



**Tony Estrella, Artistic Director**

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### GAMM LAUNCHES SEASON 39 WITH *TOPDOG/UNDERDOG*, SUZAN-LORI PARKS' MULTI-AWARD-WINNING PLAY

WARWICK, RI (August 8, 2023) – **The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre** (The Gamm) launches its **2023-24 season** with ***Topdog/Underdog*, Suzan-Lori Parks' Pulitzer Prize-winning play** about brotherly love, sibling rivalry, and surviving the American Dream. The Gamm's **Season 39** opener runs from **September 7-October 1**.

**Cliff Odle** makes his Gamm directorial debut with Parks' masterpiece. Infused with wit and raw dialogue, ***Topdog/Underdog*** tells the story of two fiercely competitive brothers who share a room in a squalid boardinghouse and a troubled past. Gamm newcomer **Anthony T. Goss** plays Lincoln, an ex-card shark now working a "straight" job impersonating Abraham Lincoln at an arcade. **Marc Pierre** (Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, BJJ/George/M'Closky in *An Octoroon*) plays Booth, a petty thief set on surpassing his older brother's reputation as a notorious three-card monte hustler.

With ***Topdog/Underdog***, Parks became the first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize in 2002. First produced in New York starring Jeffrey Wright and Don Cheadle, the play was followed by an extensive Broadway run and also won the **Outer Critics Circle Award** for playwriting. Last season's Broadway production won the **2023 Tony Award for Best Revival**.

Odle said he feels privileged to direct Parks' landmark play.

**"*Topdog/Underdog* is not only a multi-award-winning piece of art. It's one of the most important plays in the African American canon," Odle said.** "This play has its hand on the pulse of a part of America that is often taken for granted and misunderstood. That is, African American men living in dire economic circumstances. While some would declare the problem solved, this country's work remains largely unfinished. This script's endurance is a kind of litmus test of the progress that has been made and that which we have yet to see."

**Gamm Artistic Director Tony Estrella** said he is delighted to welcome Odle back to Rhode Island and The Gamm in the role of director.

**"Cliff is a true man of the theater," Estrella said.** "His is a unique talent, having made his mark on our stage in *King Elizabeth*, *Don Carlos*, and the 2020 radio broadcast of *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, among others. He is also a gifted teacher and much-produced playwright. For this incredible two-hander play, Cliff has paired a virtuosic cast to kick the door open to Season 39!"

***Topdog/Underdog* runs from September 7-October 1 at 1245 Jefferson Blvd., Warwick, R.I.** Tickets: **\$55-\$65**; preview performances (September 7-10) just **\$38**. Information about **Friday night pay-what-you-wish rush tickets**, as well as discounts for seniors, students, groups and more at [gammtheatre.org/discounts](http://gammtheatre.org/discounts). Tickets: **401-723-4266** or [gammtheatre.org/topdog](http://gammtheatre.org/topdog)

## **ABOUT TOPDOG/UNDERDOG**

Parks' Pulitzer Prize-winning fable of brotherly love and rivalry tells the story of Lincoln and Booth, named by their father before he walked out the door for good. Dressed as his presidential namesake and painted in whiteface, Lincoln sits in an arcade all day being assassinated over and over. His brother, Booth, stays in their rundown boardinghouse room practicing the street con game three-card monte in hopes of escaping his money woes. **Haunted by their troubled past, inherited poverty, and the forces of racism, the brothers find that surviving the American Dream is the ultimate hustle in this often humorous and startling play.** Don't miss this deeply theatrical experience by one of the most adventurous playwrights of her generation.

**"A theatrical event that deserves to be seen here and now."** *Variety*

**"It's tough, it's gritty, it's beautiful, it's poetry, and it's pretty damn funny."** *Entertainment Weekly*

Season supporter: **Rhode Island State Council on the Arts**

## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

***Topdog/Underdog***

By **Suzan-Lori Parks**

Directed by **Cliff Odle**<sup>+</sup>

## **CAST**

Lincoln.....**Anthony T. Goss**\*

Booth.....**Marc Pierre**\*

## **CREW**

Set Design **Michael McGarty**

Costume Design **Liza Alexis**

Lighting Design **Jeff Adelberg** <sup>Δ</sup>

Sound Design **Hunter Spoede**

Production Management **Jessica Hill Kidd**

Stage Manager **James Kane**\*

<sup>+</sup>Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

<sup>Δ</sup>Member of IATSE, the union representing Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Sound and Projection designers in Live Performance.

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

## **ABOUT THE GAMM THEATRE**

Founded in 1984, the non-profit Gamm Theatre is proud to tell stories that entertain, provoke, and engage seriously with the most important issues of our time. The Gamm further serves the public with educational programming that enriches the cultural and civic life of our community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Tony Estrella and Executive Director Jason Cabral, The Gamm is a regionally recognized, award-winning theater and a proud member of New England Area Theatre (NEAT), a bargaining unit of the Actors' Equity Association.

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