McCARTER THEATRE CENTER PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF KEN LUDWIG’S
THE GODS OF COMEDY

In association with The Old Globe

Princeton, NJ: A young Classics professor puts her career—and her love life—in peril, and calls on the gods of Ancient Greece to save her. Things don’t go according to plan when the gods who show up are The Gods of Comedy!

Thus begins the latest tour-de-force by comic genius Ken Ludwig, the two-time Olivier Award-winning playwright who penned Lend Me a Tenor, Moon over Buffalo, and many other tales beloved by theatergoers around the world. The Gods of Comedy is the fourth premiere of Mr. Ludwig’s at McCarter following Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery, A Comedy of Tenors, and his thrilling adaptation of Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express.

The Gods of Comedy is directed by Amanda Dehnert (Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery at McCarter) and runs March 12 – 31 in the Matthews Theatre. Press opening is Saturday, March 16 at 8 p.m. Tickets start at $25. The play is produced in association with The Old Globe.

About the play, McCarter Artistic Director Emily Mann said “It has been one of the great joys of my career to produce four world premieres by Ken in the past five seasons. Each previous work was a joy to create, and The Gods of Comedy will be no different. It is Ken at his very best—combining wit, theatricality, delight, and scholarship into a piece that at its heart is simply great fun.”

Playwright Ken Ludwig added “McCarter has become my artistic home, and I love coming back to this magical place. To work hand in hand with a theatre of this caliber has been one of highlights of my career. And of course, there is no one else like Emily Mann, it’s a privilege to work with her. The Gods of Comedy is a story about making your life an adventure, and therefore very near to my heart.

The cast consists of seven artists making their McCarter debuts, including Jessie Cannizzaro (Puffs at New World Stages); Steffanie Leigh (the title role in Broadway’s Mary Poppins); Jevon McFerrin (Hamilton on Broadway, Smokey Robinson in Motown on Broadway); Keira Naughton (Broadway’s The Rivals, Three Sisters); Brad Oscar (numerous Broadway credits including Tony Award® nominations for Something Rotten! and The Producers); George Psomas (Broadway’s South Pacific and Fiddler on the Roof); and Shay Vawn (soot and spit at The New Ohio Theatre).
The design team includes a mix of new and returning McCarter artists including Drama Desk and Lortel Award nominated scenic designer Jason Sherwood (recently: Rent the musical, Live on Fox!); costume designer Linda Roethke (Richard III at The Public); lighting designer Brian Gale (dozens of theater credits, 24 years with The Walt Disney Company); sound designer Darron L West (McCarter’s Murder on the Orient Express); wig designer Carissa Thorlakson (McCarter’s A Christmas Carol); and illusion designer Jim Steinmeyer (Into the Woods, Beauty and the Beast on Broadway).

About Playwright Ken Ludwig
Ken Ludwig is a two-time Olivier Award-winning playwright who has written over 28 plays and musicals, including six shows on Broadway and 7 in London’s West End. Lend Me a Tenor won two Tony Awards® and was called “one of the classic comedies of the 20th century” by The Washington Post. Additional awards include the Helen Hayes Award, the Edgar Award for Best Mystery of the Year, The Samuel French Award for Lifetime Achievement, and The Edwin Forrest Award for Contributions to the American Theatre. His Broadway plays have starred Alec Baldwin, Carol Burnett, Tony Shalhoub, Lynn Redgrave, and Kristin Bell. His book How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare won the Falstaff Award for Best Shakespeare Book of the Year. His best known works include Crazy for You (5 years on Broadway, Tony® and Olivier Awards for Best Musical); Moon Over Buffalo; Baskerville: A Comedy of Tenors; Sherwood; and a stage version of Murder on the Orient Express written expressly at the request of the Agatha Christie Estate. He holds degrees from Harvard, where he studied music with Leonard Bernstein, and Cambridge University. His work has been performed in over 30 countries in more than 20 languages, and is produced somewhere in the United States every night of the year.

About Director Amanda Dehnert
Recent: West Side Story (Carnegie Hall at The Knockdown Center). World Premieres: Kate Hamill’s Pride and Prejudice (Primary Stages NY, Seattle Rep, Hudson Valley Shakespeare); Ken Ludwig’s Baskerville (McCarter/Arena Stage); Eastland: A New Musical (also orchestration, Lookingglass Theatre Company); Cloudlands (Adam Gwon/Octavio Solis, South Coast Repertory). As director/composer/adaptor: Love’s Labor’s Lost, Timon of Athens (Oregon Shakespeare Fest.); The Verona Project (California Shakespeare Theatre); Peter Pan (Lookingglass Theatre Company); Richard III (Public Theater Mobile Unit). Other: Little Shop of Horrors (Cleveland Playhouse), The Fantasticks (Trinity Rep, Long Wharf, Arena Stage, South Coast Rep), Into the Woods, Julius Caesar (Oregon Shakespeare Fest.), My Fair Lady (Oregon Shakespeare Fest., Cleveland Playhouse, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Virginia Stage, Trinity Rep.), Death of a Salesman (Dallas Theatre Center), Cabaret (Stratford Shakespeare Festival).

Cast and Creative Team Bios
Steffanie Leigh (Zoe/Brooklyn) Broadway: War Paint (Dorian Leigh), Gigi (Liane d’Exelmans), Mary Poppins (Mary Poppins). National Tour: Mary Poppins (Mary Poppins). NYC/regional: Passion (Signature Theatre); Dani Girl (Exit, Pursued by a Bear); Venus in Fur (Singapore Repertory Theatre); Jaques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris (Alliance Theatre); Into the Woods, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera). TV: Blacklist, Blind Spot, Mysteries of Laura, The Following, The Good Wife, Members Only. Film: Seaside, Easter Mysteries, American Dresser, Progress (and unrelated things), They’re Out of the Business. BFA acting/musical theatre, Carnegie Mellon. www.steffanieleigh.com

Jevon McFerrin (Ralph) is originally from San Francisco, CA; and currently lives in Brooklyn, New York. He is a graduate of The American Academy of Dramatic Arts NYC (03-05). Most recently Jevon was in Hamilton on Broadway as the Principle Standby for Alexander Hamilton and the Sons of Liberty, Simeon the Leper in Cinco Paul’s A.D.16 for the NAMT Festival, Smokey Robinson in Motown on Broadway, Dennis in Daniel Beaty’s Tearing Down the Walls for which he received an Audelco Award nomination (Outstanding Male Performance in a Musical), T. Schreiber Studio’s award-winning production of Balm in Gilead, and Benny in RENT at the Hangar Theatre (Ithaca, NY). Visit him at www.Jevonmcferrin.com

Keira Naughton (Dean Trickett) Broadway: The Rivals, Dance of Death, Three Sisters. Off-Broadway: These Paper Bullets, The Jammer, Hunting and Gathering, Indoor/Outdoor, All My Sons, The American Clock, among others. Regional credits include Evanston Salt Costs Climbing (New Neighborhood/White Heron), Church & State (Berkshire Theater Grp), These Paper Bullets (Geffen Playhouse and Yale Rep), Elevada (Yale Rep), I Saw My Neighbor on the Train and I Didn’t Even Smile (New Neighborhood/BJT), A Delicate Balance (Yale Rep), The Dining Room (Westport), Becky Shaw (Huntington), Proof (Helen Hayes Award nomination), Company (Kennedy Center Sondheim Celebration). Keira directed the world premiere of Cedars by Erik Tarloff at Berkshire Theatre Group and she directed at the 92nd Street Y Lyrics and Lyricists series. TV/Film: The Exorcist (Fox), Body of Proof, 3 Lbs., Law & Order: SVU, Sex and the City, The Independents, Book of Shadows: Blair Witch 2, and Cradle Will Rock. She is a founding member of New Neighborhood. She is a singer/songwriter in the theatrical band The Petersons. MFA from NYU.

Brad Oscar (Dionysus) Broadway: Something Rotten! (Tony Award® nomination), Big Fish, Nice Work If You Can Get It, The Addams Family, Spamalot, The Producers (Tony Award® nomination), Jekyll & Hyde, Aspects of Love. National Tour: The Phantom of the Opera, Young Frankenstein, Jekyll & Hyde. West End: The Producers. Off-Broadway: Nassim, Sweeney Todd (Barrow Street), Forbidden Broadway (Encores!), Annie Get Your Gun, Bells Are Ringing, and Do Re Mi. Regional: The Squirrels (La Jolla Playhouse); Fiddler on the Roof (Barrington Stage); Barnum (Asolo Rep/Maltz Jupiter-Carbonell Award, Best Actor in a Musical); The Mystery of Irma Vep, Cabaret, and Damn Yankees (Arena Stage); The First Wives Club (The Old Globe). Film: Ghost Town, The Producers. Television: Madam Secretary, Smash, The Good Wife, three Law & Orders.

George Psomas (Aristide/Aleski/Ares) was in the 2015 Broadway production of Fiddler on the Roof, and the 2008 Broadway production of South Pacific. Other theatre includes the world premiere
productions of Sex and Other Disturbances (Portland Stage); Errol and Fidel (NYMF, Best Supporting Actor Award); and Play It By Heart (Human Race Theatre Co.). George recently made his Carnegie Hall debut singing “Somewhere” from West Side Story honoring Academy Award Winner George Chakiris. Film: Jersey Shore Massacre, Family on Board, and Bittersweet Sixteen. Print: Vogue Magazine in Romeo & Juliet by photographer Annie Leibovitz. George was also the 2016, 2017, 2018 Host of Broadway Under The Stars in NYC and the season 2 winner of Broadway Idol. Instagram @George_Psomas

Shay Vawn (Daphne) is delighted to make her regional debut with this incredible ensemble. NYC credits: soot and spit (Charles Mee world premiere; The New Ohio Theatre) and the 52nd St Project. TV: DEVS (FX) and Instinct (CBS). Training: NYU Graduate Acting @dictionarydame

Jason Sherwood (Scenic Design) is a Drama Desk Award, Lucille Lortel Award, and Henry Hewes Design Award nominee. He recently designed Rent the musical, Live on Fox; Sam Smith’s Arena World Tour and campaign TV appearances (including Grammys, SNL, Ellen); and the People’s Choice Awards on E!. Upcoming: the Spice Girls World Tour, and the Broadway revival of The Secret Garden. More designs at New York Theatre Workshop, Playwright’s Realm, Rattlestick, the Old Globe, American Repertory Theatre, Guthrie, among many others. Online: @JasonSherwoodDesign

Linda Roethke (Costume Design) Off-Broadway: Richard III (The Public Theater). Regional: Indecent (Arena Stage and Baltimore Center Stage); Oklahoma!, Richard II, Into the Woods, King Lear, As You Like It, Julius Caesar, All’s Well That Ends Well (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); Hand to God, The Geller Girls, Managing Maxine, The Underpants, Shadowlands (Alliance Theatre); The Game’s Afoot (Cleveland Playhouse); The Good Book, Water by the Spoonful, The Dead, Orlando (Court Theatre); Stage Kiss, The Clean House (Goodman Theatre); Visiting Edna, Mary Page Marlowe, Motherf**ker with the Hat, Dead Man’s Cell Phone, Intimate Apparel (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); Indecent, Sweeney Todd, Sunday in the Park with George (Kansas City Repertory Theatre); Miss Saigon (The Paramount Theatre). Cincinnati Playhouse, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Connecticut Repertory Theatre, Arden Theatre Company, Center Stage, Maltz Jupiter Theatre, American Players Theatre, and Northlight Theatre. Other credits: co-director of the MFA Design Program at Northwestern University. Awards: Jeff Award (An Ideal Husband, Court Theatre); Suzi Bass nominations (The Geller Girls and The Underpants, Alliance Theatre); Connecticut Circle nomination (A Little Night Music, Connecticut Repertory Theatre). Education: MFA, University of Iowa.

Brian Gale (Lighting Design) Credits include: All My Sons, Two Trains Running (Matrix Theater); El Nino, Mexican Day, 100 Aprils (Rogue Machine); Punk Rock (Odyssey); God of Carnage, Carrie the Musical (La Mirada); Red, Disgraced (San Diego Rep.); Little Shop of Horrors (Cleveland Playhouse); Hugh Jackman One Night Only (Dolby Theater). Lighting & projection design for Sleepless in Seattle: The Musical, lighting for Intimate Apparel and The Heiress (Pasadena Playhouse). Lighting and projection for Waiting for Godot, lighting for The Lieutenant of Inishmore and Harps’ and Angels (The Mark Taper Forum). Projection for Eurydice, lighting for Doctor’s Dilemma (A Noise Within). Lighting and projection for LA Opera’s complete Ring Cycle. 24 years with the Walt Disney Company, he
continues to consult on theme parks, shows and special events worldwide. Mr. Gale is a member of IATSE USA Local 829.

**Darron L West** (Sound Design) McCarter: A Christmas Carol (2016-18); Murder on the Orient Express; Bathing In Moonlight; Hoodwinked; Baby Doll; Into the Woods; The Convert; Fetch Clay, Make Man; Me, Myself & I; Stick Fly; Miss Witherspoon; Hamlet; The Bells; and Crowns (2002). He is a Tony® and Obie Award-winning sound designer whose work for dance and theater has been heard in over 500 productions in the U.S. and internationally in 14 countries. His accolades include the Drama Desk, Lortel, Audelco, and Princess Grace Foundation Statue Awards among many others.

**Carissa Thorlakson** (Wig Design) is a New Jersey-based wig and makeup designer. She has recently designed Grand Hotel and Little Rock off-Broadway. She is currently in her sixth season with McCarter, where her design work includes A Christmas Carol (2013-2018), Simpatico, The Mousetrap, and All the Days. She has designed for Temple University, Olney Theatre Center, the University of Delaware Resident Ensemble Players, The Princeton Festival, American Repertory Ballet, and the NewArts group in Newtown, CT. She has served as a wig and makeup artist at Santa Fe Opera, Sarasota Opera, The Kennedy Center, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Signature Theatre, and Round House Theatre. Carissa also creates custom medical wigs, cosplay wigs, and teaches classes in wig and makeup. You can find her at [CThorwigs.com](http://CThorwigs.com) and @wigician.

**Jim Steinmeyer** (Illusion Design) The New York Times calls him the “celebrated invisible man, designer and creative brain behind many of the great stage magicians.” His illusions have been featured by Doug Henning, Siegfried and Roy, David Copperfield, Ricky Jay, and many others. He created the special illusions for Broadway, including: Beauty and the Beast, Into the Woods, The Scarlet Pimpernel, Mary Poppins, and Aladdin. He’s also the author of books on the history and practice of magic.


**About McCarter Theatre Center**
Under the leadership of award-winning playwright and Artistic Director Emily Mann, Managing Director Michael S. Rosenberg, and Special Programming Director William W. Lockwood, McCarter’s mission is to create world-class theater and present the finest artists for the engagement, education, and entertainment of the community. Winner of the 1994 Tony Award® for Outstanding Regional Theatre, world premieres include Christopher Durang’s Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike (2013 Tony® – Best Play); Tarell Alvin McCraney’s The Brother/Sister Plays; Emily Mann’s Having Our Say; and Danai Gurira’s The Convert. McCarter brings artists from around the world to Princeton, New Jersey including Angelique Kidjo, Esperanza Spalding, David Sedaris, and more. Education and
outreach efforts serve tens of thousands through student matinees, in-school residencies, and adult classes. More at mccarter.org.

About The Old Globe
The Tony Award®-winning Old Globe, now in its 84th year, is San Diego’s flagship arts institution and one of the country’s leading regional theatres. Under Erna Finci Viterbi Artistic Director Barry Edelstein and Managing Director Timothy J. Shields, The Old Globe produces a year-round season of 16 productions, including its renowned Shakespeare Festival. More than 250,000 people attend Globe productions annually, including the Globe for All Tour, which brings free professional productions to diverse and underserved audiences. World premieres such as A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder, Bright Star, Allegiance, The Full Monty, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, and Dr. Seuss’s How the Grinch Stole Christmas! have been developed at The Old Globe and gone on to successful runs on Broadway and across the country.

Ken Ludwig’s THE GODS OF COMEDY—PRODUCTION FACTS
CREATIVE, PRODUCTION, AND DESIGN TEAM
By: Ken Ludwig
Direction: Amanda Dehnert
Scenic design: Jason Sherwood
Costume design: Linda Roethke
Lighting design: Brian Gale
Sound design: Darron L West
Wig design: Carissa Thorlakson
Illusion design: Jim Steinmeyer
Casting: Tara Rubin Casting
Stage manager: Alison Cote
Production stage manager: Cheryl Mintz
Resident producer: Debbie Bisno
Director of production: Dixie Uffelman
Managing director: Michael S. Rosenberg
Artistic director/resident playwright: Emily Mann
Produced in association with The Old Globe

THE CAST (in order of appearance)
Aristide/Aleksi/Ares: George Psomas
Daphne: Shay Vawn
Dean Trickett: Keira Naughton
Ralph: Jevon McFerrin
Zoe/Brooklyn: Steffanie Leigh
Dionysus: Brad Oscar
Thalia: Jessie Cannizzaro

*The Actors and Stage Managers in this production are members of Actors Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.
Ken Ludwig’s *The Gods of Comedy* is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Ken Ludwig’s *The Gods of Comedy* is sponsored by PNC Bank. Hospitality sponsor for this production is Residence Inn Marriott.

**Ticket Information and Performance Schedule**

Ken Ludwig’s *The Gods of Comedy* runs March 12 – 31 in the Matthews Theatre. Tickets start at $25 and are on sale now online at mccarter.org, by phone at (609) 258-2787, or in person at the McCarter Ticket Office, located at 91 University Place in Princeton.

The production’s running time is 90 minutes, plus one 15 minute intermission.

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**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Dialogue on Drama**

Sunday, March 17 after the 2p.m. matinee performance

An in-depth post-show interview, offering audiences a window into the artistic process of bringing a play to life. The interview is followed by questions and reflections from the audience. *This is a free event, no RSVP required.*
**Post-Show Discussions**  
**Sunday, March 24 and Thursday, March 28**  
Post-show discussions are interactive conversations facilitated by a member of McCarter’s artistic staff, often featuring cast members. Post-show discussions occur directly following the 2 p.m. performance on Sunday, March 24 and the 7:30 p.m. performance on Thursday, March 28.

**Inside Story**  
Join us 45 minutes before every performance for a talk led by a member of McCarter’s artistic staff. Hear about what inspired the play and more. All Inside Story talks take place in the Matthews Theatre unless otherwise noted in the lobby upon arrival.

**Yankee Doodle Tap Room Dinner Package**  
**Thursday, March 28 at 5 p.m.**  
Take advantage of this special “dinner and a show” offer*, as McCarter partners with Princeton’s own Yankee Doodle Tap Room. Prior to the 7:30 p.m. performance of Ken Ludwig’s *The Gods of Comedy*, enjoy free parking at the Chambers or Hulfish Garage and 3 course meal at the Yankee Doodle Tap Room.

*Adult packages start at $74.84, children’s packages start at $41.80. Price includes one ticket to the performance. Restrictions may apply.

For further inquiries and more information, contact: Tom Miller, Director of Public Relations  
tmiller@mccarter.org | 609.258.6524 | 91 University Place, Princeton, NJ 08540 | mccarter.org