

Central Works

The New Play Theater

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CENTRAL WORKS 25th SEASON CONTINUES WITH
WORLD PREMIERE # 48, a Central Works Method Musical

PROJECT AHAB;

or, Eye of the Whale

written by Gary Graves

directed by John Patrick Moore

musical direction by Ben Euphrat

July 18 – August 23

(Press Night July 18, previews July 16 & 17)

Berkeley City Club

2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley

Central Works 25th anniversary season continues with ***PROJECT AHAB; or, Eye of the Whale***, a new musical about how a band of hippies, mystics and visionaries changed the world. Set in 1973, in the formative years of the ecology movement, *Project Ahab* converts *Moby Dick*, Melville's classic story of a man bent on killing a whale, to that of a man determined to *stop* the killing of whales; or, "Ahab goes after the whalers." Central Works' 48th world premiere opens with a press night July 18 (previews July 16 & 17), and runs through August 23 at the historic Berkeley City Club.

Building on the success of the company's 2013 musical epic, *Red Virgin*, writer Gary Graves and director John Patrick Moore team up with musical director Ben Euphrat. "Ahab" draws on popular music from the early 70s, including tunes by local Berkeley icon Country Joe McDonald, the *Youngblood's* Jesse Colin Young, and B.W. Stevenson. The cast of actor/singer/musicians also taps into a rich array of traditional seafaring and folk songs.

Project Ahab features performers Michael Barrett Austin*, Ben Euphrat*, Sam Jackson, Caitlyn Louchard and Clive Worsley (*members AEA), with stage management by Vanessa Ramos, costumes by Tammy Berlin, scenic installation by Reenie Charriere, sound by Gregory Scharpen, and props by Debbie Shelley.

The script was created using the **Central Works Method** of collaborative play development. In a supportive workshop environment, group exploration and collective brainstorming contribute to the development of the script. The play emerges as a rich mix of group research, dramaturgical analysis and shared imagination. "The creative simmering that takes place gives a Central Works production a different brand from other more conventionally created productions...a unique style of theater not to be missed"—*San Jose Mercury News*. (more)

Central Works - add one

Central Works fills a special niche for theater artists in the San Francisco Bay Area, producing more new plays by local playwrights than any other company in the region. “**The New Play Theater**” utilizes three basic strategies: some come to the company fully developed, some are products of the **Central Works Method** (described above), and some are developed in the **Central Works Writers Workshop**, an ongoing commissioning program established in 2012.

GARY GRAVES (playwright) has been a resident playwright and company co-director at Central Works since 1998. He has been a part of developing 45 world premiere productions with the company, many of which he has either written and/or directed. Titles of plays he has written include: *Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s The Yellow Wallpaper*, *Dracula Inquest*, *Lion and the Fox*, *Red Virgin*, *Richard the First (a trilogy)*, *Machiavelli’s The Prince*, *The Inspector General*, *Achilles and Patroklos*, *The Grand Inquisitor*, *Chekhov’s The Duel*, *Misanthrope*, *Mata Hari*, and *Penelope’s Odyssey*. He also leads the Central Works Writers Workshop, an ongoing commissioning program that develops new works. Since 2002, he has taught playwriting year-round at the Berkeley Rep School of Theater, including the annual Summer Playwriting Workshop that develops and presents a series of staged readings of eight new plays each session.

JOHN PATRICK MOORE (director) is an Artistic Associate with Central Works where he previously directed the new musical *Red Virgin: Louise Michel and the Paris Commune of 1871* and *Penelope’s Odyssey*. He appeared (as an AEA actor) in *Richard the First*, *Reduction in Force*, *Midsummer/4*, *Shadow Crossing*, *The Mysterious Mr. Looney*, *Chekhov’s The Duel*, and *Mata Hari*. With Expanded Arts/Free Shakespeare in the Park(ing) Lot in New York, he helped develop new adaptations of *The Seagull*, *Medea*, *Richard II* and *Dracula*. John also assistant directed Urban Opera’s productions of Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* (SF Chronicle’s Top 10 Classical Music in 2009) and *The Witch of Endor* and SF Lyric Opera’s production of David Lang’s *Little Match Girl Passion* (SF Chronicle’s Top 10 Classical Music performance in 2012) which traveled to Den Fynske Opera in Denmark in 2013.

BEN EUPHRAT* (musical director and actor) just finished performing in the award-winning production *Ideation* at San Francisco Playhouse and HIR at the Magic Theater. He has worked as an actor, musician or music director (and often times all three at once) at companies such as *Shotgun Players*, *Magic Theatre*, *Marin Theatre Company* and *Center Rep*. With his own company, *Opentab Productions*, he has directed, produced and acted in a number of plays and short films. As a musician, Ben has written and performed music all over the Bay Area through various bands and music projects. Primarily, he is a pianist, drummer and guitarist, though he’s always collecting new instruments to add to his repertoire.

Cast:

MICHAEL BARRETT AUSTIN* most recently appeared in *Best of PlayGround 19*, *Nick and Nora* (42nd Street Moon), *Red Hot Patriot* with Kathleen Turner (Berkeley Repertory Theatre) and *Manic Pixie Dream Girl* at The New York International Fringe Festival. Other credits include *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* (SF Playhouse), *Dracula* (Center Rep) and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (Berkeley Rep). Michael toured Italy with Shakespeare at Stinson and the US with The National Theatre for Children, and has appeared in numerous films, television series and advertisements. He loves a woman named Emily and their daughter-to-be at the end of August! michaelbarrettaustin.com

(more)

Central Works - add two

CAITLYN LOUCHARD has appeared with The Cutting Ball Theater, where she is an associate artist (*The Bald Soprano, The Tempest, Pelleas & Melisande, Strindberg Cycle*), The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival (*Cymbeline*) and Shotgun Players (*The Coast of Utopia Trilogy*.) Caitlyn is also the founding artistic director of The Free Theater where she recently appeared as Romeo in *Romeo & Juliet*. caitlynperrylouchard.com.

SAM JACKSON is a local Bay Area actor, vocalist, teaching artist and musical director of Handful Players (a youth musical theater nonprofit). Happy to be making her Central Works debut, she has also had the honor of being a part of NCTC's "*Compleat Female Stage Beauty*", Shotgun Players' "*Our Town*", Idiot String's "*O Best Beloved*", NCTC's "*Avenue Q*" (2014) and many more.

CLIVE WORSLEY is the Director of Artistic Learning at the California Shakespeare Theater, the former Artistic Director of the Town Hall Theatre Company and former member of the Shotgun Players. As an award winning actor he has appeared on such Bay Area stages as Cal Shakes, Berkeley Rep, Magic Theater, TheaterWorks, Marin Theater Company, Theatre First, Center Rep, Shotgun Players, Town Hall Theater and many more.

(*Members Actors Equity Association)

For more information, visit our website: www.centralworks.org

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FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

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musical direction by Ben Euphrat

Opens July 18- Aug 23 (Previews July 16 & 17)

At: The Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley.

Performances: Thurs, Fri & Sat at 8 pm, Sun at 5 pm (Post-show Talk-backs: July 19 & Aug 9)

Ticket prices: \$28 advance, \$28-\$15 sliding scale at the door;

previews & Thursdays pay-what-you-can at the door.

Tickets: centralworks.org or 800.838.3006

Information: centralworks.org or 510.558.1381

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Central Works - add three

CENTRAL WORKS 2015 SEASON SCHEDULE CONTINUES:

PROJECT AHAB;

OR, EYE OF THE WHALE

how a band of hippies, mystics and visionaries changed the world

written by Gary Graves

directed by John Patrick Moore

musical direction by Ben Euphrat

A Central Works Method Musical

Opens July 18-Aug 23 (Previews July 16 & 17)

ADA AND THE MEMORY ENGINE

A new play about Ada Lovelace (1815-1852): countess/metaphysician/computer programmer

written by Lauren Gunderson

directed by Gary Graves

A Central Works Method Play

Opens Oct 17- Nov 22 (Previews Oct 15 & 16)

(30)