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The Tallest Tree in the Forest

Tectonic Theater Project
Written and performed by
Daniel Beaty
Directed by Moisés Kaufman

BAM Harvey Theater
Mar 22, 24—28 at 7:30pm
Mar 22 & 28 at 2pm

Running time: two hours, including intermission

Incidental music and arrangements by

Kenny J. Seymour

Music direction **Shelton Becton**

Set design by **Derek McLane**

Costume design by **Clint Ramos**

Lighting design by **David Lander**

Sound design by **Lindsay Jones**

Projection design by **John Narun**

Dramaturgy by **Carlyn Aquilino**

Season Sponsor:

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The Tallest Tree in the Forest

CAST

Paul Robeson **Daniel Beaty**

MUSICIANS

Music Director/Conductor/

Piano/Contractor **Shelton Becton**

Woodwinds **Ralph Olsen**

Cello **Mairi Dorman-Phaneuf**

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION CREDITS

Production Stage Manager **Craig Campbell***

Stage Manager **Zach Kennedy***

Production Manager **Don Gilmore**

Assistant Director **Timothy Koch**

Dialect Coach **Julie Foh**

Assistant Set Designer **Shoko Kambara**

Associate Lighting Designer **Greg Solomon**

Assistant Sound Designer **Daniel Lundberg**

Costume Design Assistant **Dede Ayite**

Projection Design Assistant **Shawn Duan**

The Tallest Tree in the Forest was originally commissioned and developed by Tectonic Theater Project: Moisés Kaufman, Artistic Director; Tiffany Redmon, Interim Executive Director.

Sponsored by The Ford Foundation.

* Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

ABOUT PAUL ROBESON

Paul Robeson is best known for his iconic baritone (he performed two recitals at BAM) and leading roles in *The Emperor Jones*, *Show Boat*, and *Othello*—a remarkable accomplishment despite the fact that his star rose at a time when segregation was legal. But his life trajectory took twists and turns and Robeson wore many hats as a public figure and outspoken champion of peace and justice.

Robeson was a scholarship student—and the third black student ever—at Rutgers University, where he played varsity football and was a two-time All-American. He graduated from Columbia Law School in 1923, though worked only briefly as a lawyer, citing intolerable racism. As an activist, among the causes he most ardently supported were antilynching legislation in America, Indian independence from Britain, anticolonialism in Africa, and organized labor.

Robeson, who was blacklisted, was a lifelong supporter of Stalin and the Soviet project, performing concerts in Moscow and receiving the International Stalin Prize in 1952. In a professional resurgence, in 1958 Robeson released *Here I Stand*, part manifesto, part autobiography. He also played the title role in the RSC's 1959 production of *Othello*. After a series of mental and physical illnesses, he returned to the US and lived for the next 13 years in seclusion. Robeson died in Philadelphia in 1976.

AUTHOR'S PROGRAM NOTE

In writing this play, I used research from a multitude of books, films and other sources. In the end, though, the play is my original writing, since the research has been filtered through my imagination and personal understanding of this complicated man. I have taken some poetic license, when necessary, to meet the unique conventions of theatrical storytelling. Still, I hope *The Tallest Tree in the Forest* honors the spirit and truth of Paul Robeson's life and character.

—Daniel Beaty

MUSIC SELECTIONS

"Ol' Man River"

"Steal Away"

"The Joint is Jumpin'"

"Get on Board Lil' Chillun"

"Shortnin' Bread"

"Ol' Man River" (Reprise)

"Go Down Moses

"Great Day"

"Ballad for the Americans"

"Happy Days Are Here Again"

"Battle of Jericho"

"Zog Nit Kaynmal"

"Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel"

"Scandalize My Name"

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.

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Ali Batwin, Image Research





DANIEL BEATY (author; Paul Robeson) 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*—Paul Robeson have been performed at venues ranging from Lincoln Center to the White House, and garnered numerous awards including an Obie award for writing and performance and two NAACP Theater Awards. A highly requested keynote speaker and thought leader, Beaty has worked throughout the US, 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, Beaty has spoken at all-staff retreats and led leadership training for a myriad non-profits and corporations. In fall 2013, Beaty launched a nationwide initiative, I DREAM, funded by W.K. Kellogg, Ford, Barr, and Sherwood Foundations among others, to use the tools of storytelling to help individuals and communities heal from the trauma of race and class inequity. He holds a BA with honors in English and music from Yale University and an MFA 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 published his empowerment book *Transforming Pain to Power* this past March. Follow Beaty's work at DanielBeaty.com and on Twitter: @DanielBBeaty

MOISÉS KAUFMAN (director) is delighted to return to BAM after debuting *The Laramie Project Cycle* here in 2013. On Broadway, he directed Rajiv Joseph's Pulitzer Prize finalist *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* with Robin Williams and he wrote and directed *33 Variations*, starring Jane Fonda for which he received a Tony nomination. Additionally, Kaufman directed the Pulitzer and Tony Award-winning play *I Am My Own Wife*, earning him an Obie award for his direction, as well as Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, and Lucille Lortel nominations. His 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. 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. Kaufman received two Emmy Award nominations for Best Director and Best Writer. He is a Guggenheim Fellow and the artistic director of Tectonic Theater Project.

KENNY J. SEYMOUR (incidental music, arrangements) has Broadway and off-Broadway credits including *Memphis* (music director/conductor; Tony Award, Best Musical), *First Wives Club: The Musical* (music director), *Amazing Grace* (orchestrator), *The Strangely Beautiful Tale of Miss Percy Parker* (co-composer, lyricist, orchestrations), *Marley: A World Premiere Musical* (music supervisor, orchestrator), *Scary Musical* (orchestrator), *The Wiz* (dance music arranger). Film/TV: *The Fringe* (composer), *Talking with the Taxman About Poetry* (composer and recipient of the 2013 Global Music Award for Best Original Score. Music arranger and orchestrator for shows on Fox, BET, and NBC, and the Inauguration Ball for President Barack Obama. Seymour has performed around the world, from the Apollo Theater and Carnegie Hall to the Montreux Jazz Festival. He studied at Manhattan School of Music and Berklee College of Music. kennyseymour.com

SHELTON BECTON (music director) is a pianist, vocalist, composer, arranger, conductor, and vocal coach. He has served as music director for Judy Collins, Phyllicia Rashad, Roz Ryan, Patti Austin, and Roberta Flack. His compositions were featured on *The Cosby Show* and *Roberta Flack's Christmas Album*, and have been sung by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir and Broadway Inspirational Voices. His Broadway credits include *The Wiz*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *The Color Purple*, *Memphis*, *Baby, It's You*, and most recently *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* with Tony winner Audra McDonald. His vocals can be heard on radio and television commercials, duets with Patti Austin, and vocals for Celine Dion, Vanessa Williams, and Anita Baker. His debut CD is entitled *Where Is God?*

DEREK McLANE's (set design) Broadway credits include *Beautiful: the Carole King Musical*, *The Heiress*, *Nice Work if You Can Get It*, *The Best Man*, *Follies*, *Anything Goes*, *How to Succeed in Business...*, *Bengal Tiger in the Baghdad Zoo*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Ragtime*, *33 Variations* (Tony Award, Best Scenic Design), *Grease*, *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 credits: *Stick and Bones, Ruined, Lie of the Mind, Marie and Bruce, Starry Messenger, The Voyage Inheritance, Two Trains Running, Macbeth* (Shakespeare in the Park), *Hurllyburly*, and *Abigail's Party*. He recently designed the 2013, 2014, 2015 Academy Awards and *Peter Pan Live*, and created opera and theater designs in London, Paris, Dublin, Glasgow, Moscow, Krakow, Caracas, Sydney, and Warsaw. Awards: 1997 and 2004 Obie Awards; 2004, 2005, 2007 Lucille Lortel Awards; 2009 Tony Award; 2011 Drama Desk Award; and a 2014 Emmy Award.

CLINT RAMOS (costume design) has designed for Broadway productions of *The Elephant Man* with Bradley Cooper (also West End) and *Violet* with Sutton Foster. With Moisés Kaufman: *Into the Woods* (Kansas City Rep), *One Arm* (New Group), *El Gato con Botas* (Gotham/Tectonic), and *The Tallest Tree* (KCR, Arena, Taper). Recent work include sets and/or costumes for *Here Lies Love* (NY and London), *Kid Victory* (Signature), *Appropriate* (Signature), and *Bootycandy* (Playwrights Horizons). He has been the principal costume designer for the last two seasons of City Center Encores! Off-Center, designing for *Cradle Will Rock*; *Violet*; *I'm Getting My Act Together...*; *Tick, Tick BOOM!*; Randy Newman's *Faust*; and *Pump Boys and Dinettes*. He has more than 100 regional and international design credits. Honors include the 2013 Obie Award for Sustained Excellence, three Lucille Lortel Awards, TDF Irene Sharaff Young Master Award, two American Theater Wing Henry Hewes Awards, and Helen Hayes Awards. Upcoming: *The Colored Museum* (Huntington), *Buzzer* (Public), *Power of Duff* (Geffen), *Melancholy Play* (Trinity Rep), and the third season on Encores! Off-Center.

DAVID LANDER (lighting design) on Broadway has designed for *The Winslow Boy* with Roger Rees and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, *The Heiress* with Jessica Chastain and Dan Stevens, *The Lyons* with Linda Lavin, *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 noms.), *Master Class* with Tyne Daly, *A Man for All Seasons* with Frank

Langella, *Dirty Blond* (Drama Desk nom.), and *Golden Child*. Off-Broadway: *Fran's Bed* with Mia Farrow, *King Lear* with Kevin Klein, *Macbeth* with Liev Schreiber and Jennifer Ehle, and *Modern Orthodox* with Molly Ringwald and Jason Biggs, among others. Regional venues for which he has designed: Ahmanson Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Goodman Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Huntington Theatre, Kennedy Center, La Jolla Playhouse, Mark Taper Forum, Old Globe, and the Wallis, and internationally in London, Caracas, Singapore, Tokyo, Sydney, Melbourne, among others.

LINDSAY JONES (sound design) on Broadway has worked on *Bronx Bombers* and *A Time to Kill*. Off-Broadway credits: *Bootycandy* (Playwrights Horizons); *Mr. Joy* (LCT3); *Through the Night* (Union Square/Westside Theaters); *Wild with Happy* (Public Theater); *Top Secret* (New York Theater Workshop); *Rx* (Primary Stages), and many others. Regional venues include Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage, Alliance, Goodman, Arena Stage, Chicago Shakespeare, La Jolla Playhouse, Steppenwolf, Mark Taper Forum, 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 include seven Joseph Jefferson Awards and 21 nominations, two Ovation Awards and three nominations, LA Drama Critics Circle Award, two ASCAP Plus Awards, three Drama Desk Award nominations, and two Helen Hayes nominations, as well as nominations for Henry Hewes Design and Barrymore Awards, and many others. Film scoring: *The Brass Teapot* (Magnolia Pictures) and *A Note of Triumph* (HBO Films, 2006 Academy Award, Best Documentary). lindsayjones.com

JOHN NARUN (projection design) has created designs for *The Darrell Hammond Project* (La Jolla Playhouse); *The Radio City Spring Spectacular* (video content); *The Laramie Project Cycle* (BAM); *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* (video content); Cirque du Soleil's *The Immortal Tour* (video content), and for concerts including 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*, and Christina Aguilera's *Back to Basics Tour*. Broadcast designs include the NBC Beijing



Summer Olympics Teaser Campaign; ABC News, main title (2004); *The Dr. Phil Show* main title (2006); CBS' *Wolf Lake* main title (Emmy nomination); HBO's *Genre Opens* (2002); and *The Oprah Winfrey Show* main title (1999). He studied theatrical design and radio, TV, and film at Northwestern University. johnnarun.com

CARLYN AQUILINE (dramaturgy) has been dramaturg on many new works, as well as production dramaturg on contemporary and classical works at City Theatre Company in Pittsburgh (literary manager and dramaturg), Syracuse Stage (artistic associate), Goodspeed Musicals (literary and producing associate), Hartford Stage, Lark Play Development Center, Yale Repertory Theatre, Arden Theatre, Florida Stage, TheatreWorks (Palo Alto), American Theater Company, Microscopic Opera Company, and Actor's Express, among others. She received an LMDA Residency Grant for her collaboration with the Microscopic Opera Company, an Alcoa Foundation Leadership Grant, and an Education Foundation of America Fellowship for her work with Syracuse Stage. She was managing editor of the international journal *Theater* for two years, teaches at Carnegie Mellon University, and is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

CRAIG CAMPBELL (production stage manager) has worked on off-Broadway productions of *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 *The Tallest Tree in the Forest* (KC Rep, La Jolla Playhouse), and three seasons with the Santa Fe Opera Company. TV credits include *The Amandas*, *Clean House*, *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Over Your Head*, *Comic Relief*, and many award shows on television. Campbell is an Emmy Award winner with three nominations. He is a proud graduate of Rollins College, with an emphasis in theater. Love to MKD.

ZACH KENNEDY (stage manager) previously collaborated with Tectonic Theater Project on *The Tallest Tree in the Forest* at Center Theatre Group, La Jolla Playhouse, and Arena Stage. His credits include Continuum: *Beyond the Killing Fields* (TheatreWorks Singapore, presented in

Shizuoka, Japan); *Facing Goya* (Spoleto Festival USA and Singapore International Festival of Arts); *The Cherry Orchard Sequel* (La MaMa ETC, NYC); *The Darrell Hammond Project* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Glengarry Glen Ross*; 2013 Shakespeare Festival (The Old Globe); *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*; and *Somewhere*. He spent two seasons as production stage manager at the Lost Colony, America's largest outdoor theater. Kennedy is a freelance producer and stage manager for corporate theater and has managed events for multiple companies including Google and Palantir. He holds his MFA in stage management from UC San Diego.

TECTONIC THEATER PROJECT (TTP), founded in 1991 by Artistic Director Moisés Kaufman and Jeffrey LaHoste, 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. Moisés Kaufman and Tectonic Theater Project have developed a wholly unique methodology for creating theater, Moment Work. Participants in Moment Work Trainings actively engage with the elements of the stage—exploring lights, sound, costumes, movement, text, architecture, and others elements—to discover their full theatrical potential and the poetry inherent in each element. Our first, *Moment Work Book*, will be published by Random House in 2016. Training and workshop information is available at tectonictheaterproject.org.

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, Guggenheim's Works & Process, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with the City Council, First Republic Bank, Axe-Houghton Foundation, and numerous Tectonic Theater Project supporters including our Board of Directors: Ted Trimpa, Chair; Alan

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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 Afro-Cuban jazz arrangements by Arturo O'Farrill.

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