

For Immediate Release: December 14, 2006
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American Repertory Theatre
presents
BRITANNICUS
by **Jean Racine**
directed by **Robert Woodruff**
January 20 — February 11
Loeb Drama Center

Cambridge, MA — Robert Woodruff, Artistic Director, Gideon Lester, Associate Artistic Director, and Robert J. Orchard, Executive Director of the American Repertory Theatre (A.R.T.), present Jean Racine's powerful drama **Britannicus** in a translation by C.H. Sisson and directed by Robert Woodruff. Performances begin on Saturday, January 20 at the Loeb Drama Center, 64 Brattle Street, Harvard Square in Cambridge, and run through Sunday, February 11. **Britannicus will be available for press viewing beginning Wednesday, January 24 at 7:30pm.**

The young emperor Nero is running wild, leaving a mass of political and personal scandals in his wake. He decides to shed his wife Octavia, and instead marry Junia, the beloved of his half-brother Britannicus. Nero's mother, the mighty Agrippina, steps in to prevent him, and chaos and tragedy ensues. Racine's magnificent play — part political thriller, part gripping family drama, is set in the palace at the center of the Roman empire, where private and public worlds collide. Operatic in its passions, **Britannicus** is a tautly plotted masterpiece that documents the beginning of the decline of the Roman Empire.

The cast includes returning A.R.T. actors **Joan McIntosh** as Agrippina, **David Wilson Barnes** as Narcissus, and **Adrienne Krstansky** as Albina; joined by **Alfredo Narciso** as Nero, **Kevin O'Donnell** as Britannicus, and **John Sierros** as Burrhus; and A.R.T. Institute actor **Merritt Janson** as Junia. Set design is by **Riccardo Hernandez**, costume design by **Kay Voyce**, lighting design by **Christopher Akerlind**, and sound design by **David Remedios**.

The Acting Company

David Wilson Barnes appeared at the A.R.T. as Frank in **Olly's Prison**. New York credits include **Hamlet** at The Public Theater, **A Midsummer Night's Dream** at 78th Theatre Lab, **The Caucasian Chalk Circle**, and **The Bald Soprano** at La Mama, ETC, **Hedda Gabler** at Horace Mann Theatre, and **Jersey Story** at The Cherry Lane. Resident work includes **The Best Man** at Actor's Theatre of Louisville, **Quake** at ATL Humana Festival, **The Lion in Winter** at The Cape Playhouse.

Merritt Janson is a second-year actor at the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advanced Theatre Training. She is currently appearing in the A.R.T. production of **The Onion Cellar**.

Adrienne Krstansky played Queen Rosamund in the A.R.T. production of **Ubu Rock**. She appeared in the Young Vic production in London of **Laundry and Bourbon**; at the Atlantic Theater and LaJolla Playhouse in **Luck, Pluck and Virtue**; at the Steppenwolf Theatre in **A Clockwork Orange** and **Twelfth Night**; and locally in **Closer** at Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre; **Frozen** at New Rep, **Bug** at Boston TheaterWorks, and **The Loman Family Picnic** at Gloucester Stage, among others.

Joan McIntosh played the role of Mme. Irma in Joanne Akalaitis' production of **The Balcony** at the A.R.T. She was seen on Broadway in **Orpheus Descending** and **Our Town**; at the New York Shakespeare Festival in **Macbeth**, **Alice in Bed**, **All's Well that Ends Well**, **Cymbeline**, **Julius Caesar**, and **A Bright Room Called Day**; and in many resident theatres throughout the U.S. She has several Obie awards; a Drama Desk and a Drama League Award; and

a Herald Angel Award from the Edinburgh Festival. She also directs and teaches acting throughout the country.

Alfredo Narciso appeared on Broadway in a **A Streetcar Named Desire**. Off-Broadway credits include Michael John Garces' **Points of Departure**, **Split Wide Open**, and **Good Thing**; and the OBIE-winning **Benten Kozo**. Other credits include Alice Tuan's **Ajax**, which also participated in the 2001 Melbourne Fringe Festival, Olympia Dukakis' **The Tempest Project** at the Long Wharf Theatre. He is the 2006 recipient of the Charles Bowden Award from New Dramatists.

Kevin O'Donnell is a Boston native, who grew up on the South Shore and received his BFA in Literature and Creative Writing at Emerson College. Currently based in New York, his credits include **The Hairy Ape** at The Irish Repertory Theatre, and **The Comedy of Errors** off-off Broadway. Resident theatre roles include Laertes in **Hamlet** at Shakespeare & Company, Horatio in **Hamlet** at The Guthrie Theater, Charles Surface in **The School for Scandal** with Brian Bedford at The Mark Taper Forum, Gil/Jody in **Thief River** at Barrington Stage Company, and **A Midsummer Night's Dream** and **The Skin of Our Teeth** at Chautauqua Theatre Company. He played Romeo in **Romeo and Juliet** alongside dancers from the American Ballet Theatre as part of the Guggenheim Museum's 'Works in Process' series. Films include *Black Irish*, *Opa*, *Shaft*, *A Million Miles An Hour*. Television: Comedy Central's "Strangers With Candy". Mr. O'Donnell is a graduate of The Juilliard School. His short play, **No More Static** was commissioned by The Guthrie Theater and produced at The Guthrie Lab, later included in *The Best Ten-Minute Plays of 2004 for 3 or More Actors*, published by Smith and Krause and PlayScripts.net. His original screenplay, *Penance*, was recently optioned by MCPFilms of Boston, and is scheduled to begin shooting in Massachusetts in the fall of 2007, with Mr. O'Donnell playing a starring role.

John Sierros has a degree in Film Production & Theory from the University of Notre Dame. His Chicago theatre credits include the premiere of Charles Mee's **Time To Burn** (directed by Tina Landau), **The Weir** and **Mother Courage**, Steppenwolf Theater Company; and **Dylan** (role of Dylan Thomas, directed by Sydney Michaels, Joseph Jefferson Award), Seanachai Theater Company. New York credits include the adaptation of Michael Cunningham's novel **Flesh and Blood** (opposite Cherry Jones, directed by Doug Hughes). He works primarily in New York City, and has just been named Executive Producer for a black comedy film entitled *Gems*, in which he will also star, opposite Olympia Dukakis.

The Creative Staff

A.R.T. Artistic Director **Robert Woodruff** previously directed **Island of Slaves**, **Orpheus X**, **Olly's Prison**, **Oedipus**, **Highway Ulysses** (2003 Elliot Norton Award for best production), **Richard II**, **Full Circle** (2000 Elliot Norton Award for Best Director) and **In the Jungle of Cities** (1998 Elliot Norton Award for Best Director) at the A.R.T., as well as the A.R.T. Institute production of Charles L. Mee's **Trojan Women A Love Story**. His credits include the premieres of Sam Shepard's **Curse of the Starving Class**, **Buried Child** (Pulitzer Prize), and **True West** at the New York Shakespeare Festival; **In the Belly of the Beast**, **A Lie of the Mind**, and Philip Glass's **A Madrigal Opera** at the Mark Taper Forum; **The Comedy of Errors** (with the Flying Karamazov Brothers) at Lincoln Center; David Mamet's adaptation of **Red River** at The Goodman Theatre; **The Tempest**, **A Man's a Man**, and **Happy Days** (among others) at La Jolla Playhouse; **Julius Caesar** at Alliance Theatre; **The Duchess of Malfi** and **Nothing Sacred** at the American Conservatory Theatre; **The Skin of Our Teeth** at The Guthrie Theater, **Baal** at Trinity Repertory Company; **Medea** at the National Theatre of Israel and **Saved** at Theatre for A New Audience. His work has been seen at most major U.S. Arts Festivals and abroad. Mr. Woodruff cofounded The Eureka Theatre, San Francisco, and created The Bay Area Playwrights Festival.

Scenic Designer **Riccardo Hernandez** designed **Romeo and Juliet**, **Desire Under the Elms**, **The Miser**, **Uncle Vanya**, **Marat/Sade**, **Full Circle**, **Enrico IV**, **Phaedra**, **Othello**, **The Doctor's Dilemma**, **Three Farces and a Funeral**, and **Dream of the Red Spider** at the A.R.T. Broadway credits include **Caroline, or Change**; **Topdog/Underdog** (also Royal Court, London); **Elaine Stritch at Liberty** (also West End's Old Vic, London and National Tour); **Parade** (Tony and Drama Desk Nominations); **Bells are Ringing**; **Noise/Funk** (also National Tours and Japan);

The Tempest, and over a dozen productions at New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater. He has designed at every major resident theatre in the country, and created sets at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and Santa Fe Opera, among others.

Costume Designer **Kay Voyce**'s most recent work includes **Arms and the Man** at Williamstown Theatre Festival, Philip Glass's **Orphée** at Glimmerglass Opera, Racine's **Phèdre** at Bard College, and **The Merchant of Venice** at CalShakes. She has worked at numerous resident theatres and opera companies throughout the US.

Tony Award-winning designer **Christopher Akerlind** created lighting for the A.R.T. productions of **Island of Slaves**, **Desire Under the Elms**, **Olly's Prison**, **Oedipus**, **La Dispute**, **Uncle Vanya**, **Enrico IV**, and **Misalliance**. Recent work includes **Well** (Joseph Papp Public Theatre), **The Light in the Piazza** (Tony Award), **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (Siti Company), **Cymbeline** (Royal Shakespeare Company), **Pericles** and **Don Juan** (Theater for a New Audience). His extensive credits in opera include productions at the Metropolitan Opera, Boston Lyric, L.A. Opera, Dallas, Glimmerglass, Hamburg, Houston, Minnesota, New York City, Nissei, and Santa Fe Operas. Awards: Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Lighting Design, the Michael Merritt Award for Design and Collaboration and numerous nominations for the Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics Circle and Tony Awards.

Resident Sound Designer **David Remedios** has created twenty-eight productions for the A.R.T., including **Three Sisters**, **The Keening**, **Amerika**, **Olly's Prison**, **Dido**, **Queen of Carthage**, and **The Provok'd Wife** (original music). He has created sound for Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, the 92nd St. Y, Emerson Stage, Boston Theatre Works, New York Theatre Workshop, and Vineyard Playhouse; original music and sound for Boston Playwrights Theatre; and dance soundscapes for Concord Academy, Snappy Dance Theater Company, and Lorraine Chapman. He is recipient of 2001 Elliot Norton Award for **Mother Courage and Her Children**.

Performances of **Britannicus** run January 23, 24, 25, 28, 30, 31, February 1, 4, 6, 7, 8 at 7:30pm; January 20, 26, 27, February 2, 3, 9, 10 at 8pm; January 21, 27, 28, February 34, 10, 11 at 2pm.

The balance of the A.R.T. 2006-07 Season includes the US premiere of **Oliver Twist**, based on the novel by Charles Dickens, adapted and directed by Neil Bartlett (February 17 — March 25, Loeb Stage); the US Premiere of **Elections and Erections: A Memoir of Fear and Fun**, created and performed by Pieter-Dirk Uys (April 4 — May 6, Zero Arrow Theatre); and—**No Man's Land** by Harold Pinter, directed by David Wheeler (May 12 — June 10, Loeb Stage). The 2006-07 Season is sponsored by TIAA-CREF.

Single ticket prices range from \$29 to \$76. Discounts include student tickets at \$15 and **Theatre for the price of a movie**: the box office matches a current movie ticket stub with a ticket at the same price for students with valid IDs; **Pay What You Can**, making fifty tickets available for every Saturday matinee performance of the subscription season at the Loeb Drama Center for patrons to purchase at whatever amount they can afford (based on availability); **50@15@noon**, offering fifty tickets at \$15 for each performance during the 2006-07 Season (tickets become available at noon on each performance day, either by phone or in person, purchases limited to two tickets per customer and available on a first-come, first-served basis; program does not apply to performances for which tickets are no longer available); **Group rates**, with extra savings for senior citizens and student groups. The A.R.T. is still offering several subscription plans and a host of benefits, including discounts on parking, fine dining, and tickets to other theatres; a *child-care series* (Saturday matinee), and *pre- and post-performance discussion series* (Saturday matinees).

To learn more about the A.R.T. season visit the A.R.T. website at www.amrep.org or call the **A.R.T. InfoLine** at (617) 547-8300 for directions to the theatre; to order brochures, calendars, and newsletters; and for direct access to the A.R.T. Box Office (hours are noon to curtain time on performance days, noon to 5 pm on non-performance days, closed on Mondays).

The American Repertory Theatre, located at the Loeb Drama Center in Harvard Square at 64 Brattle Street, Cambridge, is accessible to persons with special needs and to those requiring wheelchair seating or first-floor restrooms. Deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons can also reach the Theatre by calling the toll-free N.E. Telephone Relay Center at 1-800-439-2370.

Public transportation and discount parking are available nearby.

**AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATRE
FACT SHEET**

WHAT:

Britannicus

by Jean Racine

Translated by

C.H. Sisson

Directed by

Robert Woodruff

Scenic Design

Riccardo Hernandez

Costume Design

Kaye Voyce

Lighting Design

Christopher Akerlind

Sound Design

David Remedios

CAST

NERO

Alfredo Narciso *

BRITANNICUS

Kevin O'Donnell *

AGRIPPINA

Joan MacIntosh *

JUNIA

Merritt Janson

BURRHUS

John Sierros *

NARCISSUS

David Wilson Barnes *

ALBINA

Adrienne Krstansky*

OCTAVIA

TBA

PALLAS

TBA

(*) members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

WHEN:

Sa Jan 20 8pm (preview)

Su Jan 21 2pm (preview)

Tu Jan 23 7:30pm (preview)

We Jan 24 7:30pm (press opening)

Th Jan 25 7:30pm

Fr Jan 26 8pm

Sa Jan 27 2pm and 8pm

Su Jan 28 2pm and 7:30pm

Tu Jan 30 7:30pm

We Jan 31 7:30pm

Th Feb 1 7:30pm

Fr Feb 2 8pm

Sa Feb 3 2pm and 8pm

Su Feb 4 2pm and 7:30pm

Tu Feb 6 7:30pm

We Feb 7 10am and 7:30pm

Th Feb 8 7:30pm

Fr Feb 9 8pm

Sa Feb 10 2pm and 8pm

Su Feb 11 2pm

TICKETS:

\$25 to \$50. Students: \$15. Tickets may be charged to American Express, Visa, or MasterCard. Senior citizen, group discounts are available.

Box Office Phone and A.R.T. InfoLine: (617) 547 8300 www.amrep.org

E-mail address: press@amrep.org **Web address:** www.amrep.org

Publicity photo available at www.amrep.org/media

Production photos of *Britannicus* can be downloaded from www.amrep.org/media
from January 22, 2007