



**POWERFUL STORIES. BOLDLY TOLD. 40 YEARS STRONG.**

163 3RD ST N, ST PETERSBURG, FL 33701

**For Immediate Release**

September 1, 2017

Contact: The American Stage

Marketing Team

(727) 823-1600 x 209

[marketing@americanstage.org](mailto:marketing@americanstage.org)

## **American Stage presents THE ROYALE**

**The 2017-18 Season launches with this Tampa Bay premiere.**

**A theatrical drama in six rounds! #asROYALE**

**St. Petersburg, FL** – American Stage opens its 2017-18 Season ‘WE THE PEOPLE’ with the Tampa Bay premiere, *THE ROYALE* by Florida native Marco Ramirez (*Sons of Anarchy*, *Fear the Walking Dead*, Netflix series *Orange is the New Black*, *Marvel’s Daredevil* and *The Defenders*).

***“It was important to me that this play never felt like a period piece. While it is ultimately about a boxer born in the late 1800s, I wanted him to sound, feel, and act like athletes and even musicians that came way after him. For me, it was always interesting to draw historic parallels between Jack Johnson and Miles Davis, Allen Iverson, and Kanye West. Jack Johnson invented swagger.”*** – Marco Ramirez, Playwright

*THE ROYALE* will be directed by Lisa Tricomi, featuring new faces Aygemang Clay\*, Rokia L Shearin, and Rich Lowe, making their American Stage debut, with award-winning veteran performers, Kim Sullivan\* (Seen in all 10 of American Stage’s August Wilson Productions) and Richard B Watson\* (*INFORMED CONSENT* and *JOE TURNER’S COME & GONE*), making their return to our Mainstage. *THE ROYALE* is a theatrical drama in six rounds that packs a punch. **COME TOGETHER as WE THE PEOPLE...WILL FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE.**

***“To me, THE ROYALE is about breaking down barriers, fighting for a seat at the table. It’s a story that has a familiarity in its timelessness, and yet its theatricality and inventiveness feel so fresh, so contemporary, and so specifically designed for our medium. For all of these reasons, and others, THE ROYALE seemed the ideal piece to open our 2017-18 season, WE THE PEOPLE.”*** – Stephanie Gularte, Producing Artistic Director

***“Ramirez has crafted a beautifully stylized world, and it’s a thrilling challenge to direct a play that exudes so much theatricality. Ramirez floods us with the graceful brutality of pugilism, enhanced by an a cappella heartbeat soundtrack of body percussion.”*** – Lisa Tricomi, Director

**Carolina Esparza, Movement and Sound Percussion Coach, said this about her process, “...Jay Jackson is a lover of music, and it’s important to bring different feelings in the rhythms. Not just sound, but feelings...”**

### **TALKS & EVENTS**

This 2017-18 Season, ‘WE THE PEOPLE’, celebrates a partnership with local talents of seven visual artists and one photographer to create elements of the 2017-18 season selections. For *THE ROYALE*, American Stage is collaborating with Herbert Scott Davis. Herbert created artistic elements which were used in *THE ROYALE* show art, which will be seen throughout the season.

**-MORE-**

Davis will be invited to attend rehearsals, interact with the development of the set, lighting and costume designers which will further inform his artistic perspective. Inspired by the collaborative creative process of theatre-making, Herbert will create a one-of-a-kind painting that will be unveiled during Opening Night on September 22, 2017, and will be donated as a fundraiser for the American Stage 40 FORWARD fund campaign.

Going one step further in this collaborative process, **Herbert Scott Davis** will present a **Solo Show & Artist Reception, sponsored by Creative Loafing**, at American Stage on **Friday, September 29**. This gallery show will run concurrently with THE ROYALE and showcase Davis' own personal selections. This season American Stage asks the community to be a part of the WE THE PEOPLE movement and celebrate the arts in the Tampa Bay area!

***“An event that allows us to take a moment to reflect on issues that we face in our lives, can help to make us more rounded individuals. Projects like this collaboration will reach a wider audience whether it is through Visual Art or Theater.” – Herbert Scott Davis, THE ROYALE Featured Visual Artist***

American Stage has also programmed several audience experience opportunities surrounding the production of THE ROYALE beginning with the **SPOTLIGHT ON THE ROYALE: BEHIND-THE-SCENES** on September 10, 2017, an exclusive conversation with THE ROYALE's Lisa Tricomi (Director), Aygemang Clay\* (Actor), and Carolina Esparza (Movement and Sound Percussion Coach).

Throughout the run of THE ROYALE, ticket holders are invited to arrive early for an exclusive **PROLOGUE** presented by select American Stage apprentice Courtney McLaren 30 minutes prior to each performance.

American Stage is also excited to launch **TGIF!** where guests can kick off their weekend in style and join us for fancy, fun, fierce, and fabulous nights out at the theatre the first four Fridays of every mainstage production.

Visit [americanstage.org/ROYALE](http://americanstage.org/ROYALE) and click the **TALKS & EVENTS** tab for a full listing of ways to enhance your experience.

THE ROYALE runs from September 20 through October 15, 2017. **Opening night is Friday, September 22, 2017** with a reception sponsored by **David Bilyeu's Bayou Catering** at **7PM, performance at 8PM, and a dessert reception with the cast to follow.**

The following includes information on the cast, production, performance dates, and ticketing information, as well as a listing of special events associated with the production.

## **ABOUT THE PLAY**

From an award-winning writer on the hit TV series *Orange is the New Black* comes one of America's hottest new plays. Jay "The Sport" Jackson wants nothing more than to prove he's the best boxer in the world. However in the Jim Crow era, his chances are as good as knocked out. When a boxing promoter hatches a plan for "the fight of the century," The Sport just might land a place in the ring with the reigning white heavyweight champion. But is the country ready for this face off? Through the sights and sounds of the early 20th century boxing circuit, THE ROYALE packs a punch that will leave you breathless.

***"...a stylized, blazingly theatrical triumph..." -Miami Herald***

**-MORE-**

## CAST

**Aygemang Clay\*** (Jay)  
**Rich Lowe** (Fish)  
**Rokia L Shearin** (Nina)  
**Kim Sullivan\*** (Wynton)  
**Richard B Watson\*** (Max)

## CREATIVE

**Lisa Tricomi** (Director)  
**Carolina Esparza** (Movement and Sound Percussion Coach)  
**Jerid Fox** (Scenic Designer/ Properties Master)  
**Joseph P Oshry#** (Lighting Designer)  
**Trish Kelley** (Costume Designer)  
**Rachel Harrison** (Production Stage Manager)  
**Benjamin T Ismail** (Sound Designer)  
**Elysse Helms** (Scenic Artist)  
**Leigh Simons & James Battle** (Boxing Consultants)

\* = Member of Actors' Equity Association; # = Member of the United Scenic Artists Union

For Cast Bios please visit [AmericanStage.org/ROYALE](http://AmericanStage.org/ROYALE)

LINK to press releases: [AmericanStage.org/media](http://AmericanStage.org/media)

LINK to promotional photos: [Flickr American Stage](https://www.flickr.com/photos/americanstage/)

*\*Photo credit: Joey Clay Photography. Please note that publicity photos are not typically available until 2 weeks prior to opening. Please contact [marketing@americanstage.org](mailto:marketing@americanstage.org) for immediate needs.*

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

**MARCO RAMIREZ** is a South Florida native, Marco Ramirez has had plays produced at Lincoln Center Theater, The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (DC), The Humana Festival (Louisville), The Old Globe (San Diego), The Bush Theatre (London), Center Theatre Group (LA), and GableStage (Miami). Honors include the Outer Critics Circle's John Gassner Playwriting Award, Juilliard's Lila Acheson Wallace Playwriting Fellowship, and TCG's Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. A WGA and Emmy Award-nominated TV writer, his credits include *Sons of Anarchy* (FX), *Orange is the New Black* (Netflix), *Fear The Walking Dead* (AMC), *Marvel's Daredevil* (Netflix), and *Marvel's The Defenders* (Netflix).

## TALKS & EVENTS - Full Details

Visit [americanstage.org/ROYALE](http://americanstage.org/ROYALE) and click the **TALKS & EVENTS** tab for a full listing of events.

Sunday, September 10 | 1PM

### Spotlight Series: BEHIND-THE-SCENES

The perfect primer! Take a peek behind the curtain before the opening of each production with this informative and entertaining presentation about the play, the playwright, and the American Stage artists who bring it all to life. Professor Emerita Dedee Aleccia will provide relevant details about the history and central themes of the play, while members of the artistic team will give an insider's perspective on their process.

*Pricing: \$10 for General Public. Free for American Stage Subscribers and Act 1 Club Members*

**-MORE-**

Friday, September 22 | Reception at 7PM | Performance at 8pm

**Opening Night + Signature Art Unveiling by Herbert Scott Davis**

Celebrate with the stars! Enjoy a pre-show reception with hors d'oeuvres and an open bar, rub elbows with the cast & creative team, witness the unveiling of an original piece of art inspired by the show, and be among the first to see one of our first-class productions.

Thursday, September 28, Sunday, October 1, & Sunday, October 8 (Post-Performance)

**Spotlight Series: CHATBACK**

Stick around immediately following select performances to talk with the cast and other audience members while the experience of the play is fresh! Ask questions about the play, the characters, and the process, plus respond to the story and ideas aroused by the production. Free for ticket holders to the performance.

Friday, September 29

**WE THE PEOPLE - Artist Reception & Young Professionals Night**

**Artist Meet & Greet 6PM | Happy Hour at 7PM | Performance at 8PM**

On the second Friday, stop by our lobby to celebrate the visual artwork of Herbert Scott Davis. American Stage will host a solo gallery show for four weeks and will also display an original work inspired by the art on stage. Meet & Greet with the artist begins at 6PM.

***Solo Show & Artist Reception Sponsored by Creative Loafing***

**PLUS - Young Professionals Night:** Calling all twenty-somethings to enjoy \$15 tickets, drink specials, and conversation with the artists. YOUNG AMERICANS between the ages of 21-29 can access \$15 tickets with promo code UNDER30. Code can only be used for one ticket per order when purchased online. Otherwise you can call the Box Office at 727-823-7529 or email [youngamerican@americanstage.org](mailto:youngamerican@americanstage.org).

Tickets can be converted to a Young American Pass before or after the evening's performance at the Box Office. Young American Passholders get **unlimited** access to theatre, comedy, music, improv and more – whenever and however often they choose!

Friday, October 6

**LADIES Night:**

**Happy Hour at 7PM | Performance at 8PM**

Grab friends, bring a date and turn your ordinary Friday evening into a scintillating, one-of-a-kind night out highlighting some really awesome local women.

Friday, October 13

**PRIDE PLUS Night**

**Happy Hour at 7PM | Performance at 8PM**

Enjoy a night OUT at the theatre, with Happy Hour drink specials, and meet some local LGBT+ trendsetters and change-makers.

Tuesday, October 10 | 7PM

**Spotlight Series: COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS**

Great theatre inspires contemplation and challenges our assumptions while inviting us to come together for conversation and a deeper connection. From social and political hot-button issues to ethical dilemmas, American Stage's COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS dig deeper into the intriguing and sometimes provocative topics explored by our mainstage productions. Join a panel of local experts as they guide us through a lively discussion, and answer questions about the relevancy of the subject matter explored in the play.

*Pricing: \$10 for General Public. Free for American Stage Subscribers and Act 1 Club Members*

**-MORE-**

## AT A GLANCE

**WHAT:** American Stage presents THE ROYALE by Marco Ramizez

**WHERE:** Raymond James Theatre  
163 3rd Street North  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

**WHEN:** September 20 – October 15, 2017

Preview Wednesday, September 20, 7pm, “Pay What You Can”

Preview Thursday, September 21, 8pm, \$29 tickets

Opening Night: Friday, September 22, 8pm, \$59 tickets (includes opening night reception at 7pm, and a dessert reception with the cast following the performance.)

Continues: Wednesdays-Sundays through October 15, 2017

Arrive 30 minutes early to get the inside scoop on the play.

### TIMES & PRICES:

Wednesdays 7pm, \$39 tickets

Thursdays 8pm, \$39 tickets

Fridays & Saturdays 8pm, \$49 tickets

Saturdays & Sundays 3pm, \$39 tickets

### TALKS & EVENTS:

**Spotlight Series: BEHIND-THE-SCENES:** Sun, September 10 | 1PM

**Opening Night + Signature Art Unveiled:** Fri, September 22, 8pm, \$59 tickets (includes opening night reception at 7pm, and a dessert reception with the cast following the performance.)

**Spotlight Series: CHATBACK:** Thurs, September 28, Sun, October 1, & Sun, October 8 (Post-Performance)

**WE THE PEOPLE - Artist Reception & Young Professionals Night:**

Fri, September 29 | Artist Meet & Greet 6PM | Happy Hour at 7PM | Performance at 8PM

**LADIES Night:** Fri, October 6 | Happy Hour at 7PM | Performance at 8PM

**Spotlight Series: COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS:** Tues, October 10 | 7PM

**PRIDE PLUS Night:** Fri, October 13 | Happy Hour at 7PM | Performance at 8PM

### SERVICE & FACILITIES

**Physical Accessibility:** The theatre features accessible parking, entrances, restrooms, and seating.

*Displaying a valid disabled parking permit will allow you to park at City metered spaces for FREE, for as long as your event requires, including those posted with time limit signs (green signs). **This does not apply to loading zones or otherwise restricted parking signage (red signs).***

**Large Print Program:** Theatregoers may peruse large print programs for each Mainstage production.

**Listening System:** Theatregoers may enjoy the free infrared listening system from any seat.



---

-MORE-

## **AMERICAN STAGE | AS/40**

American Stage celebrates **40 Years Strong** this season. Since 1977, American Stage, has contributed to the vitality of Tampa Bay as a regional professional theatre. American Stage's mission is to reinforce the power of live theatre with high quality productions that excite and challenge a diverse audience. Our year-round programming seeks to realize this through our Mainstage season, Spotlight Series, 21st Century Voices: New Play Festival, American Stage in the Park and Improv. American Stage Education's offerings include award-winning Teaching Artist Outreach focused on bringing theatrical arts experiences to underserved populations, helping them to excel onstage & beyond.

We believe that through the telling of dynamic stories, live theatre has the power to unite us in our shared experiences and to deepen our connection to one another through the illumination of diverse perspectives. American Stage artists and stakeholders are responsible for helping a small theatre touring company blossom into a thriving world-class professional theatre providing nearly 70,000 Tampa Bay residents and tourists with accessible, relevant art and arts education annually.

**Powerful Stories. Boldly Told. 40 Years Strong.**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**



@americanstage

## **BOX OFFICE INFORMATION:**

**Phone:** (727) 823-PLAY (7529)

**Email:** [BoxOffice@americanstage.org](mailto:BoxOffice@americanstage.org)

**Location:** 163 3<sup>rd</sup> St. North, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

####