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25th Anniversary Season
A Noise Within, L.A.'s Acclaimed Classical Repertory Theatre Company, presents
Shakespeare's *King Lear*
February 12 – May 6, 2017 Press Opening February 18

Man of La Mancha
by Dale Wasserman, Music by Mitch Leigh and Lyrics by Joe Darion
March 26 – May 21, 2017 Press Opening April 1

The Great Escape – April 22 and May 6 - see *Lear* and *La Mancha* on the same day!

Pasadena, CA (February 2, 2017) -- A Noise Within (ANW), the acclaimed classical repertory theatre, announces two spring productions in their 25th Anniversary Season, **Shakespeare's *King Lear*** and ***Man of La Mancha*** by Dale Wasserman, music by Mitch Leigh and lyrics by Joe Darion, and based on Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. ANW Artistic Director Julia Rodriguez-Elliott directs both productions. *Lear* performs February 12-May 6, 2017; *La Mancha* performs March 26-May 21, 2017.

"In *Lear*, this personal journey of a family dealing with an ailing patriarch has global implications," says Rodriguez-Elliott, "The breakdown of a nation runs concurrent with Lear's mental decline. At the beginning of the play, see a man at the zenith of his power, a modern day dictator who is feared and has never heard the word NO. The world we enter is a violent, callous one. At the end, we see a man transformed."

The world of *La Mancha* is similarly violent and callous – and ripe for transformation. "Though many often associate *Man of La Mancha* with elaborate set pieces and fanciful costumes," says Rodriguez-Elliott, "Its earliest stagings were sparse, encompassing the spirit of a rag-tag band of prisoners putting on a play with found objects. I wanted to return to those roots. Based off real third-world prisons, the conditions we've created for Cervantes and his fellow inmates are recognizable and terrifying."

Artistic Director Geoff Elliott takes on the challenge of playing both Lear and Cervantes/Don Quixote. He says, "I feel that I know Lear. He is stripped of everything, and must face his worst demons to find tenderness and uncompromising love in a very violent world. Lear spends so much of the play terrified of losing his mind. Anyone who goes through a similar self-investigation can't help but ask 'am I sane?' as so much of the world we live in seems insane."

Elliott continued, "In his way, Cervantes/Don Quixote is Lear's doppelganger. As he assumes Quixote's persona, Cervantes gains the courage and the strength needed to face the uncertain future of the inquisition. He – along with his fellow prisoners and, ultimately, the audience – are transformed."

Julia Rodriguez-Elliott's references this quote by Pablo Picasso: "We artists are indestructible; even in a prison, or in a concentration camp, I would be almighty in my own world of art, even if I had to paint my pictures with my wet tongue on the dusty floor of my cell."

“*La Mancha* is about the power of imagination – and how important it is onstage and in our own lives. It’s a play that truly represents the transformative power of the theatre; a perfect way to end our 25th Anniversary season,” says Rodriguez-Elliott.

About *The Great Escape* – a special event that takes theatre lovers behind the scenes

While both *King Lear* and *Man of La Mancha* can be enjoyed singly, when seen consecutively, they become an informative theatrical experience. “It seemed natural to pair Shakespeare and Cervantes—two essential figures in English and Spanish culture—on the heels of the 400th anniversary of their deaths. I saw an opportunity to approach *Lear* and *La Mancha* in a fresh new way,” says Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, “Both stories are deeply personal and have such a profoundly optimistic worldview. Though it’s a tragedy, I would argue that by the play’s end, Lear realizes what truly matters in life: family by his side.”

In addition to the director and lead actor, both *Lear* and *La Mancha* share other key cast and Artistic Design Team members—Fred Kinney (Scenic), Angela Balogh Calin (Costume), and Ken Booth (Lighting). “On two Saturdays this spring, we invite audience members to dine with our casts and artistic team,” says Geoff Elliott, “it’s a unique opportunity to gain insight on our design and conceptual process.” Called *The Great Escape*, audience members can enjoy lunch with the casts and artistic team between back-to-back performances of *King Lear* and *Man of La Mancha* on April 22 and May 6. Tickets to this special event are \$50 per person and includes food and drink (show tickets must be purchased separately).

About *King Lear* and *Man of La Mancha*

King Lear tells the story of an elderly King who has decided to end his reign and divide his country among his three daughters, Cordelia, Regan, and Goneril. The corrupt and deceitful Regan and Goneril tell him what they think he would most like to hear; the daughter that truly loves him, Cordelia, flatly but sincerely tells him an unvarnished truth – that she loves him as a daughter should. Lear disowns Cordelia, and splits the kingdom between Regan and Goneril, setting in motion the great tragedy that befalls all of the characters.

A Noise Within last performed *King Lear* in 1994. Written in 1606 with a second version appearing in 1623, *Lear* is one of Shakespeare’s most well-known and frequently performed tragedies. Marjorie Garber wrote in *Shakespeare After All*, “This extraordinary play, in part a poignant and disaffected family drama, and in part the political story of Britain’s union and disunion, bears as well explicit markers of the time in which it was written and the time in which it was set. Three crucial time periods – the time the play depicts, the time of its composition, and the time in which it is performed – will always intersect.”

The *King Lear* cast includes Geoff Elliott* as King Lear, Trisha Miller* as Goneril, Arie Thompson* as Regan, Erika Soto* as Cordelia, Christopher Franciosa* as Duke of Albany, Jeremy Rabb* as Duke of Cornwall, Apollo Dukakis* as Earl of Gloucester, Stephen Weingartner* as Earl of Kent, Rafael Goldstein* as Edgar, Freddy Douglas* as Edmund, Craig Brauner as Oswald, Kasey Mahaffy* as the Fool, Tyler Miclean as King of France, Troy Whiteley as Duke of Burgundy, with Jonathan Padron, Maria Arciniega, and Marissa Ruiz in the Ensemble. * Denotes member of Actors’ Equity

In *Man of La Mancha*, playwright Dale Wasserman takes a more meta-approach to the source material, Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, also originally published in the early 1600s. The fictionalized author ‘Cervantes’ is the main character of *Man of La Mancha*. While in prison during the Spanish Inquisitions, he is forced to act out parts of Don Quixote for the other inmates.

This story-within-a-story of Don Quixote’s musical misadventures – rife with love, chivalry, and of course, four-armed giants – unfolds into something more transcendent: a beacon of hope in a dire world. One of the most important hits of Broadway’s golden age, audiences have been dreaming “The Impossible Dream” for the past half century, with the wandering hidalgo in this quintessential tale about the resilience of the human spirit, and the power of storytelling when faced with insurmountable odds.

First performed in 1965, *Man of La Mancha* is based on an earlier teleplay *I, Don Quixote* that Wasserman wrote for television. It won five Tony Awards and has subsequently become one of the most enduring works of musical theater. It started its life in New York on a thrust stage, much like the ANW's Redmond Stage, at the ANTA Washington Square Theatre in Greenwich Village before moving uptown to Broadway in 1968. A Noise Within first performed *Man of La Mancha* in 2007.

In summing up *La Mancha's* achievements, *The New York Times* said, "It was a harbinger of the concept musical — *Cabaret* would open the following year — and a pioneering effort in what could perhaps be called the musical-theater counterculture." Critic Gerald Bordman in his encyclopedic *American Musical Theatre* said, "its excellent reviews and favorable word of mouth from audiences that no longer demanded the well-mannered niceties of an earlier era soon made it the 'hottest' ticket in town...it could be considered the last major hit to emerge from Broadway before rock and roll overwhelmed the nation."

About Wasserman, Leigh, and Darion

Dale Wasserman, born in 1914 in Wisconsin and after riding the rails as a hobo in his youth, wrote for theater, television and film for more than 50 years and is best known for the musical *Man of La Mancha*, a multiple Tony Award winner. He also wrote the stage play *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, based on Ken Kesey's novel, which has won several Tony Awards. Both shows continue to be produced nationally and internationally with an estimated 300 productions a year. In 2008, Dale Wasserman passed away at age 94 at his home in Paradise Valley, Arizona.

Mitch Leigh (born Irwin Michnick in 1928 – died 2014) was an American musical theatre composer and theatrical producer best known for the musical *Man of La Mancha*. He was the composer of several popular commercial jingles as well as the ill-fated musical *Halloween*.

Joe Darion (1911-2004) wrote lyrics for several shows besides *Man of La Mancha* including *Shinbone Alley* and *Illya Darling*, as well as some early 1950s pop hits.

Symposium, Conversations, Pay What You Can

The run of *King Lear* includes a pre-performance symposium on Wednesday, February 15 at 6:30 pm, post-performance conversations with the artists on Sunday, February 26 at 2:00 pm, Friday, March 17 at 8:00 pm, Friday, April 14 at 8 pm, and Friday, May 5 at 8 pm, with a Pay What You Can performance on Thursday, February 16 at 7:30 pm.

The run of *Man of La Mancha* includes a pre-performance symposium on Wednesday, March 29 at 6:30 pm, post-performance conversations with the artists on Friday, April 7 at 8 pm, Sunday, April 16 at 2:00 pm, and Friday, May 12 at 8:00 pm, and a Pay What You Can performance on Thursday, March 30 at 7:30 pm.

About the 25th Anniversary Season 2016-2017 – *Beyond our Wildest Dreams*

This spring, ANW's *Beyond Our Wildest Dreams*-themed season continues with *Ah, Wilderness!* by Eugene O'Neill (March 5-May 20, 2017). This gentle American family comedy set in the first decade of the 20th Century over a July 4th weekend rounds out our spring repertory season.

About A Noise Within

A Noise Within, celebrating its 25th Anniversary during the 2016-2017 season, was recently named "one of the nation's premier classical repertory companies" by The Huffington Post, and is a leading regional producer based in Pasadena, CA. ANW's award-winning resident company practices a rotating repertory model at their state-of-the-art, 283-seat performing space. This venue, established in 2011, has allowed ANW to expand its audience, surpassing its previous box office, subscription, and attendance records each year.

In addition to producing world-class performances of classical theatre, the organization runs robust education programs committed to inspiring diverse audiences of all ages. Helmed by Producing Artistic Directors Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, who hold MFAs from San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre, A Noise Within truly delivers CLASSIC THEATRE, MODERN MAGIC.

www.anoisewithin.org

Calendar Listing: *King Lear*

Shakespeare's *King Lear*

Directed by Julia Rodriguez-Elliott

At A Noise Within, 3352 E Foothill Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91107

Performances:

Sunday, February 12 at 2:00 pm

Wednesday, February 15 at 7:30 pm

(*Symposium* starts at 6:30 pm)

Thursday, February 16 at 7:30 pm (*Pay What You Can*)

Friday, February 17 at 8:00 pm

Saturday, February 18 at 8:00 pm

Sunday, February 19 at 2:00 pm

Saturday, February 25 at 2:00 pm

Sunday, February 26 at 2:00 pm (*Conversations*)

Friday, March 17 at 8:00 pm (*Conversations*)

Saturday, March 18 at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm

Saturday, April 8 at 2:00 and 8:00 pm

Thursday, April 13 at 7:30 pm

Friday, April 14 at 8:00 pm (*Conversations*)

Saturday April 22 at 8:00 pm (*The Great Escape*)

Sunday, April 23 at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm

Thursday, May 4 at 7:30 pm

Friday, May 5 at 8:00 pm (*Conversations*)

Saturday, May 6 at 2:00 pm (*The Great Escape*)

Calendar Listing: *Man of La Mancha*

Man of La Mancha

By Dale Wasserman, music by Mitch Leigh, lyrics by Joe Darion

Directed by Julia Rodriguez-Elliott

At A Noise Within, 3352 E Foothill Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91107

Performances:

Sunday, March 26 at 2:00 pm

Wednesday, March 29 at 7:30 pm

(*Symposium* at 6:30 pm)

Thursday, March 30 at 7:30 pm (*Pay What You Can*)

Friday, March 31 at 8:00 pm

Saturday, April 1 at 8:00 pm

Sunday, April 2 at 2:00 pm

Thursday, April 6 at 7:30 pm

Friday, April 7 at 8:00 pm (*Conversations*)

Sunday, April 16 at 2:00 and 7:00 pm

(*Conversations* after 2:00 pm)

Saturday, April 22 at 2:00 pm (*The Great Escape*)

Sunday, April 30 at 2:00 and 7:00 pm

Saturday, May 6 at 8:00 pm (*The Great Escape*)

Sunday, May 7 at 2:00 pm

Friday, May 12 at 8:00 pm (*Conversations*)

Saturday, May 13 at 2:00 and 8:00 pm

Sunday, May 21 at 2:00 and 7:00 pm

Tickets and information:

Website: www.anoisewithin.org, Phone: 626-356-3100

Regular Prices: Single Tickets from \$44.00, Student Rush with ID an hour before performance \$20.00

Groups (10 or more): Adults from \$30/ticket; Students from \$18/ticket

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