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Central Works Completes A Gothic Trilogy With The World Premiere Of
Robert Louis Stevenson: Jekyll and Hyde

Written By Gary Graves

Directed by Jan Zvaifler

May 14–June 12

Press Night Saturday, May 14 (Previews Previews May 12 & 13)

Berkeley City Club

2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley

Central Works 2016 Season continues on May 14th with the world premiere of Gary Grave's **Robert Louis Stevenson: Jekyll and Hyde** (May 14 to June 12). Scottish author **Robert Louis Stevenson** is known worldwide for his *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, and the novella *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. In this production, Stevenson awakens from a fever dream that unleashes a dreadful tale from the deep unconscious recesses of his mind. **Robert Louis Stevenson: Jekyll and Hyde** is a Central Works Method play based on Stevenson's classic tale of good and evil. Following Central Works' productions *Dracula Inquest* (2014) and *Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper* (2015), **Robert Louis Stevenson: Jekyll and Hyde** completes a Gothic trilogy created by the company, guided by the Graves/Zvaifler team.

In a cottage on the stormy English seacoast, Stevenson has a dark, awful dream that gives birth to a fully formed idea for a new novel that will allow him to realize his literary ambitions. Louis reveals the dream in intimate, uncompromising detail to his beloved, volatile, and very eccentric wife, Fanny. Horrified by the dark metaphor of the monstrous tale, and fearful of the scandalous revelations it contains about her husband, Fanny begs him not to write the book. Louis is passionately committed to pursuing "the truth" in his writing, no matter what the consequences. Fanny is worried about paying the bills (and what comes after for her, should her ailing husband expire). She begs him not to write the book, and threatens to destroy it if he does. All hangs in the balance if Louis gives himself over to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

"There's a story that Stevenson wrote '*Jekyll and Hyde*' in a sort of mad fever dream in just three days," says playwright, Gary Graves. "The first person he read the story to was his wife, Fanny Osbourne Stevenson. But Fanny criticized the draft. Allegedly, she accused him of 'missing the point of the allegory.' Stevenson flew into a rage and the two of them had an 'almighty row' about it that concluded with Stevenson heaving the manuscript into the fireplace where it burned to ashes. The story we know is the second draft, the revised version. I was fascinated with questions about what might have been in the first draft, and what the big fight might have been about. What exactly is 'the allegory' in *Jekyll and Hyde*?"

Robert Louis Stevenson: *Jekyll and Hyde* was created using the Central Works Method of collaborative play development. Directed by Jan Zvaifler, it features actors Brian Herndon* and Danielle Levin; with costumes by Tammy Berlin, sound by Gregory Scharpen, and props by Debbie Shelley. (*member AEA)

Robert Louis Stevenson: *Jekyll and Hyde*

Written by Gary Graves - A Central Works Method Play

Directed by Jan Zvaifler

May 14–Jun 12 (Previews May 12 & 13)

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

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

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

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

Tickets: 510.558.1381 or centralworks.org

On Background: *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* the novella and this production.

Published in 1886, the story precedes, even anticipates both Freud's explorations of the unconscious, as well as the famous murders of Jack the Ripper, according to Graves. "Stevenson claimed the story came to him directly from his unconsciousness, presenting itself to him in a series of dreams. He was experimenting with tapping into his unconscious in his writing through the exploration of his dreams. Two years after the publication of the book, Jack the Ripper began his horrifying crime spree. A popular version of *Jekyll and Hyde* was already playing on a London stage at the time, and the play had to be closed because of its disturbing resonance with the awful murders. The two—Jack the Ripper and *Hyde*—have often associated together ever since, though almost nothing in Stevenson's book is revealed about *Hyde*'s so-called 'terrible Crimes.'

"Stevenson's story, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* has generated a huge volume of scholarship and analysis. It has been interpreted as an allegory for late Victorian era homosexuality, as a parable of addiction, as a metaphor for the conflict between father and son, and a myriad other Interpretations" remarks playwright, Gary Graves. "For me, the addiction theme is central. There is evidence Stevenson was experimenting with a new drug called 'cocaine' when he wrote the book, a drug with addictive powers far better understood today than when it appeared in the 1880s. Was Stevenson addicted to a mysterious powder that fueled his writing but was making a monster of him? What was the big fight with Fanny about? Why did Stevenson burn the manuscript? What was in it? The play wrestles with these questions, and poses Fanny and her husband with some very difficult choices to make."

GARY GRAVES is a playwright and director living in the Bay Area. Since 1998, he has been a resident playwright and company co-director at Central Works and has been a part of developing 50 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*, *Achilles and Patroklos*, *The Grand Inquisitor*, *Chekhov's The Duel*, *Misanthrope*, *Mata Hari*, and *Penelope's Odyssey*. Dr. Graves received an MFA in playwriting from Southern Illinois University, a PhD in directing from UC Berkeley, and teaches playwriting at the Berkeley Rep

School of Theater. He also developed and leads the Central Works Writers Workshop, an ongoing commissioning program that develops new works.

JAN ZVAIFLER is a founding member of Central Works, and its co-director along with Gary Graves. Her company collaborations over the past quarter century encompassed acting, directing and producing. More recent directing credits include *Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper*, *Dracula Inquest*, *Lion and the Fox*, *Richard the First (a trilogy)*, *The Grand Inquisitor* and *The Education of a Rake*. She was last seen on the Central Works stage in *Ada and the Memory Engine*. Ms. Zvaifler studied at UC Berkeley and the Guildford School of Music and Theater, is company representative for the Berkeley Cultural Trust and a member of the Emeryville Artists Coop, and sat on the selection committee for the Bay Area Playwrights Festival for 7 years.

BRIAN HERNDON (Robert Louis Stevenson) makes his debut at Central Works with this production. He has had the pleasure of portraying Danielle Levin's husband on several occasions, including Jane Austen's *Emma* at TheatreWorks and as a company member of PlayGround. Favorite roles include Mortimer in *Failure: A Love Story* at Marin Theatre Company, Edward Gant in *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness* at Shotgun Players, and Dromio of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors* with SF Shakes. Some of the other companies with which he has worked include: 42nd Street Moon, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, New Conservatory Theatre, Old Globe, Pacific Rep, San Jose Stage Company. He teaches at Odyssey Middle School in San Mateo and is a proud AEA member.

DANIELLE LEVIN (Fanny Vandergrift Osbourne Stevenson) also makes her Central Works debut with *Robert Lewis Stevenson: Jekyll and Hyde*. Recent Bay Area productions include *strangers*, *babies* with Shotgun Players, *Emilie*, *La Marquise du Chatelet Defends Her Life Tonight*, and *The Language Archive* - the last two with Symmetry Theatre Company, where Danielle is an Associate Artist. Danielle has also appeared at Aurora Theatre Company, Center REPeritory Company, Crowded Fire, Just Theater, Marin Theatre Company, San Francisco Playhouse, TheatreWorks, and Word for Word.

Central Works is committed to the collaborative development of production of new plays. Since 1991, the company has developed and produced over 50 world premieres bringing to the stage new works by such local writers as William Bivins, Christopher Chen, Anne Galjour, Gary Graves, Aaron Loeb, Patricia Milton, Geetha Reddy, Michael Gene Sullivan, and Brian Thorstenson, among others. This season showcases Central Works favorite sources of inspiration: current political events, history and literature.

Plays developed with the **Central Works Method** begin by bringing together writer, actors and director at the very outset of the playwriting process. Over 30 hours in a supportive workshop environment, group research and collective brainstorming contribute to the development of the script. In this way, the entire artistic team participates in the creation of the new play from its inception. As workshop sessions progress, the writer introduces new pages, and the script emerges in a rich mix of group research, dramaturgical analysis and collective imagination.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

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Robert Louis Stevenson: Jekyll and Hyde

A new play with a Gothic twist based on Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale of good and evil.

Written by Gary Graves

A Central Works Method Play

Directed by Jan Zvaifler

May 14–Jun 12 (Previews May 12 & 13)

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

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Pay-what-you-can at the door Thursdays and previews

Tickets: 510.558.1381 or centralworks.org

CENTRAL WORKS 2016 SEASON CONTINUES

Hearts of Palm

A very serious, very funny new play.

Unrequited love meets unregulated capitalism in Hearts of Palm.

Written by Patricia Milton

From the Central Works Writers Workshop

Directed by Gary Graves

Previews July 14 & 15

Jul 16–Aug 14

Into the Beautiful North in partnership with National New Play Network

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

Rolling World Premiere with NNPN

Directed by Gary Graves

Previews Oct. 13 & 14

Oct 15–Nov 13

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