



**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS BAY AREA PREMIERE OF
MARCO RAMIREZ'S THE ROYALE
November 3 - December 3, 2017**

BERKELEY, Calif. (Oct. 5, 2017) — **Aurora Theatre Company** continues its 26th season with the Bay Area premiere of **THE ROYALE** by Marco Ramirez (*Orange Is the New Black, Sons of Anarchy*). **Darryl V. Jones** directs and co-choreographs the compelling ringside tale, featuring **Calvin M. Thompson** (The Barrow Group), **Satchel André** (American Stage), **Tim Kniffin** (Aurora's *Trouble in Mind, The Arsonists*), **Donald E. Lacy, Jr.** (Berkeley Repertory Theatre) and **Atim Udoffia** (San Francisco Playhouse).

THE ROYALE plays November 3 through December 3 at the Aurora Theatre in Berkeley. For tickets and information the public can call **510-843-4822** or visit **auroratheatre.org**.

Award-winning writer and producer Ramirez tightly constructs this visceral theatrical work that reimagines the life of the first African-American heavyweight world champion Jack Johnson, one of the first celebrity-athletes. It's 1905, and Jay "The Sport" Jackson is ready to take on both the current heavyweight champion and the entrenched discrimination of the Jim Crow era — but is America ready for him? With rhythmic and ingenious staging, Ramirez's contenders never physically engage in the ring; instead it's "The Sport's" internal struggle that delivers a sharp and surprising punch.

Earlier productions in New York, London, Chicago, and Los Angeles drew critical acclaim. *The New York Times* called **THE ROYALE** "swift stark lyricism." *The Los Angeles Times* said **THE ROYALE'S** "lively manner of telling reanimates this breakthrough saga for a new generation." Said *Variety*: "A gripping, vivid coup de theatre."

In addition to **THE ROYALE**, playwright **Marco Ramirez** has had plays produced at the Center Theatre Group (Los Angeles), Old Globe, the Kennedy Center, Juilliard School, the Arsht Center, and Actors Theatre of Louisville's Humana Festival of New American Plays (where he's twice received the Heideman Award). He's been an artist-in-residence at Atlantic Theatre Company. On television, he's been nominated for Writers Guild of America and Emmy awards. His TV writing and producing credits include *Sons of Anarchy, Orange Is The New Black, Fear the Walking Dead, Daredevil* and *The Defenders*.

Theatre veteran **Darryl V. Jones** makes his directorial debut at Aurora with **THE ROYALE**, which he co-choreographed. His directing credits include *The Brothers Size* at Theatre Rhinoceros, and *Spunk* at the Lorraine Hansberry and leading theatres in Washington, DC, including the Arena Stage, where he directed, choreographed and was associate producer of *PlayQuest: The New Play Development Series*. He has directed

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off-Broadway and at many leading regional theatres. Formerly on the University of Michigan faculty, he currently serves as Associate Professor of Theatre and head of the Musical Theatre Program at Cal State East Bay.

Aurora Theatre Company has assembled a talented cast for **THE ROYALE**. In his Aurora stage debut, **Calvin M. Thompson** leads the ensemble as Jay “The Sport” Jackson. He recently appeared as Herald Loomis in American Stage's production of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Additional credits include off-Broadway productions at The Barrow Group Theatre, New York Musical Theatre Festival, and Snapple Theatre. His film and TV work includes *Ying-Yang, City of Dreams, Law & Order*.

Also making his Aurora stage debut is **Satchel André** as Fish. A recent MFA graduate of the University of Southern California, his regional credits include productions at PCPA Theatre, American Stage, SkyLight Theatre and Courage Theatre. His television work includes *Real Husbands of Hollywood, Deadly Wives, Dating Pool*.

As Max, **Tim Kniffin** returns to the Aurora, where the San Francisco native has performed in *Trouble In Mind* (BATCC Award Best Actor), and *The Arsonists*, among others. Additional credits include productions at San Francisco Playhouse, Shotgun Players. His film and TV credits include *Burn Country, Trauma, and Chance*.

Donald E. Lacy, Jr. makes his Aurora stage debut in **THE ROYALE** as Wynton. The 2017 Theatre Bay Area Legacy Award-winner's credits include productions at Cal Shakes, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. His film and TV work includes *Cherry, Other Bario, Trauma*.

Atim Udoffia also makes her Aurora stage debut as Nina. Her stage credits include productions at San Francisco Playhouse, Sacramento Theatre Company, Capital Stage, and B Street Theatre.

The Royale's creative team includes **Richard Olmsted**--Set Designer; **Courtney Flores**--Costume Designer; **Kurt Landisman**--Lighting Designer; **James Ard**--Sound Designer; **Joe Orrach**--Boxing Coach & Co-Choreographer.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

Aurora Theatre Company continues its 26th season with the Bay Area premiere of **THE ROYALE** by Marco Ramirez, award-winning writer of the hit TV series (*Orange Is the New Black* and *Sons of Anarchy*). It's 1905, and Jay “The Sport” Jackson is ready to take on both the current heavyweight champion and the entrenched discrimination of the Jim Crow era—but is America ready for him? Inspired by the real-life experiences of Jack Johnson, the first African-American heavyweight world champion, the play uses rhythmic and ingenious staging. Ramirez's contenders never physically engage in the ring; instead it's “The Sport's” internal struggle that delivers a sharp and surprising punch.

The tightly constructed, viscerally theatrical tale has had acclaimed productions in New York, London, Chicago, and Los Angeles. *The Los Angeles Times* says **THE ROYALE'S** “lively manner of telling reanimates this breakthrough saga for a new generation.” Variety called **THE ROYALE** “A gripping, vivid coup de theatre.”

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DATES: Previews: November 3, 4 at 8pm; November 5 at 2 pm; November 7, 8 at 7pm
 Opens: November 9, 2017 8pm
 Closes: December 3

SHOWS: Tuesday and Wednesday at 7pm; Thursday through Saturday at 8pm; Sunday at 2, 7pm.

WHERE: Aurora Theatre Company, 2081 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA

TICKETS: For single tickets (\$33-\$65) or subscriptions (\$99-\$360), the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit **auroratheatre.org**. Half-off tickets for Under 35; student, and group discounts available.

PHOTOS: High-resolution images can be found at auroratheatre.org/index.php.press-room

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Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Associate Sponsors Deborah & Howard Goodman, Ellen & Barry Levine, Gennaro "Gerry" DeVito & Merrill J. Meltz, and Helen M. Marcus & David J. Williamson for their support.

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