

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 15, 2016

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Shines a Spotlight on International Directors**

NEEDLES AND OPIUM

Written and Directed by Robert Lepage
March 16-18, 2017 in the Eisenhower Theater

ANTIGONÓN, UN CONTIGENTE ÉPICO

Directed by Carlos Díaz
March 21-22, 2017 in the Eisenhower Theater

PETROL STATION

Written and Directed by Sulayman Al Bassam
March 24-26 in the Eisenhower Theater

BATTLEFIELD

Directed by Peter Brook
March 29-April 2, 2017 in the Family Theater

THREE SISTERS

Directed by Lev Dodin
April 26-30, 2017 in the Eisenhower Theater

(WASHINGTON)—This spring, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing arts highlights the work of five of the theater’s preeminent directors from across the globe: **Robert Lepage**, **Carlos Diaz**, **Sulayman Al Bassam**, **Peter Brook**, and **Lev Dodin**. Kennedy Center audiences will experience a theatrical feast of visionary productions of both classic and contemporary plays offering a truly global perspective on theater today.

One of Canada’s most lauded theater artists, **Robert Lepage**, and his multidisciplinary performance company Ex Machina present ***Needles and Opium***, a highly visual exploration of creativity, love, addiction, and withdrawal through two artists’ stories. From Cuba comes

Teatro El Público's production of playwright **Rogelio Orizondo's** epic explosion of myths, poetry, and heroics, ***Antigonón, un contingente épico***, directed with the unwavering vision of **Carlos Díaz**. Internationally acclaimed Anglo-Kuwaiti writer/director **Sulayman Al Bassam** (*Richard III: An Arab Tragedy*) returns to the Kennedy Center with the world premiere of ***Petrol Station***, which uses its titular setting as a poetic space to explore the oppressions and aspirations of the Gulf Arab region. **Peter Brook**, the legendary British director, takes the subject matter from his landmark production of *The Mahabharata* to stage ***Battlefield***. And **Lev Dodin**, widely regarded as one of the world's finest directors, with Maly Drama Theatre of St. Petersburg, one of Russia's premier theater companies, presents a luminous and emotionally raw retelling of Chekhov's ***Three Sisters***.

"To create this series I looked to some of the world's greatest and acclaimed directors," said Alicia Adams, Vice President of International Programming and Dance at the Kennedy Center. "I looked for work that has currency in today's global environment from several generations of international directors. I am excited that the result is this collection of plays reflecting some of the most brilliantly inspired storytellers and organizers of illusion."

Concurrently, the Kennedy Center will also play host to the previously announced collaboration with Sundance Institute to present a series of theater pieces in the Terrace Gallery. The program will feature Institute alumni artists representing Palestine: playwright and performer Amer Hlehel's *TAHA*, based on the life of the celebrated Palestinian poet Taha Muhammad Ali; the U.S. premiere of *Where Can I Find Someone Like You, Ali?*, an autobiographical work by Raeda Taha, daughter of Ali Taha (performed in Arabic with English surtitles); and *Creative Tensions: HOME*, a collective conversation expressed in movement guided by moderator Phillip Himberg and provoked by speakers who approach the topic from different perspectives.

Ex Machina/Robert Lepage: *Needles and Opium*

Robert Lepage and his Ex Machina performance company present a reimagined version of his acclaimed *Needles and Opium*, a cinematic exploration of art, love, and addiction that is as relevant now as when it premiered in 1991. Lepage writes and directs a fictional story triggered by the art of French poet and filmmaker Jean Cocteau and American jazz artist Miles Davis, coincidentally crossing the Atlantic Ocean in 1949, visiting each other's cities. Through a hypnotic series of vignettes set in a cube suspended in midair, characters played by Oliver Normand and Wellesley Robertson III tumble from the boulevards of Paris to the back alleys of New York in this fascinating look at how the echoes

of history affect our daily struggles. With music, theater, acrobatics, and Lepage's signature visual aesthetic, this noir-drenched examination of the soul turns heartbreak into art.

Teatro El Público: *Antigonón, un contingente épico*

Two myths collide in this new production from Havana's provocative Teatro El Público. From sharp young playwright Rogelio Orizondo and the audacious director Carlos Díaz, this brave work departs from the myth of Sophocles's *Antigone* to fuse with old and new figures from Cuban history. Icons are reborn and others are abandoned – in particular, the myth of renowned poet José Martí, considered the founder of Cuban revolutionary thought. Structured on a series of non-linear monologues and embroidered with exotically absurd costumes that the five-member cast dons and sheds rapid-fire as they work through dozens of different characters, *Antigonón, un contingente épico* flows poetically like a series of flashbacks, all set against a backdrop of archival film clips. The text reflects a new view of contemporary Cuba from a subtle perspective that slices through moments of the island's past and surprises us with questions regarding the present, including the country's strained relationship with its own history. Performed in Spanish with English surtitles.

Sulayman Al Bassam: *Petrol Station*

A remote petrol station within earshot of civil war provides the background for a familial standoff in which the crimes, secrets, and broken loves of one generation make violent claims on the lives of the next as two half-brothers vie for favors and allegiance from their aging father. In this compelling drama, acclaimed Anglo-Kuwaiti writer/director Sulayman Al Bassam examines themes of identity, ambition, and betrayal. Al Bassam, a New York University Artist-in-Residence, returns following his highly regarded presentation of *Richard III: An Arab Tragedy* during the Kennedy Center international festival, *Arabesque*, in 2009. His provocative new story draws inspiration from Sumerian myth, Palestinian refugee literature, and American 1950s urban legends of the gas station to portray a modern dystopia where defunct ideologies, desperate migrants, zealous warlords, and opportunistic traffickers vie for supremacy.

Peter Brook's *Battlefield*

Peter Brook's colossal 1985 production of *The Mahabharata* is hailed as one of the greatest and most memorable theatrical productions of all time. His internationally renowned work was last seen at the Kennedy Center in *Fragments* in 2011 and *The Suit* in 2014. Now based in France, Brook comes together with frequent collaborators Marie-Hélène Estienne and Jean-Claude Carrière to once again take inspiration from this sweeping epic poem of ancient India. Their new play from Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, *Battlefield*, is a revised and extended excerpt from *The Mahabharata*. War is ravaging the kingdom, and the Bharata family is being pulled at the seams. A new and untested king must face the devastation he has caused as his world crumbles around him and his people. This riveting story poses the enduring question: how can we find inner peace while the world rages around us?

Maly Drama Theatre: *Three Sisters*

Maly Drama Theatre of St. Petersburg, one of Russia's leading theater companies, presents this luminous retelling of legendary playwright Anton Chekhov's masterpiece *Three Sisters*. Renowned director Lev Dodin directs this radiant, complex play with rich insight into Chekhov's eloquent understanding of resignation, longing, and love. Following the death of their father, three sisters are forced to leave Moscow for life in a provincial town. They bravely confront the tragic discrepancies between yearnings and reality, and a saga unfolds about the vital importance of staying true to oneself while struggling with the burden of everyday life. The play examines the hierarchical and emotional effects of losing status and wealth while coming to terms with changes in modern society. Performed in Russian with English surtitles.

Ticket Information

Needles and Opium will be performed March 16-18 at 8:00 p.m. with a 2:00 p.m. matinee on March 18. *Antigonón, un contingente épico* will be performed March 21 and 22 at 8:00 p.m. *Petrol Station* will be performed March 24 and 25 at 8:00 p.m. with a 2:00 p.m. matinee on March 26. *Battlefield* will be performed March 29-April 1 at 7:30 p.m. with a 2:00 p.m. matinee on April 2. *Three Sisters* will be performed April 26-29 at 8:00 p.m. with a 2:00 p.m. matinee on April 30.

TAHA will be performed on March 15 and 16, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. *Where Can I Find Someone Like You, Ali?* will be performed on March 23 and 24, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. *Creative Tensions: HOME* will take place on March 25, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.

Post-performance discussions will be offered following the March 15 performance of *TAHA*, the March 21 performance of *Antigonón, un contingente épico*, the March 23 performance of *Where Can I Find Someone Like You, Ali?*, the March 24 performance of *Petrol Station*, and the March 29 performance of *Battlefield*.

For more information please visit the Kennedy Center website, in-person at the Kennedy Center box office, or call (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324.

Funding Credits

*International Theater is underwritten by **HRH Foundation**.*

*Additional support for International Theater is provided by the **Laura Pels International Foundation for Theater**.*

*International Programming at the Kennedy Center is made possible through the generosity of the **Kennedy Center International Committee on the Arts**.*

Discover the [Kennedy Center](#) on social media:



#KennedyCenter

###

PRESS CONTACTS

Brendan Padgett
(202) 416-8004
bepadgett@kennedy-center.org

TICKETS & INFORMATION

(202) 467-4600
(800) 444-1324
www.kennedy-center.org