



UMKC announces theater season lineup



Provided by UMKC Theatre
Freedom Rider at UMKC

UMKC Theatre Announces 2016-2017 Season:

*Works by Theresa Rebeck, Tennessee Williams, John Guare, Beth
Henley, Marcus Gardley, Rebecca Gilman, David Grimm,*

William Shakespeare and First-Ever Collaboration with

The Acting Company and More Round Out Extraordinary Season

in Graduate and Co-productions

KANSAS CITY, MO (Sept. 13, 2016) – Known for high-quality

productions and successful collaboration with Kansas City and nationwide theatre companies, UMKC Theatre announces its 2016-17 season.

“We continue our push to produce exciting master works and not-to-be-missed plays that are new to Kansas City,” said Tom Mardikes, Chair of UMKC Theatre. “As a rare treat for Kansas City audiences I’m especially thrilled to announce that UMKC Theatre will be the first to present The Acting Company’s commissioned work *Desire* since its NYC debut in October 2015. We continue our tradition of partnering with local professional theatres including KC Rep, the Unicorn, and the Coterie with co-productions. For more than 30 years, UMKC Theatre has produced innovative and high-quality theatre for KC audiences and this year promises to expand upon that tradition.”

The 2016-17 graduate season opens in October with *O Beautiful* by Theresa Rebeck, and directed by Stephanie Roberts and Theodore Swetz. *Desire: An Evening of Plays* based on Tennessee William’s short stories, directed by Darren Sextro, continues the season in November. Two co-productions: *An Octaroon* by Brandon Jacobs Jenkins at the Unicorn Theatre and *Hana’s Suitcase* by Emil Sher at the Coterie Theatre are featured. The season continues with *The Way of the World*, by William Congreve and directed by Theodore Swetz. The final coproduction with KC Rep completes the season with the Origins KC New Play Festival production of *Antony & Cleopatra*. A completely new event for UMKC Theatre is the presentation of the famed The Acting Company’s national touring productions of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* and Marcus Gardley’s *X:Or, the Nation vs Betty Shabazz*.

Graduate Productions

“O Beautiful”

By Theresa Rebeck and directed by Stephanie Roberts and Theodore Swetz. This fiercely funny and disturbingly shocking story explores the lives of high school students, teachers, and their families as they cope in a world of real personal problems and extreme ideologies. Jesus, Joan of Arc, and Benjamin Franklin, among others, show up to weigh in and mix it up. As topical as tonight's newscast, *O Beautiful* lands the complex realities of our culture squarely on the stage in an electrifying blend of ancient characters, founding fathers and your neighborhood high school.

The production will preview Oct. 14 – Oct. 18, open Oct. 19 and run through Oct. 23 at Spencer Theatre, Olson PAC.

“Desire: An Evening of Plays Based on six stories by Tennessee Williams”

Directed by Darren Sextro, Tennessee Williams's life-changing short stories depict loss of innocence, coming of age, fighting loneliness and isolation, and what it means to love and to lose it. Adapted by some of America's leading playwrights, Williams's striking stories explode off the page.

The Resemblance Between a Violin Case and a Coffin by Beth Henley

The Field of Blue Children by Rebecca Gilman.

Tent Worms by Elizabeth Egloff

Oriflamme by David Grimm

desire quenched by touch by Marcus Gardley

You Lied to Me About Centralia by John Guare

The production will preview Nov. 25 – Nov. 29, open Nov. 30 and run through Dec.10 at Studio 116, Olson PAC.

“The Way of the World”

By William Cosgrove and directed by Theodore Swetz. *The Way of the World* is about money, sex, power, appearances and deception, and finally, love. Mirabell and Millamant love each other, but they endlessly deceive other people, and each other, in order to achieve that love. And that is probably the truest relationship in the play! It's a huge comedy of deception, set in a society that really has money and sex at the heart of its concerns." (Michael Kahn) Written in 1700, Congreve's *The Way of the World* continues its life as a classic Restoration comedy because its language is musical and its social commentary is timeless.

The production will preview Feb. 10 – Feb. 14, open Feb. 15 and run through Feb. 27 at Grant Hall Theatre.

UMKC Theatre Presents The Acting Company

Julius Caesar/ X:Or, the Nation vs Betty Shabazz: Politics, power, and the high cost of real change

The Acting Company and the University of Missouri-Kansas City, University of Kansas, University of Central Missouri and University of Missouri-Columbia are embarking on an exciting artistic and educational collaboration featuring Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and a newly commissioned play about the life and assassination of Malcolm X by Marcus Gardley; *X:Or, the Nation vs Betty Shabazz* in rotating repertory. College and high school students in theatre, education and humanities are collaborating to explore ideas and artistic practice across the curriculum. On-site workshops, class visits, theater performances and public forums will engage students and faculty with opportunities to learn from our past while inviting critical dialogue about current events and social issues.

The Acting Company

Founded in 1972 by legendary producer/director/actor **John Houseman** and previous Producing Director **Margot Harley** with

members of the first graduating class of Juilliard's Drama Division, the Tony Award-winning company has performed 141 productions for over 3 million people in 48 states and ten foreign countries. The Acting Company has given a generation of actors the opportunity to master their craft. Alumni members include Kevin Kline, Rainn Wilson, Patti LuPone, David Schramm, Jesse L. Martin, David Ogden Stiers, Frances Conroy, Jeffrey Wright, Harriet Harris, Hamish Linklater and Keith David. Twelve UMKC Theatre MFA Acting alumni have been members of The Acting Company.

Promoting theater and literacy by bringing a touring repertory of classical productions and exceptional new works, talented young actors and teaching artists into communities across America – particularly those where live performance and theater arts education is limited or non-existent –The Acting Company performs each year in over 20 cities to audiences of 25,000 and reaches more than 15,000 students with its arts education programs. For more information, please visit <http://theactingcompany.org/>.

Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare, directed by Devin Brain. Tackling essential questions about the balance of ambition, personal loyalty, and love of country, Shakespeare's timeless political masterpiece has never been more relevant. Through the story of Julius Caesar, a rising political star torn down by his most trusted allies, audiences witness the art of persuasion, the ugliness of backroom politics, and the historical patterns we can't stop repeating.

X:Or, the Nation vs Betty Shabazz by Marcus Gardley, directed by Ian Belknap. The assassination of Malcolm X—both the story we think we know and illuminating details that have seldom been shared—is brought to vivid, lyrical life in award-winning writer Marcus Gardley's new play. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* provides a framework for Gardley to deepen our understanding

of one of America's most complex, compelling historical figures and explore the tumultuous landscape of ideology and activism in the 1960s.

These productions will begin Feb. 21 and run through Feb. 23 at Spencer Theatre, Olson PAC.

Co-Productions

"An Octoroon"

Co-produced with Unicorn Theatre.

Written by Brandon Jacobs Jenkins and directed by Damron Russell Armstrong. *An Octoroon* transforms a 19th century plantation melodrama with a beautiful maiden, Indians, and slaves into a theatrical event that is equally hilarious and moving, subversive and provocative. Part period satire, part meta-theatrical middle finger, it's a shocking challenge to the racial pigeonholing of 1859—and of today.

Performances run Nov. 30 –Dec. 26 at Unicorn Theatre, 3828 Main Street, KC MO. For tickets, please call (816) 531-7529 or visit [online](#).

"Hana's Suitcase: A Holocaust Mystery"

Co-produced with The Coterie Theatre.

An investigative play by Emil Sher, based on the book by Karen Levine and directed by Walter Coppage. Past and present mysteries come together in this captivating true story spanning 70 years and crisscrossing three continents. Fumiko Ishioka, a Japanese Holocaust educator, and her students set out to track down information about a suitcase from Auschwitz. It is a worldwide search for information about its owner, Hana Brady, whose fate is pieced together from her suitcase and artifacts. Hana's story reaches through time

into the lives of the young Japanese students in a Holocaust story like no other – providing a contemporary global perspective and a fascinating history of love and tragedy from Hana’s courageous life story.

Performances run Jan. 24 –Feb. 12 at Coterie Theatre, Crown Center, 2450 Grand Ave. KCMO (816) 474-6552. For tickets, please call (816) 474-6552 or visit [online](#).

“Shakespeare: Modern language adaptation in conjunction with Oregon Shakespeare Festival”

Co-produced with OriginsKC Festival with Kansas City Repertory Theatre

Antony and Cleopatra By William Shakespeare. A new translation by Christopher Chen, commissioned by Oregon Shakespeare Festival’s Play On! Program.

These production previews begin April 28 – May 2, open May 3 and run through May 14 at Spencer Theatre, Olson PAC. For tickets, please call (816) 531-7529 or visit [online](#).

Ticket Information

Season tickets are available for all five productions for \$73. Single ticket adult prices are \$20 for any performance. All UMKC faculty and staff tickets are \$13 and UMKC student tickets are \$10 for any performance (limit one per ID). Senior (60+) ticket prices are \$15. For tickets, call the Central Ticket Office at (816) 235-6222 or purchase online [here](#).

Single tickets for The Acting Company productions are \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors, \$15 for UMKC faculty and staff and \$10 for all students. Packages for both plays are available: \$45 for adults, \$35 for seniors and \$25 for UMKC faculty and staff.

Ticket sales for the co-productions are available through KC Rep, Unicorn Theatre, and Coterie Theatre box offices.

Monday nights are traditionally “dark” as that is the actors’ day off. However, UMKC Theatre will again provide an Industry Night for each production so that theatre professionals and others will have one opportunity to see UMKC Theatre performances on a Monday. Admission to all Monday night shows is only \$12 per person and, good news, is open to the general public.

Parking

Free event parking for Olson Performing Arts Center is on level 5 of the Cherry Street parking structure. Park near the Northeast Tower and use the skywalk to the theatres. The Olson Performing Arts Center is at 4949 Cherry Street on the UMKC campus.

Free event parking for Grant Hall Theatre is on level 4 of the Rockhill Parking Garage. Grant Hall Theatre is at 5227 Holmes Street on the UMKC Campus.

UMKC Theatre has been ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* among the top graduate theatre training programs in the country. Graduates from UMKC Theatre are invited to the most prestigious New York and Los Angeles professional reviews and auditions to exhibit their work and secure positions with national and international performing companies. We build bridges. We assist the creative student in making the journey to becoming a creative professional. The practice of the department is to vigorously educate students in the many arts, crafts and traditions of theatre, and provide a basis for future careers in the creative industries. Our program offers intensive hands-on experience while at the same time fostering analytical and contextual skills. The practical experience of theatre-making occurs not only within the performing venues of UMKC, but also in professional theatres in Kansas City. Theatre is a passion. We seek it, we train for it and we

embody it. UMKC Theatre is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) and the University/Resident Theatre Association (U/RTA).

The University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), one of four University of Missouri campuses, is a public university serving more than 14,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students. UMKC engages with the community and economy based on a three-part mission: visual and performing arts, health sciences, and urban engagement. UMKC has been designated as Missouri's Campus for the Arts. More information is available online at www.umkctheatre.org.

For interviews and press passes to performances, contact Ellen McDonald, 816.444.0052 or ellen@mershonandmcdonald.com.

2016-2017 UMKC Theatre Season

| Play | Director | Venue | Preview | Run |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 0 Beautiful | Stephanie Roberts and Theodore Swetz | Spencer Theatre, Olson PAC | 10/14-10/18 | 10/19-10/23 |
| Desire | Darren Sextro | Studio 116, Olson PAC | 11/25 – 11/29 | 11/30 – 12/10 |
| The Way of the World | Theodore Swetz | Grant Hall Theatre | 2/10 – 2/14 | 2/15 – 2/27 |

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|------------|
| Julius Caesar and X Or, the Nation vs Betty Shabazz, The Acting Company | Devin Brain and Ian Belknap | Spencer Theatre, Olson PAC | | 2/21– 2/23 |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|------------|

UMKC Theatre 2016-2017 Co-Productions

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| An Octoroon | Damron Armstrong | Unicorn Theatre | 11/30 – 12/2 | 12/3 – 12/26 |
| Hana's Suitcase | Walter Coppage | Coterie Theatre | | 1/24 – 2/ 12 |
| OriginKC New Works Festival | | Spencer Theatre, Olson PAC | 4/28– 5/2 | 5/3– 5/14 |