



KANSAS CITY REPERTORY THEATRE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Kansas City Repertory Theatre
2015-16 Season Continues with the
WORLD PREMIERE of
Michael Benjamin Washington's
Blueprints to Freedom:
An Ode to Bayard Rustin
A co-production with LaJolla Playhouse -
Oct. 16 through Nov. 15 at the Copaken Stage**

Kansas City, MO (Oct. 7, 2015) – Kansas City Repertory Theatre continues its 2015-16 season and its commitment to the creation of unforgettable new plays with the WORLD PREMIERE of *Blueprints to Freedom: An Ode to Bayard Rustin*, written by and starring **Michael Benjamin Washington** and directed by the critically acclaimed **Lucie Tiberghien**. This story is more than relevant. It's riveting. Those who stand up for equality in 2015 are following in the footsteps of Bayard Rustin, the lesser known but powerfully influential civil rights leader who orchestrated the March on Washington and stepped forward himself as an openly gay man at a time when few had the courage to do so. In this ode, an exiled Rustin masterminds "a tribute to the ancestors" 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

Kansas City Repertory Theatre's *Blueprints to Freedom: Ode to Bayard Rustin*
Oct. 16 through Nov. 15 at Copaken Stage

This exciting production begins Friday, Oct. 16 and runs through Sunday, Nov. 15 at KC Rep's Copaken Stage in the Power & Light District in downtown Kansas City, Missouri.

"The 2015-16 season is about the exploration of how someone creates and follows his or her own voice, in spite of, or because of, numerous obstacles both internally and externally," stated Eric Rosen, artistic director of Kansas City Repertory Theatre. "*Blueprints* is an exploration into how Bayard was able to create this absolutely crucial and historic event in spite of what many would define as impossible odds. How does this happen that someone is driven to follow a calling at such great cost?"

Part of Origins KC, the Rep's new works program, *Blueprints to Freedom: An Ode to Bayard Rustin* builds on KC Rep's commitment to supporting a vital, diverse body of theatrical work from the seed of an idea through to production. *Blueprints to Freedom* forwards the rich artistic relationship between KC Rep and La Jolla Playhouse, having previously co-produced the world premiere productions of a new adaptation of *Peer Gynt* by David Schweizer, and *The Tallest Tree in the Forest* by Daniel Beaty. *Blueprints to Freedom* was given its first reading at the LaJolla Playhouse on August 28, 2013 – the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington.

The ensemble cast, drawn from across the country, includes: **Ro Boddie** (Helen Hayes Award winner for Forum Theatre's *Angels in America*) as "Martin Luther King, Jr.," **Mandi Masden** (Theatre for a New Audience's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) as "Miriam Caldwell," **Antonio Johnson** (Playbill Award for *Driving Miss Daisy*) as "A. Philip Randolph," **Mat Hostetler** (*War Horse* national tour) as "Davis Platt, Jr." and **Michael Benjamin Washington** (Playhouse's *The Wiz*, *Memphis* – also on Broadway) as "Bayard Rustin."

Performances begin Friday, Oct. 16 and run through Sunday, Nov. 15 at the Copaken Stage. Press night is scheduled for Opening Night Friday, Oct. 23 at 8:00 pm. High res headshots and production photos can be found [here](#). *Appropriate for ages 13 +.*

About the Artists

Lucie Tiberghien (Director) **KC Rep:** Debut. **LaJolla Playhouse:** JT Roger's *Blood and Gifts* and the DNA New Work Series readings of Andrew Rosendorf's *Tranquil* and Monique Gafney's *Being Henrietta*. Other credits include the world premieres of Emily Schwend's *The Other Thing* (Second Stage, Uptown); Rehana Lew Mirza's *Soldier X* (Ma-Yi Theater Company); Christina Anderson's *The Ashes Under Gait City* (CATF); Charles Randolph-Wright's *Love in Afghanistan* (Arena Stage); Stephen Belber's *Don't Go Gentle* (MCC); *Geometry of Fire* (Rattlestick); *A Small Melodramatic Story* (LAByrinth); Craig Wright's *Blind* (Rattlestick); Katori Hall's *Hoodoo Love* (Cherry Lane); Lee Blessing's *Great Falls* (Humana Festival); *Flag Day* (CATF). Other credits: Quiara Alegria Hudes' *Water by the Spoonful* (Arden Theater Company); Lee Blessing's *The Winning Streak* (George Street Playhouse) and Craig Wright's *The Pavilion*

(Rattlestick and CATF). She recently joined the team of Stew and Heidi Rodewald's new musical *Resurrection City*.

The design and production team includes **Neil Patel** (Set Design); **Beth Goldenberg** (Costume Design), **Lap Chi Chu** (Lighting Design), **Joe Huppert** (Sound Design), John Narun (Projection Design); **Gabriel Greene** (Dramaturg) and **Peter Van Dyke** (Production Stage Manager).

The ensemble cast, drawn from artists across the country, includes:

RO BODDIE (*Martin Luther King Jr.*) **KC Rep:** debut. **Regional:** *Blueprints to Freedom* (La Jolla Playhouse); *The Whipping Man* (John, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre); *Hamlet*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Horatio, American Players Theatre); *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Sylvester, CENTERSTAGE and Philadelphia Theatre Company co-production); *Dirt* (Studio Theatre); *Angels in America* (Belize, Helen Hayes Nomination); *Floyd Seven Guitars* (Barton, Helen Hayes Nomination). **Television:** *The Good Wife*, *Person of Interest*, *Unforgettable*. **Education:** University of the North Carolina School of the Arts. AEA Member. www.roboddie.com

MAT HOSTETLER (*Davis Platt, Jr.*) **KC Rep:** debut. **Off Broadway:** *A Particle of Dread* (Signature Theatre); *The Preacher and the Shrink* (The Beckett at Theatre Row). **New York:** *Of Orient Are* (The Representatives); *American Journalero* (Working Theatre); *Richard II* (Sonnet Repertory Theatre). **National Tours:** *War Horse* (North America and Japan). **Regional:** *Blueprints to Freedom* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Richard III* (Denver Center Theatre Company); *Amber Waves* (Indiana Repertory Theatre); *Three Musketeers*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* (Colorado Shakespeare Festival). **TV/Film:** "The Following", "Smash", "Boardwalk Empire", "White Collar", "Six Feet Under", "Cold Case", "JAG", "Navy NCIS", *The Utopian Society*. **Education:** MFA, National Theatre Conservatory; BA, University of Kansas. AEA Member.

ANTONIO T. J. JOHNSON (*A. Philip Randolph*) **KC Rep:** debut. **Regional:** *Blueprints to Freedom*, *My Children My Africa* (La Jolla Playhouse); *True West*, *Fool for Love*, *Fences*, *Matchmaker* (Cygnet Theatre); *Joe vs The Volcano*, *Glory Man*, *The Fantasticks*, *South Pacific* (Lamb's Players); *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *A Christmas Carol* (3 seasons) (San Diego Repertory Theatre); *Buried Child*, *Stories About the Old Days*, *Driving Miss Daisy* (North Coast Repertory Theatre); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Old Globe Theatre); *Twelve Angry People*, *I Am a Man* (San Diego Black Ensemble); Moonlight Productions, Intrepid Shakespeare Company. **Awards:** Craig Noel Critics Circle Award/Patté Award/Best Actor 2008 (*Fences*); Playbill Award/Best Actor 2002 (*Buried Child*); Artist-in-Residence, UCSD Thurgood Marshall College, 2012/2013. Mr. Johnson is the Executive Director of the San Diego Black Ensemble. AEA Member.

MANDI MASDEN (*Miriam Caldwell*) **KC Rep:** debut. **Off Broadway:** *Our Lady of Kibeho*, *The Piano Lesson* (Signature Theatre Company); Julie Taymor's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Theatre for A New Audience). **Regional:** *Blueprints to Freedom* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Shipwrecked! An Entertainment* (Cincinnati Playhouse In the Park); *Ruined* (Philadelphia Theatre Company); *A Christmas Carol*, *Dracula* (Denver Center Theatre Company), *Ragtime* (PPTOPA). **Additional Theatre Credits:** *Ruined*, *Angels in America*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Winter's Tale*, *HAIR*, *Ah! Wilderness*, *As You Like It*, *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, *Into the Woods*, *The Threepenny Opera*, and *The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer*. **TV/Film:** Julie Taymor's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "The Knick", "LFE". **Education:** MFA, National Theatre Conservatory. AEA Member.

MICHAEL BENJAMIN WASHINGTON (*Bayard Rustin/Playwright*) **KC Rep:** debut. **Broadway:** *Mamma Mia!* (original company, directed by Phyllida Lloyd) and *La Cage Aux Folles* (2005 Tony-winning revival, directed by Jerry Zaks). **Off Broadway:** Stephen Sondheim's *Saturday Night* (directed by Kathleen Marshall/Nonesuch Records). **Regional:** *The Wiz* (Tinman), *Memphis*, directed by Christopher Ashley; *Most Wanted* (workshop), directed by Michael Greif; and *Letters to Barack* (reading), directed by Christopher Ashley, *Blueprints to Freedom* (La Jolla Playhouse). **TV/Film:** *Love and Other Drugs*, directed by Ed Zwick; *Gnome*, directed by Jenny Bicks; "30 Rock" (Donald Jordan, director), "Glee" (Tracy Pendegrass, director), "100 Questions" (Andrew), "Law & Order". **Education:** BFA, New York University/Tisch School of the Arts. Mr. Washington is a Presidential Scholar in the Arts and teaches *Young Arts Master Class* workshops in Los Angeles. He is an alumnus of the National Young Arts Foundation and serves on the Writing Adjudication panel where he co-wrote the Foundation's gala this winter under the direction of Bill T. Jones. Mr. Washington is a member of The Broadway Inspirational Voices and an AEA Member.

Conversation Series

Patrons are invited and welcome to attend these FREE pre and post-show forums to learn more from the artists and creative teams about the production.

Making the Play: 30 minutes prior to select performances, free pre-show conversation with the artistic staff

Meet the Creative Team: Oct. 21, following the 7 pm performance

Scholars' Forum: Oct. 31, following the 2pm performance

Actor's Forum: Nov. 1, following the 2pm performance and Nov. 3, following the 7 pm performance

Education

More than 10,000 students experience world class theatre at KC Rep each year. The Student Matinee Series is an affordable way for students to experience arts education through professional theatre in Kansas City. After every performance, students and teachers can enjoy a Kansas City Repertory Theatre's *Blueprints to Freedom: Ode to Bayard Rustin* Oct. 16 through Nov. 15 at Copaken Stage

Q&A conversation with the cast. All matinee orders include one complimentary chaperone ticket for every ten students, a study guide for students and free preview tickets for sponsoring teachers.

Student Matinee Series: Student Matinees of *Blueprints to Freedom* will be performed on Thursday, Oct. 29, Thurs., Nov. 5 and Tues., Nov. 10 at 10:00 a.m. Student tickets are \$10 and include a pre-show class orientation, learning guide and post-performance Q. and A. with the cast. Order forms are available at www.kcrep.org or by emailing owensaa@kcrep.org.

Subscriptions and Tickets

Tickets to *Blueprints to Freedom: An Ode to Bayard Rustin* range from \$25 to \$59. For season subscriptions and ticket information for Kansas City Repertory Theatre's production of *Blueprints to Freedom: Ode to Bayard Rustin* and the remainder of KC Rep's 2015-16 season, please contact the Box Office at 816.235.2700 or visit www.KCRep.org.

Gala 2016

Save the date for Friday, May 20, 2016 at the newly renovated Spencer Theatre! Last year's Fearless Fête raised more than \$655,000 which helps ensure that KC Rep can continue to create professional productions that garner regional and national acclaim and provide lifelong learning opportunities through our Education and Community Programs which benefit more than 10,000 Kansas City area students each year. For more information, please contact Amanda Middaugh at Middaugham@kcrep.org or 816.235.1489.

About Kansas City Repertory Theatre

Kansas City Repertory Theatre, one of the nation's oldest and most respected regional theaters, is the center of a great theatre town. KC Rep produces theatrical excellence, creating and sharing stories at the center of our nation's creative crossroads. KC Rep's mission is to advance the art form while cultivating passionate audiences, artists, and advocates to invest in our region's creative future. We build community by connecting people through productions and outreach that educate, entertain, challenge and inspire. Lauded by *The Wall Street Journal*, *TIME* magazine, *Variety* and *The Toronto Sun*, KC Rep produces mainstage plays and special events at Spencer Theatre, where it serves as the professional theatre in residence at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), and Copaken Stage located in downtown Kansas City. KC Rep employs more than 250 professional artists, technicians and administrators, and serves more than 100,000 patrons and 12,000 school children annually. Kansas City Repertory Theatre is led by Artistic Director Eric Rosen and Executive Director Angela Lee Gieras.

Social and Digital Media

Receive daily updates by 'Liking' KCRep's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/KCREP

and follow KC Rep on Twitter at @KCRep or on YouTube by visiting <https://www.youtube.com/user/kansascityrep>. High resolution photos can be downloaded [here](#). B-roll is available upon request.

2015-2016 Season At A Glance

Kansas City Repertory Theatre

Kansas City Repertory Theatre ticket office 816.235.2700
Purchase tickets online at www.kcrep.org.

Sunday in the Park with George

September 11- October 4, 2015 | Atkins Auditorium at the Nelson-Atkins Museum | Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim | Book by James Lapine | Directed by Eric Rosen

You've seen Georges Seurat's famous painting, but have you heard it? Those who love art, music or both are in for a rare treat as Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's stunning Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece takes the stage inside the Nelson-Atkins Museum. While Seurat works on his famous painting, we see the fascinating drama of his life unfold around him. Savor the Grammy award-winning score that moves the audience through time as we celebrate life, love and the creation of art.

"An audacious, haunting, and in its own intensely personal way, touching work." – *The New York Times*

Origin KC - WORLD PREMIERE

Blueprints to Freedom: An Ode to Bayard Rustin

October 16- November 15, 2015 | Copaken Stage | Written by Michael Benjamin Washington | Directed by Lucie Tiberghien | Co-production with La Jolla Playhouse

Written by and starring Michael Benjamin Washington, this story is more than relevant. It's riveting. Those who stand up for equality in 2015 are following in the footsteps of Bayard Rustin, the lesser known but powerfully influential civil rights leader who orchestrated the March on Washington and stepped forward himself as an openly gay man at a time when few had the courage to do so. In this ode, an exiled Rustin masterminds "a tribute to the ancestors" 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

A Christmas Carol

November 20 - December 24, 2015 | GRAND RE-OPENING of Spencer Theatre | Written by Charles Dickens / Directed by Jerry Genochio

Bah, humbug! Kansas City's favorite holiday tradition is back for its 35th season, and the magnificent new Spencer Theatre promises an experience that's more magical than ever. Come share the joy, as our theatre transforms into a page right out of Dickens. Richly textured sets, ornate costumes and spectacular special effects will transport the entire family into the tale of the grumpy Ebenezer Scrooge, who requires the intervention of a few ghostly guides to find the true

meaning of Christmas – and life itself.

The Santaland Diaries

December 3- December 24, 2015 | Copaken Stage | Written by David Sedaris | Directed by Eric Rosen

Leave the kids at home for this hilariously irreverent holiday show. It's David Sedaris' side-splitting send-up of Christmas and his brief, misguided career as a Macy's elf. Featuring an uproarious soundtrack of holiday tunes, *The Santaland Diaries* skewers everything we love (and secretly loathe) about the holidays. See what it's like for the subversive to work at Santaland, where the only thing more plentiful than good cheer is a good case of the giggles.

"...lots of acerbic asides, plenty of irony and numerous chuckles thanks to the incongruous humor of an embittered elf holding back the curtain for us to see the grimy reality of creating 'holiday magic.'" – *Kansas City Star*

The Diary of Anne Frank

January 29 – February 21, 2016 | Spencer Theatre | Written by Frances Goodrich & Albert Hackett | Newly Adapted by Wendy Kesselman | Directed by Marissa Wolf

The most personal aspects of Anne Frank's story went untold until newly discovered writings became part of a mesmerizing Pulitzer-Prize winning play, adapted for our stage by Wendy Kesselman. Peer into the world of a family in hiding and a gifted young writer who came of age during the horrors of the Holocaust. This adaptation weaves together Anne's reflections with actual survivor accounts to tell the chilling story of Nazi persecution and the prevailing hopes of a girl who – despite everything – inspired generations with her unwavering faith in humanity.

"A powerful new version that moves the audience to gasp, then tears." —Associated Press.

WORLD PREMIERE

Roof of the World

February 26 – March 27, 2016 | Copaken Stage | Written by D. Tucker Smith | Directed by Eric Rosen

Part spy thriller, part *Downton Abbey*, this world premiere production is an epic love story about a British explorer and an Indian spy during Queen Victoria's rule. This high speed, sweeping drama takes you into uncharted territory (quite literally), where suspense and romance keep your pulse racing and your knees weak. It's fun, sexy, edge-of-your seat excitement that will leave you breathless from the exhilaration of a grand overseas adventure.

The Fantasticks

March 18 – April 10, 2016 | Spencer Theatre | Book and Lyrics by Tom Jones | Music by Harvey Schmidt | Directed by Jerry Genochio

It's the longest-running musical in history for a reason. This is theatre magic in its purest form, with clever props, snappy dialogue, plot twists and the mesmerizing performances of a

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stunningly talented cast. The delightful drama starts as a tale about a boy and a girl whose fathers lovingly hatch a plan to bring them together. But when the sly El Gallo steps in to assist, the young lovers experience the harsh realities of life before wising up to the world and fully realizing their love. A small cast never made such a big impression. Don't miss it.

Origin KC- New Works Festival

Two WORLD PREMIERES presented in rotating repertory
April 22- May 22, 2016 | Copaken Stage | Curated by Marissa Wolf

Fire in Dreamland

Written by Rinne Goff | Directed by Marissa Wolf

Moments after you've settled into your seat, this coming-of-age story grabs you with such intensity that you can't look away. A world premiere from celebrated playwright Rinne Goff (*Saved!*, *Compulsion*), it's the story of a modern-day young woman named Kate who is seduced by the vision of a Dutch filmmaker obsessed with the tragic 1911 fire on Coney Island. Past and present converge against a destructive backdrop, and when Kate finally sees the illusion of filmmaking – and of life with an inattentive lover – she rediscovers her ambitions as an independent woman.

Lot's Wife

Written by Eric Rosen

You're at times inside the play, at times behind the scenes, all the while wondering whether the story is actually a murder confession. This world premiere production from KC Rep Artistic Director Eric Rosen centers on Adam Mace, a promising playwright with a troubling past who has written his first new play since the tragic deaths of his wife and infant child. Set as a 1930s noir thriller, the script opens old wounds between ex-friends and lovers as actors are made to play themselves, and even the dead take the stage to tell their side of the story in an epic meta-theatrical murder mystery that is both heartbreaking and hilarious.

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The image shows the KCRep logo in large blue letters. To the right of the logo is a grid of eight production cards, each with a title, subtitle, and dates. The cards are: 'SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE' (SEP 11 - OCT 4, 2015), 'BLUEPRINTS TO FREEDOM AN ODE TO BAYARD RUSTIN' (OCT 16 - NOV 15, 2015), 'The Christmas Carol' (NOV 20 - DEC 24, 2015), 'SANTALAND DIARIES' (DEC 3 - 24, 2015), 'THE MARY OF ANNE FRANK' (JAN 29 - FEB 21, 2016), 'ROOF OF THE WORLD' (FEB 26 - MAR 27, 2016), 'FANTASTICKS' (MAR 18 - APR 10, 2016), and 'NEW WORKS FESTIVAL' (APR 22 - MAY 22, 2016).

NEW LOOK : NEW SEASON! SEASON TICKETS ON SALE NOW at 816.235.2700 or visit KCRep.org.
