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**AFRICAN-AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE COMPANY OPENS 18TH SEASON
WITH AN ENCHANTING HOLIDAY PRODUCTION OF
"CINDERELLA"
December 8-23, 2012
8 performances only!**

SAN FRANCISCO (November 13, 2012) – San Francisco's **African-American Shakespeare Company** opens its 2012-13 season with an enchanting production of **CINDERELLA**. Back by popular demand, this timeless tale, brought to whimsical, magical life just in time for the holiday season, is an uplifting re-telling of the classic fairytale, featuring all of the pageantry, hilarity, and charm of the original, but with a soulful twist. African-American Shakespeare Company Executive Director **Sherri Young** helms this new edition of **CINDERELLA**, the company's 12th annual holiday production, featuring a dazzling masquerade ball choreographed by **Alise Halbert**. **CINDERELLA** plays **December 8 through 23** (*press opening: December 8 at 3pm*) at the Buriel Clay Theater at the African American Art & Culture Complex in San Francisco. For tickets (\$10-\$35) and more information, the public may call **1-800-838-3006** or visit **African-AmericanShakes.org**.

This heartwarming story finds Cinderella, a young, beautiful dreamer, toiling away as a lowly scullery maid for her evil stepmother and (oddly masculine) stepsisters. With a little bit of magic, Cinderella finds her Prince Charming and learns that anything is possible, even miracles. Featuring music, songs, and dancing, this new edition of **CINDERELLA** is the perfect holiday treat for the entire family.

Additionally, African-American Shakespeare Company is proud to announce complimentary student matinee performances of **CINDERELLA**. African-American Shakespeare Company extends the opportunity to attend their annual holiday production to a total of 600 students each year free of charge as part of the organization's dedication to providing cultural enrichment activities to public schools located in low-income neighborhoods. All school matinee students will not only see a performance of **CINDERELLA** free of charge, but they will also have an opportunity to have a holiday photo taken with Cinderella and Prince Charming.

The rags-to-riches story we know today as "Cinderella" can be traced to many stories and legends dating back to ancient China; today, some 1,500 variations of the story exist. The themes from the story appear

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in the folklore of many cultures, but the tale always centers around a kind but persecuted heroine who suffers at the hands of her stepfamily. In the 9th-century folk story *Yeh-Shen*, a stepmother and two stepsisters humiliate a hard-working girl, but when a 10-foot fish gives her food, a beautiful dress and tiny slippers, she gains confidence. Charles Perrault’s French version of the tale, which was written to entertain the 17th-century court of Louis XIV, is the basis for the Western versions of the *Cinderella* tale, and is the most popular version of the story. Germany’s Brothers Grimm published their version, *Aschenputtel*, in 1812, but took a decidedly more gruesome take on the tale. Disney’s 1950 classic animated film gave Perrault’s tale new life, adding a supporting cast of animals and a score of catchy songs.

Featuring a cast of 23, **African-American Shakespeare Company** has assembled a gifted ensemble for **CINDERELLA**, including: **Lexi Hart** (Cinderella); **Brandon Hughes** (Prince Charming); **Monica Cappuccini** (Evil Stepmother); **Chico B. Purdiman** (Shoniqua, Evil Stepsister); **Daniel Bakken** (Zonita, Evil Stepsister); **Belinda Sullivan** (Grandmother); and **Dwight Mahabir** (Duke).

African-American Shakespeare Company Executive Director **Sherri Young** helms this production of **CINDERELLA**. An M.F.A. graduate from the American Conservatory Theater, Young founded the African-American Shakespeare Company and has been its Executive Director since. She has directed over 17 productions, produced and executed four programs for the organization, and speaks at various colleges, universities, and conferences across the nation; she hires and manages the 60 company members that perform productions throughout the Bay Area. Ms. Young formerly served as Commissioner for the City and County of San Francisco’s Art Commission agency serving under Gavin Newsome.

Following **CINDERELLA**, **African-American Shakespeare Company** continues its 18th season in January with Tennessee Williams’ **CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF**, directed by **L. Peter Callender**; and William Shakespeare’s **THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR**, directed by Becky Kemper, scheduled to open in May 2013. For more information about African-American Shakespeare Company, or for tickets to upcoming productions, the public can call **1-800-838-3006** or visit **www.African-AmericanShakes.org**.

African-American Shakespeare Company was introduced in 1994 to create an opportunity and a venue for actors of color to hone their skills and talent in mastering some of the world’s greatest classical roles. The company is dedicated to producing classic stage works from an African-American cultural perspective, providing opportunities and accessibility for minority artists and their communities to view these works in a manner that is inclusive of their cultural heritage. African-American Shakespeare

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Company has produced over 30 productions, toured to over 97 schools, and reached over 105,000 patrons through its main stage productions and arts education program.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

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SHOWS: **Opening: Saturday, December 8, 3pm** (*also press opening and gala performance*)

Saturday, December 8, 8pm

Sunday, December 9, 3pm

Saturday, December 15, 8pm

Sunday, December 16, 3pm

Saturday, December 22, 3pm

Saturday, December 22, 8pm

Sunday, December 23, 3pm

WHERE: Buriel Clay Theater at the African American Art & Culture Complex
762 Fulton Street (at Webster), San Francisco, CA

TICKETS: For tickets (\$10-\$35) and information, the public can call
1-800-838-3006 or visit **www.African-AmericanShakes.org**

PHOTOS: High-resolution digital color photos may be accessed at
http://www.African-AmericanShakes.org/Media/Media_PressPage.htm or are
available upon request by contacting [syoung\[at\]African-americanshakes.org](mailto:syoung[at]African-americanshakes.org)

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