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## M E D I A R E L E A S E

### *GROUND-SHAKING WORLD PREMIERE APOLLO BLASTS OFF AT PCS*

*The history of the space race gets re-drawn in color in Nancy Keystone's mind-blowing examination of the intersections between the civil rights movement and America's quest for the moon, premiering at Portland Center Stage January 13<sup>th</sup> to February 8<sup>th</sup>.*

**December 20, 2008 – PORTLAND, OR.** Award winning playwright/director Nancy Keystone explodes the myths that brought us to this present moment in the world premiere of [Apollo](#), her epic multi-media exploration of the space race, its employment of former-Nazi scientists and its surprising intersection with the civil rights movement. [Apollo](#) will preview January 13 through 15th, with the **Gala Opening Night Performance on Friday January 17th, 2009**. The production will run **Tuesday through Sunday through February 8th**, with 7:30 pm evening performances Tuesday through Saturday and matinee performances at 2 pm on Sundays. There are alternating Sunday evening and Saturday 2:00 pm matinee performances, plus weekday matinee performances at noon on Thursdays. Go to [www.pcs.org/carol08](http://www.pcs.org/carol08) for a complete list of show times. Tickets range from **\$30.00 to \$66.50**, with Student and Rush tickets available. Tickets can be purchased through the box office by calling 503.445.3700 or online at [www.pcs.org](http://www.pcs.org).



Inspired by a 1990 LA Times article about former-Nazi rocket scientist (and huge Apollo contributor) Arthur Rudolph, *Apollo* dives down the rabbit hole of America's race into space, seeking the strange truths, fascinating personalities and unforgivable compromises behind "the pinnacle of human achievement and progress" that was our trip to the moon. Part performance art and part deconstructed documentary, *Apollo* breaks our quest for progress down into three acts. The first two acts premiered at Center Theater Group's Kirk Douglas Theater under the title *Apollo [Part 1]: Lebensraum* and won Garland Awards for Playwriting, Sound Design and Lighting Design, plus Backstage West Picks for Best Production, Directing, Ensemble, Scenic Design and Video Design.



*[Part 3]: Liberation* began development in 2003 at Portland Center Stage through a grant from the TCG Artist in Residence Program. Portland Center Stage's production will be the **first time all three parts are being integrated** into one coherent and complete production.

**Part 1 [Lebensraum]** explores the relationship of Nazi scientists to the U.S. Space Program; the contrast between America's "innocent" love affair with technology and spaceflight, and the decidedly less innocent development of that rocket technology in Nazi Germany's slave labor camps during WWI. A bright gold fantasia of rocket history, Part one follows Wernher von Braun, the boy wonder of rockets, who suavely sells the same bill of goods consecutively to Hitler, Walt Disney, President Kennedy and the Ladies Home Journal.



(continued)

**In Part 2 [Gravity]**, the shiny, happy surface of Part 1 is pulled away to expose the underbelly of that same history through the experiences of Arthur Rudolph. Once the top project manager for the Apollo rocket program, Rudolph eventually renounces his U.S. citizenship after an investigation by Nazi-hunter Eli Rosenbaum, who uncovers Rudolph's involvement with Mittelwerk, Nazi Germany's secret underground rocket factory manned entirely by concentration camp labor. Three thousand file boxes on stage shift throughout the act, spewing strange secrets and obscuring uncomfortable truths about the costs of human aspiration and progress.



**Part 3 [Liberation]** flashes forward to 1960s Alabama, where the seemingly impossible quest to get to the moon collides with the equally impossible quest to integrate a lunch counter. Amidst Alabama Governor George Wallace's cries of "segregation now, segregation forever" we watch David McCadden, an avid young astronomer and space enthusiast become the first black student to integrate the University of Alabama at Huntsville. Meanwhile von Braun, who once used concentration camp labor to research and build his rockets, now uses TV shows by Walt Disney to help convince a state torn by racial tensions that its best interests lie in burying the segregationist sentiments of the past to make way for a shinier future in space.



**Playwright/Director Nancy Keystone** is the founder/Artistic Director of Critical Mass Performance Group. Previously at Portland Center Stage, Keystone directed *Antigone* (in an adaptation she wrote), *Dirty Blonde*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Underneath the Lintel*, and was co-design consultant on the new Gerding Theatre for PCS at the Armory, conceptualizing and developing features for the four lobby spaces. As a visual artist, Ms. Keystone works in mixed media, creating paintings and collages, and combines her visual art with directing to create unique scenic environments for her productions. She is the recipient of TCG's prestigious Alan Schneider Director Award, as well as grants and fellowships from the NEA (with PCS), Arts Presenters/Doris Duke Ensembles Collaborations grant (with PCS), TCG/Pew Charitable Trusts' National Theatre Artist Residency Grant, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Center for Cultural Innovation's Investing in Artists Grant, Durfee Foundation, Drama League of New York, the California Community Foundation. She is a member of the visiting faculty at UCLA, is a frequent guest lecturer and an instructor in arts-in-education programs nationwide. [www.nancykeystone.com](http://www.nancykeystone.com)

The ensemble cast of *Apollo* each play multiple roles throughout the three acts of the production. Some highlighted roles for each include: **Angie Browne** (Vivian Malone, Civil Rights Worker, Rocket Muse #2), **Russell Edge** (Wernher von Braun #1, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Rocket Center Guide, NASA Engineer), **Ray Ford** (Rev. Ralph Abernathy, James Hood), **Richard Anthony Gallegos** (Apollo #1, Ghost of the Dora Prisoner, Court Reporter, John Doar), **Brandon Ford Green** (Civil Rights Worker, David McCadden), **Lorne Green** (Frank Fisher, Apollo # 2, Dred Scott), **Andy Hirsch** (Hermann Oberth, Senator Sparkman, Eli Rosenbaum, Robert Kennedy), **Jeffrey Johnson** (Walt Disney, Jefferson Davis, Wernher von Braun #2), **Nick Santoro** (Engineer, Bosquet Wev, SS Officer, Thomas O. Paine), **Christopher Shaw** (von Braun's Father, Arthur Rudolph, Jules Verne, George Wallace), **Valerie Spencer** (Rocket Muse #1, Thea von Harbou, von Braun's Mother, Mickey Mouse, The Daughter, Hitler, Southern Belle, Barbara Solomon) and **J.Karen Thomas** (Civil Rights Worker, Dolores McCadden).

Scenic design is by **Nancy Keystone**, costume design will be by **Jeff Cone**, sound design will be by **Randall Tyco**, lighting will be designed by **Justin Townsend** and the video elements will be designed by **Jeffrey Elias Teeter**. The production Dramaturg is Tom Bryant.

Some of the text of *Apollo* is taken from or inspired by the writings of: Yves Beon, Wernher von Braun, Ed Bullins, William E. Burrow, Paul Dickson, Walter Dornberger, Frederick Douglass, Oriana Fallaci, Vincent Harding, Linda Hunt, Thomas Jefferson, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Lincoln, Norman Mailer, Jean

Michel, Michael J. Neufeld, Fredrick I. Ordway III, Mitchell Sharpe, Friedrich Nietzsche, Dan Pagis, Dennis Piskiewicz, Thomas Pynchon, Dr. P.B. Randolph, N.B. Sterett, Frederick Turner, Jules Verne and Tom Wolfe, as well as official government documents.

The Main Stage Series is sponsored by **Key Private Bank**. This production of *Apollo*, including the world premiere of *Apollo [Part 3]: Liberation*, is made possible in part by a grant from the **Association of Performing Arts Presenters Ensemble Theater Collaborations Grant Program**, a component of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Initiative.

Additional support for this production has been provided by the **National Endowment for the Arts, Susan & Tom Desmond, Reynolds Potter and Sharon Mueller, Sharon Robinson**, and the **Howard and Manya Shapiro Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation**.

The development of *Apollo* has been made possible through the generous support of **Flintridge Foundation, Durfee Foundation, City of Culver City Art in Public Places Fund and A.S.K. Theatre Projects**. *Apollo, [Part 3]: Liberation* was partly commissioned with support from **San Diego Repertory Theatre and Magic Theater/Alfred P. Sloan Foundations New Science & Technology Plays Initiative**, and partly developed at Portland Center Stage with the support of **Theatre Communications Group and the Pew Charitable Trusts** through the **National Theatre Artist Residency Program**.

[PORTLAND CENTER STAGE](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Established in 1988 as an off shoot of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PCS became an independent theater in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May 2000. The company presents a blend of classic, contemporary and original productions in a conscious effort to appeal to the eclectic palate of theatergoers in Portland. PCS also offers a variety of education and outreach programs for curious minds from six to 106, including the PCS GreenHouse, a school of theater.

**THE GERDING THEATER AT THE ARMORY** houses a 599-seat Main Stage and a 200-seat black box Studio. It was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on Oct. 1, 2006. The capital campaign to fund the renovation of this hub for community artistic activity continues.

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