

Central Works

THE NEW PLAY THEATER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CENTRAL WORKS 2015 SEASON CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF MAKING PLAYS

Central Works 25th Anniversary Season celebrates the company's ongoing commitment to new works. Since 1991, the company has developed and produced 45 world premieres (many through its eponymous Central Works Method) bringing to the stage new works by local writers such as **William Bivins, Christopher Chen, Anne Galjour, Gary Graves, Aaron Loeb, Patricia Milton, Geetha Reddy, Michael Gene Sullivan, and Brian Thorstenson**, among others. As noted in *Theater Bay Area Magazine*, "Berkeley's Central Works is probably host to more world premieres by local writers than any other company in the Bay Area." The 2015 Season concludes with **the company's 49th world premiere**, a new play by **Lauren Gunderson**. Overall, the season showcases Central Works favorite sources of inspiration: current political events, history and literature.

Central Works marks its first quarter century with a far-ranging lineup - four world premiere productions celebrating the shimmering vision and range of Bay Area artists. The season opens with the darkly comic ***Enemies: Foreign and Domestic* by Patricia Milton**, February 21 to March 29. A gothic horror story about a Victorian woman's descent into madness; Gary Graves's adapts the classic feminist short story, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's ***The Yellow Wallpaper***, May 16 to June 21. Next summer, ***Project Ahab; or, Eye of the Whale***; a new Central Works Method Musical set in the 1970's about how a band of hippies, mystics and visionaries changed the world, July 18 to August 23. Closing the season, ***Ada and the Memory Engine***; a new play by **Lauren Gunderson** about Ada Lovelace (1815-1852), countess, metaphysician and the world's first computer programmer, October 17 to November 22.

***Enemies: Foreign and Domestic* by Patricia Milton** is a new comedy with a sharp political edge. Following on the success of her hilarious economic comedy, *Reduction in Force*, "a timely, witty farce" (*SF Examiner*) that played to packed houses in 2011, local playwright Patricia Milton returns to Central Works with this darkly comic intersection of foreign "black ops" and family politics... "because counter-terrorism begins at home." When the rebel among three odd sisters returns home to reconcile with her estranged mother, cultures clash, sibling rivalries erupt, and bombs start falling. **World Premiere #46: From the Central Works Writers Workshop. Feb 21 to March 29.**

Next up: **Charlotte Perkins Gilman's THE YELLOW WALLPAPER**, adapted by Gary Graves. A classic of early American feminist literature, first published in 1892, Gilman's haunting short story follows a Victorian woman's descent into madness. Confined in the

attic of an old, dilapidated mansion, as part of a “rest cure” prescribed by her husband, “Jane” begins to see strange forms creeping around behind the torn and ragged yellow wallpaper in the room. “One of the finest, and strongest, tales of horror ever written. It may be a ghost story. Worse yet, it may not.” — Alan Ryan, *Haunting Women*. **World Premiere #47: A Central Works Method Play. May 16 to June 21.**

Project Ahab; or, Eye of the Whale is 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 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.”

Building on the popularity of last season’s musical epic, *Red Virgin*, writer Gary Graves, and director John Patrick Moore team up with musical director Ben Euphrat. Tapping into the rich reservoir of folk and pop tunes from the period, the cast of actor/singer/musicians also draws upon a diverse body of classical and traditional seafaring music. **World Premiere #48: A Central Works Method Musical. July 18 to August 23**

Closing the season, ***Ada and the Memory Engine* by Lauren Gunderson**, a new play about the world’s first computer programmer, Ada Lovelace. Estranged daughter of the flamboyant and notorious leader of the Romantic Movement, Lord Byron, young Ada only knows her father through his poetry — nothing more than a haunting memory from the past. But Ada sees the future in the “analytic engines” of her friend and soul-mate, Charles Babbage, inventor of the first mechanical computer. A gifted mathematician in her own right, Ada foresees the boundless creative potential of Babbage’s engine. As she writes the first computer program, Ada envisions a whole new world where art and information converge — a world she will never live to see.

Lauren Gunderson is the 2014 winner of the Steinberg/ATCA New Play award and was a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Her work has been commissioned, produced and developed at companies across the US, including The Kennedy Center, The O’Neill Center, Denver Center, Berkeley Rep, and more. **World Premiere #49: A Central Works Method Play. October 17 to November 22.**

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. Patricia Milton’s *Enemies: Foreign and Domestic* is the fourth production at Central Works to emerge from this program.

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

2014 SEASON SCHEDULE

ENEMIES; FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC

...because counter-terrorism begins at home

written by Patricia Milton

directed by Gary Graves

From the Central Works Writers Workshop

Previews Feb 19 & 20

Opens Feb 21

Closes Mar 29

CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN'S THE YELLOW WALLPAPER

adapted from the short story by Gary Graves

directed by Jan Zvaifler

A Central Works Method Play

Previews May 14 & 15

Opens May 16

Closes June 21

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

Previews July 16 & 17

Opens July 18

Closes Aug 23

ADA LOVELACE 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

Previews Oct 15 & 16

Opens Oct 17

Closes Nov 22

Performing at the Berkeley City Club

2315 Durant Avenue, Berkeley

Tickets: \$28 online at centralworks.org

or \$28 – \$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