

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS

Christopher Ashley  
Artistic Director

Michael S. Rosenberg  
Managing Director

# THE TALLEST TREE IN THE FOREST

WRITTEN BY AND FEATURING

**DANIEL BEATY\***

DIRECTED BY

**MOISÉS KAUFMAN**

Co-produced with Kansas City Repertory Theatre

Eric Rosen, Artistic Director | Angela Lee Gieras, Executive Director | Jerry Genochio, Producing Director

MUSIC DIRECTOR/INCIDENTAL MUSIC & ARRANGEMENTS	KENNY J. SEYMOUR
SCENIC DESIGN	DEREK McLANE
COSTUME DESIGN	CLINT RAMOS
LIGHTING DESIGN	DAVID LANDER
SOUND DESIGN	LINDSAY JONES
PROJECTION DESIGN	JOHN NARUN
DIALECT DESIGNER & COACH	PAUL MEIER
DRAMATURG	CARLYN ACQUILINE
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER	CRAIG CAMPBELL*
ASSISTANT STAGE MANANAGER	ZACH KENNEDY*
PRODUCING DIRECTOR	DANA I. HARREL
PRODUCTION MANAGER	LINDA S. COOPER

*The Tallest Tree in the Forest* was originally commissioned and developed by Tectonic Theater Project  
Moisés Kaufman, Artistic Director | Erika S. Floreska, Executive Director



## THE CAST

Daniel Beaty ..... Paul Robeson

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER KRISTIN SWIFT HAYES  
 ASSISTANT SOUND DESIGNER KEVIN ANTHENILL  
 COSTUME DESIGN ASSISTANT TIJANNA POROBIC†  
 PRODUCTION ASSISTANT JENNIFER SEARS

*The Tallest Tree in the Forest* is performed with a 15-minute intermission.

## MUSIC SELECTIONS

"Ol' Man River"	"Great Day"
"Steal Away"	"Ballad for the Americans"
"The Joint Is Jumpin'"	"Happy Days Are Here Again"
"Get on Board Li' Chillun'"	"Battle of Jericho"
"Shortnin' Bread"	"Zog Nit Kaynmal"
"Ol' Man River" (Reprise)	"Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel"
"Go Down Moses"	"Scandalize My Name"

## MUSICIANS

Music Director / Conductor / Piano ..... Kenny J. Seymour  
 Woodwinds ..... John Reilly  
 Cello ..... Jennifer Epler  
 Contractor ..... Lorin Getline

## MUSIC CREDITS

*Ballad for America* was written by John Latouche and Earl Robinson and is used by arrangement with Music Sales Corporation and Sony/ATV Music Pub.

*Happy Days Are Here Again* was written by Milton Yeager and Jack Yellen and is used by arrangement with Warner/Chappell Music.

*The Joint Is Jumpin'* was written by Thomas Fats Waller, Andy Razaf and JC Johnson and is used by arrangement with Warner/Chappell Music, MPL Communications, The Songwriters Guild of America, and Razaf Music c/o Wixen.

*Ol' Man River* was written by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II and is used by arrangement with the Estate of Betty Kern Miller and Hammerstein Properties LLC.

## PROJECTION CREDITS

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The Tallest Tree in the Forest* has been in development for two years and would not have been possible without the generous support of the Ford Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, Jeanne Sullivan, The Guggenheim's 'Works & Process,' the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with The City Council, First Republic Bank, the Axe-Houghton Foundation and numerous Tectonic Theater Project supporters.

Sharp Business Systems

\* Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. This theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association.

† UC San Diego M.F.A. Candidates in residence at La Jolla Playhouse.

This Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, an independent national labor union.



All musicians are represented by the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada.



This Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.



La Jolla Playhouse is a member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for the nonprofit professional theatre.







## **DANIEL BEATY**, *Paul Robeson*

La Jolla Playhouse: Debut. Mr. Beaty is an award-winning actor, singer, writer and motivational speaker. His critically acclaimed plays *Through the Night*, *Emergency*, *Mr. Joy* and *The Tallest Tree in the Forest* have been performed at venues ranging from Lincoln Center to the White House, and have garnered numerous awards, including an Obie Award for writing and performance and two NAACP Theater Awards. A highly requested keynote speaker and thought leader, Mr. Beaty has worked throughout the U.S., Europe and Africa, speaking and performing on programs with luminaries such as Bill Cosby, Deepak Chopra, Hill Harper, Jill Scott, Donnie McClurkin and Ruby Dee. An adjunct professor at Columbia University, diversity trainer and youth development specialist, Mr. Beaty has spoken at staff retreats and led leadership training for a myriad of non-profits and corporations. In fall 2013, Mr. Beaty launched a nationwide initiative, funded by W.K. Kellogg and Ford Foundations among others, to use the tools of storytelling to help individuals and communities heal from trauma. He holds a B.A. with Honors in English and Music from Yale University and an M.F.A. in Acting from the American Conservatory Theater. His poem *Knock Knock* became an internet sensation receiving millions of views, and has been transformed into a children's book, also titled *Knock Knock*, published by Little Brown Books. Penguin-Random House will publish his empowerment book *Transforming Pain to Power* in February 2014. Follow his work at [www.DanielBeaty.com](http://www.DanielBeaty.com) and on Twitter @DanielBBeaty.

## **MOISÉS KAUFMAN**, *Director*

La Jolla Playhouse: *33 Variations*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *The Laramie Project* and *The Nightingale*. Mr. Kaufman is a Tony- and Emmy-nominated director and award-winning playwright. He is also the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Tectonic Theater Project. Most recently, he directed *The Laramie Project* Cycle at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, marking the first time *The Laramie Project* and *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later* ran in repertory. Mr. Kaufman's plays *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* and *The Laramie Project* have been among the most performed plays in America over the last decade. Prior Broadway directing credits: *The Heiress* starring Academy Award nominee Jessica Chastain and David Strathairn; *33 Variations* (which he also wrote and received a Tony nomination for Best Play) starring Jane Fonda; the Pulitzer Prize finalist *Bengal Tiger in the Baghdad Zoo* with Academy Award winner Robin Williams; and the Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning *I Am My Own Wife* (Obie Award for direction; Tony, Outer Critics, Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk Awards nominations). Off-Broadway/Regional: *The Common Pursuit* (Roundabout Theater) and an adaptation of Tennessee Williams' *One Arm* (Steppenwolf and Off-Broadway). Mr. Kaufman also directed the film adaptation of *The Laramie Project*, which aired on HBO. It was the opening night selection at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival and won a Special Mention for Best First Film at the Berlin Film Festival. Mr. Kaufman received two Emmy Award nominations for Best Director and Best Writer. Other directing credits include *Macbeth* (Shakespeare in the Park), *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Williamstown), *Master Class* with Rita Moreno (Berkeley Rep), *This Is How It Goes* (Donmar Warehouse), *Women in Becket*, *Machinal*, *In the Winter of Cities* and *The Nest*. Mr. Kaufman is a Guggenheim Fellow.

## **KENNY J. SEYMOUR**, *Music Director/Incidental Music & Arrangements*

La Jolla Playhouse: *Memphis* (Music Director). Broadway/Off-Broadway: Tony Award-winning Best Musical *Memphis* (Music Director/Conductor), *Amazing Grace* (Orchestrator), *The Strangely Beautiful Tale of Miss Percy Parker* (Co-Composer & Lyricist, Orchestrations), *Big Maybelle: Soul of the Blues* (Music Supervisor/Orchestrator), *The Wiz* (Dance Music Arranger), *Hot Feet: The Music of Earth, Wind & Fire* (Synth Programmer). Film/TV: *The Fringe* (Composer), *Talking with the Taxman About Poetry* (Composer; recipient of the 2013 Global Music Award for Best Original Score). Music Arranger/Orchestrator for shows on Fox, BET, NBC and the Inauguration Ball for President Barack Obama. Mr. Seymour has performed around the world, from the Legendary Apollo Theatre and Carnegie Hall to the Montreux Jazz Festival. Education: Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art, Manhattan School of Music and Berklee College of Music. [www.kennyseymour.com](http://www.kennyseymour.com)

## **DEREK McLANE**, *Scenic Design*

La Jolla Playhouse: *33 Variations*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *The Nightingale* and *Guitar Lessons*. Broadway: *The Heiress*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *The Best Man*, *Follies*, *Anything Goes*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Bengal Tiger in the Baghdad Zoo*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Ragtime*, *33 Variations* (Tony Award, Best Scenic Design), *Grease*, *Lestat*, *Little Women*, *The Pajama Game*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *The Women*, *Present Laughter*, *London Assurance*, *Holiday* and *The Three Sisters*. Off-Broadway: *Ruined*, *Lie of the Mind*, *Marie and Bruce*, *Starry Messenger*, *The Voyage Inheritance*, *Two Trains Running*, *Macbeth* (Shakespeare in the Park), *Hurlyburly*, *Abigail's Party* and *Aunt Dan and Lemon*. Recently designed the 2013 Oscars and the premiere of the opera *Fen Yi Ting* at Spoleto Festival/Lincoln Center. International: Opera and theatre designs in London, Dublin, Glasgow, Moscow, Krakow, Caracas, Sydney and Warsaw. Awards: Winner of 1997 and 2004 Obie Awards; 2004, 2005, 2007 Lucille Lortel Awards; 2009 Tony Award; 2011 Drama Desk Award; 2013 Emmy nomination.

## **CLINT RAMOS**, *Costume Design*

La Jolla Playhouse: *Ruined* and *Most Wanted*. Recent set and/or costume designs include *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Violet* and *I'm Getting My Act Together and Taking It on the Road* (NY City Center Encores!); *Here Lies Love*, *Venice* and *Wild with Happy* (Public Theater); *Good Person of Szechuan* (Foundry Theater) and *Volpone* (Red Bull Theater). Designs seen in New York at Playwrights Horizons, Lincoln Center Theater, Roundabout, Second Stage, New York Theater Workshop, Culture Project, Foundry Theatre, Ma-Yi, Mint, NAATCO, New Georges, Clubbed Thumb, Gotham Opera and many others. Regional credits include designs for Arena Stage, American Repertory Theater, Alliance Theater, Alley Theater, Asolo Repertory, Berkeley Repertory, Baltimore Centerstage, California Shakespeare Theater, Cleveland Play House, Cincinnati Playhouse, Chautauqua Theater Company, Denver Center Theatre Company, Dallas Theater Center, Folger Theatre, Geva Theater, Huntington Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Old Globe Theater, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Opera Boston, Prince Opera Theater, Williamstown Theater Festival, Wilma Theater and many others. Numerous international credits. Honors and awards include the 2013 Obie Award for Sustained Excellence, two Lucille Lortel awards, TDF Irene Sharaff Award and two American Theater Wing Henry Hewes Awards.



**DAVID LANDER, Lighting Design**

La Jolla Playhouse: *His Girl Friday*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Nightingale*, *33 Variations* and *Restoration*. Broadway: *The Heiress* with Jessica Chastain and Dan Stevens, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* with Robin Williams (Drama Desk Award; Tony and Outer Critics nominations), *33 Variations* with Jane Fonda (Tony and Outer Critics nominations), *I Am My Own Wife* (Drama Desk and Outer Critics nominations), all directed by Moisés Kaufman; *The Lyons* with Linda Lavin, *Master Class* with Tyne Daly, *A Man for All Seasons*, *Dirty Blonde* (Drama Desk nomination) and *Golden Child*. Off-Broadway: *Fran's Bed* with Mia Farrow, *King Lear* with Kevin Kline, *Rose* with Olympia Dukakis, *Macbeth* with Liev Schreiber and Jennifer Ehle, *Modern Orthodox* with Molly Ringwald and Jason Biggs, among others. Regional: Ahmanson Theatre, Arena Stage, Berkeley Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Huntington Theatre, Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum and the Old Globe, among others. International: London, Dublin, Caracas, Singapore, Tokyo, Sydney and Melbourne, among others.

**LINDSAY JONES, Sound Design**

La Jolla Playhouse: Debut. Broadway: *A Time to Kill*. Off-Broadway: *Mr. Joy* (LCT3); *Through the Night* (Union Square/Westside Theatres); *Wild with Happy* (Public Theater); *The Burnt Part Boys* (Playwrights Horizons/Vineyard); *Top Secret* (NYTW); *Rx* (Primary Stages) and many others. Regional: Guthrie Theatre, Hartford Stage, Alliance, Goodman, Arena Stage, Chicago Shakespeare, Steppenwolf, Lookingglass and many others. International: Stratford Shakespeare Festival (Canada), Royal Shakespeare Company (England), as well as productions in Austria, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Scotland. Awards: six Joseph Jefferson Awards and 16 nominations, two Ovation Awards and three nominations, LA Drama Critics Circle Award, two ASCAP Plus Awards, three Drama Desk Award nominations, as well as nominations for Henry Hewes Design, Barrymore and many others. Film scoring: Magnolia Pictures' *The Brass Teapot* and HBO Films' *A Note of Triumph* (2006 Academy Award, Best Documentary). [www.lindsayjones.com](http://www.lindsayjones.com)

**JOHN NARUN, Projection Design**

La Jolla Playhouse: Debut. Credits: *The Laramie Project Cycle* (BAM); *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* (video content), Cirque Du Soleil's *The Immortal Tour* (video content). Concerts: Madonna's *Sticky and Sweet Tour*, The Spice Girls' *Reunion Tour*, Celine Dion's *Taking Chances Tour*, Britney Spears' *The Femme Fatale Tour*, Ricky Martin's *The Black and White Tour*, Christina Aguilera's *Back to Basics Tour*. Regional: Bailiwick Repertory, The Griffin Theatre, Rice University, Marriott's Lincolnshire Theatre. Broadcast Design: NBC Beijing Summer Olympics Teaser Campaign; ABC News Open (2004); *The Dr. Phil Show* Open (2006); CBS *Wolf Lake* Main Title (Emmy nomination); HBO Genre Opens (2002); *The Oprah Winfrey Show* Open (1999). Education: Northwestern University, Theatrical Design and Radio, TV, Film. [www.johnnarun.com](http://www.johnnarun.com)

**PAUL MEIER, Dialect Designer & Coach**

La Jolla Playhouse: Debut. Mr. Meier is a leading dialect coach in theatre and film. His book, *Accents & Dialects for Stage and Screen*, is the standard work in its field, used in over 100 conservatories around the world. This and his other publications, like *Voicing Shakespeare*, are available from bookstores everywhere, as well as from his website: [www.paulmeier.com](http://www.paulmeier.com). Mr. Meier has taught and given workshops all over the world, at such British institutions as The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA), The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) and The Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon; in North America at The North Carolina School of the Arts, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario and (currently) at the University of Kansas, where he is

a professor in the Theatre Department; and in Australia at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). He has coached numerous feature films, including Oscar-winning director Ang Lee's *Ride with the Devil*, and close to two hundred plays and musicals in more than a dozen countries. At Kansas City Rep his most recent work was on *Death of a Salesman*, while among other one-person shows he has coached are *My Brilliant Divorce* at the Asolo Theatre. He has also dialect coached a dozen productions at the New Theatre. Meier is a noted voice actor himself with over fifty audiobooks to his credit, including Ayn Rand's *Anthem*, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* and *A Christmas Carol*. During his many years with the BBC Drama Repertory Company in London, he performed in over 100 radio dramas alongside such notable stars as Richard Burton, Dame Flora Robson, Derek Jacobi and Paul Scofield. He is the founder and director of the International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA), the leading online database of subjects reading and conversing in their native accents and dialects, online at [www.dialectsarchive.com](http://www.dialectsarchive.com).

**CARLYN AQUILINE, Dramaturg**

La Jolla Playhouse: Debut. Ms. Aquiline is Literary Manager and Dramaturg at City Theatre Company (Pittsburgh), which specializes in contemporary and new work. A former staff member at Syracuse Stage (Artistic Associate) and Goodspeed Musicals (Literary and Producing Associate), Ms. Aquiline's new play dramaturgy credits also include Yale Repertory Theatre, Hartford Stage, Arden Theatre, TheatreWorks (Palo Alto), Florida Stage, Actors' Express and Lark Play Development Center. Ms. Aquiline is also an experienced dramaturg of classical work, including among her favorite projects Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Gozzi's *The Green Bird* (at Yale Rep, in collaboration with Theatre de la Jeune Lune). She was Managing Editor of *Theater* magazine for two years, and has adjudicated many national residencies and awards for playwrights, dramaturgs and other artists. Teaching credits include Carnegie Mellon, Yale, Ohio and Syracuse universities. Education: Yale School of Drama, Ohio University and The Catholic University of America.

**CRAIG CAMPBELL, Production Stage Manager**

La Jolla Playhouse: *The Who & The What* (workshop). Off Broadway: *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*; *The Vagina Monologues*; *De La Guarda*; *Fame*; *Oedipus*; *The Pitchfork Disney*; *Amazing Grace* and *The Seagull*. National Tours: *Forever Plaid*, *All Shook Up*, *Fame* and *Dirty Blonde*. Regional: *Picnic* (San Pedro Playhouse); *The Haunted Hotel*, *Personals*, *Vanities* (Cazenovia Theatre Company) and three seasons with the Santa Fe Opera Company. Film & TV: *The Amandas*, *Clean House*, *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Over Your Head*, *Comic Relief* and *The Screen Actors Guild Awards*. Mr. Campbell is an Emmy Award winner with three nominations. He is a proud graduate of Rollins College, with an emphasis in theatre.

**ZACH KENNEDY, Assistant Stage Manager**

La Jolla Playhouse: *Glengarry Glen Ross*. Credits include TheatreWorks' Singapore production of *Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields*, directed by Ong Keng Sen in Shizuoka, Japan; *The Cherry Orchard Sequel* written and directed by Nic Ularu at La MaMa in New York; 2013 Shakespeare Festival, *The Rocky Horror Show* and *Somewhere* at The Old Globe. He spent two seasons at The Lost Colony, America's largest outdoor theater, and has worked with Seven Devils Playwrights Conference, Pat Rincon Dance Collective, Palmetto Opera Company and Theatre South Carolina. Mr. Kennedy is a freelance line producer and content manager for Blue Flame Events, most recently on Google's International Science Fair. He holds his M.F.A. in Stage Management from UC San Diego.

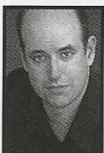


## KANSAS CITY REPERTORY THEATRE

(Eric Rosen, Artistic Director; Angela Lee Gieras, Executive Director; Jerry Genochio, Producing Director) approaching its 50th anniversary, is the largest regional theatre in the central Midwest, and is in residence at the University of Missouri – Kansas City. Under the artistic direction of Eric Rosen, the Rep's original work and collaborations have been seen across the country. With 22 production transfers in the last five years, including our co-production of *Peer Gynt* with La Jolla Playhouse two years ago, the Rep is emerging as an important center for the creation of new work of national significance. Recent transfers to Broadway and Off-Broadway include *Venue* at the Public Theater (with Center Theatre Group), *Clay* at Lincoln Center/LCT3, *A Christmas Story: The Musical* (Broadway; Tony nomination, Best Musical), *Tom Sawyer* at the New Victory and *The Great Inmensity* (upcoming at the Public).

## TECTONIC THEATER PROJECT (TTP)

Founded in 1991 by Artistic Director Moisés Kaufman, TTP is an award-winning theater company dedicated to developing innovative works that explore theatrical language and form, fostering an artistic dialogue with our audiences on the social, political and human issues that affect us all. Tectonic Theater Project is best known for creating plays which have sparked national discourse and inspired artists and audiences worldwide. They include: *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, *The Laramie Project*, *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*, *I Am My Own Wife*, Tennessee Williams' unproduced screenplay *One Arm* and *33 Variations* starring Jane Fonda. Also in development: *Square Peg Round Hole* (working title) about life on the Autism Spectrum and an adaptation of Bizet's classic opera *Carmen* set in post-revolution Cuba with an afro-cuban jazz arrangements by Arturo O'Farrill. Moisés Kaufman and Tectonic Theater Project have developed a wholly unique methodology for creating theatre, Moment Work. Participants in Moment Work Trainings actively engage with the elements of the stage – exploring lights, sound, costumes, movement, text, architecture and other elements – to discover their full theatrical potential and the poetry inherent in each element. Training and workshop information is available at [www.tectonictheaterproject.org](http://www.tectonictheaterproject.org). TTP Board: Kevin Jennings (chair), Timothy Wu (vice chair), Amy Stursberg (secretary), John Hadity (treasurer), Ralph Bryan, Michael Graziano, Andrew Hindman, Krysti Keener, Alan Kornberg, Jeffrey LaHoste, Erick Neher, Cathy Renna, Paul Sekhri, Richard Sheehan, Deborah Taylor, Ted Trimpa, Barbara Whitman, Richard Willis.



## CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY, Artistic Director

has served as Artistic Director at La Jolla Playhouse since October, 2007. During his tenure, he has helmed the West Coast premiere of *His Girl Friday*, David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*, the world premiere of Arthur Kopit and Anton Dudley's *A Dram of Drummhicit*, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the world premiere of Claudia Shear's *Restoration*, and the acclaimed musicals *Xanadu* and *Memphis*, which won four 2010 Tony Awards including Best Musical. Mr. Ashley spearheaded the Playhouse's acclaimed Without Walls series of site-specific work, as well as the DNA New Work Series. He also established the Resident Theatre program, which encourages the artistic development of up-and-coming theatre companies and provide a temporary home each year to one of the many vibrant local theatre troupes without a permanent venue. In addition, he oversaw the world premieres of *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots*, *Hands on a Hardbody*, *Milk Like Sugar*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Limelight: The Story of Charlie Chaplin*, *Surf Report*, *Bonnie & Clyde*, Doug Wright's adaptation of *Creditors*, the Page To Stage workshop of Charlayne Woodard's *The Night Watcher*, and the West Coast premiere of *33 Variations*. Prior to joining the Playhouse, Mr. Ashley directed the Broadway productions of *Xanadu* (Drama Desk nomination), *All Shook Up* and *The Rocky Horror Show* (Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award nominations), as well

as the Kennedy Center Sondheim Celebration productions of *Sweeney Todd* and *Merrily We Roll Along*. Other New York credits include: *Blown Sideways Through Life*, *Jeffrey* (Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards), *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, *Valhalla*, *Regrets Only*, *Wonder of the World*, *Communicating Doors*, *Bunny Bunny*, *The Night Hank Williams Died*, *Fires in the Mirror* (Lucille Lortel Award), among others. He also directed the feature film *Jeffrey* and the American Playhouse production of *Blown Sideways Through Life* for PBS. Mr. Ashley is the recipient of the Princess Grace Award, the Drama League Director Fellowship and an NEA/TCG Director Fellowship.



## MICHAEL S. ROSENBERG, Managing Director

has served as Managing Director of La Jolla Playhouse since April, 2009. During his four years at the Playhouse, he has worked in partnership with Artistic Director Christopher Ashley to produce fourteen world premieres, seven Playhouse commissions and the hit musicals *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots*, *Hands on a Hardbody* and *Little Miss Sunshine*. He was also instrumental in bringing the Page To Stage workshop of John Lequizar's *Diary of a Madman* to the Playhouse, which transferred to Broadway. Additionally, he fostered the growth of the Playhouse's award-winning Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour, achieving the most performances at local schools in Playhouse history. Previously, Rosenberg was Co-Founder and Executive Director of Drama Dept., a New York non-profit theatre company, where he produced new works by the likes of Douglas Carter Beane, Warren Leight, Isaac Mizrahi, Paul Rudnick and David and Amy Sedaris. He has been a part of the producing teams for the Broadway productions of *Grey Gardens* and *American Buffalo* and the national tour of *Little House on the Prairie*. He serves on the boards of La Jolla Country Day School and the Theatre Communications Group.



## DEBBY BUCHHOLZ, General Manager

has served as General Manager of La Jolla Playhouse since 2002. She is a member of the Executive Committee and of the League of Resident Theaters (LORT). In 2009, she received a San Diego Women Who Mean Business Award from The San Diego Business Journal. Previously she served as Counsel to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, DC. She was a faculty member of the Smithsonian Institution's program on Legal Problems of Museum Administration. Prior to the Kennedy Center, she served as a corporate attorney in New York City and Washington, DC. She is a graduate of UC San Diego and Harvard Law School. Ms. Buchholz and her husband, noted author and White House economic policy advisor Todd Buchholz, live in Solana Beach and are the proud parents of Victoria, Katherine and Alexia.



## DES MCANUFF, Director Emeritus

served as La Jolla Playhouse's Artistic Director from 1983 through 1994, and from 2001 through April, 2007. Under his leadership, the Playhouse garnered more than 300 awards, including the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Playhouse to Broadway credits: *Jersey Boys* (four Tony Awards); Billy Crystal's *700 Sundays* (Tony Award); *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (five Tony nominations); director and co-author with Pete Townshend on *The Who's Tommy* (Tony and Olivier Awards for Best Director) and *Big River* (seven Tony Awards), among others. Film credits: *Quills*, *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle*, *The Iron Giant* (9 Animation Society awards) and *Cousin Bette*. Recipient of the Drama League's 2006 Julia Hansen Award, Mr. McAnuff served as Artistic Director at Canada's Stratford Festival from 2007 through 2012. He recently directed the hit productions of *Sideways*, *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Playhouse.



# PAUL ROBESON

## CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

By Laura Muir

Courtesy of Kansas City  
Repertory Theatre



“As an artist, I come to sing,  
but as a citizen, I will always  
speak for peace, and no one  
can silence me in this.”

— Paul Robeson



## In the mid-20th century, Paul Robeson

was one of the best known African American artists in the world. Through his singing and acting talent, he became enormously popular and wealthy, and he was also highly regarded as an international champion for human rights.

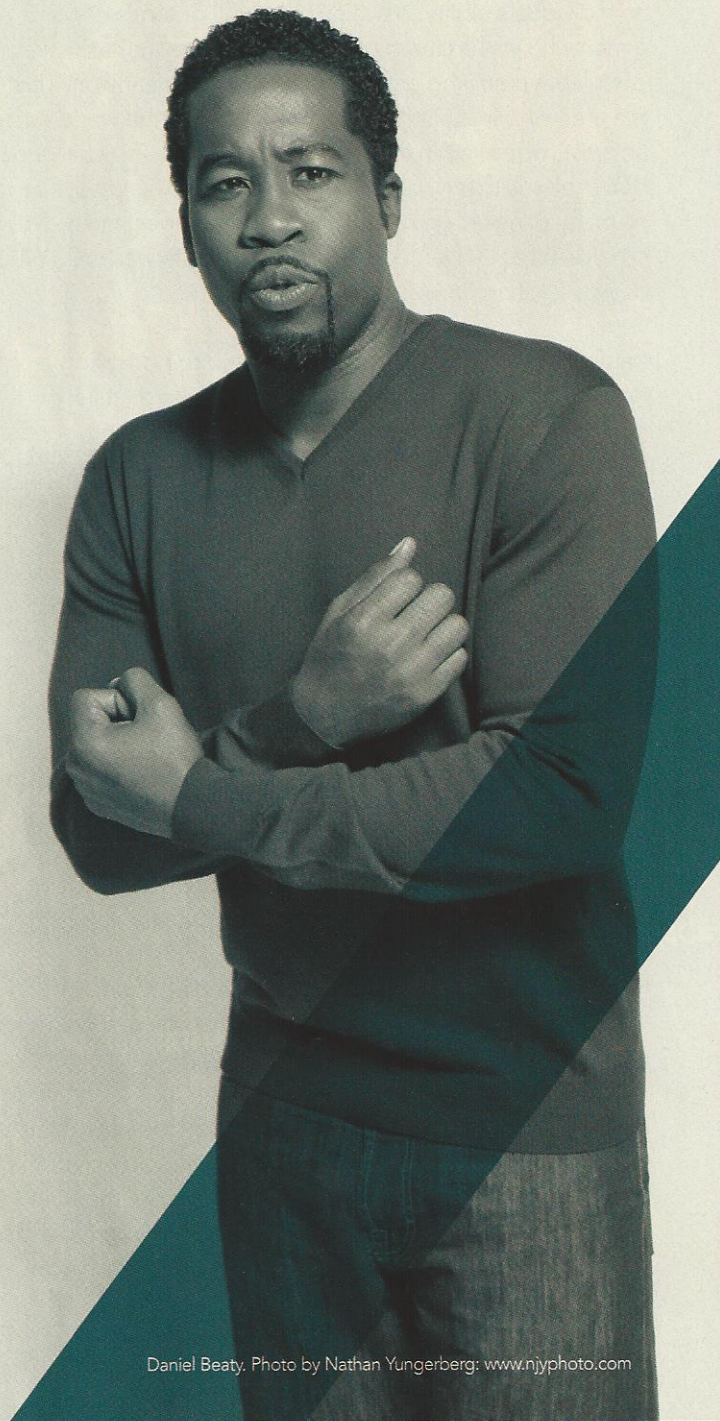
Award-winning playwright and actor Daniel Beaty makes his La Jolla Playhouse debut as the legendary performer and social activist in the world premiere production of *The Tallest Tree in the Forest*. Moisés Kaufman, a Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Tectonic Theater Project, returns to the Playhouse, having directed *33 Variations*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *The Laramie Project* and *The Nightingale*.

As the show's only performer, Beaty portrays multiple characters with clarity and truth. Some of the characters are well-known figures from history and others are not, but Beaty is determined that each character have a clear perspective and emotional need. Moisés Kaufman explains Beaty's approach: "One of the things that amazes me about Daniel's work on character is the specificity that he brings to that work. Each character has a history, each has an idiosyncrasy, and each has a philosophy by which she or he lives. Each character is not only an individual but is a member of the society in which he or she lives. Daniel does an incredible amount of homework for every character. What you see is the very, very, very small tip of a very, very, very large iceberg. Each character has a rich inner world, even if they only have two lines in the play."

**"I fell in love with the material  
and with the virtuosity of this  
performer."** - Moisés Kaufman

**Daniel Beaty** was a student of classical voice at Yale University when he first discovered African American singer, actor and social activist Paul Robeson. After hearing some of Robeson's recordings – and with a love of Negro spirituals – Beaty became curious about the man behind the amazing voice. "When I found out the breadth of all he had done I was both astonished and very upset that I had not learned about this giant figure," Beaty says about the man who became one of his heroes. "I feel like he epitomizes the artist activist. I wanted to find the right space and the right vehicle to bring him back to the social discourse, but to do it in a way that is as challenging and as complex and layered as he was. For me that means the complexity both of the man and the project in the time that he was living."

How does one bring to the stage the life experiences of this giant of a man? It was challenging for Beaty, but not daunting. "So much of the power of drama is in the choices," he explains. "And much of the power of constructing a dramatic narrative that has force and urgency is trying to highlight those moments – sometimes very big and public and sometimes extremely personal – that were turning points in Robeson's development." Beaty continues, "The delicious aspect of the work is to continue to try out different moments to find which of them collectively tells the most dramatic story that is most compelling and also does justice to the character. And by justice, it's not necessarily hero worship but a human being we can relate to who has contradictions and challenges and obstacles."



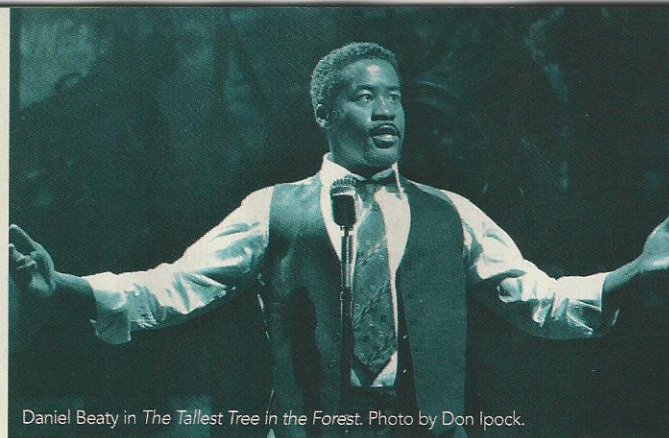
Daniel Beaty. Photo by Nathan Yungerberg: [www.njyphoto.com](http://www.njyphoto.com)



**Moisés Kaufman** is one of the nation's most well-known author-directors, and his plays – most of which address historical subjects and social change – have been performed around the world. “Having worked with a lot of historical dramas and material, I am very attuned to historical characters and discovering what they want. Not to be over-reductionistic, but the Oscar Wilde project [*Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*] was about art, beauty and sexuality. In [*The Laramie Project*] you had a whole town going through this experience around the death of Matthew Shepard [who was murdered in an anti-gay hate crime in Wyoming in 1998]. And there’s Beethoven in *33 Variations*. So I have had quite a bit of experience dealing with real life on stage, but I don’t think any of that prepared me for dealing with Robeson because his project was about race, and about class, and about colonialism in Africa, and about an individual’s ability to achieve their full potential. This is a man who was a citizen of the world before that term was popular. A man who got so much so right so early on. This is a man who lived in the world; who lived in the world as an artist; who lived in the world as an activist. The challenge of this play is that Robeson was a giant and was great at so many things – a great athlete, a great singer, an erudite scholar. What he wanted to achieve in his life was epic. What he was fighting for was epic.”

Kaufman and Beaty are perfectly attuned to portraying Robeson as both activist and artist. “Daniel and I think of ourselves as artists who create work that extends into social, political and human ideals of our time. Some people say our work is political. Yes. It is art that is political. Many times when you are in the middle of creating a work like that, you do struggle. You care so much about politics and you are asked, *why don’t you quit being an artist and become an activist and fight for those things that you want?* That conversation occurs all the time with artists like us who are in the trenches. What Robeson did that I find fascinating is that he made a choice. He stopped being an artist and he became an activist. Whether I agree with him or not, I find my conversation with that decision incredibly rich for a dramatic event.”

Long an admirer of Kaufman’s work, Beaty believed their collaboration – Beaty as creator and performer, Kaufman as director – could bring *The Tallest Tree in the Forest* to the stage. Figuring out how to pitch a play to one of theatre’s top directors was a challenge that was resolved with unexpected ease, as Beaty relates: “I have a residency with New Dramatists in New York City and I was telling Emily Morse, who is one of the creative directors there, that Moisés Kaufman would be my dream director for the project, but I didn’t know how to reach him. So Emily sent him the script. We did a 5-day workshop about 18 months ago and found a terrific connection. We’ve been on the journey ever since.”



Daniel Beaty in *The Tallest Tree in the Forest*. Photo by Don Ipock.

“For me, what was exciting was when I got Daniel’s script, I felt that this was something that not only I could get behind but that Tectonic could get behind,” said Kaufman. “I fell in love with the material and with the virtuosity of this performer.”

Before leaving the rehearsal hall for the evening, Beaty reflects on his relationship with Robeson, a man the young performer deeply admires and hopes to introduce to audiences who may not be familiar with the great accomplishments and bitter disappointments of his life. “I want audiences to have a profound understanding, if possible, about the time in which Robeson lived. The character of the person he was and the myriad of factors that contributed to the choices he made. The later years of his life are extremely painful to even contemplate, but I’m not interested in writing tragedy. So even in this play the difficulty that happens there is ultimately a discovery that has a glimmer of hope inside of it. But you know, whether or not people love Paul or hate him, I think it would be hard for anyone to argue that the contributions he made should be forgotten.”

Kaufman ended the conversation with an interesting piece of information: “The day that Robeson got the fatal stroke that killed him was the day that Daniel was born, December 28, 1975.” And so the connection began.

