

**CUTTING BALL THEATER CONTINUES 16TH SEASON
WITH NEW TRANSLATION OF “ANTIGONE”
February 19 – March 22, 2015**

SAN FRANCISCO (January 16, 2015) – **Cutting Ball Theater** continues its 16th season, devoted to the theme of “Injustice,” with a new translation of Sophocles’ **ANTIGONE**. Associate Artistic Director **Paige Rogers**, who helmed Cutting Ball’s productions of *Tontlawald* and *Mud*, directs this new translation from **Daniel Sullivan** using music and movement techniques inspired by Poland’s famed Teatr ZAR. Featuring **Madeline H.D. Brown, Hannah Donovan, Emma Crane Jaster, Wiley Naman Strasser, Elissa Beth Stebbins, Jason W. Wong, Tim Green, and Paul Loper**, **ANTIGONE** plays **February 19 through March 22** (Press opening: February 22) at the Cutting Ball Theater in residence at EXIT on Taylor (277 Taylor Street) in San Francisco. For tickets (\$10-50) and more information, the public may visit cuttingball.com or call **415-525-1205**.

Two brothers leading opposite sides in Thebes’ civil war die fighting each other for the throne. Kreon, the new ruler of Thebes, has decided that one brother, Eteocles, will be honored, buried and sanctified by holy rites, and the other, Polyneices, will lie unburied on the battlefield. In this seminal Greek play by Sophocles, Antigone defies the royal edict sent out by her uncle, Kreon, not to bury the body of her brother, deemed a traitor. Exploring the struggle between the individual and the state, this elegant tragedy about tyrannical power and civil disobedience is considered to be Sophocles’ masterpiece and has become synonymous with political protest. Written In 441 BC at a time of national fervor, **ANTIGONE** is as pressing for modern audiences as it was for those in the ancient world. **ANTIGONE** appeared as a staged reading as part of Cutting Ball’s Hidden Classics Reading Series in 2013.

During the summer of 2014, the cast and creative team of **ANTIGONE** were invited by the Grotowski Institute in Wroclaw, Poland, to be in residence there for sixteen days and to work with members of the world renown, Teatr ZAR. This made them the first American company to receive such an invitation in over a decade. Teatr ZAR has inspired the artistic leaders of Cutting Ball for years; Paige Rogers, director of **ANTIGONE**, has said that “ZAR’s work opened up a whole new world” for her.

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“What attracted me to *Antigone* was that the play is raw in so many ways,” said director Paige Rogers. “Yet, it is also so ordinary; two sisters have a disagreement, a father and son jockey for status, each trying to make their point, a community is shocked. How incredibly common are these things? Both the heightened and the everyday make me love *Antigone*.”

Continued Rogers, “I feel very lucky to have worked with this cast of *Antigone* for nearly a year. We did a lot of exploration with song and movement long before Daniel Sullivan’s translation was finished. This allowed the actors to get to know their characters in a different way, from a physical and tonal perspective. They also participated in the development of the script for nearly half of the year that Daniel worked on it. Seeing Teatr ZAR’s *Gospels of Childhood* at L.A. Live! in 2007 made me decide to put my focus on directing. The visceral presence of the company paired with their polyphonies sung from such a deep place made me feel like I was engaged, in body and mind. I feel like there is almost no way to be present for a performance like this and not have it snake its way into one’s feeling life. I wanted to use this element of live singing and performance to help me reach my audiences.”

“*Antigone* is the second play in our season exploring injustice. In many ways this is the original civil disobedience play. While this play was written over 2000 years ago, recent events make it plain to see that it is still as relevant as ever,” said Cutting Ball Artistic Director Rob Melrose. “Paige Rogers has continued the deep relationship with Teatr ZAR, the resident company at the Grotowski Institute, that she started with her inventive production of *Tontlawald* in 2012.”

Continued Melrose, “This is Cutting Ball’s first production of a Greek classic and I couldn’t be happier with the way we are doing it. It was important to Paige to have access to the original Greek, so translator Daniel Sullivan worked closely with the original text and a team of scholars to get at the original meanings, sounds, and emotions of the play. He translated those original impulses and ideas from 441 BC Greece into a living, breathing,actable text that communicates with a 2015 San Francisco audience. It is not a literal translation, but it is not an adaptation either; it renders Sophocles’ *Antigone* scene by scene in a way that is fresh and new and of our time.”

Paige Rogers is an actress, director, and Associate Artistic Director and co-founder of the Cutting Ball Theater. In addition to **ANTIGONE**, her directing credits at Cutting Ball include *Tontlawald*, *Mud*, The Hidden Classics Reading Series, Suzan-Lori Parks’ *365 Plays/365 Days*, and *RISK IS THIS...*The Cutting Ball New Experimental Plays Festival. Additionally, Rogers has appeared in Cutting Ball’s productions of Eugenie Chan’s plays *Bone to Pick* and *Diadem*; in the company’s hit production of *The Bald Soprano*;

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My Head Was a Sledgehammer; *As You Like It*; *The Vomit Talk of Ghosts*; *Macbeth*; *Accents in Alsace*; and *The Taming of the Shrew* for which she won the *SF Weekly* annual poll for Best Actress in San Francisco. She has been seen locally with Berkeley Opera, Lamplighters, Sonoma County Repertory Theater, and on tour with California Shakespeare Theater. National credits include performances at The Kennedy Center, McCarter Theater, Trinity Repertory Company, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

In addition to translating **ANTIGONE** for Cutting Ball, **Daniel Finnian Sullivan** has had pieces performed at Transient Theater, Second Wind Theater, Aurora Theatre Company’s GAP, and Augustino Dance Theatre. His recent play *Peppertree* was both a Playlabs selection at the 2013 Great Plains Theater Conference and a finalist selection for the 2014 Bay Area Playwrights Foundation competition. He got involved in theater through track and field, and was an All American pole vaulter, when Bill Shepard, of Schechner's *The Performance Group* and *Dionysus in '69*, saw him jumping and asked him if he wanted to get involved in a theater laboratory (Shepard had just spent some years working with Grotowski). He spent a year training with Shepard and went to Los Angeles where eventually he met Murray Mednick, John Stepling, Tim Miller, Rachel Rosenthal, and Maria Irene Fornes, each of whom has informed his writing for stage.

Cutting Ball Theater has assembled a talented ensemble for **ANTIGONE**. **Madeline H.D. Brown**, who appeared in Cutting Ball’s production of *Tontlawald*, returns to the company in the title role of **ANTIGONE**, which she originated as part of Cutting Ball’s Hidden Classics Reading Series in 2013. Additional credits include productions at Aurora Theatre Company (*Salomania*, *Metamorphosis*), San Francisco Playhouse (*Wirehead*, *The Apotheosis of Pig Husbandry*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*), Shotgun Players (*Woyzeck*, *Our Town*, *Three Penny Opera*), Brava Theater, Mugwumpin/Just Theater, CenterREP, Golden Thread, and Noir City Film Festival, among others.

Hannah Donovan makes her Cutting Ball Theater debut as Antigone’s sister Ismene. She received her B.A. in Dramatic Arts from The University of Southern California and attended the British American Drama Academy in London. Following her recent graduation, she has performed in several New York City productions and has just returned from a month-long theatrical immersion program in Ecuador. Also making her Cutting Ball acting debut is **Emma Crane Jaster** as Eurydice. A performer and generative artist trained in mime, clown, mask, puppetry, and physical theater, Jaster has performed from childhood with her father, acclaimed mime Mark Jaster, a student of Étienne Decroux and Marcel Marceau. Credits include productions with Royal Shakespeare Company, Theatre J, Round House Theatre, and choreography for Cutting Ball’s *Communique n°10* among others.

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Wiley Naman Strasser returns to the Cutting Ball stage as Haemon in **ANTIGONE**. He has been an Artistic Associate with Cutting Ball since 2012 and has appeared in the company’s productions of *Tontlawald*, *Krispy Kritters in the Scarlett Night*, *Communique No. 10*, and numerous *RISK IS THIS...* workshops. Additional credits include productions at Mugwumpin, Crowded Fire, Golden Thread, Shotgun Players, and Aurora Theatre Company. **Elissa Beth Stebbins** makes her Cutting Ball debut as the Chorus Lead; credits include productions at Livermore Shakespeare Festival, Custom Made Theater, Impact Theatre, and as part of the TheatreWorks Educational Tour. **Jason W. Wong** returns to Cutting Ball as King Kreon; previous Cutting Ball credits include *Taming of the Shrew* and various Hidden Classics readings.

Rounding out the cast are **Tim Green** (Bigger Than a Breadbox Theatre Co., SF DIVAfest, A.C.T.’s Costume Shop, Playwrights Foundation) as the Messenger, and **Paul Loper** (performed with Twyla Tharp, ISO (formerly Momix), American Dancemachine, Olympic Games Opening Ceremonies) as Tiresias.

Continuing the work the company started in Poland this past summer are Music Directors **Aleksandra Kotecka** and **Tomasz Wierzbowski**. **Aleksandra Kotecka** has worked with Poland’s Teatr ZAR since 2004. She helped develop and now tours with their productions of *Caesarean Section*, *Anhelli*, *The Calling*, and *Armine, Sister*. She has worked extensively with Georgian polyphonies, both during field expeditions and as part of her own research, and most recently with the modal music of Persia and Armenia. Among her main interests is the music of Orthodox Christianity. Apart from Teatr ZAR’s projects, she co-created a musical score for Heresy Black, a performance of *Compania Sinégloss* and for the film *Daas*.

Since 2005 **Tomasz Wierzbowski** has worked with Teatr ZAR as an actor and musician in the performances *Gospels of Childhood*, *Caesarean Section*, *Anhelli*, *The Calling*, and *Armine, Sister*. A graduate of English Philology from the University of Wroclaw he is also the author of the Polish translation of Nikos Kazantzakis’ Report to Greco. While working on Zar’s newest piece, *Armine, Sister*, he broadened his vocal work by learning modal music and also learned to play the kanoun under the supervision of Aram Kerovpyan.

Teatr ZAR is the resident artist company at the Jerzy Grotowski Institute in Wroclaw, Poland. Teatr ZAR is a multinational group formed by apprentices of the Grotowski Institute during its annual research expeditions to Georgia in 1999–2003. During these expeditions, the group collected musical material, the core of which is a group of centuries-old polyphonic songs that have their roots in the beginning of the

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human era and are probably the oldest forms of polyphony. The work of Teatr ZAR attempts to demonstrate that theater does not only pertain to the Greek ‘thea,’ or seeing, but that it is something that above all should be heard. Teatr ZAR takes its name from the funeral songs performed by the Svaneti tribe who inhabit the high regions of the Caucasus, in North-West Georgia. In May 2011, Teatr ZAR performed at the SF International Arts Festival and Cutting Ball hosted Jaroslaw Fret, Artistic Director of Teatr ZAR and Director of the Grotowski Institute, for a discussion about his work and the founding of Teatr ZAR; Cutting Ball will again host Fret, SF International Arts Festival, in May 2015 for a discussion of his work and a workshop.

Co-founded in 1999 by theater artists Rob Melrose and Paige Rogers, **Cutting Ball Theater** presents avant-garde works of the past, present, and future by re-envisioning classics, exploring seminal avant-garde texts, and developing new experimental plays. The company has commissioned, developed, and produced new experimental plays, and has partnered with Playwrights Foundation, and the Magic Theatre/Z Space New Plays Initiative to commission new experimental works. In addition to producing West Coast Premieres and re-imaging various classics, Cutting Ball Theater has produced nine World Premieres and seven World Premiere translations. Cutting Ball received the 2008 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Goldie award for outstanding talent in the performing arts, and was voted “Best Theater Company” in the 2010 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Best of the Bay issue. The company also earned the Best of SF award in 2006 and “Best Experimental Theater Company” in 2012 from *SF Weekly*, and was selected by *San Francisco* magazine as Best Classic Theater in 2007. Cutting Ball Theater was featured in the February 2010 and 2012 issues of *American Theatre Magazine*. In 2012, Cutting Ball was awarded a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to fund a three-year residency for resident playwright Andrew Saito. The American Theatre Wing, best known as the creator of the Antoinette Perry “Tony” Awards, awarded the company with a 2013 National Theatre Company grant.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT:

Cutting Ball Theater continues its 16th season, devoted to the theme of “Injustice,” with a new translation of **ANTIGONE**. In this seminal Greek play by Sophocles, Antigone defies the royal edict sent out by her uncle, Creon, not to bury the body of her brother, Polynices. Exploring the struggle between the individual and the state, this elegant tragedy about tyrannical power and civil disobedience is considered to be Sophocles’ masterpiece and has become synonymous with political protest.

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and reprises her role as Antigone. Also featuring **Hannah Donovan, Emma Crane Jaster, Wiley Naman Strasser, Elissa Beth Stebbins, Jason W. Wong, Tim Green, and Paul Loper.**

ANTIGONE Special Events – for more information visit cuttingball.com

Gala Opening – Saturday, February 21, 8pm, \$50 tickets

January 25 – Polyphonic Singing Workshop – 1-4pm, \$65 (EXIT on Taylor)

Aleksandra Kotecka and Tomasz Wierzbowski, long time members of Poland’s acclaimed Teatr ZAR, have worked extensively with polyphonic singing in Georgia, Corsica, Greece, Sardinia, Bulgaria, and Russia; this workshop will be an introduction to three-part polyphonies of Georgian chant, a unique form of singing that has been preserved throughout the centuries, and is intended both for people who already have musical and singing experience, as well as for those who value music as important in their lives.

March 1 – Pre-show Tea – 4pm (141 Taylor Street)

Happy Hour Fridays – meet and mingle 7-8pm

Preshow Talks (5 minutes) – before every show

Friday talk back series with the artists – post-performance talks following every Friday performance

Sunday talk back series – themed post-performance talks led by Bay Area thought leaders following every Sunday performance

DATES: Previews: February 19, 7:30pm, February 20, 8pm

Opens: February 22

(Gala Opening: Saturday, February 21, 8pm; Press opening: Sunday, February 22, 5pm)

Closes: March 22, 2015

All performances Thursday at 7:30, Friday at 8pm, Saturday at 2 and 8pm, and Sunday at 5pm

WHERE: The Cutting Ball Theater in residence at EXIT on Taylor, 277 Taylor St., San Francisco

TICKETS: For season membership, single tickets (\$10-50), and more information, the public may visit cuttingball.com or call **415-525-1205**; group discounts available. Pay What You Can tickets are available to neighborhood residents for all productions. Free student walk-up tickets are available to students with valid student ID.

The Cutting Ball Theater’s 2014-15 season is made possible in part by The Compton Foundation, Creative Work Fund, Fleishhacker Foundation, Grants for the Arts / San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Mental Insight Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Kenneth Rainin Foundation, The RHE Foundation, The San Francisco Arts Commission, The San Francisco Foundation, Venturous Theater Fund, Weaver Schlenger Mazel LLP, Wells Fargo, The Zellerbach Family Foundation, and Associate Producers: Laurie Edelstein and Scott Anderson, Jody Gelb, Tony Politopoulos, Mark Rabine, Joylynn Wing and Jonathan Van Bourg, and Dave and Kate Yrueta.