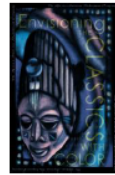


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AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
SHAKESPEARE COMPANY  
“Envisioning the Classics With Color”



## **San Francisco’s African-American Shakespeare Company Shakes Things Up With 2016/17 Season Announcement**

The company will leave the Buriel Clay Theater its long-time home of 20-plus years in order to implement a plan that will see it expand its audience as well as the scope of ambition for future productions; *Cinderella* at The Herbst for the holidays in December, August Wilson’s *Jitney* at the Marines Memorial in April, followed by the company’s first-ever mounting of *The Winter’s Tale* at the Taube Atrium in June 2017

Season opens on Saturday December 22, 2016 and runs through June 25, 2017; more information at [african-americanshakespeare.org](http://african-americanshakespeare.org)

**San Francisco CA, August 22 2016** – The African-American Shakespeare Company is pleased to announce that following one of the most successful seasons in its 22-year history, it has come to the decision to leave its longtime home at The Buriel Clay Theater in the African-American Art & Culture Complex

Originally the first production of the 2016/17 was to be the company’s first production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* since 1998. Executive Director Sherri Young and Artistic Director L. Peter Callender’s decision to place the play in Trinidad and Tobago during Carnival conjured up a partnering opportunity with an aerial dance company and a music group that was irresistible, but with the move out of the Buriel Clay happening at the same time, they and its board decided it would be better served as the anchor to the 2017/18 season.

“It’s always hard to leave your home,” says AASC Executive Director Sherri Young, “which is what The Buriel Clay has been to us all these years, but the time has come to do just that, and we’re very excited to begin the journey. I can’t wait to bring our actors, audiences, and upcoming season into these superb spaces.”

*Cinderella* will open the season at The Herbst, followed by August Wilson’s *Jitney*, which will be directed by artistic director L. Peter Callender—who also staged it to great acclaim in Florida last year—at the Marines Memorial. The company will finish up the season at the stunning Taube Atrium, with its first ever production of *The Winter’s Tale*.

### ***Cinderella***

December 22 – 24 at the Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness Avenue

- Thursday, December 22: Performance @ 8pm (Opening night!)
- Friday, December 23: Performance @ 3pm & 8pm
- Saturday, December 24: Performance @ 11am & 3pm maybe

***Jitney* by August Wilson**

April 1 – 16 at Marines Memorial Theater, 609 Sutter Street

- Saturday, April 1: Opening @ 8pm (Opening Night!)
- Sunday, April 2: Performance @ 3pm
- Friday, April 7: Performance @ 8pm
- Saturday, April 8: Performance @ 8pm
- Sunday, April 9: Performance @ 3pm
- Friday, April 14: Performance @ 8pm
- Saturday, April 15: Performance @ 8pm
- Sunday, April 16: Performance @ 3pm

**Note:** this is first time the company has produced the August Wilson classic *Jitney*; it follows in the footsteps of its hugely well-received staging of George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* during the 2015/16 season as a means of showcasing contemporary classics from the black theatrical canon

***The Winter's Tale* by William Shakespeare**

June 10 – 25 at the Taube Atrium @ 401 Van Ness Avenue

- Saturday, June 10: Performance at 3pm & 8pm (Opening Night)
- Sunday, June 11: Performance @ 3pm
- Saturday, June 17: Performance @ 3pm & 8pm
- Sunday, June 18: Performance @ 3pm
- Saturday, June 24: Performance @ 3pm & 8pm
- Sunday, June 25: Performance @ 3pm

**Note:** *The Winter's Tale* is one of the few Shakespeare plays the company has not until now been produced during its 22-year history

The African-American Shakespeare intends to continue its long-running and successful free student matinee events on Thursday mornings, and plans call for retaining at least some of these matinees at the Buriel Clay Theater (prior to the public openings of the plays at the new venues)

As a prelude to the 2016/17 Season, the African-American Shakespeare Company will host the Cultural Corridor Series of 8 outdoor performances alongside SF Jazz, SF Opera, SF Ballet and others starting on September 23 and running through October 22 at the following locations:

- **Fillmore Mini-Park** (between Golden Gate and Turk on Fillmore ): Friday September 23, September 30 and October 7 from 5pm to 6pm
- **Buchanan Street Mall** (between Golden Laguna and Webster on Fulton): Sunday, September 18, September 25 and October 2 from 1pm to 6pm
- **Proxy** (at Hayes and Octavia): Saturday October 22 from 11am to 2pm

### **About the African-American Shakespeare Company**

The award-winning African-American Shakespeare Company (AASC) was established in 1994 by professional theater artists from the American Conservatory Theatre as an alternative answer to the “Color Blind Casting” initiative that began in the early 90s. While this initiative temporarily changed the diversity on stage, African-American Shakespeare Company noticed color blind casting was ignoring these artists’ rich cultural heritage and not making the most of their dynamic, cultural vibrancy that actors of color could bring to classical works. Moreover, “mainstream” classical theaters seem to lack the ability to truly attract diverse audiences. African-American Shakespeare Company inspired to highlight artist of color’s dynamic cultural vibrancy within classical productions.

African-American Shakespeare Company's work has received honorary acknowledgement from San Francisco's City and County's former Mayor Gavin Newsome (now serving as Lieutenant Governor); recently awarded The Paine Knickerbocker Award in 2014 for Outstanding Achievement for a Theater Company by the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle; and a Community Partner Award from University of San Francisco's Leo T. McCarthy Center for outstanding collaboration in providing quality Service-Learning program.

The African-American Shakespeare Company is funded in part by Shakespeare for a New Generation, a national program of the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with Arts Midwest; San Francisco Arts Commission, Grants for the Arts, California Arts Council, The San Francisco Foundation, Columbia Foundation, Fleishhacker Foundation, Zellerbach Family Foundation, Macy’s, The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, The Hewlett Foundation, University of San Francisco Engage Program, and Silicon Valley Foundation.

### **About Sherri Young, Founder & Executive Director**

An M.F.A. graduate from the American Conservatory Theatre; and former Commissioner for the San Francisco Art Commission proudly serving for Mayor Gavin Newsom, Young founded The African-American Shakespeare in 1993 and has been its Executive Director since. She has directed sixteen productions, produced and executed four programs for the organization and speaks at various colleges, universities, and conferences across the nation. Young manages the approximately 60 company members and volunteers for the organization’s programs. Some career highlights includes the creation of the company’s signature holiday performance Cinderella, effectively building and stabilizing the organization over the past five years, increase audience attendance by 30%, and increase new funding support by foundations and individual donors within the past two years.

### **About L Peter Callender, Artistic Director**

L. Peter Callender is a native of Trinidad, West Indies, and has worked professionally as an actor for over thirty years, more recently as a director and writer. He received his formal training in the theater at the Juilliard School in New York City; Webber/Douglas Academy in London, England; Mask Technique with Julie Taymor, and The Suzuki Technique with The Tadashi Suzuki Company in Toga-mura Japan. He has appeared on Broadway, off-Broadway, in regional theaters across the US, and has performed internationally in Japan, England and France. His New York Credits include: Tom/Jamaican Waiter in *Prelude to a Kiss* (Circle Rep. and at the Helen Hayes Theater on Broadway directed by Norman Rene); Off-Broadway; Roscoe in *Black Eagles* (directed by Ricardo Kahn at Manhattan Theater Club), Casbeque in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (directed by George C. Wolfe at the Public Theater); Caliban in *The Tempest* (directed by Julie Taymor at Classic Stage Company); Curio/Ensemble in *Twelfth Night* at the Delacorte Theater directed by Harold Guskin).

Currently, Mr. Callender is an associate artist at the California Shakespeare Theater— now in his 21st season. Some roles at CalShakes include: The title roles in *Julius Caesar* and *Cymbeline*, Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Orsino in *Twelfth Night*, Leonato in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Polixenes in *A Winter's Tale*, Navarre in *Love's Labor's Lost*, Bolingbroke in *Richard II*, Duke Solinus in *Comedy of Errors*, Laertes in *Hamlet*, Dukes Frederick and Senior in *As You Like It*, Lafew in *All's Well That Ends Well*, Dr. Chasuable in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Vincent Crummels in *Nicholas Nickleby*, and Roebuck Ramsden in *Man and Superman*. He is also a Visiting Professor at Stanford University teaching Acting Shakespeare and Fundamentals of directing.

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