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



African-American Shakespeare Company's Holiday Classic *Cinderella* Returns to The Herbst for 4 Performances + Special "Afternoon Tea" with Cast & Carriage

After handing over the reins for last year's production, company Founder and Executive Director Sherri Young once again directs AASC's beloved take on the tale of Cinderella and her dreams of getting out from under some grim family dynamics in order to find a better life, all done with the assistance of a soulful-in-more-ways-than-one Fairy Godmother and a particularly potent pair of life-changing shoes; new this year will be a special "afternoon tea" scheduled between the early and matinee performances where children (and their parents) can meet the cast in person in the Herbst Green Room, enjoy delectable treats, face painting and a magic show, not to mention a photo opportunity complete with the fabled carriage

Cinderella runs for 4 performances, December 20-22 at the Herbst Theater in San Francisco; Tickets for performances are \$40.00; tickets to the Afternoon Tea are \$35.00; all tickets can be purchased at african-americanshakes.org

November 18, 2019, San Francisco— The African-American Shakespeare Company's annual holiday offering *Cinderella* returns this December with their take on the oft-told of a scullery maid determined to take her life into her own hands and make it better. All with the help of a Fairy Godmother who though opinionated and outspoken is also soulful in more ways than one, and of course, with a pair of life-changing shoes!

A holiday staple for the company for close to two decades, it has experienced a number of revisions, additions and updates over the years. "This year," says Young, "I wanted to emphasize the magical moments and elements of the show, and especially focus a bit more on the relationship between Cinderella and her Fairy Godmother."

This is the company's 18th production spun from their original take first produced in 2000, centering on a girl who while fully aware of the inequalities in her life—forced as she is to wait on her stepmother and two stepsisters hand and foot— doesn't allow them to define her.

This year's cast includes Funmi Lola as Cinderella; Devin Cunningham as Prince Charming and Brittany Sims as the Fairy Godmother.

- More information on both the production and the afternoon tea can be found [HERE](#)
- Iconic high-res photos from past productions are available [HERE](#)

What: African-American Shakespeare Company Presents *Cinderella*

Dates: December 20 - 22

Times: Friday, December 20, 8pm; Saturday, December 21, 11am; Saturday December 21 at 3pm, Sunday, December 22 at 1pm

Afternoon Tea: Saturday December 21, 1-3pm

Location: The Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

Tickets: \$40 for performances & \$35.00 for the Afternoon Tea; tickets can be purchased through african-americanshakes.org

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

In addition to being Artistic Director of AASC, L. Peter Callender has been a Visiting Professor of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Stanford University, teaching Acting Shakespeare and Fundamentals of Directing. He was also a teaching artist at Waterfront Conservatory Theater in Berkeley, and, for over 20 years, has been an Associate Artist at California Shakespeare Theater. He is an award-winning director, both in the Bay Area, where he has directed for AASC and the Aurora, and at American Stage Theater in St Petersburg, FL where he just opened *A Raisin in the Sun*. He is also an award-winning actor, performing in over 25 Shakespeare plays throughout his career, and voted "Mentor of the Year" and "Most Valuable Player in the Bay Area Theater Scene" by Robert Hurwitt (formerly) of the SF Chronicle! Callender has performed On and Off-Broadway, and in over 15 regional theaters across the country, including NY Shakespeare Festival, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Syracuse Stage, Milwaukee Rep, Pennsylvania Stage Company, American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Rep, Marin Theater Company and Aurora Theater Company. Some favorite roles: Simon in *The Whipping Man*, Richard in *Richard III*, Sam in *Master Harold ... and the Boys*, Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*, Antony in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Mr. M in *My Children! My Africa!* Walter in *Swimmers*, Robert Mugabe in *Breakfast With Mugabe*, Sterling North in *Permanent Collection*, Dr Treves in *The Elephant Man*, Tom/Jamaican Waiter in *Prelude to a Kiss* (Broadway), Caliban in *The Tempest* (directed by Julie Taymor) and several others. More information on his work and career can be seen on his website: www.lpetercallender.com.