



**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY  
ANNOUNCES 2017-18 SEASON**  
*Acclaimed intimate theatre to present*  
***O+G World Premiere from Jonathan Spector;***  
***Bay Area Premiere from Rebecca Gilman;***  
***Bay Area Premiere from Marco Ramirez;***  
***Bay Area Premiere from Sarah Burgess;***  
***George Bernard Shaw classic;***  
***Modern classic from Caryl Churchill***

BERKELEY, Calif. (March 30, 2017) – Berkeley’s acclaimed **Aurora Theatre Company** proudly announces the lineup for its 26<sup>th</sup> season. Aurora opens the season with the Bay Area Premiere of Rebecca Gilman’s **LUNA GALE**. The company is also poised to present the Bay Area Premiere of Marco Ramirez’s **THE ROYALE**, followed by a revival of George Bernard Shaw’s classic, **WIDOWERS’ HOUSES**. Caryl Churchill’s **A NUMBER** will be staged at the Aurora’s second stage performance space, Harry’s UpStage, located in the Nell and Jules Dashow Wing. Aurora continues the season with the World Premiere of Jonathan Spector’s new play, **EUREKA DAY**, commissioned and developed through the company’s Originate+Generate new works incubator that promotes the creation of new works for the stage by local artists. Closing the season is the Bay Area Premiere of Sarah Burgess’ off-Broadway hit **DRY POWDER**.

“In 2016, Aurora celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary by taking a look at the past,” said Aurora Theatre Company Artistic Director Tom Ross. “For our 26<sup>th</sup> season, we are inviting audiences to not only take a fresh look at the physical changes that we’ve made to the theatre but to also take a fresh look at the power and possibilities of live theatre.”

Continued Ross, “The six plays we have chosen for Aurora include three Bay Area Premieres written by three provocative, exciting, and insightful playwrights, a classic by the ever-relevant George Bernard Shaw, a contemporary classic by the innovative Caryl Churchill, and a World Premiere about present-day Berkeley by local playwright Jonathan Spector.”

“These plays feature some of the Bay Area’s top artists creating electrifying theatrical work in our intimate venues. Now more than ever we need to support the art and artists who make our world such an interesting place; Aurora’s 26<sup>th</sup> season promises to be a season of plays that offer much more than

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entertainment, plays that will encourage us to think deeper, laugh louder, and do better.”

The regular season will be staged September 2017 through July 2018 at the intimate Aurora Theatre in the downtown Berkeley arts district. For single tickets (\$33-\$65) or subscriptions (\$99-\$360), the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit **auroratheatre.org**. **Subscriptions on sale March 30. Single tickets on sale for subscribers July 25 and on sale August 1 to the general public.**

In chronological order, the Aurora 2017-18 season is as follows:

**LUNA GALE**  
**By Rebecca Gilman**  
***Bay Area Premiere***  
**Directed by Tom Ross**  
**September 1 - October 1, 2017 (Opens: September 7)**

Aurora Theatre Company opens its 26<sup>th</sup> season with the Bay Area Premiere of Rebecca Gilman’s (*Blue Surge, Spinning Into Butter, The Sweetest Swing in Baseball*) **LUNA GALE**. The challenges facing foster youth are real. Veteran social worker Caroline thinks she has a typical case on her hands when she meets two teenaged drug addicts accused of neglecting their baby. She will do whatever it takes to protect baby Luna Gale, but when she moves the child out of one dangerous situation, she fears she may have placed her in another. Unraveling a tangle of buried secrets, hidden motives, and mistakes, the play questions who decides what’s best for a child when there are no good choices, only good intentions.

Called “smart and absorbing... an engrossing exploration of the tough choices welfare workers contend with daily” by *The New York Times*, one of the “most valuable additions to American drama” by the *Los Angeles Times*, and “brilliant...not to be missed” by *The Hollywood Reporter*, **LUNA GALE** first premiered at the Goodman Theatre in 2014. Powerful and arresting, **LUNA GALE** asks whether the end justifies the means in a human drama about how we fail our children when right and wrong are not always self-evident.

**THE ROYALE**  
**By Marco Ramirez**  
***Bay Area Premiere***  
**Directed by Darryl V. Jones**  
**November 3 - December 3, 2017 (Opens: November 9)**

Aurora Theatre Company presents the Bay Area Premiere of **THE ROYALE** from award-winning writer Marco Ramirez (*Orange is the New Black, Sons of Anarchy, Fear the Walking Dead, Marvel’s Daredevil* and the upcoming Netflix series *The Defenders*). Set in the early 1900s and inspired by the life of boxer Jack Johnson, who became the first black heavyweight champion, **THE ROYALE** examines the single-mindedness required of champions, and the repercussions such a focus has when a black man in a white man’s world exercises it. Jay “The Sport” Jackson dreams of becoming the undisputed heavyweight

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champion of the world. When a crooked boxing promoter hatches a plan for “the fight of the century,” “The Sport” just might land a place in the ring with the reigning white heavyweight champion, and land a place in history.

Winner of the John Gassner Award for Best Play from the Outer Critics Circle and nominated for two Drama League awards and Outstanding Play from the Drama Desk Awards, **THE ROYALE** was first staged at the Kirk Douglas Theater in Los Angeles in 2013. Declared “a well constructed drama that captures both the beautiful frenzy of boxing and the (sadly still relevant) volatile state of race relations in America” by *The Telegraph (UK)*, a “breakthrough saga for a new generation” by the *Los Angeles Times*, and “original and graceful... [a] tale that bears far more social freight than the usual beat-the-odds sports melodrama” by *The New York Times*, **THE ROYALE** delivers a sharp and surprising blow without throwing a single punch.

### **WIDOWERS’ HOUSES**

**By George Bernard Shaw**

**Directed by Joy Carlin**

**January 26-February 25, 2018 (Opens: February 1)**

What would kill most romantic relationships provides kindling for a crackling comic satire in George Bernard Shaw’s first play, **WIDOWERS’ HOUSES**. A well-intentioned young doctor falls in love while on holiday, but when he returns home to London, he discovers that both he and his hot-tempered fiancé are beneficiaries of a scheme to exploit the poor. Chillingly topical, **WIDOWERS’ HOUSES**, which premiered in 1892, suggests that even high-minded idealists may be complicit in a corrupt system. Poking pointed fun at capitalism and the excuses the upper classes make for it, Shaw intended **WIDOWERS’ HOUSES** to highlight the ugly social consequences of sanctifying private profit.

Aurora first produced this Shaw classic in 1997, a production about which the *San Francisco Chronicle* said, “Widowers’ Houses develops with a compelling directness in both its political argument and its emotional drama,” and the *East Bay Express* declared, “A ticket to Widower’s Houses is the perfect gift for that hard-to-please capitalist on your list.” The *Contra Costa Times* hailed the production “an elegantly spun morality tale, and the *Oakland Tribune* hailed the production “A smashing satire.”

### **A NUMBER**

**By Caryl Churchill**

**Directed by Barbara Damashek**

**March 9-April 22, 2018 (Opens: March 15)**

Aurora Theatre Company presents **A NUMBER** by prolific playwright (*Cloud Nine, Top Girls, Far Away, Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?, Bliss, Love and Information, Mad Forest*) Caryl Churchill. How might a man feel to realize that he is only one in a number of identical copies? Bernard has just discovered that he’s not the only Bernard, and so begins a series of questions that will take him and his father on a compelling psychological journey. Set in the near future and written during a time of public

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** ERICA LEWIS-FINEIN, PR MANAGER, AURORA THEATRE COMPANY  
**PHONE** 510.843.4042 x316 **FAX** 510.843.4826 **EMAIL** ELEWIS@AURORATHEATRE.ORG

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debate over the ethics of cloning, **A NUMBER** is in part an attack on patriarchy and an exploration of the way that people develop regardless of their genes.

Raising big moral issues and exploring identity and second chances, **A NUMBER** had its World Premiere in 2002 at the Royal Court Theatre, where the *Evening Standard* declared, “Rarely in my theatre going experience has a new play conveyed such a disturbing or enthralling impression of domestic weirdness.... An astonishing event,” and the *Daily Telegraph* said, “What a tremendous play this is, moving, thought-provoking and dramatically thrilling.”

This production will be presented at Aurora Theatre Company’s second stage performance space, Harry’s UpStage, located in the Nell and Jules Dashow Wing.

**EUREKA DAY**  
**By Jonathan Spector**  
*World Premiere*  
**Directed by Josh Costello**  
**April 13-May 13, 2018 (Opens: April 19)**

Aurora Theatre Company presents the World Premiere of **EUREKA DAY** by Jonathan Spector. The first play to come out of **Originate + Generate**, Aurora’s new works initiative that promotes the creation of new works for the stage by local artists, **EUREKA DAY** focuses on the anti-vaccine movement in the Bay Area and the very human effects of disagreeing about something so wide reaching and so personal. At forward-thinking Eureka Day school, all decisions are made by consensus and everyone’s opinion is valued. But when a crisis threatens their children’s safety, it turns out that not everyone in the school community has the same definition of social justice. Now the board of directors must confront one of the central questions of our era: how do you find consensus when you can’t agree on the facts?

An incisive, poignant comedy of liberal manners, **EUREKA DAY** explores what it means when people of similar backgrounds, party affiliation, and education level hold the same worldviews but have such passionately and viciously opposing points of view about the health of our children.

Jonathan Spector is a director and playwright based in Berkeley and is the Co-Artistic Director of Just Theater. Original works for the stage include *Sandal Weather*, *Be What You Wish to Seem*, and *The World To Come*; his plays have been developed and produced by Just Theater, PlayGround, and The Source Theater Festival, among others. He is a former Associate Artistic Director of Playwrights Foundation in San Francisco. Spector was a director for Aurora’s GAP in 2011 and a prize-winning playwright in 2013 (*In From the Cold*) and 2015 (*FTW*).

**DRY POWDER**  
**By Sarah Burgess**  
*Bay Area Premiere*  
**Directed by Jennifer King**  
**June 22-July 22, 2018 (Opens: June 28)**

Closing Aurora’s 26<sup>th</sup> season is **DRY POWDER**, a new dark comedy from Sarah Burgess. If you are a capitalist, where do you draw the line of pursuing your own self-interest? After throwing himself a lavish

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engagement party in the same week that his private equity firm forced job cuts at a national retailer, Rick is facing a media furor and Occupy Wall Street-type protests against his investors. Luckily one of his Managing Directors comes up with a “win-win” plan: a cheap buyout of an American manufacturer that will grow jobs and save face. But another of the firm’s partners favors a cutthroat strategy that will maximize profit at any cost. A razor-sharp, whip-smart comedy that skewers the world of high finance from the inside, **DRY POWDER** tackles the complex, shadowy world of private equity where it’s not about right or wrong having ethics; it’s all about the art of the deal.

**DRY POWDER** received its World Premiere at the Public Theater in 2016 where *The New York Times* declared, “Take your forks and knives — and heck, your pitchforks, too — and dig in!”, and *Variety* called the play “frighteningly funny.”

Voted Best Theater Company in 2012 by *SF Weekly*, Aurora Theatre Company continues to offer challenging, literate, intelligent stage works to the Bay Area, each year increasing its reputation for top-notch theater. Located in the heart of the Downtown Berkeley Arts District, Aurora Theatre Company, declared “one of the best regional theaters around” by *7x7* magazine, has been called “one of the most important regional theaters in the area” and “a must-see midsize company” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, while *The Wall Street Journal* has “nothing but praise for the Aurora.” The *Contra Costa Times* stated “perfection is probably an unattainable ideal in a medium as fluid as live performance, but the Aurora Theatre comes luminously close,” while the *San Jose Mercury News* affirmed Aurora Theatre Company is “arguably the finest small theater in the Bay Area,” and the *Oakland Tribune* stated “it’s all about choices, and if you value good theater, choose the Aurora.”

### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

#### **WHAT:**

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The regular season will be staged September 2017 through July 2018 at the Aurora Theatre in Berkeley.

### **SCHEDULE:**

**LUNA GALE**  
**By Rebecca Gilman**  
**Bay Area Premiere**  
**Directed by Tom Ross**

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**June 22-July 22, 2018 (Opens: June 28)**

Performances: Tuesday and Wednesday at 7pm; Thursday through Saturday at 8pm; Sunday at 2pm, 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**

**Subscriptions on sale March 30. Single tickets on sale for subscribers July 25 and on sale August 1 to the general public.**

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the following foundations and government agencies for their support: Actors' Equity Foundation, Alameda County Arts Commission, Berkeley Civic Arts Program & Civic Arts Commission, The Fleishhacker Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Bernard Osher Foundation, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, The Shubert Foundation, The Tournesol Project, and The Zellerbach Family Foundation.

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