

by Christopher Demos-Brown directed by Rob Ruggiero

October 18-November 23



WELCOME TO SEASON 19/20

It was really important to me that we open our newly renovated space with a play that profoundly speaks to our world today. A story that exposes questions and truths that demand to be talked about. Something undeniably TheaterWorks.

AMERICAN SON is that play. It challenges us to think about how we navigate assumptions, fear, prejudice, parenthood, and new definitions of family and marriage. As we confront current social, political and racial pressures, it reminds us that ultimately it is our humanity that transcends all obstacles.

This explosive story of an estranged couple desperately trying to find their son is really a catalyst for a more critical dialog about an interracial couple as they navigate our nation's cultural divide. At its core, AMERICAN SON makes us question who we are as a nation – and maybe, just maybe, inspires us to think about who we want to be.

My hope is that this season will challenge and entertain, inspire and provoke—and create important and engaging dialogue with our community. It will take you on a journey that reflects the power of family, and reveal our humanity through the lens of America now.

Welcome home!

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AMERICAN SON

by Christopher Demos-Brown directed by Rob Ruggiero[†]

THE CAST

Kendra Ellis-Connor Scott Connor Officer Paul Larkin Lieutenant John Stokes

Set Design Costume Design Lighting Design Sound Design Fight Director Casting

Production Manager Stage Manager AMI BRABSON* J ANTHONY CRANE* JOHN FORD-DUNKER* MICHAEL GENET*

BRIAN PRATHER HERIN KAPUTKIN MATTHEW RICHARDS FREDERICK KENNEDY MICHAEL ROSSMY MCCORKLE CASTING, LTD.

BRIDGET SULLIVAN KATE J. CUDWORTH*

Cover Design by WondriskaRusso Photo by Nir Arieli

AMERICAN SON is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., a Concord Theatricals Company."

The world premiere of AMERICAN SON was presented at Barrington Stage Company, Pittsfield, MA in 2016, Julianne Boyd, Artistic Director and Tristan Wilson, Managing Director."

Original Broadway Production produced by Jeffrey Richards; Simpson Street; Rebecca Gold; Will Trice; Stephen C. Byrd; Alia Jones-Harvey; Nnamdi Asomugha; Domnick LaRuffa, Jr. & Co.; Greenleaf Productions; Van Kaplan; Willette & Manuel Klausner; Jada Pinkett Smith; The Miami Group; Lu-Shawn M. Thompson; Act 4 Entertainment; Gabrielle Palitz; Carl & Robin Washington; Bruce Robert Harris and Jack W. Batman; Shonda Rhimes; Bellanca Smigel Rutter; Salmira & Son; Jayne Baron Sherman; Steve Stoute for United Masters; Steven Toll; Dwyane Wade; Gabrielle Union-Wade; and The Shubert Organization.

†Member of SDC, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

*Appearing through an Agreement between TheaterWorks and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and

TheaterWorks is celebrating its 34th season as a non-profit, professional theater company. Founded in 1985.

AMERICAN SON is the 1st production of the 2019-2020 Season.

TheaterWorks • 233 Pearl Street • Hartford, CT 06103 • 2019

who



AMI BRABSON (Kendra Ellis-Connor) is making her TheaterWorks debut. She is an actor, singer and producer. Ami plays Vanessa on the next and final season of *Power* (Starz Network). Other television credits include Mary Pembleton / Homicide: Life on the Streets, Judge Karyn Blake / Law and Order: SVU, Judge Tchaikovsky / Bull Damages, The Jury,

Law & Order and various Soap Operas. Ami's stage credits include her one-woman shows, *Phenomenal Women* and *A Change is Gonna Come*. Other stage credits include the New York Premiere of *Tough Titty* by Oni Faida Lampley. Some of her favorite regional theater roles are Linda in *Curve of Departure*, Faye in Dominique Morisseau's *Skeleton Crew*, Quilly in John Henry Redwood's *The Old Settler* and Rose in August Wilson's *Fences*. Ami is an accomplished soprano and cabaret singer. She has performed at New York City venues as varied as Merkin Concert Hall, The Metropolitan Room and Ashford & Simpson's Sugar Bar. Ami received her MFA from the NYU/Tisch Graduate School of Acting. amibrabson.com



J ANTHONY CRANE (Scott Connor) is making his TheaterWorks debut. Broadway: The Country House, Sight Unseen, Butley (MTC) The Winslow Boy (Roundabout). Off-Broadway, National Tours, and Regional: Title role in Cyrano (TheatreWorks Silicon Valley); Watch on the Rhine (Arena, D.C.); Scar in The Lion King (First National Tour); M. Thenardier

in Les Miserables (N. America Tour); Spamalot (Wynn Las Vegas); Modern Orthodox (Dodger Stages); Disgraced (Goodman Theater, Berkeley Repertory, Seattle Repertory, Mark Taper Forum); Barrington Stage, The Old Globe, Capital Rep, Merrimack Rep, Pasadena Playhouse, Actors Theater of Louisville, and others. Helen Hayes and BATCC Nominations. TV/Film: Chicago PD, Madam Secretary, Elementary, CSI, and USA's The Big Easy. Theatre from Northwestern University. For Susan Ellen. IG: @janthonycrane



JOHN FORD-DUNKER (Officer Paul Larkin) is excited and honored to be making his TheaterWorks debut. Regional: *Red* (Geva Theatre), *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park), King Charles III, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (Pioneer Theatre), That High Lonesome Sound, So Unnatural a Level, A Christmas

Carol, The Glory of the World (Actors Theatre of Louisville). Other: The Glory of the World (BAM), Soot and Spit (Our Voices Theatre), Macbeth (Old Hat Theatre Company), Hands on a Hardbody (Park Playhouse), Wonderful Town (Quisisana Resort). TV/Film: The Conan O'Brien Show (Conan at The Apollo, the Clueless Gamer with Aaron Judge). Training: BFA Musical Theatre from University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Actors Theatre of Louisville Professional Training Company.



MICHAEL GENET (Lieutenant John Stokes) is making his TheaterWorks debut. Michael most recently starred on Broadway as Principal Hawkins in *The Prom*, Headmaster in *Choir Boy*, and as Dr. Dillamond in *Wicked*. Other Broadway/Off-Broadway credits: A *Few Good Men*, Hamlet, Lestat, Is God Is, Fences,

A Soldier's Play, The Tempest, All My Sons, Dance Of The Holy Ghost, The Whipping Man. TV: I Know This Much Is True, Blue Bloods, The Affair, The Mysteries of Laura, Ugly Betty, Taxi Brooklyn, The Following, Law & Order, Tyler Perry's House Of Payne, As The World Turns Film: 25th Hour, She Hate Me (also screenwriter), One Fine Day, Booty Call, Wall Street 2. Awards: Winner NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Writing In A Motion Picture for FOCUS Features' Talk To Me, starring Don Cheadle.

CHRISTOPHER DEMOS-BROWN (Playwright) has written over a dozen full-length plays and screenplays. His honors include the Laurents/Hatcher Award, a Steinberg Citation from The American Theatre Critics Association, and multiple regional theatre awards (including two Carbonell Awards, multiple Silver Palms and the inaugural Berkshire Theatre Award for Outstanding New Work). His plays include American Hero, Captiva, Stripped, and When The Sun Shone Brighter. Chris is a graduate of Dartmouth College and holds graduate degrees from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and The University of Geneva. He is also a practicing trial lawyer and former prosecutor. Chris and his wife, Stephanie, are co-founders of Zoetic Stage, an award-winning theatre in residence at The Adrienne Arsht Center for the performing Arts in Miami, Florida. They also practice law together in Miami. Chris's play, AMERICAN SON, recently had a successful run at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, directed by Kenny Leon, and starting Kerry Washington, Steven Pasquale, Jeremy Jordan, and Eugene Lee. The play is being adapted as a feature film on Netflix and will be released this summer.



ROB RUGGIERO (Director/Producing Artistic Director) has been part of TheaterWorks artistic leadership for 26 years. He has directed over 60 shows, including TW productions of *The Legend of Georgia McBride, Constellations, Next to Normal, Relativity* (starring Richard Dreyfuss) and *Christmas on the Rocks,* which he also conceived. His Broadway

credits include *Looped* (starring Valerie Harper in a Tony-nominated performance) and *High* (starring Kathleen Turner) which had its world premiere at TW. He also conceived and directed the musical revue *Make Me a Song: The Music of William Finn* which moved off-Broadway and was nominated for Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards. Rob conceived and directed *Ella*, a musical about Ella Fitzgerald, which saw sold-out runs in 24 regional theaters and was produced as a National Tour. His work on plays and musicals has received multiple awards in Connecticut and around the United States. In his eleventh collaboration with Goodspeed Musicals, Rob directed *Oliver* where he also directed many award-winning musical productions. His adaptation of *Show Boat* is now being licensed by the Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization. Internationally he directed *Fiddler* on the Roof in Athens, Greece.

BRIAN PRATHER (Set Design) is the Resident Designer for TheaterWorks, with shows that include Fully Committed, Girlfriend, The River, Relativity, Sex With Strangers, Playing the Assassin, Dancing Lessons, and many others. Recent Off-Broadway: Heartbreak House (GTG), Daniel's Husband (Primary Stages), Widowers' Houses (TACT/Gingold), A Christmas Carol (St. Clement's), Becoming Dr. Ruth (Westside), Freud's Last Session (New World Stages), and The Burnt Part Boys (Playwrights Horizons). International: Chung-mu Art Hall (South Korea). Regional: Alley Theatre, Goodspeed Musicals, Barrington Stage Co., Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Shakespeare on the Sound, Capital Rep., among many others. Joseph Jefferson Award (Chicago) winner, Emmy nomination (New England) for The Kate concert series on CT Public Television, Associate Artist at Barrington Stage Co. and a member of USA Local 829. See Brian's work at brianprather.com



HERIN KAPUTKIN (Costume Design) is making her TheaterWorks debut. Other credits include: *The Tempest* (Shakespeare on the Vine); *Romeo and Juliet* (Elm Shakespeare Company); *Marvelous* (FringeNYC); *The Shakes: Romeo and Juliet* (Flea Theater); *Cendrillon* (Purchase Opera Company); *Twelfth Night* and *Three Birds Alighting on a Field* (Purchase Repertory Theatre). Yale Credits include: The World Premiere of *El Huracán* (Yale Rep); Othello, *The Girl Is Chained* and *Pentecost* (Yale School of Drama); North of Providence, *This Sweet Affliction* (Yale Cabaret.) Herin received her B.F.A. in Costume Design from Purchase College before receiving her MFA at the Yale School of Drama.

MATTHEW RICHARDS (Lighting Design) TheaterWorks: Hand to God, The Invisible Hand, Shakespeare's R&J, American Buffalo, Souvenir, Speech and Debate, The Seafarer, Driving Miss Daisy, Doubt, Woman Before a Glass. Broadway: Ann starring Holland Taylor. Opera: Macbeth at L.A. Opera. Off-Broadway: Is God Is at Soho Rep; Absolute Brightness..., and The Curvy Widow at Westside Arts; The Killer, Tamburlaine, and Measure For Measure at Theatre For a New Audience]. Regional: Actor's Theater of Louisville; Arena Stage; Baltimore's Center Stage; Cincinnati Playhouse; Cleveland Play House; Dallas Theater Center; Ford's Theatre; The Goodman; Hartford Stage; The Huntington; La Jolla Playhouse; Long Wharf; The Old Globe; Shakespeare Theatre; Westport Playhouse; Williamstown Theatre Festival; Yale Repertory Theatre.

FREDERICK KENNEDY (Sound Design) is pleased to return to TheaterWorks, where he previously designed The River and Fully Committed. He has worked for more than a decade as a sound designer, percussionist, and music producer and has appeared on dozens of recordings; toured throughout North America and Europe, as well as to parts of South America, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific; and taught numerous classes in improvisation, composition, and sound design for multimedia as a guest artist at universities around the United States. As a designer, he has produced work for theater, video, commercials, and dance. Recent work includes Native Son (The Acting Company), The Bacchae (Classical Theater of Harlem), The Veil Widow Conspiracy (National Asian American Theater Company) and Twelfth Night (Yale Repertory Theater), which received a Connecticut Critics Circle nomination for best sound design. He holds a MFA in Sound Design from Yale School of Drama and a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies from the University of North Texas. www.fredkennedy.org

MICHAEL ROSSMY (Fight Director) Previously at TheaterWorks: The Invisible Hand. Broadway: A Tale of Two Cities. Regional credits include: The PUBLIC Theatre, Westport Country Playhouse, Goodspeed Musicals, Paper Mill Playhouse, Asolo REP, The Old Globe, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Princeton University, The Acting Company, SoHo REP, The Geffen Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, McCarter Theatre, Carnegie Mellon University, and others. He was nominated for a 2017 Drama Desk Award for his work on Troilus and Cressida for The Public Theatre's production in Central Park. Michael is in his fourteenth year as a Faculty Lecturer in Acting at the Yale School of Drama and is the Stage Combat and Intimacy Advisor for undergraduate productions at Yale College. Michael is also an Intimacy Director whose work has been featured in theatres across the country. MCCORKLE CASTING, LTD (Casting) Pat McCorkle, CSA & Katja Zarolinski, CSA. Broadway: Over 50 productions including: On The Town, Amazing Grace, End of the Rainbow, The Lieutenant of Inishmore, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, Amadeus, She Loves Me, A Few Good Men. etc. Off-Broadway: Over 60 productions: Highlights: Party Face, Clever Little Lies, Tribes, Our Town (Barrow Street), Freud's Last Session, Toxic Avenger, Almost Maine, Driving Miss Daisy. Feature films: Mental State, Senior Moment, Child of Grace, Year by the Sea, Premium Rush, Ghost Town, The Thomas Crown Affair, Die Hard with a Vengeance, School Ties, etc. Television: Twisted, Humans for Sesame Street, Hack (CBS), Californication (Emmy Nomination), Max Bickford (CBS), Chappelle's Show, Strangers with Candy, Barbershop, etc. www.mccorklecasting.com

BRIDGET SULLIVAN (Production Manager) joined the TheaterWorks team in 2016. Her experience includes production and project management, as well as many years in the world of props. Head of production for the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company in Vermont for 7 years, Bridget's past work also includes managing celebrity concerts at North Shore Music Theatre and being Project Manager for Barbizon Lighting Company. Other credits include City Theatre Company in Pittsburgh and the Santa Fe Opera. Bridget also teaches Stagecraft at Capital Community College in downtown Hartford. Go Team TW!

KATE J. CUDWORTH (Production Stage Manager) has enjoyed six seasons with TheaterWorks including The River, Hand to God, The Invisible Hand, The Legend of Georgia McBride, The Wolves, Fade, Next to Normal, Sunset Baby, Relativity, Midsummer, Woody Sez and Becoming Dr. Ruth. Off-Broadway: Freud's Last Session, [title of show]. NY/Regional: Barrington Stage Company (8 seasons including Freud's Last Session; Dr. Ruth, All The Way; Joe Iconis' The Black Suits), Atlantic Stage Company, Hartford Stage, Manhattan School of Music (4 seasons), Yale Opera, York Theatre Company, Bronx Opera Company, Fringe NYC, NYMF.

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION (AEA) was founded in 1913 as the first of the American actor unions. Equity's mission is to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 40,000 actors, singers, dancers and stage managers working in hundreds of theatres across the United States. Equity members are dedicated to working in the theatre as a profession, upholding the highest artistic standards. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions and provides a wide range of benefits including health and pension plans for its members. Through its agreement with Equity, this theatre has committed to the fair treatment of the actors and stage managers employed in this production. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. For more information, visit www.actorsequity.org

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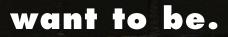


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