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THE GREAT LEAP



DOBAMA THEATRE



BASED ON THE SECOND BOOK IN L. FRANK BAUM'S OZ SERIES,
**YOUNG TIP ESCAPES AN EVIL
WITCH, THEN SETS OUT ON AN
ADVENTURE TO THE EMERALD CITY**

THE LAND OF OZ

DECEMBER 2 — 31

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Nathan Motta

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WELCOME TO CPH AT PLAYHOUSE SQUARE



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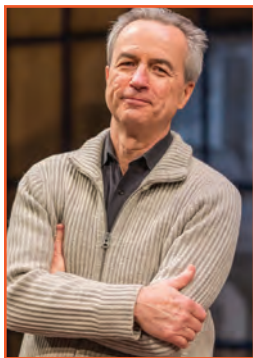
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THE OUTCALT IS AN IMMERSIVE THEATRE EXPERIENCE



Welcome to the Outcalt Theatre, built especially to complement the patron experience of the larger Allen Theatre for audiences attending Cleveland Play House productions. We are so glad that you are here!

As you can see from the set of *The Great Leap*, you are part of the scene — like a basketball fan in a gymnasium. Don't worry, you won't be invited to show off your basketball skills or be asked for audience participation as part of the show! However, you will indeed feel part of the action. That's the distinct beauty of the Outcalt. You are not only looking at the actors, you are viewing other audience members as part of the crowd. As an audience member, wrapped around the playing space, your focus and energy add to the total story. You play an important role here.

The story takes place in a variety of locations, not just a gym. It is an international tale framed by a sport. It takes place in the late 1980s in San Francisco and China — including during the protests and massacre in Tiananmen Square in 1989. You'll encounter Chinese and Chinese-American characters, as well as a well-traveled coach with a particular affinity for every bit of profanity in the English language. His is character-driven dialogue, absolutely realistic to some people in his profession. Playwright Lauren Yee heard this kind of “colorful” vocabulary in her research for the play. Her father played basketball every day on the asphalt courts and rec center floors of San Francisco Chinatown. While this play is not her father's story, it's one that Lauren knows well.

So we invite you to not only see and hear *The Great Leap*, but to fully experience it in the Outcalt. It's a CPH trademark.

Enjoy!

Mark Cuddy
Interim Artistic & Managing Director

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The cast, crew, and creative team of this production and the CPH staff would like to acknowledge those of the Shawnee, Miami, Erie, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Haudenosaunee peoples, whose lands we stand on, and the nearly 28,000 Native American people who live in Northeast Ohio today who represent over 100 tribal nations. For information about the lands on which you reside, visit native.land.ca.



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THE GREAT LEAP

by **LAUREN YEE**

Directed by **ESTHER JUN**

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YU SHIBAGAKI

COSTUME DESIGNER
SAMANTHA C. JONES

LIGHTING DESIGNER
MICHAEL BOLL

SOUND DESIGNER
MELANIE CHEN COLE

PROJECTIONS DIRECTOR
T. PAUL LOWRY

WIG DESIGNER
JANEL MOORE

CASTING DIRECTOR
JUDY BOWMAN, CSA

STAGE MANAGER
KYRA BUTTON*

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
KITTY WEN

October 29 – November 20, 2022

ALLEN THEATRE

* * *

The Great Leap is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
www.concordtheatricals.com

The Great Leap was originally developed and produced by Denver Center for the Performing Arts Theatre Company, Chris Coleman, Artistic Director.

New York Premiere Presented By Atlantic Theater Company New York City, 2018

The Great Leap was developed with the support of The Playwright's Center.

Developed in the New Strands Residency, a program of the American Conservatory Theater, Carey Perloff, Artistic Director- Peter Pastreich, Executive Director.

A workshop production of *The Great Leap* was presented by New York Stage and Film & Vassar at the Powerhouse Theater, Summer 2017.



SYNOPSIS

An American college basketball team travels to Beijing for a “friendship game” against a Chinese squad, but the matchup becomes a high-stakes battle between the two countries. Caught in the middle, a Chinese American player must prove his athletic mettle while unraveling a long-kept secret.

TIME: May/June 1989 and Summer/Fall 1971

PLACE: San Francisco, California and Beijing, China

CAST

(in alphabetical order)

MANFORD..... Eric Cheung*

CONNIE..... Amanda Kuo

SAUL David Mason*

WEN CHANG..... Reuben Uy*

Understudies never appear for a listed player unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance.

For CONNIE: Abegail Zee

For MANFORD and WEN CHANG: Ming Wu

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

The directors in LORT Theatres are represented by the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

The scenic, costume, lighting, sound, and projections designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

PRODUCTION DRAMATURG Yining Lin, PhD

WIG & HAIR TECHNICIAN and DRESSER..... Olivia Wolfram

STAGE CREW Stephanie Bahnij

COVID COMPLIANCE OFFICER Mads Massey

THIS PLAY WILL BE PERFORMED WITH AN INTERMISSION.

Wowed by the set? Feel free to snap a photo before the show, during intermission, or after the show. Don’t forget to tag Cleveland Play House (@cleveplayhouse on Twitter and Instagram) and use the hashtag #CPHLeap.

During the performance, photography, video, and/or audio recording by any means is strictly prohibited.

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THE RISE OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY



By Yining Lin, PhD 林亦宁

In 1911, a young Mao Zedong (1893-1976) joined a revolution. It was a student-led revolution that brought the Qing Dynasty (1636-1911), one of China's longest dynasties, down to the ground. The students were revolting against the inefficiency of the last Qing emperors and leaders who were forced to allocate land and ports to foreign powers after the Opium Wars (1839-1842; 1856-1860) with England.

Following the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and a short lived Republican era led by statesman and scholar Sun Yet-Sen (1866-1925), students and intellectuals — including Mao — began reading and delving into the works of Charles Darwin and Rousseau and, following the example of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia, also began reading Karl Marx, especially *The Communist Manifesto*. This book, co-written with Fredrich Engels, laid out the basic tenets of Communism, including the abolition of private property, which would result in the dissolution of the class system. While Marx and Engels had not intended for their words to reach China, students began to latch onto them after the 1919 Treaty of Versailles granted Chinese land to Germany.

On May 4, 1919, students from 13 Beijing universities gathered to establish five resolutions that would become the base for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP): 1) protesting the Versailles Treaty; 2) awakening the masses all over the country; 3) proposing a mass meeting of



the people of Beijing; 4) urging the formation of Beijing student union; and 5) demonstration of the Versailles Treaty terms.

The protests that followed the May Fourth Conference were successful in spreading the message of Communism, as well as highlighting the problems that existed in Chinese society at the time. In the years following the May Fourth Conference and Movement, a large number of protests, uprisings, and strikes among the workers sprung up around China, spreading the word of the CCP.

Mao's rise to power was preceded by "twenty-two years in the wilderness," where he fought against Chiang Kai-Shek's Guomindang with the CCP Military Arm, the Red Army, resulting in a civil war between the two factions and ending in Mao's Long March, a 6,000-mile trek from Southeastern to Northeastern China. Mao was declared the leader of the CCP while on this journey.

Mao's leadership of the CCP was driven by the idea that members of the working class, or the proletariat, were the ones who needed to make decisions; and that the bourgeoisie and upper classes should no longer exist. While his ideas had an appeal that could not be denied, Mao had also ignored the fact that the country needed to

Communist Chinese propaganda poster



Chairman Mao Zedong

survive. Having ignored the economic and agricultural hardships that covered the country, Mao established The Great Leap Forward in the late '50s, which was an agricultural and economic push to outproduce Great Britain and match the Soviet Union, thus highlighting Mao's belief that through hard work and strength of mind the Chinese people could achieve anything. Unfortunately, the push for constant farming and the creation of backyard furnaces to smelt the steel needed for an industrial revolution resulted in a 10% loss of China's forests.

From the outside, the Great Leap Forward was deemed a success. However, beginning in 1960, peasants, often considered the backbone of the Communist Revolution, began starving to death, dying in the fields as they worked to produce

enough crops and iron to satisfy Chairman Mao. Meanwhile, Mao began to force those he had deemed bourgeois to publicly renounce their sins, and sent them and their children to be re-educated in the countryside to learn what it was like to be a part of the proletariat.

Another movement that marked Mao's control was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR; 1966-1976). Led by Mao's third wife and former actress Jiang Qing, the GPCR revolutionized Chinese Indigenous Theatre (*xiqu*), specifically *jingju* (otherwise known as Beijing Opera). Before the GPCR, *jingju* performances were characterized by sweeping epics, love stories, and adventure stories where characters fought demons and evil spirits. However, in keeping with CCP ideals, Mao, in his "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art," articulated the ideal theatre, which would boost up the proletariat and bring down the bourgeoisie. For 10 years, the only theatre and culture people heard were the eight Model Modern Revolutionary *jingju*, two ballets, and two symphonies that were performed professionally and also available in what Lois Wheeler Snow called "Do-It-Yourself Kits." These kits allowed school-age children and peasants in rural areas of China to perform the *jingju*.

Mao died in 1976, effectively ending the GPCR and placing Deng Xiaoping in charge. He allowed foreign companies to establish themselves in China, which also led to corruption. In June 1989, students — most of whom had lived abroad and been exposed to Western thoughts and ideals — began to lead protests in Tiananmen Square to advocate for more political freedom.

And this is where we find ourselves at the beginning of *The Great Leap*.

WHO'S WHO



ERIC CHEUNG 張偉樑 (*Manford*) (he/him) is thrilled to be making his regional debut at Cleveland Play House. He recently understudied Manford and Wen Chang in *The Great Leap* at Asolo Repertory

Theatre.



AMANDA KUO (*Connie*) (she/her) is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan Theatre Performance program. Originally from Boston, she has worked regionally at Flint Repertory Theatre in Michigan and the Link Theatre in Arkansas. Her work on screen has taken her from Boston to New York to Los Angeles, and her credits include several independent short films, *Kevin Can F*ck Himself* and national commercials. She recently won Best Actress in the Golden Hour Film Festival for her role as Jesse in *Spirit Hand* by Jack Diehl. Amanda is an actor, writer, and director. She is currently working on an original project called *Millie & Maddie*, which you can find on Instagram, TikTok and Youtube.



DAVID MASON (*Saul*) (he/him) is delighted to make his Cleveland Play House debut. David appeared off-Broadway in the NYC premiere of Theresa Rebeck's *Seared* with Raúl Esparza and Krysta Rodriguez, directed by Moritz von Stuelpnagel at MCC Theater. Other NYC credits include work with 59E59, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Civilian Studios, Primary Stages, Present Company, Native Aliens, Red Fern Theatre, and Circle East. Selected regional credits include the world premiere of *The Nest* by Theresa Rebeck at Denver Center; the world premieres of *Dig* by Theresa Rebeck and *Thirst* by Ronan Noone at the Dorset Theatre Festival; *Chapter Two* directed by Marsha Mason at Arizona Theatre Co.; and numerous productions at Cape Playhouse, Geva Theatre Center, TheatreSquared, Portland Stage, Northern Stage, Weston Playhouse, Syracuse Stage, and New

Century Theatre. Television credits include *The Good Fight*, *The Blacklist*, *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, *The Leftovers*, *House of Cards*, and *Law & Order: SVU*. #beanartshero #blacklivesmatter



REUBEN UY 黃世源* (*Wen Chang*) (he/him) is honored to make his Cleveland Play House debut in *The Great Leap*. Reuben recently appeared in the hit musical *Interstate* by Melissa Li and Kit Yan at East

West Players. Theatre credits include *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Twelfth Night*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Hamlet*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Nick and Nora*, and *Beijing Spring*. TV credits include *Bosch: Legacy* (Amazon Prime) and *Trese* (Netflix). Film credits include *Face On*, *Metro Manila* (Sundance Audience Award Winner), and *Velvet Sky* (Best Film, LA Feedback Film Festival). Voice credits include *Squid Game* (Netflix) and *High Society* (Netflix). Reuben would like to thank his loving wife for her enduring support and his team @shushuent.



ABEGAIL ZEE (*U/S Connie*) (she/her) is a Filipino-American actor from the South Bay-Los Angeles area, and is currently based in Cleveland. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and a minor in educational studies from the University of California, Irvine. Abigail has appeared in film, television, commercial, and theatre productions including, but not limited to, her most recent regional theatre credits of the upcoming *Aponibolinayen in the Sky* at Talespinner Children's Theatre, the Marilyn Bianchi's Kids' Playwriting Festival at Dobama Theatre, and *Laws of Affection* at Tri-C. Forthcoming film credits include *Someday* and *Emerging*. This is her first Cleveland Play House production, and she is thrilled to be part of *The Great Leap*. Abigail is honored, proud, and excited to be given the opportunity to bring an authentic Asian-American story to life. She would like to thank her family — without their love and support, this journey would be impossible.

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LAUREN YEE (*Playwright*) is a playwright, screenwriter, and TV writer born and raised in San Francisco. She currently lives in New York City. Her *Cambodian Rock Band*, with music by Dengue Fever and others, premiered at South Coast Rep, with subsequent productions at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, Victory Gardens, City Theatre, Merrimack Rep, and Signature Theatre. Her play *The Great Leap* has been produced at Denver Center, Seattle Rep, Atlantic Theatre, Guthrie Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Arts Club, InterAct Theatre, Steppenwolf, Pasadena Playhouse/East West Players, and Cynet Theatre. Lauren's play, *King of the Yees*, premiered at The Goodman Theatre and Center Theatre Group, followed by productions at ACT Theatre, Canada's National Arts Centre, and Baltimore Center Stage. Other plays include *Ching Chong Chinaman* (Pan Asian Rep, Mu Performing Arts), *The Hatmaker's Wife* (Playwrights Realm, Moxie, PlayPenn), *Hookman* (Encore, Company One), *In a Word* (Young Vic, SF Playhouse, Cleveland Public Theatre, Strawdog), *Samsara* (Victory Gardens), *The Song of Summer* (Trinity Rep, Mixed Blood), and *The Tiger Among Us* (Mu). She is the winner of the Doris Duke Artist Award, the Steinberg Playwright Award, the Horton Foote Prize, the Kesselring Prize, the ATCA/Steinberg Award, American Academy of Arts and Letters Literature award, and the Francesca Primus Prize. She has been a finalist for the Edward M. Kennedy Prize and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Her plays were the No. 1 and No. 2 plays on the 2017 Kilroys List. Lauren is a Residency 5 playwright at Signature Theatre, New Dramatists member (class of 2025), Ma-Yi Writers' Lab member, former Princeton University Hodder fellow, and Playwrights Realm alumni playwright. Current commissions include Arena Stage, Geffen Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Portland Center Stage, Second Stage, and South Coast Rep. She received her BA from Yale and MFA from UCSD. www.laurensee.com

ESTHER JUN (*Director*) is a Toronto-based director who has worked with companies across Canada, including fu-Gen, Cahoots, Nightwood, Soulpepper, and Talk is Free. She is a founding member and co-artistic director of Directors Lab North, the first international offshoot of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, of

which she was a 2010 member. In 2015, Esther was a Neil Munro Intern Director at the Shaw Festival, and in 2016 was part of the Michael Langham Workshop for Classical Direction at the Stratford Festival. New play development, however, kept pulling her back in, and she was the assistant artistic director at Tarragon Theatre from 2016-2018, where she directed the Canadian premiere of Evan Placey's *Girls Like That*, and also premiered *Theory* by Norman Yeung. In 2017, Esther's co-production of Kate Henning's *The Last Wife* with The Befrey and GCTC was nominated for seven Prix Rideau Awards, including Best Production and Best Director. She won the Capital Critics award for Best Director. Esther returned to Stratford in 2020 to assist Antoni Cimolino on *Richard III*, but the pandemic had other plans. During that time, the festival began embarking on a culture shift, and she was asked to join the festival's Anti-Racism Committee and become an artistic associate in Planning. She also took over the directorship of The Langham Directors Workshop. Most recently, Esther has directed *I Am William* by Rébecca Déraspe and a new adaptation of *Little Women* by Jordi Mand at the festival. www.theestherjun.com

YU SHIBAGAKI (*Scenic Designer*) (she/her) is a NYC based set designer, originally from Nagoya, Japan. Recent designs include *1919* (Steppenwolf for Young Adults); *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* (Studio Theatre); *Dishwasher Dreams* (Hartford Stage); *Her Honor Jane Byrne* (Lookingglass Theatre); *America v.2.1* (Definition Theater); *School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play* (Goodman Theatre); *I, Banquo, I, Cinna* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); and more. Upcoming designs include *Villette*, *Lucy & Charlie's Honeymoon* (Lookingglass Theatre); *Madama Butterfly* (Boston Lyric Opera) www.yushibagaki.com.

SAMANTHA C. JONES (*Costume Designer*) is excited to be making her Cleveland Play House debut with this deeply touching piece of theatre. She is a Los Angeles based costume designer and educator. Previous design credits include the Geffen Playhouse, Center Theatre Group, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre, Paramount Theatre (Aurora), Northlight Theatre, Drury Lane Theatre, Writers Theatre,

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Lookingglass Theatre Company, Chicago Children's Theatre, TimeLine Theatre, Porchlight Music Theatre, Jackalope Theatre, Kansas City Rep, Alley Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, First Stage, Skylight Music Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Peninsula Players Theatre and others. Her work can currently be seen in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (Huntington Theatre Company). Upcoming productions include the world premiere of *What-A-Christmas* at Alley Theatre. Her work can be viewed at samanthacjones.com.

MICHAEL BOLL (*Lighting Designer*) is a Cleveland-based lighting designer. His Cleveland Play House designs include *Where Did We Sit on the Bus?*; *Pipeline*; *Native Gardens*; *An Iliad*; *The Invisible Hand*; *The Good Peaches*; *The Little Foxes*; *Venus in Fur*; *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor*; *In the Next Room or the vibrator play*; and *Stew and the Negro Problem*. Productions with the CWRU/CPH MFA Acting Program include *Macbeth*, *Metamorphoses*, *The Winter's Tale*, *An Orchard*, and *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*. Other Cleveland lighting design work includes Cleveland Public Theatre, Karamu House, Cain Park, Cleveland Museum of Art, Dobama Theatre,

and Beck Center for the Arts. Off-Broadway credits include *The Moliere Cycle* (Classic Stage Company), *Songs for a New World* (George Street Playhouse), *Dog Sees God* (SoHo Playhouse), and *The Moonlight Room* (associate lighting designer, Beckett Theatre). His work has also been seen at the N.Y. Fringe Festival, La MaMa E.T.C., HERE Arts Center, and Yale Cabaret.

MELANIE CHEN COLE (*Sound Designer*) (she/her) is a San Diego-based sound designer, and is thrilled to be making her design debut at Cleveland Play House with this production of *The Great Leap*. Regional work includes designs at Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Alley Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Clubbed Thumb, Dallas Theater Center, Geffen Playhouse, Goodman Theatre, The Huntington, Indiana Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, Milwaukee Rep, The Old Globe, PlayMakers Rep, South Coast Rep, and the Utah Shakespeare Festival. She holds a M.F.A. in theatre and dance from UC San Diego.

T. PAUL LOWRY (*Projection Designer*) (he/him) is a Cleveland-based projection, scenic, and lighting designer. Recent designs include *Egress* at

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Cleveland Play House; *Sherlock Holmes: The Baker Street Irregulars*, *Ella Enchanted*, *The Nether*, *Airness*, and *Kill Move Paradise* at Dobama Theatre; *Black Nativity*, *Greenwood*, and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* at Karamu House; and *The 39 Steps*, *Via Brooklyn*, and *Jane Eyre* for Cleveland Musical Theatre. Recent music and dance design include projects with International Festival of Arts & Ideas, ChamberFest Cleveland, and GroundWorks Dance Theater.

JANEL MOORE (*Wig Designer*) is a Cleveland-based wig and costume designer. Recent Cleveland Play House Credits include wig designer for *A Christmas Story* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Other local credits include wig designer at Cain Park for *Ragtime*. Janel is a graduate of Cleveland State University's Department of Theatre and Dance. She also works as a costumer in the local film union here in Cleveland. Follow on Instagram @moore_janel

JUDY BOWMAN, CSA (*Casting Director*) has CPH credits that include *The Three Musketeers*, *Antigone*, *Light It Up!*, and *The Invisible Hand*. Regional theater credits include *A Christmas Carol*

(McCarter), Madeline Sayet's *Where We Belong* (tour), *Incendiary* (Woolly Mammoth), *Justice* and *Nina Simone: Four Women* (Arizona Theatre Co), ...*Chad Deity* (Profile Theatre Co), and *Wait Until Dark* and *Thirst* (Dorset Theatre Fest). NYC credits include *Metra* (Flux Ensemble) and *Vatican Falls* (The Tank). Film and TV credits include *Hurricane Bianca*, *Separation*, *One Moment*, *Dead Sound*, *No Alternative*, *Gold Star*, *Copenhagen*, *Lost Cat Corona*, *Big Dogs*, and Hallmark's *Redemption in Cherry Springs*. Artios Award nominee Best Webseries Casting, PT Barnum Award recipient. judybowmancasting.com

YINING LIN, PhD 林亦宁 (*Production Dramaturg*) (she/her) is the manager of partnerships in Cleveland Play House's Education Department. As a freelance dramaturg, she has worked in Cleveland, Florida, Hawai'i, San Francisco, and Milwaukee. Yining holds a PhD in Asian/Western Comparative Theatre from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Yining has published book reviews in the *Asian Theatre Journal* and has recently co-authored an article on the teaching of Chinese Movement in the United States for the *Journal of Dance Education*.

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KYRA BUTTON (*Stage Manager*) is excited to be returning to Cleveland Play House for her sixth season. At CPH, she has worked on *Antigone*, *Where Did We Sit On The Bus?*, *Tiny Houses*, *Into The Breeches*, and *Pipeline*, to name a few. Her previous credits also include *ABCD* (Barrington Stage Company), *Dreamgirls* (Virginia Stage Company), *Hurricane Diane* (Dobama Theatre), *Baby Camp* (Leviathan Labs), *Resistance* (Semicolon Theatre), *The Heart's Impatience* (Shufflefoot Theatre Company), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (St. Ann's Warehouse), *Medea* and *Dreamgirls* (Red House Arts Center), *This Day Forward* (The Vineyard Theatre), and *The Intergenerational Project* (Rose Bruford, London). Kyra is proud to hold a BFA in stage management from Syracuse University's Department of Drama and is overjoyed to be working on this production.

KITTY WEN 温婉圻 (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is grateful to be involved with Cleveland Play House for the first time, having stage-managed the family theatre tour of *Teddy Bear Mountain*. She recently completed her Disney College

Program and Dobama Theatre Stage Management internship. Previous stage management credits include Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Karamu House, Cleveland Public Theatre, Ohio City Theatre Project, Baldwin Wallace, Independence Theatre, and Cassidy Theatre, among others. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Baldwin Wallace.

CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE, founded in 1915 and recipient of the 2015 Regional Theatre Tony Award, is America's first professional regional theatre. Throughout its rich history, CPH has remained dedicated to its mission to inspire, stimulate, and entertain diverse audiences across Northeast Ohio by producing plays and theatre education programs of the highest professional standards. CPH has produced more than 100 world and/or American premieres, and over its long history more than 12 million people have attended over 1,600 productions. Today, Cleveland Play House celebrates the beginning of its second century of service while performing in three state-of-the-art venues at Playhouse Square in downtown Cleveland.

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MARK CUDDY (*Interim Artistic & Managing Director*) joined Cleveland Play House as Interim Artistic Director in July 2022. He served as artistic director of Geva Theatre Center in Rochester, N.Y., for 27 years. He led Geva through a renaissance of artistic and institutional growth with a diverse repertory, topflight artists, wide-reaching educational programs and a commitment to new play development. Mr. Cuddy is a founding member of the board of directors for the Rochester Fringe Festival that just concluded its fourth year, and served on the board of directors of the only national service organization for non-profit theatres, Theatre Communications Group. As a director, Mr. Cuddy is known for his productions of musicals, contemporary comedies, and premieres. He also directed the CPH/Geva co-production of *Clybourne Park*. His Geva productions include *Once*, *The Humans*, *Ring of Fire*, *Good People*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *You Can't Take it With You*, *Superior Donuts*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* co-directed with Skip Greer and *Company*;

as well as his adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* with music and lyrics by Gregg Coffin. Among his many other Geva credits are *The Music Man*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Fences*, *Five Course Love*, *A Christmas Story*, and *Pride and Prejudice* (co-adaptor); and the world premieres of *Convenience* (musical) by Gregg Coffin, *Theophilus North* by Matthew Burnett from Thornton Wilder (also at Arena Stage), *Splitting Infinity* by Jamie Pachino, *Famous Orpheus* by Oyamo (choreography by Garth Fagan), *House and Garden* by Alan Ayckbourn (East Coast premiere), and *That Was Then* (American premiere). Mr. Cuddy has also served as artistic director of Sacramento Theatre Company, producing director of the Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and on the directing staff of the Denver Center Theatre Company. He has served on the review panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. He received his B.A. in the theatre/honors from the University of Massachusetts where he was a Commonwealth Scholar.



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CPH Playbill Editors: Derek Green and Craig Joseph

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Cleveland State University Cleveland Play House and Cleveland State University have a formal education partnership that enhances the learning opportunities of CSU students. For more information, call the CSU Theatre Department at 216-687-2113.

TCG Cleveland Play House is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.



Playhouse Square is a not-for-profit performing arts center that presents and produces a wide variety of performing arts, advances arts education and creates a destination that is a superior location for entertainment, business and residential living, thereby strengthening the economic vitality of the region.

Playbill Editor: Linda Feagler

For advertising information, please contact

Matthew Kraniske: 216-377-3681

PLAYHOUSE SQUARE HISTORY



Video Killed the Vaudeville Star

By 1925 the popularity of motion pictures was spelling the decline of vaudeville. Seeing the writing on the screen, the Keith Organization (which ran the Palace Theatre, now Connor Palace) opted to introduce films into its schedule of reduced vaudeville bookings. *The Iron Horse*, a John Ford epic about the construction of the transcontinental railroad, was the first silent film to play the Palace. It starred George O'Brien and Madge Bellamy, and a ticket cost a whopping 25 cents!

No Butts About It

In the 1920s, women were being enticed by such advertising as “reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet.” Although ladies who smoked in public were still frowned upon in 1922, the management decided to buck the controversy by creating the private Egyptian Smoking Room. Located off the main lobby, it allowed female guests a proper place to smoke. The room’s walls were of Hindu design; its carved furniture upholstered in a black

and gold brocade Egyptian motif; wrought iron Egyptian-styled lamps were topped with red silk shades, and a rare carpet from India covered the floor.

Although the room retains the name of the Egyptian Smoking Room to this day, it is now used for administrative purposes because no smoking is allowed in any of the Playhouse Square spaces.

Knot Your Average Carpet

The original carpet that adorned the Connor Palace Grand Hall (main lobby) when the venue opened in 1922, was touted as the largest carpet in the world to be woven in one piece. Gray with wine-colored roses, the 67-foot by 40-foot carpet was created in Maffersdorf, Czecho-Slovakia and contained 9,000,272 knots — all tied by hand.

Theatrical Vermin In No Need of the Orkin Man

Mice and flies are two pests you would never stand for in your house, but both are necessary to

every theater house! Mice are actually special shields placed over microphones on the floor at the front of a stage. Flies is the entire area above the stage (not visible to the audience) where scenery is hung and stored. Flymen (stagehands operating the counterweight system and flying scenery) often are located on the fly floor, which is the work area above the stage floor.

Young STARS Shine At Playhouse Square

You might see volunteer RedCoats from time to time who look like they're not old enough to vote — and they aren't. These youths are part of the successful STARS (Students Take A Role at the Square) program, where older students volunteer to usher at Broadway Series shows, concerts and other special events at the theaters. While the STARS program can be interesting and fun for all students, it becomes a particularly invaluable opportunity to gain experience and behind-the-scenes knowledge for those students who are planning future careers in the performing arts.

Say Goodnight, Gracie

Legendary comedy duo George Burns and Gracie Allen were married in Cleveland January 7, 1926 during their Playhouse Square booking. A brief, early-morning ceremony was performed by a Justice of the Peace, after which the newlyweds checked into the Statler Hotel. George's older brother and his family (who lived in Akron) came up to Cleveland that afternoon to celebrate with the couple before George and Gracie returned to their room to honeymoon.

At 2 a.m. the phone rang. It was fellow comedian Jack Benny calling from Omaha. Immediately recognizing Jack's voice, George cut him off saying, "Send up two orders of ham and eggs," then hung up.

Ten minutes later the phone rang. It was Benny again. This time George interrupted his friend with, "You forgot the ketchup!" and hung up on Benny a second time. Half an hour later came a knock at the door. It was a waiter with two orders of ham and eggs. Trying to keep a straight face the waiter announced, "Compliments of Mr. Jack Benny from Omaha!"

As George liked to tell it, the newlyweds ate their Benny breakfast at 2:30 a.m., and, when they were done, Gracie said, "George, this was the high point of the night!"

The KeyBank State Theatre Murals

The four murals on the walls of the KeyBank State Theatre lobby were painted by American Modernist James Daugherty (1890-1974), whose work hangs in the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum and the Smithsonian. One of the murals, *The Spirit of Cinema*, was featured on the cover of *Life* magazine on February 20, 1970. It was that national attention that became the convincing argument to save the venue from the wrecking ball. Destruction of the State would also have meant the loss of the original historic Daugherty murals, since they are painted directly on the walls. Today they are the only Daugherty works which remain at the original site where they were painted.

Performers Help Restore Playhouse Square

During her 1996 run of *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, legendary Broadway star Chita Rivera was given a guided tour of Playhouse Square. As she followed her tour guide into the State auditorium, an excited Chita pointed to the mezzanine railing and proudly exclaimed, I helped paint that! Indeed, she had. In 1984, Chita had last played Playhouse Square when much restoration remained, and during her free time willingly added her brush strokes to the history of the State.

Likewise, Mary Travers of Peter, Paul & Mary fame also performed at the KeyBank State Theatre several times during its early restoration. She became so enthusiastic over the restoration process that she would climb the scaffolding and help paint the ceiling. Like Chita, on a return visit, Mary pointed out the ceiling area that she had helped paint (just-above-and-to-the-left of the Men's Room doorway on the mezzanine).

The GE Chandelier

Officially the world's largest outdoor chandelier, the 20-foot tall GE Chandelier is adorned with 4200 crystals. To find out how it was made, visit the Playhouse Square YouTube channel.

A Change in History?

One of many fascinating items to be found in the book *Playhouse Square: An Entertaining History* deals with the infamous John Wilkes Booth. Booth performed locally at the old Academy of Music, which was one of the first drama schools



in the country and was located at 1371 W. 6th Street.

It was at that Cleveland Academy where he would play his last role prior to performing at Washington D.C.'s Ford Theatre where he would assassinate President Lincoln. (Might history have been changed if the Academy had held over Booth's play for an extended run?)

Connor Palace Trivia

Before the days of clothes dryers, touring performers were often forced to pull still-damp clothes off the drying line when it was time to pack and leave. During the vaudeville era, the Connor Palace (known then as the Palace) became known as one of the most performer-friendly venues in the country because of its many backstage amenities, one of which included a drying room. In this large room, wet clothes could be hung and hot air was continuously blown into the area to hasten the drying time.

Singers' Secrets

Repeat three times: Performer packs pickle for perfect pipes. Singer Anita Baker surprised backstage workers during her sold out shows by keep-

ing an ample supply of pickle juice in her dressing room — using it to gargle! (No report as to whether Anita acquired the pickle practice during her two pregnancies.) Likewise, another unusual gargling agent was the preference of singer Millie Jackson who required a certain imported beer as her gargle-of-choice.

There Goes the Neighborhood!

The 1870s ushered in the golden age for Euclid Avenue as the street became a stretch of grand mansions, with grounds often extending as far as Lake Erie, and stately elm trees arching over the avenue. Called Millionaire's Row, it was the address where all the best families lived.

But by Cleveland's Centennial in 1896, Euclid Avenue residents were likely muttering, Well, there goes the neighborhood! as the dirt street was paved with sandstone, and businessmen began to buy up and tear down the mansions and towering elms to make way for commercial ventures.

Streetcar lines on the once totally residential stretch hastened the creation of a commercial district, forcing wealthy families to move even farther east on Euclid Avenue. In another 30 years, the district would see the birth of the five



main theaters that would eventually become Playhouse Square.

KeyBank State Theatre Trivia

The stage of the KeyBank State Theatre is so large that a typical high school gymnasium (complete with basketball court and bleachers) could easily fit on stage. As another point of comparison, three of the Mimi Ohio Theatre stages could fit onto the State's stage.

Hanna Theatre Trivia

Since its opening in 1921, the Hanna Theatre has been the site of two world premieres: Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Me and Juliette* in 1953 and, in 1974, *Odyssey* by Michel Legrand, starring Yul Brynner. Another first occurred in 1937, when Gilbert and Sullivan's first Cleveland-staged opera was performed at the Hanna by the D'Oyly Carte Company from London.

Connor Palace: A Three Stooges Favorite

In his biography, *Moe Howard & The Three Stooges*, Moe Howard wrote about the plight of dressing rooms on the road. Although dressing rooms were usually spartan at best and a hovel at worst, Howard had nothing but praise for the Connor Palace (known then as the Palace Theatre): "This theater was built without missing a thought for the actors' comfort. The Palace was beautiful not only outside and in the auditorium,

but also backstage. Most impressive was the second floor, which sported a regulation-size pool table, chess tables, comfortable chairs, an ice machine and soft drinks, playing cards, cigars — it had all the facilities of a private club. In the basement was a laundry room. There was even a nursery for youngsters.

Best of all were the dressing rooms, heavily carpeted with mirrored walls and make-up tables. They had everything in them, right down to padded coat hangers."

KeyBank State Theatre Trivia

Above the fireplace at the rear of the KeyBank State Theatre auditorium, an original mural hangs despite its near-tragic loss. Removed from the wall in the early 1970s prior to the scheduled demolition of the venue, the mural eventually turned up in the basement of a piano store and was repurchased by Playhouse Square for \$200.

The recovered mural was badly torn, having originally been painted on burlap then glued to the wall. The challenge of restoring the artwork fell to the Theater District's Bonfoey Company. Artisans sanded the glue from the burlap and attached the cleaned mural to canvas via beeswax.

The next step was to clean and restore the work where needed. A stretcher for the canvas had to be custom-made. To eliminate tears and wrinkles, the stretcher was designed to expand and contract with the theater's climactic changes and held



together with springs (no nails or screws). It took Bonfoey employees 18 months to restore the painting at a cost of \$8,500.

Although the creator of this mural is unknown, it is suspected to be Italian artist Sampitrotti, who had painted three murals for the original Mimi Ohio Theatre lobby. (Those murals were later destroyed in the Ohio's 1964 lobby fire.)

Kennedy's Cabaret Trivia

The bar in Kennedy's (the lower level cabaret space accessed by way of the Mimi Ohio Theatre lobby), might be familiar to Cleveland oldtimers. The former home of the bar was the Elegant Hog Saloon when the tavern was located on Buckeye Road.

World's Longest Lobby Explained

In 1920 as the Loew's chain anticipated building in the area that would come to be known as Playhouse Square, it was discovered there wasn't sufficient room to build two theaters side by side in the available space.

Since it was important that the proposed theater marquees be located on Euclid Avenue, an architectural plan was devised. Even though the

KeyBank State Theatre would be completed and open 21 months before the Connor Palace, it was decided to build the State behind the Connor Palace. This led to the construction of the State's 320-foot-long lobby, reported to be the longest theater lobby in the world. The Mimi Ohio Theatre would then be built on the other side of the State, giving all three theaters the desired Euclid Avenue marquee frontage.

What Would It Cost to Build Them Today?

Even though the Connor Palace is not the largest of the Playhouse Square venues, it was the most costly to build (\$3.5 million) by the time it premiered on Nov. 6, 1922. The largest theater, the State, (opened Feb. 5, 1921) was built at a cost of \$2 million; the Ohio (Feb. 14, 1921) also cost \$2 million, and the Allen's costs totaled \$1.9 million when it opened April 1, 1921. (Exact building costs for the Hanna Theatre — which opened March 28, 1921 — have yet to be uncovered.)

A Phoenix from the Ashes

In 1964, the Mimi Ohio Theatre lobby and auditorium were destroyed by fire. When the fledgling



Playhouse Square organization restored the spaces in 1982, funding and time constraints made it possible only for the auditorium to be fully restored. Thanks to a gift from the George Gund Foundation, the lobby was re-created in its original splendor in 2016. You can watch a documentary about the project, “Restoring the Legacy,” on Playhouse Square’s YouTube channel.

Re-Creating History

We call the completed Mimi Ohio Theatre George Gund Foundation Lobby project a “re-creation” rather than a restoration. Why? There was nothing left to restore after a 1964 fire destroyed the space. To reproduce the lobby’s original 1921 splendor, architects, restoration specialists and Playhouse Square staff conducted exhaustive research of the original drawings by architect Thomas Lamb, photo archives and a few remaining bits of ornamental plaster detail to gain a thorough understanding of the space and inform the plans for re-creating the lobby.

Broadway to Buildings

Where do the arts and real estate go hand-in-hand? At Playhouse Square, of course! As the theaters began to be restored in the early 1980s, it

was thought that developers would step in to build and open businesses around them. When that didn’t happen, Playhouse Square began to steward development of the surrounding neighborhood. In 1999, Playhouse Square became the first performing arts center with a real estate services division, which manages the one million square feet of property owned by the organization and another 1.5 million square feet outside the theater district. Other performing arts centers have since looked to our expertise as a model.

YPs Take the Lead

Best known as the masterminds behind the annual Jump Back Ball benefit, Playhouse Square’s young professionals group – Partners – was formed in 1991. Since then, hundreds of young professionals engage with Playhouse Square each year to build leadership skills, raise funds and volunteer in support of our not-for-profit mission, enjoy shows together, network and have fun!

Keeping Up the KeyBank State Theatre

First restored more than 30 years ago, the KeyBank State Theatre was repainted from the street to the proscenium in 2015. The new, cohesive color palette showcases the beauty and crafts-



manship of the nearly 100-year-old theater. It took 25 painters 12,500 hours and 595 gallons of paint in 15 different colors to complete the project, which also included 6000 sheets of new metal leafing in the auditorium dome and the application of a historically accurate wall-covering design. While the theater was dark, its lighting fixtures and restrooms received major upgrades.

Patterns in Plaster

As you walk through the theaters, you may notice various patterns within the plaster decoration. Common are dentil, lamb tongue, rope and rosettes. Other patterns you may see have been associated with certain meanings since they were first used hundreds or even thousands of years ago, such as the acanthus leaf (immortality), egg and dart (life and death), and the palm leaf, first used in ancient Egypt as a reference to the Nile River. In the KeyBank State Theatre, if you look closely and carefully, you can find ox skulls, which were believed to offer protection from natural elements. And throughout the theaters, you will find griffins, mythical creatures thought of as guardians.

What's in a Logo?

The Playhouse Square logo we use today – a tilted burgundy square with a capital P in its center – was introduced in 2008 to capture the enduring spirit of entertainment and excitement. Each of the logo's graphic elements has meaning: the exclamation point with a star in the "P" symbolizes excitement and innovation; the swirl in the "P" represents creativity and forward motion; the tilted square symbolizes Playhouse Square as a destination; and the burgundy color gives nod to the color scheme of our historic theaters.

Going Green

While red is the color most often associated with theaters, Playhouse Square is making efforts to go "green." You will find receptacles for recycling paper, plastic and cans, along with those designated specifically for the program you're currently reading, throughout the complex. Lighting fixtures are being switched to LED for increased energy efficiency. And the Playhouse Square administrative office is making strides towards going paperless.

GUEST SERVICES AT PLAYHOUSE SQUARE



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For questions or service that may provide a quality, entertaining experience, please see the House Manager on duty. A RedCoat usher can direct you to their office location.

Smoking Policy

Smoking, including electronic smoking or “vaping,” is not permitted indoors at Playhouse Square.

We Love Hearing From Our Guests

Your feedback is important. For matters that are not immediate or for additional questions you may have, please access our online comment form at playhousesquare.org/contact-us. We read and share all comments with the staff and meet often to discuss how we can improve upon your experience at Playhouse Square.

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Cameras, including cameras on cell phones and other personal handheld devices, audio/video recorders and flash photography are strictly prohibited.

Cell Phones

The experience of a live performance can be ruined by the interruption of ringtones, vibrating phones or conversation. The magic of a darkened theater can be disrupted by the light of someone text messaging as well. Please be considerate to others and remember to turn off your cell phone for the duration of the show.



Thank You

Playhouse Square gratefully acknowledges the people of Cuyahoga County for their historical support to theater restoration, upkeep and programming, as well as through their ongoing contributions through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture.

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Cats The Great Leap Christmas with C.S. Lewis					A Christmas Carol Girls Night: The Musical An Evening With Harry Connick Jr.	A Christmas Carol Tomáseen Foley's A Celtic Christmas The Turkey Jam feat. Bobby Brown with SWV & Ginuwine & Ruff Endz	
A Christmas Carol Cleveland Pops				DECEMBER		A Christmas Carol Rudolph The Red- Nosed Reindeer Pete Correale	
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Hamilton A Christmas Carol Dave Koz and Friends 25th Anniversary Christmas Tour		Hamilton	Hamilton	Hamilton A Christmas Carol The Nutcracker	Hamilton A Christmas Carol The Nutcracker	Hamilton A Christmas Carol The Nutcracker Jim Brickman: A Very Merry Christmas	
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		Hamilton	Hamilton	Hamilton	Hamilton	Hamilton	

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