



AMERICAN PLAYERS THEATRE

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AMERICAN PLAYERS THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2018 SEASON

Shakespeare, Shaw, Ionesco and Fugard in the summer lineup

SPRING GREEN, WIS: American Players Theatre (APT) is excited to announce its 39th summer season, which will run June 9 to October 7, 2018. In APT's flagship outdoor amphitheater, William Shakespeare will bookend the Hill season with *As You Like It* and *Measure for Measure*. Also playing on the Hill: Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday*, George Farquhar's restoration comedy *The Recruiting Officer* and George Bernard Shaw's *Heartbreak House*.

The 201-seat indoor Touchstone Theatre will host: *Exit the King* by Eugène Ionesco, *Blood Knot* by Athol Fugard and *Our Country's Good* by Timberlake Wertenbaker (a play featuring prisoners putting on a production of *The Recruiting Officer*). The 2018 shoulder season opening in November will feature John Morogijello's *Engaging Shaw*.

In advance of the 2017 season, APT launched an \$8 million capital campaign, titled The Next Great Stage campaign, to rebuild the Hill Theatre stage, lobby and backstage area. As of the close of the season, APT is thrilled to announce that the \$8 million fundraising goal has been met, and the construction project is fully funded.

Artistic Director Brenda DeVita said, "We are so grateful to every single person who helped us build our beautiful new stage. The past 12 months have been absolutely wild, and this summer we were able to produce plays that would just not have been possible for us in the past. The flexibility it gives us – the creativity it inspires – can only continue to make the experience richer for our patrons and our artists. The plan for 2018 is to take what we've learned and hand it over to a group of directors who, for the most part, didn't direct on the Hill last season. And, you know, just see what new magic they come up with. I can't wait see where their vision takes us, and I can't wait to direct on the Hill for the first time myself."

The 2018 season schedule will be available in early January. Tickets will go on sale to returning patrons on March 5 at 7:00 am online at americanplayers.org, and at 10:00 am via the APT Box Office by phone at 608-588-2361.

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The 2018 Season, June 9 – October 7, 2018

ON THE HILL

As You Like It

By William Shakespeare

Directed by James Bohnen

Two of Shakespeare's favorite devices – cross-dressing and running away to the woods – meet in glorious fashion in *As You Like It*. Rosalind and Celia are best friends and cousins. But when Celia's father, the Duke, begins to see Rosalind as a threat to his daughter's future prosperity, the two women don disguises (with Rosalind pretending to be a boy named Ganymede) and head to the Forest of Arden before Rosalind can be banished. Meanwhile, Orlando, a young gentleman who had previously fallen in love with Rosalind, is similarly threatened by his own brother and also flees to the Forest. There, he meets "Ganymede," who promises to teach him how to woo Rosalind. All that plus a band of merry woods-dwelling misfits make for a great Shakespearean comedy.

Featuring: Tracy Michelle Arnold as Jaques, Melisa Pereyra as Rosalind and Marcus Truschinski as Touchstone.

Born Yesterday

By Garson Kanin

Directed by Brenda DeVita

Shady businessman Harry Brock heads to Washington with his ex-showgirl girlfriend Billie Dawn in an attempt to shift the law to his side. When Brock decides that Billie is too unrefined to mix with the DC political set, he hires journalist Paul Verrall to make her appear more intelligent. But a little education can go a long way, and Billie may be smarter than her "friends" give her credit for. A hilarious and timely send up of politics and perceptions.

Featuring: David Daniel as Harry Brock and Colleen Madden as Billie Dawn.

The Recruiting Officer

Written by George Farquhar

Directed by William Brown

Scoundrels are put on notice and women (literally) wear the pants in this uproarious restoration comedy. Recruiting officers travel from port to port wooing men into service at sea, and women into their beds. Two such men, Worthy and Plume, land in Shrewsbury each in love with a woman who lives there. Worthy has asked Melinda to be his mistress – an offer that she declined. Meanwhile, Plume is in love with Melinda's cousin Silvia. But Silvia, grieving her brother's recent death, disguises herself as a man to get away for a while, throwing everyone's plans into comedic chaos.

Featuring: Kelsey Brennan as Silvia, Nate Burger as Plume and Marcus Truschinski as Brazen.

Heartbreak House

Written by George Bernard Shaw

Adapted by Aaron Posner

Directed by Aaron Posner

Sweet Ellie Dunn has been invited to a party along with her father and fiancé at the home of the eccentric Captain Shotover, where he lives with his bohemian daughter Hesione and her husband Hector. But it soon comes to light that Ellie has eyes for another man. Surprises hit one after the other, when it turns out Ellie's "true love" is not who he appeared to be, Shotover's other daughter, Ariadne, shows up at the party after a 23-year absence, and the evening is peppered with burglars and bomb scares. A rich Shavian comedy about human folly and the charming and self-absorbed gentry.

Featuring: Tracy Michelle Arnold as Hesione, Jim DeVita as Hector and Colleen Madden as Ariadne.

Measure for Measure

Written by William Shakespeare

Directed by Risa Brainin

The city of Vienna is rife with vice, and good Duke Vincentio wants to put a stop to it. So in hopes that a new leader will change the people's wicked ways, he steps down and appoints his trusted minister Angelo to rule in his place. But as Angelo assumes control of the city, his hunger for power grows, and he reinstates strict morality laws with deadly penalties. Claudio, the first to feel the bite of these laws, calls upon his sister Isabella, an aspiring nun, to help prove his innocence. But when Isabella approaches Angelo and appeals to his better nature, she finds he doesn't have one, and must choose between her brother and her virtue.

Featuring: Melisa Pereyra as Isabella and Marcus Truschinski as Angelo.

IN THE TOUCHSTONE THEATRE

Blood Knot

By Athol Fugard

Directed by Ron OJ Parson

Two brothers live a quiet, strained existence in a tiny house in apartheid South Africa. Morris, who has very fair skin, and has in the past passed as white, has recently returned to Port Elizabeth and is living with his brother Zachariah, who works long, painful hours as a sentry at the gate of a whites-only park. Despite Morris' constant presence, Zach is lonely for the company of a woman, so Morris suggests he find a pen pal. When it turns out Zach's pen pal is a white woman, the brothers' desperation exposes the complex angles of their relationship in this powerful play by the man who wrote *The Island* (produced at APT in 2015) and *Exits and Entrances* (at APT in 2010).

Featuring: Jim DeVita as Morris and Gavin Lawrence as Zachariah.

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Exit the King

By Eugène Ionesco

Translated by Neil Armfield & Geoffrey Rush

Directed by Tim Ocel

An absurdist masterpiece in the Touchstone Theatre. A fading ruler at the helm of a world in decline, King Berenger is having some trouble accepting his fate. His first wife, Marguerite, is intent on forcing him to face his mortality, while his second wife, Marie, wants to shield him from the bad news. All the while an eccentric mix of servants weigh in from the sidelines, with varying degrees of helpfulness. A very funny and deeply moving look at the end of it all.

Featuring: James Ridge as King Berenger.

Our Country's Good

By Timberlake Wertenbaker

Adapted from the novel "The Playmaker" by Thomas Keneally

Directed by Ameenah Kaplan

A group of soldiers and criminals have been sent to Australia as part of a recently created penal colony. The conditions are bad all around, as food is scarce for both jailor and jailed, and the punishment for theft is dire. To raise morale (and in hopes of being noticed by the governor), Lieutenant Ralph Clark decides to stage a production of Farquhar's comedy *The Recruiting Officer*, cast with inmates. But Ralph has his hands full with this group of actors, who are sometimes loveable, sometimes unscrupulous, and always perfectly human. Offering funny and candid conversations about incarceration, sex and the redemptive power of art, this play pairs particularly well with *The Recruiting Officer*. Note: contains strong language and adult themes.

Featuring: Kelsey Brennan and Nate Burger (roles TBA).

Opening in November

Engaging Shaw

By John Morogiello

With excerpts from Bernard Shaw

Directed by David Frank

George Bernard Shaw is well known for his writing, wit and commitment to social justice. But in his time, he was also known for being an unrepentant philanderer. His aversion to marriage was so strong that he clung to it even in the face of the clever and charismatic Charlotte Payne-Townshend, who is clearly more than a match for him. Urged on by their friends Beatrice and Sidney Webb, the two would-be lovers trade witty barbs as they form a close friendship. The question at the center of this charming romantic comedy is whether or not they'll ever admit how close that friendship is.

Featuring: Colleen Madden as Charlotte Payne-Townshend and James Ridge as George Bernard Shaw.

Winter Words

APT's off-season play-reading series will return for a fourth time in 2018. These play readings, held in the Touchstone Theatre January through March, explore plays that may be of interest for future APT seasons. Dates and titles will be announced in the coming weeks. Tickets will go on sale on January 3.

Still to come in 2017

August Strindberg's *Creditors* begins November 2

A seemingly solid relationship suddenly teeters, attacked from without and within. Motes of mistrust, sown in a calculated pattern, and fed by a subtle skepticism of loving and being loved. Doubt can be an insidious poison, and that doubles down when you're talking about marriage. Because sometimes, in the mind's stealthy quiet, a question surfaces: Am I enough? Yes or no, the answer carries consequences. A riveting psychological thriller to close the season. Featuring: Tracy Michelle Arnold, Jim DeVita and Marcus Truschinski.

Performances run through November 19. Tickets are on sale now, though some performances are currently sold out. Tickets and information at americanplayers.org or by calling 608-588-2361.

About the Theatre

APT is a professional repertory theater devoted to the great and future classics. It was founded in 1979 and continues to be one of the most popular outdoor classical theaters in the nation.

The Theatre is located in Spring Green, Wis., on 110 acres of hilly woods and meadows above the Wisconsin River. The outdoor amphitheater is built within a natural hollow atop an oak-wooded hill. Under the dome of sky, 1,089 comfortably cushioned seats encircle three sides of the stage. In 2009, APT opened the 201-seat indoor Touchstone Theatre, offering a different type of play and experience

For more information, visit www.americanplayers.org

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