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Press Performances:
January 30 & 31, 2016

Company One Theatre and ArtsEmerson Present

An Octoroon

A NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE

By Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Directed by Summer L. Williams

January 29, - February 27 2016 | Jackie Liebergott Black Box Theatre, Emerson/Paramount Center

Boston, MA — [Company One Theatre \(C1\)](#) and [ArtsEmerson](#) present *An Octoroon* by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins. Performances take place January 29, 2016 through February 27, 2016 at the Jackie Liebergott Black Box Theatre at the Emerson/Paramount Center (555 Washington Street in Boston's historic theatre district). Tickets, from \$25-\$35, are on sale now at www.artsemerson.org or by phone at 617-824-8400. Group, student, and senior discounts are available.

The hottest play of 1859 is back! There's trouble at the plantation: No one is falling in love with who they should be, someone has been murdered, and, unless the mail comes soon, all hope is lost! Obie-award winner Branden Jacobs-Jenkins transforms a 19th century melodrama for today's "post-racial," spectacle-obsessed world. *An Octoroon*, directed by Summer L. Williams, is an incendiary, subversively funny exploration of identity, jammed with sensation and surprises.

"An Octoroon is wildly comedic and clever look at race in America from the 1800s to present that asks how far we've truly come," says Company One Theatre's Artistic Director, Shawn LaCount. "We are honored to produce this mega-hit direct from its sold out New York production. Reuniting director Summer L. Williams and playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, who previously collaborated on the explosive *Neighbors*.

In addition to reuniting Williams and Jacobs-Jenkins, *An Octoroon* marks the second co-production for Company One and ArtsEmerson, who previously collaborated on *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation about the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as Southwest Africa, from the German Sudwestafrika, Between the Years 1884-1915*.

"An Octoroon confirms that we're on very shaky ground whenever we attempt to tell stories about the history of race in America," says Polly Carl, ArtsEmerson's Creative Director. "As two theater companies who recognize the reality of that shaky ground, we're committed to presenting challenging

theater that can deepen our understanding and further our conversations of race in the city of Boston."

Dubbed a *New York Times* critics' pick in 2014, chief theatre critic Ben Brantley described the play as "Hilarious and harrowing ... This decade's most eloquent theatrical statement on race in America today."

Critical praise received the 2014 Obie Award for Best New Play for both *An Octoroon* and *appropriate* (the latter recently received a run at Boston's SpeakEasy Stage Company). Jenkins is currently a Residency Five playwright at Signature Theatre and a Lila Acheson Wallace Fellow at The Juilliard School.

>>TICKETS AND PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Fri, Jan 29, 2016 - 08:00 PM	Sat, Feb 13, 2016 - 08:00 PM
Sat, Jan 30, 2016 - 08:00 PM **	Sun, Feb 14, 2016 - 02:00 PM
Sun, Jan 31, 2016 - 02:00 PM **	Wed, Feb 17, 2016 - 07:00 PM
Wed, Feb 03, 2016 - 07:00 PM	Thu, Feb 18, 2016 - 07:00 PM
Thu, Feb 04, 2016 - 07:00 PM	Fri, Feb 19, 2016 - 08:00 PM
Fri, Feb 05, 2016 - 08:00 PM	Sat, Feb 20, 2016 - 02:00 PM
Sat, Feb 06, 2016 - 02:00 PM	Sat, Feb 20, 2016 - 08:00 PM
Sat, Feb 06, 2016 - 08:00 PM	Sun, Feb 21, 2016 - 02:00 PM
Sun, Feb 07, 2016 - 02:00 PM	Wed, Feb 24, 2016 - 07:00 PM
Wed, Feb 10, 2016 - 07:00 PM	Thu, Feb 25, 2016 - 07:00 PM
Thu, Feb 11, 2016 - 07:00 PM	Fri, Feb 26, 2016 - 08:00 PM
Fri, Feb 12, 2016 08:00 PM	Sat, Feb 27, 2016 - 02:00 PM
Sat, Feb 13, 2016 - 02:00 PM	Sat, Feb 27, 2016 - 08:00 PM

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Single tickets are \$25 - \$35

Emerson College Community Member: \$17.50

Emerson College Student/Faculty/Staff Advance: \$10

Student Tickets: \$15

Senior Tickets: \$5 off

Purchase:

- Online at artsemerson.org
- By phone at 617.824.8400; or
- In person at Emerson/Cutler Majestic Theatre or Emerson/Paramount Center box offices

>>An Octoroon Engagement Opportunities

>> C1 Studio Sessions | January 13 at 6:30pm

Abby Lane & Emerson/Paramount Center

Part cocktail hour, part exploration of the rehearsal process, C1's Studio Sessions is an opportunity to interact with our productions prior to opening night. Toast *An Octoroon* before heading over to the rehearsal room for an inside look at how the show gets pieced together. Complimentary appetizers, cash bar.

>> Theatre & Education on the Front Lines of Boston Communities | February 2 at 6:30pm

Join us for an exciting panel discussion about how we can all more broadly, effectively, and artfully combine theater and educational programming to engage the city, schools, and the community in the fight for greater social equity. You will also have the opportunity to learn more about Company One Theatre's current educational programs from the people that are impacted the most — the teens themselves.

>> Controversies & Interventions | February 9, 2016 at 7pm

This third event of ArtsEmerson's new Public Dialogue Series will explore the themes of the ArtsEmerson/Company One co-production of *An Octoroon*. Director Summer L. Williams will be present. More details of this event and its panelist to come.

>> BosTEEN Night | Contact [Elyas Harris](#) for scheduling

BosTEEN Artist Night offers young, civically-engaged artists and community members an opportunity to see our current production, discuss the underlying themes in the work, and get creative with each other, the cast, and other C1 staff and artists.

>> Cahllge Mixah Night | At the February 19, 2015 performance

Company One Theatre invites Greater Boston's college students to Cahllge Mixah Night, an event designed to get college students to break out of their campus confines, catch a performance, and interact with other students from across the city.

>>ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Playwright

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' plays include *Neighbors* (The Public Theater), *Appropriate* (Actors Theatre of Louisville, Victory Gardens Theater, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and Signature Theatre in New York, Spring 2014), *An Octoroon* (Soho Rep, Spring 2014), and *War*. He is currently a Residency Five playwright at Signature Theatre and a Lila Acheson Wallace Fellow at The Juilliard School. In addition to these premieres and his forthcoming Company One/ArtsEmerson production, his work has been or will be seen at the Vineyard Theatre, The Matrix Theatre in Los Angeles, and the HighTide Festival in the United Kingdom. He has taught at New York University and Queens University of Charlotte, and his honors include a Paula Vogel Award, a Helen Merrill Award, and the inaugural Tennessee Williams Award. He holds an M.A. in Performance Studies.

Summer L. Williams, Director

Ms. Williams has been with Company One since its inception in 1998. An active member of the Board of Directors, Summer is a producer, director and educator for Company One. Her most recent

directing credits include *Colossal* at Company One Theatre, *Intimate Apparel* at Lyric Stage Company of Boston, *Shiv* as a part of *The Displaced Hindu Gods Trilogy*, *Shelter Of Last Resort* by Miranda Craigwell as a part of XX PlayLab 2014, the New England Premiere of Jackie Sibblies Drury's *We Are Proud To Present A Presentation About The Herero Of Namibia, Formerly Known As Southwest Africa From The German Sudwestafrika Between The Years 1884-1915*, Idris Goodwin's *How We Got On* and Lynn Nottage's *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* at the Lyric Stage Company of Boston. Regional credits: *The Brothers Size* and *Marcus; Or The Secret of Sweet* as part of the *The Brother/Sisters Plays* (2012 Elliot Norton Award nominated for Outstanding Production and winner of the 2012 IRNE Award for Best Play), *Neighbors*, *Grimm*, *The Good Negro*, *Voyeurs De Venus* (Winner of 2009 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director), *The Bluest Eye* (IRNE and Elliot Norton Award nominated), *The Last Days Of Judas Iscariot*, *Spell #7* (IRNE nominated), *Jesus Hopped the A Train* (2004 Elliot Norton Award for Best Fringe Production), *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* (IRNE nominated). Ms. Williams has also directed for the Boston Playwrights' Theatre, Clark University, Brandeis University, The Theatre Offensive and Huntington Theatre Company. She is a teacher of drama and director at Brookline High School and holds a BA in Theatre, as well as a MA Ed. in Theatre and Urban Education. Ms. Williams serves as a member of the Board of Directors of both Stage Source and The Coolidge Corner Theatre.

Brandon Green, BJJ

Brandon is an actor/poet/playwright from Selma, AL, currently residing in Boston. Brandon made his Boston debut with Company One/Arts Emerson's production of *We Are Proud...* He has also worked with Cape Rep, Nora/Underground Railway, Lyric Stage, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Huntington Theatre Company, Mad Dash, Boston Theatre Marathon, and 3050 Music Group. He holds a BA from Alabama State University and a MFA from Brandeis University.

Elle Borders, Minnie

Elle returns to her Company One family after starring in the Company One/Arts Emerson's co-production *We Are Proud ...* Other recent stage credits include *Othello* (Actor's Shakespeare Project), *Turtles* (Boston Public Works), and *27 Tips for Banishing the Blues* (Sleeping Weazel). Elle holds a BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

Obehi Janice, Dido

Obehi Janice is an actor, writer, and comedian from Lowell, Massachusetts. Recent credits include *Mr. G* (Underground Railway Theater), her solo play *Fufu & Oreos* (Bridge Rep), *Arabian Nights* (Central Square Theater), *It Felt Empty* (Theatre on Fire), and *Splendor* (Company One). Obehi is a graduate of Georgetown University, an alumni of the 2013-2014 XX PLAYLAB, a recipient of the David J. Wheeler Award, and a 2015 Fox Foundation Fellow. The Improper Bostonian named her "Boston's Best Actress" in 2014.

Brooks Reeves, Playwright

Brooks Reeves previously performed in Company One's *Shockheaded Peter*. Recent credits include *Arabian Nights* (Central Square), *Boys in the Band* (Zeitgeist), *Julius Caesar* (Bridge Rep), *Neville's Island* (Stoneham Theatre), *Midsummer* (Apollinaire), *Bent* (Zeitgeist), *Stupid Fucking Bird* (Apollinaire), *Two Wrongs* (Brown Box), *The Libertine* (Bridge Rep), *Black Comedy* (Happy Medium), and *Closer* (Bad Habit). Brooks won the 2015 IRNE award for Best Supporting Actor (small company), and his play *The City That Cried Wolf* will be revived in New York in 2016.

Shawna M. James, Zoe

Shawna is thrilled to be making her Company One debut with this stunning piece of theatre. Recent credits include *Every Five Minutes* (Magic Theatre SF), *44 Plays for 44 Presidents* (Interlochen Rep), Ken Ludwig's *Midsummer/Jersey* (Interlochen Rep). She is a two time

recipient of the Maddy Summer Artist Award for Theatre at Interlochen Arts Camp. She is a BFA Theatre Arts candidate at Boston University's School of Theatre.

Bridgette Hayes, Dora

Bridgette is a Boston-based theatre artist and an Artistic Associate of Bridge Repertory Theater of Boston. Recent credits: *The Love of the Nightingale* (Hub Theatre), *Radium Girls* (Flat Earth Theatre), *Julius Caesar* (Bridge Rep), *Hedda Gabler* (Longwood), *From Denmark With Love* (Vaquero Playground), *And Neither Have I Wings To Fly* (Bad Habit). She holds a BFA in Acting from Boston University, a Certificate of Classical Acting from LAMDA, and is finishing a Masters in Dramatic Arts at Harvard.

Harsh Gagoomal, Assistant

Harsh is so grateful to be joining Company One to help bring to life this special play. Previous acting credits include SALOMÉ (Bridge Rep), QUIXOTE IN KABUL (Instituto Cervantes/BU), and A DISAPPEARING NUMBER (URT). Harsh is a graduate of Emerson College's program of Theatre Studies ('13). He will next appear in The Nora Theatre Company's ARCADIA.

Amelia Lumpkin, Grace

Amelia is thrilled to work with Company One again after performing in *Shockheaded Peter*, and participating in the reading of *Shelter of Last Resort* in the XX Playlab. Stage credits include title roles in Apollinaire Theater's *Bocon* and Open Theatre Project's *Henry and Vanessa: Unbound*. Most recently, she was seen in Fort Point Theatre Channel's *In The Summer House*.

Kadahj Bennett, Br'er Rabbit/Ratts

Kadahj returns to the C1 stage after starring in *Dry Land* and *How We Got On*. Kadahj is a Posse Scholar, graduate of Hamilton College and Boston Arts Academy alum. Currently a teaching artist in the Boston area, Kadahj moonlights as a lyricist/vocalist for two bands, Danceluja (Boston) & the Downbeat Keys (Brooklyn).

>>ABOUT COMPANY ONE THEATRE

Dubbed Boston's Best Fringe Theatre by *Boston* magazine, Company One Theatre is Boston's theatre for the people. Founded in 1999, Company One's mission is to change the face of Boston theatre by uniting the city's diverse communities through socially provocative performance and the development of civically engaged artists. The award-winning company has been instrumental in bringing younger and more diverse audiences to see and participate in socially and politically relevant theatre. For more information visit www.companione.org.

>>ABOUT ARTSEMERSON: THE WORLD ON STAGE

Founded in 2010 by Rob Orchard (currently ArtsEmerson Creative Consultant), ArtsEmerson seeks to redefine the relationship between artist and audience, and the impact of theatre on community. Through performance programs, ongoing artist residencies and repeated engagements with ensembles, audiences see how our work evolves over time and, as a result, connect to artists' deeper ambitions and processes. This investment not only strengthens the bond between artists and audiences but allows for a highly interactive exchange that helps to realize the full potential of the arts in the life and character of the city of Boston.

ArtsEmerson is the presenting and producing program of the Office of the Arts, which exists within Emerson College to serve students, faculty and staff, the Greater Boston community, and the field of performance practice. In its entirety, the work of the Office of the Arts prioritizes community engagement with its Boston neighbors, creating a national dialogue, sharing

field-wide learning and developing curricular engagement that connect students with its work. For more information visit www.artsemerson.org.

>>ABOUT EMERSON COLLEGE

Located in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,660 undergraduates and 829 graduate students from across the United States and fifty countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than eighty student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its study and internship programs in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., the Netherlands, London, China and the Czech Republic. The College has an active network of 32,000 alumni who hold leadership positions in communications and the arts. For more information, visit emerson.edu. For more information, visit www.emerson.edu.

>> *What's Next.*

Summer L. Williams

Director of Public Relations

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