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BARD AT THE GATE

-Paula Vogel's 2020 play series-

partners with

McCARTER THEATRE CENTER

to produce 8 plays during 2021-22 and 2022-23 seasons

New collaboration marked with re-stream of

BARD's acclaimed production of Eisa Davis's

BULRUSHER – June 3-9

BARD AT THE GATE - one of the break-out play series borne of last year's lockdown - will return for an additional two seasons starting this fall when Paula Vogel's virtual start-up partners with McCarter Theatre Center, it has been announced by Ms. Vogel and Sarah Rasmussen, Artistic Director of the McCarter Theatre Center. Plays by Zakiyyah Alexander (HOW TO RAISE A FREEMAN), Jose Rivera (SONNETS FOR AN OLD CENTURY) and Christina Anderson (GOOD GOODS) will be featured during the 2021-22 season. A total of eight plays will be digitally produced and streamed in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 seasons.

The newly-formed collaboration will be celebrated with a repeat airing of Eisa Davis's play BULRUSHER on Thursday, June 3 at 8 p.m. followed by a Q&A with Ms. Davis, Ms. Vogel and Valerie Curtis-

Newton, Artistic Director for The Hansberry Project. The Vimeo stream will be available through June 9. For reservations to stream and to register for the Q&A, visit www.mccarter.org/bard or www.bardatthegate.org (Donations suggested; to benefit future productions of BARD AT THE GATE.)

Directed by Eisa Davis, the cast of BULRUSHER includes Andre Holland (MOONLIGHT, JITNEY on Broadway), Kara Young (HALFWAY BITCHES GO STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN), Tanis Parenteau (BILLIONS, DESIGNATED SURVIVOR), Sydney Elisabeth (NYU Grad Acting program), Edmund Donovan (LEWISTON/CLARKSTON) and Corey Stoll (House of Cards). Jhanaë Bonnick is Stage Manager and Sue Slagle (2020 Creative Capital Awardee) is the video artist.

Ms. Vogel undertook BARD AT THE GATE when theaters shut down, recognizing the opportunity to fill the void with some of the overlooked and underappreciated plays – in particular by BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA+ and disabled writers – she had become familiar with in her role as one of the country’s preeminent teachers of playwriting.

The four plays presented as readings by BARD in 2020 drew audience members in excess of 11,000 and – while not open for review – earned considerable media attention and kudos from viewers. BULRUSHER, in fact, appeared on New York Magazine’s APPROVAL MATRIX, and New York Stage’s Best of 2020 list.

While BARD AT THE GATE’s mission to contribute to a new standard of works produced by American theaters remains in place, the series has grown: it is now co-curated by Paula Vogel, the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, and Nicole A. Watson, Associate Artistic Director for McCarter Theater Center.

An Advisory Council of playwrights, directors, producers and academics has been created for BARD play-selection: Isabella Starr LaBlanc, Jill Dolan, Joy Meads, KJ Sanchez, May Adrales, Pirronne Yousefzadeh, Quiara Hudes, Regina Victor, Valerie Curtis-Newton, Brian Herrera, Chay Yew and Gregg Mozgala.

Previously funded solely by Paula Vogel, BARD AT THE GATE now receives dedicated financial support under McCarter's "Vogel Vanguard," which currently include Roz and Jerry Meyer, the Sallie B. Goodman Fund, Daryl Roth, Elizabeth Armstrong, and Larry Hirschhorn and Melissa Posen.

BARD AT THE GATE's Board members are Eisa Davis, Brian Herrera, Grant Rice, Sam Rudy, Rosey Strub, Paula Vogel and Chay Yew. Paula Vogel is Founder and Co-curator; Nicole A. Watson is Co-curator; Rosey Strub is Producer; Ryan Pointer and BJ Evans are Associate Producers.

Sarah Rasmussen is McCarter Theatre's Artistic Director; Debbie Bisno is Resident Producer.

About McCarter's eagerness to partner with BARD AT THE GATE, Ms. Rasmussen says, "For so long, theater has peered through an 'only if it's a premiere' or 'only if it's proven' lens. With BARD, we are discovering stunning plays and giving them new life, as well as breaking down barriers of who has access."

She adds, "This past year we have learned so much about making and sharing virtual theater. Our ADRIENNE KENNEDY FESTIVAL brought so many to her work for the first time. Accessibility is a priority at McCarter that BARD AT THE GATE directly addresses."

Ms. Vogel states, "BARD began as a very personal effort to give marginalized playwrights a voice, especially during the historic times we are living through. Partnering with McCarter will give BARD a national impact with brilliant plays that belong in the curriculum and in the seasons of theatres worldwide. I am grateful to everyone who likewise sees this vital opportunity to redefine what we consider to be the best American plays."

Paula Vogel is the author of the plays HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE (Pulitzer Prize), INDECENT (Best Play Tony Award nominee), THE BALTIMORE WALTZ, THE LONG CHRISTMAS RIDE HOME and many others. She has taught playwriting at Brown and Yale and is the creator of the popular Bake Off playwriting series. In praise of BARD AT THE GATE, David Gordon of Theatermania wrote in April 2021, “Paula Vogel is a visionary.”

Nicole A. Watson created the acclaimed ADRIENNE KENNEDY FESTIVAL for the McCarter Theatre Center and Round House Theatre, where she was an Associate Artistic Director, a position she now holds with McCarter. For Round House, she directed A DOLL’S HOUSE PART 2 and THE AFRICAN MEAN GIRLS PLAY.

ABOUT McCARTER THEATRE CENTER

Under the leadership of award-winning Artistic Director Sarah Rasmussen, 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 community engagement, education, and entertainment. 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. Due to COVID-19, McCarter has pivoted to virtual programming including McCarter@HOME and Online Classes, reaching new audiences across the world.

McCarter’s reopening plans are being finalized, and the theatre will begin sharing more information in the weeks to come. Online programming is available now, including space for an in-person children’s summer camp.

www.mccarter.org.

Set in 1955 in San Francisco's redwood country, BULRUSHER depicts the life of a multiracial girl in a predominantly white town, where the language is peppered with the native Boontling tongue. Found floating in a basket in the river, Bulrusher is an orphan, an outsider and a clairvoyant in this rough and tumble logging town.

She discovers an entirely new sense of self when a Black girl from Alabama comes to town.

EISA DAVIS is an award-winning Brooklyn-based, Berkeley-born writer, composer, and performer working on stage and screen. A 2020 Creative Capital Awardee and Obie winner for Sustained Excellence in Performance, Eisa was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama for her play BULRUSHER in 2009, and wrote and starred in the stage memoir *ANGELA'S MIXTAPE*, named by The New Yorker as one of the best plays of the year. Other work includes RAMP (Ruby Prize winner), THE HISTORY OF LIGHT, PAPER AMOR, SIX MINUTES and others. Eisa wrote for both seasons of the Spike Lee Netflix series *SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT*, penned the narration for Cirque du Soleil's first ice show *Crystal*, and has released two albums of music. As an actress, she received an Obie Award and has been acclaimed for her performances in JULIUS CAESAR (Shakespeare in the Park), PRELUDES, THE CRADLE WILL ROCK, LUCK OF THE IRISH, THE PIANO LESSON (Yale Rep), and the Broadway musical PASSING STRANGE, also filmed by Spike Lee. She is currently appearing in the HBO series MARE OF EASTTOWN.