The 2015-2016 Fordham Theatre Program Season

A Season at the Mountaintop

The season’s title is homage to the final speech of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

"...Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. My eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." Memphis, April 3, 1968, Mason Temple

Our response to racial violence will offer a vision of a society in which everyone is included. That was Dr. King's vision at the Mountaintop. To realize it, we will produce plays that reveal alternative strategies to transcend the abuse of power.

The season addresses these questions: What excellent plays can we link so that they talk to one another and to us about the crisis? How can the plays we stage make an impact on the larger lives we lead?
Force Continuum
by Kia Corthron
Directed by Elena Araoz
Performances October 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16

The Orphan of Zhao
by Ji Junxiang, co-produced with the Ma-Yi Theater Company
Directed by Ralph Peña
Performances November 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, 21

The Owl Answers
by Adrienne Kennedy
Directed by Daniel Alexander Jones
Performances February 24, 25, 26, March 3, 4, 5

White People
by J. T. Rogers
Directed by Elizabeth Margid
Performances April 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15

*Force Continuum* by Kia Corthron
Examines the use of fatal force by the police. From the playwright’s description: Three generations of African-American New York City police officers: 1) twenty-four-year-old Dece, disillusioned and confused in a contemporary world of drug violence and brutality, whose present-day struggles go beyond the routine paradox of being both black and a cop: He and his vaguely racist white partner become indicted in the death of a black female civilian. 2) Dece’s deceased parents—a practical, optimistic mother, and a father frustrated by racism within the ranks of the force. 3) And Dece’s grandfather, a man whose experience has instilled within him the awareness that there is a way out of the carnage and distrust between the African-American and police communities. A jagged, precarious journey whereby all gradually grasp that understanding comes not just through seeing others, but hearing.

*The Orphan of Zhao* by Ji Junxiang
Every season we produce a classic, and this year we are producing the 14th century Chinese masterpiece *The Orphan of Zhao*. The first Asian classic to be produced on the Fordham mainstage, *The Orphan of Zhao* fits the theme of the season because it is about the abuse of power. The Emperor has grown so corrupt he has begun killing his own subjects for sport. The First Minister, the strongman Tu’an Gu, uses the police and military to violently suppress opposition.

*The Orphan of Zhao* has an illustrious history. It became the first Chinese play to be translated into any European language after the Jesuit priest, Joseph Henri Maria de Prémare S.J., translated it into French in 1731 and titled it *L’Orphelin de la Maison de Tchao*. In 1753, French playwright and philosopher Voltaire wrote an adaptation. More recently, San Francisco’s American Conservatory Theater produced James Fenton’s adaptation of the masterwork, which originated at the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2012. We will create our own adaptation with the Ma-Yi Theater Company and Ma-Yi Artistic Director Ralph Peña. This will mark Fordham Theatre’s fifth collaboration with a New York City theatre company and our second engagement with Peña, who directed Ruth Margraff’s *Centaur Battle of San Jacinto* on our mainstage in 2012.

*The Owl Answers* by Adrienne Kennedy
Adrienne Kennedy is one of the great American writers. Her play, *The Funnyhouse of a Negro*, is a masterpiece of experimental theatre. *The Owl Answers* had its premiere at The Public Theater in January
In 1995, Michael Feingold of the Village Voice wrote: "with Beckett gone, Adrienne Kennedy is probably the boldest artist now writing for the theater." Kennedy is a surrealist, and in *The Owl Answers* she creates characters, such as "She who is CLARA PASSMORE who is the VIRGIN MARY who is the BASTARD who is the OWL." It takes place in a subway car, which is also the Tower of London. Clara, an African-American schoolteacher in Savannah, Georgia, travels to London to find her "Goddam Father who was the Richest White Man in the Town," and to seek out Chaucer, Anne Boleyn, William the Conqueror, and Shakespeare, who she knows are her ancestors. "I must talk to Anne Boleyn. She knows so much about love."

*White People* by J.T. Rogers

is of a rare genre: an examination of white racism by a white author. From a description by the playwright: "Now-right now-what does it mean to be a white American? What does it mean for any American to live in a country that is not the one you were promised?" *White People* is a play about the lives of three ordinary Americans placed under the spotlight: Martin, a Brooklyn-born high powered attorney for a white-shoe law firm in St. Louis, MO; Mara Lynn, a housewife and former home-coming queen in Fayetteville, NC; and Alan, a young professor struggling to find his way in New York City. Through heart-wrenching confessions, they wrestle with guilt, prejudice, and the price they and their children must pay for their actions. *White People* is a candid, brutally honest meditation on race and language in our culture. Performed by two casts on alternate nights.

**All Performances are at 8:00 pm**

**Ticket Information**

**Reservations**
Box office number and email: 212-636-6340, flcboxoffice@gmail.com
Box office hours: Wed-Fri 2:30-6 p.m. and one hour before the performance (September-May)

Want to be on our mailing list? Call or email us: 212-636-6340, flcboxoffice@gmail.com

**Location**
Pope Auditorium
113 West 60th Street (Corner of Columbus Avenue)
NYC, NY 10023

**Ticket Prices**
General Admission: $15
Fordham Faculty, Alumni, Staff: $10
Students* and Senior Citizens: $5
*from any school with valid I.D.

**Cash Only!**

**Season Subscriptions available:**
Purchase 3 plays, get the 4th FREE!

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