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"Character is destiny."
— Heraclitus

Theatrical Outfit, Atlanta's second-oldest continually-operating professional theatre, aspires to create a compassionate, joyful and just community by starting the conversations that matter. From *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, a timeless, epic musical co-production with Aurora Theatre (our third year in a row), to the conversation-starting new play *Boy* about gender reassignment, to the Atlanta premiere of GA native Lauren Gunderson's new, co-authored, Jane Austen-inspired holiday hit *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, to an intimate look at one of legend Billie Holiday's final solo appearances in *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, to the Atlanta professional homecoming of *Perfect Arrangement*, local writer Topher Payne's mid-century gay-rights comedy, to a world premiere collaboration with Atlanta Opera, to T.O.'s non-traditional update on the sizzling Broadway classic *110 in the Shade*, to year two of our Unexpected Play Readings, our **2017-2018 Season of Character** truly offers something for everyone.

Why "Character"? "Character matters. The character of an individual matters. The character of a nation matters. And, if the human story is ultimately a cruel tragedy or a glorious comedy, the character of the human species will matter the most. In these times of division, I know of no better place than the Theatre to understand how our common human character can create and sustain a global community—compassionate, joyful and just. Envision a wonderful destiny. Join us for a Season of Character. — **Tom Key, Artistic Director**

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME — TIMELESS EPIC MUSICAL

“Intensely emotional with exuberant Broadway roots, it sets its audience to cheering.”
— *Variety*

at the Rialto Center for the Arts, September 7 – 17, 2017

Co-production with Aurora Theatre

Book by Peter Parnell
Based on the novel by Victor Hugo and the songs from the Disney film
Music by Alan Menken
Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz
Directed by Justin Anderson
Musical Direction by Ann-Carol Pence
Choreography by Ricardo Aponte

Featuring an Oscar-nominated score. Brought to you by the Atlanta producing partners of *Memphis* and *In the Heights*.

1482. Paris, France. Quasimodo, a deformed bell ringer in a cold, cathedral tower discovers his inner strength. A conflicted priest, Frollo, battles the specter of damnation. Phoebus, a dashing soldier shuns duty to pursue Esmeralda, a beautiful Gypsy dancer. And at every turn, a malevolent force propels each of them toward fate. This musical retelling of the beloved medieval love story features a lush score by Alan Menken (Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*) and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked*, *Pippin*) — the only stage collaboration between the two giants of the American musical theatre.

presented by special arrangement with Music Theatre International

“At its heart, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is a story of faith: a faith in something bigger than us, and the faith that we are something bigger. When the fire of our life burns away the given circumstances of socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, creed, handicap and hardship, we are just people ... people who long for love, acceptance, and wholeness. In times like these that seem so unclear, I can't think of a better hope-filled story to pierce through the darkness and remind us of that truth.” — **Justin Anderson, director**

BOY — CONVERSATION-STARTING PLAY

“A smart, fresh transgender-play twist ... it's likely there are none like this one, certainly not any more beautifully realized.”
— *Huffington Post*

at The Balzer Theater at Herren's, September 28 – October 22, 2017

By Anna Ziegler
Directed by Melissa Foulger
Featuring Theatrical Outfit's Associate Artistic Director, Clifton Guterman

1968-1990. Davenport, Iowa and Boston, Massachusetts. Inspired by a fascinating true story covered by Oprah, documented by the BBC and exposed in a best-selling biography, *Boy* asks us: does nature or nurture determine who and how we love? A renowned doctor convinces the parents of a male infant to raise their son as a girl after an accident, and years later, the repercussions and realities of that choice unfold and alter lives. With humor and tenderness, *Boy* explores the tricky terrain of loving oneself and others amidst the confusion of gender identity as one very special young person simply yearns to be himself.

presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service

"I am so pleased to be able to work for the first time with Theatrical Outfit on this beautiful and challenging play about self-acceptance and the peace that comes from finding comfort in your own skin. Anna Ziegler's show will open a much needed dialogue surrounding sexuality, gender identity, and expression for Theatrical Outfit and greater Atlanta audiences. I am so honored that Tom Key has trusted me to helm the cast and crew for this production, and am so excited to be working again with my good friend Clifton Guterman in the starring role." — **Melissa Foulger, director**

MISS BENNET – CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY — SPARKLING HOLIDAY ROMANCE

"A delicious seasonal sequel to *Pride and Prejudice* ... a celebration of nerd love in all its overeducated glory."
— *The Chicago Tribune*

at The Balzer Theater at Herren's, November 30 – December 24, 2017

By Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon
Directed by Carolyn Cook

Southeastern premiere from the writer of *Silent Sky*.

1815. England. This Christmas, cozy up with your favorite *Pride and Prejudice* characters at Pemberley, the grand estate of newlyweds, Mr. and Mrs. Darcy. Middle daughter Mary Bennet, bookish and often overshadowed by her sisters, blossoms when a curious visitor proves himself an intellectual match, kindred spirit and possibly more. For the first time, Mary must stand tall and become the heroine of her own story. Told with modern wit and period style, this effervescent, comedic sequel to one of the most beloved literary romances of all time will enchant Jane Austen fans and new-comers alike.

presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service

"When my co-author Margot Melcon and I started *Miss Bennet*, we wanted to create a holiday story for everyone that explores the complexities of family and love. It had to be funny, moving, romantic and smart. It had to be something Jane Austen would approve of. We are so proud of the play and the incredible reception its premiere received across the country last year. I can't think of a better community with whom to share this story than my Theatrical Outfit family." — **Lauren Gunderson, playwright**

LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR AND GRILL — ICONIC MUSICAL PORTRAIT

"Hurts and exhilarates in just the right proportions." — *New York Magazine*

at The Balzer Theater at Herren's, January 11 – February 4, 2018

By Lanie Robertson
Directed by Eric J. Little
Musical Direction by S. Renee Clark

1959. Philadelphia. At Emerson's seedy bar on Philly's south side, an audience gathers to witness, unknowingly, one of legend Billie Holiday's last solo performances, given four months before her death at forty-four. Full of heart-melting numbers like "God Bless the Child," "Strange Fruit," and "What a Little Moonlight Can Do," Billie shares with us her loves and losses in this award-winning musical fresh from its recent Broadway and London revivals. Pull up a chair and grab a drink for an intimate and epic evening with one of the greatest jazz and blues vocalists of all time – a riveting portrait of the life, the icon and the unforgettable music that is "Lady Day."

presented by special arrangement with Samuel French

"I'm a musician who loves storytelling. Billie Holiday was one of the greatest storytellers of jazz and one of my personal favorites. Lady Day was bold enough to put politics in her work, with songs like "Strange Fruit," when others of her era were not." — **S. Renee Clark, musical director**

PERFECT ARRANGEMENT — CUNNING MID-CENTURY COMEDY

"Tophér Payne has a *Perfect Arrangement* for a hot issue." — *The Washington Post*

at The Balzer Theater at Herren's, February 22 – March 18, 2018

By Tophér Payne

Directed by Adam Koplan

Featuring Theatrical Outfit's Associate Artistic Director, Clifton Guterman

Winner of the 2014 American Theatre Critics Association Osborn Prize

1950. Georgetown. Washington, D.C. As the Red Scare looms large, two State Department employees, Bob and Norma, receive orders to expose "moral turpitude" within the government. But, the coworkers are both gay and have married each other's partners, Millie and Jim, in a picture-perfect façade of domestic, mid-century bliss separated, literally, by a shared closet door. Inspired by true stories of social survival, this bubbly cocktail party-meets-TV sitcom simmers into poignant realism as the four mates face exposure and a future more gray than Technicolor.

presented by special arrangement with Samuel French

"The journey of *Perfect Arrangement* started with The Process Theatre's workshop production in a storefront space on Spring Street – on a good night we had twenty people in the audience. Now, after productions in twelve states and an off-Broadway run, it feels so great to bring it back home."

— **Tophér Payne, playwright**

OUT OF DARKNESS: TWO REMAIN — ATLANTA OPERA COLLABORATION

at The Balzer Theater at Herren's, April 5-15, 2018

Featuring Theatrical Outfit's Artistic Director Tom Key in a singing role.

Music by Jake Heggie

Libretto by Gene Scheer

Directed by Atlanta Opera's General and Artistic Director, Tomer Zvulun

As part of its Discoveries Series, Atlanta Opera will present the world premiere of *Out of Darkness: Two Remain*, a riveting new work based on the true narratives of two Holocaust survivors who are visited by ghosts of their past. In Act I, Polish dissident Krystyna Zywulska relays her gripping story of survival to a journalist, aided by the ghosts of Auschwitz. In Act II, Gad Beck, a gay German Jew, is visited by his true love, the poet Manfred Lewin, who perished in Auschwitz, and the painful and poignant truth of their love emerges.

More information and tickets at www.AtlantaOpera.org.

"Theatrical Outfit is one of my favorite theaters in the city. It's very intimate: 200 seats – a real collaboration that we're very excited about." — **Tomer Zvulun, General and Artistic Director, Atlanta Opera**

110 IN THE SHADE — HOMESPUN CLASSIC MUSICAL

"One of the most purely organic, fine-grained musicals ever." – *The New York Times*

at The Balzer Theater at Herren's, May 31 – June 24, 2018

Book by N. Richard Nash

Music by Harvey Schmidt

Lyrics by Tom Jones

Orchestration by Jonathan Tunick

Based on the play *The Rainmaker* by N. Richard Nash

Directed by Theatrical Outfit Artistic Director, Tom Key

Musical Direction by S. Renee Clark

Choreography by Ricardo Aponte

1936. July 4th. Three Point, Texas. In the middle of a heat wave, while locals are desperate for rain, Lizzie Curry daydreams away fears of becoming a spinster in a tiny, dusty town. Her wit, intelligence and lauded homemaking skills don't seem to guarantee a romantic future, and even the reserved town sheriff, File, won't take a chance on the plain girl next door. But, when a charismatic rainmaker named Starbuck sweeps into town promising more than just atmospheric relief, Lizzie's world is suddenly larger than she imagined possible, and choice and clarity arrive like a cleansing summer storm.

presented by special arrangement with Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc.

"I had the great pleasure of working on the 2007 Broadway revival cast recording of *110 in the Shade* starring Audra McDonald. We are thrilled to produce this long-loved, down home classic at The Outfit, which we will cast in a similarly inclusive way that honors the story and music while also holding a mirror up to today's citizenry – Atlanta's beautifully diverse talent pool and audiences in particular." — **Clifton Guterman, Theatrical Outfit Associate Artistic Director and Casting Director**

THE UNEXPECTED PLAY READING SERIES

"For last year's words belong to last year's language, and next year's words await another voice."
— **T.S. Elliot**

at The Balzer Theater at Herren's, four 2017-2018 dates to be announced in the summer of 2017

Welcome to year two of our Unexpected Play Readings – this time reconfigured into a series spread throughout the season with one reading happening quarterly. Witness top-notch talent bring characters and plots to vivid life as four new or *newish* scripts not only stir the soul but maybe even unsettle it. Think of it as T.O. Stage 2 - unpredictable and exciting fare that stretches The Outfit aesthetic in either content or form. Preview tomorrow's hit plays, and then engage with the artists and staff at post-reading talk backs. Buckle up.

"What a delightful experience! The selections were diverse and provocative. The casting was superb. The direction was organic and meaningful. And the panel discussions were thoughtful and creative. Bring it on...again and again. I'm hooked!" — **Cynthia Fritts Stillwell, Atlanta Casting Director**

Please note: season titles, artists and dates subject to change.

TICKETS: Subscription packages – \$75-\$252 – are on sale now. Single tickets – \$26-\$51 – go on sale July 1, 2017. 678.528.1500. www.theatricaloutfit.org/shows/2017-2018-season/. Tickets for the Unexpected Play Reading Series are \$10 per reading. Titles and dates to be announced in the summer of 2017.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:

Downtown Dialogues, one per production, are community conversations featuring non-theatre panelists discussing the social and global themes found in the show. They occur immediately following the first Saturday matinee of each production and last one hour.

Macy's Page to Stage Talk Backs, one per production, occur the second Friday after Opening and happen after the final bow. They last approximately thirty minutes and are an opportunity for patrons to engage directly with the production's artists.

ABOUT THEATRICAL OUTFIT: Atlanta's second-oldest continually-operating professional theatre company was founded in 1976 and has been led by Artistic Director Tom Key since fall 1995. Key led the company through the creation of its award-winning downtown home, the Balzer Theater at Herren's, the first U.S. theater to achieve LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The Balzer Theater is also the historical site of Herren's, the first restaurant in Atlanta to voluntarily desegregate in 1962; its first African American patrons, Dr. Lee and Delores Shelton, remain Theatrical Outfit patrons and season ticket subscribers. Key's programming of classics, regional and world premieres tell **soul-stirring stories**, with themes that explore diversity, equality, ethnicity, race, and religion; and often feature the best writers of the American South, including Ernest Gaines, Lauren Gunderson, Horton Foote, Harper Lee, Flannery O'Connor, Janece Shaffer, Sherry Shephard-Massat, Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder and Tennessee Williams. After ten years of capital investment, T.O. is in new territory. Having retired its mortgage, staff, trustees and artists are in the midst of a 2014-17 Strategic Plan designed to expand mission-driven, artistic offerings of genres ranging from dramas and comedies to large scale musicals, engaging many more of Atlanta's world class theatre artists. The plan now has the benefit of two leaders, Artistic Director, Tom Key and Managing Director, Lee Foster, hired in June 2014, who together have achieved the theatre's most successful season of ticket sales in its forty year history and the most Suzi Bass Award Nominations for one season ever garnered by Theatrical Outfit.

ABOUT OUR VENUE: All shows, excluding *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* (at the Rialto Center for the Arts, 80 Forsyth St NW, Atlanta, GA 30303), are performed at The Balzer Theater at Herren's at 84 Luckie Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30303. Theatrical Outfit utilizes a Loop Listening System, making The Balzer Theater at Herren's the first theater in the state of Georgia to incorporate this technology. Attendees with T-coil hearing aids may participate automatically, and others needing enhancement may obtain system-compatible headsets from our lobby Box Office.

Front Desk and Box Office: 678.528.1500. Online at: www.theatricaloutfit.org.

OUR VISION:

We aspire to create a compassionate, joyful and just community by starting the conversations that matter.

OUR MISSION:

To produce world-class theatre that inspires, unites and empowers.