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



***The Winter's Tale* From African-American Shakespeare Company Comes to The Taube Atrium This June**



From left to right: Eric Reid and Cameron Payne; Eric Reid and Regina Morones; Eric Reid, Regina Morones and Cameron Payne (Lance Huntley)

One of only a handful of Shakespeare plays the SF-based company has not yet produced, this version will be directed for the first time by L. Peter Callender, the company's Artistic Director, who has appeared in the play as an actor four times prior, including at Cal Shakes and Shakespeare Notre Dame; this re-imagined adaptation will focus on telling the story through the eyes of young Prince Mamillius with contemporary costumes, lighting and sound propelling the bard's narrative of clashing desires, hidden motives and love

7 performances only, June 10-18 at The Taube Atrium Theater (with Preview June 9); tickets \$30.00 <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2641066>

San Francisco, April 28, 2017 – The African-American Shakespeare Company finishes off its 2016/17 season with *The Winter's Tale*, one of the few Shakespeare plays that has gone unproduced over its 22 years of making theater in San Francisco. The company's Artistic Director, L. Peter Callender, will direct this production. While he has appeared in the play as an actor four times over his career, this is his first time directing it. "Our re-imagined adaptation will focus on the telling of the story through the eyes of the young Prince, Mamillius. My hope is empower young people and to explore what happens when a loving family suddenly becomes dysfunctional."

Lights and sound and minimal setting will influence the telling of this story. "My initial thought was not to distract with overly laden set pieces, especially at the beautiful space that is The

Taube Atrium,” says Callender. “Shakespeare's words, contemporary costumes, dynamic lighting and sound will drive this telling of what I and many think of as one of Shakespeare's most romantic plays. Clashing desires, hidden motives, and love, always love live side by side with themes of mental illness, family abuse, and teen rebellion, all coupled with the classic themes of fate, royal privilege and monomaniacal behavior. It is theatre that excites, thrills and makes us lean forward.”

"Children listen with their eyes," continues Callender. "They see more than their parents think they see and experience. In this adaptation we are introduced to a little Prince seeing his family torn apart by the suddenly tyrannical behavior of his father. He sees the effects on his pregnant mother and shares a sad tale of what could happen to a family in this situation and, in so doing, leads his family out of the darkness to the light."

The cast includes Eric Reid as Leontes; Regina Morones as Hermione; Cameron Payne, age 9, as Mamillius, who will alternate with Atlantis Clay, age 14, in the role.

Eric Reid is making his second sequential appearance with the company, coming off his starring role in *Jitney*. “Eric is such a focused, hard-working actor, and though he has never done Shakespeare, wanted to brave the challenge. Any trepidation I had was erased after rehearsal started, as he proved to me that he has the strength as an actor to play this complicated man as well as give life to the language.”

When it came to young Prince Mamillius, Callender was looking for someone age-appropriate who was smart, open, confident and fearless. “When I met Cameron, it was in his home with his mother and siblings. There was no prep. I gave him some language to read and he breezed thru the text without questions. The more he read, the more I was convinced he would be my choice. This is his first time ever working with AASC. We are thrilled to have this young man in our show.”

Regina Morones is a Bay Area-based actor, singer and educator with an MFA in acting from the University of Iowa who last essayed Shakespeare in the summer of 2015 in *Romeo and Juliet* at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. "Regina was one of the first actors I cast. She has a natural, regal bearing that immediately impressed me. She handles the language beautifully and when I learned that she also speaks fluent Spanish, I was intrigued, as well as inspired to add a bit more dimension to the adaptation."

Other cast members include Edward Ewell, Awele Makeba, Brittany Sims and Jacob Williams

What: African-American Shakespeare Company Presents *The Winter's Tale*

When: June 10-18 (with preview June 9)

Time: Matinee's at 3pm; evening performances at 8pm

Where: The Taube Atrium Theater, 401 Van Ness Ave, SF CA 94102

Tickets: \$30.00 <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2641066>

High Res Images can be found [HERE](#)

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 is a Visiting Professor of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Stanford University, teaching Acting Shakespeare and Fundamentals of Directing. He is also a teaching artist at Waterfront Conservatory Theater in Berkeley, and, for over 20 years, an Associate Artist at California Shakespeare Theater. He is 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! Mr. 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.

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