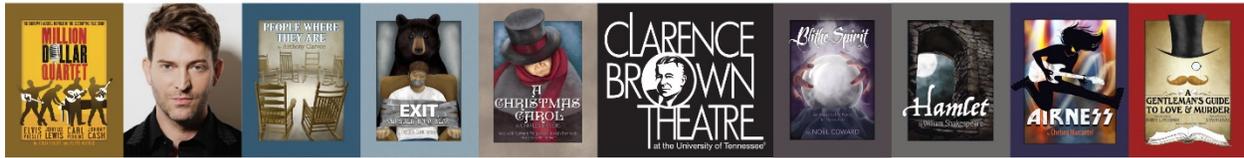


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For immediate release:
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Clarence Brown Theatre's New Play "People Where They Are Focuses on Highlander Center Teaching

The world premiere of the CBT-commissioned "People Where They Are" will be performed in the Clarence Brown Theatre's Carousel Theatre October 2 – 20, 2019. Written specifically for the current UT Theatre MFA actors by Anthony Clarvoe and directed by Calvin MacLean, the play dramatizes the famous Highlander Center's expansion into the Civil Rights movement, and more. Support for this production is provided by Townes Lavidge Osborn and Jennifer Banner. Media sponsors are WUOT, WUTK, The Knoxville News Sentinel and The Daily Beacon. **Several ancillary events will accompany this production.** Details are listed at the bottom of the release.

In 1932, Myles Horton, Don West, Jim Dombrowski and others founded the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee. They focused first on organizing unemployed and working people, and by the late 1930s Highlander was serving as the de-facto CIO education center for the region, training union organizers and leaders in 11 southern states. During this period, Highlander also fought segregation in the labor movement, holding its first integrated workshop in 1944.

Highlander's commitment to ending segregation made it a critically important incubator of the Civil Rights movement. Workshops and training sessions at Highlander helped lay the groundwork for many of the movement's most important initiatives, including the Montgomery bus boycott, the Citizenship Schools, and the founding of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In 1961, after years of red-baiting and several government investigations, the state of Tennessee revoked Highlander's charter and seized its land and buildings. The school reopened the next day as the Highlander Research and Education Center. From 1961-1971, it was based in Knoxville, and in 1972 it moved to its current location near New Market, Tennessee.

According to Clarvoe, all the actions depicted in the play actually happened and all the characters are based on actual people. But the timeline of events has been rearranged and telescoped and the named characters are amalgams of several different historical figures.

MacLean said that when he and the cast began work with the playwright in December 2017, the work of Highlander was largely unknown to them. Clarvoe brought to their attention the historical significance of Highlander and the ironies of its placement in rural East Tennessee. They had no idea that, while working on the play, the eruptions of violence would increase and even visit upon the Highlander Center in New Market.

"This new play dramatizes Highlander's expansion into the Civil Rights movement. But it also takes aim at our own time, by dramatizing our own ongoing discussions about race, "otherness," and the eruption of violence our nation has endured since even before we began this particular artistic journey," MacLean said.

Calvin MacLean (Director) is in his fourteenth year as Theatre Department Head and CBT Company Producing Artistic Director. CBT productions he has directed include: "A Flea in Her Ear," "The Life of Galileo," "The Secret Rapture," "A Streetcar Named Desire" (with Dale Dickey), "Amadeus" (with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra),

“Kiss Me, Kate,” “Sweeney Todd” (with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra and Dale Dickey), “Our Country’s Good,” “The Threepenny Opera,” “The Open Hand,” “The Crucible,” and “Candide” (with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra). He was the Artistic Director of the Illinois Shakespeare Festival for eleven seasons. Professionally active in Chicago, his productions – mostly at the Famous Door Theatre – earned several Joseph Jefferson Awards for Outstanding Production and Direction. Most notable were Joshua Sobol’s Ghetto, a production that ran for seven months and honored with four Jeff Awards including for Outstanding Direction of a Play and Anthony Clarvoe’s “The Living,” which won Joseph Jefferson Awards for Outstanding Direction of a Play and Outstanding Production.

Dee Dee Batteast (Director) is a Chicago based actress, director and teacher. She performed last year at the CBT in “Detroit ’67.” She received her undergraduate degree from Ball State University and her MFA from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Playwright Anthony Clarvoe has received American Theatre Critics, LA Drama Critics, Elliot Norton (New England drama critics), SF Bay Area Theatre Critics, Will Glickman, Garland, and Edgerton New American Play awards; fellowships from the Guggenheim, Irvine, Jerome, and McKnight Foundations, National Endowment for the Arts, TCG/Pew Charitable Trusts, and Kennedy Center; commissions from South Coast Rep, Mark Taper Forum, and Playwrights Horizons; the Berrilla Kerr Award for his contributions to American theater; and many others. The Chicago production of his play “The Living,” directed by Cal MacLean, produced by Famous Door Theatre, won three Joseph Jefferson Awards including Production of the Year. He lectures on theater history at UC Berkeley and leads playwriting classes in Oakland. A native San Franciscan and long-time resident of New York and the Midwest, he lives with his family in Berkeley, CA.

The UT Theatre MFA actors performing in this play are: **Aleah Vassell** (Mrs. Clark); **Owen Squire Smith** (Mr. Carawan); **Brittany Marie Pirozzoli** (May); **Brenda Orellana** (Emma); **Collin Andrews** (Ned); and **Jade Arnold** (John).

The creative team for the production includes: **John Merritt** (Costume Design); **Carrie Ferrelli** (Scenic Design); **Mike Ponder** (Sound Design); **Bill Miller** (Lighting Design); **Kathy Logelin** (Dialect Coach); **Casey Sams** (Choreographer/Intimacy Coach); **Gina M. DeSalvo** (Dramaturg); and, **Dane Urban** (Stage Manager).

Several ancillary events will take place in conjunction with this performance.

A **free reading of Anthony Clarvoe’s “The Living”** will take place on September 21 at 2:00 pm in the Lab Theatre with a talk back immediately following the reading.

Following each “People Where They Are” performance, patrons will have the opportunity to make voluntary donations support the Highlander Center. The **Pay What You Can** performance is Wednesday, October 2 at 7:30 pm. Half of the proceeds from the PWYC tickets sales will benefit the Highlander also. **Behind the Scenes Sunday** is October 2 following the 2:00 pm matinee. It will include a panel discussion with the playwright, director, and co-director who will discuss what it takes to create a new play and will delve into the themes of social activism present in the production. An **Actor Talkback** will take place on Sunday, October 13 following the matinee performance. A **Highlander Benefit Concert** will take place October 19 at 2:00 pm, featuring inspirational folk music by Michael and Carrie Kline. Michael served as a staff musician for the Highlander from 1968-1969 and they both have been studying Appalachian community culture and history for more than 40 years. The concert is free and open to the public with another opportunity to donate to the Highlander Center. A **Sunday Symposium with Wess Harris** will take place on October 20 following the 2:00 pm matinee performance. A sociologist and former coal miner and union organizer from West Virginia, Harris will recount his experiences with one of the co-founders of the Highlander, Don West. He also will shed light on his journey of collecting portraits created by another co-founder of the Highlander, Connie West, which were done to depict influential individuals of the Highlander. Select portraits, which echo the themes and characters present in our production, will be on display in the lobby of the theater. Harris also will be on hand Oct. 9 through Oct. 20 to talk about the portraits and to sell his books, “Written in Blood: Courage and Corruption in the Appalachian War of Extraction” and “When Miners March.”

For tickets to “People Where They Are,” 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.

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).

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