



**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS  
THE U.S. PREMIERE OF STEVE WATERS'  
"TEMPLE"**

**April 14-May 14, 2017**

BERKELEY, Calif. (March 27, 2017) – **Aurora Theatre Company** presents the **U.S. Premiere of British playwright Steve Waters'** (*World Music, The Contingency Plan*) hit play, **TEMPLE**. Aurora Artistic Director **Tom Ross** (*Mud Blue Sky, A Bright New Boise, Edward Albee's A Delicate Balance*) helms this thought-provoking new play, featuring **Paul Whitworth, Sylvia Burboeck, J. Michael Flynn, Sharon Lockwood, Leontyne Mbele-Mbong, and Mike Ryan**. **TEMPLE** plays **April 14 through May 14** at the Aurora Theatre in Berkeley. For tickets and information the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit **auroratheatre.org**.

On October 15, 2011, Occupy London made camp outside St Paul's Cathedral, one of the most famous, beloved, and recognizable institutions in London. On October 21, a building that was kept open through floods, the Blitz, and terrorist threats closed its doors. A week later the City of London initiated legal action against Occupy protestors to begin removing them, by force if necessary. Beset by problems on all sides, the dean of St Paul's is simply anxious to resume worship, but the big issue is whether he should support the City in its plan to evict those who've set up their tents. Set in the heart of a crisis of conscience, a crisis of authority, and a crisis of faith, **TEMPLE** powerfully demonstrates how even the most liberal and enlightened can fail.

Declared by the *London Financial Times* to be "a rich, deeply thoughtful piece about contemporary values. Waters draws from recent history a history play in which flesh-and-blood individuals, caught at a pivotal moment, struggle with fundamental questions about what matters," and about which *The Telegraph (UK)* said, "Call it divine inspiration - but some rare creative power has settled on the playwright Steve Waters...[he has] gone behind the head-lines, and closed ecclesiastical doors, to produce a riveting drama that unpicks the institutional and psychological turmoil the saga caused," **TEMPLE** premiered at the Donmar Warehouse in 2015.

Aurora Theatre Company Artistic Director **Tom Ross** helms **TEMPLE**. Ross inaugurated Aurora Theatre Company with Barbara Oliver in 1992 and has directed over 25 productions for the company, including *Mud Blue Sky, A Bright New Boise, Neil LaBute's This Is How It Goes, Edward Albee's A Delicate*

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*Balance*, Lanford Wilson’s *Fifth of July*, *The Soldier’s Tale* (co-directed with Muriel Maffre), Tennessee Williams’ *The Eccentricities of a Nightingale*, the World Premiere of *The First Grade*, Gore Vidal’s *The Best Man*, Mae West’s *SEX*, and Harold Pinter’s *The Birthday Party*. For Aurora Theatre Company, Ross has also directed acclaimed productions of *Marius*, *Blue/Orange*, *Betrayal*, *Lobby Hero*, which went on to be presented as a co-production between Aurora Theatre Company, Jonathan Reinis, Inc., and the Napa Valley Opera House, *The Shape of Things*, *The Entertainer*, *The Homecoming*, *The Weir*, *Death Defying Acts*, *Abigail’s Party*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (co-directed with Danny Scheie), and *The Aspern Papers*, among others. He also wrote and directed *A Karen Carpenter Christmas* in both San Francisco and Seattle. Prior to coming to the Bay Area, Ross worked for eight years at The Public Theater in New York as Executive Assistant to Joseph Papp and as co-Director of Play and Musical Development. While in New York, Ross also penned the book adaptation of the New York Drama Desk nominated musical *Up Against It*, based on Joe Orton’s screenplay for The Beatles.

In addition to **TEMPLE**, British playwright Steve Waters’ plays include *Limehouse* (Donmar Warehouse, 2017); *Ignorance / Jahillyah* (Hampstead Theatre, 2012); *Little Platoons* (Bush Theatre, 2011); ‘*Capernaum*’ in *Sixty-Six Books* (Bush Theatre, 2011); *Amphibians* (Bridewell Theatre, 2011); *The Contingency Plan* (shortlisted for the John Whiting Award, Bush Theatre, 2009); *Fast Labour* (Hampstead Theatre/West Yorkshire Playhouse, 2008); *World Music* (Sheffield Crucible /Donmar Warehouse, 2004); *English Journeys* (Hampstead Theatre 1998), and *After the Gods* (Hampstead Theatre, 2002).

Waters penned *Scribblers*, *Bretton Woods*, and *The Contingency Plan* for BBC Radio 3; and *Deep Swimmer*, *The Air Gap*, *Little Platoons*, *Morning*, *The Parliament of Rooks*, and *The Moderniser* for BBC Radio 4. For the screen, Waters wrote a version of *The Contingency Plan* and *Safe House*, and is currently developing TV dramas with Forge Entertainment. Future projects include an adaptation of Giles Foden’s *The Last King of Scotland* (Paulden Hall Productions) and new commissions with Hampstead Theatre and the Michael Grandage Company. He is the author of a book entitled *The Secret Life of Plays* (2010).

Aurora Theatre Company has assembled a gifted ensemble for **TEMPLE**. **Paul Whitworth** returns to Aurora as The Dean in **TEMPLE**; he previously appeared in the company’s hit production of Joe Penhall’s *Blue/Orange*. Additional credits include productions at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Former Artistic Director for Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Whitworth appeared for several seasons with the Royal Shakespeare Company and has appeared in productions at American Conservatory Theater and Seattle Repertory Theatre.

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Making her Aurora debut is **Sylvia Burboeck** as The PA. Credits include productions at Marin Shakespeare Festival, The Flight Deck, California Conservatory Theatre, Bus Barn Stage Company, and Ross Valley Players, among others. **J. Michael Flynn** returns to Aurora Theatre Company as The Bishop of London in **TEMPLE**; he was last seen at Aurora in *The Second Man*. Additional credits include productions at California Shakespeare Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Old Globe Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Huntington Theatre, Center REPeritory Company, and San Jose Repertory Theatre, among others.

Veteran actress **Sharon Lockwood** makes her Aurora stage debut as The Virger in **TEMPLE**. Credits include productions at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, Marin Theater Company, Center REPeritory Company, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Seattle Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Mark Taper Forum, Old Globe Theatre, Intiman Theatre, and San Francisco Mime Troupe, among others.

**Leontyne Mbele-Mbong** returns to the Aurora stage as The City Lawyer; she previously appeared in the company’s hit production of *Breakfast with Mugabe*. Credits include productions at Shotgun Players, New Conservatory Theatre Center, African-American Shakespeare Company, Lamplighters Music Theatre, Women’s Will, Impact Theatre, and Central Works, among others. Rounding out the cast is **Mike Ryan** as The Canon Chancellor; he previously appeared in Aurora’s production of *Anatol*. Additional credits include productions at American Conservatory Theater, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, Laguna Playhouse, and Jewel Theatre Company, among others.

Following **TEMPLE**, Abi Morgan’s **SPLENDOUR**, directed by Barbara Damashek, closes the season in June.

Voted Best Theater Company in 2012 by *SF Weekly*, Aurora Theatre Company continues to offer challenging, literate, intelligent stage works to the Bay Area, each year increasing its reputation for top-notch theater. Located in the heart of the Downtown Berkeley Arts District, Aurora Theatre Company, declared “one of the best regional theaters around” by *7x7* magazine, has been called “one of the most important regional theaters in the area” and “a must-see midsize company” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, while *The Wall Street Journal* has “nothing but praise for the Aurora.” The *Contra Costa Times* stated “perfection is probably an unattainable ideal in a medium as fluid as live performance, but

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the Aurora Theatre comes luminously close," while the *San Jose Mercury News* affirmed Aurora Theatre Company is "arguably the finest small theater in the Bay Area," and the *Oakland Tribune* stated "it's all about choices, and if you value good theater, choose the Aurora."

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**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

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**DATES:**        Previews: April 14, 15, 19 at 8pm; April 16 at 2pm; April 18 at 7pm  
                  **Opens: April 20, 2017**  
                  Closes: May 14

**SHOWS:**        Tuesday at 7pm; Wednesday through Saturday at 8pm; Sunday at 2pm, 7pm

**WHERE:**        Aurora Theatre Company, 2081 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA

**TICKETS:**     For tickets (Previews \$36; Regular Performances \$32-56; Limited Opening Night Seating \$65) the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit **auroratheatre.org**. Half-off tickets for Under 35; student, and group discounts available.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Season Restaurant Sponsor Gecko Gecko and Season Floral Sponsor Darling Flowers for their support.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Associate Sponsors Elizabeth Burwell, Carol and Joe Neil, Deborah and Howard Goodman, and Ellen and Barry Levine for their support.

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