

Caryl Churchill's *Fen*
+ The Dramaturgical Process

THEATRE & THOUGHT



Read the play! Order books or scripts related to Court's digital programming—visit semcoop.com/court-theatre

We're so glad you're joining us for Court's Theatre & Thought series: **Caryl Churchill's *Fen* + The Dramaturgical Process**. Dramaturg and University of Chicago lecturer Derek Matson digs into the multitudinous themes and histories that make Churchill's play tick. Plus, director Vanessa Stalling (*Photograph 51*) directs a digital reading of the play.

On the date of each session, you will receive a digital access link via email with login instructions.

You will be able to access sessions 1, 2, and 4 following their release date for up to 60 days. Session 3 which includes a reading of the play will be available through December 17.

You will not need to download any special software in order to access digital content – only an internet-enabled device with a web browser.

QUESTIONS? Call our Box Office at (773) 753-4472.

MON
NOV 30
7PM

What is Dramaturgy and Where to Start with *Fen*?

Featuring Derek Matson and Siân Adiseshiah

Ever wonder what a dramaturg does? In this session, Derek explains the role of the dramaturg in the theatrical production process, and he launches his journey into the play world of *Fen* by speaking with Churchill scholar Siân Adiseshiah about what makes Caryl Churchill one of our greatest living playwrights.

WED
DEC 2
7PM

*Fen*women and Village Life in the Fens

Featuring Derek Matson and Mary Chamberlain

In this session, Derek talks with Professor Mary Chamberlain, author of *Fenwomen: A Portrait of Women in an English Village*, the pioneering work of women's oral history that served as an inspiration for Caryl Churchill's *Fen*.

MON
DEC 7
7PM

Digital Reading: Caryl Churchill's *Fen*

Directed by Vanessa Stalling

The online reading of *Fen* will be brought to life by Jeff Award-winning director Vanessa Stalling and actors Isa Arciniegas, Diana Coates, Elana Elyce, Emjoy Gavino, Cruz Gonzalez-Cadel, Aurora Real de Asua, and Eric Slater.

WED
DEC 9
7PM

The Director/Dramaturg Collaboration

Featuring Derek Matson and Vanessa Stalling

In this session, Derek and director Vanessa Stalling will sit down for a conversation to share what they learned from the play reading and from the other sessions in the series. They'll flag which aspects of the play might especially need the dramaturg's support, and they'll discuss the play's big ideas, just as they would do before heading into the rehearsal process.

PROFILES



DEREK MATSON is a dramaturg and translator of theatre and opera. His dramaturgy has included productions with Court Theatre (*Photograph 51*, *The Mousetrap*), Steppenwolf (*The Wheel*), The House Theatre of Chicago (*United Flight 232*, *The Hammer Trinity*), and American Theater Company (*Columbinus*), among many others. Derek studied acting at the Cours Florent in Paris. His translations of French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, German, and Catalan have been featured on ARTE in France and at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and Cornell University, where he earned his M.A. in Theatre and Performance Studies. Derek's a former recipient of a Fulbright Assistantship to France and a Rotary Cultural Ambassadorial Scholarship to Russia.



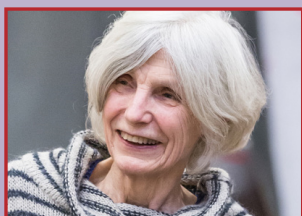
SIÂN ADISESHIAH joined Loughborough University as Senior Lecturer in English and Drama in June 2018 as part of its Excellence 100 campaign. Her research interests lie mostly in contemporary theatre and 21st-century literary studies, utopianism, class studies, feminist theatre, and age studies. Her PhD on the plays of contemporary playwright Caryl Churchill was funded by the United Kingdom's Arts and Humanities Research Council. She is author of *Utopian Drama: In Search of Genre* (Methuen Drama, 2023 forthcoming) and *Churchill's Socialism: Political Resistance in the Plays of Caryl Churchill* (CSP, 2009), as well as co-editor of *debbie tucker green: Critical Perspectives* (Palgrave, 2020), *Twenty-First Century Drama: What Happens Now* (Palgrave, 2016), and *Twenty-First Century Fiction: What Happens Now* (Palgrave, 2013).



MARY CHAMBERLAIN is a pioneer of oral history and life story methods, and has published widely on these, as well as on women's history and Caribbean history. She is also a novelist, and she uses creative writing as a way of exploring contemporary historical questions around the silences and untold stories of the Second World War and, in particular, women and memory. She is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and Emeritus Professor of Caribbean History at Oxford Brookes University, where she's also a Senior Research Fellow in Creative Writing. Visit www.marychamberlainbooks.com.



VANESSA STALLING is a director of theatre. Recent productions include *Roe* at Goodman Theatre, *Tiny Beautiful Things* at Victory Gardens, and *Photograph 51* at Court Theatre, for which she won a Jeff Award for Best Direction. Her adaptation and direction of *United Flight 232* from the book *Flight 232*, by Laurence Gonzales, won Jeff Awards for Best Production and Best Ensemble. Upcoming productions include *The Great Leap* at Asolo Rep. Vanessa was a primary artist at Redmoon Theater, where she served as a director, performer, and Associate Artistic Director. As an artist at Redmoon, she enjoyed directing several productions, including a remount of *The Cabinet*, which toured Brazil as part of the FILO Festival, *Last of My Species*, *Winter Pageant*, *Princess Club*, *Twilight Orchard*, and roaming performances for President Obama's Halloween celebrations at The White House. She has held teaching positions at Roosevelt University, Columbia College, University of Chicago, and is Area Head of directing at UC San Diego's Department of Theatre & Dance.



CARYL CHURCHILL was born on September 3, 1938, in London and grew up in the Lake District and in Montreal. She was educated at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Her plays include *Owners*, *Traps*, *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, *Cloud 9*, *Top Girls*, *Fen*, *Serious Money*, *Ice Cream*, *Mad Forest*, *The Skriker*, *Blue Heart*, *This is a Chair*, *Far Away*, *A Number*, *Drunk Enough To Say I Love You?*, *Seven Jewish Children*, *Love & Information*, *Here We Go*, and *Escaped Alone*. Dance and music pieces include *Lives of the Great Poisoners* and *Hotel*, both with Orlando Gough. She has also written for radio and television.

READING ENSEMBLE PROFILES



ISA ARCINIEGAS: Chicago: *How to Defend Yourself* (Victory Gardens Theater); *Wolf Play* (The Gift Theatre); *First Love Is the Revolution* (Steep Theatre); *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Emerald City Theatre); *The Wolves* (Goodman Theatre, Jeff Award—Best Ensemble), *Fun Home* (Victory Gardens Theater); *Buried Child* (Writers Theatre); *We're Gonna Die* (Haven Theatre Company, ALTA Award—Outstanding Actor in a Principal Role in a Musical); *good friday* (Oracle Productions); *You on the Moors Now* and *American Idiot* (The Hypocrites); *Romeo and Juliet* (Teatro Vista); and *Adventures with Aladdin* (Lookingglass Theatre Company with Chicago Symphony Orchestra). Regional: *Such Things as Vampires* (People's Light Theatre); *Stinky Cheese Man* and *Letters Home* (Griffin Theatre National Tour). Isa is an ensemble member with Griffin Theatre Company and is represented by Gray Talent.



DIANA COATES is so grateful to be working with Court Theatre. She was most recently seen in Asolo Repertory Theatre's *Murder on the Orient Express* and *Into the Breeches*; the Midwest premiere of Rachel Bond's *Sundown Yellow Moon*; the title character in First Folio's *Henry V. The House That Will Not Stand* with Victory Gardens; *Natural Affection* with Eclipse Theatre; and playing Isabella in Michigan Shakespeare Festival's *Measure for Measure* are among her favorite projects. Extremely proud to be a part of this community of resilient artists.

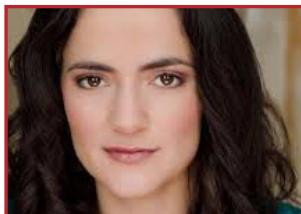


ELANA ELYCE acts, directs, writes, coaches, and produces. She has been seen in several productions with Interrobang Theatre Project, where she is Artistic Producer and ensemble member; The House Theatre of Chicago, most notably, three separate runs of *United Flight 232*; six productions with Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre, her favorite being *Lady in Red* in *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf*. She has had the great pleasure of portraying Chicago activist Tonika Lewis Johnson in the acclaimed *Folded Map*. Additionally, Elana serves as the Business Manager of The Chicago Inclusion Project. Visit www.elanaelyce.net.



EMJOY GAVINO's Chicago acting credits include A Red Orchid Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Court Theatre, About Face Theatre, The Hypocrites, The Second City, The House Theatre, Northlight, Remy Bumpo, Victory Gardens Theater, Paramount, Broadway Playhouse, Lookingglass, The Neo-Futurists, Goodman Theatre, and The Gift Theatre, where she is

the casting director and an associate artistic director. Enjoy is a 2017 3Arts Make a Wave grantee, a 2020 3Arts Award Recipient, and the founder and producer of The Chicago Inclusion Project, through which she has cast for American Theater Company, The Hypocrites, Circle Up, and In the Works. She is represented by Stewart Talent.



CRUZ GONZALEZ-CADEL is an award-winning actor based in Chicago. Born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Cruz received her degree in acting from the Universidad del Salvador. She is an

ensemble member at Teatro Vista, where she was seen in *Hope: Part II of A Mexican Trilogy*, *The Abuelas*, *La Havana Madrid* and *i put the fear of mexico in 'em*. Selected Chicago credits include Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (Lookingglass Theatre); the critically acclaimed *Lela & Co.* (Steep Theatre), which earned her a Jeff Award for Performance in a Principal Role–Play; *Electra* (Court Theatre); *You on the Moors Now* (The Hypocrites); and *The Compass* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). TV/Film credits include *Fargo* (FX), *Chicago Med* (NBC), *The Chi* (Showtime), *Empire* (Fox), and *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*. She is represented by Stewart Talent.



AURORA REAL DE ASUA is an actor and playwright based in Chicago. She was last seen at Court in *The Adventures of Augie March*. Other credits include *The Wolves* (Goodman); *Top Girls* (Remy Bumpgo); *The Wickhams* (Northlight); *Pipeline* (Victory Gardens); *You on the Moors Now* and *Dracula* (The Hypocrites); and *Firebirds Take the Field* (Rivendell), among others. You can hear her this December in the Goodman's upcoming audio play *A Christmas Carol*. She is also an

ensemble member at Remy Bumpgo and a graduate of Northwestern University. She is proudly represented by Gray Talent.



ERIC SLATER's credits at Court include *What the Butler Saw*. Chicago: *Hand to God*, *Tiny Beautiful Things* (Victory Gardens); *Small Jokes About Monsters* (16th Street Theater); *Support Group for*

Men, Feathers and Teeth, *Smokefall* (Goodman Theatre); *The Tasters*, *Cal in Camo* (Rivendell Theatre Ensemble); *The Doppelgänger (an international farce)* (Steppenwolf Theatre). Off-Broadway: *Juvenal Players* (The Kitchen); *The Dudleys! A Family Game* (Theater for the New City); *Our Greatest Year* (Kraime); original cast of *Gloryana* (Workshop Production, The Public Theater); *Cyanocitta* (The Beckett / Theatre Row). Film: *Widows*, *Coming To You*. TV: *Fargo*, *Chicago Fire*. Member of Rivendell Theatre Ensemble.





Deepen Your Experience

Want to deepen your relationship with the material in **Caryl Churchill's *Fen* + The Dramaturgical Process**? Explore the following options for increasing your understanding and appreciation of the artists and academics bringing this Theatre & Thought series to life.

READ:

Historical Background on Caryl Churchill's *Fen*

<https://www.courttheatre.org/about/blog/historical-background-on-caryl-churchills-fen/>

Caryl Churchill at 80: theatre's great disruptor

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/sep/02/caryl-churchill-at-80-theatre-great-disruptor>

LISTEN:

**Public Square, a podcast of The Public Theatre:
What Keeps You Up at Night**

In this podcast, Public Theater Company Dramaturg Jesse Cameron Alick and Director of New Artists Jack Phillips Moore talk about what it means to develop new work for the theatre, their advice for aspiring artists, and why dramaturgy, like love, is an action.

https://publictheater.org/news-items/buckets/conversations/podcast/podcast_ep9/

WATCH:

American Theatre Wing – In the Wings: Anne Cattaneo

Dramaturg Anne Cattaneo explains her primary responsibilities, and likens her job to an acquisitions editor in a publishing house. Cattaneo has developed an extensive knowledge of languages, culture, and theatre history. In-depth research is often required for productions with complex timelines such as "The Coast of Utopia" trilogy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTjvFp9loMQ>

What the Theory: An Introduction to Dramaturgy and the Theatre Dramaturg

Tom Nicholas takes a look at the meaning and definition of dramaturgy. Developed by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Bertolt Brecht, the role of the dramaturg in theatre originated in Germany, but has come to be used in American theatre and British theatre, too, as well as elsewhere around the world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4MRV1THT9Q>

KING HEDLEY II HONORED AT THIS YEAR'S JEFF AWARDS

Court Theatre is thrilled to share that we received 3 Jeff Awards for our production of August Wilson's *King Hedley II*, directed by Resident Artist Ron OJ Parson, including Best Production, Best Performer in a Principal Role, and Best Performer in a Supporting Role. During such a difficult time for performing arts organizations, this year's online Jeff Awards ceremony served as a rousing reminder of the powerful role Chicago's artists and cultural institutions play in our city.

Each year, the Joseph Jefferson Awards committee honors outstanding Chicago-area theatres and artists. This achievement continues to reinforce the consistent quality of Court's artistic contributions to Chicago's theatre scene.

2020 Court Theatre Jeff Award Recipients

Production – Play (Large)

King Hedley II – Court Theatre

Performer in a Principal Role – Play

Kelvin Roston, Jr. (Hedley) – *King Hedley II*

Performer in a Supporting Role – Play

A.C. Smith (Elmore) – *King Hedley II*

We are privileged to be part of the incredible theatre community in Chicago, and look forward to being able to attend and celebrate live performance again. Congratulations to all of the award recipients!



Kelvin Roston, Jr. (*Brosilow*)

SAVE THE DATE! ARTISTS & ELDERS: A BRIDGE, A GIFT

Online Symposium December 10 at 7pm

Court and the **Experimental Performance Initiative** at the University of Chicago are celebrating For You's "Artists & Elders: A Bridge, A Gift" project with an online event on December 10. After Court Theatre's production of *The Lady from the Sea* closed due to COVID-19, Court teamed up with the Experimental Performance Initiative and *Lady from the Sea* choreographer Erika Chong Shuch and her colleagues from For You to connect ten artists with ten elders in Chicago. Drawing on dramaturgy from director Shana Cooper's vision for the play, these artists looked for beacons of hope in their connections with strangers. As a form of creative mutual aid, this project offered artists and elders the chance to connect while sheltering

in place, create an artistic exchange in the spirit of gift-giving, and inspire new forms of distant socializing.

Speakers at the online event will offer insight and stories from their time collaborating on Artists & Elders. Featured speakers and topics include Resident Artist Ron OJ Parson discussing his work expanding community engagement at Court; Sarah Curran on the Experimental Performance Initiative at University of Chicago; Ryan Tacata and Rowena Richie from For You; Shana Cooper on how artists are shifting roles to meet the current moment; and several participants reflecting on their creative process.

Beginning in December, you can view the works created during Artists & Elders: A Bridge, A Gift in a digital gallery at www.CourtTheatre.org/ABridgeAGift. Look for an email soon detailing how to register for this free event.

Court's remote, digital experiences are produced in partnership with



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