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Central Works Launches Its 26th Season With The World Premiere
Of An Utterly Ridiculous, Deadly Serious, Oedipal Family Drama

Totem and Taboo

written by David Weisberg
directed by M. Graham Smith

Feb 20 to March 20

(Press Night Saturday, **Feb 20**, Previews Feb 18 & 19)

Berkeley City Club
2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley

Central Works' 26th Season takes off with ***Totem and Taboo*** by David Weisberg, opening with a press night on Saturday, February 20 (previews Feb 18 & 19) and running through March 20 at the historic Berkeley City Club. Inspired by Freud's famous book of the same title, Weisberg's new play is a grand, epic concoction mixing together elements of family melodrama, surrealism, and classic situation comedy from the Central Works Writers Workshop.

Ralph is a pill-popping, stay-at-home "house husband." He's also been working on a very long book, his life's work: *Opting Out of the Social Contract*. When a drug-induced hallucination lands him in a real-life episode of *The Honeymooners* – with cannibalism! – Ralph's world spins out of control.

"Freud remains one of the most controversial thinkers of the modern age," observes playwright David Weisberg. "Engaging his most controversial, speculative, and disturbing work, *Totem and Taboo*, I devised a darkly comic and surreal domestic drama about the waning of the baby boomer generation."

The script was created using the Central Works Method of collaborative play development. Director M. Graham Smith remarks, "I love the humor of David's writing, his sense of combining vaudeville comic routines with big cultural and philosophical questions. Essentially, he's written a comedy about the end of Western Civilization – specifically, the way we understand the family unit." *Totem and Taboo* features actors Caleb Cabrera, Deb Fink*, April Green and Bob Greene* with costumes by Tammy Berlin, lights by Gary Graves, sound by Gregory Scharpen, and props by Debbie Shelley. (*member AEA)

Central Works launches its 26th Season with:

Totem and Taboo

A hectic, wild, utterly ridiculous, deadly serious, Oedipal family drama

Written by David Weisberg, Directed by M. Graham Smith

A new play from the Central Works Writers Workshop

Feb 20–Mar 20 (Previews Feb 18 & 19)

Performing at the Berkeley City Club 2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley

For more information call 510.558.1381 or visit centralworks.org

David Weisberg is a writer and teacher, formerly an Assistant Professor of English at Wesleyan University. He is the author of *Chronicles of Disorder*, a study of Samuel Beckett's fiction; *Altitude Sickness*, a play in two acts and *The Stipulation*; (Theater 22, NYC, directed by Brad Mays); and co-translator with Regina Gelb of Stanislaw Witkiewicz's *The Shoemakers* (Wesleyan University, directed by Mark Sussman). He has published short fiction, poetry, and criticism, and recently completed the novel, *The American Plan*. Currently, Mr. Weisberg lives in Berkeley and is developing a theatrical adaptation of Art and Laurie Pepper's *Straight Life*, an amazing story of jazz, drugs, prison, and love.

M. Graham Smith has directed at many venues in San Francisco, including A.C.T.'s Masters program, Aurora Theatre, Crowded Fire, The EXIT Theatre, Asian American Theatre Company, Playground, BRAVA, Berkeley Playhouse, Golden Thread, SF Opera, and New Conservatory. He directed the West Coast Premiere of *Jerry Springer: The Opera* in SF as well as *Truffaldino Says No* at Shotgun Players, which won Best Director for the Bay Area Critics Circle. He recently directed *The Rover* at Shotgun Players as well as *The Liar* adapted by David Ives, at Occidental College in Los Angeles as an Edgerton Foundation director-in-residence. Mr. Smith was the Producer of Aurora Theatre's international new play festival, the Global Age Project, for the last five years.

Deb Fink* (Alice) was most recently seen in *Hay Fever* with Stanford Repertory. She has acted in more than ten productions at Central Works, including the staged reading that constituted the founding of the company. Other local theatrical credits: Aurora Theatre, TJTSF, Center Rep, The Magic, Marin Shakespeare, SF Playhouse, San Jose Stage Company, Thick Description, Berkeley Shakespeare, and Playwrights Foundation. Her film and TV credits include *Happily Even After*, *Save Me*, *This Space Between Us*, *Nine Months*, *The Princess Diaries*, *Half-life*, and *Nash Bridges*. Ms. Fink won the award for Best Actress at the Bare Bones Film Festival for the short *Warnings from the Bathtub* opposite the late Karen Black and is currently working on several animated feature film projects with Pixar-Disney.

Caleb Cabrera (Toby/Norton) is making his debut with Central Works. Recent stage credits include: *My Mañana Comes* (Marin Theater Company), *Cloud Tectonics* (Blue House Arts), *Water by the Spoonful* (Dirty Hands). Since graduating from San Francisco State University, he has also worked with Cutting Ball, Theatre Battery, Impact Theatre, and Do It Live! Productions.

April Green (Trixie) is also making her debut with Central Works. An actor, improviser and improv teacher, her Bay Area theatrical credits include *M. Butterfly* (City Lights), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Tides Theater), *Beloved Strangers* (Un-Scripted Theater Company), *Fool for Love* (Pear Ave Theater), *Macbeth* (Rapid Descent Physical Theater Company), Stanford Theater (Exception and the Rule) and *Doubt* (Jewel Theater).

Bob Greene* (Ralph) has performed across the country. His local credits include: San Francisco Shakespeare (Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Grumio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shorty in *Oh, Kay!* and Drumio in *Boys from Syracuse* – garnering the award for “Best Actor” by the Bay Area Theater Critics Circle); California Shakespeare (Feste in *Twelfth Night*, Master Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Bardolph in *Henry IV*); 42nd Street Moon (*Fiorello* and *Do Re Mi*); Theatreworks (*Memphis*). In New York, Mr. Greene played Macheath in *A Three Penny Opera*. Principal film roles: *The Pursuit of Happyness* with Will Smith, *Flubber* with Robin Williams, *Copycat* with Holly Hunter and *Woman on Top* with Penelope Cruz.

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 are products of the Central Works Method, some are developed in the Central Works Writers Workshop, and some come to the company fully developed. Central Works Method plays bring together writer, actors and director at the very outset of the playwriting process. In a supportive workshop environment, group research and collective brainstorming contribute to the entire development of the script. The Central Works

Writers Workshop is an ongoing commissioning program established in 2012. Twice a year, in 12-week sessions, 8 local playwrights are selected to develop projects through informal readings and carefully directed discussions. *Totem and Taboo* is the fifth production at Central Works to emerge from this program.

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

2016 SEASON SCHEDULE CONTINUES

Robert Louis Stevenson: Jekyll and Hyde

A new play based on the classic tale of good and evil.
Written by Gary Graves, Directed by Jan Zvaifler
May 14–Jun 12 Previews (May 12 & 13)

Hearts of Palm

Unrequited love meets unregulated capitalism.
Written by Patricia Milton, Directed by Gary Graves
Jul 16–Aug 14 (Previews July 14 & 15)

Into the Beautiful North

A National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere
Based on the novel by Pulitzer Prize finalist Luis Alberto Urrea,
and inspired by the classic Hollywood western, *The Magnificent Seven*.
Written by Karen Zacarias
Directed by Gary Graves
Oct 15–Nov 13 (Previews Oct. 13 & 14)

Performing at the Berkeley City Club 2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley
Tickets: \$30 online at centralworks.org or \$30 – \$15 sliding scale at the door.
Previews and Thursdays are pay-what-you-can at the door.
For more information call 510.558.1381 or visit centralworks.org

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

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**Central Works Launches Its 26th Season With A Grand, Epic Concoction:
A Blend Of Family Melodrama, Surrealism And Classic Situation Comedy.**

Totem and Taboo

A hectic, wild, utterly ridiculous, deadly serious, Oedipal family drama
Written by David Weisberg, Directed by M. Graham Smith
A new play from the Central Works Writers Workshop
Feb 20–Mar 20 (Previews Feb 18 & 19)

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

Performances: Thurs., Fri.& Sat. 8 pm, Sun. 5 pm (Post-show Talk-backs on Feb 23 & Mar 13)

Ticket prices: \$30 online at centralworks.org, \$30–\$15 sliding scale at the door

Previews and Thursdays are pay-what-you-can at the door

Tickets: 510.558.1381 or centralworks.org