



2015-2016  
*Season*



## Press Release

UT Department of Theatre • 206 McClung Tower • Knoxville, TN 37996

For more information contact: Robin Conklin, Marketing & Communications Director  
[rconkli1@utk.edu](mailto:rconkli1@utk.edu) or 865-974-2497

For immediate release:

### *Clarence Brown Theatre Receives*

### *National Endowment for the Arts “Art Works” Award for*

### *“A Lesson Before Dying”*

The Clarence Brown Theatre is the recipient of a prestigious \$20,000 “Art Works” award from the National Endowment for the Arts in support of its spring production of “A Lesson Before Dying.”

“We couldn’t be more pleased to receive a sizeable grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for our 2015/2016 production of “A Lesson Before Dying.” In addition to raising the profile of the CBT on a national level and celebrating Knoxville’s robust arts community, these monies will be of great assistance as we create the production in early 2016. Like all CBT productions, “A Lesson Before Dying” is built right here in Knoxville, using local and national talent in addition to vendors and materials from our area,” said David B. Byrd, CBT Managing Director.

The play, which was written by Romulus Linney and adapted from the novel by Ernest J. Gaines, tells the story of the friendship between an African-American schoolteacher and an uneducated African-American man who has been wrongly accused of murder and sentenced to death in the pre-Civil Rights Movement South.

Several ancillary events designed to engage the Greater Knoxville and East Tennessee communities in dialogue on issues of civil rights, social justice, racism, and the legal system have been planned in conjunction with the Knox County Public Library’s *The Big Read* program. Additional community partners include, but are not limited to, Knoxville Area Urban League, University of Tennessee’s College of Law, Community Law Office, Beck Cultural Center, and many others. For more information on the specific events are available at [clarencebrowtheatre.com/a-lesson-before-dying-programs/](http://clarencebrowtheatre.com/a-lesson-before-dying-programs/).

Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America.

The “Art Works” category supports the creation of work and presentation of both new and existing work, lifelong learning in the arts, and public engagement with the arts through 13 arts disciplines or fields.

NEA Chairman Jane Chu said, “The arts are part of our everyday lives – no matter who you are or where you live – they have the power to transform individuals, spark economic vibrancy in communities, and transcend the boundaries across diverse sectors of society. Supporting projects like the one from the Clarence Brown Theatre offers more opportunities to engage in the arts every day.”

With a dual mission to train the next generation of theatre artists and to provide top quality professional theatre, the Clarence Brown Theatre at the University of Tennessee Knoxville is one of only 13 academic LORT (League of Resident Theatre) institutions in the nation. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Calvin MacLean and Managing Director David B. Byrd, the CBT season runs from August through May and features eight productions ranging from musicals to drama.

The CBT provides a cultural resource for both the university and the larger East Tennessee community and affirms diversity and inclusivity in all their forms.

The 2015/2016 remaining season productions include: “A Christmas Carol,” “The Santaland Diaries,” “Titus Andronicus,” “A Lesson Before Dying,” “The Open Hand,” and “South Pacific”. For more information or tickets, call the CBT Box Office at 865-974-5161 or visit us online at <http://clarencebrowntheatre.com/>. Stay connected to the Clarence Brown Theatre on Facebook (Clarence Brown Theatre), follow us on Twitter (@ClarenceBrown) and view Clarence Brown videos on YouTube (Clarence Bro).

###