TWO-TIME ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE MARY McDONNELL TO STAR IN GLORIA: A LIFE AT McCARTER THEATRE CENTER

Gloria: A Life runs September 6 – October 6 and is produced in association with American Repertory Theater at Harvard University

PRINCETON, NJ: Two-time Academy Award nominee Mary McDonnell has been cast in the title role of Gloria Steinem in Emily’ Mann’s Gloria: A Life, the opening production in McCarter Theatre Center’s 2019-2020 Theater Series.

A richly-detailed tapestry about one of the most inspiring and remarkable women of our time, the McCarter production features a dynamic all-female cast led by Mary McDonnell. The play premiered earlier this year with an acclaimed Off-Broadway run produced by Daryl Roth. The original direction by Tony Award®-winner Diane Paulus will be restaged by McCarter’s Artistic Director and Resident Playwright Emily Mann.

Ms. McDonnell commented “I am honored to be given the opportunity to represent the great Gloria Steinem onstage. This production is a gift, and I encourage anyone interested in experiencing this work to bring their daughters, their sisters, their mothers, their sons, their husbands, their friends to join us as we tell this story together.”

Making her McCarter debut, Ms. McDonnell has enjoyed a celebrated career across a variety of notable film and television projects including Dances with Wolves (Oscar and Golden Globe nomination), Passion Fish (Oscar and Golden Globe nomination), Independence Day, Major Crimes (Emmy nomination), Battlestar Galactica, ER (Emmy nomination), and Hulu’s Veronica Mars. Her stage career has included many projects with Emily Mann including Mann’s Still Life (Obie Award), and the Broadway production of Execution of Justice.

Director and playwright Emily Mann added “Gloria: A Life explores how we move forward together as a community. We have gathered an amazing cast for this production, including my dear friend and collaborator, the legendary actress, Mary McDonnell. Her take on Gloria Steinem will be nothing short of a revelation for McCarter audiences. I cannot wait to be back in a rehearsal room with her.”

Gloria Steinem first raised her voice five decades ago, championing equality for all. Today, her vision is more urgent than ever. The first act is Gloria’s story; the second is our own, as a “talking circle” emerges and the audience joins in conversation to share personal experiences. McCarter’s Berlind Theatre will be transformed into a unique in-the-round for the production.

Joining Ms. McDonnell will be a dynamic ensemble of performers including Gabrielle Beckford (McCarter’s 2018 revival of Regina Taylor’s ‘Crows’), Mierka Gierten (A Red Orchid Theatre’s production of Simpatico at McCarter), Patrena Murray (original cast of *Gloria: A Life*), Erika Stone (ensemble at Native Voices at the Autry in Los Angeles), Brenda Withers (Crimes of the Heart and A Midsummer Night’s Dream at McCarter), and Eunice Wong (Classic Stage Company’s Faust). *Gloria: A Life* reunites members of the original production’s design team with scenic designer Amy Rubin, costume designer Jessica Jahn, sound designers Robert Kaplowitz and Andrea Allmond, and projection designer Elaine J. McCarthy. The team is joined by lighting designer Jason Lyons (Skylight at McCarter). Casting for *Gloria: A Life* is provided by Tara Rubin, CSA.

[Click through for more on Gloria: A Life from Emily Mann](1 minute, 15 second video).

**Artists Biographies**

**Emily Mann** (Playwright, Artistic Director/Resident Playwright) is in her 30th and final season as Artistic Director and Resident Playwright. Her nearly 50 McCarter directing credits include acclaimed productions by Shakespeare, Chekhov, Ibsen, and Williams and the world premieres of Christopher Durang’s Turning Off the Morning News and Miss Witherspoon; Ken Ludwig’s Murder on the Orient Express; Rachel Bonds’ Five Mile Lake; Danai Gurira’s The Convert; Sarah Treem’s The How and the Why; and Edward Albee’s Me, Myself & I. Broadway: A Streetcar Named Desire, Anna in the Tropics, Execution of Justice, Having Our Say. Her plays: Having Our Say, adapted from the book by Sarah L. Delany and A. Elizabeth Delany with Amy Hill Hearth; Execution of Justice; Still Life; Annulla, An Autobiography; Greensboro (A Requiem); Meshugah; Mrs. Packard; and Hoodwinked (a Primer on Radical Islamism). Adaptations: Baby Doll, Scenes from a Marriage, Uncle Vanya, The Cherry Orchard, A Seagull in the Hamptons, The House of Bernarda Alba, Antigone. Currently in development: The Pianist. Awards include: Peabody, Hull Warriner, NAACP, Obies, Guggenheim; Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle nominations; a Princeton University Honorary Doctorate of Arts; a Helen Merrill Distinguished Playwrights’ Award; the Margo Jones Award given to a “citizen-of-the-theater who has demonstrated a lifetime commitment to the encouragement of the living theater everywhere”. During her 30 year tenure, Mann has committed to supporting the work of playwrights past, present, and future including: Ayad Akhtar, Edward Albee, David Auburn, Eleanor Burgess, Marina Carr, Nilo Cruz, Nathan Allan Davis, Lydia Diamond, Selina Fillinger, Athol Fugard, John Guare, Beth Henley, Naomi Iizuka, Arthur Kopit, Tarell Alvin McCraney, Lynn Nottage, Dael Orlandersmith, Will Power, Heather Raffo, Theresa Rebeck, Sarah Ruhl, Ntozake Shange, Regina Taylor, August Wilson, Doug Wright, and Mary Zimmerman. This year, she was awarded the TCG Visionary Leadership Award.

**Mary McDonnell** (Gloria Steinem) Theater includes: Off-Broadway: Emily Mann’s Still Life (Obie Award), Sam Shepard’s Buried Child, John Patrick Shanley’s Savage in Limbo, Kathleen Tolan’s A
Weekend Near Madison, and Dennis McIntyre’s National Anthem. Broadway: Tennessee Williams' Summer and Smoke, Wendy Wasserstein's The Heidi Chronicles, Emily Mann’s Execution of Justice. Regional: A Doll’s House (dir. Emily Mann), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Arena Stage), The Cherry Orchard (People’s Light). Film includes: Dances with Wolves (Oscar and Golden Globe nomination), Passion Fish (Oscar and Golden Globe nomination), Grand Canyon, Mumford, Sneakers (opposite Robert Redford and Sidney Poitier), and Independence Day. TV: Sharon Raydor in Major Crimes (Emmy nomination), Laura Roslin in Battlestar Galactica, Fargo, Grey’s Anatomy, ER (Emmy Nom.), and Hulu’s Veronica Mars. 2015 Gina Award (Women in Film), 2017 Leadership Excellence Award (Women in Cable Telecommunications), 2018 Pell Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts.

Gabrielle Beckford (Ensemble) is a NYC native from Queens and recent BFA Musical Theatre graduate from Rider University. Her Regional Theatre credits include her lead role in the 15th Anniversary production of Crowns co-produced by McCarter Theatre Center and the Longwharf Theatre; Nina Simone: Four Women, A Play with Music at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival; Hair at the Geva Theatre Center; and All Shook Up at the Laguna Beach Playhouse. Repertory Theatre credits include AIDA, Hairspray, Big River, and Sister Act at the Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts.

Mierka Girten (Ensemble) is thrilled to be returning to McCarter Theatre Center where she last performed as Cecelia in A Red Orchid Theatre’s production of Simpatico in 2017. She is an ensemble member of Chicago’s A Red Orchid Theatre, where she has been seen in over fourteen productions including Victims of Duty, The Room, The Mutilated, Simpatico, Red Handed Otter, Mud Blue Sky, and Abigail’s Party among others. Her one-woman show, With or Without Wings, chronicling her diagnosis of Multiple-Sclerosis, has been performed many times over the years and most recently enjoyed a sold-out performance at Steppenwolf Theatre in 2018. Mierka’s voice can also be heard in various national and web commercials and is also the voice of Cancer Treatment Centers of America. Mierka is a proud 3Arts Award Recipient.


Erika Stone (Ensemble) is excited to make her debut at McCarter Theatre Center! She earned her B.A. from Boston University. She is an ensemble member with Native Voices at the Autry in Los Angeles, where she has performed in multiple productions and readings, including Off the Rails as Isabel in the Festival of New Plays, The Further Adventures of Super Indian, and Cherry Orchard and Commodity Cheese. She is a regular performer at Perseverance Theatre in Juneau, Alaska where she has performed in William, Inc.; Whale Song; and Our Voices Will Be Heard; which was also produced at AFN in Fairbanks. Film and television credits include Lucky Louie and Spring Breakdown.
Brenda Withers (Ensemble) is a writer, actor, and co-founder of the Harbor Stage Company. She’s thrilled to be back at McCarter, where she previously appeared in Crimes of the Heart and A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Other recent credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Hartford Stage, Geva Theatre Center, and Hudson Stage Company. Her plays have been produced and developed at places like Portland Stage, Performance Space New York, Amphibian Stage, Two River Theater, and Northern Stage, where her piece Jordan will premiere this fall. Brenda is a member of The Pool, a playwriting fellow at Huntington Theatre Company, and a graduate of Dartmouth College.

Eunice Wong (Ensemble) Dan Berrigan in Trial of the Catonsville 9 (Transport Group); Lavinia in Mourning Becomes Electra (Target Margin); Ginny in Smart People (Huntington); Gretchen in Faust (Classic Stage Company); Antigone in Antigone, Adela in House of Bernarda Alba (NAATCO); Jennifer in Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow (DC’s Studio). Other regional appearances at Atlantic Theater, Guthrie, Yale Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Walnut St., Virginia Stage, Pearl, Merrimack Rep, Berkshires Theatre Group, others. Helen Hayes Award (Lead Actress); My Boston Theater Award (Best Actress); Barrymore nom. (Lead Actress); IRNE nom. (Best Ensemble); L.A. Press Club Journalism Award. Chief Editor: Countering Violence Against Women (www.truthdig.com). Writer: What The Health, The Sustainability Secret. TV: Law & Order, Sex & the City, etc. Audiobooks include Elaine Pagels’ Why Religion? and Lindsay Wong’s The Woo-Woo. Juilliard. www.eunicewong.com.

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.

GLORIA: A LIFE PRODUCTION FACTS
McCarter Theatre Center
in Association with American Repertory Theater at Harvard University
by Special Arrangement with Daryl Roth
presents GLORIA: A LIFE
By: Emily Mann
Original Direction by: Diane Paulus
Restaged for McCarter by: Emily Mann
Scenic Design: Amy Rubin
Costume Design: Jessica Jahn
Lighting Design: Jason Lyons
Sound Design: Robert Kaplowitz and Andrea Allmond
Projection Design: Elaine J. McCarthy
Casting: Tara Rubin, CSA
Production Stage Manager: Cheryl Mintz
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
Gloria Steinem: Mary McDonnell

The Ensemble: Gabrielle Beckford, Mierka Girten, Patrena Murray, Erika Stone, Brenda Withers, Eunice Wong

The actors and stage managers for this production are members of Actors Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

Gloria: A Life was commissioned by Lincoln Center Theater by Special Arrangement with Daryl Roth.

Ticket Information and Performance Schedule
Gloria: A Life runs September 6 through October 6 in the Berlind Theatre. Tickets start at $25 and will be available on July 18 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 1 hour, 50 minutes with no intermission.

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Wednesday   September 25   7:30 p.m.
Thursday    September 26   7:30 p.m.
Friday      September 27   8 p.m.
Saturday    September 28   2 p.m.   Open Captioning
Saturday    September 28   8 p.m.
Sunday      September 29   2 p.m.

Wednesday   October 2   2 p.m.
Wednesday   October 2   7:30 p.m.
Thursday    October 3   7:30 p.m.
Friday      October 4   8 p.m.
Saturday    October 5   2 p.m.   Audio Described, ASL Interpreted
Saturday    October 5   8 p.m.
Sunday      October 6   2 p.m.   Closing

SPECIAL EVENTS

Gloria Steinem’s My Life on the Road Pop-Up Book Club – Sunday, August 25 at 4 p.m.
McCarter is partnering with Labyrinth Books and Princeton Public Library to offer a pop-up book club event to explore writer, lecturer, and feminist activist and organizer Gloria Steinem’s most recently published memoir My Life on the Road. This event will take place at The Princeton Public Library, located at 64 Witherspoon Street in Princeton, NJ.

REGISTER HERE to participate; registration is requested as space is limited. This event is free and open to the public. Need a copy of Gloria Steinem’s My Life on the Road? Purchase it from Labyrinth Books in person or online here.

This is a Princeton Public Library, Labyrinth Books, and McCarter Theatre Center joint community partnership event.

Film and Post-Screening Conversation with Emily Mann – Wednesday, August 21 at 7 p.m.
Join McCarter Theatre Center Artistic Director and Resident Playwright Emily Mann to share in a screening of filmmaker Johanna Demetrakas’ 2018 documentary Feminists: What Were They Thinking? The film revisits Cynthia MacAdams’ “Emergence”, a landmark photographic collection of portraits of second-wave pioneering feminists—including Gloria Steinem, Kate Millett, Lily Tomlin, and Jane Fonda. Many of MacAdams’ original subjects, as well as their third-wave successors, reflect on the portraits, their identity as feminists, and their own experience as women in the Movement, both past and present. This event will take place at The Princeton Public Library, located at 64 Witherspoon Street in Princeton, NJ.

No RSVP or ticket is required to attend this event; it is free and open to the public. All are welcome. This is a Princeton Public Library, Garden Theatre, and McCarter Theatre Center community partnership event.

Live at the Library with Emily Mann and Mary McDonnell – Tuesday, August 27 at 7 p.m.
In the Princeton Public Library Community Room, McCarter Theatre Center’s Artistic Director and Resident Playwright Emily Mann will be joined in conversation by stage, film, and television actor Mary McDonnell, where they will speak about their decades-long friendship and artistic reunion on *Gloria: A Life*. This is a free event, no RSVP required. This is a Princeton Public Library and McCarter Theatre Center community partnership event.

**Dialogue on Drama – Sunday, September 15 following the 2 p.m. performance**
An in-depth post-show interview with director/playwright Emily Mann and Mary McDonnell (Gloria Steinem) which offers 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 – Wednesday, September 18 and Sunday, September 22**
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 7:30 p.m. performance on Wednesday, September 18 and the 2 p.m. performance on Sunday, September 22.

**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 Berlind 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