encore
STAGES
SEPTEMBER 2016

ACT A Contemporary Theatre 2016 SEASON
Sep 9–Oct 9, 2016

THE ROYALE
BY MARCO RAMIREZ
DIRECTED BY AMEENAH KAPLAN

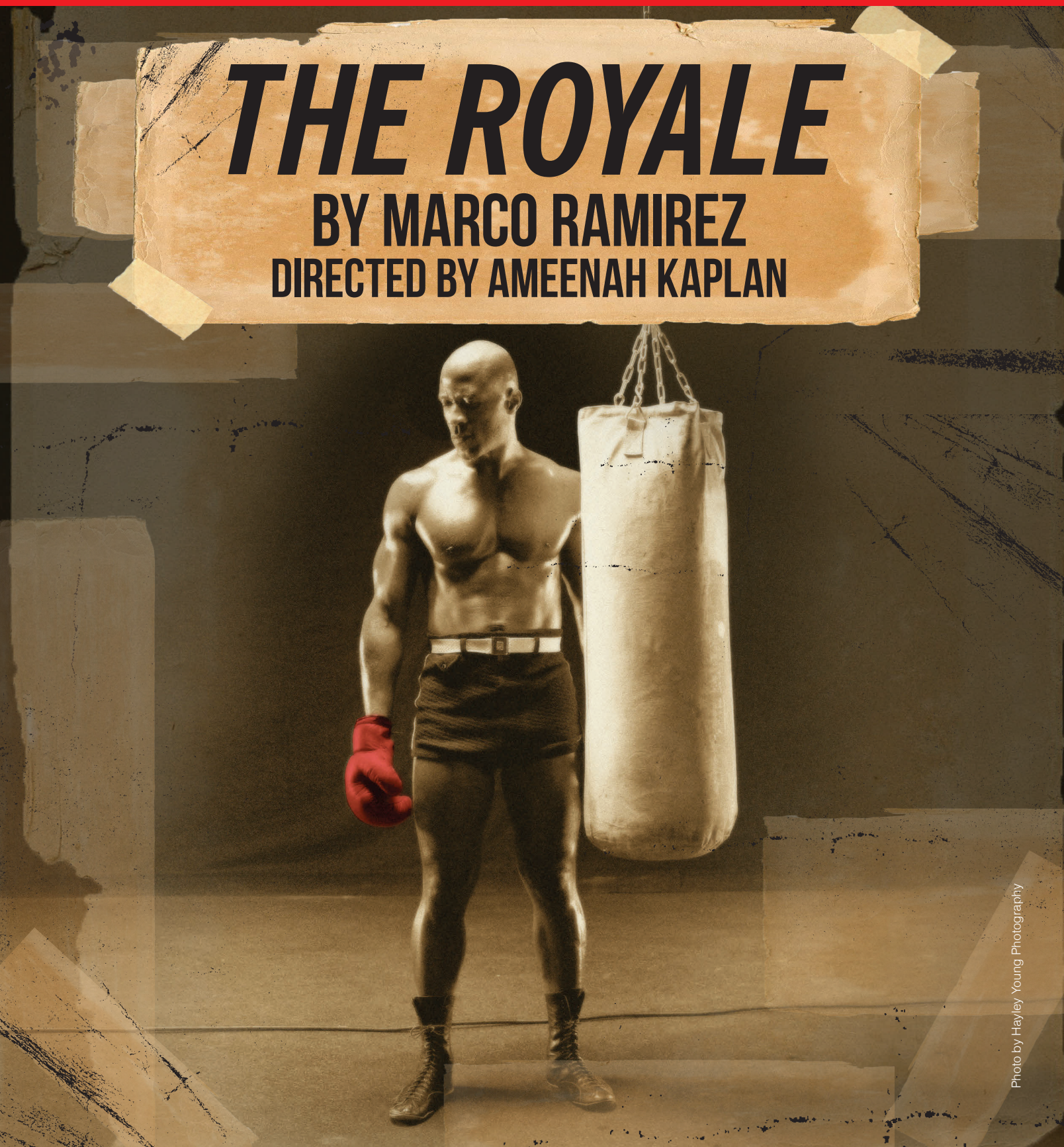

Photo by Hayley Young Photography

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encore STAGES

SEPTEMBER 2016

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Test yourself with our trivia quiz

Encore Stages is a publication of Encore Media Group. We also publish Encore Arts Programs, the monthly arts & culture magazine *City Arts*, and custom publications, including the Official Seattle Pride Guide and the SIFF Guide and Catalog.

Encore Stages features the following organizations:

ACT A Contemporary Theatre

Book-It Repertory Theatre

Meany Center for the Performing Arts, University of Washington

Seattle Repertory Theatre

Seattle Shakespeare

Seattle Theatre Group

Taproot Theatre Company

Dialogue

Encore Stages in conversation

Members of the New Guard: Teen Arts Leadership Society at the 2015 Teeny Awards. Photo: Branwen Hock

TeenTix, a Seattle non-profit founded in 2004, works in partnership with 64 regional arts organizations, to ensure equitable arts access for all young people. TeenTix has facilitated the sale of over 70,000 arts tickets to teens to local organizations including Seattle Symphony, 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle Opera, Pacific Northwest Ballet, SIFF, Seattle Repertory Theatre and more.

We sat down with Executive Director Holly Arsenault, just as she announced that she is stepping down from the position. After 11 years at the helm, we talked to Arsenault about teenage brains, her favorite TeenTix memories and ways you can help the organization.

What does TeenTix do?

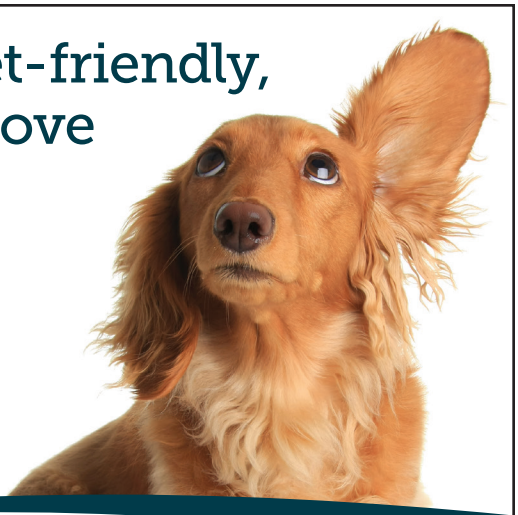
TeenTix partners with arts organizations to help them connect with and serve young, diverse audiences. We are best known as the people who make it possible for any teenager to buy a five-dollar ticket to pretty much any art event in the region. But we also do arts leadership training and arts journalism training. We're all about offering teens the tools to take an active role in shaping the arts community, and empowering youth to engage with the arts on their own terms.

How does the ticketing part of TeenTix work?

Any teen—13- to 19-years-old—can sign up for TeenTix. It's free. They then present their TeenTix pass at any of our 64 partnered arts organizations on the day of the show or exhibit that they want to attend, and, if there are tickets available, that partner will sell them one for five bucks. That's basically it. It is a beautifully simple, mutually-beneficial thing. We also have 2-for-$10 days —

I hear that pet-friendly, 62+ Village Cove is open on Green Lake.

Let's Visit!



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VILLAGE COVE

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WORLD PREMIERE

ROZ AND RAY

BY KAREN HARTMAN

DIRECTED BY CHAY YEW

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ARTSFUND

TeenTix Executive Director Holly Arsenault

Thursdays at our museum partners and Sundays everywhere else—when a TeenTix member can buy a second, $5 ticket and hand it to anyone they'd like, including an adult or a child too young for TeenTix.

Why is exposing teenagers to the arts important?

We have tons of data that show that arts engagement has all kinds of healthy side-effects for young people: higher rates of literacy and volunteerism, lower rates of delinquency and school dropouts. These benefits are real and important, but I always feel like they fall short of really answering the question of why this is important.

I am more compelled by the stories that young people share with me about how experiencing art has opened their hearts and brains in ways that they did not expect, how it gives them something to do with their friends that feels positive and constructive, that sharing space, and sharing experiences, with people with whom they might otherwise never come into contact with has changed their idea of what their city even is and how they fit into it. For me, that is so powerful. How many opportunities do we really create in our culture for people from different generations to share an experience where there's not a teacher/student dynamic? Very few.

Continued on page 5

John Langs
Artistic Director

Carlo Scandiuzzi
Executive Director

Becky Witmer
Managing Director

ACT – A Contemporary Theatre presents

THE ROYALE

A PLAY IN SIX ROUNDS

BY MARCO RAMIREZ

Directed by Ameenah Kaplan

Beginning September 9, 2016 • Opening Night September 15, 2016

CAST

Jarrod M. Smith*	Jay Jackson
Lorenzo Roberts*	Fish
G. Valmont Thomas*	Wynton
R. Hamilton Wright*	Max
Zenobia Taylor	Nina

CREATIVE TEAM

Ameenah Kaplan	Director
Carey Wong	Scenic Designer
Rose Pederson	Costume Designer
Ben Zamora	Lighting Designer
Sharath Patel	Sound Designer
Lily McLeod	Assistant Lighting Designer
Jeffrey K. Hanson*	Stage Manager
Tori Thompson	Production Assistant
Chris Denina	Boxing Coach

Running Time: This performance runs approximately 90 minutes. There will be no intermission.

Setting: Various cities in the U.S., between 1905-1910.

Join us for a discussion on themes of the play following each performance, featuring a panel of scholar and artist responders.

*The actors and stage manager employed in this production are Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Center Theater Group / Kirk Douglas Theatre, Michael Ritchie, Artistic Director produced the World Premiere of THE ROYALE in Los Angeles, CA in 2013

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

SHOW SPONSOR:

NESHOLM FAMILY FOUNDATION

THEATRE AND SEASON SPONSORS:

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Katharyn Alvord Gerlich, Eulalie M. & Gian-Carlo Scandiuzzi, Nancy Alvord, True-Brown Foundation

Audience members are cordially reminded to silence all electronic devices. All forms of photography and the use of recording devices are strictly prohibited. Please do not walk on the stage before, during, or after the show. Patrons wearing Google Glass must power down the device if wearing them in the theatre.

John Langs
PHOTO BY TRUMAN BUFFET

A Note from Artistic Director JOHN LANGS

> *"A blow to my head as I danced about sent my right eye popping like a jack-in-the-box and settled my dilemma. The room went red as I fell. It was a dream fall, my body languid and fastidious as to where to land, until the floor became impatient and smashed up to meet me. A moment later I came to. An hypnotic voice said FIVE emphatically. And I lay there, hazily watching a dark red spot of my own blood shaping itself into a butterfly, glistening and soaking into the soiled gray world of the canvas."*

This passage from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* is from the chapter entitled, "The Royale." This poetry, brutal and beautiful, was part of the inspiration for Marco Ramirez when he sat down to write this play.

Last summer, while our country was boiling with the events of Ferguson and reeling in the aftermath of the death of Trayvon Martin, we here at ACT were sitting down to plan our 2016 season. This led to a discussion of these incidents in an historical context as we thought about how our theatre could participate in this conversation. These events, and the continued tragedies we have experienced since then, remind us that we cannot turn our eyes away from the past if we intend to change the future. Racial injustice in our country has its roots in the one great flaw of the initial "American Experiment." Even our founding fathers cautioned their countrymen about building a new country on the old world system of subjugation and slavery. From all corners of our modern society, the ramifications of this system continue to be felt, in our prisons, our streets, and our civic discourse. As we continue to face this legacy, it becomes increasingly clear that we must look at our past square in the face. In our own way, we hope to inspire conversation that leads to change by continuing to tell stories like the one you are about to see tonight.

There are many poets, playwrights, and artists working toward this end. But how do you employ the artistic voice to tackle such difficult material without getting preachy? The first rule of theatre is to entertain. I find that the best way to entertain is to tell a great story in an original way. Looking at the issue of race through the lens of sports, and through the metaphor of boxing, proved not only a leap of inspired creativity, but a vehicle by which to provide an evening of theatre as dynamic, subtle, and complex as the issue itself.

Our protagonist—like many ground-breakers in sports—was thrust into the spotlight through the single-minded pursuit of excellence. He was not an activist, but by virtue of his deeds and the color of his skin he found that he came to represent the hope, the dream, and the fear that radiates from one of the deepest challenges our country continues to face. How does one person hold all of this responsibility? Through the years, many—for good or ill—are burdened with that responsibility. What would you do if this bright light were shone on you? Who would you become in that moment of intense scrutiny? What would you fight for?

Thank you for being a part of this thrilling season.

John Langs
Artistic Director

A Note from Executive Director CARLO SCANDIUZZI

Carlo Scandiuzzi

Becky Witmer

Welcome to *The Royale* and thank you for joining us for ACT's 51st Season. With so much happening on our stages, we don't often take the time to talk about another important part of our operation: our historic national landmark building. This year marks the 20th anniversary of ACT's move from lower Queen Anne to downtown Seattle.

Just over 20 years ago, a dedicated and visionary group of people walked into the dilapidated Eagles building, full of pigeons, stripped wallpaper, dust, and dirt. They imagined the potential of a multi-story renovation—including four stages for contemporary theatre, as well as space for scenery and costume shops, administrative offices, and rehearsal studios all in one home. They successfully raised $30 million to make it happen. This year we celebrate those theatre visionaries and their pioneering spirit. ACT was one of the businesses that helped revitalize downtown Seattle in the '90s, and today we are proud to contribute to the cultural and economic impact of the area. Now, ACT's annual attendance is between 140,000-170,000 people who see shows in

and Managing Director BECKY WITMER

our five performance spaces, where last year alone we hosted more than 600 performances and events.

In the last year, ACT received a Building for the Arts Award from the State of Washington to make improvements to our historic landmark building. With funds from the State as well as generous support from 4Culture, the Norcliffe Foundation, and the Joshua Green Foundation, ACT is able to:

- Replace the outdated HVAC air system and controls
- Update the work lights and house lights in The Allen and Falls Theatres
- Replace the carpets
- Work with architects to explore the design possibilities of a full building renovation

ACT is dedicated to stewarding our 91-year-old building and to providing our patrons and artists with a welcoming, safe, vibrant environment to connect with one another. We hope you can see and feel some of the improvements being made this year in the cleaner air, the brighter lights, and certainly the new flooring!

Thank you for your support of ACT and for helping us to keep this beautiful landmark building alive and brimming with audiences, artists, and great live theatre!

Cheers,

Carlo and Becky

Ameenah Kaplan

A Note from Director AMEENAH KAPLAN

I first read *The Royale* in 2012. I was up for the job of choreographing it, but immediately after reading, I wanted to direct it. *The Royale* was a perfect storm of artistic techniques that lit a fire in my belly. I heard and saw music everywhere! In the language, in the characters, and in the clapping and stomping written into the script.

I've long been working in physical theatre. My mission has been to combine what we do with linear storytelling. This has been the bane of the community. We've set everything from the *The Bacchae* to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to movement, trying to find the formula. But, I'm attracted to new stories rather than recycling old ones. *The Royale* is a new play written specifically with movement and sound in the design. They are not appendages or creative afterthoughts, but rather integral parts of the story.

Of course, it's not the first play to fall under this definition. What makes *The Royale* stand out is the excellence of the storytelling. Marco Ramirez has written a dynamite piece of literature.

There are no wasted words and no wasted actions in *The Royale.* Marco had a very specific story to tell and he told it succinctly, with passion, and candor. I don't know what was going through his mind when he chose rhythm as his preferred accompaniment, but in so doing, he was speaking the universal language of man. What better way to handle the difficult topic of race? Words have not sufficed. We are constantly misunderstanding each other with them. But with rhythm, this is hardly ever the case. It calms, it soothes, and it informs.

There are hard lessons to be learned in *The Royale,* hard history to be swallowed. Perhaps there is no need to draw the obvious parallel between the events of *The Royale,* set in the early 1900s, and the current events invading our smart phones and computer screens daily. Perhaps words just don't suffice. Perhaps it's time to do what we always do when there are no more words ... we listen.

So, I invite you to listen to the heartbeat of *The Royale.* Listen to the undercurrent of rhythm. It speaks a language we can all understand.

COMING SOON TO ACT

A Contemporary Theatre

Dangerous Liaisons

BY Christopher Hampton

DIRECTED BY John Langs

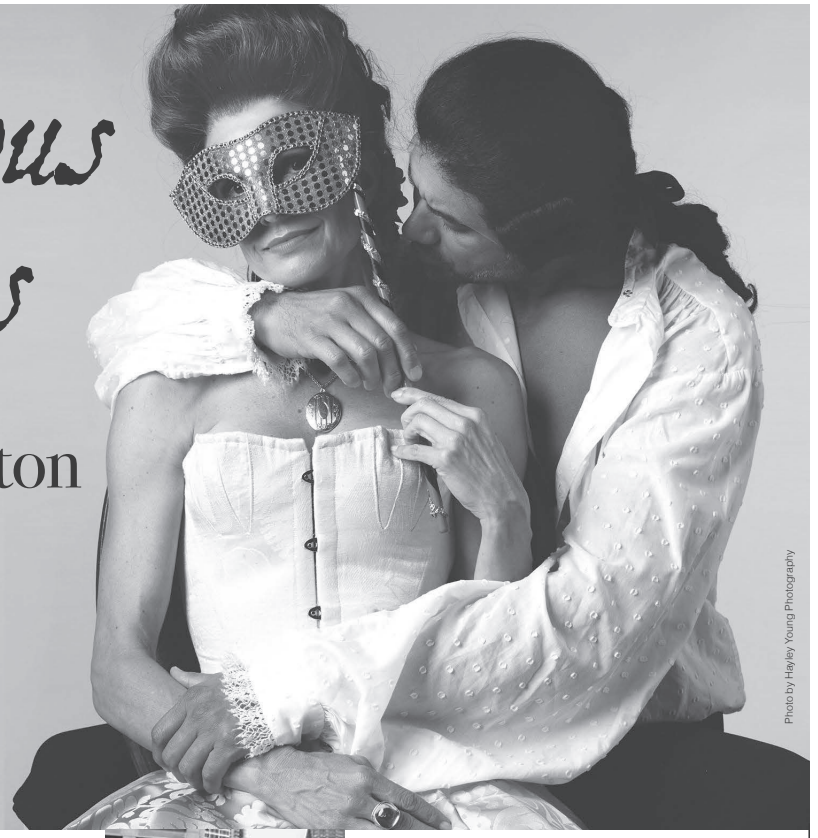


Photo by Hayley Young Photography

Oct 21–Nov 20

Photo by Hayley Young Photography

BAD APPLES

Now–Sep 25

Welcome to Club Abu, the darkest party in Baghdad. An incendiary rock musical that pulls back the curtain of one of the greatest moral challenges we have faced as a nation and sets it to a wicked irreverent back beat.

MEMBERS ONLY PARTY

Sep 21

Exclusively for ACTPass Members! Join us before the evening performances of *The Royale, Bad Apples,* and *The Construction Zone.*

THE CONSTRUCTION ZONE

Sep 14, 21, 28, Oct 5

Join us for a one-month new play reading festival where we experience four plays, with one to be staged as part of the 2017 ACTLab Season. Features *Naming True, Late in the Game, The Ansel Intimacy,* and *Downstairs*.

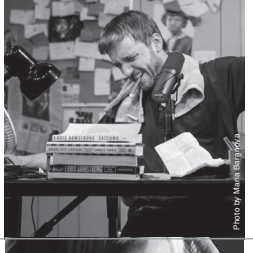
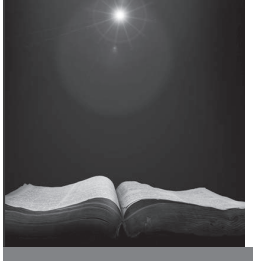


Photo by Mollie Burnton

THE HOLLER SESSIONS

Sep 29–Oct 9

Originally premiering at On The Boards in 2015, this *New York Times* Critics' Pick centers on one man's burning obsession for American jazz. *The Holler Sessions* serves an irreverent love letter to the best thing America has ever created—and forgotten.



ENDANGERED SPECIES THEATRE PROJECT

Sep 17–18, Oct 10, Nov 7

Explore the great plays you seldom see. Join ESTP for its sixth year of 12 book-in-hand presentations, chosen and performed by dozens of Seattle's best and bravest actors!

Photo by Liz Morris

AN ATTIC AN EXIT

Oct 26–Nov 6

A haunting and delightful pas de deux for the 21st century, featuring dance artists Rachael Lincoln and Leslie Seiters.

acttheatre.org | 206.292.7676 | 700 Union Street, Seattle

A Conversation with Marco Ramirez

Playwright of *The Royale*

BY JOHN LANGS, ACT ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

John: Hello Marco! How are you?

Marco: I'm so excited! Hi! How are you?

John: I'm doing very well, thank you. What are you working on?

Marco: I'm on a contract with Marvel TV. I grew up loving comics, so it's a dream come true, in the geekiest way possible.

John: That's fantastic! So, this gorgeous play … Where did the inspiration come from?

Marco: There was a moment when I was watching the Kanye West video, "POWER." There are a lot of hand claps incorporated into the beat, and I remember thinking, the intersection of Jack Johnson and Kanye West is interesting: the building of celebrity and identity, and specifically black male identity.

John: Did you have an inkling that you were writing a play about race?

Marco: I didn't. I just wanted to write a play about boxing. There came a moment when I realized that the play was really about a brother and sister, and not just about boxing. I have a little sister who I'd unknowingly written into the play, until we were in rehearsal in LA, when one of my friends said, "Jesus! You wrote a play about your sister!" And I said, "What do you mean? I didn't write a play about my sister, I wrote a play about Jack Johnson!" I had no idea. The play is definitely about me growing up, having a little sister who couldn't find a single Disney princess that looked like her. That's what the play is about. Representation.

John: I think that's why the story is so moving. As "A Contemporary Theatre," we are looking for plays that talk about the world around us. When I read this play, we were in the middle of Ferguson. I connected with the story of the forerunner: those people who end up on the sharp edge of changing a culture.

Marco: Yes.

John: Have you been surprised by the response to your play, in terms of how it speaks to the time we're in right now?

Marco: Yes! What's unfortunate is that every time I've gone into rehearsal, there's been a new tragic circumstance that relates to the play. In addition to the current violence that draws parallels, I was walking to rehearsal at Lincoln Center when I got a phone update that the Oscar nominations were out. This was last year … [laughs]

John: Right!

Marco: This is before the controversy. This is the minute they were announced, because I'm a dork. I am reading these names realizing, "Oh my God, where is anybody who was in *Selma?* Where is anybody else?" That experience spoke to the issues of representation in the play, which to me are just as major as the violence, because lack of representation is ultimately what leads later generations to violence.

John: I'd like to unpack that a little bit.

Marco: Yes. Before we become police officers, before we become criminals, before we make any real adult choices, the world teaches us who we are, who we are allowed to be, and who everyone else is. For kids to see a child getting shot by the cops on the news is incredibly violent. And in the same way, for a kid to watch the Oscars where only white people get nominated, and only white people win, that's an act of spiritual violence. And then I watched Beyoncé's *Lemonade*. It's an hour-long manifesto that unpacks the Nina character in this play, and I love it.

John: I am so happy that you are writing. And thank you so much for speaking with me, Marco.

Marco: Anytime! It's an honor that so many people have responded to *The Royale.* Thank you for doing it!

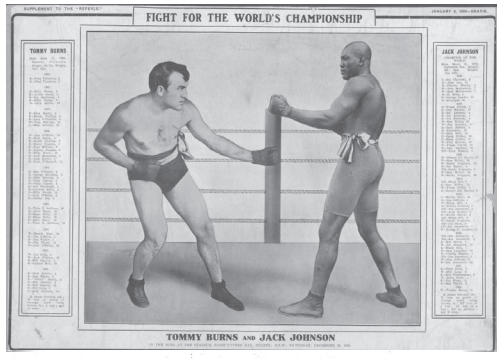
Who are the Responders?

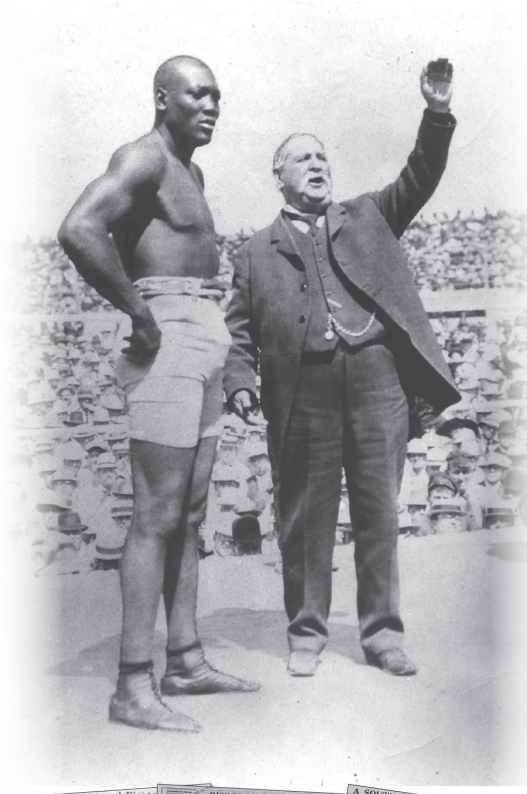
We've asked scholars and artists to share a response to *The Royale*. Stay after the performance and hear **Donald Byrd** (Artistic Director of Spectrum Dance Theater), **Eric Davis** (Professor of Sociology at Bellevue College), **John Eklof** (Poet, Writer, Speaker), **Nikkita Oliver** (Poet, Organizer, Boxer), **Vivian Phillips** (Chair of the Seattle Arts Commission), or **Laura Wright** (Educator, Community Organizer, Spoken Word Artist, Boxer). **Check our website for scheduling details.**

Who Was Jack Johnson?

BY DR. GERALD EARLY, PBS

"He was scandal, he was gossip, he was a public menace for many, a public hero for some, admired and demonized, feared, misunderstood, and ridiculed"





JACK JOHNSON, the first black heavyweight champion, whose reign lasted from 1908 to 1915, was also the first African American pop culture icon. He was photographed more than any other black man of his day and, indeed, more than most white men. Black people during the early 20th century were hardly the subject of news in the white press unless they were the perpetrators of crime or had been lynched (usually for a crime, real or imaginary). Johnson was different—not only was he written about in black newspapers but he was, during his heyday, not infrequently the subject of front pages of white papers. Johnson emerged as a major figure in the world of sports at the turn of the century when sports themselves, both collegiate and professional, were becoming a significant force in American cultural life and as the role of black people in sports was changing. As his career developed, he was subject of scrutiny from the white press, in part because he was accused and convicted of a crime, but also because he was champion athlete in a sport with a strong national following. After he served his time, Johnson did what many famous ex-athletes do: he tried to live off his name. He fought in exhibitions, told his life story in dime museums, appeared in a few movies in bit roles, and exchanged predictions about upcoming title bouts for meals from reporters. He continued to marry white women, but since he was no longer heavyweight champion, no one cared. He occasionally performed as a musician. There was an aspect of the shabby about his final years, but Johnson was a man of dignity and even of cultural bearing. He was an intelligent man—always a shrewd operator, looking for an angle. He died in an automobile accident in 1946 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

A Conversation with Angie Kamel

ACT's new Artistic Engagement Manager

BY EMILY PENICK, LITERARY & ARTISTIC MANAGER

Emily Penick: What in your background drew you to artistic engagement?

Angie Kamel: The performing arts were a big part of my life from a very young age, and for me they were a way to understand the world better, to connect with other cultures, and to create a community. I am an immigrant to this country, so a big way for me to connect with other people and understand American culture, frankly, was to participate in the arts. Early in my career, I loved being in the room when the team was discussing what the play was really about, and delving into the heart of the play during the table work process.

E: Could you tell us about your role at ACT, and why this new position so important to us?

A: People go to the theatre for a communal experience, and to learn more about themselves, about people who don't look like them, people who don't think like them, or love like them. They want to learn about history, to understand their contemporary world a little bit better. My job is to find ways for our audiences to learn all of those things in and around the play. Folks can see the play and have a passive experience and form their own ideas, and walk away, but they can also come and see the play, and look at the reading list that we've curated. Or they can attend a pre-show event or a post-show discussion. They can look at the materials that are available in the lobby for deeper engagement. They can attend a partner organization's event. My work always starts with the art, and then I figure out how to help the play grow outside of the theatre itself.

The other piece of my work is to connect with partner organizations, scholars, and artists that are already doing incredible work around the themes we're discussing. Hopefully this invites people who maybe historically didn't feel like they were welcome in the theatre to come check us out, because it looks a little different than the theatre of yore.

E: What are some highlights of your year so far?

A: My first week, we opened *Assassins.* I think John [Langs] knew it was a timely piece, but I'm not sure anybody had a sense of how much people would want to talk about it. Implementing a post-show dialogue series really made that clear to me. It became a way of inviting the audience into the rehearsal room.

E: That's a full-circle moment!

A: That drives me to do what I do.

Spotlight on ACT's Own Champions

G. Valmont Thomas

2016 Core Company Member

Once dubbed the hardest working actor in Seattle by *The Seattle Times*, **G. Valmont Thomas**, known to many as G. Val, credits his Clover Park High School teacher with instilling in him "a love for this art form that hasn't been equaled by anything else since." He received his B.A. in theatre arts from Western Washington University and his M.F.A. in directing from Penn State University.

He pushed racial boundaries by adapting roles in Shakespearean and contemporary plays that are traditionally played by white actors. In the acting company of Oregon Shakespeare Festival for 13 seasons, he enjoyed playing the title character in *Macbeth,* Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* and Feste in *Twelfth Night.* His acting career was largely propelled through his involvement in the 1986 Bathhouse production of J.B. Priestley's *Johnson Over Jordan,* as critics applauded him for his acting versatility. As an actor in the Bathhouse production of *Twelfth Night* (1984), he was commended for his ability to turn moving furniture between intermissions into an art form due to the choreographed and character-motivated manner in which he did it. Last seen at ACT in *Stupid Fucking Bird*, Thomas has worked in almost every equity theatre in Seattle, a rare and great accomplishment.

From left: Core Company members Kirsten Potter, G. Valmont Thomas, R. Hamilton Wright. | PHOTO BY ALABASTRO PHOTOGRAPHY

R. Hamilton Wright

2016 Core Company Member

R. Hamilton Wright is a veteran actor who initially pursued a career as a writer. "I never thought of acting or theatre as something I would be interested in, or how a single performance could affect the world," he says. He studied writing at Western Washington University but left for Seattle's former Empty Space Theatre, where he was able to watch and apprentice under Seattle actors like John Aylward and Lori Larsen. He fittingly credits this decision to James Earl Jones' heartbreaking performance inspired by Jack Johnson in the film *The Great White Hope*. "I walked out of that theatre with an entirely new idea in my body—that a work of art, a performance, a story told on stage or the screen, could actually change the shape of the world."

Last seen at ACT in *Daisy,* Wright looks forward to telling another important American story in *The Royale*. "It is part of an intensifying and critical conversation that all Americans must have about ourselves, and how race illuminates our relationships with each other," he says. "There is a joyous quality to this piece that I love. There is a sense in the nation that talking about and acting on the issues of race in America is exhausting and that a fatigue is setting in. But what if this process could be less grim and more joyous? It is the process of being human beings—with all our faults and strengths—that we talk about when we talk about race in America. This play embraces and dances in that conversation. I love that."

Who's Who in *The Royale*

Jarrod M. Smith *(Jay Jackson*) is an actor from LaPlace, Louisiana, a suburb right outside of New Orleans. Jarrod attended and graduated from Southern University of Baton Rouge with a B.A. in History in 2011. In 2008, while at Southern, he took an interest in acting, and was immediately bitten by the acting bug. Jarrod's interest and talents soon led him to the training grounds of the prestigious American Conservatory Theater. Jarrod made his professional debut in the South Coast Repertory/Pasadena Playhouse co-production of the *The Whipping Man* and just finished a run of the new play *Sojourners* at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco. Jarrod is ecstatic and proud to be making his debut at ACT.

Lorenzo Roberts *(Fish*) received his B.F.A. in Acting from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and appeared in *Othello* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), *Henry IV Part 1* (Wooden O), and *As You Like It* (ACTLab) with ACT's 2015 Kenan Directing Fellow. He is a member of ACT's 2016 Core Company, and has previously appeared this season in *The Mystery of Love & Sex.*

G. Valmont Thomas *(Wynton*) is proud to be a 2016 Core Company member at ACT. Since returning to Seattle from Ashland, OR and 13 seasons with The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, some of G. Val's work includes Jacob Marley in *A Christmas Carol,* and Sorn in *Stupid Fucking Bird* (ACT), Dad in *Stickfly* and Sheldon Forrester in *Trouble in Mind* (Intiman Theatre), Wining Boy in *The Piano Lesson* (Seattle Repertory Theatre), Sam in *Master Harold and the Boys*, Habib in Yussef El Guindi's *The Tyrant* and Chutes and Ladders in *Water by the Spoonful* (West Of Lenin).

Zenobia Taylor *(Nina)* a recent graduate of the Intiman Emerging Artists Program, is very excited to be included in this thrilling production of Marco Ramirez' *The Royale*. Most recently, she starred in Copious Love's production of *Alice's Anthem* as Alice Charlotte Chase, a role for which she received a nomination for Actor to Watch from BroadwayWorld. Long before that, when she was 7 years old, she starred in her very first show with Broadway Bound's 2004 production of *The Wiz* in this same theatre. ACT was the first place that Zenobia learned the love of the stage, and she is elated that this also be the venue of her professional debut. She would like to thank Mr. Ramirez for his beautiful words, Bugy for always being there, her mother for always being overwhelmingly supportive of her dreams, and her sisters for all of their love and encouragement.

R. Hamilton Wright *(Max*) was last seen onstage at ACT as Bill Bernbach in this season's world premiere of Sean Devine's *Daisy*. His first role at ACT was as Vince in Sam Shepard's *Buried Child* in the summer of 1981. Some of his favorites between those two: *Red Noses, Bach at Leipzig, Chorus of Disapproval, Intimate Exchanges, Middletown, Double Indemnity* (Writer), *End of the World, Souvenir* (Director), *Enchanted April, The Revengers' Comedies, The Pillowman, Assisted Living* (Director), *The Odd Couple, Stuff Happens,* and *Marrying Katie.* Bob is a proud member of this season's Core Company. His original play *Sherlock Holmes and the American Problem* received its world premiere this past season at Seattle Repertory Theatre.

Marco Ramirez *(Playwright*) has had plays produced at Lincoln Center Theater, The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (DC), The Humana Festival (Louisville), The Old Globe (San Diego), The Bush Theatre (London), American Theater Company (Chicago), and Center Theatre Group (LA). Honors include the Outer Critics Circle's John Gassner Playwriting Award, Juilliard's Lila Acheson Wallace Playwriting Fellowship, Lincoln Center's Le Comte du Nouy Award, and TCG's Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. A Writers Guild of America and Emmy Award-nominated TV writer, his credits include Sons of Anarchy (FX), Orange is the New Black (Netflix), Fear The Walking Dead (AMC), Marvel's The Defenders (Netflix) and Marvel's Daredevil (Netflix).

Ameenah Kaplan *(Director*) is a graduate of the Academy of Art University Film School. She also attended the New York University Tisch School of the Arts for Acting. She made her directorial debut with the inter-disciplinary physical theatre show *Everyman for Himself.* Her most recent short, *Man With a Movie Camera,* premiered at HollyShorts Film Festival. She recently won Best Director for the short film *The American Failure* (New York International Short Film Festival), as well as directed the multi-award nominated show *Bash'd: A Gay Rap Opera.* She also recently directed *Black Sheep & Other People's Organs* as part of Noah Wylie's Young Playwright's Festival. Choreography credits include: *The Brother's Size, In the Red & Brown Water* (Fountain Theatre); *The Women of Brewster Place, Altar Boyz, [title of show], The Daddy Machine* (Celebration Theatre); *Duel, Steel* (Oasis Theater Company); *The Royale, The Legend of Alex* (Center Theatre Group); *Oedipus the King—Mama, CHiPs, Frosty the Snow Manilow, A Christmas Carol King, Santa Claus is Coming to Motown, The Comedy of Aerosmith, Jackson Frost, Alice in One Hit Wonderland II, It's a Stevie Wonderful Life* (Troubadour Theater Company); *Sissy* (Company of Angels); Princess Bean's *Messy World* (Princess Bean Productions). Awards and honors include: *Everyman for Himself* (2007 NAACP Award: Best Choreography; 2007 LA Weekly Awards: Best Fight Choreography and Best Original Score); 2007 Richard E. Sherwood Award (Center Theatre Group); *Altar Boyz* (2009 LA Weekly Award: Best Choreography); *The Women of Brewster Place* (2010 NAACP Award: Best Choreography); *The Royale* (2013 Ovation Award: Best Choreography); and 2012 LA Weekly Queen of Angels Award.

Carey Wong *(Scenic Designer*) Theatre credits include Seattle Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Portland Center Stage, Arizona Theatre Company, Syracuse Stage, Intiman, Seattle Children's Theatre, The Village Theatre, Tacoma Actors Guild, Phoenix Theatre, Childsplay, Mixed Blood Theatre, Prince Music Theater, and Hey City Theater. He has been Resident Designer for Portland Opera, Opera Memphis, and Wildwood Park for the Arts. Opera credits include Seattle Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, New York's Valhalla Wagnerfest, Pittsburgh Opera, Opera Carolina, Vancouver Opera, and the San Francisco Opera Center. Carey is a graduate of Yale College and attended the Yale School of Drama. Previous designs for ACT include *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof; Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike; Bethany; Uncle Ho to Uncle Sam; The Pitmen Painters; First Class; The Underpants; A Number; Good Boys; Fish Head Soup;* and *Holy Ghost* .

Rose Pederson *(Costume Designer*) is happy to be returning to ACT where her work was last seen in *The Price*. She has designed 28 plays for ACT including *Middletown, The Invisible Hand,* and *Uncle Ho to Uncle Sam*. She designed *Largely New York* on Broadway and The Kennedy Center. Rose has designed 47 plays at Seattle Rep, most recently *View From The Bridge* and *Near To Baby.* Locally she has also designed shows at The 5th Avenue Theatre, New Century Theatre Company, Seattle Children's Theatre, Intiman, New City Theater, and Seattle University. Regionally, Rose has designed at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage, Artists Repertory Theatre, Playmakers Repertory Company, and The Cleveland Playhouse.

Ben Zamora *(Lighting Designer*) is an American artist and lighting designer. He received an M.F.A. from the University of Washington and a B.A. from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Previously at ACT: *Middletown, The Pitmen Painters, In the Next Room or The Vibrator Play,* and *Hold These Truths.* Zamora's design work has been seen internationally at venues including Royal Festival Hall and The Barbican Center in London, the Mariinsky Theatre in Russia, Stockholm's Baltic Sea Festival, the Helsinki Festival, the Berliner Festspiele, the Lucerne Festival in Switzerland, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York, Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Getty Villa in Los Angeles, DeDoelen in The Netherlands, and Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and Salle Pleyel in France. Moving seamlessly between performance and visual art, Zamora has created light-based sculptures and art installations for performance-based work, including projects with Kronos Quartet, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Barbican, Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. His artistic collaborators have included Bill Viola, Gronk, Peter Sellars, Steve Reich and Beryl Korot, the renowned architecture firm Olson Kundig Architects, and Saint Genet. Zamora has created large-scale installations and sculptures for the Park Avenue Armory in New York, The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, Art Basel/Design Miami, Kunsthalle Krems in Austria, The Frye Art Museum, Suyama Space, as well as a number of other galleries, museums, private art collections, and public art projects.

Sharath Patel *(Sound Designer*) grew up splitting his time between Appalachia and India while spending the following years studying across Europe and New England. Before finding a home in Portland, he spent nearly a decade as a lead sound designer in New York City. Design highlights include *Grand Concourse, Tribes, The Price* (Artists Rep)*; Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Profile Theatre)*; The Setup* (Cygnet Productions)*; Free Outgoing* (East West Players/ Boom Arts)*; The Piano Lesson, The Brother/ Sister Plays, Jitney* (Portland Playhouse). International design credits in NYC, D.C., Boston, Aspen, Norfolk, Raleigh, Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, India, France, England, Germany, and Romania. Sharath holds a B.F.A. from Ohio University and a M.F.A. in Sound Design from the Yale School of Drama. In 2014 he received the Kennedy Center Meritorious Achievement Award for Sound Design (*Far Away*). Currently, Sharath is Resident Artist at Artists Rep.

Jeffrey K. Hanson *(Stage Manager)* Now in his 27th season at ACT, Hanson has stage managed more than 70 shows including *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris; Mr. Burns, a post electric play; Little Shop of Horrors; Sugar Daddies; The Pinter Festival; The Pitmen Painters; Double Indemnity; In the Next Room, or the vibrator play; Becky's New Car; The Lieutenant of Inishmore; Das Barbecü; The Women; Stuff Happens; The Pillowman; Mourning Becomes Electra; A Skull in Connemara; Quills; Laughter on the 23rd Floor; The Gospel at Colonus; Halcyon Days; The Revengers' Comedies;* and *Lloyd's Prayer.* At The 5th Avenue Theatre, he has been production stage manager for *A Night With Janis Joplin, How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying, A Chorus Line, Oklahoma!, Candide, Irving Berlin's White Christmas, HelloDolly!,* and *Mame.* He has stage managed *Metamorphoses, The Cider House Rules, Parts One and Two* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); and for Seattle Children's Theatre, Intiman, and Arizona Theatre Company.

John Langs *(Artistic Director*) John has been delighted to serve as ACT's Artistic Director in 2016, and previously as Associate Artistic Director of ACT for three years. John's 16-year freelance career has afforded him the opportunity to work with many prestigious theatre companies across the country. He has directed productions at Playwrights Horizons NY, Ensemble Studio Theater NY, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Lookingglass Theater Company in Chicago, Circle X in Los Angeles, The Resident Ensemble, New Century Theatre Company, Washington Ensemble Theatre, and Seattle Shakespeare Company. John received his directing degree fromthe University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Some of his favorite directing credits include T*he Shaggs Philosophy of the World* (LA Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Original Musical), and *Brothers Karamazov* (seven LADCC Awards including Best Production of the year and Best Direction) and directing Kurt Beattie in *King Lear*. John received the first annual Seattle Gregory Award honoring excellence in direction for The Adding Machine. Recent Seattle credits include *Mary's Wedding* (NCTC), *The Three Sisters* (The Seagull Project), and *Othello* (Seattle Shakespeare Company). As a dedicated fan of original work, John has shepherded over a dozen projects to their premieres.

Carlo Scandiuzzi *(Executive Director*) is a founder of Agate Films and Clear Pictures, producing such films as *Prototype, Dark Drive, Outpatient,* and *The Flats*, and Indieflix, a distribution company. In 1979, Scandiuzzi started Modern Productions, bringing to Seattle such legendary bands as The Police, Devo, Nina Hagen, Iggy Pop, The Ramones, John Cale, Robert Fripp, James Brown, Muddy Waters, and many more. He performed in several plays at Empty Space

Theatre including *Aunt Dan and Lemon, The Return of Pinocchio,* and *Dracula.* In the early '80s, he collaborated with many Seattle performance artists such as Norman Durkee, Alan Lande, and Jesse Bernstein. He also acted in various films including *Bugsy, The Public Eye, Another You, Casanova's Kiss*, and *Killing Zoe.* He graduated from the Ecole Superieure D'Art Dramatique of Geneva. Carlo currently serves as a member of the Seattle Arts Commission.

Becky Witmer *(Managing Director)* has been with ACT since 2011, serving as the General Manager (2014-2015) and also the Director of Marketing and Communications (2011-2014). Becky began her career in arts management through marketing and communications. She was the Director of Marketing and Public Relations at Intiman Theatre (2008-2011) and Opera Colorado (2006-2008). She was the Associate Director of Marketing with Central City Opera (2002-2005). Becky is an advisory board member for TeenTix, a founding co-chair of the Cultural Resource Collective, an Arts Business Consultant with Shunpike, and she frequently appears as a guest lecturer for Seattle University's Arts Leadership M.F.A. program. She is a graduate of the Leadership Tomorrow program.

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Dialogue continued

I also love hearing from teens who do not participate in any other kinds of art activities in their day-to-day lives. We have a young woman right now on the New Guard, our Teen Arts Leadership Society, named Elizabeth. She goes to Aviation High School in Tukwila, which is a STEM high school. She says that TeenTix taught her that you don't have to be an artist to be a part of the arts community, and that art is now a huge part of her life and the way she engages with the world—she never expected that to happen. People like Elizabeth are so important for the health of this community, and we need to be nurturing their interest and inviting them to participate in every way that we can.

What are some TeenTix memories that will stick with you?

Oh, golly. So many. You are asking me this at a particularly tender time, with me stepping down at the end of October. One memory that is really indelible is a young woman named Olivia Menzer. She was an athlete, primarily, in high school, but she started writing reviews for the TeenTix blog, and then she participated in a little experiment we were doing with On the Boards for a bit called the Contemporary Performance Cool Kids Club where a group of teens committed to seeing everything in OtB's season for one year and then they would get together on Saturdays with Dave Schmader and just talk about it. That program was one of the better things we've done. Anyway, that season OtB produced a conversation hosted by CultureBot where they asked a bunch of different audience types to give short talks about their experiences with contemporary performance. Olivia was one of them, and she just blew the walls down. She was so honest and vulnerable about her anxiety and confusion about some of the work she had seen, and so passionate about what it meant to her and how it had

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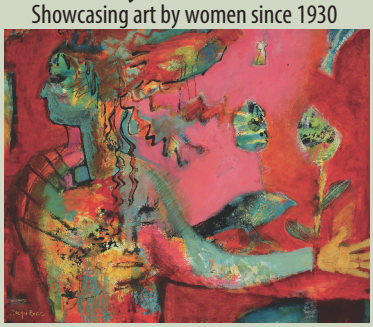
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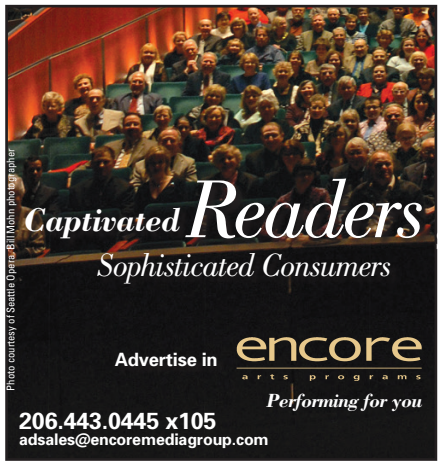

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changed her. This was four years ago, I think, and people still tell me about the impact that her five-minute speech had on them, just allowing people—some of whom consider themselves to be very sophisticated arts goers—to kind of reclaim their "beginners mind" and feel comfortable saying "I don't know what that was, but here's how it made me feel." For me, that is the power of inviting young people into our arts spaces. They are still in learning mode, they're still in the student part of their lives, so they can be less shy about asking questions and just engaging with something where they are, which then makes that easier for everybody else. There is so much that we, as established arts audiences, have to learn and gain from inviting young people into "our" spaces.

How can someone get involved in TeenTix?

This year, we expect to send about 15,000 teens through the doors of our region's arts organizations. TeenTix is a pure service organization—we get no revenue from the ticket sales that we facilitate. We rely entirely on the generosity of the community to keep doing what we do. Luckily, this community has really stepped up and said, "Yes, we want to be a place where all teens—regardless of their background or income—have access to the arts." So, donating money is a great way to get involved and join that movement. We are growing just as fast as we can to keep up with the demand for our work, but we could double our staff tomorrow and everybody would still have more than enough to do.

If someone is interested in learning more about TeenTix, our annual gala, The Teeny Awards, is a great starting point. This year it will be October 9th at Benaroya Hall. It's a perfect opportunity to get to hang out with some arts-passionate teens, and support TeenTix. People always tell me that they leave the event feeling really optimistic about the future of this community. That's how I feel every day, so it's nice to get to share that feeling. ■

Intermission Brain Transmission

Are you waiting for the curtain to rise? Or, perhaps, you've just returned your seat before the second act and have a few minutes to spare? Treat your brain to this scintillating TRIVIA QUIZ!

Email us the answer to the last question and have a chance to win tickets to a show!

1) What Shakespeare play contains one of the most famous stage directions of all time: *Exit, pursued by a bear*?

   a) *Love's Labour's Lost*
   b) *The Tempest*
   c) *The Winter's Tale*
   d) *Measure for Measure*

2) Taproot Theatre's presenting *Joyful Noise* about the life and times of composer George Frederick Handel. What famous piece did he compose?

   a) *Brandenburg Concertos*
   b) *Ode to Joy*
   c) *Messiah*
   d) *Moonlight Sonata*

3) ACT Theatre is presenting The Royale, by Marco Ramirez, a play inspired by history's first African-American heavyweight champion. Who was that boxer?

   a) Joe Louis
   b) Jack Johnson
   c) Jersey Joe Walcott
   d) Joe Gans

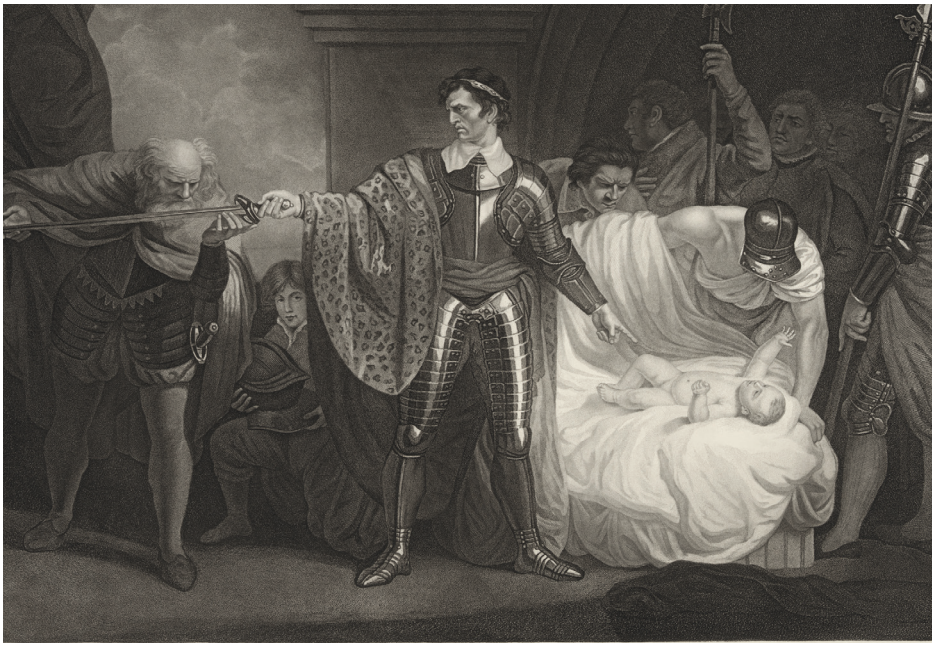

Illustration of a scene from *The Winter's Tale* by John Opie, public domain

4) Book-It Repertory Theatre is presenting *A Tale for the Time Being*, directed by Desdemona Chang. Based, in part, on the devastating tsunami that hit Japan in 2011, who wrote the novel?

   a) Ruth Ozeki
   b) Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
   c) Ursula Le Guin
   d) Louise Erdich

5) In what year did Seattle have its first production of a Shakespeare play?

   a) 1865
   b) 1875
   c) 1895
   d) 1905

Bonus Question

What was the last performance you attended that you liked best and why?

Email production@encoremediagroup.com or tweet to @EncoreArts with #EncoreStages and be entered to win two tickets to an upcoming Encore Arts performance.

ANSWERS 1) C – *The Winter's Tale*. One of Shakespeare's late romances, it was first performed in 1611. 2) C – Messiah. Composed in 1741, it was originally written for Easter services. 3) B – Jack Johnson. Johnson became champion in 1908, defeating white boxer Tommy Burns. 4) A – Ruth Ozeki. Ozeki, a Zen Buddhist priest, was on the Man Booker Prize shortlist for the novel. 5) B – 1875. The Fanny Morgan Phelps Company performed *The Taming of The Shrew*. Bonus Question: Email your response to production@encoremediagroup.com with Trivia Quiz in the subject line.

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