

2017



2018



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***CBT-Commissioned World Premiere of “the strangers”
 in Clarence Brown Theatre’s Carousel Theatre***

The world premiere of the CBT-commissioned “the strangers,” written by christopher oscar peña and directed by John Sipes, will be performed in the Clarence Brown Theatre’s Carousel Theatre February 21 to March 11, 2018. A Pay What You Wish Preview performance will be held Wednesday, February 21, a talk back with the cast will take place Sunday, March 4 following the matinee, and the Open Captioned performance is Sunday, March 11 at 2:00 pm. Support for this production was provided by Townes Lavidge Osborn and Jennifer Banner. Media sponsors are WUOT, WUTK, and The Daily Beacon. ***The production contains adult themes and strong language. Recommended for ages 17 and up.***

Cris returns to a place he once used to know, only to find a world he no longer recognizes. As he connects with a stranger tasked to show him around town, an unexpected spark challenges all of his preconceived notions. “the strangers” depicts a contemporary American world thrown into chaos.

“This is a play with heart, about the heart, and the unpredictable ways of the heart. And the ravaging pain, both personal and societal, that overwhelms when the heart is broken. We are reminded oftentimes in this story of the consequences of love’s absence. This too is a play about our troubles—our troubles in relationship, in community, in politics, in spirit. It holds a mirror up to our society today and reflects the bias, the imbalance of power, and the ignorance that is fragmenting our country,” said director John Sipes.

John Sipes (Director) John is a Professor in the Department of Theatre at the University of Tennessee. Before joining the UT faculty, he was a Director and the Resident Movement Director for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for fifteen seasons. Prior to his residency at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, John was a Director and Movement Director for the Illinois Shakespeare Festival for twelve seasons and served as the Festival’s Artistic Director for five seasons. Directing credits include productions at the Clarence Brown Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Milwaukee Rep, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival and others.

Playwright **christopher oscar peña** also is a screenwriter, actor and educator who resides in New York City. He teaches theater at NYU's Tisch School of Arts and is a member of the Playwrights Unit at Goodman Theatre in Chicago. His work has been developed or seen at the Public Theater, The Goodman Theater, Two River Theater, INTAR, the Ontological Hysteric Incubator, The Playwrights Realm, Son of Semele (LA), American Theater Company (Chicago), Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, the Old Vic, Theater for a New City, the Orchard Project, Naked Angels and the New York Theatre Workshop, among many others. He is the co-writer of the Golden Globe nominated TV series, "Jane the Virgin" and HBO's "Insecure."

The cast is comprised of UT Theatre MFA candidates **Jeff Dickamore** (Dave), **Miguel A. Faña** (Diego/Guy 2/Wedding Guest); **Emily Kicklighter** (Sarah/Homeless Person/Wedding Guest), **Charlotte Munson** (Eleanor/White Girl 2/Caroline/Wedding Planner), **Aaron Orlov** (Cris), **Lauren Pennline** (Emily/White Girl 1/Wedding Guest/Red), **Carlène Pochette** (Pearl/Crossing Guard/Wedding Guest), and **Jude Carl Vincent** (Nigel/Guy 1/Wedding Guest/Gatz).

The creative team for the production includes: visiting guest artists **Andrea Lauer** (Costume and Scenic Design) and **Vincent Olivieri** (Sound Design and Original Music); UT faculty **Kenton Yeager** (Lighting Design); and **Caleb Cook** (Stage Manager).

Two Previews for "the strangers" are Wednesday, February 21 and Thursday, February 22 followed by Opening Night Friday, February 23. The production runs through April 11. For tickets, call the Clarence Brown Theatre box office at 865-974-5161 or order online 24/7 at www.clarencebrowntheatre.com

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 12 academic LORT (League of Resident Theatre) institutions in the nation. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Calvin MacLean and Managing Director Tom Cervone, the CBT season runs from August through May and features nine productions ranging from musicals to drama.

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