

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

By Todd Kreidler

Based on the screenplay by William Rose

Directed by Marti Lyons

with Associate Director Wardell Julius Clark

court THEATRE





Dear friends,

January 27 was a milestone in Court's history. On that night, in the company of hundreds of friends and family from around the country, we gathered in the theatre with love, laughter, and tears to honor the memory of our late Executive Director, Stephen J. Albert.

Since Steve's passing, I have been reflecting on what it means to be a truly transformative leader. I believe this type of leader is someone whose influence and inspiration remain active within an organization long after they are gone. Steve embodied such leadership during his seven years at Court. As we move into 2018, memories of his work and character continue to lift us up and guide us onward.

The Chicago premiere of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* is no exception. When Steve and I first learned there was a contemporary stage adaptation of this cinematic classic, we were immediately interested. We wanted to train a powerful new lens on this story, in hope of awakening new ideas and understandings. Director Marti Lyons is an ideal artist for this task. Her vibrant interpretations make her a Chicago director of note, and we are thrilled to share her work with our audience. We are also fortunate to have Associate Director Wardell Julius Clark back to Court after his excellent work here on *Gem of the Ocean* and *Satchmo at the Waldorf*.

Looking ahead, I am proud to announce our 2018/19 Season. We begin with *Radio Golf*, the last play in August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle. Next, on the 200th anniversary of *Frankenstein*, performance collective Manual Cinema presents their interpretation of the Gothic monster story. Then, *Photograph 51* will shine a light on Rosalind Franklin, the scientist whose research was crucial to solving the mystery of DNA's double helix. In Ntozake Shange's landmark *For Colored Girls*, seven women will fearlessly tell their stories through song and poetry. Finally, playwright David Auburn brings to Court's stage his world premiere adaptation of Saul Bellow's classic novel, *The Adventures of Augie March*.

Thank you for your support and for joining us at the theatre!

Sincerely,

Charles Newell, Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director



CHARLES NEWELL
Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director

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

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

March 15 - April 15, 2018

BY **TODD KREIDLER**

BASED ON THE SCREENPLAY

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER BY WILLIAM ROSE

DIRECTED BY MARTI LYONS

WITH ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR WARDELL JULIUS CLARK

Scenic Design by Scott Davis U.S.A.

Casting by Cree Rankin

Costume Design by Samantha Jones U.S.A.

Additional Casting by Becca McCracken, C.S.A.

Lighting Design by Lee Fiskness U.S.A.

Gabrielle Randle, *Production Dramaturg*

Sound Design by Andre Pluess U.S.A.

Amanda Weener-Frederick, * *Production Stage Manager*

and Christopher M. LaPorte

Cara Parrish, * *Assistant Stage Manager*

SETTING:

The action of the play unfolds in the Drayton family's home atop a hill in San Francisco in the spring of 1967.

There will be a 15-minute intermission.

Sponsored by **KIRKLAND & ELLIS**

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER is produced by special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials supplied by WILLIAM MORRIS ENDEAVOR ENTERTAINMENT, LLC.

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

Sydney Charles *Matilda "Tillie" Binks*
Mary Beth Fisher* *Christina Drayton*
Bryce Gangel *Joanna Drayton*
Tim Hopper* *Matt Drayton*
Michael Aaron Pogue* *Dr. John Prentice*
Rachel Sledd *Hilary St. George*
Dan Waller* *Monsignor Ryan*
Jacqueline Williams* *Mary Prentice*
Dexter Zollicoffer* *John Prentice Sr.*

Understudies: Kona N. Burks (Matilda Binks/Mary Prentice), David Goodloe (Dr. John Prentice), Darren M. Jones (John Prentice, Sr.), Tim Kidwell (Matt Drayton/Monsignor Ryan), Erika Napoletano (Christina Drayton/Hilary St. George), Meg Warner (Joanna Drayton)

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

PRODUCTION STAFF

Dialect Consultant Elise Kauzlaric
Scenic Artists Scott Gerwitz U.S.A., Julie Ruscelli U.S.A.
Scenic Design Assistant Lauren Nigri
Carpenters Mariana Noga, Dean Gnadinger, Chris Stoutjesdyk, Tony Cooper
Draper Beth Uber
Tailor Fox Brothers
Stitcher Alex Rutherford
Wigs Christina Carlson
Costume Shop Assistant Jerica Huckle
Wardrobe Crew Alex Rutherford
Assistant Lighting Designer Madeline Scott
Assistant Master Electrician Raphael Grimes
Electricians Shelbi Arndt, Billy Borst, Jessie Cole, Danielle Davis, Brian Elston, Victoria Fox, Andy Kauff, Billy Murphy, Benjamin Stopek, Jonah White
Floor Manager Jaclynn Joslin

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 Bryce Gangel and Michael Aaron Pogue by Joe Mazza.

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

Playwright Todd Kreidler

Playwright Todd Kreidler's stage adaptation of the film Guess Who's Coming to Dinner was produced by Arena Stage in 2013. The production's dramaturg, Linda Lombardi, spoke with Todd just as preview performances were about to begin.

How did you get started as a playwright?

That question's hard to answer. I've done everything on some level. I stretched flats, I was a Master Electrician (until I got electrocuted), I worked in a box office, directed, did sound design, stage managed, everything, but writing has always been a constant in my life.

I had some early success writing plays when I was young in Pittsburgh and that scared me. I turned my focus to directing and by the time I started working with August Wilson and became his dramaturg I was directing a lot—I was a director who really wanted to be a writer, but was scared. Not that directing isn't incredibly difficult and rewarding but what I really wanted to do was write. Around November of 2000, August said, "If you're gonna write, man, be a writer. Don't stand out there hesitating. Man, you gotta stand up and claim it." Which is what I did.

What attracted you to *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*? Why adapt this story today?

First of all, it's a cultural touchstone. Whatever your feelings about the piece are, whatever community you're from, it literally brought the issue of race into the home, both in the storytelling and thematically.

Approaching it today I wanted to take the opportunity to talk about and engage in the attitudes of 1967, but in a way that was for the 21st century. These attitudes and ideas are still very much alive. People have tried to make linguistic

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Photos of John Judd, Bryce Gangel, Michael Aaron Pogue, Jacqueline Williams, Mary Beth Fisher, Wardell Julius Clark, and Sydney Charles at first rehearsal of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (Joe Mazza).

adjustments so racism today has become more covert. The systemic racism and the endemic attitudes are cloaked, but they're still very much alive. Just look at the disproportionate amount of blacks living in poverty or the criminalization of young black men. That's not an opinion about society. Those are verifiable facts. You're on one of two sides. You either say that young black men are somehow more criminally bent, that it's built into them to be more violent or more criminal, or you believe—as I do—that this is our American legacy from slavery that we are still struggling to redress.

The writing challenge was also exciting to me. From *Holler If Ya Hear Me* to *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, I'm writing character-driven American stories. I get to deal with a defining aspect of American life, which is race relations in America. There's something about the access to characters on stage that's particularly of interest to me. It's something that you can't get in film and television. I find theater very supple for the exploration of character and the layered aspects of our lives—attitudes towards love, attitudes towards sex, towards food. There's a way to evolve those things and really try to cover the individual humanities of the characters, and to make what I think is an argument and transformation about attitudes towards race.

How did you go about adapting the screenplay of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* for the stage?

It wasn't just taking a screenplay to a play. It was taking an iconic screenplay to a play. So there was always a spirit of preserving the iconic moments of the film, and then connecting them with a story that is familiar. The single setting and the compression of time made it ready-made for the stage. The challenge was going from iconic moment to iconic moment.

The question for me has always been how do we keep it set in 1967 but not of 1967. When I first took the project I saw the film, but once I started writing the first draft, I didn't look back. I asked myself about the characters and the period and where they come from, looking for things that echo the central issue of race, but I also explored other aspects of their humanity. There is a love story at the heart of this play. And there is a happy family at the heart of this, which is not your normal exciting grist for a play, so it's been fun to disrupt but also maintain that.

What's your approach as a playwright?

It takes a lot of different forms but I'm always doing it. I may work on one detail or one aspect of a story and then abandon it for a while and work on another piece, and then come back to it. My mother and grandmother are quilters and the approach is similar. I do that square and then I do this other square.

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—Playwright Todd Kreidler

I'm always looking for projects to tell me how they should be written. So when I work on those squares and start to lay them out, they start to arrange themselves. At some point the relationship goes from assembly to response. There's a point in the process when I become audience to the work itself. I become responsive to the material, and that's when it gets exciting. I love when it's speaking back to me—I'm arguing with it, I'm fighting for it—and it begins to tell me what it wants to do.

At the end of the day I still love this profession. We are privileged. I can't think of a profession that brings so many different kinds of talents all to the same table, from your master electrician to the stage manager to a costume designer. Writer, director, actors – those are the people everyone thinks about, but you put all the sensibilities that go into ultimately realizing the physical production and it's stunning. You get to work with such a diverse group of people in a very intimate, concentrated way.

When I write for the theater I try to put my arms around all the people at the table. My job is to make material that is bigger than all of us. That's exciting. I don't know what artist with a capital 'A' means, but I know that we're all artists at the table, we're all craftspeople.

The phrase 'guess who's coming to dinner' has become part of the American vernacular. What does the saying mean to you?

It's exciting. There's a surprise coming. It'll either be an old friend or an acquaintance or someone exciting—but it'll be an interesting dinner. ■

This interview was conducted by Linda Lombardi for Arena Stage in 2013.

The Originalist comes to Court Theatre

This May, we present the Asolo Repertory Theatre/Pasadena Playhouse/Arena Stage production of *The Originalist* by John Strand, directed by Arena Stage Artistic Director **Molly Smith** and featuring **Edward Gero** as Justice Antonin Scalia.

When *The Originalist* premiered at Arena Stage, Smith recognized that she was venturing into political territory familiar to audiences in Washington, D.C. The play imagines conversations between Justice Scalia and his liberal law clerk.

“The whole country is awake and politically active today in a way I haven’t experienced in my lifetime, making this the most exciting time to be producing plays,” she said. “This play is a boxing match. It does what any good play does: it humanizes the combatants.”

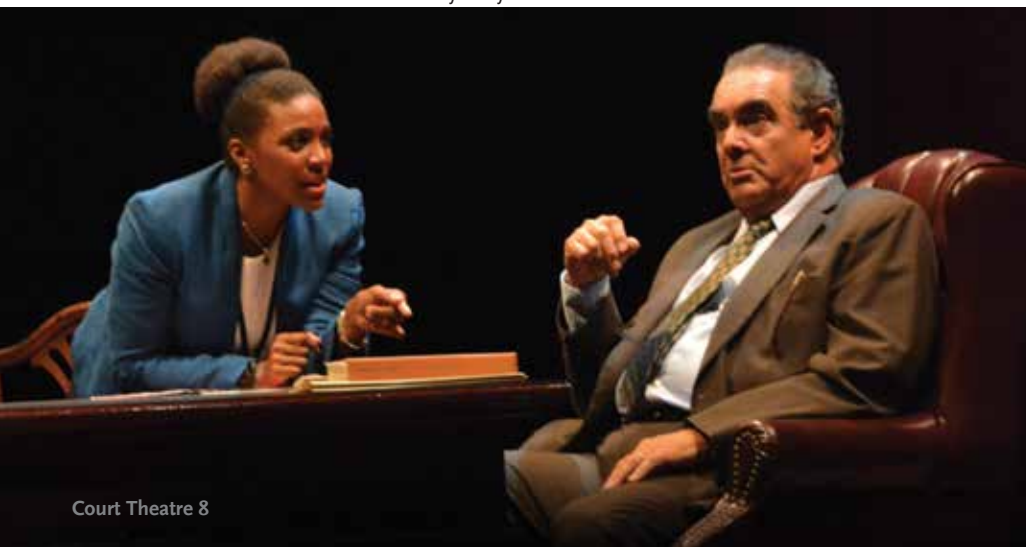
Featured in the lead is one of D.C.’s most prominent actors, Edward Gero, who shares a striking resemblance with the former Supreme Court Justice, and who built a personal relationship with Scalia before his death in 2016. Gero’s history with *Red* at the Goodman Theatre makes us pleased to reconnect him with this city.

Molly Smith’s production was a sensation in Washington, D.C., where it premiered and has been revived twice. Court will join a network of regional theatres moving this production across the nation.

“Justice Scalia had a complex and often contentious relationship with the University of Chicago Law School,” says Charles Newell, Court’s Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director. “We look forward to exploring intellectual challenges and finding opportunities for great discussion with amazing minds as we bring this play to the university community.”

The cast also includes **Jade Wheeler** (Cat) and **Brett Mack** (Brad). ■

Photo of Jade Wheeler and Edward Gero by Gary W. Sweetman.



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Cultural Memory

by Gabrielle Randle, *Production Dramaturg*

I invite you to conjure a memory. Try to think of a story you find yourself returning to often, something that has stuck with you. The sort of thing that comes up at dinner parties or family functions—a shared experience. Now think about how that memory makes you feel. Is it warming or chilling? Do you feel comforted by this memory, or is a story of foreboding? Is it a memory that serves as a cautionary fable, a mistake never to make again?

There is an unforgettable event, an exciting notion, or an intriguing memory behind most great stories—and of course, there is a tale behind this one as well. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* film director Stanley Kramer recalls a conversation with screenwriter William Rose in his biography, *Stanley Kramer: Filmmaker*: "... As we walked, he told me a story, mostly a comedy, about a white South African man, a liberal, whose daughter falls in love with a black guy. I said, 'Geez, we ought to set the story here, in this country, in this background ... I thought to myself, 'What a sorry sight to see a frontline liberal come face to face with all his principles right in his own house.'"

Kramer knew exactly who he wanted to play the role of this reticent patriarch. Spencer Tracy signed on, then Katharine Hepburn, and quickly thereafter Sidney Poitier. All three stars committed to the project before Rose had written any lines of text. What was it in this story that each actor saw, what strong memory did it evoke? *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* was an historic tale, even in its own time.

Kramer produced his first film in 1942, and William Rose adapted his first screenplay in 1948; their take on racial politics in 1967 was tinged with the nostalgia of a bygone era (perhaps most effectively illustrated in the groundbreaking political and cinematic influence of the other members of the Best Picture class of 1968: *In the Heat of the Night*, *The Graduate*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, and *Doctor Doolittle*). This nostalgia is marked most clearly in the lack of intersectional foresight (or the success of a particular liberal hegemonic ideology) of the tale. Though Dr. Prentice is embraced as a part of



"The adaptation for the stage departs from the film in a few distinct ways, but the fact remains that this play is a story oft repeated. A story that has crossed a continent, a memory that made its way into the hearts of a generation..." –Gabrielle Randle

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Kirkland & Ellis is proud to sponsor

Court Theatre's Production of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*

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the family at the end of the film, the image of the black maid, Tillie, still standing on the margin, is the haunting final figure.

When playwright Todd Kreidler and stage director Kenny Leon took up the task of adapting *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* about a decade ago, they too had a sense that this was a story worth retelling. The adaptation for the stage departs from the film in a few distinct ways, but the fact remains that this play is a story oft repeated. A story that has crossed a continent, a memory that made its way into the hearts of a generation: the image of a Black man on a patio looking out over San Francisco Bay. But what of all of those other images that filled screens in 1967? Images of cities burning, of war, of LSD, of a summer of love played alongside the story of Dr. John Prentice and Joanna Drayton. Those stories have their place in our memory, but they are not the story we revisit today. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* is in that world, but not of it.

Return to your personal memory. Let it sit with you as you take in this production. Imagine *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* as its own type of cultural memory. What makes some images, experiences, or narratives worth returning to? What about the actual event gets smoothed over and rubbed out over time? I invite you into this examination of memory, and how that memory makes meaning. I invite you to ask the question alongside us: why is this the memory we return to? ■



For more dramaturgical content, visit www.CourtTheatre.org/blog.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL FILM SERIES

Get Out

Friday, March 30

Sunday, April 1

Doc Films, Ida Noyes Hall
\$5 Tickets available at the door
half an hour prior to screening.
Visit docfilms.uchicago.edu for
screening times.

Written and directed by Jordan
Peele, this 2017 thriller tells the
story of a black man who notices
unusual behavior at the family
home of his white girlfriend.

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

Saturday, April 7, 3:00PM
Logan Center for the Arts
2nd floor screening room
Attendance is complimentary.
RSVP at www.CourtTheatre.org

The original 1967 film directed by
Stanley Kramer, starring Sidney
Poitier, Spencer Tracy, and
Katharine Hepburn.

Loving

Saturday, April 7, 7:30PM
Logan Center for the Arts
2nd floor screening room
Attendance is complimentary.
RSVP at www.CourtTheatre.org

This 2016 tells the story of
Richard and Mildred Loving,
plaintiffs in the 1967 U.S.
Supreme Court decision *Loving
v. Virginia* who fought for the
state of Virginia to recognize their
interracial marriage.

Nicholas Rudall Endowed Fund

The Nicholas Rudall Endowed Fund was established to honor the contributions of Court Theatre's Founding Artistic Director, Nicholas Rudall. As a professor, actor, director, translator, and leader, Nick was the catalyst for the creation of Court Theatre at the University of Chicago. Today, Court is a major force in Chicago's theatre scene and a leader in presenting adaptations of classic works for contemporary audiences.

The Nicholas Rudall Endowed Fund supports the production of classical theatre at Court Theatre and ensures that Nick's legacy will continue as a permanent part of the Court's future. Thanks to these generous individuals, the Nicholas Rudall Endowed Fund has been created at Court Theatre.

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To make a gift to the Nicholas Rudall Endowed Fund, please contact Lauren Sheely, Development Assistant, at (773) 834-3563 or lsheely@uchicago.edu.

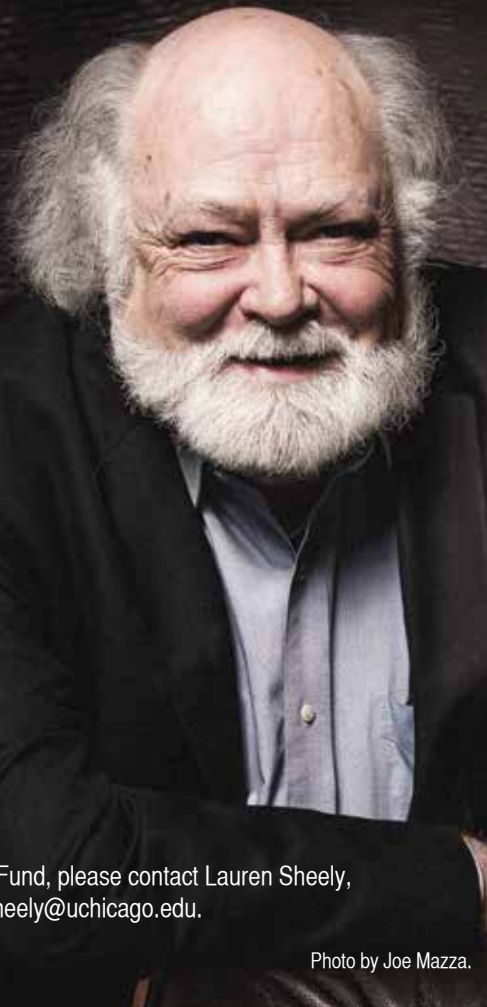


Photo by Joe Mazza.

PROFILES

KONA N. BURKS (*U/S Matilda Binks/Mary Prentice*) is excited to work at Court again. Chicago credits: *Harvey* (Court); *The Snowy Day* (Emerald City Theatre); *The Grapes of Wrath* (The Gift Theatre); *Domesticated*, *How Long Will I Cry* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Heaven, How I Got Here* (Provision Theatre); *People* (Redtwist Theatre); *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning* (Prologue Theatre at Steppenwolf's Garage Rep); *Small* (Open Door Repertory); *Intimate Apparel*, *Crumbs From The Table of Joy* (Illinois Theatre Center); *Levi James*, *The Trip*, and *A Fool Such As I* (ETA). Kona is a member of SAG-AFTRA. She attended The School at Steppenwolf, earned a B.A. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and earned an M.A. from the University of Illinois at Chicago.



SYDNEY CHARLES (*Matilda "Tillie" Binks*) is thrilled to be making her Court Theatre debut with this production. Selected theatre credits: *Lottery Day* (Goodman Theatre); *The Fly Honey Show*, *Spamilton* (Royal George Theatre); *Minnie* (Definition Theatre Company); *The Wiz* (Kokandy Productions); Zora in the world premiere of *Prowess* (Jackalope Theatre); and *Dessa*

Rose (Bailiwick Chicago). Sydney can soon be seen in episodes of *The Haven* web series and *Shameless*. She is an artistic associate with Firebrand Theater, the newly-formed feminist musical theater company. Sydney thanks God for every opportunity she is given and her circle for supporting her every step of the way. Represented by Stewart Talent.



MARY BETH FISHER (*Christina Drayton*) has appeared at Court Theatre in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *Angels in America*, *Three Tall Women*, *The Year of Magical Thinking* (Jeff Award), *The Wild Duck*, *What the Butler Saw*, *Arcadia*, *Travesties*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Her most recent Chicago credits include *Blind Date*, *Vanya & Sonia &*

Masha & Spike, *The Little Foxes*, and *Luna Gale* (Goodman Theatre); *Domesticated* (Jeff Award) and *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Steppenwolf Theatre); and *Roz and Ray* (Victory Gardens Theatre). TV/Film: *Sense8*, *Chicago Justice*, *Chicago Fire*, *Without a Trace*, *Numb3rs*, *Prison Break*, *NYPD Blue*, *Profiler*, and *Dragonfly*.



BRYCE GANGEL (*Joanna Drayton*) makes her Court Theatre debut. Recent Chicago credits: *1980 (Or Why I'm Voting for John Anderson)* (Jackalope Theatre); *Dry Land* (Rivendell Theatre, Jeff Award Nomination: Best Actress); *Posh* (Steep Theatre); *Between You, Me & the Lampshade* (Teatro Vista); *All American* (Redtwist Theatre); *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*

(Filament Theatre); and work with Remy Bumppo, The Gift Theatre, and Victory Gardens. Film/TV credits: *Chicago Fire*, *Crisis*, *The Exorcist*, *Embeds*, and *Princess Cyd* directed by Stephen Cone. Bryce is a graduate of Loyola University and the School at Steppenwolf, and is represented by Paonessa Talent.

DAVID GOODLOE (*U/S Dr. John Prentice*) is a Chicago native who has been acting professionally since 2006. At the University of Chicago, he reignited his love of performing. Theater credits include *Skin for Skin* (The Agency Collective Theater);

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DIRECTED BY **HALLIE GORDON**

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PICTURED: JULIAN PARKER, KATIA CARTER, DEANNA MYERS AND ERIK HELLMAN. PHOTO BY JOE MAZZA-BRAVE LUX.

PROFILES

For My Brothers Whenever I May Find Them (Step Up Productions); *An Improv Play* (InFusion Theatre); *A Fool Such As I* (eta Creative Arts); *The Last Saint on Sugar Hill* (MPAACT Theatre); and *Between Legs & Open Ears* (Black Ensemble Theater). TV/film credits include *Chicago P.D.*, *D.I.N.K.'s*, *Thanks Mom*, *Perceptions* and *Morning After*.

DARREN M. JONES (U/S John Prentice Sr.) has been acting for 26 years. Recent stage credits: *The Heavens Are Hung in Black* (Shattered Globe Theatre); *Megastasis* (Eclipse Theatre Company); *Never the Milk & Honey* (MPAACT); *Rutherford's Travels* (Pegasus Theatre Company); *What I Learned in Paris* (Congo Square Theatre); *Repairing a Nation*, *If Scrooge Was a Brother* (eta); *Katrina: Mother-In-Law of the All!* (Interrobang Theatre Company); *Fabulation: or The Re-Education of Undine* (Pulse Theatre Company); *The Alton School Cases of 1867* (DePaul Theater School); *The Whaleship Essex* and *Mill Fire* (Shattered Globe Theatre). Film/TV: *Chiraq*, *Hood*, *No Chaser*, *Road To Freedom*, *Chicago P.D.*, and *Chicago Fire*. Darren is an Artistic Associate at Shattered Globe Theatre Company and is represented by Lily's Talent Agency.



TIM HOPPER (Matt Drayton) is making his Court Theatre debut. He is an ensemble member at Steppenwolf, where he last appeared in *Linda Vista*. He also performed the title role in *Uncle Vanya* at Goodman Theatre. Television credits include *Empire*, *The Exorcist*, *Chicago Fire*, *The Americans*, and others. Films include *The Pages*, *Consumed*, *School of Rock*, and *To*

Die For, among others.

TIM KIDWELL (U/S Matt Drayton/Monsignor Ryan) is a recent arrival to the Chicago theatre community, appearing last fall in *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (City Lit Theater) and understudying for *The Rembrandt* (Steppenwolf Theatre). Tim hails from St. Louis where his credits include *The Merchant of Venice* (New Jewish Theatre); *Restoration*, *The Tempest* (St. Louis Shakespeare); and *The Madwoman of Chailot* (Stray Dog Theatre). A singer/songwriter, Tim's award-winning song "The Long Goodbye Waltz" was featured last fall in *Breathe With Me* (Erasing the Distance/Filament Theatre). He is represented by Gray Talent Group.

ERIKA NAPOLETANO (U/S Christina Drayton/Hilary St. George) is a Chicago-based artist who is honored to work with Court. A graduate of The ACADEMY at Black Box Acting, she holds a B.A. in Theatre from the University of Houston and is represented by Shirley Hamilton, Inc. Recent Chicago credits: *Welcome to Jesus* (U/S, American Theatre Company); *Bobbie Clearly* (Steep Theatre); *Chimerica* (U/S, TimeLine); *Fulfillment* (American Theatre Company); and *Washer/Dryer* (Rasaka Theatre Company). Mad love to Philip for relentlessly supporting her pursuit of art in all its forms.



MICHAEL AARON POGUE (Dr. John Prentice) is delighted to work again with Court, where he has appeared in *Electra*, *Agamemnon*, *Tartuffe*, *The Misanthrope*, *Angels in America*, and *Spunk*. Other credits: *Dutchman* (American Blues); *Carter's Way*, *Venus* (Steppenwolf); *Becky Shaw*,

PROFILES

Stick Fly (Windy City Playhouse); *Night and Day* (Remy Bumppo); *Romeo and Juliet* (Teatro Vista); *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Hamlet* (Oak Park Festival). TV credits: *Chicago Fire* and *Crisis*.



RACHEL SLEDD (*Hilary St. George*) is thrilled to be back at Court after understudying Veeta in *Harvey* last season. Recent Chicago credits: *The Rose Tattoo* (Shattered Globe Theatre), *Jerusalem*, and *The Jacksonian* (Profiles Theatre). Off-Broadway and Regional credits: Manhattan Theatre Club, Mint Theater Company, Berkshire Theatre Festival,

Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Delaware Theatre Company, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and StageWest. Recent TV/film credits: *Chicago Med*, *Chicago P.D.*, and *Bride of Frankie*, for which she won Best Actress at the Sydney Indie Film Festival. Rachel holds an M.F.A. from the University of Washington in Seattle. She is represented by Gray Talent Group.



DAN WALLER (*Monsignor Ryan*) last appeared at Court in *All My Sons* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Select Chicago credits: *East of Eden*, *The Night Alive*, *Three Sisters* (Steppenwolf); *The Little Foxes*, *Sweet Bird of Youth*, *The Good Negro*, *Ghostwritten*, *Talking Pictures* (Goodman Theatre); *The Weir*, *Lay Me Down Softly*, *The Seafarer*, *Mojo-*

Mickybo, *Our Father*, *A Whistle in the Dark*, *Journey's End* (Seanachai/Irish Theatre of Chicago); and *The Pitmen Painters* (TimeLine Theatre). Television credits: *Leverage*, *Science Story*, *The Beast*, *Chicago Code*, *Crisis*, *Chicago P.D.*, *Empire*, and *Shameless*. Film credits: *Barefoot to Jerusalem*, *Repetition*, *Of Boys and Men*, *Devil's Dominoes*, *Witless Protection*, *Transformers 3*, *At Any Price*, *Chasing Gold*, and *Canal Street*. He is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.

MEG WARNER (*U/S Joanna Drayton*) is so thankful for the opportunity to be working for the first time with Court Theatre. Chicago theatre credits: *Romeo and Juliet* (Teatro Vista); *Travesties* and *Northanger Abbey* (Remy Bumppo); *Strandline* (A Red Orchid); *Wrens* (Rivendell); *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Searching for Peabody's Tomb* (First Folio); and *Amadeus* (Oak Park Festival Theatre). TV credits: *Chicago P.D.* Meg is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.



JACQUELINE WILLIAMS (*Mary Prentice*) returns to Court where she's been seen in *Harvey*; *Man in the Ring*; *Gem of the Ocean*; *Fences*; *Caroline, or Change*; and *Electra*. Chicago credits: *Skeleton Crew*, *The Miser*, *Gees Bend* (Northlight); *The Christians*, *Airline Highway*, *Head of Passes*, *Hot L Baltimore*, *Brother Sister Plays* (Steppenwolf);

The House that Will Not Stand, *A Wonder in My Soul*, *Gospel of Lovingkindness* (Victory Gardens); *Pullman Porter Blues*, *stop.reset*, *Camino Real*, Trinity River Plays, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *The Story*, *Amen Corner* (Goodman). She is a multi-award winner and has worked and toured regionally. Broadway: *Young Man from Atlanta*. Off-Broadway: *From the Mississippi Delta*, *Talented Tenth*, *Mill Fire*.



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DEXTER ZOLLICOFFER (*John Prentice Sr.*) appeared at Court Theatre in *Electra*, *Water by the Spoonful*, and *The Mystery Cycle: Creation and Passion*. Selective local theatre credits: *Charm* at Northlight Theatre (Jeff Award, Actor in a Principle Role; Jeff nomination, Ensemble); *The Little Foxes*, *The Odyssey*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Goodman); *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Lesson Before Dying* (Steppenwolf); *The Overwhelming* (Next Theatre); *Relatively Close*, *Knock Me a Kiss*, and *The Sutherland* (Victory Gardens). TV credits: *Chicago Med*, *Chicago Fire* and *DETROIT 187*. He is also an administrator at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

TODD KREIDLER (*Playwright*) served as dramaturg for August Wilson's *Radio Golf* and *Gem of the Ocean* in early productions regionally and on Broadway. He wrote the Broadway musical *Holler If Ya Hear Me*, an original story featuring the lyrics of Tupac Shakur, and is writing a musical with Nikki Sixx, based on Sixx's memoir and music, *The Heroin Diaries*. His stage adaptation of the film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* ran at Arena Stage in Washington, DC and premiered at True Colors Theatre Company in Atlanta. He originally directed August Wilson's *How I Learned What I Learned*, co-conceiving the piece with Mr. Wilson at Seattle Repertory Theatre in 2003. He co-founded the August Wilson Monologue Competition, a national program aimed at integrating August Wilson's work into high school curriculum.



MARTI LYONS (*Director*) most recently directed *The Wolves* (Studio Theater), *Native Gardens* (Victory Gardens), *Twelfth Night* (Montana Shakespeare), *The Mystery of Love and Sex* (Writers Theatre), *Short Shakes! Romeo and Juliet* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), *Wit* (Hypocrites), *Give It All Back* (Sideshow Theatre), and *The City of Conversation* (Northlight Theatre Company). She directed *Wondrous Strange* for the Humana Festival (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *Title and Deed* (Lookingglass Theatre), and she received the 2015 Maggio directing fellowship at The Goodman Theater. Other projects include *Bethany* and *Mine* (The Gift Theatre); *Hot Georgia Sunday* and *Seminar* (Haven Theatre); *Prowess* and *The Peacock* (Jackalope Theatre); *The Play About My Dad* (Raven Theatre); *Give it all Back* and *Maria/Stuart* (Sideshow Theatre). Marti will next direct *Botticelli in the Fire* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre). She is a proud member of SDC.



WARDELL JULIUS CLARK (*Associate Director*) hails from Fairfield, Alabama. Directing credits: *Insurrection: Holding History* (Stage Left Theatre); *Surely Goodness*, and *Mercy* (Redtwist Theatre). Assistant directing credits: *The Scottsboro Boys* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Satchmo at the Waldorf*, and *Gem of the Ocean* (Court Theatre). Select acting credits: *Silent*

PROFILES

Sky (First Folio Theatre); *Apartment 3A* (Windy City Playhouse); *Gem of the Ocean*, *Invisible Man* (Court Theatre); *A Raisin in the Sun* (TimeLine Theatre); *The Whipping Man* (Northlight Theatre); *We Are Proud To Present...*, *The Gospel According To James* (Victory Gardens Theatre); *The Beats* (16th Street Theater); and *Topdog/Underdog* (American Theater Company/Congo Square Theater). Regional credits: *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *The Learned Ladies* (Theater at Monmouth); *Cymbeline* (Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival). He received a B.F.A. in Acting from DePaul University.

SCOTT DAVIS (*Scenic Designer*) joins Court again following his work in *Electra*. Chicago credits: Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Steppenwolf, Paramount Theater, Victory Gardens, Drury Lane, Northlight Theatre, American Theater Company, Northwestern University, and more. Off-Broadway credits: *Ride the Cyclone* (MCC) and *Othello: The Remix* (Westside Theater). International credits: Shakespeare's Globe, Unicorn Theatre (London), The Market Theatre (South Africa), The Neuss (Germany), Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre (Poland), The Cultch (Vancouver), DUCTAC Theater (Dubai), Brice Mason Center (New Zealand), and The Edinburgh Festival (Scotland). Regional credits: Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Signature Theatre, Walnut Street Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, Rep Stage, and Dallas Theater Center. Davis serves as adjunct faculty at Columbia College. Visit www.scottadamdavis.com.




The Promontory offers a complimentary wine pairing with each entrée purchased by Court Theatre patrons with same day ticket stub.

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SAMANTHA JONES (*Costume Designer*) is excited to return Court following her work in *The Belle of Amherst*. 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.

LEE FISKNESS (*Lighting Designer*) is making his Court Theatre debut. Credits include: *Crucible*, *The Fundamentals* (Steppenwolf); *Joseph...*, *Chicago*, *Hazel*, *White Christmas*, *Billy Elliot*, *Camelot*, *Young Frankenstein* (Drury Lane); *Spring Awakening* (The Marriott Theatre); *Yellow Moon* (Writers Theatre); *A Wonder in my Soul*, *Sucker Punch*, *Gospel of Loving Kindness*, *L-Vis* (Victory Gardens); *In To America*, *Balm of Gilead*, *Burnt Part Boys* (Griffin Theatre); *Bootycandy*, *Explorer's Club* (Windy City Playhouse); *Souvenirs* (Northlight Theatre); *Peter Pan* (Lookingglass Theatre); *Ghost Of Versailles* (Manhattan School of Music); *Murder for Two*, *Forever Plaid*, *Ring of Fire*, *Song Man Dance Man*, *Liberace* (Milwaukee Rep); *Jacques Brel...* (Two River Theatre). Lee is the lighting director at The Santa Fe Opera. He received a M.F.A. from Northwestern University.



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ANDRE PLUESS (*Sound Designer*) previously worked at Court on *The Belle of Amherst*, *The Hard Problem*, *Electra*, *Man in the Ring*, *Satchmo at the Waldorf*, *Agamemnon*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *An Iliad*, and more. Broadway: *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 Theatre); *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 Theatre 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.

GABRIELLE RANDLE (*Production Dramaturg*) is a performance scholar, director, and dramaturg currently based in Chicago. She has a B.A. in Drama from Stanford University and an M.A. in Performance as Public Practice from The University of Texas at Austin. She has worked as a dramaturg, producer, and director across the United States, including Off-Broadway and internationally on three continents. In Chicago, she has worked with Sideshow Theatre Company, Chicago Dramatists, Victory Gardens Theater, and Oracle Theatre. She is a second year PhD student at Northwestern University in The Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama.

AMANDA WEENER-FREDERICK (*Production Stage Manager*) is thrilled to be spending her fifth season with Court Theatre, where she has stage managed 20 productions. Favorite productions include *Native Son*; *Gem of the Ocean*; *Long Day's Journey Into Night*; *One Man, Two Guvnors*; *Man in the Ring*; *Blues for an Alabama Sky*; *The Hard Problem*; *Harvey*; and most recently, *All My Sons*. She was the stage manager for Court's production of *Iphigenia in Aulis* at the Getty Villa in California. In Chicago, Amanda has worked with Lookingglass Theatre and Chicago Shakespeare. Regionally, she spent eight seasons with Milwaukee Repertory, seven summers with Great River Shakespeare Festival, and two summers with Utah Shakespeare Festival. Amanda is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

CARA PARRISH (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is returning for her fifth show at Court. Chicago credits include *Five Guys Named Moe*, *The Hard Problem*, *Electra*, and *Gem of the Ocean* (Court Theatre); *Beauty's Daughter* (American Blues); *James and the Giant Peach* (Drury Lane); *Douglass* (American Vicarious); *Jabari Dreams of Freedom* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *Men of Soul*, *Sounds So Sweet*, *The Trial of Moses* ('Fleetwood' Walker, *At Last*, and *The Marvelous Marvelettes* (Black Ensemble Theater);

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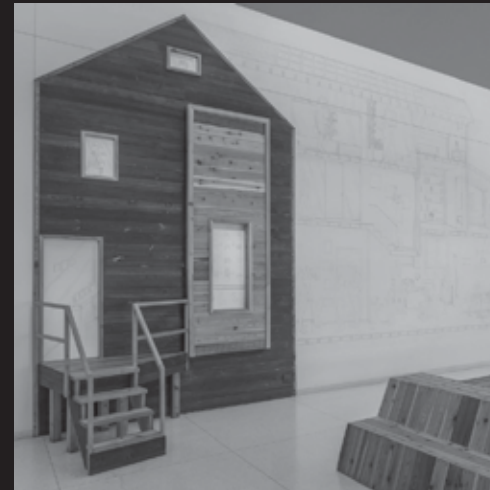
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The MLK Project, Port Authority, Yellow Moon, The Letters, The Blonde, the Brunette, and the Vengeful Redhead, and The Caretaker (Writers Theatre). Cara is an Artistic Affiliate with American Blues Theatre. She would like to thank her family and friends for all of their love and support.



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 *All My Sons*; *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.



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.



BECCA MCCRACKEN (*Casting Director*) is a Chicago theatre fanatic. Casting credits include American Blues, Asolo Rep, Florida Studio, Infusion, Indiana Festival, Indiana Rep, Lyric Opera, Madison Rep, Milwaukee Rep, New Theatre, Paramount, Provision, Silk Road Rising, Syracuse Stage, Writers, *Spamilton*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Old Jews Telling Jokes*, *Evil Dead: The Musical*, *Working*, *Dee Snyder's Rock & Roll Christmas*, and *Mozart the Rock Opera*. National Tours: *How To Train Your Dragon*, *Peter Pan*, and *Sister Act*. She is an Artios Award winner for her casting of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's *Carousel*. Her casting career also spans into television, film, and commercial. ■



Photo: Joe Mazza.

Exelon[®] South Side Youth Performance Fest

The Exelon South Side Youth Performance Fest, held annually at Court Theatre, marks the beginning of a rewarding partnership between Exelon and Court Theatre. Exelon,

the parent company of the Chicago-based firm ComEd, is committed to strong corporate citizenship, with a significant focus on enabling student access to the arts and cultural experiences.

“We believe the arts are integral to the health and vitality of the communities we serve, and it’s critical to support arts programming in our schools,” said Steve Solomon, Exelon’s Vice President of Corporate Relations and President of the Exelon Foundation. “As we see public and private funding in this area declining, we want to help provide continued access to and appreciation for the arts.”

This year, Exelon supported the intersection of arts and education in Chicago’s South Side through the Exelon South Side Youth Performance Fest. On January 23, 66 students presented scenic designs and performed monologues from work they developed during their Artists-in-the-Schools (AIS) Residencies. The Youth Performance Fest serves as a capstone for the Residencies, and often marks the first time that AIS students perform on a stage of any kind. This year, students were able to work with teaching artists across four different AIS Residencies: Devised Work, Scene Exploration, Scenic Design, and the August Wilson Monologue Competition. Solomon said, “For the students involved in arts education, they are exposed to an environment that inspires teamwork, compassion, empathy, and understanding.”

AIS provides quality exposure to the arts, and the Youth Performance Fest provides students an exciting end goal to motivate their efforts during the Residencies. Solomon elaborated, saying, “The Youth Performance Fest gave students at the participating high schools an outlet to express themselves authentically, and a mechanism for understanding the human experience in a multi-dimensional way.” Parents, peers, teaching artists, and community members were amazed by the hard work they saw on Court’s stage.

Court is grateful to the following AIS partner schools: John M. Harlan Community Academy High School, Kenwood Academy High School, Walter H. Dyett High School for the Arts, Wendell Phillips Academy High School, and William R. Harper High.

Thanks to Exelon for making this night possible! ■

To find out how you or your company can support arts education at Court, please contact Susan M. Zellner, Director of Development at (773) 834-3305 or szellner@uchicago.edu.

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Photo of Stephanie Andrea Barron and Sandra Marquez (Brosilow).

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