

THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY PRESENTS

King James

By **Rajiv Joseph**

Directed by **Giovanna Sardelli**

Regional Premiere

October 9 – November 3, 2024 (*opening night: October 12*)

MOUNTAIN VIEW CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA (27 August 2024) — **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** tips off its 54th season by bringing basketball from center court to center stage with Pulitzer Prize finalist **Rajiv Joseph's *King James***. In this brilliant buddy comedy, superfans Matt and Shawn forge a friendship through their shared love of the Cleveland Cavaliers and star player LeBron James. Spanning 12 years from James' 2004 rookie season to 2016 NBA championship, tensions mount both on and off the court for the duo in this honest exploration of love, grace, and the power of a good game to bring people together. Directed by TheatreWorks Artistic Director **Giovanna Sardelli**, ***King James*** will be presented **October 9 – November 3, 2024** (*press opening: October 12*) at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St, Mountain View. For more information the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org** or call **877-662-8978**. Season subscriptions are currently available and single tickets (\$34-\$115) will go on sale in September.

Premiering in a co-production between Steppenwolf Theatre Company and Center Theatre Group, ***King James*** performed Off-Broadway at Manhattan Theatre Club. *The New York Times* lauded the play as “a touching examination of male friendship and the powerful social currents beneath it.” *TheaterMania* called the play “a must-see. One of the funniest and most moving plays about friendship in years.” *The San Diego Union-Tribune* hailed it as “enormously entertaining. A touching and funny story on the game of life and the audience wins every night.”

In directing this production, TheatreWorks Artistic Director **Giovanna Sardelli** continues a long collaboration with Joseph at TheatreWorks, where she also directed his plays *Archduke* and *The Lake Effect*, and the World Premiere of *The North Pool*. She also helmed Joseph's Obie Award-

winning *Describe the Night* at Atlantic Theatre Company, which she helped develop at TheatreWorks' 2014 New Works Festival, as well as the World Premiere of *Archduke* at Center Theatre Group and *The Guards at the Taj* at Geffen Playhouse.

TheatreWorks is committed to creating an environment that is accessible for all audiences in its community. American Sign Language interpretation will be available at the performance of ***King James* at 7:30pm Tuesday, October 22**. In partnership with c2 Caption Coalition, TheatreWorks will include open captioning (a screen displaying all dialogue and a description of sound effects) for the performances **2pm and 7pm on Sunday, October 27** and **2pm Wednesday, October 30**. TheatreWorks is collaborating with Gravity Access Services in offering audio descriptions to assist patrons who are visually impaired. This service will be available **8pm Saturday, November 2** and **2pm Sunday, November 3** (To utilize audio description, patrons should pre-register at **877-662-8978** after purchasing tickets). Assistive listening devices are offered at every performance with no advance registration required. For more information about accessibility programs at TheatreWorks the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org/accessibility**.

TheatreWorks will hold post-show discussions with the cast following the **Wednesday, October 30** performances of ***King James***.

TheatreWorks will require face masks to be worn for the performances of ***King James* at 8pm Friday, October 18; 2pm Saturday, October 19; and 2pm Sunday, October 27**. For up-to-date information about COVID-19 health and safety procedures the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org/safety**.

Director Sardelli has cast **Kenny Scott** and **Jordan Lane Shappell** to portray the play's dynamic duo. Seen in *A Distinct Society*, **Kenny Scott** (he/him) returns to TheatreWorks as Shawn, an avid basketball fan pursuing a career as a writer. An artistic company member of Oakland Theater Project and Shotgun Players, Scott has appeared in productions at Berkeley Repertory

Theatre, Marin Theatre, Magic Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Z Space, Crowded Fire Theater, Cutting Ball Theater, and New Conservatory Theatre Center.

Jordan Lane Shappell (he/him) makes his TheatreWorks debut as Matt, a dedicated basketball fan forced to sell his family's Cavaliers season tickets. He has performed with Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Writers Theatre, American Blues Theater, and National Theatre of the Deaf. His TV credits include Fox TV's "The Orville."

King James features scenic and costume design by **Christopher Fitzer**, lighting design by **Steven B. Mannshardt**, and sound design by **Gregory Robinson**. **Randall K. Lum** serves as stage manager with **Megan Hall** as assistant stage manager. **Jeffrey Lo** will be the production's basketball consultant.

Rajiv Joseph (Playwright) is well known to audiences at TheatreWorks, which has presented his works *Archduke* (2019), *The Lake Effect* (World Premiere 2015), *The North Pool* (World Premiere 2011) and *Describe the Night* (seen in TheatreWorks' 2014 New Works Festival before going on to win the 2018 Obie Award for Best New American Play for its production at Atlantic Theatre Company helmed by Giovanna Sardelli). Joseph came to national attention when his celebrated hit *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* became a finalist for the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and received an Outstanding New American Play Award from the National Endowment for the Arts. *The New York Times* described it as a "boldly imagined, harrowing and surprisingly funny drama." The show made its Broadway debut starring Robin Williams in March 2011. His play *Guards at the Taj* was a 2016 Obie Winner for Best New American Play and 2016 Lucille Lortel Winner for Best Play. Other plays include *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, *The Monster at the Door*, *Animals Out of Paper*, and *Mr. Wolf*. Joseph has been awarded artistic grants from the Whiting Foundation, United States Artists, and the Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust.

Giovanna Sardelli (Director) is TheatreWorks' artistic director. Her many directing credits at TheatreWorks include the West Coast Premiere of *Mrs. Christie* and the World Premiere of *A Distinct Society* in association with Pioneer Theatre Company, as well as *Nan and the Lower Body* (World Premiere), *They Promised Her the Moon*, Rajiv Joseph's *Archduke*, *The Lake Effect* (World Premiere), and *The North Pool* (World Premiere), *FINKS*, *Somewhere* by Matthew Lopez, and many more. She has directed World Premieres around the country of plays by Rajiv Joseph, Theresa Rebeck, Lynn Rosen, Joe Gilford, Jeff Augustine, Lauren Yee, Zayd Dohrn, Melissa Ross, Lila Rose Kaplan, Matthew Lopez, and Zoe Kazan, among others. Sardelli recently directed "Marvel's Squirrel Girl: The Unbeatable Radio Show!," a podcast series by Marvel Entertainment and Sirius XM.

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, led by Artistic Director **Giovanna Sardelli** and Interim Executive Director **Criss Henderson**, presents a wide variety of contemporary plays and musicals and revitalizes great works of the past. Founded in 1970 by **Robert Kelley**, TheatreWorks has grown from a truly original Silicon Valley start-up to become one of the nation's leading professional non-profit theatre companies. TheatreWorks was recently honored as the recipient of the 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award. TheatreWorks also champions new work, offering artists support and a creative home as they develop new stories for the American theatre. Offstage, TheatreWorks' arts education programs in local schools and arts engagement programs in Silicon Valley neighborhoods uplift its audiences and strengthen community bonds. Onstage and off, TheatreWorks welcomes the mosaic of people that embody the Bay Area and beyond, celebrating the transformative power of theatre to ignite imagination, inspire conversation, and enliven souls.

Media sponsor for TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 2024/25 season is *San Francisco Chronicle*.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** tips off its 54th season by bringing basketball from center court to center stage with Pulitzer Prize finalist **Rajiv Joseph's *King James***. In this brilliant buddy comedy, superfans Matt and Shawn forge a

friendship through their shared love of the Cleveland Cavaliers and star player LeBron James. Spanning 12 years from James' 2004 rookie season to 2016 NBA championship, tensions mount both on and off the court for the duo in this honest exploration of love, grace, and the power of a good game to bring people together. TheatreWorks Artistic Director **Giovanna Sardelli** directs the TheatreWorks production, continuing a long collaboration with Joseph at TheatreWorks.

WHEN: Previews: Wednesday, October 9 – Friday, October 11, 2024
Opening: Saturday, October 12, 2024
Closes: Sunday, November 3, 2024

SHOWS: Previews: 8:00pm
Tuesdays: 7:30pm
Wednesdays: 2:00pm, 7:30pm
Thursdays & Fridays: 8:00pm
Saturdays: 2:00pm, 8:00pm
Sundays: 2:00pm, 7:00pm

ACCESS: **ASL Interpretation:** 7:30pm Tuesday, October 22, 2024
Open Captioning: 2pm and 7pm on Sunday, October 27, 2024; 2pm on Wednesday, October 30, 2024
Audio Description: 8pm Saturday, November 2, 2024; 2pm Sunday, November 3, 2024
Please register in advance, as service includes a pre-show talk 30 minutes before the performance.
Assistive Listening Devices available at every performance

EVENTS: **Post-show discussions with cast:** 7:30pm Wednesday, October 30, 2024

WHERE: **Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts**, 500 Castro St., Mountain View, CA 94041

TICKETS: Subscriptions are currently available for the 2024-25 Season. Single tickets (\$34-\$115) will be available in the coming months. Pricing inclusive of fees and subject to change.

INFO: For information visit **theatreworks.org** or call **877-662-8978**

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

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available: <https://cbpr.co/press/kingjames/>

