



**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY
CONTINUES 25TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH
TOM STOPPARD'S "THE REAL THING"
January 27-February 26, 2017**

BERKELEY, Calif. (December 15, 2016) – Aurora Theatre Company continues its 25th season with **THE REAL THING**, Tom Stoppard's (*The Coast of Utopia, Arcadia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*) timeless comedy about an all-too-witty playwright who succumbs to the emotional ravages he puts his characters through. **Timothy Near** (*"Master Harold" ...and the boys*) returns to Aurora to helm this Tony Award-winner for Best Play (1984) and Best Revival of a Play (2000), featuring **Elijah Alexander**, **Liz Sklar**, **Carrie Paff** (*This Is How It Goes, A Delicate Balance, Collapse*), **Tommy Gorrebeek** (*The Monster-Builder, The Eccentricities of a Nightingale*), **Seann Gallagher**, and **Emily Radosevich**. **THE REAL THING** plays **January 27 through February 26** at the Aurora Theatre in Berkeley. For tickets and information the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit **auroratheatre.org**.

Playwright Henry is not so happily married to Charlotte, the lead actress in his play about a marriage on the verge of collapse. When his affair with their friend, Annie, threatens to destroy his own marriage, he realizes that life has started imitating art. After Annie leaves her husband for Henry, he can't help but wonder whether their relationship is fiction or the real thing. Delectable and deeply affecting, **THE REAL THING**, which *The New York Times* called "Stoppard's most moving play, but also the most bracing play that anyone has written about love and marriage in years," and *The Independent (UK)* declared "Stoppard at his most relatable," takes a look at the absolute chaos of love and trust, or lack thereof, and the passions that often blur our perceptions.

Timothy Near helms **THE REAL THING**. She previously directed Aurora's hit production of Athol Fugard's "**MASTER HAROLD**"... and the boys, and has directed plays at California Shakespeare Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Center REpertory Company, Mark Taper Forum, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Arizona Theatre Company, Portland Center Stage, Guthrie Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Atlanta's Alliance Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Ford's Theatre in Washington D.C., Intiman Theatre, New York Shakespeare Festival, and Opera San Jose. For 22 years, Near was the Artistic Director of San Jose Repertory Theatre where she produced over 120 plays, including 21 World Premieres. She is the recipient of the Woman of Achievement Award in the Arts given by the *San Jose Mercury News*/Women's Fund and The Janet Gray Hays Award for Women in Leadership.

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Czech-born British playwright **Tom Stoppard**’s most-notable works for the stage include *The Real Inspector Hound* (1968), *Jumpers* (1972), *Travesties* (1974, Tony Award for Best Play), *Enter a Free Man* (1974), *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (1978), *Night and Day* (1978), *Undiscovered Country* (1980, adapted from a play by Arthur Schnitzler), and *On the Razzle* (1981, adapted from a play by Johann Nestroy). **THE REAL THING** (1982, Tony Award for Best Play) was Stoppard’s first romantic comedy. *Arcadia*, which juxtaposes 19th-century Romanticism and 20th-century chaos theory, premiered in 1993. *The Invention of Love*, about A.E. Housman, was first staged in 1997. The trilogy *The Coast of Utopia* (*Voyage, Shipwreck, and Salvage*), first performed in 2002 (Tony Award for Best Play), explores the lives and debates of a circle of 19th-century Russian émigré intellectuals. *Rock ’n’ Roll* (2006) jumps between England and Czechoslovakia during 1968–90.

Additionally, Stoppard has written a number of radio plays, including *In the Native State* (1991), which was reworked as the stage play *Indian Ink* (1995). Screenplays include *The Romantic Englishwoman* (1975), *Despair* (1978), *The Human Factor* (1979), *Brazil* (1985), *Empire of the Sun* (1987), *The Russia House* (1990), *Billy Bathgate* (1991), *Vatel* (2000), *Enigma* (2001), *Anna Karenina* (2012), and *Tulip Fever* (2017), as well as a film version of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1990), which he also directed. In 1999, the screenplay for *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), co-written by Stoppard and Marc Norman, won an Academy Award. Stoppard currently lives in London; he was knighted in 1997.

Aurora Theatre Company has assembled a talented ensemble for **THE REAL THING**. **Elijah Alexander** makes his Aurora debut as playwright Henry. Credits include *Metamorphoses* on Broadway and productions at Royal Shakespeare Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, California Shakespeare Theater, American Conservatory Theater, Old Globe, Yale Repertory Theatre, South Coast Repertory, and Berkeley Repertory Theater, among others. Also making her Aurora debut is **Liz Sklar** as Annie. Credits include productions at California Shakespeare Theater (*Othello*), Marin Theatre Company (*The Whale, Anne Boleyn*), San Francisco Playhouse (*Becky Shaw*), Shotgun Players (*Care of Trees*), and American Conservatory Theater (*A Christmas Carol*), among others.

Carrie Paff returns to Aurora Theatre Company as Charlotte in **THE REAL THING**; she was last seen at Aurora in *This Is How It Goes*, Edward Albee’s *A Delicate Balance*, the World Premiere of Allison Moore’s *Collapse*, the West Coast Premiere of Craig Lucas’s *Small Tragedy*, and Harold Pinter’s *Betrayal*. Additional credits include *The Other Place* at Magic Theatre, *Tiny Alice* and *It’s a Wonderful Life* at Marin Theatre Company, as well as productions at American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco

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Playhouse, Magic Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Center REpertory Company, and Word for Word, among others. Paff is the co-founder of StageWrite, Building Literacy through Theatre.

Tommy Gorrebeek returns to the Aurora stage as Billy/Brodie in **THE REAL THING**; he was last seen at Aurora in Amy Freed’s *The Monster-Builder* and *The Eccentricities of a Nightingale*. Additional credits include productions at San Francisco Playhouse (*Colossal*), TheatreWorks (*The Chosen, Sense and Sensibility*), California Shakespeare Theater (*Much Ado About Nothing*), City Lights Theater Company (*Compleat Female Stage Beauty*), Center REpertory Company (*Dracula, Sleuth*), Marin Theatre Company, Palo Alto Players, Foothill Music Theatre, and Broadway By the Bay, among others.

Rounding out the cast are **Seann Gallagher** in his Aurora debut as Max and **Emily Radosevich** in her Aurora debut as Debbie. Gallagher’s credits include productions at Neptune Theatre, Toronto Fringe Festival, Canadian Stage, and Resurgence Theatre Company; television credits include appearances on *Hannibal* (NBC), *Nikita* (The CW), and *Flashpoint* (CBS). Radosevich’s credits include productions at Breadbox Theatre (*Miss Julie*), Playwrights Foundation, San Francisco Fringe Festival, and Contra Costa Musical Theatre; New York credits include productions at Theatre for a New City and Joe’s Pub.

Following **THE REAL THING**, Aurora Theatre Company continues its 25th season with the Bay Area Premiere of Sarah Greenman’s **LENI** in March helmed by Jon Tracy. Steve Waters’ **TEMPLE** makes its U.S. Premiere at Aurora in April, directed by Aurora Artistic Director Tom Ross. Abi Morgan’s **SPLENDOR**, directed by Barbara Damashek, closes the season in June.

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.”

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FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

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DATES: Previews: January 27, 28, and February 1 at 8pm; January 29 at 2pm; January 31 at 7pm
 Opens: February 2, 2017
 Closes: February 26

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

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

TICKETS: For subscriptions and single tickets, 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 photos for **THE REAL THING** can be found at **https://auroratheatre.org/index.php?option=com_theatre&view=press_show&id=131** or can be received as jpegs upon request by emailing elewis@auroratheatre.org

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