Direct from its acclaimed world-premiere run in Chicago, Lookingglass Theatre Company returns to McCarter with a galvanic adaptation of Shelley’s undying story, running October 15 – November 3.

PRINCETON, NJ: An eerie evening of ghost stories crackles to life as Mary Shelley spins her tale of love, horror, power, and unholy experimentation. This visceral new adaptation from Lookingglass Theatre Company brings together inventive staging, acrobatics, and a completely “novel” in-the-round experience to McCarter’s Matthews Stage.

Mary Shelley herself (played by Cordelia Dewdney) rests at the core of Catlin’s bold theatrical adaptation. Ahead of her time in more ways than one, the author was only eighteen when she conceived of Frankenstein. Shelley experiences a lifetime of love and passion, of tragedy and loss, all of which unfolds on page and stage as her characters navigate a new age of science and unintended consequences. Two hundred years later, this cautionary tale looms large as we grapple with the ramifications of synthetic biology, AI, and ever-invasive algorithms.

“I’m fascinated by the blur between Mary Shelley’s story of creation, rejection, and destruction and her own life of love, loss, and abandonment. How does the human heart survive desolation and misery?” notes director/adaptor David Catlin. “This is a story that continues to unsettle us.”

McCarter Theatre Center Artistic Director and Resident Playwright Emily Mann added, “When I heard that David Catlin was adapting Frankenstein through the lens of Mary Shelley’s life and experience, my heart started to pound because it was such an exciting idea. The artistry of Lookingglass plus the genius of Mary Shelley seemed to me to be a perfect marriage. I believe that this story’s extraordinary power will blow the roof off of this theater.”

The cast includes Walter Briggs (Percy Bysshe Shelley), Debo Balogun (Dr. John Polidori), Cordelia Dewdney (Mary Shelley), Keith D. Gallagher (Lord Byron), and Amanda Raquel Martinez (Claire Clairmont). All are making their McCarter Theatre Center debuts.

The creative team includes Daniel Ostling (scenic design), Sully Ratke (costume design), William C. Kirkham (lighting design), Rick Sims (sound design/composition), and Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi (circus and movement design).
About the Artists

David Catlin (Adaptation and Direction) is a founding member ensemble member, actor, writer, director, and former Artistic Director of Lookingglass Theatre Company in Chicago. Previous McCarter directing/writing credit: Lookingglass Alice. Recent direction and/or adaptation credits include: Moby Dick, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and The Little Prince, and Icarus. In addition to Lookingglass, regional credits include: The Alliance in Atlanta, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Adrienne Arsht Center, The Getty Villa, Syracuse Stage, Actors Theater of Louisville, Arden Theatre, and The New Victory on 42nd Street. David is an Artistic Associate with Actors Gymnasium and serves on the acting faculty at Northwestern University.

Debo Balogun (Dr. John Polidori) is an actor/poet from Chicago, IL and is thrilled to be making his McCarter and regional theatre debut! Chicago theatre credits: Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (Lookingglass Theatre Company); Red Rex, Zurich (Steep Theatre Company); You Can’t Take It With You; Fair Maid of the West (Oak Park Festival Theatre); Mary’s Wedding (First Folio Theatre); Moon Man Walk (Definition Theatre Company); and Bobby Pin Girls (Nothing Without a Company). Debo is an Artistic Associate with Oak Park Festival Theatre and is proudly represented by Gray Talent Group. debobalogun.com

Walter Briggs (Percy Bysshe Shelley) is making his McCarter debut. He is an artistic associate of Lookingglass and has appeared in their productions of Act(s) of God, 20,000 Leagues Under the Seas, Moby Dick, Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo, and The North China Lover. Regional credits: American Repertory Theater, Arena Stage, South Coast Repertory, Alliance Theatre, and The Getty Villa. Chicago credits include: Sucker Punch (Victory Gardens Theater), Hit The Wall (The Inconvenience/Steppenwolf Theatre Company), All Our Tragic (The Hypocrites), The Glass Menagerie (Mary-Arrchie Theatre Co.), and A Red Orchid Theater. TV/Film credits include: Chicago Med, Kappa Force, Jessica, I Don’t Care, A Good Person, Ballad, and Older Children.

Cordelia Dewdney (Mary Shelley) is overjoyed to be at McCarter and back on the East Coast where she grew up! Previous credits include Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, Hard Times, and Moby Dick at Lookingglass Theatre in Chicago. She has toured with Moby Dick to South Coast Repertory, Arena Stage, and the Alliance Theatre, and has worked with the Shakespeare Project of Chicago. Television and Film credits include Chicago Med. Cordelia is a graduate from Northwestern University where she studied Theatre and English Literature.

Keith D. Gallagher (Lord Byron) McCarter debut. Chicago: Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, Beyond Caring (Lookingglass Theatre Company); Breach (Victory Gardens); Mary Page Marlowe, Marie Antoinette (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); The Gospel of Franklin, Man In Love (Steppenwolf First Look); Awake and Sing, Lieutenant of Inishmore (Northlight Theatre); Shining City (Goodman); Arcadia (Court Theatre); The Real Thing (Remy Bumppo); Tracks (TUTA). Regional: Macbeth (Denver Center for the Performing Arts); A Raisin in the Sun (Geva Theatre Center); The Gospel According to James (Indiana Repertory); Lieutenant of Inishmore (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis). TV: Chicago Med, Chicago P.D., Chicago Fire, Empire. Film: Orders.
Amanda Raquel Martinez (Claire Claremont) is grateful to make her McCarter debut! She last worked with Lookingglass Theatre on Big Lake, Big City. A New York City native, she has performed at HERE Arts Center and various music venues around NYC. Regional credits include: Ghost Quartet (Black Button Eyes Productions); La Ruta (Steppenwolf); 33 to Nothing (A Red Orchid Theatre); Kitty Hawk (Adrienne Arsht Center), Pirates of Penzance and The Mikado (Olney Theatre Center/Pasadena Playhouse/Skirball Center); Cinderella at the Theater of Potatoes (Hypocrites); As You Like It and Love, Loss and What I Wore (First Folio Theatre); For the Love Of (Pride Films and Plays); Even Longer and Farther Away (The New Colony); El Stories: The Holiday Train (Waltzing Mechanics); Generation Sex (Teatro Luna).

Lookingglass Theatre Company
Inventive. Collaborative. Transformative. Lookingglass Theatre Company, recipient of the 2011 Regional Theatre Tony Award, was founded in 1988 by eight Northwestern University students. Now in its 32nd Season, Lookingglass is home to a multi-disciplined ensemble of artists who create story-centered theatrical work that is physical, aurally rich and visually metaphoric. The Company has staged 69 world premieres and produced work all across the United States. Lookingglass continues to expand its artistic, financial, and institutional boundaries under the guidance of Artistic Director Heidi Stillman, Executive Director Rachel L. Fink, Producing Director Philip R. Smith, Director of Community Engagement Andrew White, General Manager Michele Anderson, a 24-member artistic ensemble, 23 artistic associates, an administrative staff, and a dedicated board of directors. For more, visit lookingglasstheatre.org.

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 Rhiannon Giddens, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Hiromi, and more. Education and outreach efforts serve tens of thousands through student matinees, in-school residencies, and adult classes. More at mccarter.org.

MARY SHELLEY’S FRANKENSTEIN PRODUCTION FACTS
McCarter Theatre Center presents
Lookingglass Theatre Company’s production of
MARY SHELLEY’S FRANKENSTEIN
Adaptation and Direction: David Catlin
From the book by: Mary Shelley
Scenic Design/Original Composition: Daniel Ostling
Costume Design: Sully Ratke
Lighting Design: William C. Kirkham
Sound Design/Composer: Rick Sims
Circus and Movement Design: Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi
Rigging Design: Rigability Inc.
Property Design: Amanda Herrmann
Fight Choreography: Britain Willcock
Dialect Coach: Linda Gates
Casting: Philip R. Smith
Flying by Foy
Production Stage Manager: Mary Hungerford*
Stage Manager: Alison Cote*
Director of Production: Dixie Uffelman
Resident Producer: Debbie Bisno
Artistic Director/Resident Playwright: Emily Mann
Managing Director: Michael S. Rosenberg

THE CAST
Dr. John Polidori: Debo Balogun*
Percy Bysshe Shelley: Walter Briggs*
Mary Shelley: Cordelia Dewdney*
Lord Byron: Keith D. Gallagher*
Claire Clairmont: Amanda Raquel Martinez

*Denotes member of Actors Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

This work was supported by a Theatre Commissioning and Production Initiative grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein is sponsored by the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation.

Ticket Information and Performance Schedule
Lookingglass Theatre Company’s production of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein runs October 15 through November 3 in the Matthews Theatre. Tickets start at $25 and are available 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 2 hours, 20 minutes including one 15 minute intermission.

Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein is recommended for ages 12+.

Tuesday October 15 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday October 16 7:30 p.m.
Thursday October 17 7:30 p.m.
Friday October 18 8 p.m.
Saturday October 19 8 p.m. Opening Night
Sunday October 20 2 p.m. Dialogue on Drama
Wednesday October 23 7:30 p.m. 
Thursday October 24 7:30 p.m. Pride Night
Friday October 25 8 p.m.
Saturday October 26 2 p.m. Open Captioned
Saturday October 26 8 p.m.
Sunday October 27 2 p.m. Post-Performance Discussion
Thursday October 31 7:30 p.m. Post-Performance Discussion
Friday November 1 8 p.m.
Saturday November 2 2 p.m. ASL/Audio Description
Saturday November 2 8 p.m.
Sunday November 3 2 p.m. Closing

SPECIAL EVENTS

Frankenstein Filibuster: A Community Read-Aloud Event – Friday, October 4 at 12 p.m.
In celebration and anticipation of McCarter Theatre Center's presentation of Lookingglass Theatre Company's production of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, take part in reading Mary Shelley's breakthrough and groundbreaking novel—in its original 1818 “uncensored” version—from start to finish. All are invited and encouraged to attend—individuals, groups, families, teachers and students, and book and drama clubs. Readers are invited to sign up for a time slot by calling the library's Welcome Desk at (609) 924-9529 x1218. Drop-in readers and listeners are welcomed. This event will take place at The Princeton Public Library, located at 64 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ. No RSVP or ticket is required to attend this event; it is free and open to the public. This is a Princeton Public Library, Labyrinth Books, Arts Council of Princeton, and McCarter Theatre Center joint community partnership event.

Film and Post-Screening Conversation: Haifaa Al-Mansour’s Mary Shelley with Scholar Professor Susan Wolfson – Monday, October 7 at 7:30 p.m.
Join Princeton University Professor of English Susan Wolfson, co-editor of the award-winning The Annotated Frankenstein, at a screening of Haifaa al-Mansour’s Mary Shelley, written by Emma Jensen and featuring Elle Fanning in the title role. Following the screening, Professor Wolfson will share her perspective on the film as well as her vast knowledge of English novelist Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and her novel Frankenstein, as well as entertain questions from the audience. Tickets can be purchased through the Princeton Garden Theatre box office, located at 160 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ, or online HERE. This is a Princeton Garden Theatre, Princeton Public Library, and McCarter Theatre Center community partnership event.

Book Discussion: Charlotte Gordon’s Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley – Thursday, October 10 at 7 p.m.
Explore the life of Mary Shelley with author/historian Charlotte Gordon through a reading of
her National Book Critics Circle Award-winning biography Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley. The Distinguished Professor of Humanities at Endicott College will share how she came to write the book and talk about pioneering feminist Wollstonecraft’s profound influence on “the daughter she never knew” and how the rise of science and life with radical poet-philosopher Shelley led to the younger Mary’s creation of Frankenstein. This event will take place at The Arts Council of Princeton, located at 102 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ. No RSVP or ticket is required to attend this event; it is free and open to the public. This is a Princeton Public Library, Labyrinth Books, Arts Council of Princeton, and McCarter Theatre Center joint community partnership event.

Dialogue on Drama – Sunday, October 20 following the 2 p.m. performance
An in-depth post-show interview with director/playwright David Catlin 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, October 27 and Thursday, October 31
Post-show discussions are interactive conversations facilitated by a member of McCarter’s artistic staff, often featuring cast members. Post-show discussions occur following the 2 p.m. performance on Sunday, October 27 and the 7:30 p.m. performance on Thursday, October 31.

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, its unique style, and more. All Inside Story talks take place in the Matthews Theatre unless otherwise noted in the lobby upon arrival.

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

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