in nineteenth-century America. His quotations from “Safe in their Alabaster Chambers” come from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition*, ed. R. W. Franklin, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 1: 159-64.



Up Next: *All My Sons*

My first experience with an Arthur Miller play was as an actor, not a director: I was cast as John Proctor in my high school's production of *The Crucible*. Playing the part of Miller's tragic hero was the first time I ever attempted to become someone else. Even though I proved to be a terrible actor, the experience revealed to me the transcendent and transformative power of drama. After this first brush with Miller, I knew theatre was where I truly belonged.

All My Sons will run at Court Theatre from January 11 through February 11. Tickets are now available at www.CourtTheatre.org.

In bringing *All My Sons* to life at Court this season, we are building upon what was learned during our three-play Greek cycle—*Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Agamemnon*, and *Electra*—and applying those lessons to Miller's first masterpiece. In 1947, the playwright called *All My Sons* his tragedy for “the common man”: Miller hoped his effort to re-imagine and re-purpose the Greek tragic form would speak directly to the lives and psyches of modern Americans. To capture the feeling of Greek tragedy in our design for this production, we will not be seeking to represent a backyard in Middle America, where the action of the play typically unfolds. Rather, we are turning to the American painter Edward Hopper for inspiration. Our aim is to create a setting that feels primordial rather than literal: a space out of time.

In addition to mirroring Court's Greek cycle, *All My Sons* is a continuation of Court's exploration of American classics, and joins the likes of *Long Day's Journey into Night* and *Harvey* of recent seasons. What makes it uniquely Court is the dazzling cast. You may already know the incredible work of Timothy Edward Kane, Kate Collins, and John Judd individually, but just imagine the dynamism that will manifest when they're on stage together in one cast. We've been very successful working with these artists in the past because they leap forward into new acting challenges. We know they will continue to take genuine and fearless risks, and will bring to this work the full power of their creative imaginations.

—Charles Newell, Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director

Photo of John Judd and Kate Collins by Joe Mazza.

Revisiting *Iphigenia in Aulis* at the Getty Villa

By Ellen Wiese

This summer, Court Theatre was honored to remount its production of *Iphigenia in Aulis* at the Getty Villa stage in Malibu, California. Each year, the Getty selects one classical tragedy or comedy to showcase in its dramatic Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater, an outdoor venue modeled after ancient Greek and Roman amphitheaters. This invitation is one of the highest honors for theatres producing classical works, and was due in large part to the exceptional support of our audience.

The production, translated and updated by Court's Founding Artistic Director and renowned classicist Nicholas Rudall, was reprised in California by Charles Newell, Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director. *Iphigenia* began Court's recent three-year cycle of Greek tragedies, and the Getty production provided a fitting capstone.

The reprisal of *Iphigenia* was not so much a remount as a new production—the same translation and team, but with a different set of questions and challenges. Over the course of a few weeks, an entire production—actors, management, and director, as well as necessary set pieces, costumes, and lights—was transported from Chicago to California. This particular production's existence relied on the careful assembly of a multitude of puzzle pieces: the rebuilding of a design scheme, the rehearsal process in both Chicago and Los Angeles, and the adjustment from the intimate staging at Court to the more expansive Getty space.

This could not have been accomplished without the commitment of United Airlines in transporting everyone where they needed to go, the guidance and enthusiasm of the Getty Villa in navigating and facilitating the process, and the incredible support of Court's audience, trustees, and donors.

The production and process was a tribute to the lasting power of the show and the commitment of everyone working on it. The production of *Iphigenia* at the Getty Villa was a profound tribute to the original Court production, four years ago—and to the original Greek production, two thousand years ago. ■



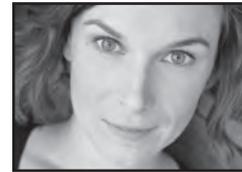
Ellen Wiese, a member of University of Chicago's Class of 2017, traveled with Court Theatre's production of *Iphigenia* to the Getty Villa this summer. Her residence with the Court company in California and her work as Assistant Director to Charles Newell was made possible by the generous support of The College.

Photo: Stephanie Andrea Barron and Sandra Marquez (Craig Schwartz Photography)





KATE FRY (*Emily Dickinson*) has performed in over a dozen productions at Court, most recently *Electra* and *The Hard Problem*. Other Chicago credits: Goodman Theatre, Writers Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Victory Gardens, Theatre at the Center, Marriott Theatre, Apple Tree Theatre, and Candlelight Playhouse. Regional credits: McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton, NJ, Center Theatre Group in LA, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, and Lincoln Center. TV credits: *Boss* (Starz), *Empire* (Fox), and *Chicago PD* (NBC). She received three Joseph Jefferson Awards, an After Dark Award, Chicago Magazine’s Actress of the Year, and the Sarah Siddons Award for Chicago’s Leading Lady. Fry is married to actor/teacher Timothy Edward Kane. They have two sons.



TIEN DOMAN (*Understudy*) is excited to be working with Court Theatre. A company member with The Hypocrites, Tien was most recently seen in *You on the Moors Now*. Past productions with The Hypocrites: *All Our Tragic*, *12 Nights*, *Romeo Juliet*, *Ivywild*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Sophocles: Seven Sicknesses*, and *K*. Other companies that Tien has worked with include Goodman, Victory Gardens, The House, The Neo-Futurists, NewLeaf, Northlight, Trapdoor, Provision, and TimeLine Theatre. Tien received her BFA from Carnegie Mellon and also studied at the Moscow Art Theatre.

WILLIAM LUCE (*Author*) wrote *The Belle of Amherst* for Julie Harris, who won her fifth Tony Award for her portrayal of Emily Dickinson. For soprano Renée Fleming, Luce wrote *My Business Is To Love*, which premiered at Lincoln Center. Luce’s Broadway hit *Barrymore* starred Christopher Plummer as John Barrymore. For her portrayal of Isak Dinesen in Luce’s play *Lucifer’s Child*, Julie Harris received a Tony nomination. Harris also starred in Luce’s play *Brontë*, written for WGBH and Irish Television. *Lillian*, Luce’s Broadway play on Lillian Hellman, starred actress Zoe Caldwell. Luce’s play *Zelda* starred Olga Bellin off-Broadway; later as *The Last Flapper*, the play starred Piper Laurie. Luce’s two plays, *Chanel* and *Nijinsky*, premiered at Parco Theatre in Tokyo. Luce’s *Sound Portrait of William Shakespeare* for NPR starred David Warner, David Dukes, Peter Donat, Arthur Hill, Julie Harris, Joan Hackett, and Marian Mercer. *Baptiste*, Luce’s comedy about Molière, premiered at Hartford Stage. Luce is twice a Writers’ Guild Award nominee for his CBS movies *The Last Days of Patton* and *The Woman He Loved*.



SEAN GRANEY (*Director*) is happy to return to Court. Currently he’s the Artistic Director of The Hypocrites. In 2013, he was a Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University. He is a Creative Capital Awardee, has been granted the Helen Coburn Meier and Tim Meier Arts Achievement Award, and is a participant in the NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Directors. Selective directing credits: American Repertory Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Berkeley Rep, Chicago Shakespeare, Goodman Theatre, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, Court Theatre, Milwaukee Rep,

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Steppenwolf for Young Audiences, Chicago Children's Theatre, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

ARNEL SANCIANO (*Scenic Designer*) studied drama with honors in design at UC Irvine, and received his MFA in scenic design from Northwestern University. He has designed shows in Philadelphia, D.C., Milwaukee, and Chicago. He designed the sets for *Boy* (TimeLine Theatre); *Ellen Bond Union Spy* (The House Theatre); *The Crucible* (Steppenwolf for Young Adults); *The Wiz, Little Fish*, (Kokandy Productions); *Pilgrims* (The Gift Theatre); *Hookman, Earthquakes in London* (Steep Theatre); *Peerless* (First Floor Theatre); *How We Got On* (Haven Theatre); *You on The Moors Now* (The Hypocrites); *Carousel, Titanic, Rock of Ages* (Timberlake Playhouse); and *Xanadu* (American Theatre Company). www.ArnelDesigns.com.

SAMANTHA JONES (*Costume Designer*) is excited to make her Court debut and team up with Sean again. She is a Chicago-based designer whose work has been seen at Lookingglass Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Chicago Children's Theatre, American Blues Theatre, Victory Gardens Theatre, TimeLine Theatre, Jackalope Theatre, Next Theatre, Congo Square Theatre, and others. Most recently, she was the costume designer for The Hypocrites' *Dracula* at Mercury Theater. Regionally, she has worked with Triad Stage, Arkansas Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Repertory Theatre, and Peninsula Players, among others.

MIKE DURST (*Lighting Designer*) is currently designing for McCarter Theatre Center, A Red Orchid Theatre, Cardinal Stage Company, TimeLine Theatre, and The Hypocrites. Off-Broadway: Primary Stages, 59e59, Cherry Lane. Regional: Huntington Theatre Company, Lookingglass Theatre, Olney Theatre Center, and Court Theatre. National Tour: *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia's The Nightman Cometh*. Mike has received Chicago's Jeff Award, LA's Ovation Award, and San Diego's Craig Noel Award. He is a lighting design lecturer at the University of Chicago, an ensemble member with A Red Orchid Theatre, and a member of IATSE Local 2 and United Scenic Artists 829. MikeDurst.com

ANDRE PLUESS (*Sound Designer*) returns to Court, where he previously worked on *The Hard Problem, Electra, Man in the Ring, Satchmo at the Waldorf, Agamemnon, Iphigenia in Aulis, An Iliad, Travesties, Cyrano*. The Romance Cycle, and *Mary Stuart*. Broadway credits: *Metamorphoses, I Am My Own Wife, 33 Variations*, and *The Clean House* (Lincoln Center). Regional: *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare Theatre D.C.); *Legacy of Light* (Arena Stage); *Ghostwritten* (Goodman); *Palomino* (Center Theatre Group); *Equivocation* (Seattle Repertory); *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). Pluess is an Artistic Associate at Lookingglass and the California Shakespeare Festival, resident designer at Victory Gardens Theater, and teaches sound design at Northwestern University.

CHRISTOPHER M. LAPORTE (*Sound Designer*) has collaborated on projects with many Chicago companies including Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, Writers, Victory Gardens, Lookingglass, Drury Lane, The Hypocrites, TimeLine,

Raven, University of Illinois Chicago, and Sideshow Theatre Company where he is an artistic associate. Regional collaborations include Kansas City Repertory, Dallas Theatre Center, The Old Globe (San Diego), Center Stage (Baltimore), Arena Stage (Washington D.C.), Arsht Theatre Center (Miami), Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and NY United Solo Festival.

EVA BRENEMAN (*Dialect Designer*) Court credits: *The Hard Problem, One Man Two Guvnors, The Good Book, M. Butterfly, Skylight, Angels in America, The First Breeze of Summer*; and *Carousel*. Chicago: *A Disappearing Number* (TimeLine); *Arcadia* (Writers); *Hard Times* (Lookingglass); *Objects in the Mirror* (Goodman); *The Compass* (Steppenwolf); and *Shakespeare in Love* (Chicago Shakespeare). Regional: *The Who and the What* (Milwaukee Rep); three seasons at American Repertory Theatre; *Love's Labour's Lost* (Actor's Theatre of Louisville); *Around the World in 80 Days* (Centerstage/Kansas City Repertory) and *Mamma Mia!* (National Tour/Las Vegas). Eva is an associate artist at TimeLine Theatre Company.

AILEEN MCGRODDY (*Assistant Director/Dramaturg*) is a director, dramaturg, and movement director. She previously assistant directed *An Iliad* at Court Theatre and *Cinderella at the Theatre of Potatoes* with The Hypocrites. Later this season, she will be directing *Montauciel Takes Flight* (Lifeline Theatre) and *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Musical* (Emerald City Theatre). She is the Artistic Director of The Forks & Hope Ensemble, a company member of TUTA Theatre, and sits on the steering committee of DirectorsLabChicago. She has also worked with The House Theatre, The Actors Gymnasium, Physical Festival Chicago, Theatre Y, Theatre-Hikes, The Plagiarists, The Ruckus Theatre, Mudlark Theatre, and Chicago Fringe Festival.

AMANDA WEENER-FREDERICK (*Production Stage Manager*) is thrilled to be spending her fifth 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; One Man, Two Guvnors; Man in the Ring; Electra; Blues for an Alabama Sky; The Hard Problem; Harvey*; and most recently, Court's production of *Iphigenia in Aulis* at the Getty Villa in California. Amanda has also worked with Lookingglass Theatre and Chicago Shakespeare. Before that, Amanda spent eight seasons with Milwaukee Repertory and seven summers with Great River Shakespeare Festival in Winona, Minnesota. Amanda is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

ERIN ALBRECHT (*Assistant Stage Manager*) has worked previously at Court on *Five Guys Named Moe; Harvey; Blues for an Alabama Sky; Man in the Ring; One Man, Two Guvnors; Long Day's Journey Into Night; Agamemnon; The Good Book*; and *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Off Broadway work includes The Pearl Theatre, New York Classical Theatre, Friendly Fire, and West Side Theatre. Regional Theatre: American Players Theatre, Arena Stage, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Blue Man Group, The Utah Shakespeare Festival, and others. 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.

PROFILES



CHARLES NEWELL (*Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director*) has been Artistic Director of Court Theatre since 1994, where he has directed over 50 productions. Recent Court highlights include *The Hard Problem*; *Man in the Ring*; *One Man, Two Guvnors*; and *Satchmo at the Waldorf*. Charlie has also directed at the Goodman Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Arena Stage, John Houseman's The Acting Company, Lyric Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Glimmerglass, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Awards received include the SDCF Zelda Fichandler Award, the TCG Alan Schneider Award, and the League of Chicago Theatres' Artistic Achievement Award. Charlie has been nominated for 16 Jeff Awards, winning four times.



STEPHEN J. ALBERT (*Executive Director*) is celebrating his seventh season at Court Theatre. He previously served as General Manager/Managing Director of Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles for 12 seasons; Executive Director of Alley Theatre in Houston for 3 seasons; Managing Director of Hartford Stage Company for five seasons. He is a founding partner of Albert Hall & Associates, a full service arts consulting practice; a member of American Leadership Forum; and Vice President/President of the League of Resident Theatres. Steve graduated from the University of Southern California, BA and the University of California, Los Angeles, MBA.

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 & 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.



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Nicholas Rudall Endowed Fund

Earlier this year, Court Theatre's production of *Iphigenia in Aulis* was remounted at the Getty Villa in Malibu, California. While this was a major achievement for our Court community, it is a particular triumph for Nick Rudall.

Three years ago, Nick was an integral part of Court's 60th anniversary celebration, engaging with us in great generosity of spirit and characteristic wit and wisdom. It gave a renewed appreciation of his exceptional leadership of Court during his tenure as Artistic Director.

During the planning of the 60th season, he led the theatre in the creation of the three-year Greek Cycle of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Agamemnon*, and *Electra*, serving as the project's translator and advisor. This unique and ambitious undertaking reinforced Court's national standing as a daring and innovative force, with far-reaching recognition.

Long before this, Nick laid the foundation that has influenced the success that Court Theatre is enjoying. It was Nick, who:

- Turned a summer diversion into a professional theatre company;
- Created the excitement and attention that led to the University of Chicago's decision to build a home for the theatre; and
- Attracted an audience that came to see the classics and intellectually engaging work.

Now is the moment to celebrate this remarkable man, whose contributions, not only to Court Theatre but to the University of Chicago, have been many and varied: as a teacher and professor, an actor, a director, a gifted translator and overall, a man whose enthusiasm for what is excellent in his eyes, knows no bounds. As a Court patron, you have had the distinction of being directly impacted by Nick's many talents.

Court Theatre and its Trustees are honoring Founding Artistic Director Nicholas Rudall. The Nicholas Rudall Endowed Fund will support the production of classical theatre at Court Theatre and ensure that Nick's legacy will become a permanent part of your future, and Court Theatre's future. ■

To make a contribution to the Nicholas Rudall Endowed Fund, please contact Susan M. Zellner, Director of Development at (773) 834-3305 or szellner@uchicago.edu.

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