

AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
SHAKESPEARE COMPANY  
*"Envisioning the Classics With Color"*



*For Immediate Release*

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## **African-American Shakespeare Company Wins Paine Knickerbocker Award from Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle**

**SFBATCC Honors San Francisco's African-American Shakespeare Company for continuing contribution to Bay Area theatre**

**San Francisco, March 25, 2014.** The **African-American Shakespeare Company** will be honored with **The Paine Knickerbocker Award**, named for the former theatre critic of *The San Francisco Chronicle* and presented to an organization that has made a continuing contribution to Bay Area theatre. The award will be presented to AASC at the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual BATCC Awards Gala on May 5 at the California Ballroom, 1736 Franklin Street in uptown Oakland. The Gala Event begins at 5:45 p.m.

**African-American Shakespeare Company** was introduced in 1994 to open the realm of classic theater to a diverse audience, and provide an opportunity and place for actors of color to hone their skills and talent in mastering some of the world's greatest classical roles. The company produces plays from the classical theater canon, including the works of William Shakespeare, as well as classic and contemporary works from American and international playwrights, that are lively, entertaining, and relevant.

The company was founded by **Sherri Young**, who has directed 17 previous AASC productions. Ms. Young is currently the group's Executive Director. The company's Artistic Director is noted actor and director **L. Peter Callender**. Callender himself has been nominated by BATCC for best Principal Male-Drama in Marin Theatre Company's production of *The Whipping Man*.

The African-American Shakespeare Company also strives to uplift its community offstage. Its Shake-It-Up program teaches literacy skills to students using theater games and drama techniques. The program addresses the educational needs of students in fun and creative ways, helping students develop a positive relationship with complex reading materials. The company has produced over 30 productions, toured to over 97 schools, and reached over 100,000 patrons through its main stage productions and arts education program.



Executive Director Sherri Young and Artistic Director L. Peter Callender

AASC has just closed its successful run of Euripides' *Medea*, which garnered critical acclaim.

Coming up in May, the company leaps joyfully into one of Shakespeare's most delightful comedies, ***Much Ado About Nothing***. L. Peter Callender directs a modern take on this Bard classic, which includes a tribute to the music of Ella Fitzgerald.

### About the Critics Circle

The San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and acknowledging achievement in theatres of all types and sizes in the Bay Area by recognizing excellence and outstanding achievement in the various fields of theatre artistry.

Active since 1976, the Circle consists of reviewers in all nine Bay Area counties, across various media, who are voted into membership by existing members based on the quality and consistency of their reviews. The Circle hosts an annual awards ceremony each spring to celebrate superior work in the previous year.

### For Calendar Editors

**Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards Gala.** 38<sup>th</sup> Annual gala to honor Bay Area theatre artists. 60+ awards presented in a host of categories. Food, entertainment, open bar, and dancing. 5:45 pm-10:30 pm, Monday, May 5, California Ballroom, 1736 Franklin Street in uptown Oakland on May 5, 2014. Tickets \$19-35 at [www.sfbatcc.org](http://www.sfbatcc.org).

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