

THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY PRESENTS
A ROLICKING MUSICAL JOURNEY
Mark Twain's River of Song

By Randal Myler and Dan Wheetman

Directed by Randal Myler

West Coast Premiere

October 2 - 27, 2019 (*opening night: October 5*)

MOUNTAIN VIEW CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA (19 August 2019) — **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** continues its 50th Anniversary Season with the West Coast premiere of *Mark Twain's River of Song*. Charting a journey down the Mississippi River, this rousing new musical shares the humorous and heartwarming stories of one of its most famous chroniclers, Mark Twain. Developed by Randal Myler and Dan Wheetman, creators of TheatreWorks favorites *Fire on the Mountain* and Tony-nominated *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*, this rollicking adventure features guitars, banjos, and harmonicas in a music-filled voyage that will have audiences tapping their toes. Directed by Randal Myler, *Mark Twain's River of Song* will be presented **October 2-27, 2019** (*press opening: October 5*) at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro Street, Mountain View. For tickets (\$30-\$100) and more information the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org** or call **(650) 463-1960**.

Featuring soaring spirituals and foot-stomping folk tunes, including "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," "Follow the Drinking Gourd," and "Deep River Blues," *Mark Twain's River of Song* received its world premiere in 2019 at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre. *Broadway World* called the spirit-raising musical revue, "Infectious, moving and merry!" and *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* deemed it "A quintessentially American, homespun delight."

TheatreWorks has assembled a stellar cast for this production. Bay Area Stage veteran **Dan Hiatt** stars as the master storyteller himself, Mark Twain. Hiatt returns to TheatreWorks Silicon Valley where he was seen in *Upright Grand*, *The Pitmen Painters*, *The 39 Steps*, and *Twentieth Century*. He has also performed at American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre,

California Shakespeare Festival, Marin Theatre Company, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and Pasadena Playhouse.

The talented ensemble of *Mark Twain's River of Song* features **Valisia LeKae**, **Chic Street Man**, **Tony Marcus**, **Rondrell McCormick**, and **Dan Wheetman**.

Tony Award nominee **Valisia LeKae** returns to TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, where she performed as Emmie in *Caroline, or Change*. Receiving Tony Award and Outer Critics Circle Award nominations and a Theatre World Award for her performance as Diana Ross in *Motown the Musical*, LeKae has also been seen on Broadway in *The Book of Mormon*, *110 in the Shade*, *Ragtime*, and *The Threepenny Opera*. Other stage credits include the national tours for *All Shook Up!* and *Mamma Mia!*, a Joseph Jefferson Award-winning performance as Sarah in *Ragtime* at Chicago's Drury Lane Theatre, and the Off-Broadway and Center REpertory Company productions of *Almost Heaven: Songs of John Denver*, directed by **Randal Myler**. She has been seen in PBS's "Live at Lincoln Center: *Camelot*," ABC's "One Life to Live," and PBS's "An Evening with Berry Gordy."

Noted blues musician **Chic Street Man** returns to TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, where he was seen in *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*. Street Man opened for such music acts as Taj Majal, Richie Havens, and blues greats Albert King and B.B. King. In addition to his work as a musician, he is a veteran of the Bay Area theatre scene, winning a San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award for Musical Direction for Berkeley Repertory Theatre's production of *Polk County*, as well as composing the score and starring in Berkeley Repertory Theatre's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Street Man was a contributing author, performer, and musical arranger for the original production of *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* and was the composer and star of the off-Broadway hit show *Spunk*, adapted and directed by George C. Wolfe at the Public Theater. His film credits include appearing in *Triple Bogey on a Par Five Hole* and *Hangin' with the Homeboys*, and composing for *Permutations*, which appeared on the PBS *Great Performances* series celebrating George C. Wolfe. In addition, Street Man has performed at leading theatres across the country including New York and Oregon Shakespeare Festivals, Mark

Taper Forum, McCarter Theatre Center, The Royal Court in London, Arena Stage, and Seattle Repertory Theatre.

Tony Marcus is an actor, musician, and music director who has worked with the creative duo behind this production for years, including in the TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's productions of *Fire on the Mountain* and *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*, Center REPeritory Company's production of *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*, and Seattle Repertory Theatre's production of *Fire on the Mountain*.

Making his TheatreWorks Silicon Valley debut, **Rondrell McCormick** has been seen onstage at American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco Playhouse, San Jose Stage Company, Center REPeritory Company, and a reading at Oregon Shakespeare Festival. His film television credits include PBS's *February One*.

Co-creator **Dan Wheetman** makes his stage debut at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, where he received a San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award for "Best Music Direction" for *Fire on the Mountain* and his Tony-nominated show *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* has been seen. A former John Denver band member, Wheetman is a writer, performer, and musical director whose work has appeared at leading theatres across the country.

Randal Myler and **Dan Wheetman** received Tony Award nominations (Best Musical and Best Book of a Musical) and a Drama Desk nomination for their musical *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* (presented by TheatreWorks in 2009). The pair also collaborated on *Fire on the Mountain* (TheatreWorks 2015), the John Denver holiday musical *Back Home Again, Appalachian Strings, Mama Hated Diesels*, and *Lowdown Dirty Blues*. In addition to the pair's collaborations, **Randal Myler's** work includes the Off-Broadway hit *Love, Janis*; *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*; *The Immigrant*; and others.

Celebrating its 50th Anniversary Season, **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** is the recipient of the 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award. With over 100,000 patrons per year, the Palo Alto-based theatre company has captured a national reputation for artistic innovation and integrity, often

presenting Bay Area theatregoers with their first look at acclaimed musicals, comedies, and dramas, directed by award-winning local and guest directors, and performed by professional actors cast locally and from across the country.

Media sponsor for TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 2019/2020 season is the San Francisco Chronicle and SFGATE.

For Calendar Editors:

WHAT: **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** continues its 50th Anniversary Season with the West Coast premiere of *Mark Twain's River of Song*. Charting a journey down the Mississippi River, this rousing new musical shares the humorous and heartwarming stories of one of its most famous chroniclers, Mark Twain. Developed by Randal Myler and Dan Wheetman, creators of TheatreWorks favorites *Fire on the Mountain* and Tony-nominated *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*, this rollicking adventure features guitars, banjos, and harmonicas in a music-filled voyage that will have audiences tapping their feet.

WHEN: Previews: Wednesday, October 2 - Friday, October 4
Opening: Saturday, October 5
Closes: Sunday, October 27

SHOWS: Previews: 8:00pm
Tuesdays: 7:30pm (+6pm October 22 – *autism/sensory friendly performance*)
Wednesdays: 2:00pm, 7:30pm
Thursdays: 8:00pm
Fridays: 8:00pm
Saturdays: 2:00pm, 8:00pm
Sundays: 2:00pm, 7:00pm

WHERE: **Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts**, 500 Castro St., Mountain View

TICKETS: \$30-\$100; savings available for educators, seniors, active military, and patrons 35 and under. Single tickets are now available. Pricing subject to change.

INFO: For information or to order tickets visit theatreworks.org or call (650) 463-1960

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PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co.
650.327.1200 | lauren@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/riverofsong>